



58th World Congress Of Dance Research

CID UNESCO

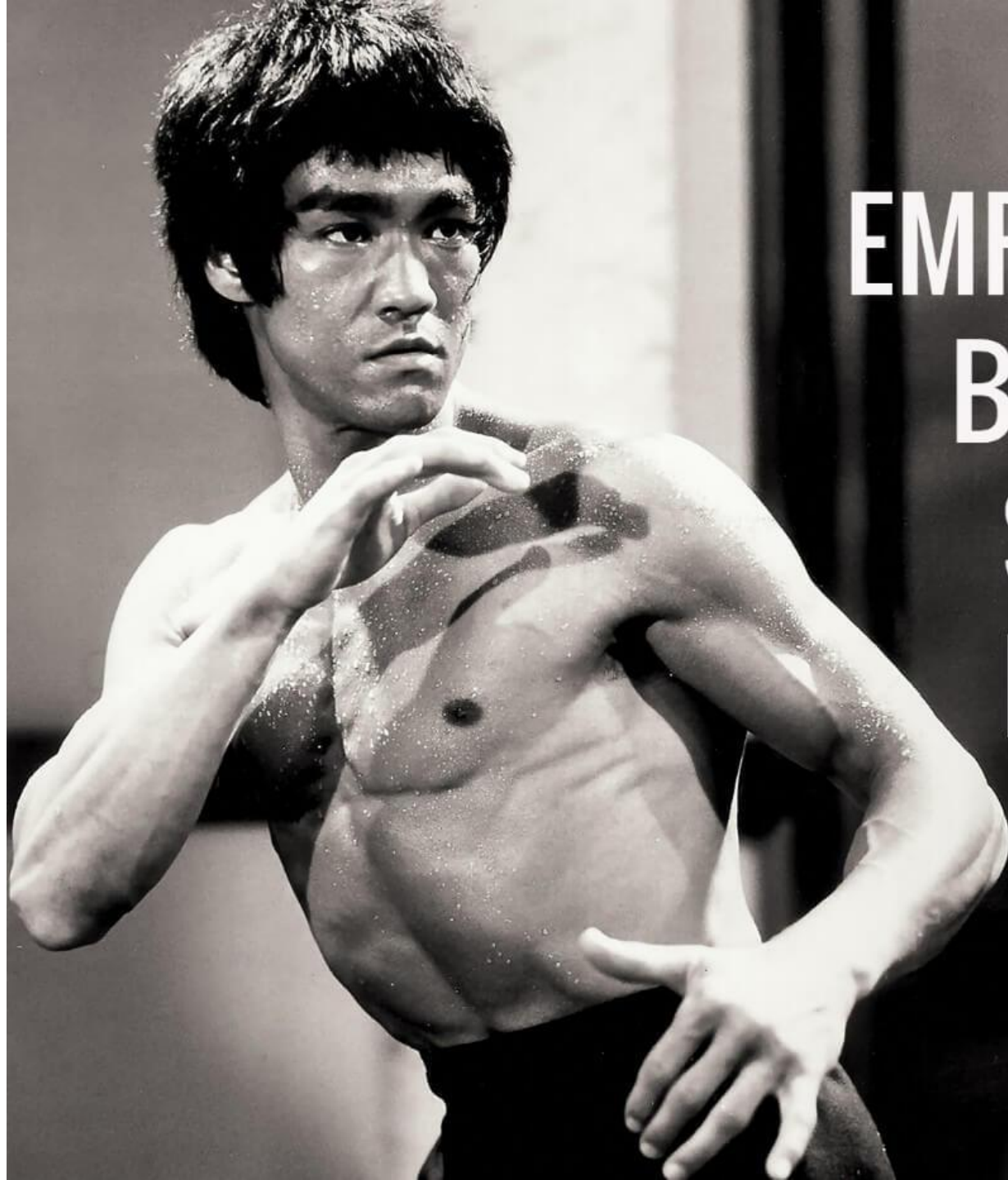
Being Formless: Daoism, Kung Fu and Dance

Prof. Rochelle Yi Hsuan Yang

The background of the slide features two silhouetted figures in dynamic Kung Fu poses against a twilight sky with soft clouds. The figure on the left is in a high, balanced pose with one leg raised and arms extended. The figure on the right is in a lower, more grounded pose with arms spread wide. The overall mood is serene and artistic.

The objective of research

Kung Fu as intangible cultural heritage
The connection between Daoism, dance and martial arts
Humanity and philosophy in martial arts
Performativity: cultural and artistic hybridization



EMPTY YOUR MIND.
BE FORMLESS,
SHAPELESS,
LIKE WATER.

Bruce Lee



EMPTY YOUR MIND, BE FORMLESS, SHAPELESS - LIKE WATER.

If you put water into **a cup**,
it becomes **the cup**.

You put water into **a bottle**
and it becomes **the bottle**.

You put it in **a teapot**
it becomes **the teapot**.

Now, water can flow
or it can crash.

Be water my friend.

- BRUCE LEE | | TheMindsJournal

MINDJOURNAL

Daoism Philosophy in Chinese Kung Fu

Unification of Man and Nature





Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

Taoist developed the concept of Yin and Yang to explain that all things have two aspects.

Harmony can only be achieved through seeking a balance of Yin and Yang energies
The concept of the Kung Fu dance performances is based on the Dao theory-the universal efficiency of rhythm.



