



# The Book of Changes as a Mirror of the Mind: The Evolution of the Zhouyi in China and Beyond<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this paper have been drawn from Richard J. Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The Yijing (I-Ching, or Classic of Changes) and Its Evolution in China* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008) The rest of it is based on my ongoing work on a companion volume, tentatively *Eternal Writ: The Globalization of the Yijing (I Ching or Classic of Changes)*.

## I. Introduction

A nineteenth century Chinese commentary on the *Yijing* (易經; aka *I Ching*) states succinctly: “The *Changes* is the mirror of men’s minds” (易者人心之鏡也).<sup>2</sup> In other words, there are as many versions of the *Yijing* as there are readers of the document and commentators upon it.<sup>3</sup> According to the editors of late imperial China’s most important literary compilation, the *Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries* (四庫全書; hereafter, the Four Treasuries), interpreting the *Yijing* is like playing chess, no two games are alike, and there are infinite possibilities.<sup>4</sup> This was especially the case because the *Classic of Changes* was not merely a book of wisdom; it was also a divinatory text, a cryptic and often highly personal guide to “the mind of Heaven” (天心).<sup>5</sup>

Over the course of more than two millennia, thousands of commentaries were written on the *Changes*, each reflecting a distinctive technical, philological, religious, philosophical, literary, social or political point of view.<sup>6</sup> Interpretive variables

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2 何毓福, 易鏡 (n.p. 1884; Ni Tseh Collection, U.C. Irvine), 1:1.

3 I develop this theme at length in *Fathoming the Cosmos*.

4 四庫全書總目提要編委會, ed., 四庫全書總目提要 (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 1999), 經部, 易類, 30 (4:25a). See also *ibid.*, 子部, 數術類, 559-560 (108: 24a-28a).

5 See *Smith, Fathoming the Cosmos*, 3, 10, 19, 22, 23, 26, 28, 35, 36, 39, 41, 42, 46, 51, 53, 55, 56, 62, 63, 67, 73, 83, 84, 85, 93, 94, 99, 102-05 *passim*, 111, 114, 115, 117, 121, 122, 127, 131, 135, 155, 156, 161, 165, 168, 170, 172, 176, 186, 192, 217, 220, 221, 221, 223-27 *passim*, 229, 235, 245, 247, 266, 247, 291, 293, 298, 305, 312 and 317.

6 For some Asian-language overviews, see 戶田豐三郎, 易經注釋史綱 (Tokyo: Kazama shobo, 1968), 朱伯崑, 易學哲學史 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1995; 4 vols), 張善文, 歷代易家與易學要籍 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1998) and 黃壽祺 and 張善文, 易學群書評議 (Beijing:

included life experiences (education, personal associations, career, etc.) as well as historical events such as natural disasters, regime changes, rebellions and foreign invasions). Intellectual fashions, which both influenced and were influenced by different approaches to the *Yijing*, operated not only in Chinese society at large, but also within the framework of regional culture, local scholarly networks and even individual families.<sup>7</sup>

The most influential early commentaries on the *Changes* were the so-called Ten Wings (十翼), which came to be officially incorporated into the “basic text” (本文) of the *Yijing* in 136 B.C.E.<sup>8</sup> Of these, the two-part “Great Commentary” (大傳; aka 繫辭傳) assumed particular importance. Attributed (erroneously) by most scholars to Confucius, this prestigious text provided the foundations for Chinese metaphysics for the next two thousand years or so.<sup>9</sup> The other “wings” explicated the *Changes* in more narrow ways (see below).<sup>10</sup>

By the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), more than seven hundred different scholarly approaches had come to be identified with the document.<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, Confucians found

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Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1988).

7 Consider, for instance, the family influences that acted upon the late Ming savant, Fang Yizhi (1611- 1671), discussed in 朱伯崑, *易學哲學史* (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1995; 4 vols) 3: 336 ff. For examples of *Changes* scholarship as a regional phenomenon, see 唐明邦 and 王學群, *易學與長江文化* (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003).

