

5ZEN Five-Element Energy · 11-Stage Commentary

W (Wood) — Energy of Growth and Expansion

Wood represents the expansive life-force that makes all things grow.

In the cosmic cycle, Wood operates as the principle of beginning, growth, direction, and possibility.

Across stages 1–11, this is the journey of life in which a seed sprouts, takes root, branches out, grows leaves, and becomes a forest.

Stage	Cosmic Principle of Wood
W1 — Seed	The primordial life-force of Wood is condensed. There is “potential,” but it has not yet manifested.
W2 — Sprout	The ascending energy of Wood breaks through the surface of the earth for the first time.
W3 — Root	The energy of Wood moves downward, forming a stable structure.
W4 — Pruning	The principle of restoring balance in the process of growth (the harmonizing nature of Wood).
W5 — Leaf	The stage of breathing life — exchange with light and air.
W6 — Sunlight	The contact point where the energy of Wood meets the realm of Fire.
W7 — Wind	The aspect of Wood that governs “flow and change.”
W8 — Growth Rings	One full cycle of Wood’s rhythm is completed — the accumulation of time.
W9 — Forest	Individual life is integrated into a larger ecosystem.
W10 — Harvest	Wood’s cycle is completed and bears fruit — the stage of “Wood’s outcome.”
W11 — Regeneration	Wood’s energy does not end in death but transitions into a preparatory state for new life.

Core Rhythm — Wood

Phase	Rhythm Core
Early (1–3)	Birth of life
Middle (4–8)	Expansion of growth
Late (9–11)	Completion and regeneration

“Wood is the element of beginnings and growth.

From seed to forest, all life moves through expansion, balance, and then back into a new cycle. The names of the Wood stages are the journey of life itself, and each stage symbolizes both the physical process of growth and a structure of expanding consciousness.”

F (Fire) — Energy of Expansion and Vitality

Fire, in the cosmic cycle, receives the growth from Wood and represents the time when the will of life appears as light and heat.

This is the process of making the unconscious visible, the stage of emotions and creative expression. The rhythm of Fire is divided into “radiation – peak – purification,” which follows the universal principle of Fire:

life-energy spreads outward, then gathers back inward.

Stage	Cosmic Principle of Fire
F1 — Spark	The first vibration of Fire — the state just before energy ignites.
F2 — Ignition	The ascending power of Fire begins to operate in earnest.
F3 — Flame	The period when the energy of Fire burns at its strongest — the peak.
F4 — Passion	After explosive expansion, Fire continues to burn steadily.
F5 — Radiance	The state in which Fire illuminates all things — the diffusion of light.
F6 — Competition	The peak of overheating — when two fires collide and clash.
F7 — Purification	The stage where the over-heated Fire burns itself away.
F8 — Transformation	The time when the heat remaining after combustion is converted into another form.
F9 — Festival	The social sharing of Fire — a time when many transformed fires gather as one.
F10 — Inner Fire	External heat diminishes, and only the inner fire remains alive.
F11 — Phoenix	Completion of Fire’s cycle — fire turns to ash and becomes new life again.

Core Rhythm — Fire

Phase	Rhythm Core
Early (1–3)	Stages of ignition
Middle (4–8)	Expansion and transformation
Late (9–11)	Integration and rebirth

“Fire is the element of emotion and creation.

Just as life ignites when the seed meets light, the Fire stages are the journey in which emotion turns into expression.

From ember to phoenix, emotion burns, purifies, and then circulates again as the new light of life.”

E (Earth) — Energy of Stability and Responsibility

Earth is the axis of the universe, gathering the growth of Wood and the radiance of Fire to create form and structure.

If Fire expands everything outward, Earth internalizes, stabilizes, and materializes that energy, creating order and system.

Thus, the 11 stages of Earth follow the rhythm of “establishment – maintenance – integration – responsibility,”

with social institutions, relational responsibility, and tangible outcomes as key themes.