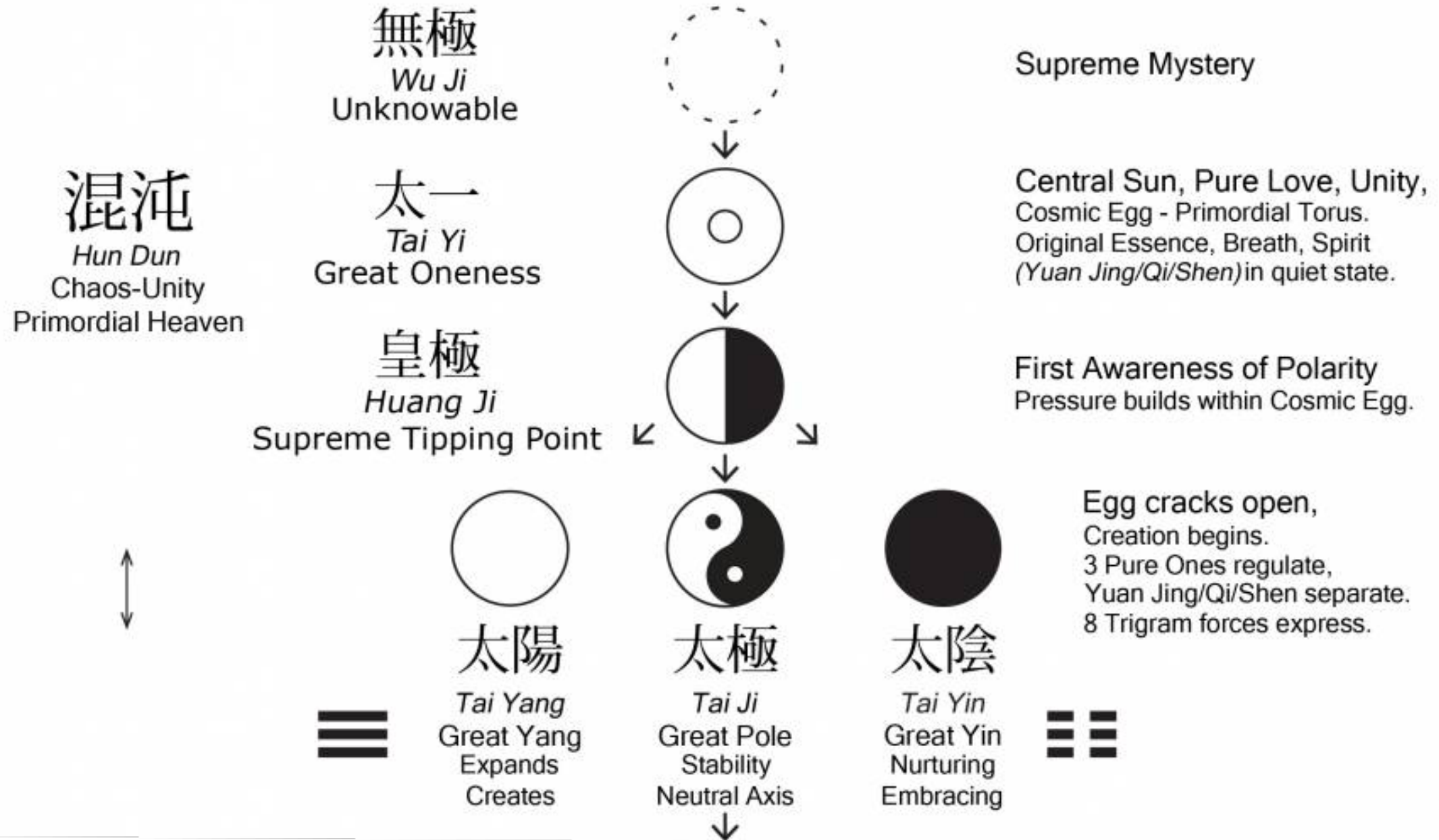






“White Water” by Cloud Gate Theatre in Taiwan

Tao Cosmology 道

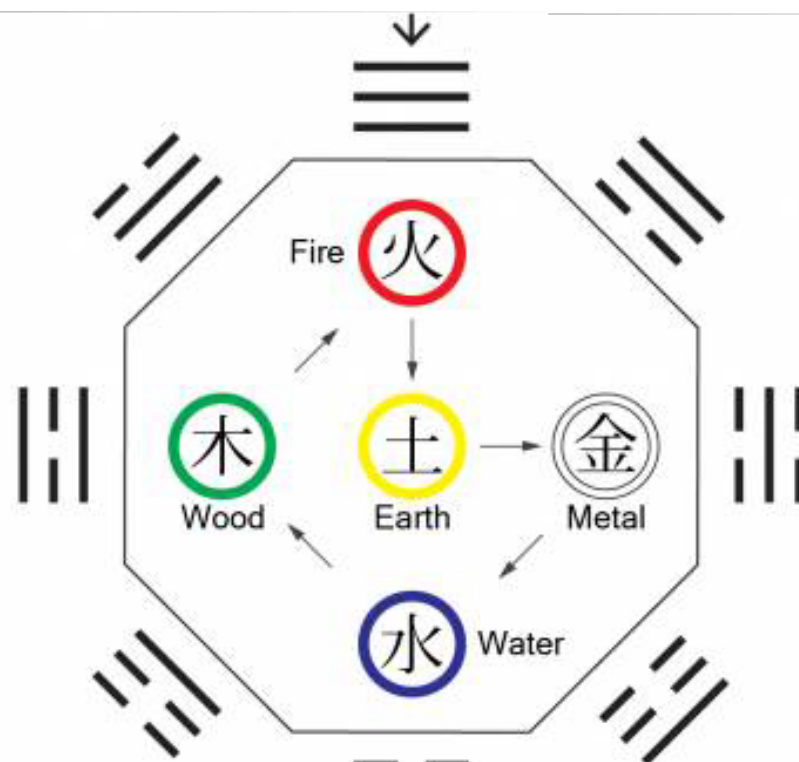


天
Tian
Early Heaven



地
Di
Earth
Later Heaven

人類
Ren Lei
Humanity



Yin-Yang flows in 5 phase
Creation Cycle (*wu xing*).

