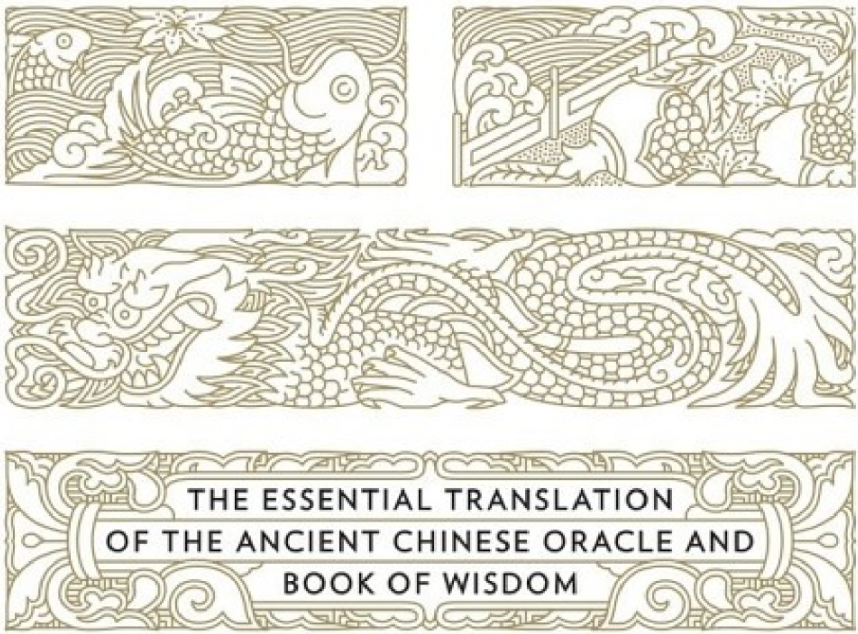
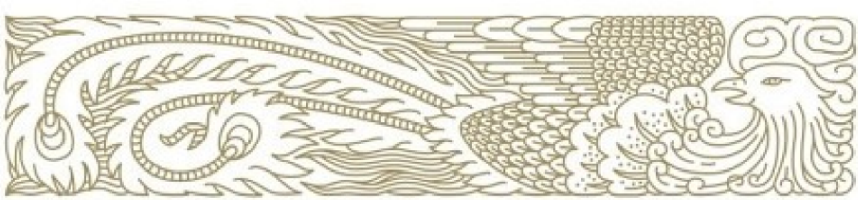


THE ESSENTIAL TRANSLATION OF THE ANCIENT CHINESE ORACLE AND BOOK OF WISDOM

I·CHING

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY BY

JOHN MINFORD



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Introduction

FROM DIVINATION TO ORACLE

The roots of the Chinese classic the *I Ching*, or the *Book of Change*, lie in ancient practices of Divination. More than three thousand years ago, in the Bronze Age society of the Shang dynasty, the Spirits of Nature and of the Ancestors were regularly questioned and placated by Kings, their Shamans, and their Scribes, through Divination and Sacrifice. These Rituals were accompanied by music and dance, the consumption of fresh and dried meats and cereals, the drinking and libation of alcohol, and perhaps the ingestion of cannabis.[1] The questions posed often concerned the Great Affairs of State. Should the King go to war? Was it going to rain (and would the crops be affected)? Should human prisoners or animals be sacrificed, to bring an end to the drought? Should the King go hunting for elephants? Was the harvest going to be a good one? Sometimes the questions were more personal. Was the King's toothache the result of an offense caused to an Ancestor? What was the significance of the King's dream? In order to elicit answers to such questions, the shoulder bone (scapula) of an ox or the undershell (plastron) of a turtle was ritually prepared and anointed with blood. Carefully placed indentations were made on it, and heat was applied to the indentations with a rod of some sort, producing cracks on the opposite surface. The cracks were then "read" as an oracular response.

The bones and shells were often used several times, and were inscribed with the details of each Divination. They were stored in underground depositories, where they would lie forgotten for thousands of years. Occasionally a farmer might bring one or two to the surface with his plough. These Dragon Bones (as they were known) were ground into powder and used in traditional Chinese medicine. They were especially valued for the healing of wounds.

It was only very recently—in the last years of the nineteenth century—that a number of scholars recognized their true nature and began avidly collecting them. The richest trove was discovered (not surprisingly) in and around the ancient Shang-dynasty capital at Anyang, in Henan Province. Since the first extensive excavations of the 1920s, hundreds of thousands of Oracle Bones have been unearthed, and numerous volumes reproducing the inscriptions have been published.[2] Chinese and non-Chinese scholars have engaged in the complex and arduous process of deciphering and interpreting the documentation of this early form of communication with the Other World. Their writings have shed fresh and often startling light on the Shang dynasty, revealing a society greatly at variance with the Way of the Former Kings as it was idealized by sage-philosophers of a later time, such as Confucius. The Shang Priest-Kings seem to have been hugely preoccupied with Warfare and Sacrifice, and in particular with large-scale Human Sacrifice. It was a gruesome business. As the contemporary archaeologist Robert Bagley has coolly observed, "Beheading was the normal method of Sacrifice, but some victims were dismembered or cut in half and a few children seem to have been trussed up and buried alive."[3]

The powerful vassal state of Zhou from the western hinterlands finally conquered its eastern Shang neighbors toward the end of the second millennium BC, and founded its own dynasty. In the period that followed, the earlier shamanistic practices of Divination gradually lost ground to the more "civilized" or "secular" practice of achillomancy—Yarrow Divination—performed by casting the dried stalks of the yarrow, or milfoil, plant, *Achillea millefolium*.[4] Mantic insight into the workings of the Universe and into the dynamic of a situation was provided by the casting of these Stalks.[5] As a nobleman remarks in an entry for the year 644 BC in the early chronicle known as the *Zuo Commentary,* "The Turtle gives Images; the Yarrow gives Numbers."[6] At some point—and here the story becomes obscure—a body of traditional Divination lore seems to have been organized under a series of sixty-four diagrams, or Hexagrams, *gua*, each made up of six Divided (Broken) or Undivided (Unbroken) horizontal Lines. Traditionally

the invention of these Hexagrams, or rather of the three-line Trigrams that were thought to constitute them, was ascribed to the legendary Fu Xi, divinely inspired by his observations of the Patterns of the Universe, of Nature, of Heaven and Earth. Some have speculated that it may have been the fall of the Yarrow Stalks themselves that gave rise to these patterns of Divided and Undivided Lines; others trace the Hexagrams back to early patterns scratched on the Oracle Bones.[7] In any event, an oracular text, or "book," became attached to the Hexagrams. This is as much as we can piece together of the hazy early story of the Oracle. There seem to have been several books of a similar nature. One (ours) was known as the *Zhouyi*, the *Change of Zhou*.[8] In those days, it should be remembered, books were bundles of bamboo strips bound together with silk threads or leather thongs.

There have been many different explanations for the term Change itself, today pronounced *yi*, in ancient days closer to *lek*. In the Oracle Bone Inscriptions it is used for a change in the weather: "It will not rain, it will become [*change to*] overcast." "Will it be [*change to*] an overcast day?"[9] Sometimes the change in the weather was the other way round, and the sun came out. But there seems to be no "sun" element in the early graph, which looks more like drops of water (rain or mist) beside the moon.

As the American scholar Donald Harper has observed, there is simply too much that we do not know to permit a precise account of the development of the Hexagrams and of the evolution of the *Zhouyi* from Oracle to what I will refer to loosely as a Book of Wisdom, from achillomancy (Yarrow Divination) to bibliomancy (Divination by the Book known as the *Change of Zhou*).[10] What is indisputable is that several of the early formulae used by the Diviners of the Shang era, as they occur in the surviving Inscriptions, are also found in the Bronze Age text of the Oracle. Richard Kunst has summarized this well: "The divinatory lexicon . . . took up in the late second millennium and early first millennium from where the Oracle Bone Inscriptions left off, then continued to develop through the years of the Zhou dynasty."[11]

This Bronze Age text, which is the basis of Part II of my translation, seems to have gradually stabilized toward the middle of the dynasty (sometime between the ninth and sixth centuries BC). It was widely used by statesmen of the period, as we can read from several episodes in the *Zuo Commentary*. It was canonized as a classic, the *I Ching*, or the *Book [Classic] of Change*, in 136 BC, by which point it had already been provided with a series of commentaries.[12] It has survived through the subsequent two thousand years of Chinese history, the strangest and most incomprehensible item in the Chinese canon, a text central to Confucian orthodoxy, and yet revered by Taoists and Buddhists; the "first of the Confucian Classics" and a pillar of state ideology, and yet at the same time a subtle and powerful vehicle for a wide range of heterodox ideas.

The book we have today, then—new editions of which, serious and not so serious, still appear with regularity in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—is the direct descendant of ancient Chinese Divination and Magic. Its core oracular text, the *Change of Zhou*, consisting of the Hexagrams themselves, the Hexagram Judgments, and the Statements attached to each Line, shares many of the preoccupations of Shang-dynasty Divination: the practice of Sacrifice, Ritual, and Warfare; the taking of captives; the activities of a pastoral society (herding, hunting, raising and gelding of livestock); sickness (its cause and cure); astronomical phenomena; and tinglings and other strange premonitions. Its language derives from the earliest known form of Chinese, used to record acts of Divination. If the Oracle Bone Inscriptions (and the later Inscriptions on Bronze Ritual Vessels) are the Chinese language in the making, the *Change of Zhou* is one of the earliest attempts to put that language to a coherent purpose.

In addition to divinatory formulae such as "It is Auspicious," "A Sacrifice was Received," "Supreme Fortune," and "No Harm," the early Oracle incorporated a patchwork of other popular oral materials—fragments of ancestral legend and myth, proverbs, songs, and rhymes—which became attached to a cyclical structure, the series of Sixty-Four Hexagrams. Joseph Needham,

the great historian of Chinese science and thought, hazarded a guess as to the process whereby this took place: “First there were the collections of ancient peasant-omens (about birds, insects, weather, subjective feelings, and the like). . . . *Somehow or other these collections coalesced* [my italics] with the books of the professional Diviners, books which preserved traditional lore relating to scapulimancy, Divination by the milfoil sticks [Yarrow Stalks], and other forms of prognostication. . . . They remodelled the text and added elaborate commentaries on it. . . .”[13] Each of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams in the series acquired a Name. The Names were not initially fixed, but varied from one version of the Oracle to another, as did their sequential order and the wording of the text itself—we can see this in the old bamboo-strip or silk transcriptions that have been excavated recently. But the wordless diagrams provided a crystalline structure to which the fluctuating text adhered.[14] However the Hexagrams and their related texts themselves may have evolved, at this early stage in its history the words of the Oracle were linked to no system of ideas, to no Confucian or Taoist philosophy or Yin-Yang cosmology. In other words, the early oracular *Change of Zhou* was not yet a Book of Wisdom. It provided its readers (the kings and aristocrats who consulted it) with glimpses (often puzzling ones) of the workings of the Universe and man’s part in it, glimpses descended from the ancient shamanistic dialogue with the unknown. With time these glimpses were to be interpreted in terms of a holistic vision of the Universe, a vision contained in many of the *I Ching* commentaries, a vision associated with the central word Tao.[15] Richard Lynn has summarized this evolution well: “Hexagram Divination . . . changed from a method of consulting and influencing Gods, Spirits and Ancestors—the ‘powerful dead’—to a method of penetrating moments of the cosmic order to learn how the Way, or Tao, is configured and what direction it takes at such moments and to determine what one’s place is and should be in the scheme of things.”[16] Both Oracle and Book of Wisdom put the reader in touch with a greater scheme of things, opening a door to a “larger view” of the world.[17]

FROM ORACLE TO BOOK OF WISDOM

During the two periods of Zhou dynastic decline known as the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States, the text circulated in this early oracular form among the states contending for leadership of the realm and was consulted for advice on pressing matters of state, and sometimes on lesser issues. When the draconian Qin state united the empire, it was one of the few texts to escape the "burning of the books" (in 213 BC), surviving intact, so tradition has it, precisely because it was regarded not as a work of philosophy (and therefore a potential source of dissidence) but "merely" as a useful handbook of Divination.[18] A growing apparatus of quasi-philosophical commentaries was nonetheless already growing up around the urtext of the Oracle. These, known collectively as the Ten Wings and probably dating from the third and second centuries BC, were for many centuries attributed to more or less legendary figures. The Great Treatise (*Dazhuan*), perhaps the most important of these early commentaries, places the origins of the Trigrams in the remote past, setting the superlative tone adopted by many subsequent commentators.

Of old, when Fu Xi ruled the world,
He gazed upward and observed
Images in the Heavens;
He gazed about him and observed
Patterns upon the Earth.
He observed markings on birds and beasts,
How they were adapted to different regions.
Close at hand, he drew inspiration from within his own person;
Further afield, he drew inspiration from the outside world.
Thus he created the Eight Trigrams,
He made Connection with the Power of Spirit Light,
He distinguished the Myriad Things according to their Essential Nature.[19]

In a sense, it almost did not matter to whom the Trigrams, the

Hexagrams, or the words attached to them were ascribed. In the eloquent words of the American scholar Kidder Smith, the *I Ching* was "the consummate written text, in that nearly every trace of human actors is absent from it. Its language is in this sense disembodied, and, by the same measure, empowered to roam freely throughout the natural world. It is in this sense *shen*, a 'spirit' or 'spiritual,' a text less of culture than of Heaven-and-Earth, of Nature."[20] It continued to occupy this central spiritual space, as Book of Wisdom and Power, for over two thousand years. The central *I Ching* concepts, Yin and Yang, the Tao, Good Faith, and Self-Cultivation, have preoccupied almost every Chinese thinker until the twentieth century.[21] To read or quote from the *I Ching* is to touch the very spiritual heart of things Chinese. Its "quality of mysterious holiness," to quote the American scholar Michael Nylan, "has engaged nearly every major thinker in imperial China."[22] The influential Song-dynasty philosopher Zhou Dunyi considered it to be *the* Spiritual Book par excellence, "the mysterious home of the gods of Heaven and Earth."[23] In 1271, the Mongol ruler Kublai Khan, at the suggestion of a Chinese adviser, named his Chinese dynasty "Yuan," from the opening word of the Judgment for Hexagram I: *yuan*, Supreme or Primordial.[24]

The Classic and Its Many Commentaries

The Ten Wings were the first of many attempts to weave a more sophisticated web of ideas around the basic Oracle, adapting the mantic tradition of the Hexagrams to a philosophical or cosmological scheme. They became an inseparable part of the classic.[25] The layers of text and commentary (and their traditional attributions) are best shown in tabular form.

Layers of Text

The Core Oracular Text

1. The Eight Trigrams (*Ba gua*) and the Sixty-Four

Hexagrams (*Liushisi gua*), attributed to Fu Xi.
2. The Hexagram Judgments (*Tuan*), attributed to King Wen, founder of the Zhou dynasty.
3. The Line Statements (*Yaoci*), attributed to the Duke of Zhou, King Wen's son, regent for the second Zhou king.

The Ten Wings (Early Commentaries)

Wings 1–2

On the Judgment (*Tuanzhuan*). This is divided into two parts, Commentary A (Hexagrams 1–30) and Commentary B (Hexagrams 31–64). I give all of this commentary, but do not reproduce this division.

Wings 3–4

On the Image (*Xiangzhuan*). Again divided into two parts, Commentary A (On the Image of the Hexagram) and Commentary B (On the Image of the Lines). In my translation, I place Commentary A immediately beneath the Commentary on the Hexagram Judgment, and Commentary B beneath each relevant Line.

Wings 5–6

The Great Treatise (*Dazhuan*; *Xici*). Also divided into two parts. This cosmological and metaphysical treatise in rhapsodic form is assembled from various sources. A copy of most of it has been found at the Mawangdui excavations, datable to c. 195 BC. Extracts from this important commentary are scattered throughout my translation.

Wing 7

On the Words (*Wenyan*). A commentary attached to the first two Hexagrams.

Wing 8

The Trigrams Expounded (*Shuo gua*). The origins and

symbolism of the Trigrams. I have given samples of this puzzling commentary under the eight Doubled Trigram Hexagrams.

Wing 9
On the Sequence of the Hexagrams (*Xu gua*). Mnemonic verses. I do not include any of this.

Wing 10
Miscellaneous Notes on the Hexagrams (*Za gua*). Rhymed glosses on Hexagram Names. I do not include any of this.

A characteristic passage from the Great Treatise extols the book's Spiritual Power:[26]

The *I Ching* has the measure of Heaven and Earth.
It comprehends the Tao of Heaven and Earth.
Gazing upward, it contemplates the Patterns of Heaven,
Looking down, it scrutinizes the configurations of Earth.
It knows the underlying causes of the occult and the evident.
It traces them back to their origins; it follows them to their ends.
It knows the meaning of birth and death,
How Essence fuses with Energy to form Being,
How the Wandering Soul departs, to be transformed.
It knows the conditions of Spirits and Souls.
It resembles Heaven and Earth; it never transgresses their Tao.
Its knowledge embraces the Myriad Things, its Tao succors All-under-Heaven.
It never goes astray.
It roams widely but is never exhausted.
It rejoices in Heaven, it knows Heaven's Decree.
It is forever free from care.
It is at peace with the land.
It is kind, and can therefore love.

It models itself on the Transformations of Heaven and Earth
And can never go astray.
It follows every twist and turn of the Myriad Things.
It omits nothing.
Its knowledge Connects with the Tao of morning and evening.
Its Spirit knows no boundaries.
The *I Ching* has no form.

The *I Ching* does indeed have “no form” (in the conventional sense), thanks to the unique nonverbal, cyclical device of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams. It neither begins nor ends anywhere. In this it emulates the cyclical movement of the Universe itself. It “has the measure” of Heaven and Earth. It has no date or location other than the moment and place of each reading. It has no story. It has no author. It lives by virtue of the sheer Power that flows from each consultation.

