



# THE ELEMENTS

## The Origins of Alchemy

They started with four: earth, air, fire, and water. From these basics, they sought to understand the essential ingredients of the world. Those who could see further, those who understood that the four were just the beginning, were the last sorcerers and the world's first chemists. The word probably comes from the Greek *chemia*, which meant to transmute or change matter; and that's what alchemy, like chemistry itself, has always been concerned with.

The roots and origin of the practice known as Alchemy take us back all the way to ancient Egypt, although many cultures throughout time have been involved in the seeking out of alchemy's secrets. Alchemy, the transmutation of base elements into gold for the purposes of both chemistry and metaphysical exploration, has been a field cloaked with mystery and controversy.

Throughout its history, alchemy has often had practitioners of two kinds. One was the true adept who sought transmutation that alchemy could bring for spiritual enlightenment, while the other groups who sought the teachings of alchemy did so for the purposes of earthly wealth and often greed as well. Those who practiced the art for its metaphysical and spiritual benefits had contempt for those that sought alchemy as a short-cut to material wealth. Indeed, the alchemist got his concept of this by observing how the process of purification occurred in nature. They understood that the four elements of Earth, Air, Water and Fire, plus the element of Spirit as the fifth element, were what all things were comprised from. They believed that as the base metal lead perfected and purified themselves in the belly of the earth through fire, eventually turning into gold or silver through a process of natural transmutation, so too could this be done in a lab, they reasoned. What was needed, though, was something they referred to as the Philosopher's Stone. A 4th century alchemist named Zosimus referred to it as "the stone which is not a stone",

as it allegedly had amazing properties which afforded it the ability not only to transmute base metal into gold, but also to soften glass, or give the alchemist the ability to levitate, or to communicate with angels. The reason for these powers of the Philosopher's Stone was said to be because of its being comprised of what they called *prima materia*, or the prime material, from which every thing on earth is made. The *prima materia*, it was believed, was the essence of physical matter which contained pure Divine essence. The first order of business of early alchemists, then was creating a philosopher's stone from the revered *prima materia*. This often proved to be the bane of alchemy however, as the Stone remained elusive.

## Roots of Western Alchemy

As we look at the roots of alchemy, we first find the concepts of it in ancient Egypt, going back between 5,000 400 B.C. Egyptians sought immortality via the manipulation of the elements. Egyptian alchemists used their knowledge about transmuting elemental metals to create metal alloys, dyes and perfumes as well as jewelry and cosmetics.

The ancient Greeks also had practiced in the art. There is, as far as is known, only one manuscript regarding the history of the art of alchemy in Greece. Between 340-640 B.C. we know that manuscripts of Greek alchemy were located in the great libraries at Alexandria.

Many ancient philosophies used a set of archetypal classical elements to explain patterns in nature. The Greek version of these ideas dates from pre-Socratic times and

persisted throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, deeply influencing European thought and culture; but the concept is far older in the Far East, and was widely disseminated in India and China, where it forms the basis of both Buddhism and Hinduism, particularly in an esoteric context.

Plato mentions the elements as of pre-Socratic origin, a list created by the Ionian philosopher Empedocles (ca. 450 BC). Empedocles called these the four "roots"; Plato seems to have been the first to use the term "element (*stoicheion*)" in reference to air, fire, earth, and water.

The word is derived from the Arabian phrase "al-kimia," which refers to the preparation of the Stone or Elixir by the Egyptians. The Arabic root "kimia" comes from the Coptic "khem" that alluded to the fertile black soil of the Nile delta. Esoterically and hieroglyphically, the word refers to the dark mystery of the primordial or First Matter (the Khem), the One Thing through which all creation manifests. Alchemy, then, is the Great Work of nature that perfects this chaotic matter, whether it be expressed as the metals, the cosmos, or the substance of our souls.

Alchemy as a philosophical and spiritual discipline. Alchemy was known as the spagyric art after Greek words meaning to separate and to join together. Compare this with the primary dictum of Alchemy in Latin: SOLVE ET COAGULA - Separate, and Join Together.

The best known goals of the alchemists were the transmutation of common metals into gold or silver (less well known is plant alchemy, or "Spagyric"), and the creation of a "panacea," a remedy that supposedly would cure all diseases and prolong life indefinitely. Although these were not the only uses for the science, they were the ones most documented and well known.

## Greek Empedoclean Theory

The Greek philosopher Empedocles of Acragas (495-435 B.C.) asserts that matter consists of four elements - earth, air, fire and water - a theory that is later supported and embellished upon by Aristotle. This concept influenced the philosophical basis for the next advance in the science of matter - alchemy.

Although Empedocles developed radically new ideas about the nature of the universe, most of his work is an extension of Parmenidean and Pythagorean philosophy. How does one account for the kaleidoscopic nature of the world if we maintain Parmenides' belief in a permanent, singular, and eternal universe? In the process of answering this question, Empedocles introduces new physical, chemical, and biological insights that influence later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle.

Empedocles explains the nature of the universe through the interaction of two governing principles, Love and Strife, on four primary elements. Unlike his predecessors, Empedocles claims that there are four elements in the universe; air, fire, earth, and water. Particular and indestructible, these elements foreshadow later developments in atomic theory by philosophers such as Leucippus and Democritus. Earlier philosophers believed that the quality of matter depends on the quantity of a particular element. For example, Anaximenes asserts that air is the primary element in the universe, condensing to form heavier matter such as water, and rarefying into fire. However, Empedocles argues that the quality of matter depends exclusively on the ratio of its elements. A stone, for example, is stone because of



a unique ratio of air, fire, earth, and water. Empedocles explains differences in living matter using the same argument; muscle is formed by a different combination of elements than, say, bone or fat. His preoccupation with ratio illustrates the strong influence of Pythagorean philosophers, creating a philosophy that closely resembles modern atomic theory.

Having defined matter as the ratio of elements, Empedocles' next challenge was to account for change. According to Aristotle, he was the first to suggest that motion is the result of two antagonistic principles, Love and Strife. Empedocles adds a moral dimension to his argument by associating Love with good and Strife with evil. The influence of each principle waxes and wanes in a cycle of opposition that Empedocles calls "The Vortex." At the beginning of time, Love completely dominated the universe. As a consequence, the four elements were unified into a sphere and segregated according to their type – a quarter of the sphere was water, a quarter was air, and the remaining half was divided equally by earth and fire. However, with the introduction of Strife "The Sphere" was gradually dissolved, slowly scattering the elements throughout the universe. The complete dissolution of The Sphere was achieved by the eventual predominance of Strife. However, Love began to gather strength again, causing the elements to congregate in clusters, and thereby creating life. Eventually, the elements will form a second unity, a second "Sphere," and the cycle will reset. Empedocles argues that this cycle will continue eternally, and two major conclusions follow from his argument: First, the cyclical nature of the universe introduces the possibility of reincarnation. Second, Empedocles asserts that life, as we know it, is the consequence of an evolutionary process. Empedocles believed that Love agglomerated the four elements into the various bodily parts; such as arms, legs, feet and fingers. These stray limbs roamed free until Love further unified them into bodily masses. Empedocles argues that some of these bodily forms were better suited for survival than others, resulting in the disappearance of monstrous beings and the evolution of modern life.

The four classical elements were independently proposed by early pre-Socratic philosophers: water (Thales), air (Anaximenes), earth (Xenophanes), and fire (Heraclitus). Empedocles proposed that they all existed together in fixed quantities from the beginning. Plato later conceived of them as consisting of atoms with the geometrical shapes of four of the five regular geometrical solids that had been discovered by the Pythagoreans but described by Plato (in the *Timaeus*). Aristotle discarded Plato's mathematical interest and saw the elements as combinations of two sets of opposite qualities, hot & cold, wet & dry. Aristotle's view was ultimately the accepted one all through the Middle Ages.

According to Galen, these elements were used by Hippocrates in describing the human body with an association with the four humours: yellow bile (Fire), black bile (Earth), blood (Air), and phlegm (Water).

Some cosmologies include a fifth element, the "aether" or "quintessence." These five elements are sometimes associated with the five platonic solids.

The Pythagoreans added idea as the fifth element, and also used the initial letters of these five elements to name the outer angles of their pentagram.

Aristotle added aether as the quintessence, reasoning that whereas Fire, Earth, Air, and Water were earthly and corruptible, since no changes had been perceived in the heavenly regions, the stars cannot be made out of any of the four elements but must be made of a different, unchangeable, heavenly substance. Various physical aether theories employed aether to provide the proposed invisible medium which permeated the universe, and was responsible for the action of gravity or the propagation of light.

Between the fifth and sixth centuries BC, we find evidences of alchemy in China, mostly associated with the religion known as Taoism. Taoist monks also had a hand in

the development of alchemy, though their lean on it was more an herbal transmutation, as opposed to the metallurgy that most other alchemists sought. They would seek to make elixirs from various herbs and plants to heal the physical, outer body, while also developing techniques to manipulate the life force of the body ("chi"). Most of the origins of the Chinese practices with alchemy are found in the 100 books, or recordings, of the Taoist teachings. There are also allusions to the Chinese form of alchemy in *Commentary on the I Ching*, a book of interpretation for relating the art of alchemy to mathematical formula used in divination. Among Chinese alchemy's biggest chemical inventions was that of black powder (gun powder). The best known Chinese alchemist was Ko Hung, who lived from 283-343 A.D.

The four elements of antiquity -- earth, water, air, and fire -- dominated natural philosophy for two thousand years. Even today, earth, water, air, and fire are not bad symbols for the four states of matter - solid, liquid, gas, and plasma. Science has discovered new ideas, but in the field of Mysticism these elements are still important today, to illustrate the oneness of all. The ancient symbol is found after each element below. Some mystics insist that these four elements be placed on the temple and home sanctum alter. Some even go so far as to have earth-(sand), water and air from Egypt, to commemorate the origin of the Mystery Schools that later migrated to many parts of the world.



### Fear and Mystery

Alexandria, Egypt was known as "the Queen City of the Mediterranean" because of its huge libraries and universities, as well as the place where many concepts, beliefs and ideas would commingle. Streams of alchemical ideas from Egyptian and Greek cultures found their way into Alexandria, Egypt. However, a large library in Alexandria, which contained the recordings of alchemists, was burned by Christians in 391 AD. They feared that alchemy was of the devil' and thus sought to destroy it's knowledge.

Indeed, from antiquity until well into the Modern Age, a physics devoid of metaphysical insight would have been as unsatisfying as a metaphysics devoid of physical manifestation. For one thing, the lack of common words for chemical concepts and processes, as well as the need for secrecy, led alchemists to borrow the terms and symbols of biblical and pagan mythology, astrology, kabbalah, and other mystic and esoteric fields; so that even the plainest chemical recipe ended up reading like an abstruse magic incantation. Moreover, alchemists sought in those fields the theoretical frameworks into which they could fit their growing collection of disjointed experimental facts.

Starting with the Middle Ages, some alchemists increasingly came to view these metaphysical aspects as the true foundation of alchemy; and chemical substances, physical states, and material processes as mere metaphors for spiritual entities, states and transformations. In this sense, the literal meanings of alchemical formulas were a blind hiding their true spiritual philosophy, which being at odds with the Medieval Church was a necessity that could have otherwise lead them to the "stake and rack" of the Inquisition under charges of heresy and witchcraft. Thus, both the transmutation of common metals into gold and the universal panacea symbolized evolution from an imperfect, diseased, corruptible and ephemeral state towards a perfect, healthy, incorruptible and everlasting state; and the philosopher's stone then represented some mystic key that would make this evolution possible. Applied to the alchemist himself, the twin goal symbolized his evolution from ignorance to enlightenment, and the stone represented some hidden spiritual truth or power that would lead to that goal. In texts that are written according to this view, the cryptic alchemical symbols, diagrams, and textual imagery of late alchemical works typically contain

multiple layers of meanings, allegories, and references to other equally cryptic works; and must be laboriously “decoded” in order to discover their true meaning.

Even though alchemy is not evil, even alchemists themselves were often fearful of its secrets falling into the wrong hands. They knew that if greed-driven people got a hold of the secrets of alchemy, it may be used as yet another catalyst for control and manipulation as some may use the art for purposes of wealth and knowledge monopolies. Indeed as alchemy spread across the West, this fear would prove to be well-founded as many sought out alchemy’s secrets for their own personal desire to control wealth and to consolidate it into their own hands. To guard the secrets of the craft, rather than recording many of their findings in words, many alchemists recorded symbols that had special meanings to the adepts practiced in the art. Even the symbols themselves are said to contain consciousness-altering imagery.

Aristotle’s ideas on Alchemy were developed by the Greeks after him, and then by Arab scientists. From time to time, alchemy mired itself in metaphysical razzle-dazzle. The practical Romans had no taste for it at all. So, as civilization spread north into Europe, alchemy all but vanished until the 13th and 14th centuries, when scholars began to re-read the old Greek and Arabic texts.

As the practice of alchemy worked its way to Palestine, the results of the practice was that of discovering more about the use of chemicals. Toxicology began to form as an offshoot of the practice, as it was discovered which plants were poisonous, as well as discoveries of antidotes for the poisonous substances. This part of alchemy’s history as practiced in the Arab world was predominantly in use between the third to ninth centuries.