10 Celestial Stems
regulate the 5 seasons,
shape the worldly destiny
of each human soul (*ling*).

Prenatal human Jing/Qi/Shen
balanced within single
androgenous (male-female) soul.



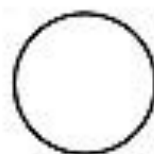
12 Earthly Branches/Animals
regulate 10,000 things (*wan wu*).

12 Human vital organ spirits
regulate heart-mind (*xin*).

Jing/Qi/Shen polarize into Male &
Female body. This inspires greater
creativity to complete our worldly destiny
(*ming*) and spiritual self-realization (*xing*).

Evolution of the Trigrams

Wu Ji



Tai Ji



Liang Yi



Yang-I



Yin-I

Si Xiang



Tai Yang



Shao Yin



Shao Yang



Tai Yin

Ba Gua



Qian



Dui



Li



Zhen



Sun



Kan

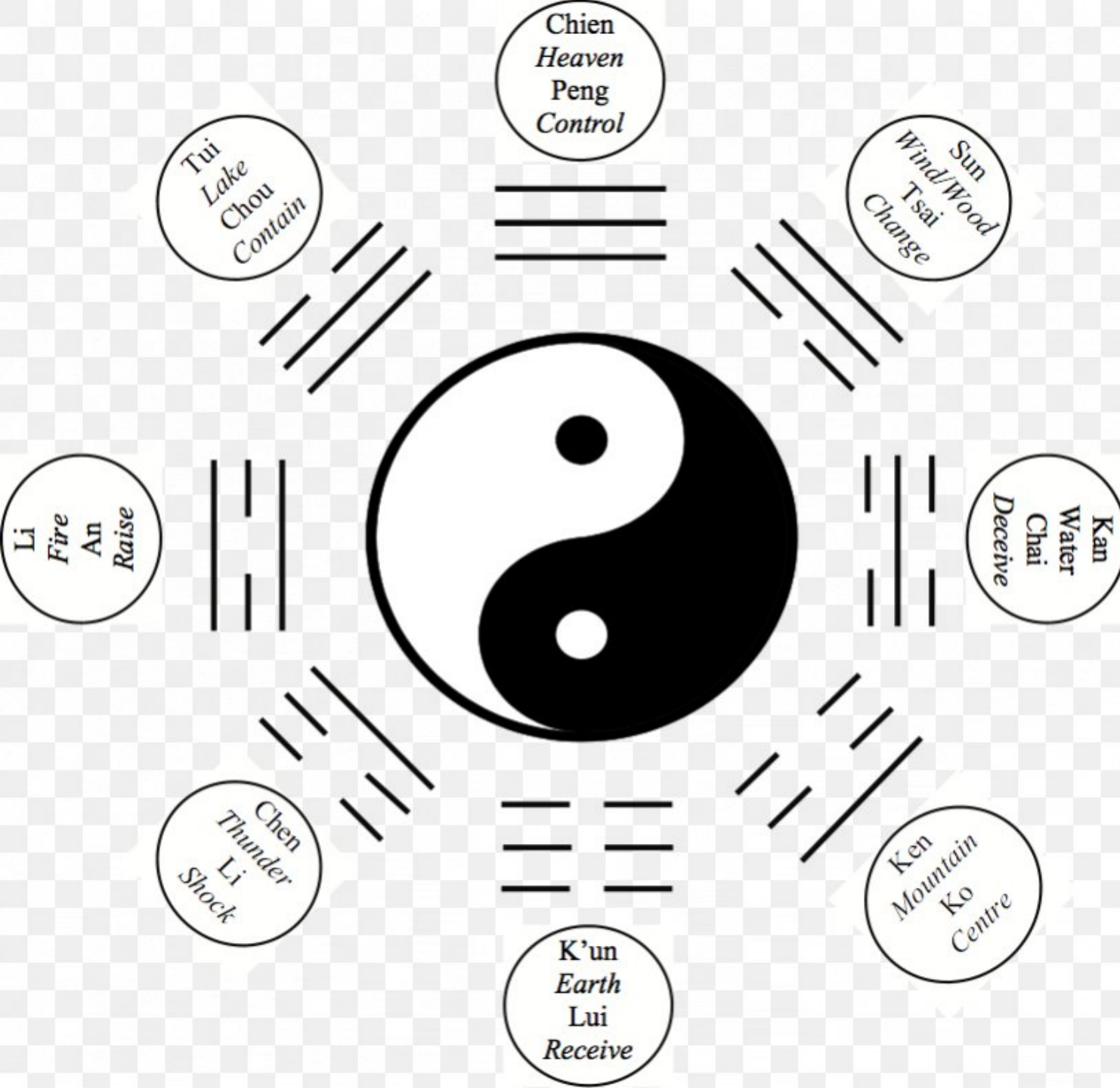


Gen



Kun

Theory of the Eight Trigrams



- ☰ – Qián (乾) – Heaven
- ☷ – Kǎn (坎) – Water
- ☶ – Gèn (艮) – Mountain
- ☳ – Zhèn (震) – Thunder
- ☴ – Xùn (巽) – Wind
- ☲ – Lí (離) – Fire
- ☷ – Kūn (坤) – Earth
- ☱ – Duì (兌) – Lake



Daoism, humanity and nature



“ Beyond time” expresses aptly the relationship between “man” and “universe”
inspired by Daoism

U Theatre from Taiwan, 2018

The Moral Philosophy of Daoism

Spirit of Xia Yi

Three Jewels for a Daoist:
Compassion, Moderation and Humility

侠義

俠之大者
為國為民





楊 照

主 講

俠義仁心

探索 金庸 的武俠世界

Heart Method

Zen techniques within martial arts
strengthen the body, mind, and spirituality of
the learner.