8 See 戴璉璋, *易傳之形成及其思想* (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1988).

9 For overviews, see note 6 above. A number of commentaries dating from the Han and Six Dynasties period, which now exist only in fragments, are represented in collections such as 李道平, *周易集解纂疏* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994).

10 The remaining “wings” are usually designated 彖傳 (two parts), 象傳 (two parts), 文言傳, 說卦傳, 序卦傳, and 雜卦傳.

11 See 四庫全書總目提要編委會, ed., 經部, 易類, 28 (4:12a-b); also *ibid.*,

Confucian meanings in the *Changes*,<sup>12</sup> Daoists found Daoist meanings in it,<sup>13</sup> and Buddhists found Buddhist meanings in it.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the great Qing scholar, Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲; 1610-1695) observed, "The nine traditions of philosophy and the hundred schools of thought have all used [the *Changes*] to promote their own theories."<sup>15</sup> But the sharp lines often drawn by Chinese and Western scholars to delineate academic lineages (宗) and schools (派) of this sort tend to blur on closer examination.<sup>16</sup> Thus, one of the principal arguments in *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World* is that the categories to which Chinese thinkers have traditionally been consigned are generally too narrow to accommodate the full range

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20 (3:15a-b) 28 (4:12a-b), etc.

12 The vast majority of commentaries on the *Changes* fall into this broad category.

13 See, for example, 劉坤生, 周易老子新證 (Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1992), 陳鼓應, 易傳與道家思想 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1994), 詹石窗, 易學與道教符號揭秘 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2001) and 詹石窗, 易學與道教符號揭秘 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2001) and 章克明, 周易道術通解 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2005). For an illuminating case study, see 劉一明, 周易闡真 (n.p.; 1819), also available as 六十四卦與養生. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1990.

14 See in particular 王仲堯, 中國佛教與周易 (Taipei: Dazhan chubanshe youxian gongsi, 2003). For a valuable case study, see 智旭, 周易四書禪解 (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1996).

15 四庫全書總目提要編委會, ed., 經部, 易類, 35 (6:10a).

16 These categories include a number of commonly dichotomized "schools," such as New Text (今文) and Old Text (古文), Han Learning (漢學) and Song Learning (宋學), and particularly in Yijing studies, Meanings and Principles (義理) and Images and Numbers (象數), etc. For some Chinese-language literature on these schools, see 吳霖, 易卦: 象數義理 (Taipei: Sunghin chubanshe, 1996) 劉大鈞, 象數 易學研究 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2003).

and richness of their ideas.<sup>17</sup>

## II. Some Chinese Perspectives on the *Changes*: The Gen Hexagram

For a few examples of the way a single hexagram might be employed and interpreted, either in the course of divination or in the process of consultation, let us discuss briefly, and from the standpoint of its historical “evolution,” Gen (#52 in the received order; #9 in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 sequence<sup>18</sup>)-variously translated by modern scholars as Mountain, Restraint, Keeping Still, Bound, Stabilizing, Limited, Immobile, Steadiness, etc.<sup>19</sup> I have chosen this hexagram in part because in the past a number of Chinese scholars have considered it to capture the essence of the *Yijing*, and also because it

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<sup>17</sup> For examples of eclecticism, strategies of accommodation, etc., see Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos*, esp. 56, 57, 59, 60, 73, 82, 94, 101, 102, 105-106, 112, 113, 133-34, 136, 141-42, 144, 146, 147, 150-53, 165, 166, 168, 169, 173, 179, 184, 187, 191, 198, 241, 266, 316 and 330.

