

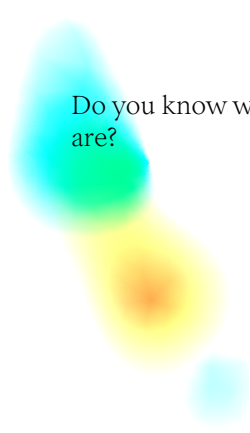


# Wh- O am I?

Thesis Process Book

Hung Tsai

我

是誰



Do you know who you  
are?

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“He who knows  
other men is  
discerning;  
he who knows  
himself  
is intelligent.”

— Lao Tzu, ancient Chinese philosopher and writer.



# Intro- duc- tion

1

## What about Thesis?

Thesis project is a milestone in the student journey of the BFA Graphic Design Program at San Jose State University. Throughout the thesis project, students are encouraged to reflect on themselves and demonstrate their interest and passion in the field of graphic design through a variety of mediums such as video, print, UX/UI, illustrations, exhibitions, etc. This thesis project provides an extraordinary experience for students to understand their personalities in the field of graphic design.

“I want to learn the ambiguity about our life.”

“I want to know the potential of humans.”

“I want everyone to know about themselves”

## What I pursue

For this thesis project, I want to use this opportunity for me to **discover the ambiguous and mysterious power of human beings**, so I decide to study deep into the Four Pillars of Astrology and use it to create a guide for everyone to understand the potential of their lives and who they are in the universe.

## Four pillars of astrology

---

Four Pillars of Astrology, as known as "BaZi", literally means Eight Characters from birth time. It is based on the sexagenary cycle calendar, a traditional Chinese calendar that accurately records a year, month, day, and hour by using celestial stems and terrestrial branches. The sexagenary cycle calendar consists of eight characters, year stem, year branch, month stem, month branch, day stem, day branch, hour stem, and hour branch. A pair of stems and branches is known as a pillar and Eight Characters consist of the year pillar, month pillar, day pillar, and hour pillar accordingly, thus Bazi is also called Four Pillars or Eight Characters.

## Abstract

Discovering who we are has been a constant pursuit of mankind since time immemorial. Philosophers also question their own nature and wonder about the individual's place in the universe, the future, and even the afterlife. Throughout thousands of years of discovery, Chinese ancestors discovered that at every moment in the world, there are various invisible forces on the earth that affect a person's character and destiny. They believe that strength has the greatest impact on the moment a person is born, so the year, month, date, and hour of a person's birth can be used to define a person's main character. Over time, a system was developed known as the Four Pillars of Destiny, the "Ba-Zi". However, due to the complexity and invisibility, it is often difficult for people to identify how different forces affect their characters, and many times it is difficult for even trainees to analyze it. A major reason is that a lot of information is compressed into 8 Chinese characters. Therefore, **unpacking the 8 Chinese characters** by clearly visualizing the power will help people to better understand the concept of power movement that occurs on their birthdays and times. Ultimately, people can perceive who they might be from a different perspective.



## Thesis statement

To make the Four Pillars of Astrology easier and accessible for the average person to understand, it is important to break down the themes for each element, so people can more easily sense the forces behind their birth dates without having the prior knowledge of the Four Pillars of Astrology. Ultimately, they can understand themselves from different perspectives.

Re-  
search  
h

2

## Initially

Once I choose this topic as my thesis, I already have a picture in my mind of what the outcome may potentially look like. I want it to be a combination of a VR world or 3D environment of the world of their own Four Pillars of Astrology plus a user guide to help the audience understand why certain things look that way. All of the initial reactions that I had led me to the research questions to think of along the project.

## Research questions

- 1 How to find the midpoint where the topics can be understood by everyone, yet still, maintain the essence of the Four Pillars of Astrology?
- 2 How to optimize the audience experience with Four Pillars Astrology?
- 3 How can the information be conveyed to the audience most efficiently and clearly?



## Answering by self-recognition

I try to recognize myself and analyze who I am as a designer in order to answer the first question. I look into my toolboxes, and soon enough I decide to introduce the topic with my **image making and visual communication skills** to create appealing visuals to deliver the insights of four pillars of astrology toward the audience. However, the essence of the Four Pillars of Astrology is complicated. It can be large or small. It can be abstract or realistic. It can be close or far. It can be anything. So, I look up myself and wonder who am I as a designer. I realize that **I appreciate the ambiguity of the world, and I embrace the vague feelings that I have all the time**. Therefore, to answer the first question, I decide to create visuals that communicate and embrace the ambiguity essences of the four pillars of astrology, which are the forces within it. Meanwhile, I would like it to maintain how it was communicated over the past thousands of years, so I include the Chinese Character as the medium. Eventually, the visuals would be able to communicate the feeling and technical part of the Four Pillars of Astrology simultaneously.

## What's out there?

I look into various existing designs and mediums and analyze what's the possible best way to communicate the messages toward the audience, so audience can get the information that they need and experience the world of Four Pillars of Astrology.



Design by 4W studio

### Animal representation

This is the most common way to visually represent the terrestrial branches, which are part of the system inside Ba-Zi. People often refer to terrestrial branches as various sorts of animals and used those animals to represent the specific Year.

**The advantage** of using this method is the ease for people to remember.

**The disadvantage** is that if I apply this method to my thesis, then I would miss the chance to connect terrestrial branches to energy forces.



[www.echineselearning.com/blog/12-heavy-stems-10-earthly-branches](http://www.echineselearning.com/blog/12-heavy-stems-10-earthly-branches)

## Traditional arrangement

The traditional method arrange elements in a very practical format. It is mainly in circular format is that it also served as a compass, so it is easier for people to search the direction of goodness.

**The advantage** of this format is that if the person carries the knowledge of all the abstract symbols, then the person would be able to accurately point out the solutions to the problems.

**The disadvantage** that comes with this is obvious. It is too complicated for general folks to try to use it in real life.



[theperihelioneffect.com/astrology-the-zodiac-and-the-eccentric-orbit-of-the-planet/](http://theperihelioneffect.com/astrology-the-zodiac-and-the-eccentric-orbit-of-the-planet/)

## Zodiac sign

Astrology Zodiac has been developed for a very long period of time, and it is by far the most popular and accessible method for common folks to understand themselves through astrology.

However, it still falls into the same issues that Four Pillars of Destiny faces, which is that it is either too generalized or too specialized. There is not many midpoints in-between.



問真八字

## App

The advantage of Four Pillar of Astrology app brings ease for professional practice tellers to easily generate the resources that they need for prediction, and the spontaneous responsiveness definitely helps speed up the workflows.

The disadvantage of this sort of app is that its target audience is only people with a certain amount of knowledge of Four Pillar Astrology, so it limits users without the knowledge to understand themselves.