BUDDHISM



Practices involve meditation, the eightfold path, mindfulness, etc.



Buddhism rejects the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God



We are stuck in an endless cycle of birth, death, & rebirth. This can be broken only by attaining Nirvana.



All human beings are ignorant and must be woken up.



Means of salvation - The Eightfold Path

ZEN BUDDHISM



Focused on non-dualism, non-conceptualism, meditation, & simplicity.



There is a Buddha inside each of us & it lives



Life after death is Nirvana.



All humans have the enlightened state within them.



Means of salvation - Meditation and Koan practice.

Heart Methods



“In order to control myself I must first accept myself by going with and not against my nature.”

-Bruce Lee





^T Zen and Resilience

The heart of Immovability



The Profound Connection Between Dance and Martial Arts

Dance Ritual & Cultural Hybridization

The concept of the Kung Fu dance performances is based on the Dao theory-the universal efficiency of rhythm.

In the past two decades, the convergence between modern dance and martial arts have been developing which has produced unique forms of Kung Fu dances and theatre productions such as U theatre and Cloud Gate based in Taiwan. Their choreographies are highly associated with Daoist philosophy and spirituality of Zen.

The Profound Connection Between Dance and Martial Arts

Contemporary Kung Fu dance choreographies noticeably combine the meditation techniques, Martial art movement and natural elements such as water, fire, wood, metal and earth. The fusion dance seem to re-discover the primal tie between ritual, legend, drama and natural elements.

Martial arts performances which are influenced by the universal efficiency of rhythm, formless theory by the ancient philosopher Lao Tsz, and the Yin/Yang theory. The unique form of Kung Fu Dance re-discovers the artistic component of martial arts, and manifest human urge for harmony, beauty and peace which are the basis of the philosophy of martial arts.

舞 武

WŪ



CLASSICAL CHINESE DANCE



VS

GYMNASTICS



Dance & Martial Arts

- Choreography
- Posture
- Technique
- Formation
- Rhyme
- Props
- Imitative /abstract
- Cultural hybridization