It was widely believed for many centuries that Confucius himself had a hand in some of the *I Ching* commentaries. This belief was already being questioned in the Song dynasty, and is no longer taken seriously. Indeed, the words from the Great Treatise just quoted have more in common with currents of early Taoist thought than they do with Confucius or the Confucian Sage Philosopher Mencius. The practice of writing commentaries in the margins of this powerful text became with the centuries not so much a scholarly pastime as an act of participatory meditation, a therapeutic exercise in its own right, keyed to the Sixty-Four Tarot-like archetypal Hexagrams—Heaven, Earth, The Well, The Cauldron, etc. For the purposes of this new translation, a very few words will have to suffice on the subject of *I Ching* commentary and exegesis. There are literally thousands of such commentaries, and exhaustive studies of some of these are available in English.[27] I give here as an example part of the preface to the influential commentary by the Song-dynasty philosopher Cheng Yi, which harks back to the much earlier Great Treatise. Cheng reflects on the strange properties of this book, on the way it provides the reader with literally “everything”:

> The *Book of Change* [*yi*] is Transformation [*bianyi*]. It is the Transformation necessary if we are to be in tune with the Movement of Time, if we are to follow the Flow of the Tao. The Book is grand in its scope; it is all-encompassing. It is attuned to the very principles of Human Nature and Life-Destiny; it penetrates the underlying causes of both the occult and the evident. It exhausts the very Reality of Things; it reveals the Tao of endeavor and completion. . . . The principles governing Fortune and Calamity, the process of waxing and waning, the Tao of Progress and Retreat, of survival and extinction—these are all to be found in the text of the Book. By delving carefully into it, by investigating the Hexagrams, we can understand the process of Transformation. . . . Its Principles are deep and subtle, its Images crystal clear. In essence and function they share a single source. . . . To those who contemplate this shared depth and connection, and who practice its inherent discipline, the text will provide *everything.*[28]

I have not followed any one of the countless "schools" of exegesis. In the composite running commentary I have created for this translation, I have been unashamedly eclectic, choosing whatever seemed to me most helpful for today's reader. In contrast with this, Richard Lynn's fine translation scrupulously follows one influential interpretation, that of Wang Bi. My selection does, however, include generous extracts from the commentary of the eighteenth-century Taoist Liu Yiming, the Master Awakened to the Primordial (*Wuyuanzi*), which I found to be inspiring. I call him Magister Liu. For Liu, as a Taoist belonging to the lineage of the Complete Reality [Quanzhen] School, the *I Ching* symbols represent phases in the Inner Alchemical Work of Self-Cultivation. To read it is to "study the fundamental principles of Nature, and to arrive at the meaning of life." It is "a basis for living in harmony with existential time."[29] It is a tool for the attainment of a heightened level of consciousness.[30] Magister Liu's vision of the human condition is eloquently expressed in his commentary on Hexagram XLIX, Change:

To achieve Change is to get rid of something and not use it anymore. . . . This is Illumined Change, achieved through Self-Cultivation. It frees one of Yin Energy, of personal Desire. This is to be rid of Self. Man is born pure, with the True Energies of Yin and Yang intact and unpolluted. True Essence shines within, the Spirit is full of Light. Emotions such as joy, anger, discontent, and happiness have not yet tainted the Heart-and-Mind. Influences such as wealth and poverty have not yet perturbed the Flow of Life. Tiger and rhinoceros can cause no Harm. Swords cannot hurt. Neither Water nor Fire can impinge on Life. Life and Death are of no concern. A child such as this eats when he is hungry and puts on clothes when he is cold. He has no thoughts or cares. His Inner Strength is Illumined. Then, when he reaches the age of sixteen, the Yang cycle comes to a Conclusion, and Yin is born. Conditioned Life begins. A hundred cares confuse the Heart-and-Mind, endless affairs take their toll on his bodily frame. He comes to think of False as True. As the days and years go by, habit accumulates on habit, estranging him from his True Nature. The Strength of his Inner Light is dimmed. *To undergo Change is to get rid of these habits*. It is to cast aside all this Ignorance and find a way back to Illumination, back to the Primordial Energy of the Tao. In order to do this, one needs first to understand Self. Then the Change will be Sincere. Then there will be Good Faith. With Sincerity and Good Faith, and once the True is distinguished from the False, all human beings are capable of Change. This is indeed their Supreme Fortune! This is the Tao. [My italics.]

THE TAO OF SELF-CULTIVATION

What Magister Liu is proposing is a program of Self-Cultivation. It is, as Joseph Needham remarks of Taoism in general, “a programme for our time as well as theirs.”[31] Some readers may already be wondering what the words Tao and Taoism (which will

occur countless times in these pages) actually mean. The opening lines of that most venerable of all Taoist classics, *The Tao and the Power*, sound a warning note: “The Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao.” We speak of it at our peril. The moment we do, it slips through our fingers. Angus Graham has called it a “makeshift name for the unnameable in union with which we are spontaneously on course.”[32] Perhaps it is best to say to the inquiring reader, “Words are inadequate for the Tao. But it is nonetheless real. What we can point to are clues left by those who have *experienced* this liberating way of looking at the world.” One such man was the poet Tao Yuanming. He wrote:

I pluck chrysanthemums beneath the eastern hedge,
And gaze afar at the southern mountains.
The mountain air is fine at evening of the day
And flying birds return together homewards.
Within these things there is a hint of Truth,
But when I start to tell it, I cannot find the words.[33]

The ancient teacher Master Zhuang, whose brilliant parables pointed to his own experience of the Tao, was more inscrutable: “This is that, that is also this. When this and that are not seen as relative opposites, this is the Axis of the Tao. When the Axis is in the center of the circle, then there is an infinite Resonance.”

Taoist Self-Cultivation. An Adept meditating on the Trigrams Kan *and* Li. *In the Taoist alchemical scheme of things, the* Kan *Trigram (one Yang line surrounded by two Yin, Yang within Yin) represents the Yin, or Female, element (Water, Kidneys, White Tiger, Earthly Anima), while the* Li *Trigram (one Yin line surrounded by two Yang, Yin within Yang) represents the Yang, or Male, element (Fire, Heart, Green Dragon, Celestial Animus). In his practice, the Adept extracts True Yang from within Yin (in the* Kan *Trigram), and True Yin from within Yang (in the* Li *Trigram).*

Just as the “true Tao” cannot be spoken, so the *I Ching* achieves something beyond mere words. It gives expression to *pure spirit*. That is why its decoding of the Universe is profoundly liberating. In the words of the Great Treatise, it drums it and dances it!

The Sages created Images to give full expression to meaning. They constructed Hexagrams to give full expression to Reality.

They attached words to these Images and Hexagrams
To give full expression to speech.[34]
With all of these Transformations,
Communication became possible,
A full expression of what is beneficial.
They drummed it, they danced it,
To give expression to Spirit.[35]

The *I Ching* does not think, it is *sine meditatione*.
It does not act, it is *sine actu.*
In its solitude, *in quiete*,
It is motionless, *sine motu.*
In its Resonance, it reaches the core of the World,
It uncovers the *rerum omnium causam*.
In all the World, only the *I Ching* can accomplish this.
It is a most Spiritual Entity, *summus spiritus*!
Through the *I Ching* the Sage plumbs the greatest depths,
Investigates the subtlest Springs of Change.
Its very depth penetrates the Will of the World,
In intima finemque rerum mundi.
Knowledge of the Springs of Change
Enables terrestrial enterprises to be accomplished.
This Spiritual Entity makes speed without haste,
It arrives without traveling.[36]

The poet Ruan Ji echoed this sentiment, this fundamental link between the *I Ching* and the Tao, several hundred years later. "Understand the *I Ching*, and the Tao will remain with you. Its application knows no end. It makes True Connection possible."[37] His life was a "searching out of the truth somewhere between Taoist mysticism and the *I Ching*." The Tang-dynasty poet Meng Jiao described the overwhelming (and wordless) experience of visiting an *I Ching* Recluse by the name of Yin:

My Teacher spoke of Heaven and Earth,
He spoke with the voice of the Spirit Turtle.

Mystery upon mystery, things beyond men's understanding—
One by one, he made all clear.
The autumn moon oozed the whiteness of night,
The cool breeze sang the music of the clear stream.
Listening beside him, I followed deep into Truth,
And suddenly we found ourselves in a distant realm,
Our Spirits Resonating in a Stillness with no need of words.
That moment of enlightenment unravelled a myriad knots.
That evening's thoughts washed away the day's every care.
Now my wanderer's skiff is restless on the moving tide.
My parting horse neighs as the carriage rolls away.
Hermit Yin, in his mountain fastness,
Shared Truth with his newfound friend.[38]

A thousand years later, the poet Qi Biaojia built himself a studio where he contemplated the mysteries of the *I Ching*:

> When the Master becomes wearied of the sights of his garden, he can spend his days with a copy of the *I Ching* in hand, painstakingly working through the text, achieving in the process a sense of release from the vexations of life.[39]

We may not wish to climb a mountain to seek out a Hermit, and we may not have the means to build our own *I Ching* studio. But the path to Self-Cultivation that generations of Chinese readers have found in this book is open to us.

THE *I CHING* IN THE WEST

The *I Ching* first reached the West in the eighteenth century. Ever since that time, Western perceptions of the book have varied greatly, from the highly reverential to the baffled, utterly sceptical, or dismissive. In 1728, the French Jesuit Claude de Visdelou, prevented by blindness from reading or writing himself, dictated the following words from the French Indian enclave of Pondicherry: "It [the *I Ching*] is not strictly speaking a book at all, or anything like it. It is a most obscure enigma, a hundred times

more difficult to explain than that of the Sphinx."[40] Hardly encouraging words for today's reader or would-be translator! The British sinologist Herbert Giles referred to "the apparent gibberish of the *Book of Changes*."[41] Bernhard Karlgren, the Swedish philologist, called it a "barely intelligible rigmarole."[42] "It would have been wiser," wrote a frustrated Joseph Needham in 1956, "to tie a millstone about the neck of the *I Ching* and cast it into the sea."[43]

From the Jesuits to James Legge

Three French Jesuits of the early eighteenth century, Jean-Baptiste Régis, Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla, and Pierre Vincent de Tartre, produced a complete Latin translation, *Y-King: Antiquissimus Sinarum Liber*, with a highly literate, discursive running commentary.[44] It circulated in manuscript transcriptions for a hundred years, and was published in Germany in two volumes (1834 and 1839).[45] The Jesuits' work presented the book as accurately as any translator has ever done. As the German editor Julius Mohl writes in his preface, it brings out both the work's *auctoritas* and its *obscuritas*. When James Legge, the redoubtable missionary from Aberdeen, began translating the book into English in the nineteenth century, he freely acknowledged his debt to the Jesuits: "The late M. Mohl said to me once, 'I like it; for I come to it out of a sea of mist, and find solid ground.'"[46] Legge admitted that they had laid the foundation for his own translation: "Their work as a whole, and especially the prolegomena, dissertations, and notes, supply a mass of correct and valuable information. They had nearly succeeded in unravelling the confusion, and solving the [book's] enigma."[47] In his own understanding of the text, Legge essentially followed the Song-dynasty neo-Confucian commentators, while conceding that there were still times when it seemed to mean very little. "If, after all," he pleaded, "there is often 'much ado about nothing,' it is not the translator who should be deemed accountable for that, but his original."[48]

Richard Wilhelm and Carl Jung

By far the most influential version of the twentieth century was Richard Wilhelm's *I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen*, first published in 1924. It transformed the book's reception in the modern Western world. Wilhelm had as his guide a remarkable end-of-empire Chinese scholar, Yao Naixuan. But he also had a complex spiritual pedigree of his own. He was a Lutheran missionary working in the German treaty port of Qingdao, but his thinking was also influenced by contemporary currents of thought in his native Germany, such as those of Count Keyserling's Darmstadt School of Wisdom, and the writings of Carl Gustav Jung. Wilhelm died in 1930, not long after his return to Germany. An English version of his translation by Cary F. Baynes was begun before the Second World War while Wilhelm was still alive, but was published only in 1950.[49] Jung wrote a lengthy foreword for it. During the 1960s and 1970s this English version became a cult book. It has continued to be influential, inspiring among many others the novelists Philip K. Dick (*The Man in the High Castle*) and Philip Pullman (*His Dark Materials*), the choreographer Merce Cunningham, the rock band Pink Floyd, and the avant-garde composer John Cage. Delight in the "oracular game" of the *I Ching* runs through Hermann Hesse's great last novel, *The Glass Bead Game* (1943). Both Hesse and Jung found in the *I Ching* the same liberation and enlightenment, the same sense of Resonance and freedom from care, that the Tang poet Meng Jiao described.

A Middle Ground

I myself feel that there is a middle ground somewhere between Meng Jiao, Wilhelm, Hesse, and the Jungians, on the one hand, and the scepticism of the work's many bewildered readers on the other. Even Joseph Needham grudgingly admits that the resolution of doubts through Divination may have some validity: "As a solvent for neuroses of indecision the method [of the *I Ching*] probably paid its way."[50] In so doing, he is merely restating a famous passage from the *Zuo Commentary*, where an officer of the southern realm of Chu argues, "We consult the Oracle in order

to *resolve doubts* [my italics]; where we have no doubts, why should we consult it?"[51] This middle, psychological, ground has been well described by Richard Lynn:

> [The reader should] allow the work to address the primary issues with which it is concerned: the interrelatedness of personal character and destiny; how position defines scope of action; how position and circumstances define appropriate modes of behavior; how the individual is always tied to others in a web of interconnected causes and effects; how one set of circumstances inevitably changes into another; and how change itself is the great constant—and flexible response to it the only key to happiness and success. There is a core of insights here concerning the structure of human relationships and individual behavior that can, I believe, speak to this and any other age—if we but allow it to do so.[52]

The American scholar Michael Nylan echoes this, characterizing the *I Ching* as a book "designed to instill in readers a simultaneous awareness both of the deep significance of ordinary human life and of the ultimately mysterious character of the cosmic process."[53] These writers are saying more or less the same thing: that this is a book which when used properly has the ability to open doors, to *reconnect* the individual with the larger Universe and its rhythms. Angus Graham puts it with characteristically cool and dispassionate clarity:

> There is no reason to doubt that Divination systems do help many people to reach appropriate decisions in situations with too many unknown factors, and that the *I Ching* is among the more successful of them. Unless we are to follow Jung in postulating an acausal principle of synchronicity, we must suppose that the *I Ching* serves to break down preconceptions by forcing the Diviner to correlate his situation with a chance set of six

> prognostications. . . . Since . . . the Hexagrams open up an indefinite range of patterns for correlation, *in the calm of withdrawal into sacred space and time*, the effect is *to free the mind* to take account of all information whether or not it conflicts with preconceptions, *awaken it to unnoticed similarities and connexions*, and guide it to a settled decision adequate to the complexity of factors. This is conceived not as discursive thinking, but as *a synthesizing act* in which the Diviner sees into and responds to everything at once, *with a lucidity mysterious to himself*. The *I Ching* . . . assumes in the Diviner that kind of intelligence we have discussed in connexion with [the Taoist Master] Zhuangzi, *opening out and responding to stimulation in perfect tranquillity, lucidity and flexibility. . . .* One consults [the *I Ching*] . . . as though *seeking advice from a daimonic presence*.[My italics.][54]

Reading the *I Ching* in this way is an interactive process, requiring the creative participation of the reader. There is ultimately no "book" out there, no "reader" in here. If there is total Sincerity in the process of consultation, book and reader come together. They are one. The book *is* you, the reader. It *is* your reading of it. No more, no less. It is what you find in yourself, in order to understand *it*. It is what *you* make of it. In that sense, you *are* the book. The experience of reading gives you (and any reader) Power. Its/your Power is limitless.[55]

A Game

Let me put this in another way. The *I Ching* is a game, a most demanding game. One does not just read it, one does not just translate it. One *plays* it, one plays *with* it, one interacts with it. It plays too, in deadly earnest. "No two games are alike. There are only infinite possibilities."[56] The act of reading creates a new dynamic, triggering reflections and conversations that might otherwise never take place. To call this a game is not to be irreverent, it is not to trivialize it. On the contrary, it is to elevate it.

"Games after all are not *only* games, they are *games*, just as an elephant is not *only* an elephant, it is an *elephant*. Games are also Rituals, Patterns and Symbols of life itself. . . . As Symbols they can at once be rejoiced in and treated with respect as the mysterious providers of that intense peace which is both action and contemplation."[57] The game of the *I Ching* constantly urges its readers to attune themselves to the Resonance of the Tao, to Connect, to tune in to the Springs, or Intimations, of Change all around them, to see themselves as part of a larger whole. To enter into a dialogue with the *I Ching* is to enter into a dialogue with the Tao, with Nature itself, to pass through a "door into the cosmic unity of a Natural Order."[58] The book's roots in Divination, in the powerful early shamanistic Rituals and Sacrifices through which Connection was established with the Other World, are what makes that Connection and Resonance still possible today. Hexagram XI, *Tai*, Grandeur: "With Communion of Heaven and Earth, the Myriad Things Connect."

In consultations I have observed that the most important thing is to approach the reading *with the utmost Sincerity*, to put aside all pretense and self-deception. Once this premise is established, the book talks back; the response comes "from the deeper mind." It is (as Angus Graham says) a daimonic presence.

A NEW TRANSLATION?

When I was already well embarked on the enterprise, I asked the *I Ching*, "Is this an Auspicious moment for a new translation?" It gave a sobering response: Hexagram I, *Qian*, Heaven, with Unchanging Yang in each of the lowest five Lines, and a solitary Changing Yang Line in Top Place. "The Dragon *overreaches himself*. There is Regret." [My italics.] Was I engaged in an act of hubris? Should I commit my manuscript to the flames? But then, with the Top Yang Line changing to Yin came Hexagram XLIII, *Kuai*, Resolution. "Good Faith cries Danger. It serves as a Light. . . . The True Gentleman . . . *does not pride himself* on Inner Strength." My favorite commentator, Magister Liu, writes, "Good Faith is the means whereby the elimination of Yin will be achieved,

the means whereby the Heart-and-Mind of the Tao can establish itself and become Master. *Be aware of Danger. Practice Caution and Self-Cultivation. Let Resolution stem from Good Faith, from Sincerity, not from Pride or Conceit*." I acknowledged the initial warning, I recognized the Danger of pride. I also took heart from the encouragement. This Offering—this new version of the most Chinese of all Chinese books—must be made in Good Faith and Sincerity. I hope my readers will understand this, and forgive the faults that surely remain, shortcomings in both scholarship and wisdom.

One of the difficulties of translating this work is that there is no author to be beholden to, and no conventional reader to speak to. The *I Ching* was not "written" in the normal sense of the word. It came into being through a process of accretion; it is the accumulated residue of generations of Divinations, wrapped in the wisdom-cocoon of further generations who have consulted its oracular pages and added their own thoughts in the form of commentaries. Its Chinese "readers" did not read it like any normal book—they consulted it. They rarely if ever began at the "beginning" and continued to the "end." The same will doubtless be true of readers of this translation. They will "read" according to their individual circumstances. Their expectations will differ from those of readers of a "normal" work of literature. The relationship between translator and reader will be correspondingly different. My translation is a spiritual Offering. To translate or to read the *I Ching* is to wrestle with Spirit, to search for Truth. We are not only gazing into the remote past. We are also face to face with ourselves and our own age.