As people began to travel about, the Arabs brought the ideas of alchemy to Spain and from there the concepts of Alchemy spread into Europe. In fact, Pope Silverster II was one such instrumental person in bringing the Islamic teachings of alchemy to Europe during the Middle Ages (1300-1500 AD). Starting with the Middle Ages, European alchemists invested much effort on the search for the “philosopher’s stone”, a legendary substance that was believed to be an essential ingredient for either or both of those goals. The philosopher’s stone was believed to mystically amplify the user’s knowledge of alchemy so much that anything was attainable. Alchemists enjoyed prestige and support through the centuries, though not for their pursuit of those goals, nor the mystic and philosophical speculation that dominates their literature. Rather it was for their mundane contributions to the “chemical” industries of the day - the invention of gunpowder, ore testing and refining, metalworking, production of ink, dyes, paints, and cosmetics, leather tanning, ceramics and glass manufacture, preparation of extracts and liquors, and so on (It seems that the preparation of aqua vitae, the “water of life”, was a fairly popular “experiment” among European alchemists). Once alchemy began to be practiced in Medieval Europe, it spawned several great philosophers who were also alchemist. One such was Roger Bacon (1214-1294 A.D.), whose alchemical discoveries and works were used by alchemists from the 15th to 19th centuries. Some of his findings showed how it was that minerals and other natural elements have an affect upon the body. However, after a brief period of acceptance among those of the clergy, alchemy came under fire once again since it sought immortality of the body and physical life on earth, as opposed to the Church’s view that the goal of man was life in heaven. So in the 14th century, once again, alchemy became hidden and controversial after it was banned by the Roman Catholic Church due to fears of being demonic.

### Spread to the Western World

As Europe continued to embrace alchemy, it reached its golden age during the Renaissance, when many kings, as well as common folk saw the alchemist quest for gold as a

pathway to quick wealth. Due to this upsurge of interest in the sacred art of alchemy, many opportunistic charlatans took advantage of people’s desire for both wealth and metaphysical enlightenment that alchemy held. It was during this time throughout the Renaissance period, that the art of alchemy spread across the western world.

What we now call chemistry began in the fiery cauldrons of mystics and sorcerers seeking not to make a better world through science, but rather to make themselves richer through magic formulas and con games. But among these early magicians, frauds, and con artists were a few far-seeing alchemists who, through rigorous experimentation, transformed mysticism into science.

Of course, alchemy promised great wealth to anyone who figured out how to transmute other metals into gold. It might seem a waste that so many alchemists devoted their lives to that, but the spin-off was enormous.

By trying to understand transmutation, they learned about practical metallurgy, about extracting metals from ores, and about chemical reaction. Their results were reported in terms alien to our ears, but the late medieval chemists were surprisingly able metallurgists.

Late 17th-century chemists saw matter as made up of three elements, or “earths,” as they were called: Vitreous earth gave solidity to matter; fluid earth gave it liquidity; and fatty earth, which was later called phlogiston, gave it combustibility. These were the old Aristotelian elements of earth, water, and fire – without air! Air was thought to be inert and not a part of other materials.

All the while, a more and more analytical science was being built on these ideas. The alchemical view of matter didn’t give way to an atomic theory until less than two hundred years ago. And then it didn’t give way completely. When people realized that heat wasn’t a part of matter, they replaced phlogiston with caloric. Caloric was another Aristotelian substance that occupied all matter and flowed from hot bodies to cold ones. Even after the atomic theory of matter replaced the various earths, caloric was still being used to describe heat when my grandfather was a little boy.

By the 18th century the building blocks of nature, the elements of which all matter is composed, were on the verge of being discovery. Initially, it was not easy to determine whether a substance really was an element. Was water just water, plain and simple? Or could it be the sum of other (unknown and maybe unknowable) parts? And if water was made up of other substances, how could it be broken down into discreet, fundamental, and measurable components?

Scientific historians generally credit the great 18th century French chemist Antoine Lavoisier with addressing these fundamental questions and ultimately modernizing the field of chemistry. Through his meticulous and precise work this chaotic new field of scientific inquiry was given order. Exacting by nature, Lavoisier painstakingly set about performing experiments that would provide lasting and verifiable proofs of various chemical theories. Unfortunately, the outspoken Lavoisier eventually lost his head in the Terror, but others would follow his lead, carefully examining, measuring, and recording their findings.



As the field slowly progressed, another pioneer was to emerge almost 100 years later. Dimitri Mendeleev, an eccentric genius who cut his flowing hair and beard but once a year, sought to answer the most pressing questions that remained to chemists: Why did some elements have properties that resembled those of others? Were there certain natural groups of elements? And, if so, how many, and what elements fit into them? It was Mendeleev who finally addressed all these issues when he constructed the first Periodic Table in the late 1800s.

But between and after Lavoisier and Mendeleev were a host of other colorful, brilliant scientists who made their mark on the field of chemistry. Today, alchemy is seen for its contribution to the field of modern chemistry. Indeed, modern chemistry has its roots in the science of alchemy. Those who studied alchemy for its spiritual and metaphysical benefits sought the betterment of man and so, indeed it is fitting that the alchemists' skills were later applied to the field of medicine and chemistry. Through the labor of alchemists in times past, we have been able to learn about how various chemical compounds work and interact. This enabled us to be able to make forward strides in the field of chemistry.

Though alchemy has had a wide and varied history, it remains one of the useful learning tools for mankind. Through it we have uncovered concepts, ideas and discoveries that would have otherwise been left unknown.

Practices of Alchemy were common in ancient Egypt where customs regarding life after death influenced study and development of rudimentary chemistry. Efforts to preserve bodies and organs gave rise to experimentation with mixing fluids and different substances until the right combinations achieved the desired effect. These practices were linked with spiritual tradition, specifically the Egyptian God Tehuti', and the existence of a mysterious artefact known as the Emerald Tablet' that later formed the

cornerstone of a new field of study and mysticism– the Hermetic movement. This movement of spiritual traditions predating Christianity is considered the foundation upon which the practices of alchemy grew into a major field of study.

The existence of Emerald Tablet was not widely known until medieval times when it began to circulate throughout the alchemical community as a result of interaction with Muslim mystics. The origin of this single piece of green crystal is lost in obscurity, some believe as far back as 10 000 years however around 400AD it was buried to protect it from religious zealots of the time where it remains hidden to this very day. The oldest surviving copies of the Emerald Tablet are Arabic translations and despite the mysterious origins, many scholars believe there was a great significance in messages of the text.

The Emerald Tablet is an artefact of significant spiritual meaning considered as the source of alchemy. For this reason, it was considered forbidden knowledge and condemned for thousands of years by the Egyptian priesthood, medieval churches and even some religious leaders of today. Scholars devoting their entire life in study of these texts believed the text contains secret knowledge of physical, mental and spiritual sciences unprecedented in depth of understanding; indeed the belief is these are clear instructions describing how to achieve personal transformation and acceleration of human evolution. The study of alchemy arose from a belief the Emerald Tablet contained secrets for transforming matter, time and reality.

The study and science of alchemy was therefore born from this mysterious and inspirational artefact. It was common for practitioners and scholars to have a copy of the

inscriptions in their laboratories and libraries. Alchemy is possibly the only common spiritual and scientific system of belief linking traditions of Eastern and Western cultures. Alchemy was (and sometimes still is) ruthlessly suppressed by governments and religious authorities throughout its entire history.

Some of our most advanced fields of study and scientific disciplines owe their very existence to alchemy thanks to the efforts of practitioners and their desire to understand the nature of matter. Egyptian alchemists discovered alloys, dyes, perfumes and jewelry. Early Arabs developed new systems of numbers and began to quantify lengths of time for processes, in other words; the beginnings of modern mathematics. Attempts to transform matter gave us the understanding of matter itself over a period of many hundreds of years in study this is sometimes characterized in descriptions of alchemists and their attempts to transform lead into gold.

Perhaps someday the Emerald Tablet, this mysterious green crystal that influenced so much human history, will be rediscovered and modern science given the opportunity to unravel the secrets locked in this ancient artefact. Imagine our considerable advanced knowledge in the sciences applied to texts the ancients grappled with for thousands of years. What new discoveries might we discern?

Without any doubt, the study and science of alchemy cannot be discounted as one of the most significant contributions to modern fields of study, science, mathematics, spiritualism and culture. The many attempts to repress the practice of alchemy retarded development and perhaps silenced some of history's most brilliant minds. It also true that some of the scientific wonders in our 21st century may not have been possible without the efforts of practitioners and discoveries attributed to alchemy.



### Alchemy Today - The Belief System of the Elements

The Ancients divided the world into four basic principles or “elements” earth, water, fire, and air. That viewpoint has mostly changed with advances of science, but the four elements are still accepted in magic, for they are more closely linked with emotions, the human psyche, and with nature than are modern explanations of the world. These “magical elements” are of some importance in astrology, feng shui, I ching and many other belief systems. Many occultists think of the magical elements as forces, or as qualities of energy; especially within the astral world. Each element has a symbol and color.

In modern-day Wicca and Paganism, there is a good deal of focus on the four elements – Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. A few traditions of Wicca also include a fifth element, which is Spirit or Self. The concept is hardly a new one. A Greek philosopher Empedocles is credited with the cosmogenic theory of these four elements being the root of all existing matter. Unfortunately, much of Empedocles' writing has been lost, but his ideas remain with us today and are widely accepted by most Pagans and Wiccans.

Each of the elements is associated with traits and meanings, as well as with directions on the compass. The following directional associations are for the Northern hemisphere; readers in the Southern hemisphere should use the opposite correspondences.



**EARTH:** Connected to the North, Earth is considered the ultimate feminine element. The Earth is fertile and stable, associated with the Goddess. The planet itself is a ball of life, and as the Wheel of the Year turns, we can watch all the aspects of life take place in the Earth: birth, life, death, and finally rebirth. The Earth is nurturing and stable, solid and firm, full of endurance and strength. In color correspondences, both green and brown connect to the Earth, for fairly obvious reasons! In

Tarot readings, the Earth is related to the suit of Pentacles or Coins. Earth represents the solid state of matter. It manifests stability, permanence and rigidity. In our body, the parts such as bones, teeth, cells and tissue are manifestations of the earth. Earth is considered a stable substance. Some mystics place a small vial or bottle of earth on their altar as a symbolic item. On transition the mystic usually prefers cremation, as fire transforms the body into ash to be returned to the earth from which it came; just as the soul is returned to the Cosmic, our eternal home. If spiritually necessary, the soul will return in a new body for another cycle of life on earth (reincarnation). Of course, we realize that earth as mentioned above, is metaphysical. By scientific chemical and atomic analysis, earth is made up of almost one hundred atomic elements; mystically, the classification of earth is an “element” of Life.



**AIR:** The word spirit comes to us virtually unchanged from the Latin: spiritus which means wind, air, and breath. Spirit is given for the Hebrew word: ruach, which is translated many ways including - air, wind and blast. Ruach comes from the root rua - shout. A shout is very like a blast of air. Blast is a good word to describe how Sumerian sages imagined the beginning of creation. According to their legend, the creator puffed air into the primeval water with such force that it lifted

up the sky, leaving behind a sort of giant bubble. Air is the element of the East, connected to the soul and the breath of life. If you're doing a working related to communication, wisdom or the powers of the mind, Air is the element to focus on. Air carries away your troubles, blows away strife, and carries positive thoughts to those who are far away. Air is associated with the colors yellow and white, and connects to the Tarot suit of Swords. Air is the gaseous form of matter which is mobile and dynamic. Within the body, air (oxygen) is the basis for all energy transfer reactions. It is a key element required for fire to burn. Air is existence without form. The wind is the motion of air. The air of the planet has been generated by biological means, largely a process of photosynthesis, where planets take in carbon dioxide and water, oxygen as a by-product. Some mystics have a bottle of air from Egypt and others just consider that the air in the room is sufficient.



**FIRE:** The Ancients were aware of only one way in which light may be produced. That is, by fire. Consequently their words for fire and light were often used interchangeably. The Genesis creation begins with three of Aristotle's four elements - water, earth, and air (wind). God adds (or is) the fourth: Light (i.e. Fire). God is also called “Spirit” and, not surprisingly, both fire and light were known as spirits, in the ancient

lingo. Fire is a purifying, masculine energy, associated with the South, and connected to strong will and energy. Fire both creates and destroys, and symbolizes the fertility of the God. Fire can heal or harm, and can bring about new life or destroy the old and worn. In Tarot, Fire is connected to the Wand suit. For color correspondences, use red and orange for Fire associations. Fire is the power to transform solids into liquids, to gas, and back

again. In other words, it possesses power to transform the state of any substance. Within our bodies, the fire or energy binds the atoms together. It also converts food to fat (stored energy) and muscle. It creates the impulses of nervous reactions, our feeling, and even our thought processes. Fire is considered a form without substance. Mystics always have symbolic fire on their sanctum altar, in the form of candles or in some cases, an urn of fire representing the alchemical fire of transformation. Fire in many ancient cultures and myths has been known to purify the land with the flames of destruction; however, it is also capable of the renewal of life through the warmth and comfort of those very same flames. The element of fire shows up in mythological stories all across the world, often in stories related to the Sun.