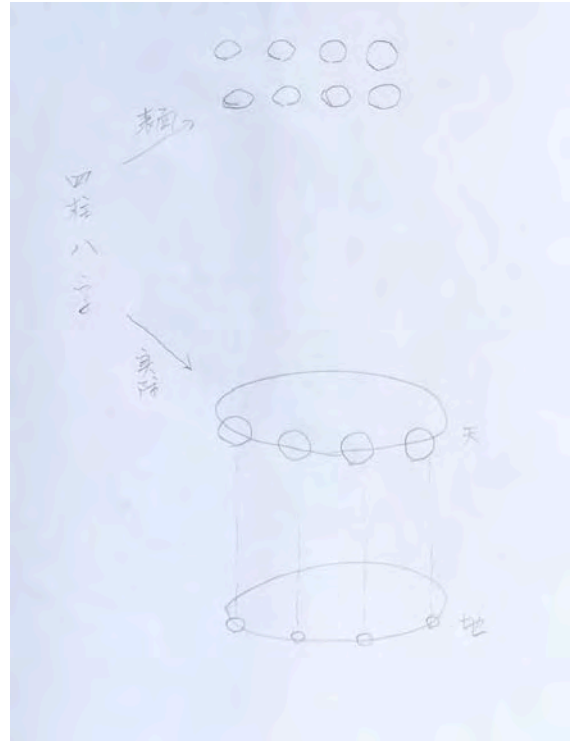
Design by Wu Liang

### **Solar terms visualization**

The artist uses Chinese Characters as the medium to draw the solar terms on top of it, so each Character no longer just carries the name of the solar terms, at the same time, they actually have visuals beyond it, which provide the atmosphere for the audience to feel it. This series of artworks provide a strong sense for the audience who doesn't have the relative knowledge and cultural background, and they can still feel the meaning behind the visuals.

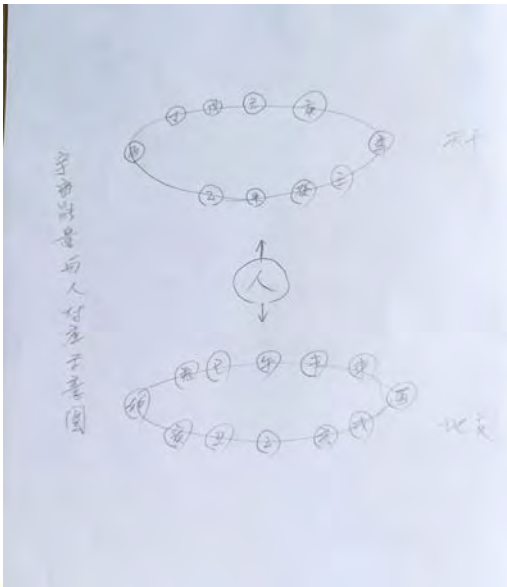
## Input from advisor

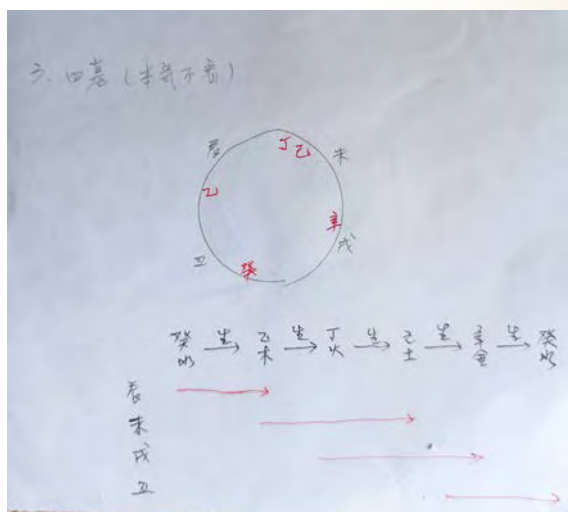
During the initial research phase, I talked with my advisor, who is a professional fortune teller and have been studied in this area for more than 30 years. He provided me some hand sketch that he made and related to information for me to consider to add into the book, so the audience would have a better understanding.



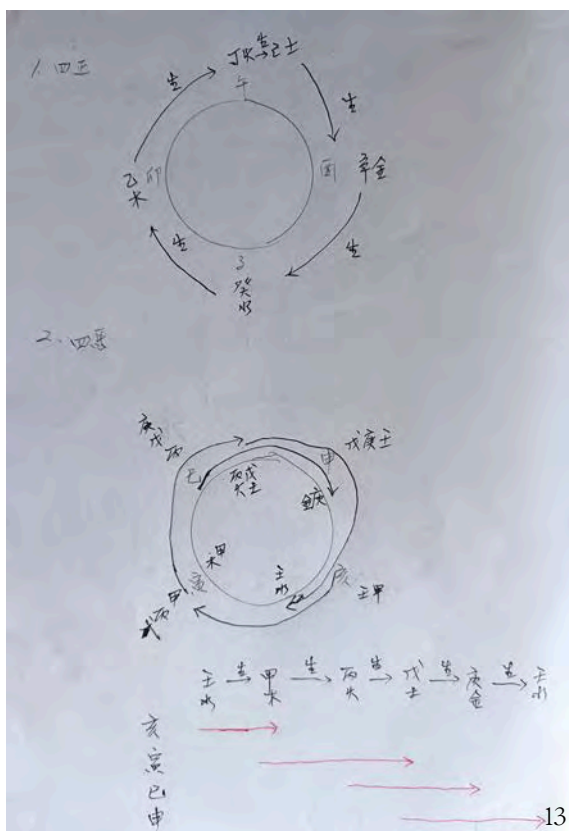
He reminded me to imagine astrology as if they are in the real world, and he asked me to tight this up with my designs.

And, he used terrestrial branches and celestial stems to explain why people's characters are influenced by them.





The movement of the forces also something that I need to consider. Especially, when it comes to the terrestrial branches because there are more forces hidden inside of them.





## Take away

Throughout my research, I realized the breadth and potential of this topic. Most current deliverables are either too complex or too simple. Therefore, in order to solve this problem, the design needs to **maintain a connection with the theme**; at the same time, the visual needs to **introduce and talk about the topic in a way that everyone can easily understand**, and it needs to **be a system** that includes the terrestrial branches and celestial stems, so that it can be further developed.

## Idea

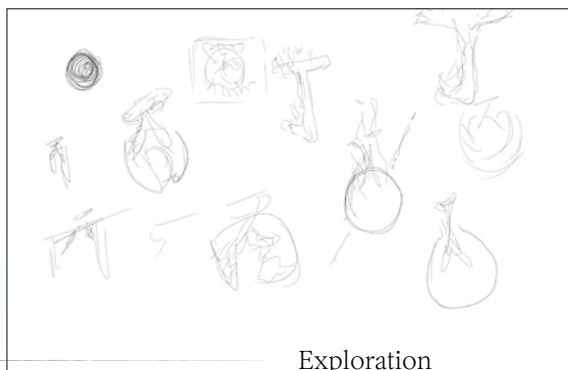
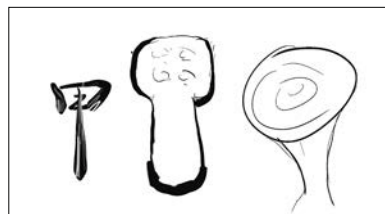
Based on the research, I plan to create a simple informational book with visuals that encoding the five forces and Chinese character. This allows me to deliver the message in a way that everyone can understand yet it is still connect with its traditional formate, so people can carry the knowledge that they gain from the book to other form of visual representation.