<sup>18</sup> On the Mawangdui version of the *Changes*, see 嚴靈峰, 馬王堆帛書易經斠理 (Taipei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 1994) and Edward L. Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996). For other versions and variants, see 廖明春, 新出楚簡試論 (Taipei, Taiwan guji chubanshe, 2001), 邢文, 帛書周易研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1997) and “Hexagram Pictures and Early Yi Schools: Reconsidering the *Book of Changes* in Light of Excavated Yi Texts,” *Monumenta Serica* 51 (2003): 571-604, 吳新楚, 周易異文校證 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2001), 鄭衍通, 周易探源 (Taipei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 2002), and esp. 李學勤, 周易溯源 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> See the “Hexagram Name” appendix at <http://www.aasianst.org/eaalsmith.htm>

seems to have been widely appealing not only to Confucians, but to Buddhists and Daoists as well.

Here is what one early Zhou dynasty understanding of the Judgment (象) and the individual line statements of Gen might have been, indicating the extraordinarily wide range of interpretive possibilities presented by the basic text of any hexagram:

Judgment: If one cleaves [here *gen* serves as a loan word for *ken*, 墾 “to open up”] the back [of a sacrificial victim] he will not get hold of the womb [lit. body]; if one goes into the courtyard he will not see the person. There will be no misfortune. (艮其背不獲其身行其庭不見人无咎)

Line 1: Cleave the feet. There will be no misfortune. Favorable in a long-range determination. (艮其趾無咎利永貞)

Line 2: Cleave the lower legs, but don't remove the bone marrow. His heart is not pleased. (艮其腓不拯其隨其心不快)

Line 3: Cleave the waist, rend the spinal meat. It is threatening. Smoke the heart. (艮其限列其夤厲薰心)

Line 4: Cleave the womb [lit. body]. There will be no misfortune. (艮其身無咎)

Line 5: Cleave the jaw. Talk will be orderly. Troubles will go away. (艮其輔言有序悔亡)

Line 6: Cleave thickly. Auspicious.<sup>20</sup> (敦艮吉)

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<sup>20</sup> Richard A. Kunst, "The Original 'Yijing': A Text, Phonetic Transcrip-

Another possible verbal meaning of *gen* in this particular hexagram is “to glare at,” which would, of course, fundamentally change the meaning of each line.<sup>21</sup>

At a fairly early point in the evolution of the *Yijing*,<sup>22</sup> the analysis of trigrams (i.e. the two sets of three-lined symbols comprising each hexagram, became a prominent feature of *Changes* exegesis. Although a number of hypotheses have been advanced about the early meaning(s) of the Gen trigram,<sup>23</sup> by the 7th century B.C.E. or so its most prevalent association seems to have been with mountains. In Zuo Commentary (左傳) we find an account of Duke Mu of Qin’s punitive expedition against Duke Hui of Jin in 645 B.C.E, in which mountain imagery plays prominent role in hexagram analysis. Before the attack, Duke Mu asked his diviner, Tufu, to consult the *Changes* regarding the outcome. Tufu drew the hexagram Gu (蠱; “Poison,” “Ills to be Cured,” #18). The judgment of this hexagram reads in part: “Auspicious occasion; it is fitting to cross the great river.”<sup>24</sup> Tu thus predicted victory, remarking that Duke Mu’s troops would cross the river sepa-

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tion, Translation, and Indexes, with Sample Glosses.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1985) 342-343.

21 See Edward L. Shaughnessy, “The Composition of the Zhouyi” (Ph.D. dissertation: Stanford University, 1983), 121-122.0

22 Perhaps as early as the Shang dynasty; see Stephen L. Field, “Who Told the Fortunes? The Speaker in Early Chinese Divination Records,” *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 13, pt. 2 (2000): 1-15.

23 There is evidence, for example, that from an early period the Eight Trigrams carried directional and family associations. Recently, Stephen Field has argued that the Gen trigram may originally have represented a “human archetype:” “The Aggressor.” See *ibid*.