**WATER:** Water is a feminine energy and highly connected with the aspects of the Goddess. Used for healing, cleansing, and purification, Water is related to the West, and associated with passion and emotion. In many spiritual paths, including Catholicism, consecrated Water can be found – holy water is just regular water with salt added to it, and usually a blessing or invocation is said above it. In Wiccan covens, such water is used to consecrate the circle and all the tools within it. As you

may expect, water is associated with the color blue, and the Tarot suit of Cup cards. Water characterizes change and represents the liquid state. Water is necessary for the survival of all things. A large part of the human body is made up of water. Our blood, lymph, and other fluids move between our cells and through our vessels, bringing energy, carrying away wastes, regulates temperature, bringing disease fighters, and carrying hormonal information from one area to another. Water is a substance without stability. Mystics have studied the electromagnetic and subtle energy fields of water for many years. Some mystics have a vial, or container of water on their sanctum alters.

**Aether/Either/Aither:** Originally called quintessence by quintessence, is the space in which everything happens. It is the field that is simultaneously the source of all matter and the space in which it exists. Either is only the distances which separate matter. The chief characteristic of either is sound. Here sound represents the entire spectrum of vibration. This space is equally represented by spirit or the will to create transformation. The magic that takes place cannot unfold without the mover to “will” the change in the elements to manifest the desired reaction. In eastern thought it is thought of as the void, the emptiness from which all things can spring forth.

### Symbolism of the Elements

Common symbols are – **Fire:** a triangle pointing up; **Air:** a triangle pointing up and with a horizontal line through the middle of it; **Water:** a triangle pointing down; **Earth:** a triangle pointing down and with a horizontal line through the middle of it.

Colors of the elements are – **Fire** - red; **Air** - yellow or white; **Water** - blue; and **Earth** - brown and/or green. The Eastern tattvic system uses different symbols and colors. The elements are often used in magic ritual.



In East Asia Metal, sometimes associated with earth, is represented by the White Tiger, known as Bái Hui in Chinese, Byakko in Japanese and Baekho in Korean. Earth is represented in the Aztec religion by a house; to the Hindus - a lotus; to the Scythians - a

plough; to the Greeks - a wheel; and in Christian iconography by a bull.

In East Asia fire is represented by the Vermilion Bird known as Zhui Què; in Chinese-Suzaku; and Ju-jak in Korean. In the Aztec religion, fire is represented by a flint; to the Native Americans - a mouse; to the Hindu and Islamic faith - a lightning bolt; to the Scythians - an axe, to the Greeks - an apple-bough; and in Christian iconography - a lion.

In East Asia, water is represented by the Black Tortoise, known as Xuán Wǐ in Chinese, Genbu in Japanese and Hyeon-mu in Korean. In the Aztec religion water is represented by a cane; to the Hindus - a bowl of blood; to the Greeks - a cup; to the Scythians - a bowl; to the Celts - the cauldron of the Dagda, which was always full; and in Christian iconography - by an eagle.

In East Asia, Wood, sometimes seen as the equivalent of air, is represented by the Azure Dragon, known as Quing Lóng in Chinese, Seiryuu in Japanese and Cheong-ryong in Korean.

Aether or Spirit is often represented by a man, a cauldron or the unicorn. Its color can be black or white or sometimes the rainbow.

Magic sees relationships between things. These relationships are called 'correspondences'. Although magical correspondences are not literally equal to one another, you can think of them that way (such as gold equals sun). Tables of these relationships, called 'Correspondence Tables', are available (an important one is Crowley's '777'). Thus one thing or symbol can be used to suggest another. This is important in magic, for the magician may surround himself with as many appropriate correspondences as he can to vividly affect the senses; thus making his magical contact with the inner planes more lucid.

Astrological signs also correspond with the elements. Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are earth signs. Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces are water signs. Aries, Leo and Sagittarius are fire signs. Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius are air signs.



## Elementals

The spirits or beings of the Elements have been known to many cultures, particularly the Greeks and Romans from whom we get our names for them. In Greek gnoma (gnomes) meant knowledge or the knowing ones. Unda (undine) in Latin meant wave, creatures of the waves. The Greek word silphe (sylph) was a butterfly or being with gauzy wings. Salambe (salamander) in Greek described a fireplace; however, the actual being was more like a very small dragon.

The Elemental kingdoms and their rulers are represented in their appropriate quarter of the magical circle by a symbol and/or candle of the correct color. The magician always draws the magical circle sunwise, beginning and ending in the east. When welcoming the Elements, he or she begins with Air in the east. When he or she ends the ritual and dismisses the kingdoms, he or she again begins with the eastern position. Before opening the circle, the

magician returns to the center and dismisses the Element of Spirit.

In magic, the four elements are given special creatures (called elementals) which represent them. Oftentimes in circles, they are called to invoke the elements. They were first classified by Paracelsus (1493-1541)

**Air:** Sylphs - Small, winged creatures similar to faeries.

**Fire:** Salamanders - Fiery dragon lizards who live in flames.

**Water:** Undines - Similar to mermaids. They live in water, are made of water, and have the ability to morph into and out of liquid form.

**Earth:** Gnomes are said to live in the earth and are keepers of gemstones and treasure. They are often depicted like the popular garden gnome statues found in a lot of gardens across the world.

The magical elements are said to be peopled by spirits and mythological entities called elementals or nature spirits. These are grouped into four main categories:

Earth	Water	Fire	Air
Gnome	Undine	Salamander	Angles
Dwarfs	Nymphs	Jin	Faries
Elves	Tritons	Efreeti	Sylph
Brownies	Mermaids	Wil-o-Wisps	Genies
Hobgoblins	Mermen	Drakes	Zephyrs
Leprechauns	Sirens		

Elementals are usually only visible to those with clairvoyant sight and are more likely to be seen at night in the mountains or country away from cities – especially if you are tired or sleepy. Although elementals exist naturally, it is also possible to create one which will exist for a limited time – no elemental has immortality. A created elemental is called an 'artificial elemental'.

**Gnomes** - Spiritual beings who inhabit the spirit realm of the elements. As spirits of energy they are commonly invisible to the average person, only those that possess second sight can see them clearly. However being on the first level of the spirit realm, they are close enough to the physical realm in order to easily inter-react with it. By tradition Gnomes were the protectors of secret treasures hidden in caves beneath the earth. Legends have it that they were reluctant to help and aid humans, but if you were to gain the trust of one, they could prove to be powerful friends. On the other hand, if you were to lose their trust, deceive them or misuse their aid, then all hell could be let loose. In Wicca/Witchcraft Gnomes are called to instill confidence, steadfastness and endurance, but can also be used to bring about gloom, melancholy and despair should that be required. In some old legends Gnomes were ruled over by a king called **Gov** whose followers became known as Goblins. Goblins were wondering mischievous sprites that would attach themselves to households, particularly those containing children. When they moved in, they would help by doing the chores at night and by playing with and disciplining the children, giving them presents when they were good or punishing them when they were bad. When upset the Goblins general good nature could become unpredictable. They would bang pots and pans in the kitchen at night just to keep the household awake, or move furniture about while knocking on walls and doors and snatching bedclothes off sleeping persons, generally becoming a nuisance. You've heard of poltergeist activity? Well this is a type of it. A Poltergeist is generally believed to be the spirit of a departed person or animal, who hasn't for various reasons withdrawn from the physical realm. It can also be an elemental that has been called for a task and for some

reason failed to complete it, hence the haunting. Witches are often called to exorcise haunting by contacting the spirit and persuading it to move on, or if that fails they can contact higher spirits or deities to banish them. Gnomes and Goblins can be called to aid all magic associated with the element Earth as given in the correspondences above.



**Sylphs** - Sylphs are the spiritual beings that inhabit the realm of the element Air. Their activities are manifest in the gatherings of clouds, in the blowing of the wind, the downpour of rain and the formation of snow. They are also responsible for the growth and maturity of all the plant life we see around us. In folklore, Sylphs appeared in many myths and legends. Some tales tell us that if you listened carefully, they would talk to you on the wind as it passed through caves and caverns. It's been suggested that the Muses of Greek mythology were Sylphs who had assumed human form in order to guide humans on a spiritual path. They are associated with the activity of the mind and can influence and inspire human actions. It is generally thought that they are attracted to poets and artists and instills them with visions of spiritual beauty. Sylphs are ruled by a King being known as

**Paralda**, and in form they appear to humans as in the classic image of the fairies. Sylphs can be called to aid in all magic associated with the element Air as shown in the correspondences above.

**Salamanders** - Spiritual beings that inhabit and control the element Fire, and it is through their activities that fire exists. There are many family branches of salamanders each differing in size, appearance and dignity, and in folklore they were ruled over by a magnificent flaming king being called **Djin**. Salamanders are the strongest and most powerful of all the elementals having the ability to extend or diminish their size as needed. They and others of their kind are mischievous spirits, who like children don't fully understand the results of their actions, which can affect the thoughts and actions of people around them. As such, strong control is required when using their aid in ritual or magic. Salamanders are thought to move about most

freely at night and if you are ever lucky enough to see them, they would appear as small balls of light drifting across the air and water. Old-time sailors often saw them investigating the sails of their ships while sailing



at sea, and the term "St. Elmo's Fire" was coined to refer to such phenomenon. On land they are mostly perceived as small lizard-like flames about a foot or more in length. When used in magic, Salamanders can have a profound effect upon human nature. Linked through the heat with which we maintain our bodily temperatures, they can influence our emotions and general temperament. When someone is called a hothead, or is referred to as hot-blooded, these are terms referring to their elemental nature.

**Undines** - Spiritual beings that inhabit the spirit realm of the element Water. They not only exist in the water itself, but also in substances of humidity and all other liquids. They appear to humans as beautiful water nymphs or the classic mermaids of myths and legends which tell of them being seen gracefully riding the waves of the ocean shimmering and shining with all the colors of the sea. They are also said to frequent marshlands, rocky pools, springs, streams and wells. They control the forces of nature in relation to plant and marine life as well as the tides and motions of water. In some cultures undines inhabited waterfalls, while others live in rivers and lakes, every fountain had its nymph, and every ocean its oceanides (daughters of **Oceanus**, the Titan ruler of the sea before **Poseidon**). In folklore the ruler of the undines is a being called **Necksa** whom they love, serve, and honor unceasingly. Undines are emotional beings, very friendly and open to being of service to humans, but care must be taken when working with undines for they can have a strong influence upon a person's emotional well-being. The smaller undines were often portrayed as tiny winged beings that people have mistakenly called fairies. Seen near flowers and plants that grow in watery areas, they had gossamer wings and shining clothing.



Some undine's closely resembled people in appearance and size, they lived in coral caves under the ocean or on the shores of lakes and banks of rivers. Undines work with the vital essences, the liquids of plants, animals, and human beings and are present in everything containing water. Undines can be called to aid in all magic associated with the element Water.

### Elemental Dragons

"Dragon" is a Greek word (*drákōn*), but the Greeks may only have been thinking of snakes. Mediaeval dragons, which give us the images of dragons typical in the European tradition, may actually have come from China, brought with steppe migrants like the Huns and Alans. Chinese dragons in popular religion tended to be associated with water, rivers, rain, etc. Fire breathing seems to be peculiar to European dragons, with the fire derived from images of Hell. In the association with the elements, however, the archetypal Chinese dragon is associated with the East, and with the element Wood. The color that goes with this can be read as either blue or green, so we alternatively hear of the Blue or the Green Dragon. But there are also Chinese Imperial dragons, where the Imperial color is yellow or gold. All in all, a fan of dragons begins to yearn for dragons more systematically matched to the elements and the colors. A Blue Dragon, using the colors from



Element Theory, sounds more like water. A Red Dragon certainly goes with fire. A Yellow Dragon goes with air, and a Green Dragon with earth.

Chinese river dragons lived, of course, in rivers. A Rain Dragon, like European fire-breathing dragons, can be imagined flying in the sky. An earth dragon is something else. In John Boorman's movie Excalibur [1981], Merlin seems to be saying that the whole world rests on a great dragon, which is responsible for creation. Merlin's "charm of making" draws out the "dragon's breath." This is very evocative. Merlin's dragon is also pretty much invisible, which we would expect for a dragon under the earth. It is disturbed, throwing Merlin off balance, when Excalibur is thrust into the earth by Arthur. To complete the image, fire dragons and water dragons can be imagined linking sky and earth, since volcanoes definitely contain fire, but erupt into the air, while water dragons, although a lot of water is low lying, must be in the air also as rain. Air dragons can be seen in the wind.

In East Asia, Wood, sometimes seen as the equivalent of air, is represented by the Azure Dragon, known as Quing Lóng in Chinese, Seiryuu in Japanese and Cheong-ryong, Hanja in Korean.

A Red Dragon occurs in the Bible, in the Book of Revelations: (Revelations 12:3) And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon [drákōn pyrros mégas], having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. This Red Dragon is Satan, and we have the account of the revolt of the angels and the casting of Satan out of Heaven, later elaborated by Milton in Paradise Lost.

### Wiccan Elemental Symbolism

The Element of Air governs the eastern quarter. Its ruler is **Paralda** who oversees the Sylphs, Zephyrs, and Nature spirits or fairies. Its color is pure yellow; it is considered warm and moist. The positive associations of Air are: sunrise, Spring, incense, the wand, clouds, breezes, breath, optimism, joy, intelligence, mental quickness, any kind of helpful air. Negative associations are: frivolity, gossip, fickleness, inattention, bragging, forgetfulness, wind storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, destructive air in any form. Air is represented in the Aztec religion by a rabbit; to the Scythians, a yoke; to the Hindus and Greeks, a sword; and in Christian iconography, as Man.