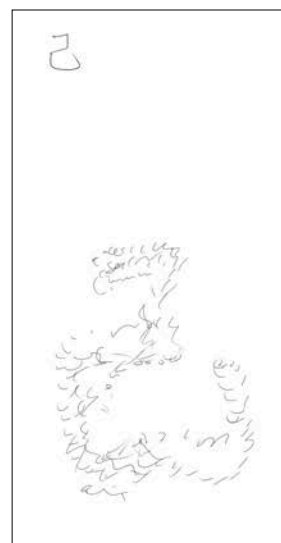


# Ex- plo- ration

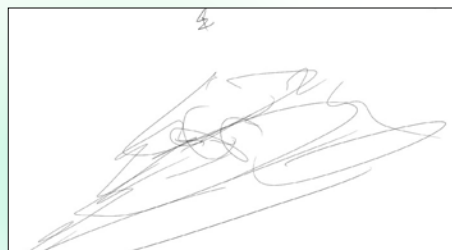
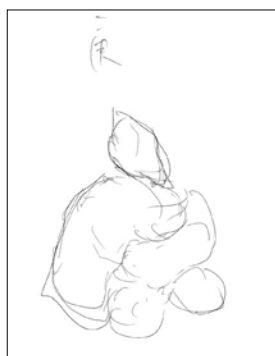
3

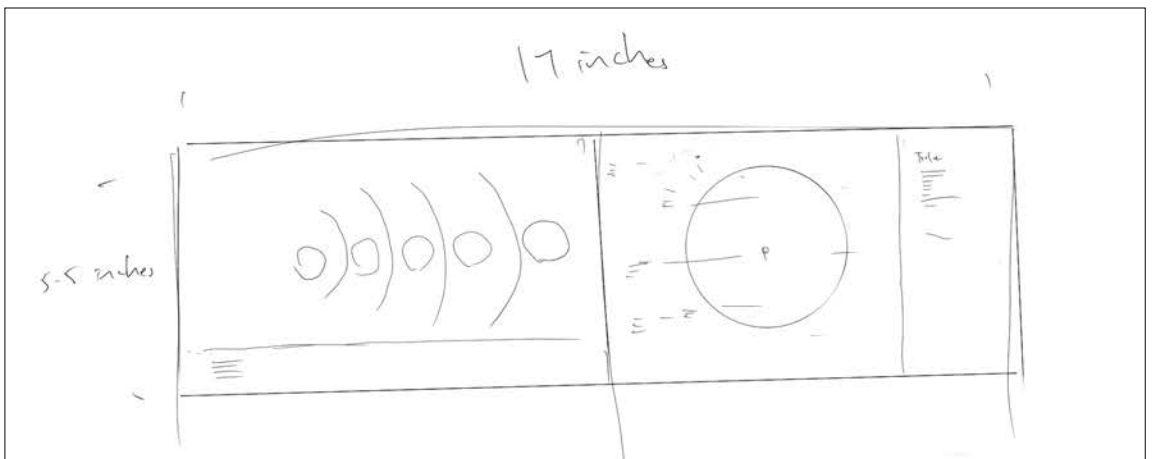
## Initial sketch



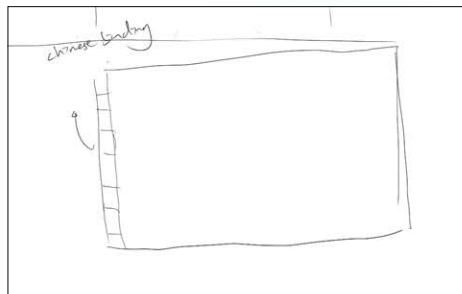


I start with quick pencil sketches and explore and think about what might be the best representational form for the Chinese characters interacting with the forces behind them.





Then I consider what sort of format the content can be best presented, and I landed on the long rectangular format at the very beginning stage.



## Developing

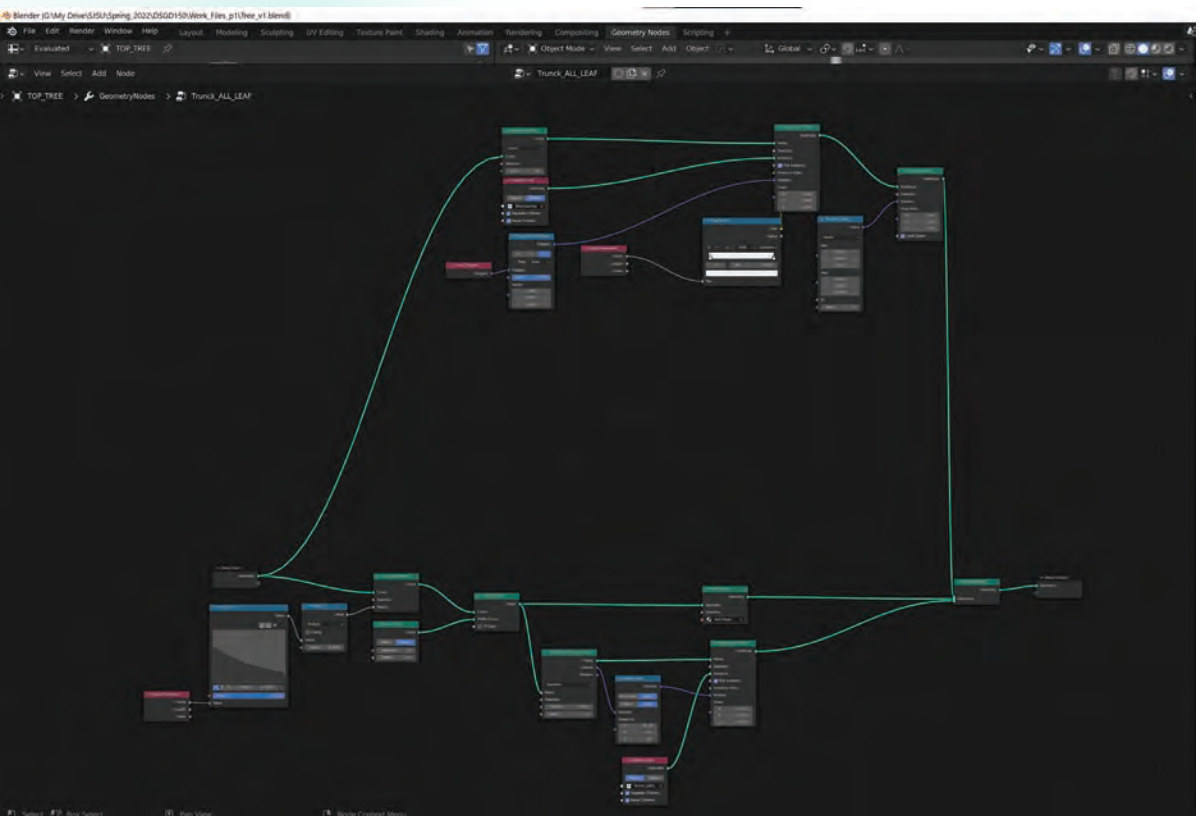
The main method I use for image making is to use **Blender** to create the base of the image. Then I would go into **Illustrator** and **Photoshop** to adjust the details and layout. Finally, I printed the content on rice paper and bound it into a book with fiber.