24 “Grand occasion” translates *yuanheng* (元亨), a term that originally connoted a great sacrifice 享 (“grand treat” or “prime receipt”) and later came to be understood as “fundamental prevalence” or “supreme success.”

rating Qin from Jin, defeat the forces of Duke Hui, and arrest the duke. He explained that since the inner (lower) trigram of Gu was Xun (巽; Wind), and the outer (upper) trigram was Gen (Mountain), the winds of Qin would blow through the trees on the mountain, stripping the Jin regime of its possessions.<sup>25</sup>

By the early Han dynasty (2nd century B.C.E.) at the latest, two “new” meanings of the Gen hexagram had emerged, both of which continued to be associated with *Yijing* exegesis for the next two thousand years or so. One was “to make still.”<sup>26</sup> The other was “to restrain.”<sup>27</sup> Presumably, because the hexagram Gen is comprised of two identical Gen trigrams, the stabilizing imagery of linked mountains (see below) eclipsed the earlier hexagram meanings that may have focused on “cleaving” or “glaring.”

Here is one prominent (and enduring) Han dynasty understanding of the basic text, amplified by various commentaries from one or another of the “Ten Wings:”

Judgment: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the back, so one does not obtain the other person. He goes into that one’s courtyard but does not see him there. There is no blame.

“Commentary on the Judgments” (彖傳): Gen means “stop.” When it is time to stop, one should

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25 Recounted at greater length in Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos*, 28.

26 See Shaughnessy, *I Ching*, 54-55. This is a translation of the Mawangdui version of the *Changes*, in which the hexagram Gen is written as “root” (根)—which, like “mountain,” suggests stability.

27 See Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 466-472.



stop; when it is time to act, one should act. If in one's activity and repose he is not out of step with the times, his Dao should be bright and glorious. Let Restraint [or Stilling] operate where restraint [or stilling] should take place, that is, let the restraining [or stilling] be done in its proper place. Those above and those below stand in reciprocal opposition to each other and so do not get along. This is the reason why, although "one does not obtain the other person," and "one goes into one's courtyard but does not see him there," yet "there is no blame.

"Commentary on the Images" (象傳): United mountains (兼山; i.e. one on top of the other): this constitutes the image of Restraint [or Stilling]. In the same way, the noble man is mindful of how he should not go out of his position.

Providing the Sequence of the Hexagrams (序卦): Things cannot be kept in a state of movement forever but eventually are brought to a stop. This is why Zhen (震; Quake, Hexagram #51) is followed by Gen [Restraint (or Stilling)]. Gen here means "to stop."

"The Hexagrams in Irregular Order" (雜卦): Gen [Restraint (or Stilling)] [means] "a stop."

Line 1: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the toes, so there is no blame, and it is fitting that such a one practices perpetual constancy.

Commentary on the Images: If "Re-

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straint [or Stilling] takes place with the toes," one shall never violate the bounds of rectitude [or "stray off the correct path"].

Line 2: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the calves, which means that this one does not raise up his followers. His heart feels discontent.<sup>28</sup>

Commentary on the Images: "This one does not raise up his followers," nor does he withdraw and obey the call."<sup>29</sup>

Line 3: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the midsection, which may split the back flesh [the flesh at the backbone],<sup>30</sup> a danger enough to smoke and suffocate the heart.

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**28** Cheng Yi (程頤) says that the second *yin* line "abides in centrality and achieves rectitude," so it represents one who has obtained the Dao of restraint." He goes on to say that although the second line possesses the virtues of centrality and rectitude," it is unable to take initiative on its own because the third *yang* line, occupying the top of the lower trigram, is the ruler of restraint. Further, he says, "The [subject of the] second *yin* line cannot manage to use its Dao of centrality and rectitude to rescue [the subject of the] third *yang* from its lack of centrality," and thus it is forced to follow line three. The subject of the second line is therefore not to blame, but he remains disappointed. 李光地, ed., 周易折中 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1998) 421-422; also *ibid.*, 610-612.

**29** Cheng Yi reads the Commentary on the Images differently, saying that line 2 cannot rescue the one he is behind (i.e. the line he follows) for the third *yang* line "never turns back and listens" to the second *yin* line. *Ibid.*, 788-789.

**30** Variant characters in the Mawangdui version of this line suggest the idea of "scratching the spine" rather than "splitting the back flesh." See Shaughnessy, *I Ching*, 55 and 292.