The Element of Fire governs the southern quarter. Its ruler is **Djin** (dee-yin) who oversees the Salamanders, Firedrakes, and the little ones of the sunbeams. Its color is pure red; it is considered warm and dry. The positive associations of Fire are: noon, Summer, the dagger and sword, candles, any kind of helpful fire, the Sun, the stars, the blood, enthusiasm activity, courage, daring, willpower, leadership. Negative associations are: hate, jealousy, fear, anger, war, ego, conflicts, lightning, volcanoes, harmful fire of any kind.

The Element of Water governs the western quarter. Its ruler is **Niksa** who oversees the Nymphs, Undines, Mer-people, and the little ones of the springs, lakes, ponds, and rivers. Its color is pure blue; it is cold and moist. The positive associations of Water are: sunset, Pall, the chalice and cauldron, any form of helpful water, compassion, peacefulness, forgiveness, love, intuition. Negative associations are: floods, rain storms, whirlpools, any kind of harmful water, laziness, indifference, instability, lack of emotional control, insecurity.

The Element of Earth rules the northern quarter. Its ruler is **Ghob**, sometimes called **Ghom** or **Gob**, who oversees the gnomes and dwarfs and the little ones of the moonbeams. Its color is clear dark green; it is cold and dry. Positive associations are: midnight, Winter, the pentacle, ritual salt, gemstones, mountains, caves, soil, respect, endurance, responsibility, stability, thoroughness, purpose in life. Negative associations are: rigidity, unwillingness to change or see another side to a problem, stubbornness, lack of conscience, vacillation, earthquakes, slides.

The Fifth Element, Spirit (or Nyu to the Druids), dominates the center of the circle, thus balancing all the other Elements. Through invocation of the gods, or Spirit, we are able to blend Elements bringing forth the desired manifestation.

To the Ancients, elementals were the physical explanation of the universe. However, some contemporary occultists see them only as symbols for forces and otherwise not 'real' at all. Another word sometimes used for elemental is 'familiar' (usually in medieval witchcraft); the term is ambiguous, as it might merely be an ordinary household pet such as a dog or cat.

### Eastern System of the Elements - Wu Xing

The Chinese elements come early, and their development in Chinese philosophy cannot be followed as can the development of the Greek and Indian elements. The system of five elements and classifying things by fives is already evident in Classics like the Tao Te Ching and the Shu Ching (the Book of History), both of uncertain date and authorship. Later such classifications are expanded almost without limit (when Buddhism arrives from India with its own five elements, it adds its own system of fives). The first individual known to have written about the five elements was Tsou Yen, of the Yin-Yang or "Cosmologist" School, who lived in the third century B.C. But even with him, the original texts are lost, and all we know is what the Han historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien (Sima Qian) says about him in the Historical Records of the first great Chinese dynastic history.

In traditional Chinese philosophy, natural phenomena can be classified into the Wu Xing, Five Elements are: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. These elements were used for describing interactions and relationships between phenomena. In traditional Chinese medicine the five phases are the five basic elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, water in their motion and change. It is the more appropriate way of translating Wu Xing – literally, "five goings". Traditional Taijiquan schools relate them to footwork and refer to them as five "steps". The original foundation is based on the concept of the Five Cardinal Points.

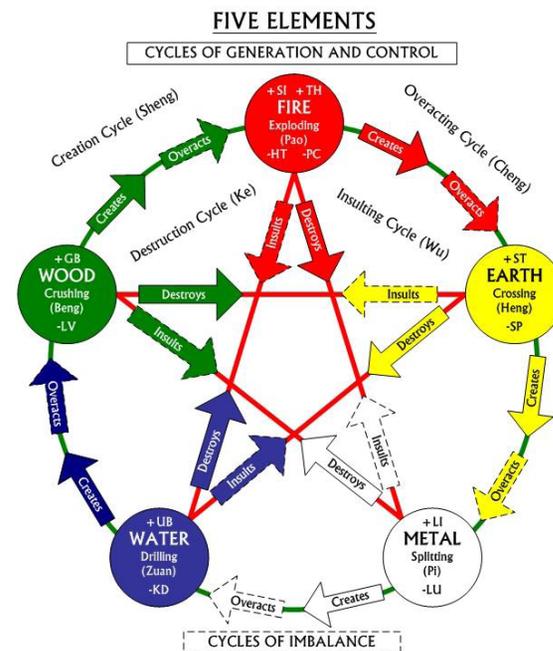
The doctrine of five phases describes two Cycles of Balance, a generating or creation cycle and an overcoming or destruction cycle of interactions between the phases.

#### Generating

- Wood feeds Fire;
- Fire creates Earth (ash);
- Earth bears Metal;
- Metal collects Water and
- Water nourishes Wood.

#### Overcoming

- wood parts earth;
- earth absorbs water;
- water quenches fire;
- fire melts metal and
- metal chops wood



### Eastern Elemental Classifications:

Element:	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Color:	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Blue
Direction:	East	South	Center	West	North
Planet:	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Yin Organ:	Liver	Heart	Pancreas	Lung	Kidney
Yang organ:	Gall bladder	Intestine	Stomach	L.Intestine	Bladder
Emotion:	Delight	Joy	Desire	Ange	Sorrow
Finger:	Index	Middle	Thumb	Ring	Little
Body Sense:	Eye	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
Sense:	Sight	Speech	Taste	Smell	Hearing
Taste:	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Acrid	Salty
Creature:	Blue Dragon	Bird	Yellow Qirin	White Tiger	Tortoise
Livestock:	Dog	Sheep	Cattle	Chicken	Pig
Fruit:	Plum	Apricot	Dates	Peach	Chestnut
Grain:	Wheat	Beans	Rice	Hemp	Millet
Season:	Spring	Summer	Change	Autumn	Winter
Life:	Birth	Youth	Adulthood	Old age	Death

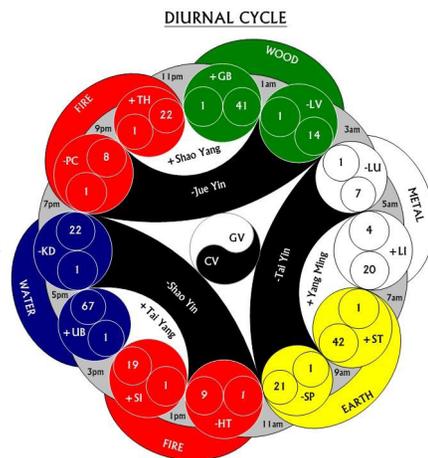
The elements have also been correlated to the eight trigrams of the I Ching:

Element:	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
I Ching	Wind, thunder	Fire	Earth, mountain	Sky, lake	Water
Trigrams	:	:	:::	::	:

### Chinese Medicine and Cosmology

According to Chinese medical theory, each organ is associated with one of the Five Phases. It is believed to be more efficacious to treat an organ during a particular time period appropriate to it. The citation order of the Five Phases, i.e., the order in which they are cited in the Bo Hu Tong and other Han dynasty texts, is Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. The organs are most effectively treated, according to theory, in the following four-hour periods throughout the day, beginning with the 3 a.m. to 7 a. m. period: Metal organs, Earth organs, Fire1 organs, Water organs, Fire2 (the “non-empirical” Pericardium and Triple Burner organs), and Wood organs, which is the reverse of the citation order (plus an extra use of Fire and the non-empirical organs to take care of the sixth four-hour period of the day). This is called the Diurnal cycle. These two orders are further related to the sequence of the planets going outward from the sun (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, or Water, Metal, Fire, Wood, and Earth) by a star diagram.

The doctrine of five phases was employed in many fields of early Chinese philosophy, including seemingly disparate fields such as music, traditional Chinese medicine, military strategy and martial arts.



### Seichem

Seichem is a healing energy composed of all the elements – Earth, Water, Fire and Air. The Seichem energy has been brought into mainstream energy healing by the American Energy Master Kathleen Milner. Kathleen was initiated into this energy by Lord Buddha and then undertook further work with the energy and developed a teaching structure around it so that the full essence of Seichem could be worked with and passed on to students. This is a very good all round healing energy working on both physical and energy bodies all the way up to soul level. The Earth element constituent of this energy supports healing in the physical body in particular, whilst the other elemental constituents are particularly good at supporting healing in our energy bodies. Kathleen calls the Water element constituent of Seichem Sophi-El, and it helps to dissolve away or to lift emotional debris or stagnant emotional energy from a person’s energy field. She calls the Fire element constituent Sakara, and it helps to burn through stagnant energy. The Air element constituent AngelicLight assist with mental clearing. Overall, Seichem often feels like a lively bubbly energy when being received and can be felt running through the physical and energy bodies as a stream of energy. However, a person receiving a Seichem treatment might feel very cold if a lot of stagnant emotional energy is being lifted away by the Sophi-El , or might feel very hot if the Sakara is burning its way through something, or might feel something like a cool breeze if the AngelicLight is doing a lot of clearing. Additionally, the AngelicLight aspect is linked to the realms of the angels. An experienced Seichem Master will be able to raise his/her energy vibration rate and that of the energy field of somebody receiving Seichem healing to a level where the healing angels may be called in to assist with the healing.

### Music

Traditional music in China is played on solo instruments or in small ensembles of plucked and bowed stringed instruments, flutes, and various cymbals, gongs, and drums. The scale has five notes. Bamboo pipes and qin are among the oldest known musical instruments from China; instruments are traditionally divided into categories based on their material of composition: skin, gourd, bamboo, wood, silk, earth/clay, metal and stone. Chinese orchestras traditionally consist of bowed strings, woodwinds, plucked strings and percussion. There is a chinese tuning system close to the ancient Greek tuning of Pythagoras.

In modern Western music, various seven note or five note scales (e.g., the major scale) are defined by selecting seven or five frequencies from the set of twelve semi-tones in the Equal tempered tuning. All western music tuning is based upon Pythagorean mathematics using early his perfect solid teachings which shares some philosophy with elemental teachings.

### Martial Arts

Xingyiquan uses the five elements to metaphorically represent five different states of combat.

Element	Fist	Description
Wood	Crushing	Arrows constantly exploding forward.
Fire	Pounding	Exploding outward like a cannon while blocking.
Earth	Crossing	Crossing across the line of attack while turning over.
Metal	Splitting	Like an axe chopping up and over.
Water	Drilling	Drilling forward horizontally like a geyser.

## Taoism

In Taoism there is a similar system of elements, which includes Metal and Wood, but excludes Air, which is replaced with the non-element qi, which is a force or energy rather than an element. In Chinese philosophy the Universe consists of Heaven and Earth, Heaven being made of qi and Earth being made of the five elements. The five major planets are associated with and named after the elements: Venus is Metal, Jupiter is Wood, Mercury is Water, Mars is Fire, and Saturn is Earth. Additionally, the Moon represents Yin, and the Sun represents Yang. Yin, Yang, and the five elements are recurring themes in the I Ching, the oldest of Chinese classical texts which describes an ancient system of cosmology and philosophy.

## Yin Yang

Chinese philosophy and acupuncture talk of yin yang. This is the idea of polarity, or opposite pairs, as shown:



The list could go on. In Chinese literature it is quite long. Some occultists suggest everything can be similarly arranged into related opposite pairs.

## Classical elements in Hinduism - Tattva

The Pancha Mahabhuta, or “five great elements”, of Hinduism are Prithvi or Bhumi (Earth), Ap or Jala (Water), Agni or Tejas (Fire), Vayu or Pavan (Air or Wind), and Akasha (Aether). Hindus believe that God used Akasha to create the other four traditional elements, and that in it the Akashic records, the knowledge of all human experience, are imprinted.

## Classical elements in Bön

In Bön, the five elemental processes of: earth, water, fire, air and space are the essential stuff of all existent phenomena or aggregates (ref. Skandha). The elemental processes form the basis of the calendar, astrology, medicine, psychology and are the foundation of the spiritual traditions of shamanism, tantra and Dzogchen.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (2002: p.1) comprehensively states:

“...physical properties are assigned to the elements: earth is solidity; water is cohesion; fire is temperature; air is motion; and space is the spatial dimension that accommodates the other four active elements. In addition, the elements are correlated to different emotions, temperaments, directions, colors, tastes, body types, illnesses, thinking styles, and character. From the five elements arise the five senses and the five fields of sensual experience; the five negative emotions and the five wisdoms; and the five extensions of the body. They are the five primary pranas or vital energies. They are the constituents of every physical, sensual, mental, and spiritual phenomenon.”

The names of the elements are analogous to categorized experiential sensations of the natural world. The names are symbolic and key to their inherent qualities and/or modes of action by analogy. In Bön the elemental processes are fundamental metaphors for working with external, internal and secret energetic forces. All five elemental processes in their essential purity are inherent in the mindstream and link us to primordial energy. As Herbert V. Günther (1996: pp. 115-116) rather unfathomably states:

“Thus, bearing in mind that thought struggles incessantly against the treachery of language and that what we observe and describe is the observer himself [sic.], we may nonetheless proceed to investigate the successive phases in our becoming human beings. Throughout these phases, the experience of ourselves as an intensity (imaged and felt as a “god”, lha) setting up its own spatiality (imaged and felt as a “house” khang) is present in various intensities of illumination that occur within ourselves as a “temple.” A corollary of this Erlebnis is its light character manifesting itself in various “frequencies” or colors. This is to say, since we are beings of light we display this light in a multiplicity of nuances.”