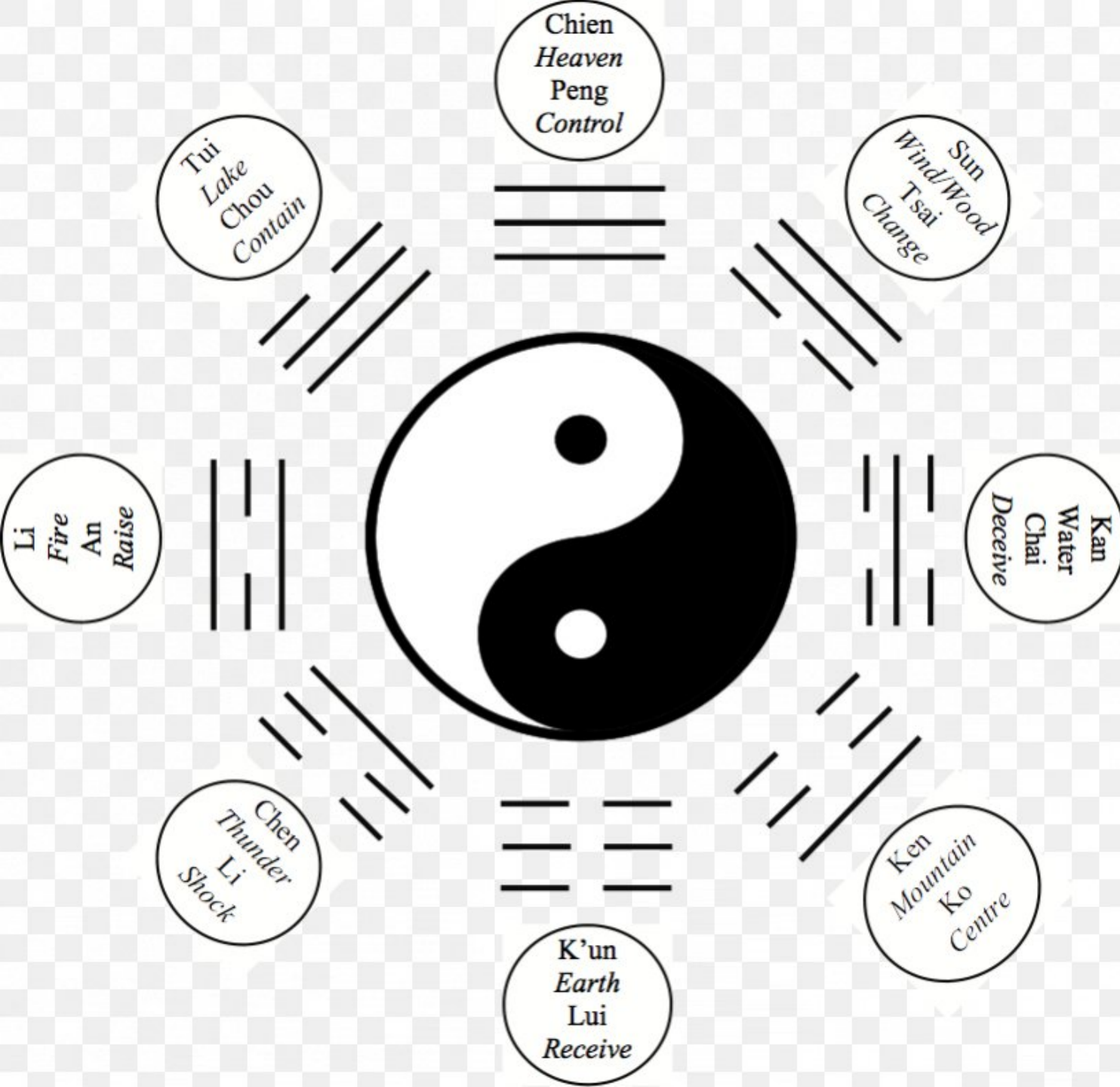






Performativity of Kung Fu

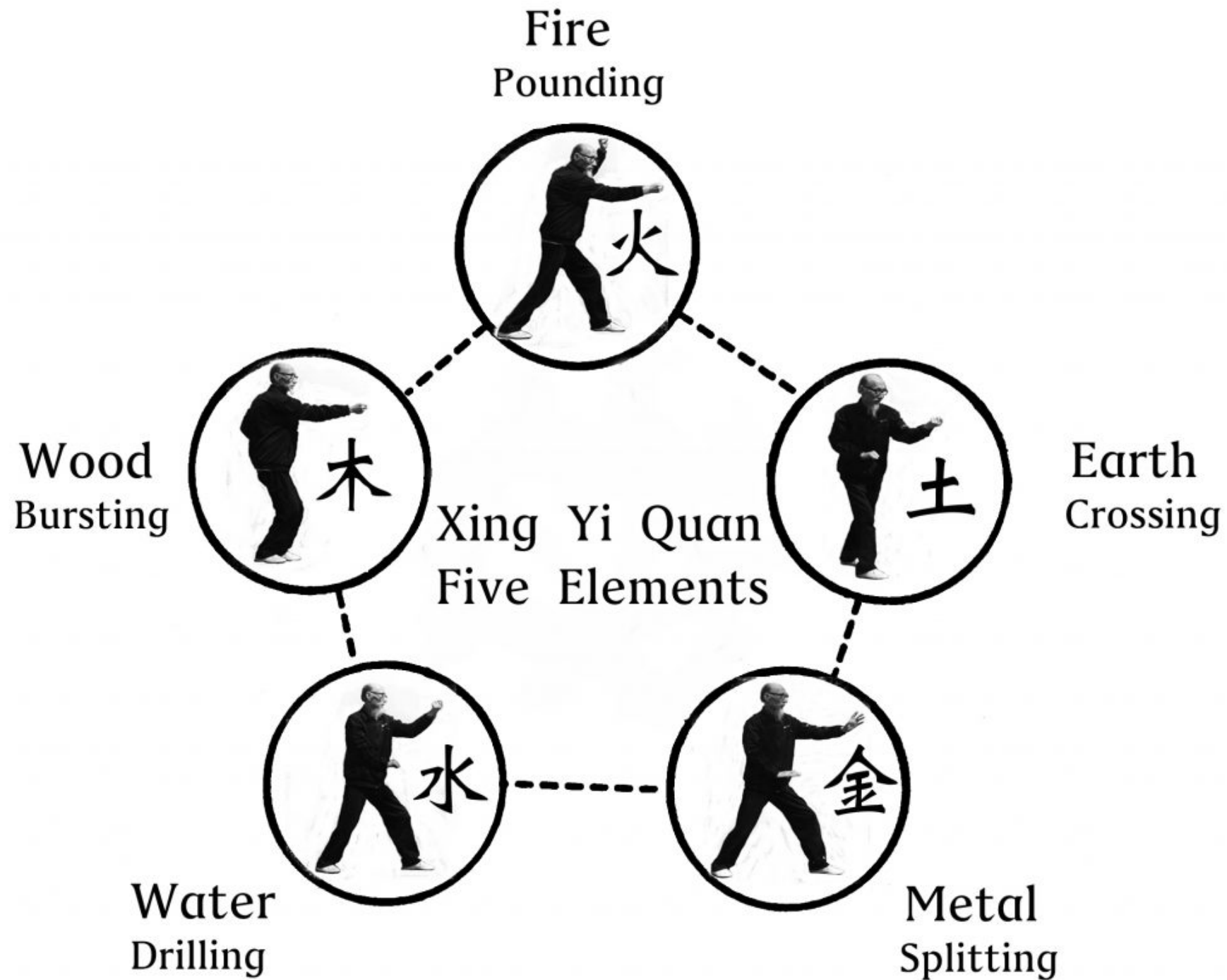
From Daoism, Zen Philosophy to Contemporary Dance