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Commentary on the Images: If “Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the midsection,” the danger would “smoke and suffocate the heart.”

Line 4: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the torso. There is no blame.

Commentary on the Images: “Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the torso,” which means that this one applies restraint to his own body.

Line 5: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the jowls, so this one’s words have order, and regret vanishes.”

Commentary on the Images: “Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the jowls,” so this one is central and correct [中正].

Line 6: This one exercises Restraint [or Stilling] with simple honesty, which results in good fortune.”

Commentary on the Images: The good fortune that springs from “exercis[ing] Restraint [or Stilling] with simple honesty, means that one will reach his proper end because of that simply honesty.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 466-470.

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Ironically, as the symbolism of the Gen hexagram began to stabilize, the symbolism of its constituent trigrams became ever more complex. According to the “wing” known as Explaining the Trigrams (說卦):

1. Mountain [Gen] and Lake [兌; Dui] “reciprocally circulate material force (氣).”
2. [It is by Gen that things] are made to stop.
3. [The Lord on High (上帝) causes things to] “reach final maturity” in Gen.
4. “Gen is the trigram of the northeast.<sup>32</sup> It is here that the myriad things reach the end of their development.”
5. “Of things that provide the myriad things with ends and beginnings, none is more resourceful than Gen. . . . This is why Mountain [Gen] and Lake [Dui] reciprocally circulate [as indicated above].”
6. “Gen means cessation, . . . [It] has the nature of a dog, . . . [and] works like the hand. . . . [It] is the mountain, the footpath, the small stone, the gate tower, the tree fruit and vine fruit, the gate keeper and the palace guard, the fingers, the dog, the rat, is the black maw of species [of birds and beasts of prey]. . . .” “With respect

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<sup>32</sup> This is the spatial position of Gen in the Later Heaven (*Houtian*) configuration of the Eight Trigrams. But in the Former Heaven (*Xiantian*) order, it is in the northwest.

to trees, [Gen] is the kind that is sturdy and much gnarled. . . ." [Gen] is the "Youngest Son."<sup>33</sup>

The Eight Trigrams also came to be identified with the Five Agents (五行) that were so pervasive in Han cosmology. In one common and persistent configuration, Gen and Kun share Earth, and in another, Gen and Dui share Fire.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, the Gen hexagram, as one of the "eight pure hexagrams" (八純卦), figures prominently in a variety of Han interpretive schemes, such as the "Eight Palace" (八宮) system and the "Six Position" (六位) system, both attributed to Jing Fang (京房; 77-37 B.C.E.). In the former system, Gen heads its own yang palace and belongs to the fourth month;<sup>35</sup> in the latter, Gen is fundamentally aligned with Earth, but it also correlates with other Agents by virtue of various stem and branch (干支) combinations, which serve as time markers.<sup>36</sup>

By the Song period, the trigrams came to be correlated with the numerical symbolism of the famed Yellow River Chart (河圖; Hetu). Chen Tuan (陳搏; d. 989) describes Gen's correlations in the following way:

The three of Heaven together with the eight of earth form wood [in the east]. The trigrams Gen

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33 Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 119-124 (modified).

34 Bent Nielsen, *A Companion to Yi jing Numerology and Cosmology: Chinese Studies of Images and Numbers from Han (202 BCE–220 CE) to Song (960–1279 CE)*. London, New York, etc.: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, 10.

35 Nielsen, *A Companion*, 1-6. In the so-called "Hexagram and Vital Force" (卦氣) system, the Gen hexagram is one of the "Feudal Lords" (諸侯) and belongs to the tenth month. *Ibid.*, 70 and 75-80.