## Classical elements in early Buddhism

In the Pali literature, the mahabhuta (“great elements”) or catudhatu (“four elements”) are earth, water, fire and air. In early Buddhism, the Four Elements are a basis for understanding suffering and for liberating oneself from suffering.

The Buddha’s teaching regarding the four elements is to be understood as the base of all observation of real sensations rather than as a philosophy. Perhaps the word ‘property’ has a better connotation now that the word element is used in modern chemistry. The four properties are cohesion (water), solidity or inertia (earth), expansion or vibration (air) and heat or calorific content (fire). He taught that all mind and matter is ultimately composed of eight types of ‘kalapas’ of which the four elements are primary and a secondary group of four are color, smell, taste, and nutriment which are derivative from the four primaries.

The Buddha’s teaching of the four elements does predate Greek teaching of the same four elements. This is possibly explained by the fact that he sent out 60 arahants to the known world to spread his teaching.

## Japanese Elements

Japanese traditions use a set of elements called the go dai, literally “five great”. These five are earth, water, fire, wind, and void. These came from Buddhist beliefs; the classical Chinese elements, go gyō, are also prominent in Japanese culture, especially to the influential Neo-Confucianists during the Edo period.

Fire: represented things that destroyed.

Water: represented things that were liquid.

Earth: represented things that were solid.

Air: represented things that moved.

Void: represented things not of our every day life.

## Elements of New Zealand

Earth, Water, Wind/Air, Flora and Fire work together respectively. In native Māori tradition, Earth makes water, water makes flora, flora makes air, air makes fire. Water and Fire are considered opposites, as are Air and Earth, where Flora is neutral. Each element had two countenances:

Earth is warm and dry.

Air is cool and moist.

Water is cold and wet.  
Fire is hot and dry.  
Flora is lukewarm and moist.

Earth was said to cause earthquakes, Water to cause tsunamis and floods, Wind to cause typhoons, and Fire to cause volcanos and fire storms. Flora was the element of serenity, as there was no natural disaster that occurred with flora.

### Astrology and the Classical Elements

Astrology has used the concept of classical elements from antiquity up until the present. Most modern astrologers use the four classical elements extensively, and indeed it is still viewed as a critical part of interpreting the astrological chart. In eastern astrology, the five elements of earth, water, wood, metal and fire are key to the numistical understanding of a persons birth sign.

### Tarot divination and the classical elements

In divinatory tarot, the suits of cups, swords, wands (batons) and pentacles (coins) are said to correspond to water, air, fire, and earth respectively. These correspond in the modern deck of playing cards to hearts, spades, clubs, and diamonds.

A fundamental starting point for any serious student of the Tarot is to become intimately familiar with the essence of each of the four suits of the Minor Arcana: Wands, Cups, Swords and Coins. Like regular playing cards with four full houses from Ace to King, the tarot also provides four different sets of cards, each with its own unique nuance and meaning. To fully understand the differences between the Ace of Wands and the Ace of Coins, the reader needs to discern the essence of the suit that a particular card belongs to, along with its individual meaning, for instance, the Ace within the suit of Wands.

The Minor Arcana cards represent the people, everyday situations and events along the Path of your Life. These complement the energy represented by the Major Arcana, which shows the actual life journey. The four suits also correspond to the many systems of four devised by people over the ages: the four directions or winds (north, south, east, west); the four elements (fire, water, air, earth); the four seasons; the four worlds of the Kaballah; the four Humors (yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, blood); and the four Jungian archetypical functions of the mind (thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition).



**Wands:** The suit of Wands corresponds to the South direction or wind; the Fire element and the color, Red; the Summer season; the Divine world of the Kaballah; the yellow bile humor, and the Jungian function of intuition.

When you think of the Wand cards, think of fire. You may actually see little images of burning objects on any of the Wand cards. Couple this with images of passion and desire, dynamic force, ambitions, creativity, vitality, self-development, growth, and perception. The Wands represent forward future-oriented energy that is active and inventive. Drawing any of the Wand cards introduces possibility and movement in the reading. Of course, the image provided by any card in the Tarot has both positive and negative aspects. The negative associated with the Wands is the scorching side of the fire - restlessness, anger, violence,

pride, mischief, disruption and willfulness. In astrological terms, the Wands are associated with the signs of Aries, Leo and Sagittarius.

The suit of Wands is associated with careers, business enterprises and work in general. If a reading brings up several wands, it points to career or work-related matters, especially organizational and creative aspects. If you are thinking about starting a new business or launch a new career, these are extremely informative cards to draw in a spread. If coupled favorably with some Coin cards, the new venture will be profitable. Often the wands also indicate the beginning stages of identifying and planning a new course for one's life, usually related to self-development and accomplishment.



**Cups:** The suit of Cups corresponds to the West direction or wind; the Water element and the color, Blue; the Autumn (Summer to some) season; the Binah or Creative world of the Kaballah; the feminine yin energy; lunar and tidal cycles; and the Jungian function of feelings. It is also associated with the astrological signs of Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces. It has been correlated to the Holy Grail chalice, the stone Cup of Soma, Isis' Pomegranate Cup, the Persian Cup of Jamshid, the Blood Mysteries, and to the Christian Cup of Communion. It holds the deepness, the well of memory, the record of our existence. It also reflects artistic expression and a dallying in the arts in general, whether they be visual, literary, musical or physical.

Various tarot scholars have called the suit of Cups by other names. This can be confusing to the new tarot initiate, but openness to alternative perceptions and flexibility is good for the soul and imperative for the truly accurate tarot reader. If you read or hear someone talking about the suit of Cauldrons, Vessels, Goblets, Chalices, or Hearts - remember, that what they really mean, is the suit of Cups.

When you think of the Cup cards, think of the deep mysterious essence of water - an essential element of life itself. You will often see little images of water and flowing objects on any of the Cup cards. Cups represent emotions, psychic and intuitive arts, fantasy and illusion, fertility, emotions, spirituality, sacred sexuality, grace and serenity. They are the dreamy aspect of the Minor Arcana, a delightful addition to any spread. These cards even stimulate your ability to visualize and practice clairvoyance! Of course, every tarot card has a down side, if pulled in an inverse position from the deck. The general negative aspects of the Cup suit is the tendency towards moodiness, excessive appetites and susceptibility to addictions. All of the emotions that drag us down - self pity, sadness, melancholia, anger, rage, jealousy, envy, callousness, and so forth can all be found in the inverse cup cards. They can also represent someone or something that drains your psychic energy. For instance, if one draws the Queen of Cups in an upright position, the card means: a sensitive, receptive and affectionate woman. Someone who is in close touch with her inner self, who can demonstrate great perceptiveness, intuition and will power when needed. If a man draws this card, it reminds him to connect with the "feminine" side of his inner self, and to open himself to life's whole spectrum of emotions. On the other hand, if one draws the Queen of Cups in an inverse position, the card means: a woman who appears to be similar to the woman described above, but only superficially. Underneath, she shows fickleness, vanity, untrustworthiness, and is capricious and unreliable. She can be the source of great problems to anyone who allows her into their confidence. It is important to note the position of the card - upright or inverse - as you do a reading. It can make all the difference in the true meaning of the card cluster being examined.

**Swords:** The suit of Swords corresponds to the East direction or wind; the Air element; the Spring season; the Yetsirah or Formative World of the Kaballah; The letter Vah (Stabilisation of Form) of the Tetragrammaton; the male yang energy; the suit of Spades; the Holy Word and the Jungian function of thinking. It is also associated with the astrological signs of Gemini, Libra and Aquarius. This suit represents our intellectual and rational faculties, the mental aspects and communicative of our lives. Positive characteristics associated with this suit include strength, authority, courage, and ambition and a desire and opportunity to travel. Above all, Swords indicate a desire to seek the truth and it is this desire to call a “spade a spade” that gives rise to the conflict aspect of this suit. Negative connotations include conflict, animosity, pain, anger and aggression.



Various tarot scholars have called the suit of Swords by other names. This can be confusing to the new tarot initiate, but by now you are probably becoming aware that there are different schools of thought regarding the tarot, hence people from around the globe have chosen to give different names to significant tools, including the tarot cards. If you read or hear someone talking about the suit of Blades, Daggers, Knives or Spades - remember, that what they really mean, is the suit of Swords.

Traditionally, a predominance of Swords in a spread have signalled arguments, illness, and even death. Yet because they represent intangible elements of the mind rather than hard facts, Sword majorities should be interpreted with great care. Our lives today are varied and multi-faceted - we often have a lot on our minds. Several swords on the table do not always indicate problems ahead. They may just as well signal the confusion and multiple layers of mental concern instead.

They give us an accurate reflection of what is going on inside of our heads in regards to the questions or issues being investigated during the reading. Of course, they MAY signal a warning of some impending event, but it is important to really tune into the cards and the querant before jumping to conclusions.

Since the Sword is associated with the Mind and Truth, it can be represented by the popular image of the balance or scales. Think of the blind-folded lady holding the scales of Justice when you think of the swords. This balance is not always easy to find or to swallow once we realize the truth about ourselves or a situation. Truth can be double edged just like the sharp and penetrating sword. It can signify miscommunication, entanglements with the legal system, a need for surgery or immediate health care, and struggles or conflict both inward and out. If cards are drawn in an inverse pattern they can also signify the negative side of people: the tendency to be arrogant, aloof, judgemental, condescending, critical, detached, insensitive, intolerant, distant and controlling. The Swords represent our minds and all of the faculties inherent in them. This includes our rational thought, our ability to learn and remember, our consciousness and awareness and our perceptions. The suit points to our abilities to consider, to contrast and compare, to weigh the evidence, and to make a decision. It signifies our insights and awareness, our ability to inquire, analyze, synthesize and investigate. It also represents legal arrangements: contracts, leases, agreements, purchase documents and the like. Likewise, it can symbolize the legal, political and judicial systems - the courts, the laws at every level and the governance dominating one's environment. Figuring out how and what the drawn sword cards mean takes work but once you get a handle on the mental flavor of this card, meaning will intuitively come.



**Coins:** The suit of Coins corresponds to the North direction or wind; the Earth element; the Winter season; the Assiah or Manifest World of the Kaballah; the Malkuth Kingdom; The letter Heh (Completion of Energy into Form) of the Tetragrammaton; the female yin energy; the suit of Diamonds; The Path of Lakshmi and the Jungian function of sensation. It is also associated with the astrological signs of Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn. This suit represents the material aspects of our lives - our finances and possessions, accomplishments, manifestations, business, trade, land, home, our level of abundance. The Coins also represent our bodies, level of vitality, connection to the Earth and Nature, and our genetic heredity. Positive characteristics associated with this suit include our status in society, our personal values and our inner sense of self-worth. The Coins speak of our feelings of safety, our ability to relax and not fret or worry - to create, enjoy beauty and a zest for life. They also represent our strengths, talents, rewards for effort well-spent, and social/family support networks. Negative connotations include material loss, low self-esteem, pessimism, materialism, compromised values, stubbornness, inflexibility, and the practical concerns that make us worry.

Like the other suits, various tarot scholars have called the suit of Coins by other names. Often a symbol of either a large gold coin or a golden pentacle will adorn the 14 cards in this suit. If you read or hear someone talking about the suit of Pentacles, Discs, Cash, Gold, or Diamonds - remember, that what they really mean, is the suit of Coins.

A predominance of Coins in a spread signals attention on your manifestations in life - how you manifest through intention, planning and action to shape your dreams into reality. They speak of your ability to apply your talents, knowledge and physical abilities and build your own personal little empire. The coins represent abundance on all different levels. Not just your bank account, but also your socio-economic status, the home you are able to obtain, the lifestyle you are able to lead, the work environment that you enjoy (or not!). They gauge your climb up the proverbial ladder of life and indicate how well you hit the mark set by your own inner self. Every card has its down-side, and the Coins are no exception. For instance, the Ace of Coins indicates new financial and security beginnings and gain. An inverse Ace of Coins warns about becoming too wrapped up in the attainment of wealth and possessions - to reject the “keeping up with the Jones” approach to life. Greed, possessiveness and poor spiritual awareness are also indicated by this reversed card. It warns of discontent, anxiety and insecurity. When coins emerge in a reading, they point to the subtle yet powerful energy that helps us succeed in the third material dimension we call physical reality. Depending on the card drawn, they suggest ways to apply the will and intent to truly follow one's life path in a meaningful and prosperous way. Even the inverse cards provide guidance and warning on what to avoid in order to preserve our sense of security and safety in the world. This is of primary importance if we are to feel comfortable and motivated to try, to work hard, to “go for the gold” in whatever enterprise we choose to apply ourselves. No matter what the focus of the reading is: whether we have questions regarding romance, love, work, family, travel, career - the suit of coins can indicate how we should apply our personal power to achieve the goal, the intent of our focus. When learning to read the tarot cards, this is important to keep in mind., They don't always mean “money” or “coin” per se. They can be more metaphysical than that - and instead point to inner talent or “inner gold” - the power within us to shape our own destiny in a rich and effective way.