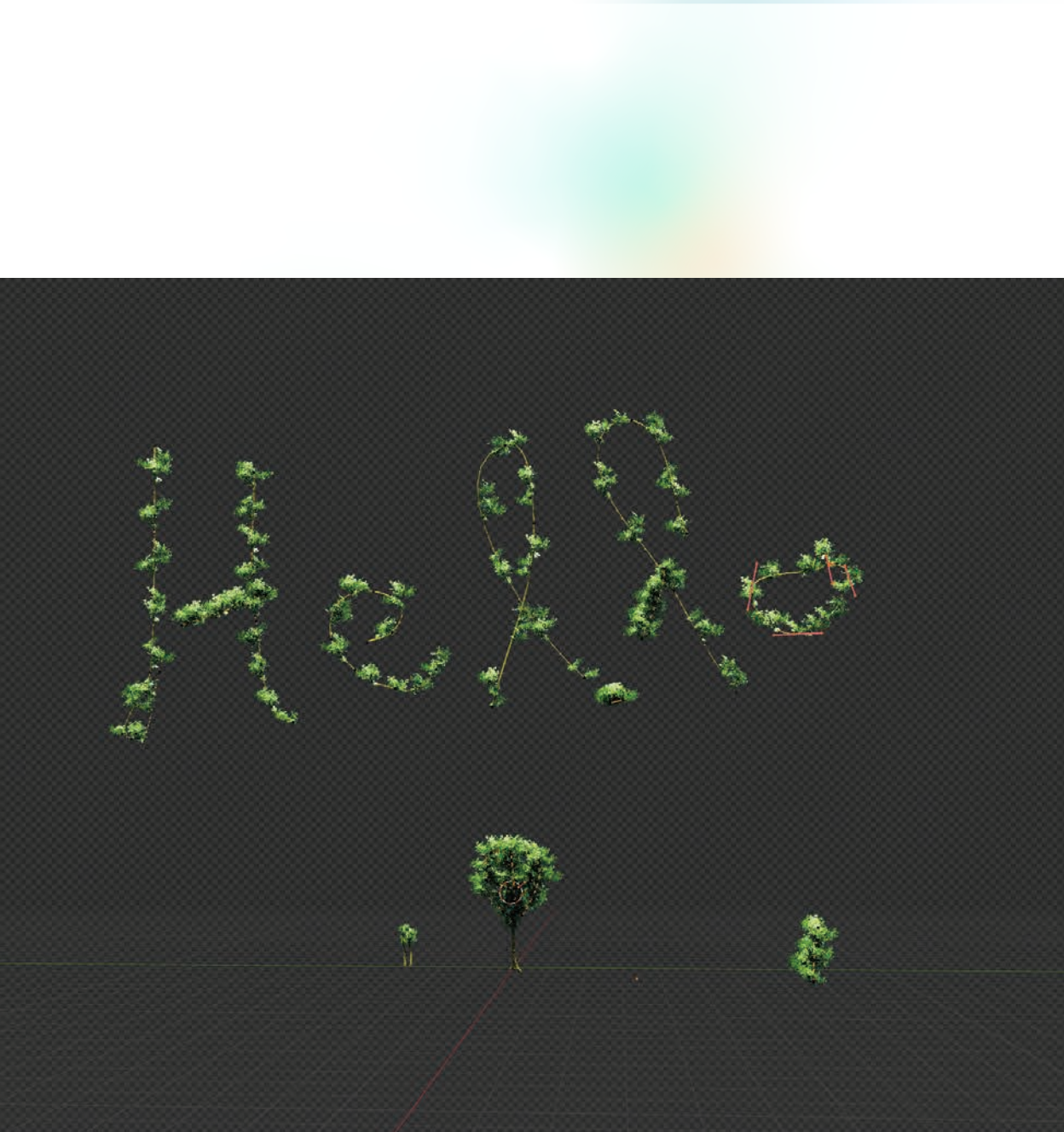
During the developing process, there is various kind of try out. Although the tool that I used is always the same, the approach constantly switches during the process.

Overall, the developing process can be separated into 3 part.

- 1 Base image creation with Blender
- 2 Layout and image refinement with Illustrator and Photoshop
- 3 Book Binding & Print

**1-1** The original reason I chose to use **Blender** was not only because it was a great tool for creating images, but also because I wanted to create props for my underlying 3D environment at the same time. Therefore, I utilized the **geometry node** in Blender to help me generate a variety of results quickly.

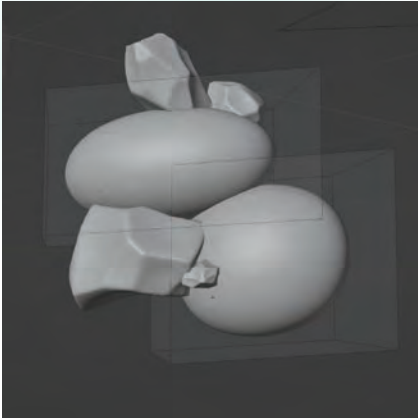




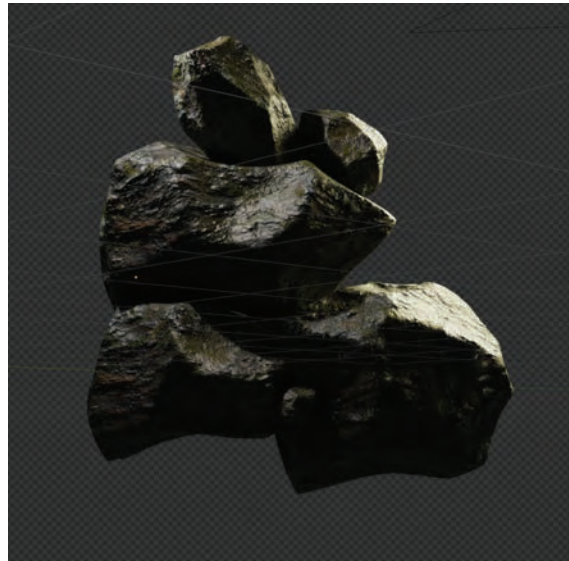
However, after I complete the generate all the nodes for Jia (甲), I realize that this is not a sustainable method for me to do for the rest of the project.



**1-2** Hence, I **changed the image making process** in Blender. I started by building the models in a transitional manner, so I would start from a base geometric shape and try to use the modifier to create models instead of using geometric node to create the model. While this way, I may be limited by the existing base, but it certainly speeds up the pace of image production.



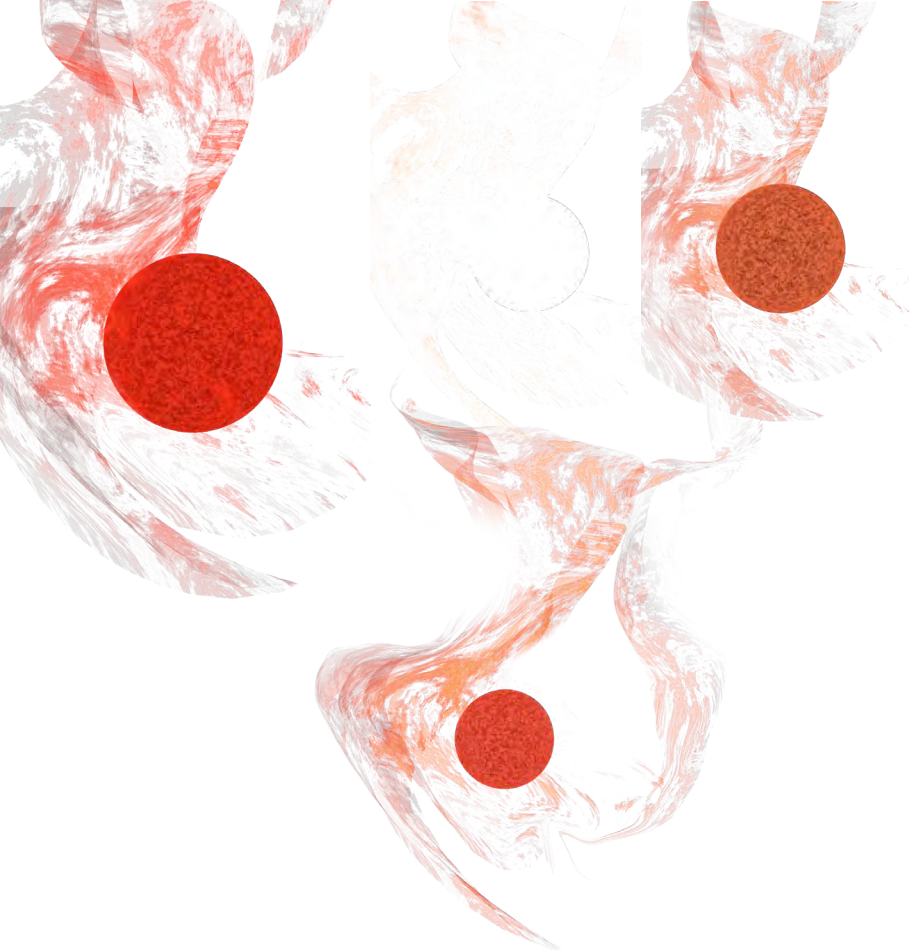
As the images show on the top, the base shape is a rectangular oval shape, and I was able to use the modifier to generate the shape for different rocks. Eventually, I would have a variety of different shapes on the right-hand side.





