

# *The Three Realms, the Four Domains, and the Five Elements:*

## *An Investigation into Human Nature*

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### *The Element Metal*

Metal is divided into geng ( 庚 ) yang metal and syin ( 辛 ) yin metal. Metal types are slender and slight in their build. They have long faces, high cheekbones, and white faces. Endowed with clean and pleasant facial features, they are also eloquent talkers who can express themselves well. They are lively, alert, and spirited. Their voices are resonant and clear, with the sound coming from their lips. When they get angry they become cold and wear a sarcastic smile, and their faces become pale. The breakdown of the five elements are clearly evidenced in Chinese opera, where different characters wear different face masks that reveal their personality. For instance, Tsau Tsau ( 曹操 ), the treacherous minister, always wears a white mask; whereas Gwang Yu ( 關羽 ) the loyal, righteous general, always wears a red mask.

Among the Five Virtues of Confucianism, metal is related to righteousness ( 義 ). In Buddhism, it is related to the precept against stealing. In Taoism, it is related to primal emotion ( 元情 ). The lungs are related to metal.

Yin metal people tend to have ill-fated lives. They are easily upset or annoyed and they also like to annoy others. This kind of vexation injures the lungs, and therefore, yin metal people tend to have illnesses such as asthma, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and other pulmonary infections. Since the lungs and the large intestines work as a pair, yin metal people also have intestinal problems.

As for yang metal people, they have a sense of righteousness, and are generous and open-minded. They are quick and alert, and have a keen sense of discernment. Yin metal people, on the other hand, can be ruthless, jealous, and cruel. They are false, argumentative, put on an ingratiating appearance, and flatter you with their words; but a dagger is hidden beneath their smile. The most obvious faults of yin metal are:

1. ruthless ( 辣 )
2. harming ( 害 )
3. discriminating ( 分 )
4. debating ( 辯 )
5. contentious ( 爭 )

Since metal is related to autumn, yin metal people have something like the autumn wind about them. They are stern and awe-inspiring. They can be like the autumn wind which gets all the leaves flying, leaving the trees desolate and forlorn. Yang metal people, on

the other hand, can be likened to the full harvest in autumn; there's a sense of abundance and fullness to them.

Metal refers to all kinds of metallic alloys or compounds, such as gold, silver, bronze, copper, iron, tin, lead, zinc, and so forth. Because there is such a wide range of metals, metal people are also quite varied. Some metals when hit make a clear and resonant sound; while others do not. For instance, true gold symbolizes yang metal, which is characterized by a majestic sense of justice. Metal is subject to dissecting, cutting up, and analyzing. Metal can be made into different kinds of utensils, such as scissors, knives, swords, and many other kinds of sharp implements. And yet, variations among these are endless .

First, I will introduce one kind of yin metal. This kind of person has a melancholic and sorrowful personality, and is given over to worry and tears. The leading female character Lin Dai-yu ( 林黛玉 ) in the famous Chinese novel DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER ( 紅樓夢 ) is a stereotypical yin metal character. From morning until night Dai-yu has knitted brows. She cries at the drop of a hat. She likes to provoke and irritate others in her speech and her words are like a small, sharp cutting instrument. Even if she were passionately in love with someone, outwardly she would still assume a cool and aloof manner. Yin metal people are easily annoyed, and this hurts their lungs. Lin Dai-yu had a severe case of tuberculosis. She coughed up blood all the time. She was wistful and sighed a lot, and died when she was very young. A common saying goes, "Beautiful young women often suffer premature deaths." That is a fitting description of Dai-yu and other yin metal women like her. Because they lack an open-minded and generous spirit, they are all caught up in tragic romance and revel in sorrow. Such women suffer ill-fated lives.

There's another kind of yin metal personality. These people are ruthless and cruel, such as some cut-throat businessmen who stop at nothing but resort to the meanest underhanded tricks to sabotage their business rivals. We have the ancient maxim "In any given situation, allow people some leeway." But yin people won't give others elbow room. They drive you to the brink of despair. Because they injure their own virtue and their primal feeling, as a consequence, their offspring are often unfilial and unworthy.

China has produced several famous queens who were strong yin metal characters. The first of these was Lu Jr( 呂雉 ), the first wife of Han, Gau-dzu ( 漢高祖 ), the founding emperor of the Han Dynasty (247-195 B.C.). After Gau-dzu ascended the throne, he took in a few concubines, one of which was the Lady Chi ( 戚姬 ). One day, Empress Lu went on an inspection tour of the concubine quarters. When she walked into Lady Chi's apartments, she discovered that Han Gau-dzu was there. He had fallen asleep across a couch with his head resting on the lap of Lady Chi. Lady Chi was caught in an embarrassing situation: the rules of etiquette demanded that she rise and greet the empress. However, if she did, she would certainly wake up the emperor, and that would also be a breach of etiquette. She was caught in a bind and didn't know what to do. Empress Lu took one look, turned her head around, and stormed out. The fire of jealousy and hatred burned in her heart; she was determined to get even.

After Han Gau-dzu woke up from his nap, the Lady Chi told him about what had transpired. She felt uneasy about her own situation. She had a son called Ru Yi (如意) who was a capable administrator. He was given the fief of Jau (present-day Honan Province) and was known as the Prince of Jau. The emperor had long toyed with the idea of abolishing the Crown Prince Wei(惠帝), son of Empress Lu, and establishing Ru Yi as the crown prince instead. However, before he had a chance to do so, Han Gau-dz died. Empress Lu, who had been waiting with bated breath for a chance to take revenge, now jumped on the opportunity. She sent an envoy to the region of Jau to inform Prince Ru Yi of the king's death, but deliberately sent the message a day late. When Ru Yi arrived at the palace for the mourning services, Empress Lu had him arrested for arriving a day late for the funeral, and charged him with being disrespectful to his dead father. On top of that, Empress Lu had all four limbs of Lady Chi cut off. Then Lady Chi was thrown into a latrine where she lingered on and died a bitter death. Empress Lu was known for this and many more cruel feats.

Han Syin (韓信) was the commanding general who helped Han Gau-dzu unite the entire kingdom. After Han Gau-dzu became King, Han Syin made known his personal ambitions by requesting that he himself be made Prince of Shan Chi (山齊王). One time, when Gau Dzu was away on official business, Empress Lu summoned General Han Syin into the palace. When he came, she accused him of unlawful entry into the inner palace, and had him executed. In history, she was known as someone who murdered a loyal minister, also as someone who killed a beloved concubine. If killing someone could bring her advantage, she could kill without batting an eye.