## Classical elements in popular culture

The classical elements are often used together thematically in modern fantasy, literature, movies, television shows, and comic books. Typically, a magic wielder has the ability to influence one of the elements, or can use the elements to affect the world around him or her.

## The influences of the Elements on Pagan Beliefs

To a magician, all magic is based on four Elements: Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Ancient occult philosophers and the Druids stated that all life is made of these four Elements; without them life could not exist. Tan or Teine (Fire in the old Celtic language) was considered the most sacred as it is the closest to pure energy.

These four Elements correspond to the four directions of our physical world, the four quarters of the universe, the four winds, and most importantly to the four quarters of the magical circle. Water and Earth are considered female energies; Fire and Air are male.

The Old Gaelic term for the four points of the compass was the Four Airs or Airs. The general definitions of these Elements were originally based on the prevailing winds in Britain.

The four Elements are forces and energies that make up the universe and everything in it. They influence our personalities and magic. They also possess form as well as force. Each Element is known for having certain qualities, natures, moods and magical purposes; each has positive and negative traits. Magical ritual calls to each Elemental kingdom and its ruler to protect its quarter of the circle. Because of this, it is very important to completely understand what each Element is and does.

In Wiccan and ceremonial magic, each Element is associated with a color: east, yellow; south, red; west, blue; north, green. Although the ancient Celts correctly knew the forces and energies of the Elements, the colors for them were different: east - red; south - white; west - gray; north - black. To the Celts, red symbolized the rising Sun; white - noonday; gray - twilight; and black - midnight.

## Feng Shui

Living in harmony with nature has always been the practical necessity and spiritual desire of man. For modern society, Feng Shui acknowledges that our outer environment is a metaphor for our lives. Thus Feng Shui addresses how our living and working environments influence our life's work, health, finances, reputation and relationships

Using the tools of Feng Shui to balance the life supporting elements of water, wood, fire, earth and metal in our homes and workspaces, there is the potential to make improvements in every area of our lives. Sacred Currents acknowledges that in reality, there is no 'inner' and 'outer'. The environment affects the body's condition. The environment 'holds' the vibration of those that have lived and worked there.

Treating the physical and subtle body (that non-corporeal aspect of us that surrounds the physical), with color and acoustical sound, both heals the physical body and its surroundings.

Sacred Currents encourages that which is Divine to flourish by creating a flow of blessings throughout one's environment and health in one's life - through the use of art, science and intuition.

Five Element Theory is basic to the understanding of Feng Shui. In actuality the Five Elements ( water, wood, fire, earth, metal ) function as agents of change to stimulate the healthy flow of "Chi" or life force.

It is intentional that in using this web site, which is graphically based of the Five Elements, you experience the dynamics of Feng Shui.

Throughout the site you will learn about the elements and how to apply them. Sacred Currents Feng Shui Home Accessories are based in the Five Elements.

Working with the Elemental Forces, in all their symbolic forms, is a powerful way to promote harmony, health, and prosperity-the desired outcome of good Feng Shui.

Every object or element present in a space has its own particular energy that it radiates to everyone and everything else in its proximity. This includes large celestial objects like planets, stars etc.—they all emit energy and have influence your life in some way or the other. But did you realize that inanimate objects and elements like metals have energy too and also affect your life?

Feng Shui Considers Elements to Have Energy. Feng Shui is based on a prevailing view in the East: that everything in our environment, whether living or inanimate, is imbued with movement. This is just not a belief but a reality based on the scientific fact that objects and elements are made up of tiny molecules and atoms that vibrate and stay constantly in motion. And since the atoms of these are constantly in motion they are abuzz with an energy that though not seen by the naked eye is able to influence our day-to-day life.

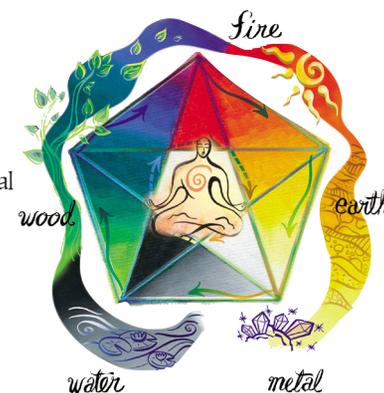
Under the Feng Shui discipline, there are a number of unique tools that assist us with tapping into the invisible energies of these inanimate objects. Feng Shui elements can help us to regain control over our lives and boost our creativity. Through proper Feng Shui practice you can have every single household object or Feng Shui decorating object in your home to emit positive life energy for you.

Chi or the energy an object, person or place has, is very important in Feng Shui. Since Chi relates to whatever is in a space, the flow of Chi is unique to every home and space. You will need to look carefully and thoroughly around your own house to assess where Chi is flowing freely and where it needs to be helped to some degree.

Chi can be broken up into several components. The two main categories are: (1) Yin and Yang, and (2) the Five Elements. Feng Shui utilizes the concepts of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements to help rebalance the competing energies in your home. Yin and yang is representative of the opposite forces. As for the second category of Chi energy, the five elements in Feng Shui are: water, wood, fire, metal, and earth. Like people, each element has its own unique personality that either enables it to "get along with" the other elements, or to "fight against" the other elements if the balance is not right.

The Feng Shui elements have a strong role to play for balancing the Chi of a space or home. In order to implement the spiritual techniques of getting a positive Chi flow in your Feng Shui home, you must be able to see how the concepts of yin and yang, the five elements, and the overall concept of Feng Shui relate to your home and each item in your home—things like your computer, your potted plant, your fish tank, your favorite pillow, your orange vase, and so on—are all made of the Feng Shui elements and have either yin or yang energies contained in them.

Each Feng Shui element has unique properties. Take water, for instance. Water as in trickling fountain, can signal networking, communication, professional opportunities and wealth, while running sink or toilet water that is just wasting water may signal loss of money or poor health. Wood promotes development and creative energies. You can use wooden objects to promote motivation, inspiration and passion without overwhelming your home.



Since metal elements are transmitters or conduct energy, introduction of metal can generate attention and transmit energy to that area. Various types of metals are considered very precious for their associations with health, for example, many people wear copper bracelets. But if one uses too much metal in a space, it may attract too much energy which can be quite destructive. The Earth itself has solidity and permanence to it, and the element of earth appropriately represents these qualities of stability, permanence, and home. This can be necessary in a space that is too full of movement. The element of Fire is considered the most powerful of all five elements and represents energy and passion.

Though the properties of Feng Shui elements individually are important, what is more important is the positive or destructive effect that each element can have on one another. If you have a room that lacks the wood element, for example, only using a wooden Feng Shui decorating would not suffice. You will have to supply some water element as well, because water is what enables wood to grow. Why? Because the compatibility of elements depends upon the Cycles of elements.

The overall Chi (ie. the total balance of Chi that is the sum of all the things in your living space) of the Feng Shui elements can either be harmonious and unified, or it can be riddled with conflict, creating a kind of war. You will know if your home's Chi is conflicted because you will feel uneasy, anxious, lethargic, unsatisfied, depressed, nervous, worried, sad, selfish, jealous, angry, frightened or empty.

When you attain "ideal" Chi, the balance and harmony to your life will return. There are many different ways to achieve that optimal Chi, and it is different for everyone. It will soothe your nerves without depriving you of much-needed excitement and stimulation.

Energy is not solid or concrete; it is fluid and transferable, and that goes for all objects and people, too. Something that is yin can become more yang. Something that is yang today can turn around to become more yin tomorrow.

Both yin and yang are essential. Yang energy is essential because it helps you stay motivated and gives you the push you need to get things done. But too much yang energy can drive you nuts! It can make you feel chaotic, frenzied and over-stimulated. It can make you feel too passionate, so that you can never just sit back and relax. Feng Shui elements have the power to balance the Yin and Yang energies of a space.

## Gods of the Elements and Alchemy

**Agni** (Hindu) - God of Fire. A major god in the myths and gods of India and Classical Hindu Mythology. The stories and myths surrounding Agni are fascinating and contradictory. Fire God Agni is worshipped in three forms; fire on earth, lightning and the sun. Agni is a Hindu and Vedic deity. The word agni is Sanskrit for "fire" (noun), cognate with Latin ignis (the root of English ignite). Agni is one of the most important Vedic gods. He is the god of fire, the messenger of the gods, the acceptor of sacrifice. The sacrifices made to Agni go to the deities because Agni is a messenger from and to the other gods. He is ever-young, because the fire is re-lit every day; but also he is immortal. His cult survived the change of the ancient Vedic fire worship into modern Hinduism. The sacred fire-drill (agnimathana) for procuring the temple-fire by friction — symbolic of Agni's daily miraculous birth — is still used.



**Aither** or **Aether** - The Protogenos (first-born elemental god) of the bright, glowing upper air of heaven - the substance of light. Above him lay the solid dome of the sky-god, Ouranos, and below, the transparent mists of earth-bound air. In the evening his mother **Nyx** drew her veil of darkness between the aither and the air to bring night to man. In the morn his sister-wife **Hemera** dispersed these mists, revealing the shining blue aither of day. Night and day were regarded as quite independent of the sun in the ancient cosmogonies. Aither was one of the three "airs". The middle air was **Aer** or **Khaos**, a colourless mist which enveloped the mortal world. The lower air was **Erebos**, the mists of darkness, which enveloped the dark places beneath the earth and the realm of the dead. The third was the upper air of aither, the mist of light, home of the gods of heaven. It enveloped the mountain peaks, clouds, stars, sun and moon. The stars themselves were said to be formed from the concentrated fires of aither. His female counterpart was **Aithre**, Titan of the Clear Blue Sky, mother of the Sun and Moon.

**Aeolus** (Greek) - King of the winds, also lived on the earth. An island, Aeolia, was his home. Accurately he was only regent of the Winds, viceroy of the gods. The four chief winds were Boreas - the North Wind; Zephyr - the West Wind; Notus - the South Wind; and the East Wind - Eurus.

**Belenus** - In Celtic mythology, Belenus (also Belinus, Belenos, Belinos, Belinu, Bellinus, Belus, Bel) was a deity worshipped in Gaul, Britain and Celtic areas of Italy, Austria and northern Spain. He had shrines from Aquileia on the Adriatic to Inveresk in Scotland. His name means "shining one" or "henbane god" and he is associated with heat and healing. He may be the same deity as Belatu-Cadros. In the Roman period he was identified with Apollo. His consort was Belisama.

**Brigid/Brigit/Brighid**, Goddess of Fire (Celtic)- Brigid's titles include 'Fire of Inspiration', 'Fire of the Hearth' and 'Fire of the Forge'. Brigid is a complex and contradictory fire goddess, a patroness of a range of practical and inspired wisdom.



**Camaxtli** - In Aztec and Maya mythology, Camaxtli, also known as Mixcoatl-Camaxtli, was a god of hunting, war, fate and fire (which he invented). He was one of the four creator gods, who made the Earth. The Chichimec considered him their tribal deity. He leads human sacrifices and warriors who have been slain in battle to the eastern sky, where they become stars.

**Ceres** (Greek)- (Demeter) Daughter of Cronus and Rhea. Goddess of agriculture, grain, harvest, fruits, flowers, fertility of the earth. Mother of Persephone.

**Chaos** (Greek) - Name means void. According to Hesiod, the very first entity to assume definite existence; the primal being out of which all else emerged.

**Coatlicue** - The mother of the Aztec gods. Earth mother, goddess of life and death.

**Djinn** (Wiccan) - God over the fire elemental spirits

**Dhara** - In Hinduism, Dhara is one of the Vasus, gods of the physical cosmos. He represents the earth and the element earth, though Earth is usually the goddess Prithvi rather than a god.

**Duamutef** - In Ancient Egypt, fire was associated with the “son of Horus” .

**Enlil** (Sumerian) - The god of air in ancient Sumer. **Shu** was the ancient Egyptian god of air and the husband of **Tefnut**, goddess of moisture. He became an emblem of strength by virtue of his role in separating **Nut** (sky) from **Geb** (earth). He played a primary role in the Coffin Texts, which were spells intended to help the deceased reach the realm of the afterlife safely. On the way to the sky, the spirit had to travel through the air, as one spell indicates: “I have gone up in Shu, I have climbed on the sunbeams.”



**Erebos** (Greek) - The Protogenos of the mists of darkness. His dark element was sunk into the hollows of the earth, and encircled the dismal realm of the underworld. Erebus (darkness) A Primal being, child of Chaos, by Nyx father of the Hesperides and of Aether. He was the utter Shadow surrounding Hades.

**Gaea** - Mother Earth (Greek). The Protogenos of the earth. Mother Earth emerged at the beginning of creation to form the foundation of the universe. Gaia was one of the few Protogenoi to be depicted in anthropomorphic form, however even as such she was shown as a woman partially risen from the ground, inseparable from her native form.