36 Bent Nielsen, *A Companion*, 7-9.

and Zhen are joined and wood is produced from water. This is the vernal equinox.<sup>37</sup>

Similar correlations existed with the Luo River Writing (洛書; *Luoshu*), in which the trigram Gen occupies a position in the Northwest.<sup>38</sup>

In Shao Yong's (邵雍; 1011-1077) "Four Images of Heaven and Earth that Rule the World" (經世天地四象圖) we find yet another system of trigram correlations. Here, the category "Greater Strength" 太剛 (one of four such categories),<sup>39</sup> associated with the Gen trigram, introduces correlations with odors, fire, day, wind, the Classic of Poetry (詩經), flying things, the stomach and marrow, leading in turn to four celestial images (sun, moon, stars, and zodiacal space), four terrestrial images (water, fire, soil, and stone), and a host of other "natural" groupings of four.<sup>40</sup>

As is well known, Song dynasty neo-Confucians, often steeped in Buddhism, drew heavily upon the *Yijing*. In

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37 Li Yuanguo, "Chen Tuan's Concepts of the Great Ultimate." *Daoist Resources* 2.1 (1990), 51, slightly modified. For details, see 陳搏, 河洛理數 (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1926).

38 On the evolution and significance of the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*, see 孫國中, 河圖洛書解析 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1990). Sun's essay titled "河洛學發展概況," in 江永, 河洛精蘊 (Xueyuan chubanshe, 1989), 445-471 provides a convenient overview.

39 The "Great Commentary" served as foundation for this idea. See Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 65-66.

40 See Anne Birdwhistell,<sup>41</sup> Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, 50 ff. Shao ordered a great many other phenomena in groups of four, including seasons, directions, limbs, virtues (benevolence, propriety, righteousness, and wisdom), stages of life (birth, growth, maturity, and death), sense organs, etc. He also ascribed to two sets of paired trigrams--Qian (乾) and Kun (坤), Li (離) and Kan (坎)--broad cosmic powers.

the minds of several such scholars, including Zhang Zai (張載; 1020-1077), the Judgment of the Gen hexagram, with its emphasis on timing, movement and stillness, and moral cultivation, captured the essence of the *Changes*. Thus, this Judgment, as well as the Commentary on the Judgment for Gen, appears often in Zhang's analysis of the sixty-four hexagrams, serving as a succinct summary of the overarching importance of controlling one's mind.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars such as Zhou Dunyi (周惇頤; 1017-73) and his student, Cheng Yi (程頤; 1033-1107), argued that studying the Gen hexagram was more productive than reading Buddhist texts such as the Lotus Sutra (法華經) and the Flowery Splendor Sutra (華嚴經), and at least some Daoist-oriented and Buddhist-oriented individuals agreed.<sup>43</sup> The Song dynasty Daoist Master, Bai Yuchan (白玉蟾; 1134-1229), for instance, in affirming that such views were essentially correct, drew on the "Commentary on the Images" as well as visual wordplay to assert:

The Gen hexagram is formed by two trigrams of the same meaning--united mountains (兼山). The character *chu* (出 "coming out") is composed of a pair of mountains [one on top of the other]. Hence the meaning of the hexagram is not only to "rest in obscurity," it also has the sense of "coming out into the light."<sup>44</sup>

42 紀昀 et al., eds., 欽定四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987) 8: 715-716 (橫渠易說; 2: 41b-43a).

43 See 王仲堯, 中國佛教與周易, 389-391.

44 Liu Ts'un-yan, "Lin Chao-en (1517-1598): The Master of the Three Teachings." *T'oung Pao* 53 (1967), 272, somewhat modified.

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The Ming scholar Jiaohong (焦竑; c. 1540-1620) voiced agreement, although he went on to say that if one is able to “see through his own nature” there would be no need to study texts.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout the remainder of the imperial era, a number of Chinese scholars used the Gen hexagram in an effort to reconcile Confucianism and Buddhism. In “Mr. Yang’s Commentary on the Changes” (楊氏易傳), for instance, Yang Jian (楊簡; 1141-1226) writes:

One who is skilled in resting acts, and one who is skilled in action rests. One who knows how to rest but does not act, does not really know how to rest. One who knows how to act but does not know how to rest, does not really know how to act. One who knows the inseparability of rest and action, but is not yet able to have each at its appropriate time, has still not become brilliantly enlightened.<sup>46</sup>