Stage	Cosmic Principle of Earth
E1 — Foundation	The first emergence of Earth energy; it cools and stabilizes the heat of Fire.
E2 — Structure	Gathers scattered energy and forms order.
E3 — Endurance	A time when “continuity” matters more than growth.
E4 — Resources	The period in which practical foundations (wealth, people, skills) gather.
E5 — Responsibility	As the structure is completed, roles and duties emerge within it.
E6 — Boundary	As the structure expands, boundaries with the outside are formed.
E7 — Cultivation	Within stability, continuous effort grows the fruit.
E8 — Fertility	The most stable and productive time for everything.
E9 — Stability	A rhythm of complete balance — continuation without major shifts.
E10 — Legacy	The structure is completed, and its results remain as systems or institutions.
E11 — Center	The point where all cycles converge again — the ultimate conclusion of Earth.

Core Rhythm — Earth

Phase	Rhythm Core
Early (1–3)	Formation of order
Middle (4–8)	Establishment of stability
Late (9–11)	Completion and integration

“Earth is the element of stability and responsibility.

It cools the heat created by Fire and anchors the growth of Wood into reality.

Every stage of Earth tells the story of ‘form and order.’

From foundation to center, relationships become more solid and meanings remain as structures.

Earth is not just static calm — it is the rhythm of balance and responsibility.”

M (Metal) — Energy of Judgment and Value

Metal (金), in the universal cycle, is the element that solidifies and completes the form, order, and value created by Earth.

The essence of Metal is “purification” and “selection.”

It discards what is unnecessary and leaves only what is real — this is judgment, wisdom, and the discovery of essence.

These stages function both as social value judgment and as the rhythm of inner insight within the individual.

Stage	Cosmic Principle of Metal
M1 — Ore	The archetype of Metal, in an unrefined state.
M2 — Mining	The time of insight when hidden value is discovered.
M3 — Extraction	The purification stage of filtering out what is unnecessary.
M4 — Purifying	Purity increases in the fire — essence becomes more concentrated.
M5 — Forging	Under strong heat and pressure, form is created.
M6 — Alloy	The fusion of different metals.
M7 — Shaping	The shape of value is fully revealed.
M8 — Treasure	The highest value; the peak of social trust.
M9 — Sharing	The stage of sharing value with others and with society.
M10 — Crown	The time when value becomes an institution, norm, or standard.
M11 — Oracle	Material value transforms into insight.

Core Rhythm — Metal

Phase	Rhythm Core
Early (1–3)	Beginning of purification
Middle (4–8)	Completion of essence
Late (9–11)	Integration and transcendence

“Metal is the element of judgment and value.

Once the structure created by Earth is complete, Metal distinguishes true from false and leaves behind ‘value.’

From Raw Light to Oracle, the journey of Metal is the process of discarding what is unnecessary and keeping only what is true.

Socially, this is the formation of standards and judgment; personally, it is the purification of the self and the birth of insight.”

S (Water) — Energy of Insight and Circulation

Water is the source of all life. It cools the heat of Fire and melts the crystallized results of Metal to prepare for new life again.

Water has no fixed shape, accepts everything, and governs the unconscious functions of inner purification, emotional recovery, and energy regeneration.

The 11 stages of Water follow the rhythm of “purification – adaptation – recovery – integration.” Within the deep circulation of emotion, memory, and the unconscious, Water creates the soil for a new rhythm to emerge.

Stage	Cosmic Principle of Water
S1 — Droplet	The first vibration of Water — the beginning of purification.
S2 — Flow	Emotional energy begins to circulate again.
S3 — Connection	The spreading power of Water — restoration of relationships and exchanges.
S4 — Reflection	The time when water becomes still and reflects itself.
S5 — Dream	New possibilities arise after purification.
S6 — Adaptation	A period of adjustment to environmental change.
S7 — Deep Sea	The deepest layer of emotion — core of the unconscious.
S8 — Healing	The rhythm of emotional recovery and forgiveness.
S9 — Wisdom	The time when inner insight becomes clear.
S10 — Peace	Purified emotions settle into tranquil balance.
S11 — Eternity	The end of one cycle and the beginning of a new one.

Core Rhythm — Water

Phase	Rhythm Core
Early (1–3)	Beginning of emotional recovery
Middle (4–8)	Inner purification and regeneration
Late (9–11)	Insight and completion

“Water is the element of insight and circulation.

It cools the heat created by Fire and melts the results of Metal to conceive life once more.

The stages of Water are the circulation of emotion and the journey of unconscious purification.

Droplets gather into flow, pass through the deep sea, and arrive at the oceans of peace and eternity.

Water is not the end — it is the doorway to a new beginning.”