**Geb/Keb/Seb** (Egyptian) - God of the earth and fertility. He was also a god who imprisoned the dead in his body. He could be a malevolent being as well as beneficial deity. Originally he was a local god, worshiped as a goose, though the specific city where he was first worshiped is unknown, it seems to have been around the Iunu (On, Heliopolis) region. Known as ‘The Great Cackler’, Geb sometimes took on the form of a goose, but was usually shown as a man. Sometimes he was depicted wearing the headdress of a goose, but more often he was shown as a reclining man - sometimes ithphallic - laying far underneath his sister-wife, the goddess **Nut**. Sometimes he was coloured green to show that, as with the ithphallic form, he was a god of fertility. He was also sometimes shown wearing the crown of Lower Egypt or the atef crown. As an earth god, the earthquakes were thought to be his laughter. It was believed that he supplied the minerals and precious stones, and so was also a god of the mines. The earth itself was referred to as prgbb (“The House of Geb”). As the god of the surface of the earth from which spring up trees, and plants, and herbs and grain he played a very prominent part in the mythology of the underworld, and as the god of the earth beneath the surface of the ground he had authority over the tombs wherein the dead were laid. In hymns and other compositions he is often styled the tribal chief of the gods, and he plays a very important part in The Book of the Dead... and on his brow rested the secret gates which were close by the Balance of Ra, and which were guarded by the god himself. He was thought to watch the weighing of the heart in the Halls of Ma’ati. As Nut was often represented on the cover of the sarcophagus, Geb was represented by the base, so the deceased was enclosed in the twin deities - Nut above and Geb below. Geb, though, had a darker aspect in relation with the dead. He was thought to hold the souls of the damned, keeping them prisoner in the earth.

Geb Laying Under Nut, Separated by Ma’at and Shu who are Seated in a Boat In the tale of Geb and Nut, the twins angered the sun god Ra, their grandfather, by being so close together in a permanent embrace, making love. He called on their father, Shu, to rip the twins apart. Shu parted them, stamping on Geb while raising Nut high up above him. It turned out,

though, that the sky goddess was pregnant, and she eventually gave birth to Geb’s children: **Osiris**, **Horus** the Elder, **Set**, **Isis** and **Nephthys**. Another tradition believed that Geb and Nut produced the World Egg from which the sun was born in the form of a bnw-bird - a phoenix. Isis is referred to as ‘The Egg of the Goose’, referring to this.

**Gerra** – The Babylonian and Akkadian god of fire, derived from the earlier Sumerian deity Gibil. He is the son of Anu and Antu.

**Ghob/Ghom or Gob** - King of the Gnomes (earth spirits) and goblins.

**Gibil** - Gibil in Sumerian mythology is the god of fire, variously of the son of An and Ki, An and Shala or of Ishkur and Shala. He later developed into the Akkadian god Gerra.

**Hermes Trismigestus** (Pan-Mythological) - In ancient times, great generals and rulers sent their messages from place to place by messengers. Ancient gods also needed a messenger, it seems, and they chose Hermes, the son of Maia (this Maia is the Greek daughter of Atlas, not to be confused with the Roman Maia from whom we get the name for the month of May, confusing isn’t it.). To carry messages for the gods one would have to be swift, and Hermes



had wings on his helmet and his sandals. He was not just fast of foot, his quick mind made him also the Greek god of invention and commerce. When the Greeks saw a planet rushing through the sky faster than any of the others, they named it for the winged messenger. Later the Greeks adopted Thoth, the Egyptian god of Learning and sort of melded him with Hermes, who was then renamed Hermes Trismigestus (triple great), and vested him additionally as the god of alchemy. The Egyptians were the early leaders in chemistry, and the word alchemy comes from the Arabic name for Egypt, al khem, for the black land. It is a short step from chemistry to medicine, since the same learned men did both, and so Hermes Trismigestus also was associated with medicine. When a messenger went from place to place they would carry a staff to let people

know they were protected by some potentate and should not be messed with. This symbol was called a caduceus (ka-doo’ syoos) from an old Doric Greek word for a herald. Hermes staff may have started out with olive branches wrapped around it, but as snakes became more and more associated with doctors (snakes can shed their skin, sort of like rebirth from the dead) the staff was decorated with coiled snakes. This symbol is still associated with the practice of medicine today, and is the insignia of the army medical corps.

When the Romans came, they associated their god of commerce, Mercury, with Hermes. Hermes name is also preserved in a scientific term for airtight, hermetic. Supposedly one of the things that Thoth/Hermes/Mercury did was create a way to make vessels airtight.

A liaison with Penelope produced a son, Pan. This personage is, of course, well known as the pipe playing god of shepherds, and if not as quick as Dad, was definitely a swift runner.

**Hermes Other Names:** To the Germans he was **Wodan**. To the Greeks he was also known as **Alipes** (the one with winged feet). To the pre-Roman Etruscans he was **Turms**, guide of the deceased to the underworld, and messenger of the gods. To the Egyptians he was known as messenger of the gods **Thoth**. As such he was the origin of the deity Hermes

Trismegistus, or “Thrice-great Hermes.” The three part title comes from this version of Hermes being the Greek writer of astrological texts and responsible for occult arts including alchemy, and the Egyptian god who invented hieroglyphics and calendar-keeping and also judged the souls of the deceased. To the Sumerians he was **Gud**, a god favoring welcome rains, agricultural fertility and harvest abundance. To the and Assyrians he was **Nabu**, the “herald.” Instead of being the messenger of the gods, he was the heavenly secretary, keeping track of the words of the gods. This also made him the Assyrian god of knowledge and the recorder of fate for people for the next year. He also Taught the Thriae, winged female spirits who live on Mount Parnassus, the art of prophesy.

As Hermes Trismegistus he authored the Hermetic Books, an astonishing 36,525 volumes of magic and wisdom, and Egyptian history. Despite this huge number, no volumes are known to exist today.....

**Hestia** Fire Goddess (Greek) or **Vesta** (Roman) - The goddess of the sacred fires of the hearth, the heart of spiritual and emotional stability in your home. Her cult goes back to the 7th century BC.

**Hephaestus** (Greek) or **Vulcan** (Roman/ Italian) - The god of fire and the forge, and the patron god of blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, and sculptors. He was worshipped in all the manufacturing and industrial centers of Greece, especially Athens. Though his forge traditionally lay in the heart of Lemnos, Hephaestus was quickly identified by Greek colonists in southern Italy with the volcano gods Adranus of Mount Etna and Vulcanus of the Lipara islands, and his forge moved here by the poets.



**Ho-Masubi/Kagu-Tsuchi** (Japanese) Fire God - Although destructive by his very nature, and feared by mortals, the fire god is not evil and does what he can for mankind, providing them with light, warmth, a means of cooking, and the heat for forging weapons and tools. If the people affront him by neglecting his worship, however, he has been known to burn cities to the ground.”

**Huracan** - In Maya mythology, Huracan (also **Hurakan**, from Mayan **Jun Raqan** “one legged”) was a wind, storm and fire god and one of the creator deities who participated in all three attempts at creating humanity. He also caused the Great Flood after the first humans angered the gods. He supposedly lived in the windy mists above the floodwaters and repeated “earth” until land came up from the seas. In appearance he has one leg, the other being transformed into a serpent, a zoomorphic snout or long-nose, and a smoking object such as a cigar, torch holder, or axe head which pierces a mirror on his forehead. His name is the source of the words hurricane and orcan (European windstorm).

**Hydros** (Greek) - The Protogenos of water. Together with the earth he formed the primeval Mud. Hydros was usually equated with the earth-encircling, fresh-water Titan Okeanos.

**Manco Capac** - In Inca mythology, Manco Capac (Quechua Manqo Qhapaq “splendid foundation”, also Manku Qhapaq) was the first king of the Kingdom of Cuzco. There are several versions of the story of the origin of Manco Capac. In one myth, Manco Capac was a son of the sun god **Inti** and brother of **Pachacamac**. Manco Capac himself was worshipped as a fire and sun god. According to the Inti legend, Manco Capac and his siblings were sent up to the earth by the sun god and emerged from the cave of Pacaritambo carrying a golden staff, called ‘tapac-yauri’. Instructed to create a Temple of the Sun in the spot where the staff sank into the earth, they traveled to Cuzco via underground caves and there built a temple in honor of their father, the sun god Inti. During the journey to Cuzco, one of Manco’s brothers and possibly one of his sisters were turned to stone. In another version of this legend, instead of emerging from a cave, the siblings emerged from the waters of Lake Titicaca.

**Nereids** (Greek) - The Nereids A large class of Divine and Semi-Divine children of Nereus and Doris; most are closely associated with the Sea: Agave, Aktaea, Amphitrite, Doris, Doto, Dynamene, Eione, Erato, Euagora, Eudora, Eukrante, Eulime, Eunike, Eupompe, Galatea, Galene, Glauke, Glaukonome, Halia, Halimede, Hipponoe, Hippothoe, Kymatolege, Kymo, Kymodoce, Kymothoe, Laomedea, Leagora, Lysianassa, Melite, Menippe, Nemertes, Nesaea, Neso, Panopea, Pasithea, Pherusa, Ploto, Polynoe, Pontoporea, Pronoe, Proto, Protomedea, Psamathe, Sao, Speo, Themisto, Thetis, Thoe.

**Nereus** (Greek) - Eldest child of Pontos, and a Divinity of the Waters who seems not to be a Titan or Olympian, but of a different order. He is called “the Old Man of the Sea”, and is said to govern with gentle and secret wisdom. By Doris, he is the father of many, including Amphitrite.



**Niksa/Necksa/Nestis** - In folklore the ruler of the undines is a being called **Necksa** whom they love, serve, and honor unceasingly. Seems to have strong associations with the **Nereids**.

**Nusku** - Nusku was the name of the light and fire-god in Babylonia and Assyria, who is hardly to be distinguished, from a certain time on, from a god Girru - formerly Gibil. **Nusku-Girru** is the symbol of the heavenly as well as of the terrestrial fire. As the former he is the son of **Anu**, the god of heaven, but he is likewise associated with **Enlil** of Nippur as the god of the earth and regarded as his first-born son. A centre of his cult in Assyria was in Harran, where, because of the predominating character of the moon-cult, he is viewed as the son of the moon-god **Sin**. Nusku-Girru is by the side of **Ea**, the god of water, the great purifier. It is he, therefore, who is called upon to cleanse the sick and suffering from disease, which, superinduced by the demons, was looked upon as a species of impurity affecting the body. The fire-god is also viewed as the patron of the arts and the god of civilization in general, because of the natural association of all human progress with the discovery and use of fire. As among other nations, the fire-god was in the third instance looked upon as the protector of the family. He becomes the mediator between humanity and the gods, since it is through the fire on the altar that the offering is brought into the presence of the gods. While temples and sanctuaries to Nusku-Girru are found in Babylonia and Assyria, he is worshipped more in symbolical form than the other gods. For the very reason that his presence is common and universal he is not localized to the same extent as his fellow-deities, and, while always

enumerated in a list of the great gods, his place in the systematized pantheon is more or less vague. The conceptions connected with Nusku are of distinctly popular origin, as is shown by his prominence in incantations, which represent the popular element in the cult, and it is significant that in the astro-theological system of the Babylonian priests Nusku-Girru is not assigned to any particular place in the heavens.

**Nut** (Egyptian) - The sky-goddess, wife of Geb, the earth-god; represented as a woman, her naked body is curved to form the arch of heaven.

**Nyx** (Greek)- A primal being, emergent from Chaos in the beginning times. Name means night or starry darkness.

**Oya** - African goddess of weather, tornadoes, lightning, destructive rainstorms, fire female leadership, persuasive charm, transformation and change.

**Oceanus** (Greek) - Eldest of the Titans, child of Uranus and Gaea (Heaven and Earth). He is the personification of the Sea. By Tethys he is the father of the race of Nymphs.

**Pan** (Greek) - He was the son of Hermes; a noisy merry god, and part animal too, with a goat's horns, and goat's hoofs instead of feet. He was the goatherds' god, and the shepherd' god, and also the merry companion of the woodland Nymphs when they danced. All wild places were his home, thickets and forests and mountains, but best of all he loved Arcady, where he was born. He was a wonderful musician. Upon his pipes of reed he played melodies as sweet as the nightingale's song. He was always in love with one nymph or another, but always rejected because of his ugliness. Sounds heard in a wilderness at night by the trembling traveller were supposed to be made by him, so that it is easy to see how the expression "panic" fear arose.

**Paralda** - If you stand in the morning mists and look up at the sky, just as the sun is rising, you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a misty shadowy shape of hazy blue darting through the clouds on the edge of the wind. This is Paralda, and his Kingdom is all around us, for he is Lord of the Element Air, and resides under the jurisdiction of the Archangel Raphael, his Master. Whenever Raphael is called upon for protection, Paralda can be seen rising up beside him, ready to do his bidding, and together they direct and control the movement of Air and the thought patterns around the earth. Those who see this Mighty King, say he swoops through the skies on gossamer wings, his billowing hair streaked with sunlight, and shaded with the grey whiteness of the clouds that surround him. His eyes are silver, slanted moonbeams, darting and alert, and the tenuous shape of his body belies his strength for, although he can seem as gentle as the touch of spring upon your cheek, his power is as wild and unpredictable as a howling east wind. We are told that, with just one glance, he can capture the secrets of our innermost thoughts in the fleeting moment of his penetrating stare, and as he speaks he carries in his voice the rushing sound of brief summer gales, and light autumn breezes. It is by the breath of Paralda's commands that he brings the tiny elemental beings, known as the Sylphs of his kingdom, under his control. Swift and graceful, they flock to surround him, their silvery elf-like form ethereal and indefinite. It is said that they they can often be heard whispering in the tree tops, as they encircle the skies with the birds of the air.