The translator's first question must surely be "Which *I Ching*?" Is this to be a translation of an Oracle (an ancient promptbook for Divination practice, a series of cryptic, sphinxlike utterances)? Or a translation of a Book of Wisdom (a revered scripture, an elaborate treatise on the nature of the Universe and of human civilization)? I found it more and more impossible to make such a choice. From the first I was drawn to the fresh, enigmatic text revealed by the inspired scholarship and guesswork of Wen

Yiduo, Li Jingchi, Arthur Waley, and others in the first half of the twentieth century, and the groundbreaking work done by American scholars in the 1970s and 1980s. I found the scepticism of these scholars refreshing. Clearly many of the old myths surrounding the origins and nature of the text were doubtful at best—including its authorship by a series of Ancient Kings and Sages. But as I studied this "revisionist" material, the newly deciphered Oracle Bone Inscriptions, and the ever more startling archaeological findings, I had a growing feeling that for all the new light being shed, something important was being lost. Where was Fu Xi, the caveman-sage wrapped in his furs, contemplating the origins and mysteries of the Universe, inventing the Eight Trigrams to make some sense of it all? In the words of the Great Treatise already quoted, he "gazed upward and observed Images in the Heavens [the 'night sky'—he was an astronomer]; he gazed about him and observed Patterns upon the Earth [he was a geologist, a geographer, a geomancer]. He observed markings on birds and beasts [he was a naturalist], how they were adapted to different regions [he was an ecologist]. . . . He drew inspiration from within his own person [he was a psychic, a psychologist]; further afield, he drew inspiration from the outside world [he was an empirical scientist]."[59] I missed too the inspired musings of later generations of philosopher-commentators. Modern attempts to divest the original Bronze Age Oracle of all its traditional clutter, despite their brilliance, somehow seemed dry and futile. In short, I missed the essential spiritual quality of the *I Ching*.

So the question "Which *I Ching*?" became less and less simple, and in the end my answer was: "Both. Oracle *and* Book of Wisdom." The Book, to interpret at greater length the shorthand utterances of the Oracle, and give inspirational guidance; the Oracle, to contribute its primitive word-magic to "quicken" the teachings of the Book, and bring them down to earth. I have therefore ended up presenting my *I Ching* in two parts: Book of Wisdom (Part I) and Bronze Age Oracle (Part II). I explain, in the introductory remarks to each Part, how this decision has influenced the way I go about things, the procedures involved. The

individual reader will decide which of the two versions to consult first. I have found that some prefer to concentrate on Part I and to read Part II separately, more out of curiosity, and for the light it sheds on early Chinese society and culture. Some have even said that they find Part II completely irrelevant to their purpose.

The Gulf Between Oracle and Book

Three concrete (and well-known) examples may help to illustrate the difference between Oracle and Book more clearly. The Chinese word *fu*, which occurs often (42 times) in the core text of the Oracle, was interpreted by early commentators, and thereafter by virtually all subsequent readers, Chinese and Western, to mean Sincerity (*cheng*). Hence the Name of Hexagram LXI (*Zhong Fu*) was translated by Wilhelm as *Innere Wahrheit* (Inner Truth in Baynes's English version). This is the scriptural understanding, and by and large I have followed it in Part I, the Book of Wisdom, adopting the term Good Faith for this fundamental concept.[60] But in 1928 the young Chinese scholar-poet Guo Moruo was among the first to claim that the word originally referred to captives and booty taken in warfare.[61] This rereading had been made possible by the Oracle Bone Inscriptions, and by other epigraphic and archaeological discoveries of the early twentieth century. In Part II, I have accordingly translated *fu* as Captives. Other frequently occurring characters have been radically reinterpreted in the same light. *Heng*/*xiang*, which occurs 50 times (see my commentary on the first Hexagram in Part II), seems originally to have meant Sacrifice —the dominant activity in early Chinese society. In Part II, I have translated it accordingly as Sacrifice Received (with minor variations). But in later *I Ching* interpretation, the word gradually came to include in its range of meanings not so much the actual Sacrifice, but the happy results of a Sacrifice *well received* by the Ancestors or Spirits, thus Fortune. This is how I have translated it in Part I.[62] *Zhen* (111 occurrences) seems (again on the basis of Oracle Bone studies) to have originally meant the act of Divination itself, rather than the quality of Steadfastness understood by later

commentators (Wilhelm's *Beharrlichkeit*, Baynes's Perseverance). These three examples illustrate the evolution of the core text from Oracle to Book of Wisdom, the way in which "sentences that had been written as pithy Oracles became moralizing statements."[63]

The Name of Hexagram IV, *Meng*, is a fourth and striking example of the gulf separating Oracle and Book. Traditionally it came to be understood as Ignorance or Youthful Folly (Wilhelm's *Die Jugendtorheit*), and this idea permeated the understanding of the entire Hexagram. Arthur Waley, however, writing in 1933 under the influence of the new school of *I Ching* critics, speculated that *meng* was in fact a parasitic mistletoe-like plant, the dodder. This sent him off in a completely new direction. His interpretation, according to which the whole Hexagram is about the qualities and significance of the dodder, is based on a combination of philological and anthropological scholarship, with a substantial dose of his own creative imagination. I have taken up some of Waley's ideas in Part II, while following more traditional readings in Part I.

This is not a translation for sinologists or scholars, although many sinological and scholarly writings have helped in its gestation. I have worked closely with the Chinese text. So far as possible I have kept away from any preconceived Western notions as to its meaning. The discovery of that meaning I leave to each individual reader. My translation strives above all to present this extraordinary Chinese phenomenon in a form that can be *consulted* in the English-speaking world.

The Chinese contains passages of great poetic and numinous beauty. It has exercised an abiding influence on Chinese literati for over two millennia. In addition to being a "spiritual entity," it is also a cultural commonplace book, an encyclopedia of proverb, imagery, and symbolism to which reference has been made throughout the ages. But it is not just a work of literature. It is not just *a* Chinese book. It is *the* Chinese Book, daunting though that may seem.

My translation is "offered" in the awareness that no translation of this awe-inspiring and deeply puzzling book can ever hope to

capture more than the faintest echo of the original. These are always going to be “coloured pictures of the wind,” as the twelfth-century scholar Qiu Cheng wrote in his poem “On Considering Certain Lines of the *I Ching*, and Showing Them to Zheng Dongqing”:[64]

These Images do but sketch the principles of Change.
Deepest Tao defies the mind.
Scholars expound its mysteries in vain,
Their words but coloured pictures of the wind.

There can never be a definitive version of this book, in any language. Its meaning is simply too elusive. Part of the book’s Power and Magic is precisely that. It has over the years meant so many different things to so many different readers, commentators, and translators. It meant one thing for the Jesuits in the eighteenth century, quite another for Richard Wilhelm working with Lao Naixuan in the immediate aftermath of the Chinese revolution of 1911. This chameleon quality was something David Hawkes stressed in our last conversation on this subject, in the summer of 2009, shortly before his death. “Whatever you do,” he said, “be sure to let your readers know that every sentence can be read in an almost infinite number of ways! That is the secret of the book. No one will ever know what it *really* means!” Even the most scholarly, even the most spiritually penetrating reading, Chinese or non-Chinese, of this strange book is in the end an act of the Imagination, a search for Truth. It is my belief that if that search is conducted in Good Faith, the book will yield its secrets.

NOTES

1. K. C. Chang made this suggestion about the early Shamans in “The Rise of Kings,” in *The Formation of Chinese Civilization: An Archaeological Perspective*, ed. K. C. Chang and Xu Pingfang (2005), p. 129. “When communicating with Heaven, the Shaman was in a trancelike state, which was often drug-induced, particularly through cannabis, or achieved through physical and mental exercises similar to today’s *qigong*. . . . [Shamans] often had animal assistants. These included dragons, tigers and deer. Dancing was one of the tasks of the Shaman. The Shaman’s paraphernalia included tattoos,

plaited hair or a serpent-like head covering, and ring ornaments around the penis." Chang was one of the most exciting scholars working in this area, where anthropology and archaeology meet. See, among his many books, *Art, Myth and Ritual* (1983), especially p. 55.

2. Li Chi, the pioneer Chinese archaeologist, gives an account of this in chapter 1 of *Anyang* (1977). His account is itself based on the classic account by his fellow scholar Tung Tso-pin. The story has been told many times. Peter Hessler's work *Oracle Bones* (London: John Murray, 2006) is a fascinating excursion around the subject. See especially "The Voice of the Turtle," pp. 135–47. One of the most scholarly accounts is by the Jesuit Father Lefeuvre, "Les inscriptions des Shang sur carapaces de tortue et sur os: Aperçu historique et bibliographique de la découverte et des premières études," in *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, vol. 61, livr. 1/3 (1975), pp. 1–82. The Academia Sinica in Taiwan has an attractive Oracle Bone website: http://oraclememory.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/e-collection.htm.
3. See Bagley's long account, "Shang Archaeology," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Ancient China* (1999), pp. 124–231.
4. The yarrow is a plant botanically related to chamomile and tarragon. See Richard Rutt, *The Book of Changes* (1996), p. 151. Yarrow was traditionally used in England for Divination, being placed under the pillow to induce dreams. James Halliwell-Phillipps recorded another mode of Divination with this plant which enabled a person to dream of a future husband: "An ounce of yarrow, sewed up in flannel, must be placed under your pillow when you go to bed, and having repeated the following words, the required dream will be realized: Thou pretty herb of Venus' tree, / Thy true name it is yarrow; / Now who my bosom friend must be, / Pray tell thou me tomorrow. This plant, in the eastern counties, is termed *yarroway*, and there is a curious mode of Divination with its serrated leaf, with which you must tickle the inside of your nose, repeating the following lines. If the operation causes the nose to bleed, it is a certain omen of success." See Halliwell-Phillips's *Popular Rhymes* (1849), p. 223: "Yarroway, yarroway, bear a white blow, / If my love love me, my nose will bleed now." Other European cultures also associated the plant with Divination—and later with forbidden knowledge of other worlds, as suggested by its common names such as Devil's Nettle and Bad Man's Plaything. For interesting information on this subject, see the website greenramblings.blogspot.com.au.
5. I use "mantic" to refer in a broad sense to any method of communication with the "other" world that gives access to hidden knowledge, as in oneiromancy (through dreams), cheiromancy (through observation of the hands), geomancy (through scrutiny of the Earth's configuration).
6. Legge, *Zuo Commentary*, p. 169. This chronicle, nominally attached to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* of the state of Lu, has been tentatively dated to the fourth century BC, although this dating is highly controversial. The authenticity

of the *I Ching* "episodes" in the *Zuo Commentary* has also been questioned.

7. See Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2, p. 347.
8. Bishop Rutt's summary of information on this topic (in his chapter "Divination") is clear and informative.
9. See Liu Zhiji et al., eds., *Hanying duizhao jiaguwen jinyi leijian* (2005), pp. 155 and 428.
10. Loewe and Shaughnessy, *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, p. 859.
11. Richard Kunst, "The Original *Yijing*: A Text, Phonetic Transcription, Translation, and Indexes, with Sample Glosses" (1985), p. 201.
12. Kidder Smith Jr., "*Zhouyi* Interpretations from Accounts in the *Zuozhuan*," *HJAS* 49, no. 2 (December 1989), p. 426.
13. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2, p. 311. Here, as throughout this Introduction, all italics are mine.
14. For an explanation of the structure of the Hexagrams, see "How to Consult the *I Ching*," p. xxxvii. For the internal relationships of the Lines, see such entries as "Place" and "Resonance" in the Glossary, p. 795.
15. Tao (or Dao, as it is written in modern Pinyin transcription) was and still is a term shared by all Chinese schools of thought, including that of the Taoists. I continue to spell it in the old way, because it has become so widely used in the English language.
16. Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation* (1994), p. 1. Here and elsewhere, for the sake of consistency, I have capitalized words such as "Divination" that are capitalized in my own translation. I have also standardized all references to the book as *I Ching*, so as not to confuse the reader.
17. For the "larger view," see Hexagram XX.
18. Richard Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The Yijing (I Ching, or Classic of Changes) and Its Evolution in China* (2008), p. 31. For a skeptical view of the "book burning," see Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (2001), pp. 29–31 and 204.
19. The Great Treatise, part II, section 2. See Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes* (1950), pp. 328–9; Chen Guying and Zhao Jianwei, *Zhouyi jinzhu jinyi* (2004), p. 650; James Legge, *The Yi King* (1882), p. 382; Richard Lynn, p. 77; G. W. Swanson, "The Great Treatise: Commentary Tradition to the *Book of Changes*," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington (1974), p. 175; Kidder Smith Jr., "The Difficulty of the *Yijing*" (1993), p. 5.
20. Kidder Smith Jr., "The Difficulty of the *Yijing*," p. 5.
21. I refer readers to the entries in my Glossary for further thoughts on the meaning of these terms.
22. Nylan, p. 204.
23. For Zhou Dunyi, see Nylan, p. 204.
24. Liu Ts'un-yan, "The Syncretism of the Three Teachings in Sung-Yuan China," in *New Excursions from the Hall of Harmonious Wind* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), p. 58.

25. Donald Harper, in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (1997), p. 229, fn. 26.
26. The Great Treatise, part I, section 4.
27. One of the most comprehensive book-length surveys is Richard Smith's excellent *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World* (2008).
28. Cf. Iulian Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching* (1979), p. 72; Cheng Yi, *Chengshi yizhuan daodu* (2003), p. 49; and Kidder Smith's Ph.D. dissertation, chapter 5.
29. Thomas Cleary, quoting Liu Yiming in his introduction to *The Taoist I Ching*, pp. 6–7.
30. The words are those of the poet and *I Ching* commentator Yu Yan, quoted by Richard Smith in *Fathoming the Cosmos* (2008), p. 153.
31. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. V: 5, p. 65. Opposite this page, Needham reproduces the picture of the Taoist Adept meditating on the Trigrams *Kan* and *Li*, from the *Xingming guizhi* (Pointer to the Meaning of Human Nature and Life-Destiny), probably of the seventeenth century.
32. A. C. Graham, index to *Disputers of the Tao* (1989), p. 497.
33. Based on William Acker's translation, in *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology*, ed. John Minford and Joseph S. M. Lau (2000), pp. 503–4.
34. "Attached Words" was another name for the Great Treatise.
35. Kidder Smith Jr., "The Difficulty of the *Yijing*," p. 7. The Great Treatise, part I, section 12. Cf. Lynn, p. 67; Legge, pp. 376–7; Wilhelm, p. 322.
36. The Great Treatise, part I, section 10. Cf. Lynn, p. 63; Wilhelm, pp. 315–16.
37. These are the concluding words of Ruan Ji's essay on the *I Ching*. Cf. Donald Holzman, *Poetry and Politics: The Life and Works of Juan Chi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 98–99, 101, 130–4.
38. For this famous poem, see Richard Smith, *Fortune Tellers*, p. 124; Richard Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos*, p. 223; also Shchutskii, p. 234.
39. Duncan Campbell's translation, from his forthcoming *Anthology of Garden Literature*.
40. *"Ce n'étoit pas proprement un livre, ni quelque chose d'approchant, c'étoit un énigme très obscure, et plus difficile cent fois à expliquer que celle du sphinx."* This is to be found in his "Notice of the Yi King," sent to the Cardinals of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.
41. Rutt, *Book of Changes*, p. 48; Herbert A. Giles, *History of Chinese Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1901), p. 23.
42. Bernhard Karlgren, "Loan Characters in Pre-Han Texts," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* (Stockholm) 35 (1963), quoted by Rutt, p. 43.
43. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2, p. 311.
44. Dates for these and all historical figures mentioned in this book are given in "Names and Dates," p. 789.
45. It is now available online at Google Books, but unfortunately several pages

are missing.

46. Legge, *Yi King*, translator's preface, p. xcvi.
47. Legge, *Yi King*, translator's introduction, p. 9, and fn. 2.
48. Legge, *Yi King*, translator's preface, p. xcvi.
49. Cary Baynes (née Fink) was a seasoned Jungian translator. There is a useful biographical note (written by William McGuire) in the *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 23 (July 1978). She and her second husband, H. G. Baynes, collaborated in translating several of Jung's works. Jung had asked her to translate Wilhelm's German *I Ging* into English before 1930, while Wilhelm was still alive. The translation finally appeared two decades later, after the Second World War, in 1950. Cary Baynes died in October 1977, at the age of ninety-four.
50. Needham, *Science and Civilisation*, vol. 2, p. 347.
51. *Zuo Commentary*, Duke Huan, Year 11; Kidder Smith, "The Difficulty of the *Yijing*," p. 7; Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5, pp. 55–7.
52. Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, p. 9.
53. Nylan, *Five "Confucian" Classics*, p. 207.
54. A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (1989), pp. 369–70.
55. One perceptive reader found an earlier draft of this paragraph "over the top." I agree. But I have kept it, since after all it is no more "over the top" than the repeated Chinese claims for the *I Ching*! See, for example, the extracts from the Great Treatise and Cheng Yi above.
56. Kidder Smith Jr., "The Difficulty of the *Yijing*," p. 13; Richard Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos*, p. 1. François Jullien echoes the idea: *"C'est du seul* jeu de ses figures [my emphasis], *de leurs effets d'opposition et de correlation, de leurs possibilitiés de transformation . . . que naît du sens."* See his introduction to the 1992 reprint of Philastre's French translation, p. 5. Li Ling's preface to his recent edition of the *I Ching* devotes several pages to the same idea (*Sheng si you ming, fu gui zai tian*, 2013, pp. xxix–xlii).
57. J. B. Pick, *The Phoenix Dictionary of Games* (London: Dent, 1952), introduction, p. 17.
58. Francis Westbrook, "Landscape Transformation in the Poetry of Hsieh Ling-Yün," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100, no. 3 (July–October 1980), p. 238.
59. The Great Treatise, part II, section 2. See above.
60. For this and other key words and concepts, see the Glossary.
61. Rutt refers to this early essay by Guo on p. 220. The original (it was many times reprinted) was published in *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi*) 25, no. 21 (November 10, 1928), pp. 79–93. Kunst gives a very full account of the word *fu* on p. 159ff.
62. See Rutt, p. 127ff.
63. All of this is admirably summarized by Rutt. As usual, he bases his summary on the prior work of Shaughnessy and Kunst.
64. Cf. Shchutskii, p. 235. The original poem can easily be found in the *Tushu*

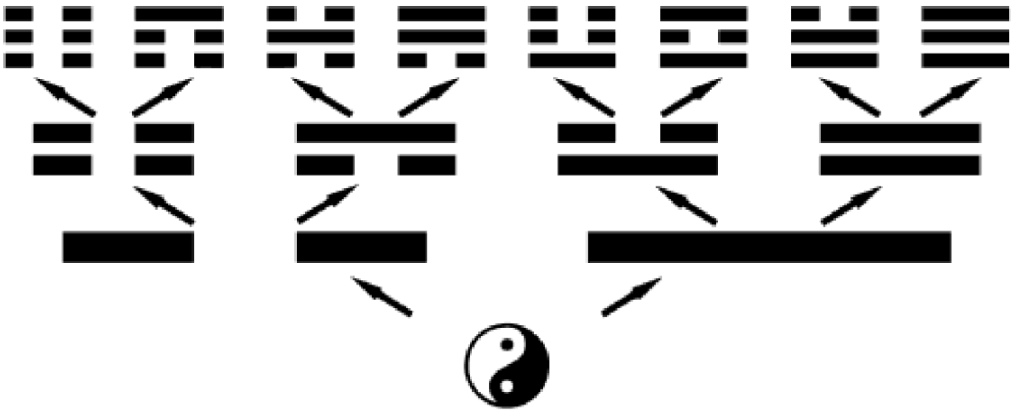
jicheng section on the *I Ching*.