And again:

A person’s attention is completely focused at his face [the surface level of awareness], not at his back [the deeper levels of awareness]. . . . [thus] he is moved by [selfish] thoughts and he chases after things, losing his own fundamental

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<sup>45</sup> Liu Ts’un-yan, “Lin Chao-en,” 273. For Zhuhong’s (1535-1615) later rebuttal, see 王仲堯, 中國佛教 與周易, 390-391.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in Douglass Alan White, “Interpretations of the Central Concept of the *I-Ching* During the Han, Sung and Ming Dynasties” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976), 120-121. White provides the Chinese text for this quotation and most others.



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nature which is silently motionless. Thus the sage teaches him to “keep still his back,” and cause that which he faces, and that which his ears, eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet are doing to become integrated as one.<sup>47</sup>

Lin Zhaoen (林兆恩; 1517-1598, well known for his emphasis on the “unity of the Three Teachings,” manifested his syncretic outlook in a variety of essays, including one titled “The Method of the Mind in Keeping the Back Still” (艮背心法).<sup>48</sup> In it, Lin uses imagery from the Gen hexagram to promote a nine-stage process of Daoist-style meditation,<sup>49</sup> glossing the Judgment of Gen in the following way:

The character bei [背; back] is composed of two parts, the radical “meat” (肉) and the phonetic bei (北) for “north.” Hence, the back of a man’s body is the meat of the north. Now in the four cardinal directions, the element of water belongs to the north, . . . . When we direct the water from the back of the north and push it down to the south where the fire of the heart lies, [the fire will be quenched]. This is why in the *Classic of Changes* it is said, “The sages having, by their possession of these [virtues associated with the yarrow stalks

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47 White, “Interpretations,” 57-58.

48 See Judith Berling, “When They Go Their Separate Ways: The Collapse of the Unitary Vision of Chinese Religion in the Early Qing,” in Irene Bloom and Joshua Fogel, eds. *Meeting of Minds: Intellectual and Religious Interaction in East Asian Traditions of Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997 211 ff.

49 White, “Interpretations,” 149-153.

and hexagrams], cleansed their minds, retired and laid them up in secrecy, which is also the “understanding from mind to mind” taught at the gate of Confucius.<sup>50</sup>

Lin then goes on to explain in language even more redolent of Daoist alchemy how to achieve the “extreme of the Way.” The process begins by imitating the hexagram Gen in order to seek calmness of the mind, and then establishing a link between the brain and the belly on the model of the Qian (乾; #1) and Kun (坤; #2) hexagrams, through which one’s qi (氣) can flow freely.<sup>51</sup>

Let me now “fast-forward” briefly to the twenty-first century and to a figure well known to everyone at this conference: Professor Shen Heyong (申荷永) of Fudan University. For those of you who may not be aware of it (although I suspect that most of you are), Professor Shen has written widely on topics that deal directly with the *Yijing*, including such famous articles as “Rongge xinli xue yu Zhongguo wenhua” (榮格心理學與中國文化; Jung’s Psychology and Chinese Culture) and “*Yijing* yu Zhongguo wenhua xinli” (易經與中國文化心理; The *Classic of Changes* and Chinese Cultural Psychology).<sup>52</sup>

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50 Quoted in Liu Ts’un-yan, “Lin Chao-en,” 267 (slightly modified). The phrase “cleaned their minds” translates *xixin* (洗心) a famous expression in the Great Commentary. For a much different rendering of this passage, see Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 64. Opinions differ on whose minds have been purified (“cleansed”) by the *Yijing*--those of the sages or of others. See *ibid.*, 73-74, note 47.