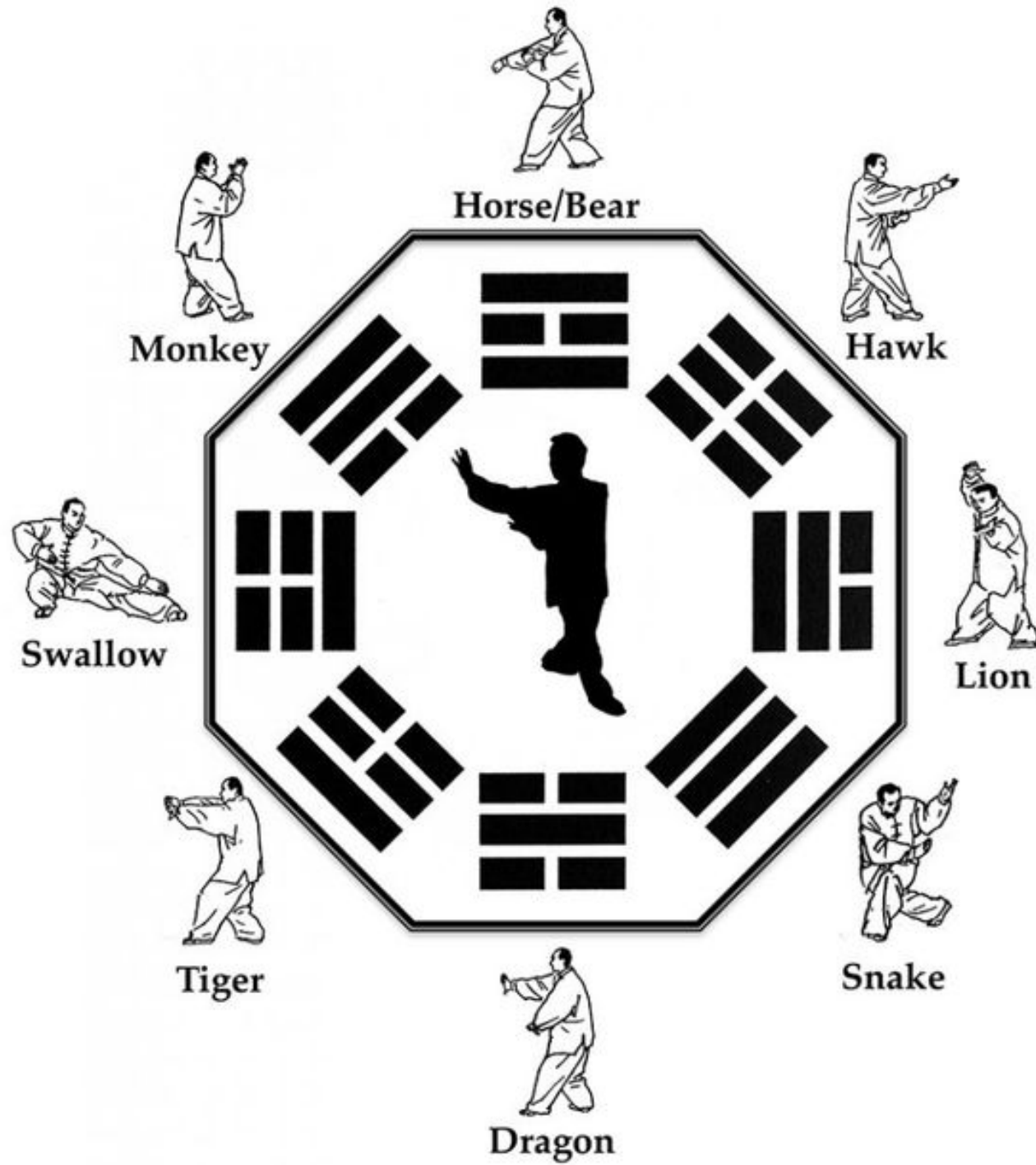


Ba Gua

- ☰ – Qián (乾) – Heaven
- ☵ – Kǎn (坎) – Water
- ☶ – Gèn (艮) – Mountain
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- ☴ – Xùn (巽) – Wind
- ☲ – Lí (離) – Fire
- ☷ – Kūn (坤) – Earth
- ☱ – Duì (兌) – Lake







Shoaling Kung Fu: Swallow

In Chinese martial arts, there are fighting styles that are modelled after animals. Swallow is one of extensive form of the Crane



Imitative-styles (像形拳)

The six well-known traditional animal styles of Shaolin Kung Fu are the dragon, the snake, the tiger, the leopard, the panda and the crane.

KNOW YOUR KUNG FU



MONKEY



TIGER



VIPER



MANTIS



CRANE



PANDA



KUNG FU PANDA

Kung Fu Dance and Pop Culture





Source: Ninja Ballet New York





Eight Immortals



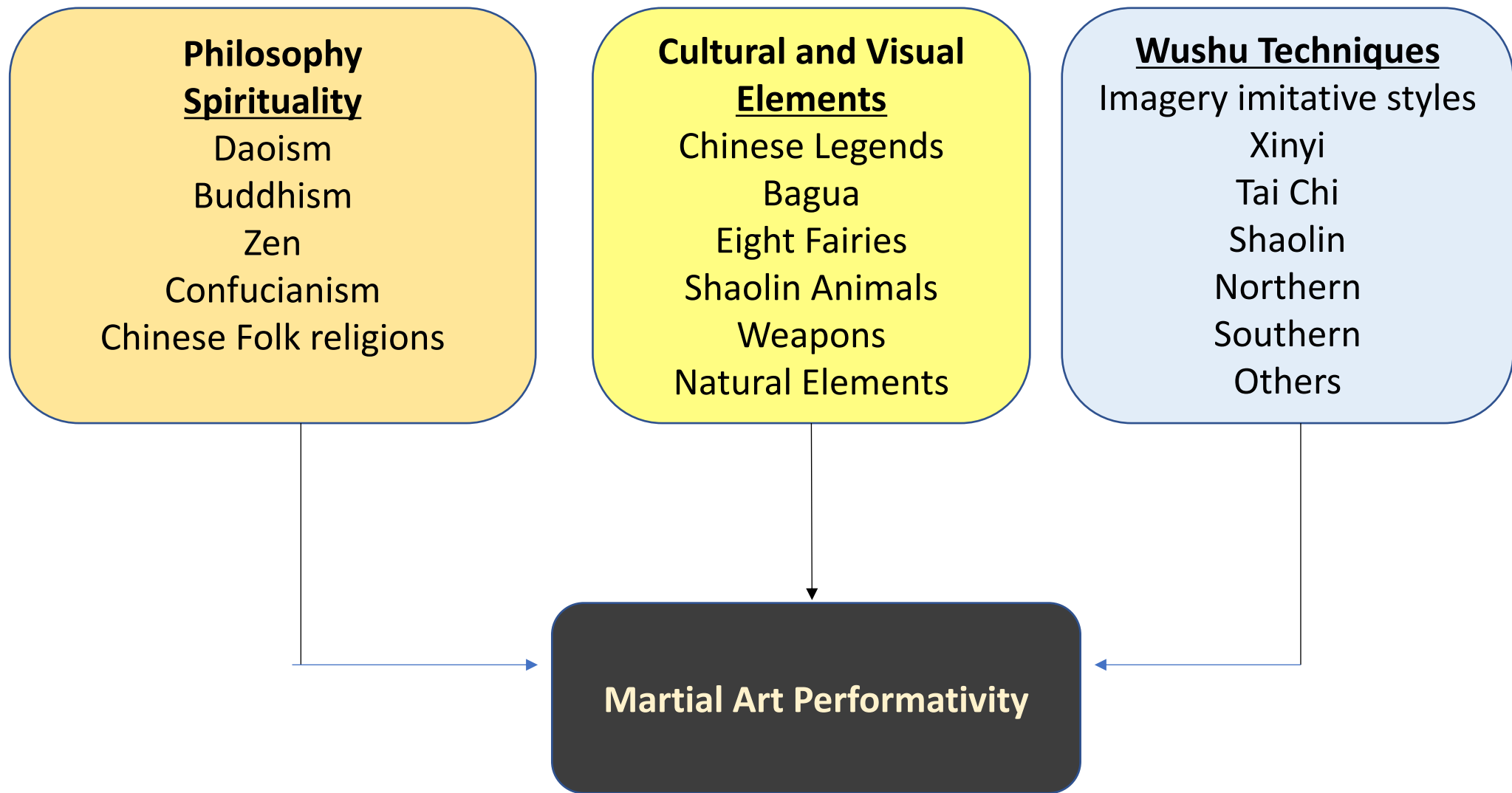
Martial Arts Movies and Xia Yi Characters