I Ching Diagrams

1. FU XI'S SEQUENCE OF THE EIGHT TRIGRAMS

The generative process of Change, of Nature in Transformation, is represented visually in two traditional diagrams. In Fu Xi's Sequence of the Eight Trigrams (*Fuxi ba gua cixu*), the Eight Trigrams (seen in the top row) are "generated" by the Four Bigrams, which are combinations of Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang proceed from the Supreme Ultimate (*Taiji*), the original state of Non-Being, of undifferentiated, inchoate chaos (*hundun*) that preceded Being (the Phenomenal World of the Myriad Things). This is represented by the famous "gyre within a circle" (sometimes known as the Yin-Yang Fish), which shows in visual terms the all-pervading synergy of Yin and Yang. The whole diagram dates most probably from the Song dynasty and the great neo-Confucian renaissance of *I Ching* studies. Zhou Dunyi, in his "Explanation of the Taiji Diagram," wrote:

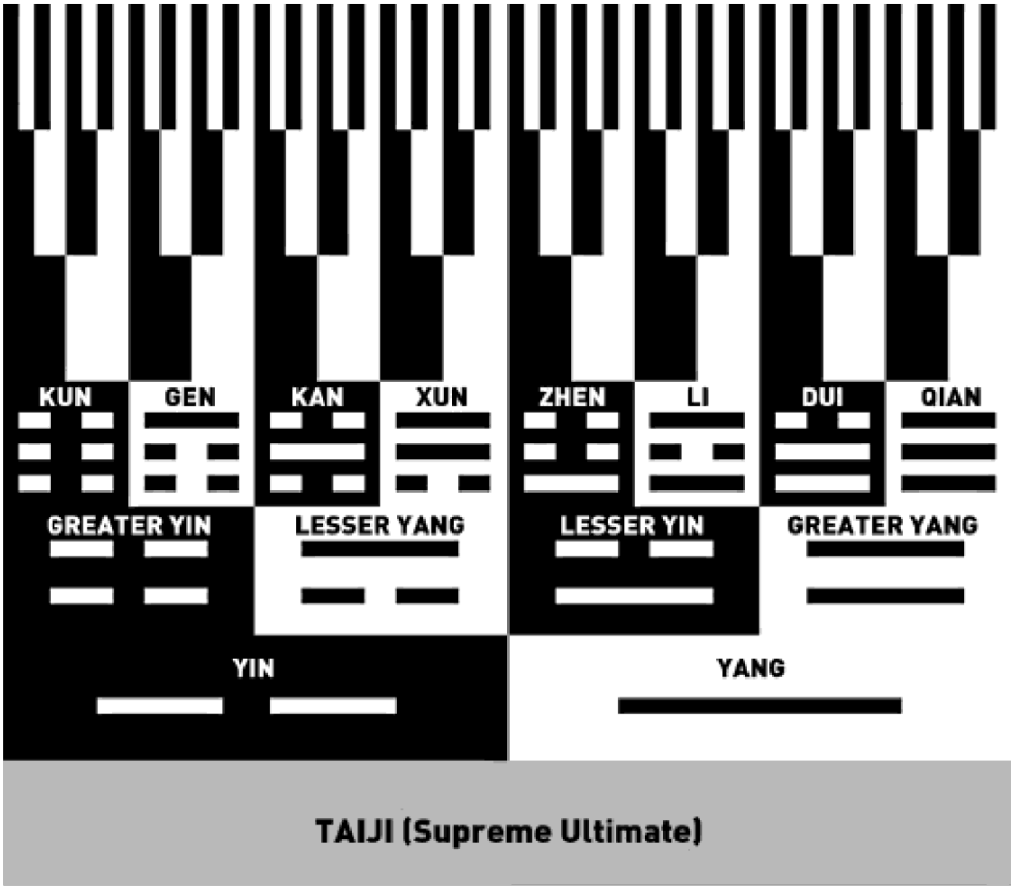
The Supreme Ultimate, in Movement, generates Yang.
Movement reaches its Ultimate Limit, to become Rest.
Rest generates Yin.
Rest in turn reaches its Ultimate Limit,
And once again there is Movement.
Thus Movement and Rest alternate.
They are each other's Source or Root.
The division into Yin and Yang establishes the Two Bigrams.



2. FU XI'S COSMIC KEYBOARD

The second diagram, an extension of the first, is known as Fu Xi's Sequence of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams (*Fuxi Liushisi gua cixu*). I like to think of it as an *I Ching* keyboard, the sort of instrument on which the Castalian Master of Music might have improvised in Hermann Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*. The black "notes" represent Yin, the white "notes" Yang. The various combinations signal the different tonalities or modalities of the Hexagrams. The entire spectrum of Sixty-Four Hexagrams is generated by all the possible sixfold combinations of Yin and Yang. On the extreme right, read vertically from the top, is the First Hexagram, *Qian*, Heaven, made up of six Yang Lines (all white). On the extreme left, again read vertically, is the Second Hexagram, *Kun*, Earth, made up of six Yin Lines (all black). And so forth.

Both of these diagrams, and others, present the reader with vivid visualizations, aids to meditation on Yin and Yang, on the Trigrams, the Hexagrams, and the entire process of Change. Through contemplation of such images, one can be helped to attain a mindful perspective on the world, a calm and objective attitude, conducive to a wise response and an appropriate decision. As Zhu Xi himself put it, such diagrams are Images of the Natural Pattern (*ziran zhi li*) of the *I Ching*. They show the Pattern of Change. To meditate on them can therefore be helpful in reaching an understanding of that Pattern and of Change itself.



TAIJI (Supreme Ultimate)

How to Consult the *I Ching*

DIVINATION PROCEDURES

These are some simple, practical guidelines for Divination with this book.

One should begin in a quiet and receptive state of mind, and approach the Divination with Sincerity and Good Faith. This is important whatever one's actual beliefs. The *I Ching* reflects the state of mind of the Diviner (the person consulting it), providing a glimpse of the Potential Energy of the moment. This reflection, this glimpse, can be true only when the mental state of the Diviner is still.

First, the question is posed. It can be written down, or not. Formulating the question carefully and clearly is a key part of the Divination process. The response, arrived at through one or other of the Divination methods described below, is presented as a six-fold combination of Yin and Yang Lines. Each Line is characterized as either Changing (6 or 9) or Unchanging (7 or 8). When a reading gives Changing Lines, those Lines take on a great significance, since they represent the dynamic forces at work in the evolution from one Hexagram to another.

Yarrow Stalk Method

This traditional method was described in detail by the neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi, whose commentary became standard for many centuries. Arthur Waley and his Bloomsbury friends used matchsticks instead of Yarrow Stalks!

The Diviner should choose a clean and quiet place as the place of Divination, with a table in the center of the room, facing south, not too close to a wall. The table should be about five feet long and about three feet wide. Before it is set an incense burner. Fifty Yarrow Stalks are kept wrapped in a length of perfumed silk, and stored in a black cylindrical container. Take them out and

place them on the table. The container can be made of bamboo, of hardwood, or of lacquer. The Stalks, once removed and held in both hands, should be ceremonially purified in the smoke rising from the burner. “The incense, the silence and the slow movements indicate that Spirits are being consulted rather than a book.” Of the fifty Stalks, one is put aside. This one stalk represents the Supreme Ultimate (*Taiji*), which stands outside the Changes of Yin and Yang.

Next the remaining forty-nine Stalks are divided into two “random” piles, which represent the two poles of Yin and Yang. The two piles are placed one at each end of the divining-table.

A single Stalk is now taken from the right-hand pile and placed between the last two fingers of the left hand. The left-hand pile is then placed in the left hand (some people leave it on the table) and reduced by four Stalks at a time, until there are either one, two, three, or four Stalks left. These are placed between the next two fingers of the left hand (i.e., between the fourth finger and the middle finger). Now the same procedure is applied to the right-hand pile, which is reduced by fours until there are only one, two, three, or four Stalks left in that pile; these are inserted between the middle and index finger of the left hand.

The Diviner now has in the left hand a total of either five or nine Stalks (1 + 1 + 3, or 1 + 2 + 2, or 1 + 3 + 1, or 1 + 4 + 4). He places these five or nine Stalks in a separate pile.

By a process of conversion, 9 is considered to be the equivalent of 2, and 5 the equivalent of 3. If this process is repeated three times, the Diviner will end up with a Line of the Hexagram that is a multiple of 2 and 3. There are four possibilities:

2 + 2 + 2 = 6, or Old Yin, a Changing Line
2 + 2 + 3 = 7, or Young Yang, Yang “at rest,” an Unchanging Line
2 + 3 + 3 = 8, or Young Yin, Yin “at rest,” an Unchanging Line
3 + 3 + 3 = 9, or Old Yang, a Changing Line

By doing this six times, the Diviner arrives at the composition

of a six-line Hexagram. There are sixty-four possible permutations. If the Lines are *all of them Unchanging*—i.e., either 7 or 8—then the Diviner pays attention only to that Hexagram, to its Judgment, to the Commentary on the Judgment, and to the Commentary on the Image of the Hexagram. The Lines and their Statements do not enter into the picture (although some may wish to read them anyway). If, however, there are *Changing Lines* (6 or 9) in the Hexagram, then the Statements attached to those Changing Lines become relevant, and must be consulted. And with the change or changes brought about by the transformation of a Changing Line (or several Lines) into its "opposite" (i.e., when a Yang Line becomes a Yin Line, or vice versa), it becomes necessary to consult the Judgment and Judgment Commentaries of the new Hexagram created as a result.

Here is a hypothetical example. The Divination (whether by Yarrow Stalks or coins) has created the sequence 8/9/7/8/7/8, giving the Lines for Hexagram XLVIII, The Well. *Do not forget that one always counts up from the base when building a Hexagram.*

9 (Old Yang, a Changing Line) is in the Second Place, and is the only Changing Line in the Divination. The Diviner should first consult the overall Judgment and Commentaries for this Hexagram, and should then pay special attention to the Statement attached to this Changing Line in Second Place. Then, as a result of the dynamic of this Changing Line, the Hexagram evolves into Hexagram XXXIX, Adversity, with Yin in Second Place:

The Diviner should pay attention to the overall Judgment and Commentaries for this second Hexagram.

Coin Method

This method is a lot simpler, and is the most commonly used nowadays, although it lacks the ritual complexity and antiquity of the Yarrow Stalk Method. It may have come into use sometime during or after the Tang dynasty.

Three coins are tossed. Heads counts as 3, Tails as 2. With old Chinese coins from the Manchu, or Qing, dynasty, such as the ones I use, Heads can be the side with Chinese characters, Tails the side with Manchu writing. But one can create one's own conventions.

The possible results are the same as with the Yarrow Stalk Method:

2 + 2 + 2 = 6, or Old Yin, a Changing Line
2 + 2 + 3 = 7, or Young Yang, Yang "at rest," an Unchanging Line
2 + 3 + 3 = 8, or Young Yin, Yin "at rest," an Unchanging Line
3 + 3 + 3 = 9, or Old Yang, a Changing Line

Once the Six Lines have been determined, the rules for the remaining procedures (building the Hexagram, consulting the Judgment and Lines) are the same as those for the Yarrow Stalk Method.

Online Methods

There are many methods available online that simulate the Yarrow Stalk Method or the Coin Method. I personally do not recommend them, since they introduce an element into the process which discourages a thoughtful and calm attitude.

TWO EXAMPLES

In order to help readers with their Divinations, I here present a couple of recent consultations, going through the process step by step. I used the Coin Method.

Consultation 1

Step 1. The Question

The first thing for the reader to do is to formulate a question. In this, as in every subsequent step, the most essential thing is the reader's attitude. For the Divination to "work," this attitude must have the quality of Good Faith and Sincerity, the prime quality stressed throughout the *I Ching.* In other words, the Question must be a truthful expression of the Inner Mind.

The question for this first consultation was as follows: "What can the *I Ching* say to me in this day and age? How can I make sense of it?"

Step 2. Arriving at the Hexagram

The Diviner threw the three coins six times, to arrive at a Hexagram (Heads/Chinese = 3; Tails/Manchu = 2). Each throw of three coins was bound to produce one of the following four numbers:

6, Divided Line (Old, or Changing, Yin)
7, Undivided Line (Young, or Unchanging, Yang)
8, Divided Line (Young, or Unchanging, Yin)
9, Undivided Line (Old, or Changing, Yang)

The Hexagram was then "built" from the bottom; i.e., the first throw gave the number for the First, or bottom, Line. The last throw gave the Last, or Top, Line.

In this consultation, the six numbers arrived at were, in the following order:

8 (Young Yin)—Bottom Line
7 (Young Yang)—Second Line
8 (Young Yin)—Third Line
8 (Young Yin)—Fourth Line
7 (Young Yang)—Fifth Line
8 (Young Yin)—Top Line

The Diviner inverted the order, since Hexagrams are always built from the bottom.

Next, the two constituent Trigrams were identified, formed by

the top three numbers, 8/7/8, and the bottom three numbers, 8/7/8. Using the Finding Table for Hexagrams on pages 856–57, the Diviner found the Trigrams, and then derived from them the resultant Hexagram. The Upper Trigram was *Kan* (third from the left in the Top Line of the Table); the Lower Trigram was also *Kan* (third down on the left-hand side of the Table). These two "met" in the square occupied by Hexagram XXIX.

So the resultant Hexagram was XXIX. The Diviner turned to the relevant page in Part I and found the opening section of the Hexagram organized on the page as follows:

HEXAGRAM XXIX

Kan

The Abyss

***Kan*/Water**

above

***Kan*/Water**

Step 3. What to Notice About the Hexagram and Its Structure
The first thing the Diviner noticed about this Hexagram was that all the Lines were Unchanging. In other words, in this reading there were no Lines with the numbers 6 or 9. (It might not have been so: if the coins had fallen differently, and the result had been 6/9/6/6/9/6, for example, the Hexagram would still have been XXIX, but every Line would have been Changing.) Since there were no Changing Lines, the Diviner went on to consult only the first section of text—i.e., the Name, the Judgment, and the two Commentaries, On the Judgment and On the Image of the Hexagram. The Diviner did not consult the Line Statements.

The next thing the Diviner paid attention to was the Hexagram structure. There could be lessons to be learned from this. The structure of this Hexagram is formed by the doubling of the same Trigram, *Kan*, Water or The Abyss. That Trigram is made up of two Yin (Divided) Lines around a single Yang (Undivided) Line. The Hexagram Name is also *Kan*. It is *Kan* Doubled. This is significant.

Step 4. What to Read in the Hexagram
After the number of the Hexagram, XXIX, comes the Name. This is the brief "tag" given to each Hexagram, which often, but not always, encapsulates some aspect of the Hexagram's meaning. In my translation, I always provide the Chinese character for the name, in this case坎, followed by its romanization, or spelling in Western letters, in this case *Kan*, and lastly the translation, The Abyss. Many Names are graphic, and in themselves provide clear clues as to a Hexagram's meaning. Good examples of this are The Well, Hexagram XLVIII, and The Cauldron, Hexagram L. Names such as these provide clear Images that dominate the subsequent text. It is not always as simple as this.

In the layout used for my translation, after the Name comes a graph for Turtle,  . This is a device I have used throughout my translation to separate sections of the text, for the convenience of the Diviner.

Next the Diviner considered the symbolism or imagery of the Trigram Structure—in this case, Water over Water. What do Water

and The Abyss mean in the context of the *I Ching*?

Then the Diviner read the Judgment, the brief mantic Statement that begins the text, followed by the Commentary on the Judgment (under the heading "On the Judgment"), and the Commentary on the Image of the Hexagram (under the heading "On the Image of the Hexagram"). These provide the basic amplification of the Divination response.

In this case, what did the Judgment say? **Good Faith. Fortune in Heart-and-Mind. Actions are honored.** A Diviner new to the *I Ching* might wish at this point to refer to the Glossary, at the back of the book, where there are entries for Good Faith, Fortune, Heart-and-Mind, Act, and Action. This Judgment in effect presented the salient characteristics of the Hexagram response, which was to a great extent positive. The Diviner was being told that the answer to the question was to be found in the basic attitude underlying the whole process of *I Ching* Divination: Good Faith. That, in other words, is what it is "saying in this day and age." With Good Faith, the Divination will "make sense." There will be a good result (Fortune) arising from the Diviner's ability to "make sense" of the *I Ching*. This Fortune stems from the Inner Heart-and-Mind. The Fortune in its turn leads to subsequent decisions and Actions being "honored."

Next, in the Commentary on the Judgment (under the heading "On the Judgment"), the Diviner went on to read the first (and oldest) expansion or interpretation of the brief Judgment. This began to explore the symbolism of the Hexagram. The two prominent symbols here were The Abyss and Water. These are linked to the overall idea of Danger or Peril. Often in this Commentary there are remarks about a Line being Centered, True, Firm, or Yielding—these are qualities of Lines and of their interaction, and also of types of response to situations in life. Again, a Diviner may wish to consult the Glossary for these words.

Next the Diviner consulted the Commentary on the Image of the Hexagram (under the heading "On the Image of the Hexagram"). This Commentary often goes one step further in interpreting the symbolism of the Hexagram. **Water flows, in an**

uninterrupted current. The True Gentleman acts from constancy of Inner Strength. It stresses two things: the need to emulate the flowing quality of Water, and the importance of cultivating Inner Strength before putting anything into "practice," before teaching, before passing on anything to Others.