By using this method, I  
was able to generate  
the base image for the  
rest of the project.

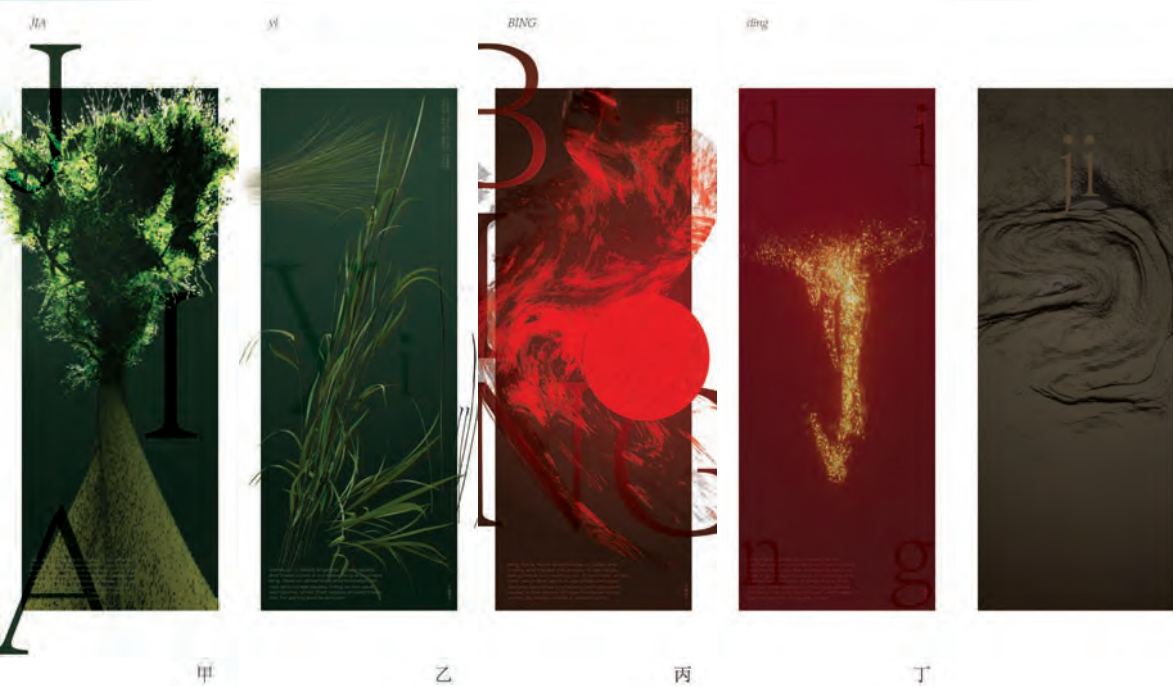






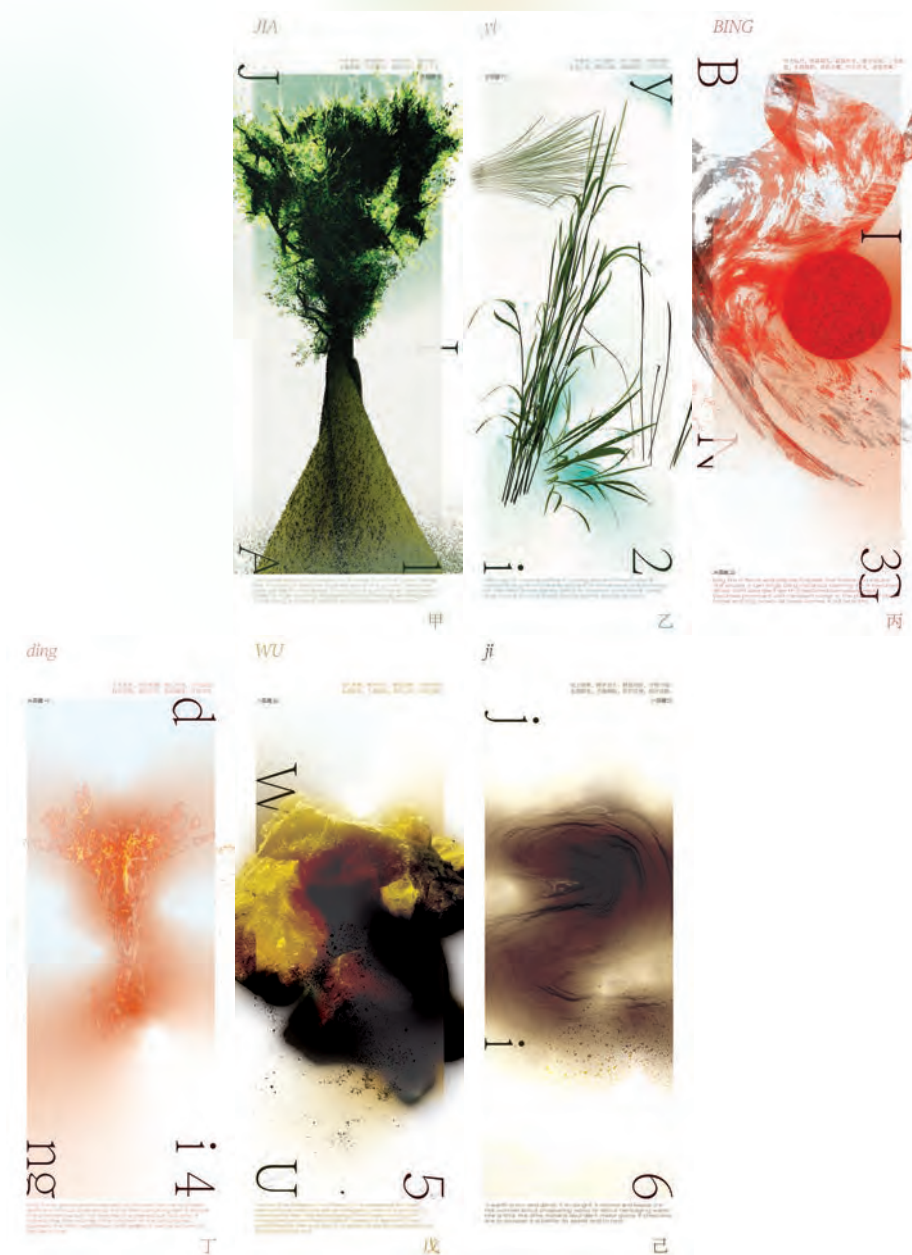


- 2 After, I finished some part of my images on Blender. I move on from it and carry the images into the **illustrator** to create the layout and refine the image.