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon





Performers stage a martial arts performance at Shaolin Temple scenic area on the Mount Songshan, Central China's Henan Province, July 13, 2019. (Photo: Xinhua)

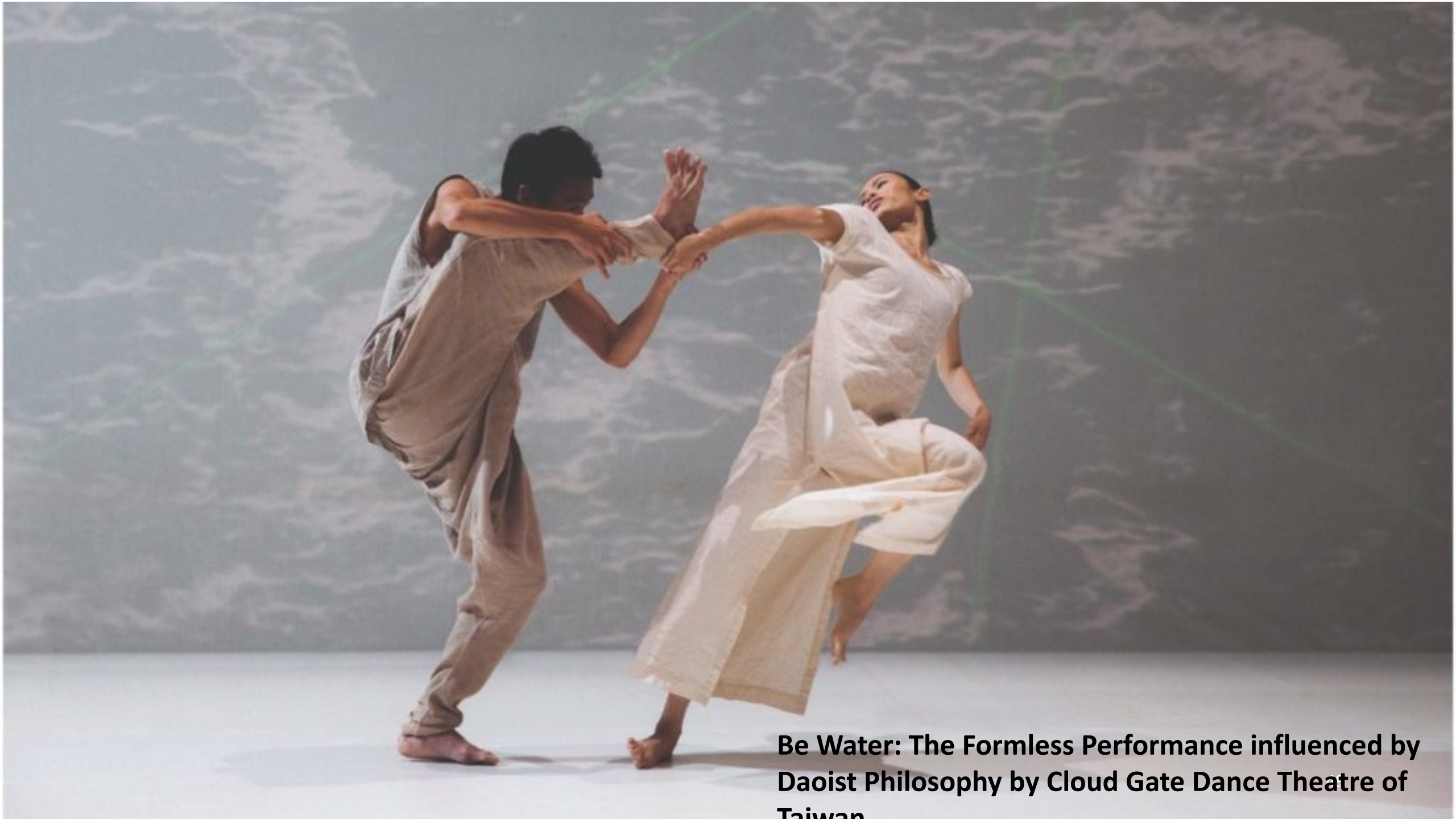


Kung Fu as intangible cultural heritage

Tai Chi-UNESCO

In 2020, the ancient Chinese martial art, has been recognised officially by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.