Gradually, as the Diviner read these two early Commentaries, it became possible to build up a picture of the Hexagram's meaning. Next, in the Composite Commentary following the graph for Dragon,  , the Diviner read a series of (hopefully) enlightening comments by later commentators. This was read from beginning to end, but not all of it was immediately or directly relevant to the question. The general message of the Hexagram *Kan*, The Abyss, emerging from the Composite Commentary was that Water flowing through an Abyss or Gorge would bring with it Danger or Peril; that this Danger would need to be faced; and that by facing Danger with Good Faith, one would become stronger, more able to deal with challenges.

This is a Doubled Trigram Hexagram (*Kan* above *Kan*). There are eight such Doubled Trigram Hexagrams in the *I Ching*. For all of these I have translated extracts from an additional early commentary (another of the Ten Wings) known as the Trigrams Expounded, describing a whole list of qualities associated with the Trigram. This Wing may be a little difficult to make sense of; it may seem little more than a sequence of random images, colorful but of little relevance to your question. You may wish to skip it.

Step 5. Contemplation of the Hexagram

Sometimes we may find that at first reading it is indeed hard to make out what the *I Ching* is "saying." To refer back to the wording of the Diviner's Question, it may seem to make little sense, in this or in any day and age. This is where the fifth step, contemplation, becomes so important. In the end, the Book "says" little that is not already in the mind of the Diviner. It draws things out of the Diviner's mind. It functions as a mirror. (See the quotations from Richard Rutt, Angus Graham, and others in my Introduction.) The more you think about the reading, the more you *contemplate* it, the more likely it is that content will come forward

from your own consciousness. So even if things appear at first to make little or no sense, persevere. *You* are the one who will ultimately make sense of it all.

It is often necessary to interpret certain words in a broad and figurative sense, not to take them too literally. This is where a commentator like Magister Liu (Liu Yiming) can be most helpful. I quote from him in my commentary to this Hexagram, for example, as saying that "with Good Faith the Auspicious interaction between Yin and Yang can be emulated; the perilous, uninterrupted torrent of Water can be navigated through the Abyss." As a practicing Taoist, Liu is telling the Diviner that the Danger or Peril portrayed in the Hexagram is an Inner Danger; it is the challenge of confronting Self, of exposing and dealing with one's own vulnerability. This Danger can be a positive thing. Liu is tying together aspects of the Hexagram so that they "make sense" in the framework of the Taoist Self-Cultivation that lies at the heart of the *I Ching* (as he sees it).

Throughout this process of reading and contemplation, Good Faith continues to be essential. Cynicism will disconnect the Diviner from meaningful interaction with the text.

Step 6. Conclusions

The Diviner needed to draw the Divination to a conclusion. What did it all amount to, as a response to the question posed? Was there an overriding message in the Hexagram? In order to answer this, it was necessary to synthesize the symbols and mantic statements in such a way that they "made sense." To put it another way, it was necessary for the Diviner to *make* sense of them himself, or herself. In this case, one possible Conclusion might have been as follows:

Life presents us with certain critical passages, seemingly dangerous moments, like the Waters of a torrent rushing through a Gorge. In dealing with such situations, we ourselves must be like Water. We can then turn Danger to our advantage. We can learn from it. In order to succeed in this, we must be adaptable, not aggressive. This is possible only if we have a reservoir of Inner Strength.

Consultation 2

The first Divination arrived at a Hexagram with six Unchanging Lines. This is relatively rare. There are usually one or two Changing Lines. I therefore thought it a good idea to try a second, in the hope that the *I Ching* would present some Changing Lines. Sure enough, it did.

Step 1. The Question

This time, I was the Diviner, and I posed my own question: "Is this new translation timely?" By that I meant, Does it have something to offer its readers that is relevant to this moment in time?

Step 2. Arriving at the Hexagram

I threw three coins six times. The following six Lines resulted:

9 (Old Yang)—Bottom Line
6 (Old Yin)—Second Line
7 (Young Yang)—Third Line
8 (Young Yin)—Fourth Line
9 (Old Yang)—Fifth Line
7 (Young Yang)—Top Line

Inverting the numbers, I arrived at the following Hexagram:

HEXAGRAM XXXVII

家人

Jia Ren

The Family

***Xun*/Wind**

above

***Li*/Fire**

This Hexagram has three Changing Lines (9 in First Place, 6 in Second Place, and 9 in Fifth Place). These Changing Lines and their Statements became important elements in the reading.

Step 3. What to Notice About the Hexagram and Its Structure
The Trigram structure of Family is composed of Wind over Fire. This can be visualized as smoke rising out of the household hearth, an Image evoking the idea of Family.

Step 4. How to Read the Hexagram
At first sight, this Hexagram, Family, is indeed all about the way in which the Family is run—through Discipline, with a focus on what was considered the suitable role for the woman in the traditional Chinese Family, one of docile subservience. Once Discipline is established, the Diviner is told, all is well. **This is the True Tao of the Family. When the Family is True, then the World is settled and at peace.** At first the Diviner might well wonder what all of this has to do with the question, the timeliness or otherwise of a new translation of the *I Ching*. What in this context are we to understand by the Family? With the Changing Line in First Place, Magister Liu begins to explain. Discipline enables order to prevail and prevents things from occurring that would lead to Regret. The

first to be disciplined should be Self. For this, the Heart-and-Mind must become Empty, Inner Thoughts must fade away. Liu understands the discipline of the Family in a metaphorical sense, to mean the way one manages Self, the Inner Family made up of all the various thoughts and emotions that drive us on, that cloud the Heart-and-Mind and prevent it from attaining the Heart-and-Mind of the Tao. The Changing Second Line emphasizes the woman's role in the Family. **It is her task to provide food at the Center. To be Steadfast is Auspicious.** Once again Magister Liu interprets this figuratively. The "woman" is a Yin Image of Yielding and Centered Truth, of the Yielding Tao of Self-Cultivation, of the Calm that governs Movement. The emphasis is on Emptiness and Calm. The new translation that is the subject of the question requires this above all else, if it is to function like a Family, spreading the True Tao. The Changing Fifth Line strikes a new and more positive note. **The King comes to his Family. There is no cause for anxiety. This is Auspicious.** The Yang King is in the Center, writes Magister Liu. The Heart-and-Mind is True. All-under-Heaven is at peace. Love prevails. Again, he interprets this in terms of Self-Cultivation.

Since these three Lines change, the reader is presented with not one but two Hexagrams. When Lines 1, 2, and 5 change, they modify the original Hexagram, to produce a second, Blight.

HEXAGRAM XVIII

Gu

Blight

***Gen*/Mountain**

above

***Xun*/Wind**

Step 5. What to Notice About the Second Hexagram and Its Structure

With this new Hexagram, the emphasis changes yet again. The Mountain of the Upper Trigram now rises above the Wind of the Lower Trigram. The Wind is checked and driven back.

Step 6. How to Read the Second Hexagram

The Diviner is now confronted with Blight, a critical situation, and the enterprise in question (the new translation) is seen in a new light. **Supreme Fortune. It Profits to cross a Great Stream. Three days before, three days after, the first day, *Jia***. This last sentence is all about timing, about the need for things to happen at an appropriate time. There is Supreme Fortune, and the implication is that the timing is right. On the Judgment: **A Great Stream is crossed, an enterprise of moment undertaken. Each ending is a commencement. This is the Movement of Heaven.** The Great Stream crossed is an Image of embarking on any challenging enterprise, such as a new translation of the *I Ching*. The Movement of Heaven, the cycle of the Tao, is such that each ending is the commencement of something new. Once again Magister Liu is very helpful. This second Hexagram portrays a time of disorder and decay, such as the present. Things are

scattered in disarray. This is the idea of Blight, a state in which things are going to ruin, as if through poison or venomous worms. The Hexagram advises how to halt this Blight, how to abandon the False and Return to the True, how to restore soundness and vigor. In the Upper Trigram, the single Yang at the Top signals a Return to the Root, a Return to Life, remedying the harmful, decaying effects of Yin Energy, Cultivating the Tao. This explains the Augury of Supreme Fortune. Great effort will be required, however, as in crossing a Great Stream. Great Danger and Adversity will be confronted. One must temper oneself, in the Dragon's Pool and the Tiger's Cave—in the furnace of the world and its troubles—in order to rediscover True Self. Careful consideration is necessary: of the events that have brought about the Blight, and of the measures required to remedy it.

Step 7. Contemplation of the Hexagrams

From Family to Blight. This is the overall movement of the reading. First the *I Ching* presents a picture of Family and the need for discipline, the need for "womanly" Yielding Calm at the Center—of both Family and Self. Without this, no enterprise (including a new translation) will be True. Then it announces the arrival of the King in his Temple—a major event. In the subsequent Hexagram, Blight, the *I Ching* proposes that the enterprise (the new translation) may indeed be timely, provided it is undertaken in the right spirit. Then it may make a contribution to halting the decay which blights the modern world.

Step 8. Conclusions

This at least was my understanding of the reading. I should persevere in the undertaking, which has the potential to be helpful in our time, but do so in a spirit of Calm. It is interesting to compare this with the reading in my Introduction, which also had a bearing on the translation, and which gave comparably balanced advice: On the one hand, proceed with Humility. On the other hand, persevere in a worthwhile undertaking.

HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND IN THIS TRANSLATION

Let us take the third Hexagram as an example.

HEXAGRAM III

Each Hexagram is numbered from 1 to 64.

The Chinese character for the Hexagram Name.

The Hexagram itself, composed of six Lines.

Zhun

The Hexagram Name in the Pinyin system of romanization.

Difficult Birth

Translation of the Hexagram Name.

Early graph for Turtle, used to divide sections of text.

***Kan*/Abyss**

Name of Upper Constituent Trigram.

above

***Zhen*/Quake**

Name of Lower Constituent Trigram.

JUDGMENT

Heading of first section of Core Text, composed of mantic statements.

Supreme Fortune . . .

Text of Judgment itself.

Early graph for Dragon, used as symbol for Composite Commentary, or Digest of Commentaries.

Abyss above Quake. The Chinese graph for *Zhun*, writes Legge . . .

Text of Composite Commentary.

On the Judgment

Difficult Birth . . .

Text of first of the Ten Wings, or early commentaries, relating to Judgment.

On the Image of the Hexagram

Clouds and Thunder,
Nubes et tonitrus . . .

Text of second of the Ten Wings, a commentary relating to Hexagram Name and Hexagram as a whole. Latin is sometimes used for a mantic formula.

 This first “mixed” Hexagram of the *I Ching* contains both Yin and Yang Lines . . .

Text of Composite Commentary.

LINES

Section of the Hexagram giving each Line and its Statement.

Yang in First Place

The “quality” of the First Line as reached by the individual Divination, and the “quality” of the place itself. These may coincide, or they may not.

Hesitation . . .

The Statement of this particular Line.

On the Image

Despite hesitation . . .

The part of the Commentary on the Image relating to this particular Line.

 Yang Line in Yang Place. This First Line, writes Legge, is Undivided (Yang) and Firm . . .

Text of Composite Commentary.

The remaining text follows the same structure.

The Sixty-Four Hexagrams

Page numbers refer to each Hexagram as it appears in Part I and Part II. Only one Name is given for a Hexagram if the Names are identical in both parts.

A Note on Pronunciation and Other Conventions

In this book, Chinese names and place names are in general spelled according to the Chinese system known as Hanyu Pinyin, or Pinyin for short. There are one or two exceptions. In the Pinyin system, the names of this book are spelled *Zhouyi* (*Change of Zhou*) and *Yijing* (*I Ching*). I use the old Wade-Giles spelling, *I Ching*, throughout, simply because it has become so familiar to Western readers. Similarly, for the Tao, which is written *dao* in Pinyin, I continue to use the old spelling, again because it is so widely used in English.

The following very short list of approximate equivalents may help readers with some of the more difficult aspects of the Pinyin system:

c = *ts*
q = *ch*
x = *sh*
z = *dz*
zh = *j*

The following rather longer list may also be of some use:

Bang = *Bung*
Bo = *Boar* (wild pig)
Cai = *Ts'eye* ("It's eye," without the first vowel)
Cang = *Ts'arng*
Chen = *Churn*
Cheng = *Churng*
Chong = *Choong* (as in "book")
Chuan = *Chwan*
Dang = *Darng* or *Dung* (as in cow "dung")

Dong = *Doong* (as in “book”)
Feng = *Ferng*
Gui = *Gway* (as in “way”)
Guo = *Gwore*
Jia = *Jeeyar*
Jiang = *Jee-young*
Kong = *Koong* (as in “book”)
Li = *Lee*
Long = *Loong* (as in “book”)
Lü = *Lew* (as in the French *tu*)
Mo = *More*
Qi = *Chee*
Qian = *Chee-yenne*
Qing = *Ching*
Rong = *Roong* (as in “book”)
Shi = *Shhh*
Shun = *Shoon* (as in “should”)
Si = *Szzz*
Song = *Soong* (as in “book”)
Sun = *Soon* (as in “book”)
Wen = *Wen* (as in “forgotte*n*”)
Xi = *Shee*
Xiao = *Shee-ow* (as in “she-cow” without the *c*)
Xin = *Shin*
Xing = *Shing*
Xiong = *Sheeoong*
Xu = *Shyeu* (as in the French *tu*)
Yan = *Yen*
Yi = *Yee*
You = *Yo* [-heave-ho]
Yu = *Yew* (as in the French *tu*)
Yuan = “*You*, *Anne*”
Zha = *Jar*
Zhe = *Jerrr*
Zhen = *Jurn*

Zhi = *Jirrr*
Zhou = *Joe*
Zhu = *Jew*
Zhuang = *Jwarng*
Zi = *Dzzz*
Zong = *Dzoong* (as in “book”)
Zuo = *Dzore*

SOME OTHER CONVENTIONS

I have used capital letters rather liberally to indicate important practices and concepts within the overall scheme of the *I Ching*. I am aware that some readers may find this tiresome. I have found it to be necessary, because the book has more or less invented its own terms and indeed its own language—some would go so far as to call it *I Ching*–speak.

In Part I, capitals are used mostly for terms that became widely accepted in later *I Ching* commentary, such as Self-Cultivation, Stillness, Steadfast, Sincerity, Good Faith, and Illumination. Illustrations of some of these terms are to be found in the Glossary. In Part II, capitals are reserved mainly for terms from the earlier period, such as Divination, Sacrifice, Ritual, Ancestor, and Temple.

Dates for dynasties, people, and books are not given in the main body of the text. They are to be found in the Names and Dates section at the back of the book.

Other information on the traditional ways of arriving at a Hexagram for a consultation, and the particular arrangements of this edition, can be found in “How to Consult the *I Ching*.”

THE BOOK OF CHANGE

I Ching

易經

PART I

Book of Wisdom

With Extracts from Traditional Commentaries

Heart-and-Mind; that Heart-and-Mind shares the same reasons." This has always been my personal motto as a translator.

But there is another reason for insinuating the odd piece of Latin, a reason that is harder to articulate. Again, as I have stated in the Introduction, over many years I have gradually come to realize (as many others have before me) that there can never be a definitive version of the *I Ching* in any language. Its "meaning" is simply too elusive. All interpretations and translations are works in progress. Part of the book's Power is precisely that it has meant so many different things to so many different readers and commentators over the ages, including its translators. With the passage of time, much of the old accepted understanding fades away. We are bereft of much that was inseparable from the reading of this book, much that gave that reading its Power. In our modern world, the numinous has been for decades in retreat, becoming little more than a faint memory, disappearing with the same alarming rapidity as many natural species. Like the inhabitants of Russell Hoban's visionary post-holocaust masterpiece *Riddley Walker* (1980), or of Walter M. Miller Jr.'s equally haunting and prophetic *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1960), we scavenge for shards of old belief and myth, we piece together whatever fragments we can, from a remote and half-forgotten past. China is no exception. My little scraps of Latin embedded in this *I Ching* are an acknowledgment of this. They serve as slightly subversive reminders that we will never be out of the dark, that we can hope to do little more than clutch at the *disjecta membra* of the past. These half-remembered mumblings (*Non est poenitendi locus!*) are a bit like the dog-Latin and Provençal ravings of Salvatore, the gargoyle vagabond heretic of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. *"Penitenziagite!* Watch out for the *draco* who cometh in future to gnaw your *anima*!" He could so easily have been half-remembering Hexagram I, First Line: "The Dragon lies hidden, *Draco est absconditus.* Do not act, *Nole uti*."

In Part I, the layout is as follows: (1) The core text comes first, centered and in largest type: Hexagram, Hexagram Name, Judgment, and Line Judgments. (2) This is followed, centered on

the page again but in slightly smaller type, by a selection from the oldest commentaries, the Ten Wings: On the Judgment, On the Image, On the Words, the Great Treatise, The Trigrams Expounded. These sections are set off from each other by an old graph for Turtle. (3) In smaller type still, following an old graph for Dragon, is my own eclectic digest of later Chinese commentaries and poets, from the Han dynasty onward, together with the thoughts of a few non-Chinese translators and commentators. These I have reworked and often reworded, weaving them together into one collective voice. Where I am adding my own thoughts, I signal this with the initials JM.

In the last years of this long project, I benefited enormously from the work of three commentators in particular. The first is Liu Yiming, a most remarkable individual of the eighteenth century, who brought to his reading of the *I Ching* insights from his lived experience as a Master in the Dragon Gate School of Complete Reality [Quanzhen] Taoism. During his late teens, Liu suffered a nearly fatal illness, and was restored to health by a Taoist monk. (This, incidentally, was also true of my teacher Liu Ts'un-yan. As a youth in Peking he suffered very poor health, which improved only when he received instruction in Self-Cultivation from a monk in the White Cloud Monastery, one of the main centers of Complete Reality Taoism.) Liu Yiming's experience opened his eyes. He set off wandering around remote areas of China, "seeking the Tao," until at the age of twenty-two, in the Northwestern province of Gansu, he encountered a Taoist Master known as the Old Man of Sacred Shrine Valley, who initiated him into the discipline of *neidan*, or Inner Alchemy. This branch of Taoist practice is no mystical mumbo-jumbo, but a carefully thought-out and long-established method of Self-Cultivation. It has been well described by Isabelle Robinet as "a technique of enlightenment, a method of controlling both the world and oneself," a process of "existential and intellectual integration."