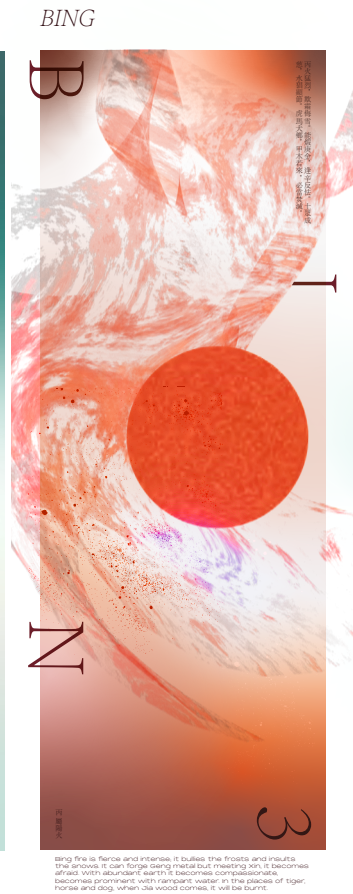


In the beginning of the layout and image making in illustrator, I want to experiment and see what would happen if the big typeface can interact with the elements, and at this point, I still hesitate of the overall look and feel.

Then I add a bit more elements into the layout,  
and it was from this moment I decide to push  
the overall looks and feel into a bit more clean  
and I want to give it a bit more space to breath;  
meanwhile still maintain the playfulness.



After several round of playing with layout, I decide to move the Chinese description into the image, and provide the images and increase the brightness of the images a little bit.

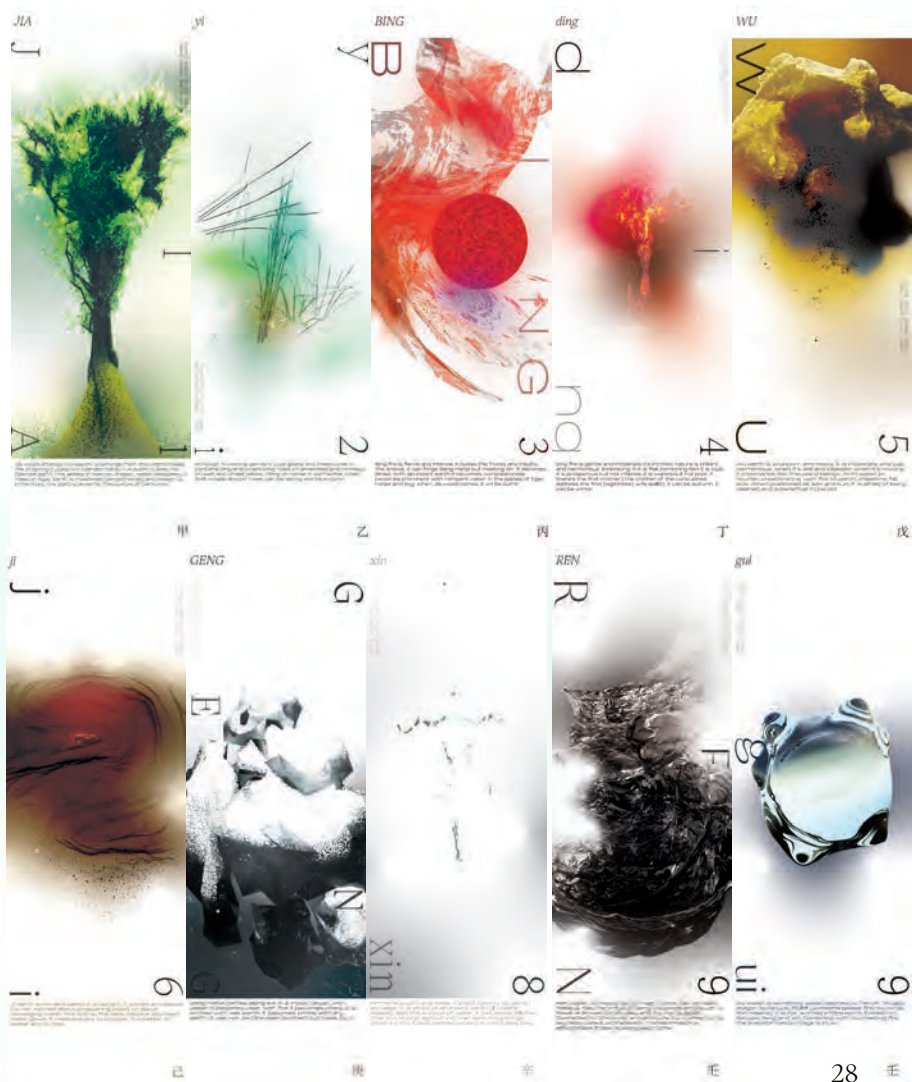


甲

乙

丙

Then I play with the gradient at the background and play with the images in order to figure out which approach may apply to the other pages and cohesive with others.





Later, I receive suggestions from advisor that texts maybe distracted from the image. Also, the advisor also wanted to see the shape of the image can looks like the Chinese Character a bit more.

JIA1



甲

BING3



丙

YI2



乙

GUI10



癸

XUN8



辛

GENG7



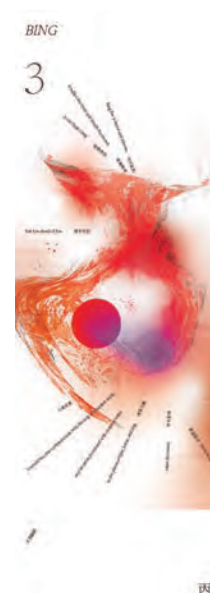
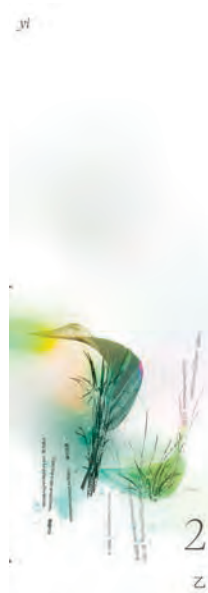
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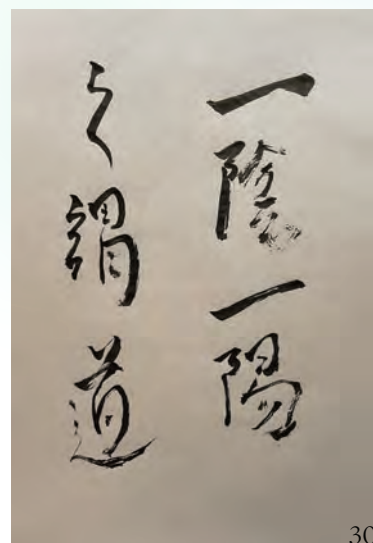
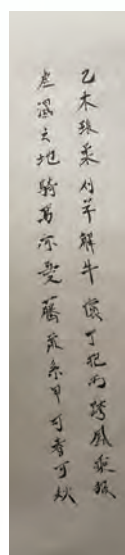
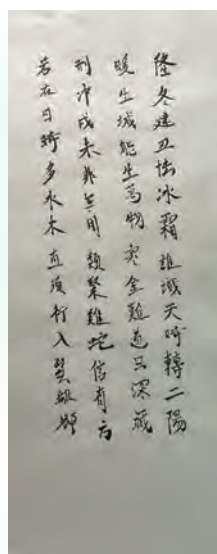