**Pele** - (Hawaiian Goddess of Fire) - Goddess of Hawaii's Volcanos "She-Who-Shapes-The-

Sacred-Land", or the Goddess of a Thousand Names, Pele was a passionate fire goddess who commanded both fear and respect. Pele is both a destructive and creative force.

**Poseidon** - (Neptune) The god of the sea and underground disturbances (earthquakes). Son of Chronos and Rhea.

**Pontos** (Greek) - A primal entity of the sea, who emerged from Gaea in the beginning times. He is the parent of Nereus.

**Prithvi** - Hindu earth and mother goddess. According to one such tradition, she is the personification of the Earth itself; according to another, its actual mother, being Prithvi Tattwa, the essence of the element earth. As Prithvi Mata, or "Mother Earth," she contrasts with Dyaus Pita, "father sky." In the Rigveda, earth and sky are frequently addressed as a duality, often indicated by the idea of two complementary "half-shells."

**Ra** - In Egyptian mythology, Ra is the Supreme god of of the sun or the sun itself. He had many name representing differnt aspects of the sun. He is god over life and death, representing how no life on earth would exist without the sun, but also the sun's destructive qualities.

**Sethlans** - In Etruscan mythology, Sethlans was the god of fire, equivalent to Greek Hephaestus.

**Svarog** - In Slavic mythology, Svarog is the Sun God and spirit of fire; his name means bright and clear. The name originates from Sankrit Svarga and Persian xwar (pron. Chvar) both meaning the same thing, indicating Indo-European etymological relation. So sacred was the fire that it was forbidden to shout or swear at it while it was being lit. Folklore portrays him as a fire serpent, a winged dragon that breathes fire. According to some interpretations the fire-god **Svarogich** was the son of Svarog. However, other sources refer to these names as one and the same god of fire. Older myths describe him as a smith god, identified with the generative and sexual powers of fire. In those myths, Svarog fights Zmey, a giant serpent or a multi-headed dragon. Zmey kills people indiscriminately. Svarog catches Zmey with blacksmith's tongs and uses him to pull a plough. Also in some myths, he has to use his own mouth to dig the ditch, thus separating the land of the living (Jav) from the land of the dead (Nav), bringing order (Prav). Zmey takes over the dead. In some myths, the ploughed ditch becomes the Smorodina River, and Zmey becomes the guardian of Kalinov Bridge. In neo-paganist religions, Svarog is often the supreme god-creator and the central part of the (holy) trinity Triglav. He completed the creation of the world by



ИЗРАБЛЕН. ИРЕНЕВАЮЩИ. КОМУ ОТПРАСЛА. И КОБАРЕТО КТО СПАРИМО

giving it Prav. Svarog is associated in Christianity with Saints Cosmas and Damian, and Saint Michael the Archangel. His animals are a golden horned ox, a boar, a horse, and a falcon named Varagna. Svarog legends can be traced back to the 8th-6th century BC when the Slavic tribes first began to practice agriculture. The etymology of the word Svarog is likely to be Slavic svar (bright and clear).

**Thoth** (Egyptian) - The ibis-headed god of Hermopolis; the scribe of the gods, the inventor of writing, and the great god of all knowledge; the ape as well as the ibis are sacred to him. In the judgment of the dead he was the scribe who recorded the confessions and affirmations of the dead on his scrolls, and also kept a record of who went into paradise and who was eaten by the dogs of judgment. Keeper of magical, alchemical and intellectual knowledge.

**Ten Ten-Vilu** or **Trentren-Vilu** (of the language mapudungun Trengtrengfilu: (Trengtreng, filu = "snake") is the god of Earth and Fertility (or goddess in some versions of Chiloé); with a generous spirit and protector of all earth's life, and the flora and fauna and according to some myths Mapuche and later of Chiloé. This snake was a key player in the Origin Of The Chiloean Archipelago. In mapuche mythology, Ten Ten-Vilu is son of Antu.

**Tetragammon** (Hebrew) - Name means "He Brings Into Existence Whatever Exists" or God, existing in His essential and absolute Unity, is exalted and distinct from material manifestation. As such, He is considered as a "fifth state" existing "behind" manifest Creation. This "fifth state" is the Source from which the four letters or phases of the Tetragrammaton

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are projected. This concept implies a direct relationship between the four letters of the Tetragrammaton and the four elements of classical philosophy, which, in turn, correspond directly to the four states of matter in modern physics. These four elements are Fire (energy), Water (liquids), Air (gases), and Earth (solids). These are the four distinguishable manifestations of the "source-substance" which Pythagoras termed "Quintessence". In Latin writings, "quinta essentia" literally means "fifth substance".

Fire, which corresponds to Yod, the first letter of the Tetragrammaton, also corresponds to the soul of humanity, the element of spirituality which resides within us. This element motivates us to strive for exalted degrees of consciousness and action, and it motivates us to become close to the Divine. Positively, the qualities of Fire manifest as will, inspiration, nobility of deeds, and the motivation and power to achieve honor, prestige, dominion, and leadership. Negatively, these last qualities become pride, egotism, despotism, and tyranny, as opposed to deserved authority. In a literal sense, Fire is the provider of warmth and light, but uncontrolled is the most destructive of the elements.

Water corresponds to Heh, the second letter of the Tetragrammaton, and corresponds to the desires of humanity, the passions which shape and direct the will towards specific ends and goals. This concept is most obviously manifest as human emotions. Philosophic Water represents the qualities of passivity, receptivity, flexibility, and dependency, which are the

qualities of emotion and desire, because emotion and desire are totally dependent on outside influences. Philosophic Water has no inherent power of its own, except as the conductor and transformer of another. Alone, the element of Water is barren; life did not manifest in seawater without the catalysts of heat and light, which are qualities of the element of Fire.

Obversely, when brought to bear on the element of Fire, Water becomes very powerful and important. Fire, in and of itself, is very chaotic and amorphous. It is the qualities of Water that make it possible to contain and control Fire. Without these "Watery" qualities, Fire would run rampant in a destructive rage and then burn itself out. It is Desire (water) which shapes, sustains, and directs the Will (fire) towards practical ends. Thus, Fire and Water are interdependent for any creative act. This fact is the basis of their relationship to the Tetragrammaton.

Air corresponds to Vav, the third letter of the Tetragrammaton, and also to human intellect. The powers of analysis and synthesis, which constitute the intellect, are the abilities to break down a subject into its basic components in order to understand its structure (and, hopefully, its purpose), and then to reconstruct these components into something new, and - possibly - better. Thus, Air represents the qualities of reason and rationality. Positively, these are directed towards constructive applications and new inventions. But, devoid of the creative guidance of the qualities of Fire and Water, intellect, as the power of division, becomes a very destructive force. It has well been seen in our time that, devoid of higher ideals, science, laws, and politics become - at best - sterile of any worth or meaning. Unfortunately, the worst is more often manifest as war, pollution, infringement of basic human rights, and weapons technology that has advanced far beyond our ability to rationally control, much less use.

Earth, the final Heh of the Tetragrammaton, manifests in humanity as the physical body, as well as that which is needed to sustain the body, such as food and shelter. Earth is also the literal Earth, the soil in which our food grows, as well as the globe which is the home and environment of the human community. Like Water, Philosophic Earth is barren and sterile in and of itself. Its value is completely dependent on how it expresses and is influenced by the "higher" elements. For example, the actions of the human body can only be judged and evaluated according to how well they express or effect the spiritual will (Fire), the passions (Water), and/or the intellect (Air). Thus, money, the most obvious example of material power, is not inherently evil. It is simply a tool of convenience, like a knife or a match, and one can only judge the value of how it is used.

This is a basic summary of the qualities of the philosophic elements of Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. Anthropomorphically, Earth corresponds to the physical body which is the vehicle of human consciousness. The consciousness itself consists of three fundamental parts: the intellect (Air), which is subject to the influences of the passions (Water), which are, in a very real sense, the physical manifestations of the strivings of the spiritual will (Fire). The correspondence of these four elements to the Qabalistic formula of the Tetragrammaton becomes a complex structure of interdependent metaphysical concepts.

**Uranus** (Greek) - The Sky-Father, a primal being, emergent from Gaea. He was Lord of the Titans, until his position was usurped by Kronos.

**Vasu** - In Hinduism, the Vasus are attendant deities of Indra, and later Vishnu. They are eight elemental gods representing aspects of nature, representing cosmic natural phenomenon. The name Vasu means 'Dweller' or 'Dwelling'.

There are varying lists of the eight Vasus in different texts, sometimes only because particular deities have varying names. The following are names and meanings according to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and according to the Mahabharata as normally equated:

Brihadaranyaka		Mahabharata	
Name	“Meaning”	Name	“Meaning”
Agni	“fire”	Anala	“living”
Prithvi	“earth”	Dhary	“support”
Vaiyu	“wind”	Anila	“wind”
Antariksha	“atmosphere”	Aha	“pervading”
Iditya	“eternal”	Pratyhsha	“pre-dawn light”
Dyaus	“sky”	Prabhysa	“shining dawn”
Chandramas	“moon”	Soma	“soma-plant or moon”
Nakstrani	“stars”	Dhruva	“motionless or Polestar”

In the Ramayana the Vasus are children of the sage Kashyapa by Aditi and so are full siblings to the Adityas. However the Mahabharata makes them sons of Prajyapati son of Manu son of Brahma by various mothers.

The Mahabharata relates how the Vasus, led by “Prithu” (presumably here a male form of Prithvi) were enjoying themselves in the forest, when the wife of Dyaus spotted an excellent cow and persuaded her husband Dyaus to steal it, which he did with the agreement and aid of Prithu and his other brothers. Unfortunately for the Vasus, the cow was owned by the sage Vasishtha who learned through his ascetic powers that the Vasus had stolen it and immediately cursed them to be born on earth as mortals. Vasishtha responded to pleading by the Vasus by promising that seven of them would be free of earthly life within a year of being born and that only Dyaus would pay the full penalty. The Vasus then requested the river-goddess Ganga to be their mother. Ganga incarnated and became the wife of King Santanu on condition that he never gainsaid her in any way. As seven children were born, one after the other, Ganga drowned them in her own waters, freeing them from their punishment and the king made no opposition. Only when the eighth was born did the king finally oppose his wife, who therefore left him. So the eighth son, Dyaus incarnated, remained alive, imprisoned in mortal form, and later became known in his mortal incarnation as Bhishma.

A later section of the Mahabharata gives an alternate version in which each of the Vasus gives a portion of himself to create a ninth being and so all eight are later drowned leaving only this ninth composite as an incarnation of parts of all the Vasus to live out a very long mortal life as Bhishma.

**Voltumna** - In Etruscan mythology, Voltumna or Veltha was the chthonic (earth) deity, who became the supreme god of the Etruscan pantheon, the deus Etruriae princeps, according to Varro. Voltumna’s cult was centered in Volsini (modern-day Orvieto) a polis of the Etruscan Civilization of northwest Italy. The bond of the twelve Etruscan populi was renewed annually at the sacred grove of Fanum Voltumnae, the sanctuary of Voltumnus sited near Volsinii (present day Bolsena), which was mentioned by Livy.[4] At the Fanum Voltumnae ludi were held, the precise nature of which, whether athletic or artistic, is unknown. In the Roman Forum, near the Temple of Castor and Pollux stood a shrine dedicated to Voltumna in the Vicus Tuscus. He was the equivalent of the Roman Vertumnus.

**Vulcan** - In Roman mythology, he is the son of **Jupiter** and **Juno**, and husband of **Maia** and **Venus**. He was god of fire and volcanoes, and the manufacturer of art, arms, iron, and armor for gods and heroes. Vulcan’s analogue in Greek mythology is the god Hephaestus. He is also called **Mulciber** (“softener”) in Roman mythology and **Sethlans** in Etruscan mythology. His smithy was believed to be situated underneath Mount Etna in Sicily. Vulcan was honoured at the Vulcanalia festival, which was held on August 23. During the festival fish and small

animals were thrown into a fire as sacrifices. Vulcan’s shrine in the Forum Romanum, called the Volcanal, appears to have played an important role in the civic rituals of the archaic Roman Kingdom.

To punish mankind for stealing the secrets of fire, Zeus, ordered the other gods to make a poisoned gift for man. Vulcan’s contribution to the beautiful and foolish Pandora, was to mold her from clay and to give her form.

**Xiuhtecuhtli** - In Aztec mythology, Xiuhtecuhtli (also named **Ixcozauhqui** and **Huehueteotl**, “old god”) was the personification of life after death, warmth in cold (fire), light in darkness and food during famine. He was usually depicted with a red or yellow face and a censer on his head. His wife was **Chalchiuhtlicue**. According to Codex Fejérváry-Mayer, a prehispanic Mesoamerican manuscript, Xiuhtecuhtli was considered “Mother and Father of the Gods, who dwells in the center of earth”. At the end of the Aztec century (52 years), the gods were thought to be able to end their covenant with humanity. Feasts were held in honor of Xiuhtecuhtli to keep his favors, and human sacrifices were burned after removing their heart.

**Zeus** (Greek) - Son of Chronos and Rhea. Ruler of heaven and earth, of all gods and men. “King of the Gods,” God of thunderbolts. Married to **Hera/Juno** who held equal status. Referred to as **Jupiter** in the Roman Pantheon. Zeus was a great sky god, carrying in the tradition of **Enlil** and **Marduk** from the Sumarian dieties.