Purists may find my exposition of Liu's complex alchemical terminology overly simplistic. To borrow the words of the Canadian novelist Robertson Davies, I do not have "a scholarly understanding of alchemy." Rather I see in Liu's interpretation of

the *I Ching* a "lived alchemy," a pointer toward the "transformation of base elements and some sort of union of important elements" in the reader's life.[1]

Inner Alchemy uses the symbolism of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams of the *I Ching* (interpreted within the framework and lexicon of the Alchemical Work) as an aide-mémoire or map for the practice of Cultivating the True Heart-and-Mind of the Tao. This is what makes Liu's *I Ching* commentary so fascinating. For him the book is a Taoist Companion to Life, the Hexagrams themselves becoming aids to visualization, steps on the Path to Self-Knowledge.

After many further years of Self-Cultivation of this sort and more wandering around China's remoter regions, doing all sorts of odd jobs, Liu finally settled in a hermitage in Gansu, offering Taoist teachings and medical advice to all comers. Among his many other writings is a commentary on *The Journey to the West,* which was influential in Anthony C. Yu's monumental translation and interpretation of that great novel. I have found Liu's *I Ching* commentary inspirational, and I quote from it liberally, under the rubric "Magister Liu." I have not attempted to convey in any detail the full intricacy of his *neidan* thinking. Instead I have tried to spell out the broad implications of his Taoist reading of the *I Ching*. The most helpful guide for the modern reader wanting to go further into the subject of Chinese Inner Alchemy is to be found in the two books by Isabelle Robinet listed in my bibliography.

The second commentator whose work I have found most helpful (even if I have not always agreed with his interpretations) is the contemporary Taiwanese philosopher and Taoist scholar Chen Guying. Chen has led a colorful and eventful life. Beginning in the early years of martial law in Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek, he acquired a reputation as an engaged and controversial political figure, teaching in the Philosophy Department of Taiwan University, and providing outspoken leadership for student protests. He began writing about Existentialism in the 1960s, and went on to rediscover Chinese philosophy and especially Taoism, so he himself says, as the result of his early studies of Nietzsche.

His edition of the *I Ching*, with prolific notes and commentary, was done in collaboration with the Beijing scholar Zhao Jianwei. It was first published in Taiwan in the late 1990s, and was reissued in Beijing in 2005. It places the *I Ching* in a proto-Taoist context, and makes important and enlightening connections between it and early Taoist texts such as *The Tao and the Power* and the *Book of Master Zhuang*.

The third of my "late companions" on this journey has been Professor Mun Kin Chok (Cantonese pronunciation of Min Jianshu —we share a surname!), Professor Emeritus of Marketing at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and economic adviser to the Chinese government. Professor Mun, now in his late seventies, is a True Gentleman and a delightful individual. In a 2006 study written in English, he derived a "Chinese leadership wisdom" from the *I Ching*. His commentary is designed for the executive or would-be executive. Since 2006, Professor Mun has gone on to write extensively in Chinese developing the same theme. All of his books are published in Hong Kong. The clarity and practical common sense of his explanations provide a useful counterweight to the Taoist musings of Magister Liu. And yet in a way Magister Liu, Professor Mun, and Professor Chen Guying are all doing the same thing. They are applying the text to life. They are using it to help readers take decisions in their outer and inner lives.

This is not an academic translation, and I have chosen not to clutter the pages with lengthy citations. Instead, I have given further details of sources online on my website, johnminford.com. Interested readers are welcome to visit this website, where they may also find further refinements of this "work-in-progress," and can put their own questions to the translator directly.

I have chosen to follow a format similar to the one I used in my earlier translation of *The Art of War*, breaking the core text into short lines to reflect its pithy, often poetic and parallelistic, nature, at the same time centering it on the page. Commentaries from the Ten Wings are also centered.

NOTE

1. Robertson Davies, *The Cornish Trilogy* (1-vol. ed.) (London: Penguin Books, 1991), vol. 2, *What's Bred in the Bone*, p. 701.


image
not
available

On the Judgment

Qian!
Grandly Supreme.
Font of Matter,
Master of Heaven!
The clouds pass,
The rains fall,
The Array of Matter
Flows into Form.
Crystal Comprehension
Of End and Beginning.
Each of the Six Places
Comes in its True Time.
Each of the Six Dragons
Rides Heaven in due order.
The Tao of *Qian*
Is Transformation,
Change.
To things it gives their True Nature,
Their True Life-Destiny.
It preserves the Great Harmony.
This Profits,
This is Steadfast,
The head raised high
Above the Multitude of Things,
The Myriad Kingdoms
All at Peace.

 *Grandly Supreme* For the often-recurring oracular formula "Supreme Fortune. Profitable. Steadfast," see below, and the

discussion of *yuan-heng-li-zhen* in Part II, Commentary to this same Hexagram.

Master of Heaven The Tao of Heaven, writes Zhu Xi, has a Heavenly and Supreme Quality, *yuan*. It has Grandeur, Primordiality. Its Masterly Power is the Font of Creation, of the Myriad Things, of the phenomenal world. Through the Tao of Yin and the Tao of Yang, comments Magister Liu, the Sage Masters both Heaven and Earth. *Qian*, for Zen master Zhixu, is the Buddha Nature.

The clouds pass, the rains fall The Tao of Heaven moves, comments Cheng Yi. It acts and interacts with Earth. In so doing, it creates, it gives birth to all things. This is Fortune, *heng*, writes Yang Wanli; this is the positive manifestation of the *Qian* Hexagram. Clouds and rain are the Energy (*qi*) of that Fortune. Matter is the form into which that Fortune or Energy flows. *Qian* is not just Fortune, adds Yu Yan. It is Supreme in that it lies at the very Origin of Pure Energy, before material distinctions come into play. Its Fortune is to be found in the Flux, in the Flowing into Form, at the point where the Array of Distinctions—those material things that are massive or minute, high or low—becomes manifest. Nothing, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, illustrates better than clouds the continuous Gestation of Heaven, its continuously evolving Flux, its Movement. Nothing illustrates better than rain Heaven's kindly Enrichment of the Earth, its Fertilization of Life. The positive current of Yang Energy passes through all things, charging and renewing them according to their kind. Through it, the world of Matter "becomes," it constantly realizes itself. JM: The cosmic "mating" of Heaven and Earth during rainstorms, the intercourse of Yang and Yin in Nature, is an ancient Chinese motif. "Clouds-and-Rain" has always been the image par excellence of sexual union and consummation, a reminder that the human microcosm functions like the cosmic macrocosm, that the union of man and woman is simply the interaction of the forces of Nature "writ small." It is an intrinsic part of the intercourse of Heaven and Earth. The two levels interact. They have a Resonance. In an essay entitled "Seeking Rain," the

Han-dynasty scholar Dong Zhongshu even proposed that husbands and wives, in order to ensure the timely precipitation of rain, should have sex with each other on every *gengzi* day in the sixty-day cycle. This, wrote an anonymous commentator of the time, would be sure to secure the Harmony of Yin and Yang in the world of Nature—an example of "sexual sympathetic magic." A century earlier, in his preface to a famous poetic rhapsody, the poet Song Yu celebrated sexual ecstasy on a mountaintop, describing the union of a Former King and a Shamaness. This was the *locus classicus* for the "Clouds-and-Rain":

The King lay with her,
And at their parting
She spoke these words:
"My home is on the southern slope
Of Shaman Peak,
Where from its rounded summit
A sudden chasm falls.
At dawn I am the morning clouds,
At dusk, the driving rain. . . ."

Crystal Comprehension This, writes Zhu Xi, is the Comprehension of the Sage, who "gets" the Tao of *Qian* with crystal clarity, both as to its End and as to its Beginning. Hence his Supreme Fortune. Wang Fuzhi understands it to refer to the Tao itself, the all-comprehending, all-knowing Process of *Qian* and of Heaven. The Tao knows all.

Each of the Six Dragons The Six Dragons, writes Zhu Xi, are the Six Lines of this Hexagram, in their respective Places. The Sage comprehends the significance of each—Hidden Dragon, Dragon Seen, Flying Dragon, Dragon Leaping into the deep, etc. —and can therefore act in the appropriate way at the appropriate moment. He rides the Dragons as they progress through the Heavens. In Seclusion, writes Wang Bi, ride the Hidden Dragon. In the Open, ride the Flying Dragon. Ride each of the Six Dragons in due and proper order. Ride the Transformations, take control of the Great Vessel of Heaven. At Rest, be concentrated. In

Movement, be straight and true. Never lose sight of the Great Harmony. Is this not the True Essence of Human Nature and Life-Destiny? JM: Again, this passage concerns the Sage, or the Tao, or both. Zen Master Zhixu comments that the Six Places, and hence the Six Dragons, represent stages of Enlightenment, the gradual revelation of the Buddha Nature. They are also, writes Professsor Mun, the six different stages of development in an enterprise. The Lines advise the Leader of an Organization how to adapt to changing conditions.

Profitable and Steadfast We come now to the key "oracular" words Profit/Profitable, *li*, and Steadfast/Steadfastness, *zhen*, found in this first Judgment, and many times hereafter throughout the *I Ching*. How, asks Zhu Xi, can one ensure that one's actions bring Profit? How and when should one be Steadfast? The answer is to be found in understanding Transformation, the gradual process of Change, the constantly shifting situation and its dynamic; and in understanding Change itself, the final outcome of Transformation, the underlying Reality. One must be in tune with that process, with the True Nature of things, with their True Life-Destiny. The Great Harmony that this understanding brings and preserves is the Harmony of Yin and Yang, the creative fusion of their twin Energies through Transformation. The Transformations of the Tao of *Qian* Profit all things. Through these Transformations every thing perfects its True and Steadfast Nature and Life-Destiny. Heaven, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, never deviates from its correct course (visible in the stars and the seasons). Heaven is always True and Steadfast. In the same way, the Sage is judiciously Steadfast in his pursuit of Truth; he is finely attuned to the Inner Logic of the process of Transformation, participating in that process in the appropriate manner at the appropriate stage. Thereby he achieves results that are both Profitable and Steadfast. The Transformation of Reality, the process of Change, is ongoing, constant, and uninterrupted. But each individuation receives from this very process its True individual identity, its True Nature and Life-Destiny. If all beings respect the inner demands of their True Nature, then individual

existences and Destinies will be united and reconciled in the Great Harmony.

High above the Multitude Heaven, writes Cheng Yi, is Ancestor of the Myriad Things. The King is Forefather of the Myriad Kingdoms. When the Tao of Heaven, of *Qian*, the Head, "is raised high above the Multitude," then the Myriad Things will all enjoy Fortune together. When the Tao of the Ruler respects the Place of Heaven, then everything within the Four Seas will fall into place. When the King embodies the Tao of Heaven, then the Myriad Kingdoms will be at peace. JM: Again, the Head can be understood as the "head" of the Hexagram *Qian*, the "head" of Heaven and the Tao, the "head" of the Dragon, or the "head" of the King, the Ruler, the Sage, or of all at once.

On the Image of the Hexagram

Strong is the Movement of Heaven.
Tirelessly
The True Gentleman
Tempers himself.

 Heaven is the Image of *Qian*, writes Zhu Xi. The Movement of Heaven is strong; it is a powerful "revolution" repeated each day, today's revolving Movement giving way to an identical Movement tomorrow. This celestial phenomenon is fueled by Supreme Cosmic Strength. In the *I Ching*, as Jullien insists, "reality is never the product of creation, always of interaction." Joseph Needham repeatedly emphasizes that the Chinese have no "*spiritus rector*." The True Gentleman models himself on this, he "works on himself," never allowing petty human desire to harm the Inner Strength of Heaven's Power (the Power of the Tao). The great seventeenth-century painter Shi Tao (Stone Wave), also known as

Taoist Laozi (Master Lao, the Old Master, sometimes written Lao Tzu). A disciple asks Confucius about the visit. “I saw a veritable Dragon!” he replies. “A Dragon at one moment coming together into a body, and at the next dispersing to form a colored brilliance. It rides on the clouds of Heaven, it is nourished by Yin and Yang. My mouth fell open in amazement!” The Dragon is the prime image of the *I Ching*, and one of the most powerful. It has been the subject of much rhapsodic speculation. What do we really know about the *long*, the Chinese Dragon, especially in ancient times? As Robert Bagley has remarked, “the literature of Chinese archaeology commonly applies the label Dragon to almost any imaginary animal.” The early (c.AD 100) dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* merely says (rather unhelpfully, and clearly itself quoting the early *I Ching* commentaries) that the Dragon “rises up to Heaven in the Spring, and sinks into the Abyss in the Autumn.” Today we can see with our own eyes in the museums of the world a rich array of stylized early Chinese Dragons, especially on the extraordinary bronze vessels of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. But do these representations really help? Was this creature in fact no more than a construct, inspired by the discovery of various antediluvian dinosaur remains? Was the Dragon closest to snake, crocodile, or fish? Or are these simply the wrong questions? The chameleon-like Chinese Dragon could change shape at will. It was, and is, an emblem of Change. The contemporary art historian Wu Hung, commenting on the strange animals of hybrid form that pervade Chinese mythology and religion, writes vividly of one surviving bronze Dragon, dating from the Warring States period: “Half-feline and half-reptilian, the Dragon has dorsal spikes and pinioned wings. Its body is covered by linear volutes filled with dots. But its sharp wings, horns, and fins convey a strong sense of three-dimensionality. . . . The mythical animal, bending its cylindrical neck and tightening its sinews and muscles, is about to leap in the air.” This is just one among many such Dragon-like creatures. A relatively early, partly Taoistic text, the *Book of Master Guan*, informs us: “The Dragon [like the Turtle] lives in the water. It can acquire the five colors of water, and become a Spirit. If it so

wishes it can make itself as small as a silkworm or a caterpillar. Or it can make itself so large as to cover the whole world. If it wishes to rise up, it can fly among the clouds; if it wishes to descend, it can visit the deepest springs. It changes constantly; it can go up or down whenever it so wishes." Clearly this is far from the fire-breathing Western dragon, the evil creature with which St. George (or St. Michael the Archangel, or Cadmus, or Beowulf, or Siegfried) so heroically fought. It is no monster guarding a hoard of treasure, nor is it an archetypal dark shadow against which the Inner Hero must do battle. Far from it. The Chinese Dragon is a creature of light, positive and numinous "symbol of the electrically charged, dynamic, arousing force that manifests itself in the thunderstorm," as Richard Wilhelm puts it so eloquently. It symbolizes the very process of Change itself, disseminating not fire but water, fertilizing the Earth with its Creative Energy. In the Chinese art of geomancy, *fengshui*, the channels in the landscape through which the Energy of the Earth flows are termed Dragon Veins (*longmai*), and the focal points where Positive, or Yang, Energy is concentrated (sites suitable for graves) are termed Dragon Hollows (*longxue*). In astronomy, the Dragon was an important cluster of stars (see Part II). Later, and more generally, the Dragon came to stand for China and for the whole of Chinese culture and history. The Chinese were "Heirs of the Dragon." A song of that name by the contemporary Taiwan singer Hou Dejian became extremely popular among Chinese of all persuasions in the 1980s.

The Chinese Emperor (in later times Prime Dragon), before ascending his throne, was Dragon in Hiding. "Hidden Dragon" indeed became a stock phrase for a man of parts biding his time. The great wizard and strategist of the Three Kingdoms period, Zhuge Liang, when he retreated to the countryside and became a hermit, was known as the Sleeping Dragon. The Leader of an Organization, writes Professor Mun, is advised to keep a low profile, to store Energy for a future move.

On the Words

The Master said:
He possesses Dragon Power,
But stays concealed.
He does not Change
For the World's sake,
Does not crave success or fame.
He eschews the World.
Neither oppressed by solitude,
Nor saddened by neglect,
In Joy he Acts,
In sorrow stands aside.
He is never uprooted.
This is the Hidden Dragon
In lowly place;
This is Yang Energy
Concealed in the deep.
The True Gentleman acts
From Perfection of Inner Strength.
His Actions are then visible daily.
Here he is
Concealed,
He is
Not yet visible,
His conduct is not yet
Perfected.
He does not
Act.

Yang in Second Place

The Dragon
Is seen in the fields,
Draco in campis.
It Profits
To see a Great Man,
Magnum virum.

On the Image

Inner Strength
Spreads its influence far and wide.

On the Words

The Master said:
This is
Dragon Power.
True and Centered,
In daily words
Sincere,
In daily conduct
Earnest.
He guards against depravity;
He preserves
Good Faith.
Good works are done
But never boasted of.
Inner Strength spreads far and wide;
It Transforms.


Yang Line in Yin Place. Centered. The fields lie upon the Earth, writes Cheng Yi. Now the Dragon emerges, visible above the Earth, manifesting Inner Strength, influencing others in a process of universal extension. The Sage Shun cultivated the Earth and caught fish. It Profited him to see a Great Man of Inner Power, the Sage Yao, in order to implement the Tao. Equally it Profited the Sage Yao to see before him a subordinate of Inner Strength, and to enlist his support. The Leader should seek wisdom and advice, writes Professor Mun, from knowledgeable people (Great Men) both inside and outside his Organization. Then he can announce new plans and new products, while maintaining the principles of sincerity, balance, and uprightness. With this Yang Line in Second Place, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, Dragon Energy becomes manifest; it begins to be openly deployed. Just as in the natural world plants grow and bear fruit, so this Line represents an emergence into the open, above ground. The “fields” can also be seen as the Inner Ground of the Sage’s being, a Spiritual Space to be cultivated and made fruitful.

Yang in Third Place

The True Gentleman is vigilant

Throughout the day;

He is

Apprehensive in the evening.

Danger.

No Harm,

Nullum malum.

On the Image

Have no Constant Rule.
Eschew the irregular.
Movement
Knows no Fixed Rule,
Neither Advance
Nor Retreat.
Be not distant from fellow men.
The True Gentleman
Cultivates Inner Strength;
He fulfills his task.
He tunes Self
To the Moment,
And thus incurs
No Harm.

 Yang Line in Yin Place. The deep, writes Cheng Yi, is the Dragon's natural place of repose. Leaping into the deep at an opportune moment, the Dragon finds rest. In similar fashion, the Sage always stirs (into Action) at an opportune moment. He calculates before advancing; he judges the moment, and thereby avoids Harm. Advance is possible, comments Zhu Xi, but not necessary. Here a certain hesitation and uncertainty are implied. The leap takes place with no apparent cause, without any sense of urgency or flight. The deep may be the space above, or the caverns beneath—places dark and unfathomable. The Dragon bides his time. He may descend, but he may also leap upward toward Heaven. The Leader, writes Professor Mun, is at a crossroads and needs to make a decision whether he should move forward or not, in a calm and balanced manner, without being impulsive. JM: Tao Yuanming, in his poem "Rhapsody on Scholars out of Their Time," drew on the imagery of these lines:

Hidden Dragon,

Leaping Dragon:
All is
Ordained. . . .
The Enlightened Man's Vision
Bids him eschew office,
Bids him
Retreat to his farm.