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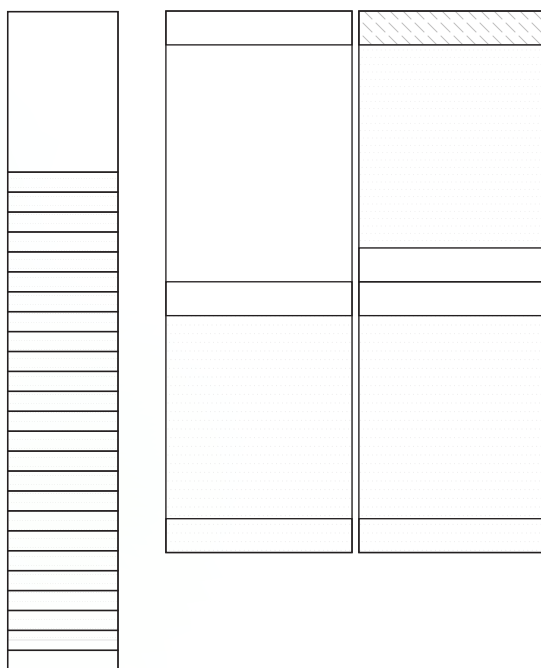




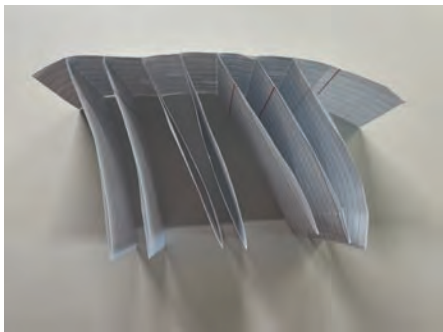
After losing the playful texts, I would like to bring them back. However, it seems not to work pretty well with some images, and the readability of the texts is questioned. Therefore, in order to address the lack of fun. I decide to add my hand write calligraphy.



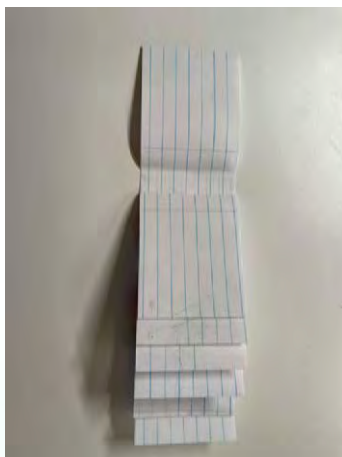
- 3 Also, in order to make the final outcomes appealing and understandable. I attempt several physical printing and try to figure the best way to deliver the message toward the audience.



I plan out the print template and define the print and bind area of the book to help me create the final outcomes.



Hence, I was able to build the first tiny mock-up from the template that I build.



And, then I print out the first test print base on the images that I have from the time.





With the further development, I create more images, and I bind them together with the size that I wanted at the time. Due to this time's test print, I am able to see how the potential printout may look the first time.





Out-  
come

4

Who am I?

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

—Laozi, Tao Te Ching, chapter 17

"He who knows other men is discerning; he who knows himself is intelligent."

—Laozi, Tao Te Ching, chapter 33

Understanding Yourself Through the External

Understanding who you are is a complex task. It is not enough to look at the external world and see the things that are around you. You must also look at the internal world and see the things that are within you. This is the only way to truly understand yourself.

Real Effects of Knowledge

Real effects of knowledge are not just in the mind. They are also in the world. When you know something, you can do something. This is the power of knowledge.

Applications

Although there is no doubt that knowledge is useful, it is not always used in the right way. Sometimes it is used to harm others. This is the danger of knowledge.

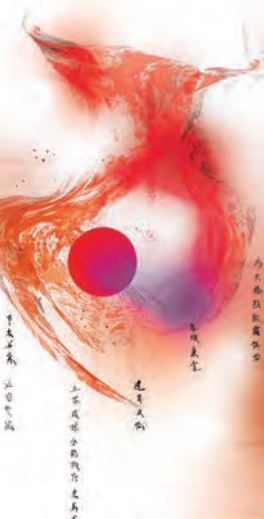
The External World

There are many things in the external world that we can see and touch. These are the things that we can know. This is the external world.

白雲

BING

3



Along the river and across the river, the water is always flowing. It is always moving. It is always changing. This is the nature of water.

ding

Along the river and across the river, the water is always flowing. It is always moving. It is always changing. This is the nature of water.



4

WU

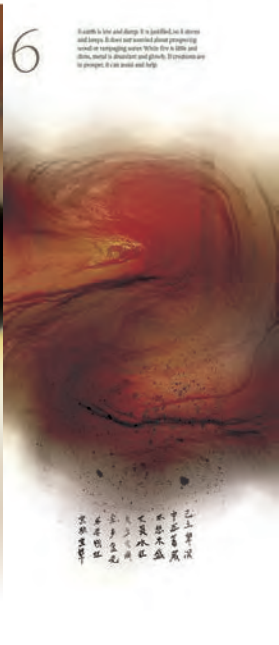
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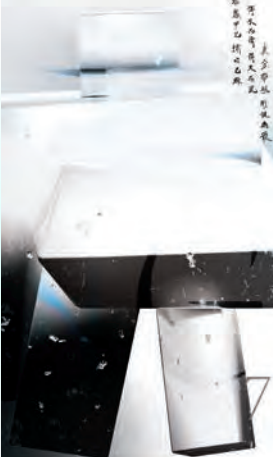
6



Outcome



Gang social structure with Hanger II is far more  
 robust. It becomes clear with some 20 min. It is with five, it becomes strong. It is  
 defined with one more, then it becomes better with five more. It is not the  
 (the other brother had been to 11 (the other team)).



美余帝族 明使典賓  
傳水內書 萬天而風  
此圖制五 五十七有記  
知悉中已 續之已與



温江布衣  
袁山子登樂水文君  
謝侯仙履  
然竹翠華  
夷猶自下

Full mouth of both head and neck. It is slender and (best if) is filled of sharp-pointed teeth, with 4 rows of a couple of inches. It can hold a fish and use it as a weapon. When it's not a fish (or another animal) it's a sword. (See below.)

21

8

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chou

9



三、四、五、六、七、八、九、十、十一、十二、十三、十四、十五、十六、十七、十八、十九、二十、二十一、二十二、二十三、二十四、二十五、二十六、二十七、二十八、二十九、三十、三十一、三十二、三十三、三十四、三十五、三十六、三十七、三十八、三十九、四十、四十一、四十二、四十三、四十四、四十五、四十六、四十七、四十八、四十九、五十、五十一、五十二、五十三、五十四、五十五、五十六、五十七、五十八、五十九、六十、六十一、六十二、六十三、六十四、六十五、六十六、六十七、六十八、六十九、七十、七十一、七十二、七十三、七十四、七十五、七十六、七十七、七十八、七十九、八十、八十一、八十二、八十三、八十四、八十五、八十六、八十七、八十八、八十九、九十、九十一、九十二、九十三、九十四、九十五、九十六、九十七、九十八、九十九、一百。

[illegible]

10



and more to increasing needs, yet it still has much more to go. When the drought comes, the food bank will have trouble getting the food to the people who need it most. It will have to find a way to get the food to the people who need it most. It will have to find a way to get the food to the people who need it most.