**Be Water: The Formless Performance influenced by
Daoist Philosophy by Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of
Taiwan**

Zen and The art of dance

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan: Between East and West, Heaven and Earth

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan is one of the Asia's most acclaimed contemporary dance company, founded by choreographer Lin Hwai-Min whose choreography has been profoundly influenced by Buddhist Zen and Daoist philosophy.

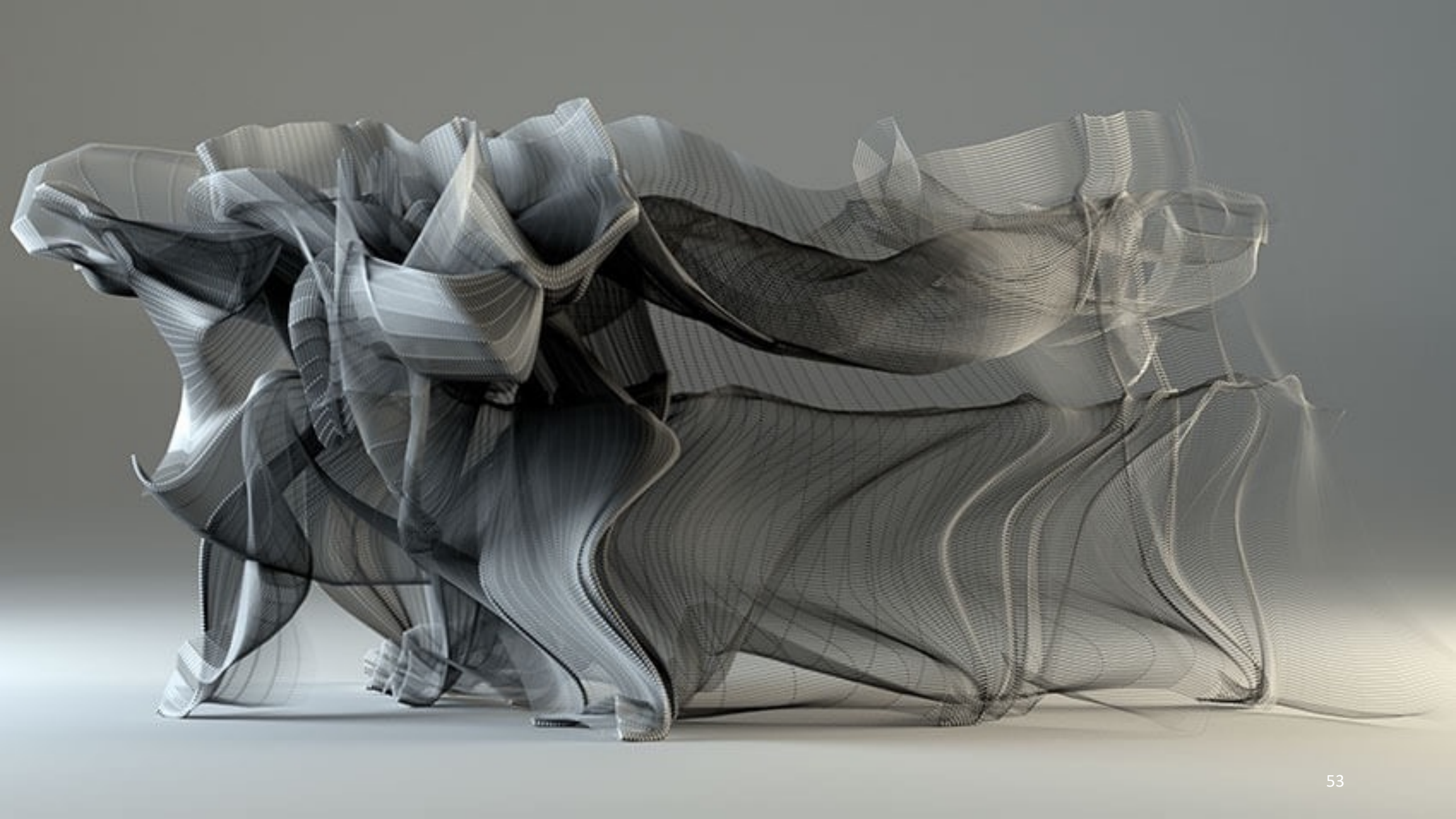


White River: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan



Songs of the Wanderers by Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan







About the speaker

Name: Rochelle Yi Hsuan Yang

Award-winning artist, choreographer and curator. Rochelle Yang's practice encompasses performing art, photography, new media arts and experimental video.

Rochelle's artworks and dance choreography have won several international awards, including London International Creative Awards (UK), International Photography Awards (IPA, USA), Honorary Doctorate in Arts, CISAC, France (The International Confederation of Authors and Composers Societies), Chinese Youth Award for Excellence (New York) Golden Pin Design Award (Taiwan), Chinese Arts Global Award in Beijing, Asia Pacific Dance Award (Thailand, Macau), Champion of World's Super Talent in Dance (Thailand), etc.

Yang is from Taiwan who currently works as Associate Program Director in Art and Design, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.

Video Examples & Visual References

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOfINGjB_Ik
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PG6VntE-gg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJKiftu5TE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lg6PrDRuVqc>
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Thank you

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