Yang in Fifth Place

The Dragon

Flies in Heaven,

Draco volans in coelo.

It Profits

To see a Great Man,

Magnum virum.

On the Image

The Great Man
Sets to work.

On the Words

The Master said:
Sounds of the same sort
Resonate;
Creatures of the same Energy
Congregate.
Water flows to moist ground,
Fire rises to that which is dry.

Clouds follow the Dragon,
Wind follows the Tiger.
The Sage stirs the Myriad Creatures
Into Action.
Pay heed:
Whatsoever derives from Heaven,
The Heaven-bound,
Is drawn to what is above;
Whatsoever derives from Earth,
The Earth-bound,
Is drawn to what is below.
Each follows its kind.

 Yang Line in Yang Place. Centered and True. This is the Great Man's Work, writes Cheng Yi, this is the business of the Sage. The Great Man is the Dragon, comments Xu Ji. The Work is the flight. Here, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, the Yang which has been slowly accumulating is suddenly transformed; it attains perfect freedom of movement (*aisance*). The soaring flight is free progress, effortless and unhampered. Steadfastness has become spontaneity. One day it just happens. The transition to sagehood is like the passage from Apprentice to Master, for aspiring musician, painter, or calligrapher. All the toil of practice is suddenly transformed into an astonishing facility. At this juncture the Sage simply takes off ("leaps"). He follows the Tao as naturally and instinctively as if it were an Edict of Heaven. The Ruler too, thanks to Inner Strength patiently accumulated, at this juncture no longer needs to exert himself in order to be obeyed. The Inner Strength operates of itself; it emanates effortlessly (it is, after all, *mana*) from his Spiritual Ascendance. In business, writes Professor Mun, this is the ideal state. Once an Organization can identify its goals, then its members can apply their expertise appropriately and work with Energy toward those goals.

Yang in Top Place

The Dragon
Overreaches himself.
There is
Regret,
Est quod poeniteat.

On the Image

That which is full
Cannot endure.

On the Words

The Master said:
Be noble,
But hold no position;
Be high,
But have no subordinates
Below.
The worthy hold lower positions
But provide no support.
Movement
Brings Regret.
Things have reached an extremity.
Calamity.
At odds with the moment,
One can Advance
But not Retreat.

One can survive
But not disappear.
One can take hold
But not let go.
Only the Sage can master both
Advance and Retreat;
Only he can survive and disappear,
And never lose his True Nature.

 Yang Line in Yin Place. The previous Place (the Flying Dragon) is the highest point in the Hexagram. It is the most opportune moment, writes Cheng Yi, properly Centered and True. To overstep that moment is to go too far, to overreach oneself, with consequent Regret. The Sage knows the limits; he knows when to Advance and when to Retreat; he knows how to survive. He does not overreach himself. He has no pride. He has no Regret. The Sage has already gone through all the spheres in which he is called upon to display his qualities, comments Legge. It is now time for him to let go and relax. The string should not always be pulled taut; the bow should not always be kept drawn. The inflexible use of force will give occasion for Regret. The moral meaning found in the Line is that “the high shall be abased.” Here the Dragon is paralyzed (*bloqué*), writes Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi. That which cannot increase, that which is already full, will necessarily decline. But the Dragon is still a Dragon. Its Inner Strength remains intact. The Regret of the Dragon Sage is a stoical Regret. Joseph Needham writes of the “self-regulating Organic System” of the Universe. The Chinese Sage is “only finding out what all natural bodies, celestial and terrestrial, spontaneously know and perform.” He quotes Heraclitus: “The Sun will not transgress his measures.”

attributed to Confucius, but was most probably written well after his death, and, as many scholars have pointed out, it contains ideas that are close to the worldview of early Taoism. It is in many ways a work in its own right, expounding at some length, and often poetically, cosmological ideas such as the interplay of Yin and Yang, as well as the general nature of the Tao, ideas that are barely mentioned in the Judgment and Lines of the *I Ching* core text. A large part of the Treatise can be found in the Mawangdui silk manuscript, dated to the early second century BC. Richard Rutt calls it a cosmological and metaphysical treatise, "awkwardly cobbled together from other sources," a "collection of short essays that provide a rationale of the connection between the Hexagrams and the events they predict." In it, "the process began that eventually produced the understanding of the *I Ching* found in most Chinese commentaries, which ultimately received its classic expression in the neo-Confucian synthesis of the Song dynasty."

Principles

Before giving the opening words of the Treatise, I give here its grand Statement of Principles from part I, section 10, describing what Wilhelm calls the "psychological basis of the Oracle," the way in which "the conscious and the supraconscious enter into relationship." This passage has already been given in the Introduction, but it deserves to be repeated here.

The *I Ching* does not think,
It is *sine meditatione*.
It does not act,
It is *sine actu.*
In its solitude,
In quiete,
It is motionless,

Sine motu.
In its Resonance,
It reaches
The core of the World,
It uncovers
The *rerum omnium causam*.
In all the World,
Only the *I Ching*
Can accomplish this.
It is a most Spiritual Entity,
Summus spiritus!
Through the *I Ching*
The Sage
Plumbs
The greatest depths,
Investigates
The subtlest Springs of Change.
Its very depth
Penetrates
The Will of the World,
In intima finemque
Rerum mundi.
Knowledge of
The Springs of Change
Enables
Terrestrial Enterprises
To be accomplished.
This Spiritual Entity
Makes speed without haste,
It arrives without traveling.


The “subtlest Springs” (*ji*), the infinitesimally small “germs of Change” (Jullien, “*l’amorce infime de la mutation*”), are the first inklings or stirrings, the faintest hints or suggestions of Movement in the environment. They are triggers, pivots, turning points. In *The Art of War*, in some ways a simplistic (and by no means always benign) strategic application of some of the basic ideas of the *I Ching*, it is the Warrior Adept’s awareness of the Springs that brings victory. In a deeper sense, the unique access the *I Ching* provides to the deep inner structure of the present moment, of the “now,” the perception it brings of the moment’s Inner Dynamic or Potential Energy (*shi*), brings not victory as such, but spiritual and strategic insight, and so Strength or Power. It is in this sense more than a book. It is a Spiritual Entity. This Power of the *I Ching* is intangible and infinite. It mirrors the Power of the Tao itself, as described in the words of the Taoist classic *The Tao and the Power*:

Chapter 42
From the Tao is born the One,
From the One, Two;
From Two, Three;
From Three,
The Myriad Things.


The *I Ching* operates, to quote Legge, like “Spirits, inscrutable, unfathomable, even like that of the Spirit of God.” Richard Wilhelm compares it to “an electrical circuit reaching into all situations.” He continues: “The circuit only affords the potentiality of lighting; it does not give light. But when contact with a definite situation is established through the questioner, the ‘current’ is activated, and the given situation is Illumined.”

The Opening Remarks of the Great Treatise

Heaven is lofty,
Earth lowly.
These define
Qian and *Kun*.

 These opening words of the Treatise announce the grand cosmic architecture of the *I Ching*, built on the twin pillars of *Qian* and *Kun*, the first two Hexagrams, composed as they are of Pure Yang and Pure Yin. Heaven and Earth, writes Zhu Xi, are the substantial manifestations of the Forms and Energies of Yang and Yin. *Qian* and *Kun*, comments Wang Bi, are the Two Gates of the *I Ching*.

Lowly and lofty
Are arrayed,
Noble and humble
Have their place.
Movement and Rest
Obey Constant Rules,
Firm and Yielding
Are defining qualities.
Tendencies fall into categories,
Things divide into classes.
Fortune and Calamity come to pass.
Heaven engenders images,
Earth engenders forms.
Change and Transformation
Are made manifest.

 Lofty and lowly, writes Zhu Xi, are the high and low places of Heaven and Earth and of the Myriad Things. Noble and humble occupy highest and lowest place. Movement is the

constant mode of Yang, Stillness the constant mode of Yin. Firm and Yielding are the defining qualities of the Yang and Yin Hexagram Lines. The Heavenly Images referred to here, writes Wang Bi, are the sun, moon, and stars. The Earthly Forms are mountains, lakes, shrubs, and trees. Suspended in the Heavens, the Images revolve to create darkness and light. On the Earth, mountains and lakes circulate Energy, clouds pass by, rains fall. In this way the Process of Transformation is made manifest. Like Nature, comments Richard Wilhelm, the Book itself (in its own internal hierarchy) reflects the differentiation between lowly and lofty. Each Hexagram consists of Six Places, of which the odd-numbered are Firm (Yang) and the even-numbered Yielding (Yin).

Firm and Yielding
Press against one another;
The Eight Trigrams
Propel each other onward.


Commentators and translators through the ages have had a broadly shared understanding of this important description of the process of Change, the interaction of Yin and Yang, the Dynamic, the sheer Power, of the dual cosmic forces as they perpetuate the Universe in an unending chain of permutations. Firm and Yielding “press against one another,” writes Wang Bi, in the interaction of Yin and Yang. They propel each other onward. This is the Transformative Process of the Trigrams and Hexagrams, writes Zhu Xi. The Sixty-Four Hexagrams all derive ultimately from the Two Primal Lines—the Firm or Undivided Line, Yang, and the Yielding or Divided Line, Yin. These Two Primal Lines “press against one another,” they interact, they multiply, they generate the Four Bigrams, the fundamental Two-Line permutations of Yang and Yin—halfway between the Primal Lines and the Eight Trigrams. The Four Bigrams then “press against one another” once again to

Principle brings with it Illumination, the ability to know one's True Place in the scheme of things.

HEXAGRAM II

Kun

Earth

***Kun*/Earth**

above

***Kun*/Earth**

JUDGMENT

Supreme Fortune.

Steadfastness of a Mare

Profits,

Equae soliditas.

The True Gentleman

Has a Destination,

Sit quo est.

At first he goes astray,

Then finds a Master.

It Profits

To gain friends

In West and South,

To lose friends

In East and North.

It is Auspicious

To rest in Steadfastness,

Bonum est.

 Earth above Earth. Pure Yin. This Hexagram, the second composed of a Doubled Trigram, is made up of six Yin Lines. The meaning of *Kun*, writes Zhu Xi, is found in the Tao of Earth. The Tao of Earth is to serve Heaven. Earth is the origin of all things, writes Master Guan. It is the Root and Garden of Life. Earth is the place where all things, beautiful and ugly, good and bad, foolish and clever, come into being. Water is the blood and breath of Earth, flowing through its landscape, connecting through sinews and veins. Chinese Heaven, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, is always inseparable from Earth. Earth is its true partner. Reality results from the immanent interaction of these two Energizing Breaths (*souffle-énergies*). And yet there is also here a strong emphasis on submission, on the duty of the woman (Yin, Earth) to conform, to serve, an emphasis that has always permeated the feudal value system of China. Earth is a Perfect and Receptive Void, opening herself to the penetrating influence of Heaven, thereby demonstrating her vast capacity. In Earth,

Deep Inner Penetration is transformed into Outward-Flowing Radiance. Having taken in the seeds of Heavenly Energy, Earth bestows upon them their Steadfastness and makes them prosper. The Human Heart-and-Mind may indeed "go astray," writes Magister Liu. But eventually it finds tranquillity and submits to the Heart-and-Mind of the Tao. The submissive Yin Energy of Earth finds a Master in the strong Yang Energy of Heaven. A Leader, writes Professor Mun, in addition to being strong, must be open-minded and tolerant. In addition to having Strength and Energy, he must have the ability to be receptive and soft.

On the Judgment

Kun!
Grandly Supreme!
Mother of the Myriad Things,
Willing Servant of Heaven.
Ample is *Kun*,
Sustaining all matter.
Kun's Power
Knows no bounds,
Kun's Capacity
Is vast,
Kun's Radiance
Is great.
Matter in all its variety
Shares in the Fortune of *Kun*.

 *Qian* has the Power, *Kun* the Capacity, writes Legge. *Qian* originates, *Kun* produces. *Kun* gives birth to what has been originated, "sustains matter." The radiance of *Kun* is the beauty that shines forth throughout the vegetable kingdom. JM: Joseph Needham makes the connection between the "germinal ideas" of

early Chinese thought and similar ideas of the pre-Socratic philosophers: “The Tao as the Order of Nature, which brought all things into existence and governs their every action, not so much by force as by a kind of natural curvature in space and time, reminds us of the *logos* of Heraclitus of Ephesus, controlling the orderly processes of change.” Needham refers to the famous verses from *The Tao and the Power*:

Chapter 25
In the beginning
Was a thing,
Undifferentiated
And yet complete.
Before Heaven and Earth,
There it was,
Silent,
Empty!
Sufficient unto itself!
Unchanging,
Revolving incessantly,
Inexhaustible.
Well was it called Mother
Of All-under-Heaven.
I do not know its name.
We call it the Tao.

Chapter 34
The Great Tao
Floods in every direction!
All things look to it for life,
None are refused.

Chapter 51
The Tao gives birth,
The Power nurtures.

The Mare is of Earth,

On the Words

Kun
Is most Yielding;
In motion
It is Firm.
It is
Quietest.
Its Power is square.

 The whole Hexagram *Kun*, writes Legge, made up as it is of six Divided Lines, expresses the ideal of Yielding, of subordination and docility. The Superior Man, the True Gentleman, does not take the initiative. It is by following that he finds his Lord. The Firmness in motion is that of a mare, docile yet strong, a creature for loyal service to man.

The Trigrams Expounded

Kun
Is Earth,
Mother.
Kun
Stores and serves;
It follows the flow.
It is
Cow and belly.
South-West.
Cloth and cauldron.
Thrifty,
Even.
Large chariot,
Pattern and multitude.

It is handle.
Of soils,
Black.

The Great Treatise

From Part I, Section 11

Closing the Door
Is *Kun.*
Opening the Door
Is *Qian*.
Closing and opening,
These are Change,
Infinite Movement
Back and forth.
Connection.

From Part II, Section 6

The Master said:
Qian and *Kun*
Are the Doors of Change.
Qian is the
Yang Thing,
The penis.
Kun is the
Yin Thing,
The vagina.
When Yin and Yang Energies join,
When Firm and Soft unite,
Then is Substance attained.


One of the first translators to draw attention to this extraordinary passage, and to the sexual dynamic at the very heart of Change, the interplay of Yin and Yang, was the much-reviled (and now largely forgotten) Irish clergyman Thomas McClatchie. McClatchie arrived in the newly established treaty port of Shanghai as a missionary in 1844, and went on to become canon of Shanghai Cathedral. He published his interesting version of the *I Ching* in 1876, much influenced by the new ideas on comparative mythology and religion (Edward B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* first appeared in 1871). "From the statements of the *I Ching*, and of Confucius in his Commentary, *Qian-Kun* or *Shangdi* [elsewhere McClatchie calls this the Chinese "hermaphroditic deity," and identifies it with Baal of the Chaldeans] is evidently the phallic God of Heathendom represented unmistakably by the usual symbols. *Qian* or his Male portion is the *membrum virile*, and *Kun* or his Female portion is the *pudendum muliebre*; and these two are enclosed in the circle or ring, or *phallos*, the Great Extreme [*Taiji*, the Supreme Ultimate] or Globe of Air [*qi*, Energy], from and by which, as the Great Monad [*Taiyi*], all things are generated. In these two powers of nature we have evidently the Linga and the Yoni of the Hindus." Predictably, McClatchie's contemporary, the prudish Presbyterian James Legge, took great offense at this mention of "sundry things which are not pleasant to look at or dwell upon. Why did he [McClatchie] not dismiss the idea of such conjugal intercourse from his mind altogether? Why make the *I Ching* appear to be gross, when there is not the shadow of grossness in it? It is hardly possible, on reading such a version, to suppress the exclamation *proh pudor*! [For shame!] Can a single passage be adduced in support of it from among all the Chinese critics in the line of centuries? I believe not. The ideas which it expresses are gratuitously and wantonly thrust into this text of the *I Ching*." Canon McClatchie, in his understanding of these Chinese terms (*yangwu* and *yinwu*—literally, Yang Thing and

Yin Thing) was well ahead of his time. His rather precise translation is supported by the views of several twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals (e.g., Guo Moruo and Qian Xuantong), and has been vindicated more recently by Edward Shaughnessy in his version of the Mawangdui silk manuscript *I Ching*. It also reflects a pervasive current in early Chinese thought. Douglas Wile writes, "Early texts are marked by the existential loneliness of Yin and Yang for each other, and their union consummates a cosmic synergy." Joseph Needham puts it in his own characteristic fashion: "One notes the solidity of *Qian* as opposed to the cavity in *Kun*, and one can hardly overlook a phallic significance in this, *Qian* as the lance and *Kun* as the grail." *Qian* and *Kun* are two peaks facing each other. From them proceeds the Tao of Change. They are the two leaves of a single entrance, or door, constantly opening onto the Transformation of Things. David Hall and Roger Ames draw attention to the pervasive use of this image in Taoism, the opening and closing of the Heavenly Gate, moving the leaves of the door back and forth, navigating between Yin and Yang. As *The Tao and the Power* says:

Chapter 6
The Gate of the Dark Female
Is the Root
Of Heaven and Earth.

Chapter 10
In opening and closing
The Gate of Heaven,
Can you be like a hen?

All of this has deeply sexual implications. The *I Ching* has always been a source for Chinese ideas of sexuality, often elaborated in alchemical terms. The mutual physical and psychological benefits of sexual union, the interplay or intercourse of Yin and Yang, are already referred to in the earliest Chinese sexological texts. Physical intercourse is the

Union of Yin and Yang, or the Union of their Energies (*heqi*, Union of the Breaths of Yin and Yang). Early Taoists celebrated this Union in collective Sexual Rites. The vagina is the Dark Gate, the Jade Gate, the Vermilion Gate. In one of the commentaries (the *Xiang'er*) on the passage just quoted from *The Tao and the Power*, we read:

The Dark Female
Is Earth,
Woman its Image.
The Yin Cavity
Is the Gate,
Office of Life and Death,
Essence,
Root.
The Male Stalk,
The Penis,
Is also the Root.