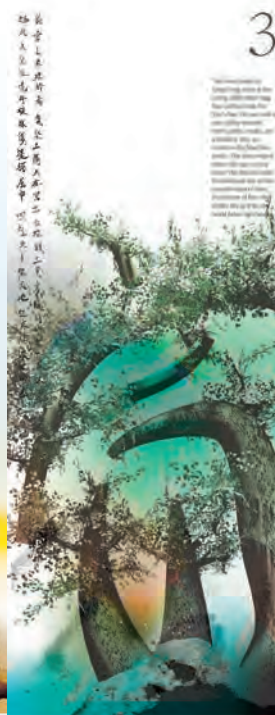
不似之也  
名氏息文地家新  
蘇東馬道缺此新

YIN

笑

3

“The most common mistake I see is that people are not taking the time to understand the business they are entering. They are not doing their homework. They are not taking the time to understand the business they are entering. They are not taking the time to understand the business they are entering.”



字

37

十二地爻



### Positive Control Group

The Pacific Oriental Museum (POM) holds some 100,000 objects, including the entire collection of Japanese lacquerware donated for a total of 100,000 US dollars by the artist in the early 1970s. The first three years after the gift of the Japanese lacquerware are going to be the most important for the museum, as it is the time when the collection will be established. The first three years are going to be the most important for the museum, as it is the time when the collection will be established. The first three years are going to be the most important for the museum, as it is the time when the collection will be established.

[illegible]

1

子

丑

字

吳文子今在楚考茨河江斗不盡  
夫道無何心以人問今暖寄堂主  
君建年級無名既過即行還身後  
杜作望石墓合而即成江平使賊聲

修來正此情冰霜在歲時情三  
暖生暖也生萬物 我全無志云深  
門中亦未幾月 幾幾難此寫者  
看此情時多未三歲打入籠籠

[illegible]

子

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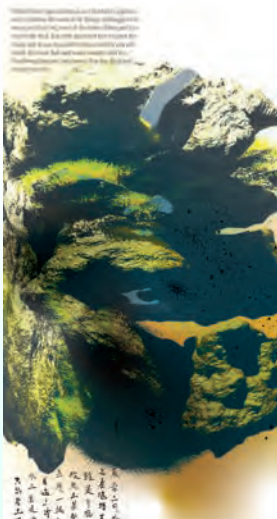
4

卯時：日出萬物生，萬物皆欣欣然。

卯時：日出萬物生，萬物皆欣欣然。



卯時：日出萬物生，萬物皆欣欣然。



5

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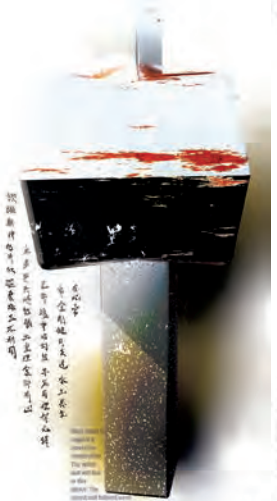
XU

午

8



酉時：日入萬物歸，萬物皆歸。



戌時：日入萬物歸，萬物皆歸。



亥時：日入萬物歸，萬物皆歸。

6 7

巳

XU

午

9

10 11

申

酉

戌

[illegible]

The important thing is to select the right talent to drive the business and have good people with the right experience, vision and skills to drive the business, and then to be able to get the right investment capital. The first step is to get the right talent. The second step is to get the right investment capital. The third step is to get the right talent. The fourth step is to get the right investment capital. The fifth step is to get the right talent. The sixth step is to get the right investment capital. The seventh step is to get the right talent. The eighth step is to get the right investment capital. The ninth step is to get the right talent. The tenth step is to get the right investment capital. The eleventh step is to get the right talent. The twelfth step is to get the right investment capital. The thirteenth step is to get the right talent. The fourteenth step is to get the right investment capital. The fifteenth step is to get the right talent. 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Thank you for walking through the woods. The  
cypress that I grew when I was a boy is the  
biggest I have ever seen. I do hope that you can see the  
cypress in a forest. It is a very beautiful tree. The  
cypress is a very beautiful tree. It is a very beautiful tree.  
The cypress is a very beautiful tree. It is a very beautiful tree.



### Special Thanks

### Special Thanks

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Julie Margrave  
Executive of profit

Lecturer at San Jose State University

**BUSINESS CASE**

Author of 五丁氏字體圖  
之說明和筆順, 內容詳  
盡。

100

Connie Huang  
 Randall Sargent  
 Tracy Chung Wan

## References

1. **Abstract** - 1 page  
 2. **Introduction** - 1 page  
 3. **Methods** - 1 page  
 4. **Results** - 1 page  
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 6. **Conclusion** - 1 page  
 7. **References** - 1 page



一陰一陽之謂道  
成久有性也  
繼之者善也

甲乙丙丁戊己庚辛壬癸  
子丑寅卯辰巳午未申酉戌

JIA

As wind attends to  
beasts, What it emerges  
from the south winds fan  
In spring, it does not  
withstand wind. In autumn,  
it does not withstand frost.  
Seldom late in autumn, it rises  
on the wings. While under  
disaster, it rises on the  
light. Earth is connected  
and heaven is in harmony.  
The plant stands for  
the monarch of creation.



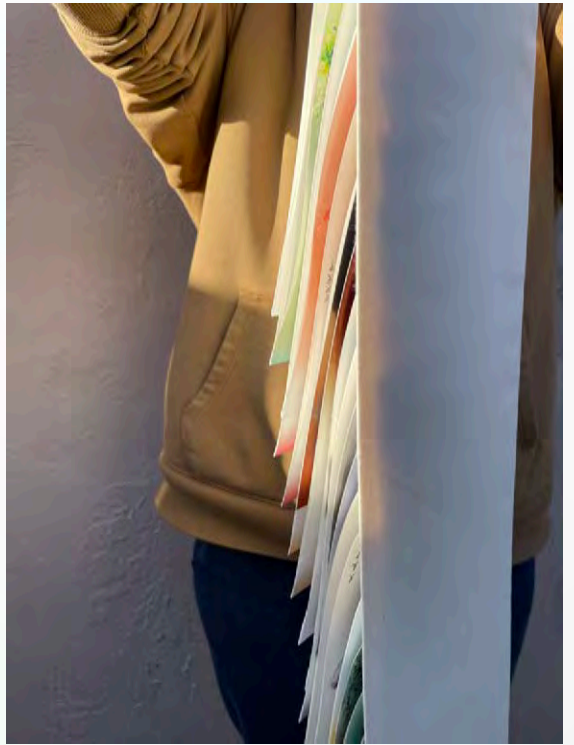
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辛丑月  
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癸亥日

之謂道  
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戊午年  
己未月  
庚申日  
辛酉年  
壬戌月  
癸亥日







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## Colophon

**Inferi** by Blaze Type

San José State University  
BFA Graphic Design Program  
Class of **2022**