Heaven spreads its influence over Earth, writes Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi. It penetrates Earth. Earth opens itself to this influence, bringing it to fruition. This reflects the relationship between Yin and Yang. Yang is firm and solid, Yin soft and malleable. Yin tends toward condensation of Energy—concentration and actualization; Yang tends toward deployment of Energy—animation, positive orientation. But there is never Yin without Yang, just as there is never Heaven without Earth. The Sage gains access to the Power of the Energy that lies at the base of the world, by himself experiencing this Inner Process of Reality, this interaction of Yin and Yang. JM: The poet Bo Xingjian uses the same language in his rhapsody "The Great Joy of the Intercourse of Yin and Yang." Young lovers, preparing for the act of love in an upper chamber on a moonlit night, read passages from the *Classic of the Plain Girl*, a sex handbook dating probably from the Sui dynasty. In the handbook, the Plain Girl, immemorial instructress in matters Yin and Yang, gives the Yellow

These are no events
Of a single morning,
Nor of a single evening.
They come to pass gradually.
Matters must be seen clearly
At an early stage.
The Book speaks here
Of the need for vigilance.


Yin Line in Yang Place. Yin is humble and weak in origin, writes Wang Bi, but nonetheless accumulates. Be on the lookout at the very outset, advises Magister Liu, for the first signs of negative Yin Energy creeping in. Frost, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, is a natural Image for the excessive accumulation and condensation of Yin. We must recognize this state of affairs, this Potential Energy in the situation, before it is too far advanced. We need to "read" the minimal degree of freezing present in "hoarfrost," in order to be ready for the really "hard ice" when it comes. In human terms, if we are to act appropriately, we must learn to "read" the undercurrent as it evolves. We must be alert to the Springs of Change, which may presage some spectacular event. JM: This section of the commentary On the Words is quoted in full by the nineteenth-century critic Zhang Xinzhi, in his essay "On Reading *The Story of the Stone*." It is, he says, the underlying theme of that great novel: the Gradual Process of Change (*Jian*, Gradual, is itself the name of Hexagram LIII). Within a family, the accumulation of evil is Gradual, the development of Misfortune is Gradual. There is a need to see things clearly, to nip them in the bud, if one is not to be suddenly confronted with disaster. More recently, in February 2012, these words from the *I Ching* ("A family accumulating goodness . . .") were publicly proposed as a motto to be printed on a new series of Chinese banknotes. The proposal, aimed at raising "awareness of traditional Chinese values," came from the

forty-two-year-old “maverick recycling billionaire” Chen Guangbiao, sometimes described as the Warren Buffett of the People’s Republic of China. The Leader of an Organization, writes Professor Mun, must keep his eyes open for any changes in both the internal and the external environment. Negative signs of Change to look out for might include a decline in sales, an increase in customer complaints, changes in the prevailing interest rate, or an increase in staff turnover.

Yin in Second Place

Straight,

Square,

Great.

There is neither effort nor practice.

All Profits.

On the Image

This is the Motion of Yin
In Second Place:
Straight and square.
Luminous is the Earth’s Tao,
Lex terrae.

On the Words

Straight is true,
Square is righteous.
The True Gentleman
Stays straight within:

This is Reverence.
He remains square without.
This is Righteousness.
When Reverence and Righteousness
Are established,
There is no solitude,
There is Inner Strength.
Actions leave no room for doubt,
Nullus dubitandi locus.


Yin Line in Yin Place. Centered and True. Abiding in Center, writes Wang Bi, in True Place, the True Gentleman here attains the Supreme Quality of Earth. He trusts in the course of Nature. Things are born of themselves. He makes no “effort” to cultivate results; they happen of themselves. He does not rehearse (“practice”) matters, and yet everything Profits. This Line presents us with Earth itself, comments Legge, according to the Chinese conception of it, as a Great Cube. Heaven is a Circle or Sphere. In this Hexagram, writes Professor Mun, to be straight is to be honest, to be square is to be upright, to be great is to be large-minded and tolerant. These qualities complement the Strength and Energy of the First Hexagram and create a balanced character in a Leader.

Yin in Third Place

Excellence is
Contained.
Remain Steadfast.
The King’s service

May be done,

But without success.

There is a Conclusion,

Finem.

On the Image

Act at the right time.
This is great wisdom,
Claritas magna.

On the Words

The beauty of Yin
Is contained,
In the King's service.
Yin never presumes
To claim success.
This is the Tao of Earth,
The Tao of Wife,
The Tao of Minister.
The Tao of Earth
Knows of no success;
It brings
Conclusion for others,
Finem.


Yin Line in Yang Place. The Tao of Earth, writes Wang Bi, does not initiate; it responds, it awaits orders. This is Excellence Contained, this is Truth. To Contain Excellence, comments Legge, is the part of the Minister or the Officer. He seeks not his own glory, but that of his Ruler. The Leader's Yin character, writes Professor Mun, is projected outward, while his Yang character is

“contained” inwardly. His service to the public is done quietly, without claiming any credit for “success.”

Yin in Fourth Place

The bag is tied.

Neither Harm,

Nor praise,

Nullum malum,

Nulla gloria.

On the Image

With Caution,
There is no Harm,
Nullum infortunium.

On the Words

In the Transformations
Of Heaven and Earth,
Plants thrive.
In the Closing
Of Heaven and Earth,
Worthy men stay hidden,
Sapientes latent.
The Book of Change speaks
Of Caution.

 Yin Line in Yin Place. The “tied bag,” coments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, signifies a Retreat within oneself, in order to

On the Image

The Tao is exhausted,

Lex exhausta.

 Yin Line in Yin Place. This Line, writes Legge, like the Yang in Top Place of the preceding Hexagram ("The Dragon overreaches himself"), points to a time of crisis. The Yin Line is a Dragon doing battle with another Dragon. They bleed, and their blood is of two colors: the color proper to Heaven (dark blue), and the color proper to Earth (yellow). This conflict, writes Magister Liu, stems from an inability to follow Others, a desire to *be followed*, a lack of Harmony and Equilibrium. Yin and Yang are out of tune. The injury is self-inflicted. The "ice" in the First Place and the "blood" in the Sixth, comments Jullien, following Wang Fuzhi, both indicate a crisis, a conflict, a warning that things have reached a critically dangerous turning point. If one can recognize this, if one can acknowledge Life-Destiny and be attentive to the Springs of Change, then the result of this crisis need not be Misfortune. In an Organization, writes Professor Mun, there may be a conflict between old and new visions or policies.

Yin in Final Place

It Profits

To be forever Steadfast,

Oportet ut perpetua sit soliditas.

On the Image

A Grand Conclusion,

Magnus finis.

As with the Final, or Supernumerary, Line of the First Hexagram, writes Zhu Xi, there is here a general movement from Yin to Yang, hence a Grand Conclusion. Yang is great, Yin is small. Here all Yin elements become Yang; they move from small to great. To reach the Tao, writes Magister Liu, one must know how to be submissive and receptive. One must be forever True and Steadfast.

HEXAGRAM III

Zhun

Difficult Birth

***Kan*/Abyss**

above

***Zhen*/Quake**

JUDGMENT

Supreme Fortune.

Profitable.

Steadfast.

A Destination

Is of no avail.

It Profits

To establish Lieutenants,

Oportet elevare principes.

 Abyss above Quake. The Chinese graph for *Zhun,* writes Legge, shows a plant struggling with difficulty to sprout out of the Earth, to rise gradually above the surface. This difficulty marks the first stages in a plant's growth, its embryonic "growth pains." It also symbolizes the struggles that mark the rise of a state out of a condition of disorder, consequent upon a Great Change, or revolution. "Establishing Lieutenants," writes Chen Guying, can also be understood figuratively to mean adopting good habits, sound principles of conduct; forming good friendships; building a sound basis for one's life. Magister Liu agrees. Once the Heart-and-Mind is True, then the Root is strong and Primal Energy is not dispersed or trapped by Negative Yin Energy.

On the Judgment

Difficult Birth.
First intercourse
Of Firm and Yielding,
Of Yang and Yin.
There is
Movement in Danger,
Great Fortune.
Steadfastness.
Movement
Of Lightning and Rain.
Fullness to the brim,
Heaven's murky brew.
Lieutenants established;
No peace.

On the Image of the Hexagram

Clouds and Thunder,

Nubes et tonitrus.

The True Gentleman

Weaves the Fabric of Order.

 This first "mixed" Hexagram of the *I Ching* contains both Yin and Yang Lines, and thus points to "first intercourse of Yin and Yang" and the ensuing pangs of birth. First Intercourse is the Quake, writes Zhu Xi. Difficult Birth takes place in the Abyss, the Place of Peril. The Quake (*Zhen*, Lower Trigram) Moves: that is its mode of Action. The Abyss (*Kan*, Upper Trigram) receives; it is a Place of Danger: that is its Nature. Lightning is an Image associated with Quake, Rain an Image associated with Water in the Abyss. In the Intercourse of Yin and Yang, Lightning and Rain break forth. They move. In this "murky brew," Nature ferments, it gives birth. In this disorder, nothing is fixed, names are as yet undetermined. It is the True Gentleman who instills Order, who weaves its Fabric. He "establishes Lieutenants." But his measures cannot yet bring peace. The Yang Line in First Place is born within the Abyss, writes Magister Liu. At this crucial Intercourse of Yin and Yang, at this Ford between Life and Death, Calamity and Fortune are being determined. The Taoist must be decisive in his Work, must nurture the Sprouts of Spirit, must not allow Yin Energy to invade and cause injury. Ultimately Yang Energy will unfold and prevail, like Thunder in the Clouds. Sweet Dew will descend. The twilight is long, but the dawn is radiant. JM: "Heaven's murky brew," the treacherous but creative Water in which all things are born, is close in meaning to the primordial "chaos" (*hundun*) of the Taoists. (In fact, the character *dun* is very close in form to this Hexagram Name, *Zhun*.) The historian and poet Ban Gu refers to this Hexagram in his "Rhapsody on Connecting with Spirit":

What confusion lies in *Zhun,*

Is set on the True Path.
The noble stoop
To the humble,
Drawing them over in large numbers.

 Yang Line in Yang Place. This First Line, writes Legge, is Undivided (Yang) and Firm. Action is possible, but above and ahead (within the Hexagram) lies the Trigram of Danger (*Kan*). Hence the need for Caution and the importance of “establishing Lieutenants” and delegating authority. In this way, writes Magister Liu, Primal Energy can be conserved and nurtured. Confusion must be resolved gradually, writes Richard Wilhelm. To rule by serving, as noble stoops to humble, is the secret of success. Caution and hesitation are advised at this difficult time. The Leader has a strong character (Yang Line), writes Professor Mun, and will not give up his development plan even though he is facing difficulties (he “remains Steadfast”). He should seek assistance from capable people (“Lieutenants”).

Yin in Second Place

Difficulty at Birth.
A turning.
Horses wheel,
Pulling at odds.
No brigand this,
But a suitor.
The woman
Stays Steadfast;

She rejects marriage.

She waits ten years to wed.

On the Image

Yin Rides
Firm Yang,
Supra durum.
Difficulty.
Marriage after ten years
Returns all
To its proper state.


Yin Line in Yin Place. Centered and True. A young lady is sought in marriage by a strong suitor, writes Legge. She rejects him, and finally, after ten years, finds a more suitable husband. JM: Marriage does indeed present itself as a resolution of the uncertainties and difficulties that beset this critical juncture. But it must be entered into only with careful deliberation. The horses wheeling, pulling in opposite directions, indicate a difficult relationship. Note that they occur three times in this Hexagram, in Lines 2, 4, and 6. Wait until Yin and Yang are properly matched, writes Magister Liu. Do not act impulsively. The executive, writes Professor Mun, is close to, immediately above, Yang in First Place (he Rides Yang). But clashes may arise between the two. To forge a more productive partnership or alliance with Yang in Fifth Place will take time and requires patience.

Yin in Third Place

There is

No guide.

A deer

Is hunted into the woods.

The True Gentleman,

Understanding

The Springs of the moment,

Abandons the chase.

To continue

Will bring Misfortune,

Poenitebit.

On the Image

One man hunts with no guide,
For the sheer sake of the chase.
The True Gentleman
Abandons the chase,
Seeing trouble ahead,
And Harm.


Yin Line in Yang Place. Pursuit of any goal must be tempered by the wisdom of the True Gentleman, by a cultivated insight into the Springs of Change. The Hunt, writes Chen Guying, is also the quest for a mate, an underlying theme of this Hexagram. Any hasty move will be dangerous, writes Magister Liu. If a weak and incapable Leader (Yin in Yang Place), writes Professor Mun, undertakes a risky venture, then he will suffer a serious setback.

Yin in Fourth Place

Horses wheel;

They pull at odds.

A wife is sought.

A Destination

Is Auspicious,

Hoc bonum.

All things Profit,

In nullo non convenit.

On the Image

Both the seeking and the Destination

Show clarity,

Claritas.

 Yin Line in Yin Place. The bride “goes” with her suitor. All is “clear.” This Line Resonates with Yang in First Place. This is the right moment, advises Magister Liu. True Yang Energy is in sight.

Yang in Fifth Place

Fat meat

Is laid in.

To be Steadfast

Is Auspicious

In small matters,

Hoc bonum.

To be Steadfast

In great matters

Brings Disaster,

Hoc infortunium.

On the Image

Generosity
Cannot yet shine.

 Yang Line in Yang Place. Centered and True. This is the Place of Authority (Fifth Place), writes Legge, and the true Ruler should dispense generosity. But at the same time this is the Center of the Upper Trigram, Danger (*Kan*, Abyss), and great things should not be attempted. The Leader, writes Professor Mun, is caught between two Yin Lines, which symbolize difficulties. He should take small steps rather than giant leaps. JM: Go ahead, prepare (as if for the festivities of marriage) in small ways (such as laying in the choicest viands), but resist the temptation to make a big thing, a “great matter,” of it.

Yin in Top Place

Horses wheel;

They pull at odds.

Tears of blood

Flow in torrents.

On the Image

Seeks me.
First Divination
Receives a response.
Second and third Divinations,
Importunate questions,
Receive none.
To be Steadfast
Profits,
Necesse est ut sit soliditas.

On the Judgment

Beneath the Mountain,
Danger,
Timendi locus.
A halt.
Fortune lies
In according with Time,
In keeping to Center.
Youthful Folly seeks me out,
Aspirations Resonate.
First Divination,
Strong and Centered,
Receives a response.
Importunate questioning
Is Folly,
Is in need of
Cultivation and guidance,
Work of the Sage.

 Mountain above Waters of the Abyss. After the struggles of Hexagram III, *Zhun*, the seed bursting through the soil to be born, here we enter the gushing Waters of the Alpine Abyss, the Spring beneath the Mountain, the wayward Energy of the growing infant, the vagaries of youthful inexperience and Ignorance, Folly groping for Truth. Two Yang Lines confront the Darkness of four Yin Lines. One of the earliest meanings of *meng* is a "covering," a "darkness" (as of the sky), a "blinding" (of the eye). "To open the covering," *qimeng*, is an old term for to "enlighten." Zhu Xi's famous *I Ching Primer* was entitled *Yixue qimeng*, literally "Lifting the Cover from the Study of the *I Ching."* Richard Wilhelm gives this somewhat enigmatic fourth Hexagram a positive interpretation: intimations of Enlightenment, a dialogue between Youth and Sage, between Wisdom and Folly. The Fool "in his spontaneous and unreflecting attitude, is able to be at the Center, and in accordance with Time." Magister Liu emphasizes that the Darkness can be overcome only through natural innocence. Be open, be still, be sincere, be respectful. This is the path of Non-Action. This nurtures Truth. This makes it possible to tread the path out of Darkness. Professor Mun writes of the need in an Organization for an interactive relationship between Leader and subordinate. One cannot impose Enlightenment, comments Zen Master Zhixu. The Other must be ready and willing to come forward. Danger is inherent in the search for Enlightenment, which leads, after all, through a perilous Abyss.

On the Image of the Hexagram

Beneath the Mountain
Gushes a Spring.
The True Gentleman
Cultivates Spiritual Strength
With determination,
Sapiens virtutem perficit.


The Water of the Spring is pure, comments Zen Master Zhixu. It is fresh, it flows from a deep Source. And just as the Spring must flow, so the Aspiration for Enlightenment cannot be quenched, it can never be destroyed. JM: At the same time, Aspiration and Enthusiasm benefit from the sureness and form of the Mountain. They need guidance and direction. The Mountain, writes Magister Liu, nurtures the Spring. Simplicity and honesty nurture Inner Strength.

LINES

Yin in First Place

Folly

Is dispelled.

It Profits

To punish

With loosened

Manacles and shackles.

Severity

Brings Distress,

Poenitendi locus.

On the Image

Punishment

Strengthens discipline.


Yin Line in Yang Place. Punishment in itself, writes Wang Bi, is

abhorred by the Tao. It is contrary to spontaneity (*ziran*). But the *threat* of punishment can have a strengthening effect on discipline. JM: Discipline enables Youth to form mature habits. But to continue too long and too severely in a disciplinarian manner will only have undesirable effects. Punishment must be measured and judicious. Discipline, writes Magister Liu, helps to guard against the debilitating effects of Yin, the stirrings of the Human Heart-and-Mind, in the first stage of Youthful Folly. Any Organization, writes Professor Mun, needs rules and self-discipline.

Yang in Second Place

To tolerate Folly
Is Auspicious,
Hoc bonum.
It is Auspicious
To take a wife,
Optimum.
A child
Sustains the family.

On the Image

The Firm connects
With the Yielding,
With Yin in Fifth Place,
Durum et molle conjugantur.

 Yang Line in Yin Place. Centered. The Compliant Master of the

household, writes Richard Wilhelm, permits a firm son to take over (and “sustain the family”). JM: One should deal kindly with Folly and Inexperience. Resonance between this Yang Line and Yin in Fifth Place leads naturally to the idea of marriage. The Leader of an Organization, writes Professor Mun, should be patient with those taking on new responsibilities.

Yin in Third Place

Do not marry the woman.

At sight of a man of gold,

She loses control.

No Profit,

Nulla est convenientia.

On the Image

Do not marry the woman.
Her conduct does not follow
The True Flow.

 Yin Line in a Yang Place. This, writes Legge, indicates an undesirable character, a woman unable to withstand temptation, one from whom it is wise to keep a distance. The example of a “man of gold” (i.e., a wealthy philanderer) given by Zhu Xi is Lu Qiuhu, famous from the first-century AD *Tales of Virtuous Women.* Returning home from a nine-year absence, he tries to seduce a pretty girl outside his village with the offer of gold and silks, only to discover that she is in fact his own wife. JM: In the story, the wife is a model of Confucian virtue. Her distress at her husband’s infidelity drives her to commit suicide. In the Hexagram, things are