51 Liu Ts’un-yan, “Lin Chao-en,” 270; cf. White, “Interpretations,” 152. See also 朱伯崑, *易學哲學史*, 3: 33 ff., esp. 37-38.

52 Gao and Shen, “Rongge” and Shen and Gao, “*Yijing*.” Cf. Xu

In an article co-authored with his colleague, Professor Gao Lan (高嵐), which has been reprinted on countless Chinese websites, Shen and Gao, “*Yijing*.” This article appeared initially in the *Xinli xuebao* (*Journal of Psychology*) in 2000. Professor Shen points out that China is the “homeland” (故鄉) of psychology--a country with a long history of scholarly and practical preoccupation with problems of the “heart/mind” (心). This preoccupation, Professor Shen argues, is clearly reflected in the *Yijing*, where one can find a great many psychological insights that are expressed not only in the Ten Wings, but also in a number of psychologically potent hexagrams, including: Bi (比; #8; “Closeness”), Kan (坎; #29; “The Sinkhole”), Xian (咸; #31; “Reciprocity”), Mingyi (明夷; #36; “Suppression of the Light”), Jiaren (家人; #37; “The Family”), Yi (益; #42; “Increase”), Jing (井; #48; “The Well”), Gen (艮; #52; “Restraint”) and Lü (旅; #56; “The Wanderer”).<sup>53</sup>

As one of several examples of the psychological orientation of the *Changes* and the primal power of its archetypal images, Professor Shen cites a line in the “Explaining the Trigrams” commentary that refers to the duplicated trigrams of Kan (“The Sinkhole”) as the symbols for anxiety (憂), and “heartsickness” (心病) in the realm of human affairs.<sup>54</sup> He goes on to say that a number of traditional Chinese commentators, including

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Yiming’s “*Yijing di xinli sixiang*.” Professor Shen has edited two recent books on the psyche (*lingxing*), one focusing on “analysis and experience” (*fenxi yu tiyan*) and the other on “images and synchronicity” (*yixiang yu ganying*). For other works written or edited by him, see <http://www.timesinfor.com/zcx.asp?searchkey=%C9%EA%BA%C9%D3%C0>.

<sup>53</sup> Even a cursory glance at the Judgments and line statements of these hexagrams will reveal why they seem to be especially rich in psychological symbolism.

<sup>54</sup> Lynn, *Changes*, 124; cf. Wilhelm, *I Ching*, 114-118 and 530-535.

both Cheng Yi (程頤) and Zhu Xi (朱熹), have identified Kan as a hexagram reflecting not only the problems but also the potential powers of the mind. Thus, for example, in glossing the Judgment of Kan, which refers explicitly to the “success” or “prevalence” (亨) of the heart/mind of a person who possesses true sincerity, Cheng Yi avers that “With the most highly developed sincerity, [the heart/mind of a human being] can penetrate metal and stone, and overcome water and fire, so what dangers and difficulties can possibly keep it from prevailing?”<sup>55</sup>

Professor Shen then puts forward the Xian (“Reciprocity”) hexagram as a prime example of the psychological orientation of the *Changes*. His analysis, which posits affinities between the symbolism of this hexagram, Western-style “Stimulus-Response” theory, and “a combined psychology of consciousness and unconsciousness,” draws upon a number of timehonored exegetical techniques, including references to the Ten Wings, an examination of various line relationships (both within the Xian hexagram and involving comparisons between the line statements of Xian and other hexagrams), trigram symbolism, and even the “dissection of characters” into their constituent elements. Professor Shen begins by quoting from the Commentary on the Judgment of Xian, which states:

Reciprocity is a matter of stimulation. Here the soft and yielding [the Dui trigram] is above and the hard and strong [the Gen trigram] is below. The two kinds of material force [氣] stimulate and respond

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<sup>55</sup> 李光地, 周易折中 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1998. Foreword by 劉大鈞. Originally published in 1715), 246.

and so join together. The one is passive, and the other joyous. The male takes place below the female . . . It is by the mutual stimulation of Heaven and Earth that the myriad things are created. It is by the sage stimulating the hearts-and-minds of human beings that the entire world finds peace. If we observe how things are stimulated, the innate tendencies [情] of Heaven and Earth and the myriad things can be seen.<sup>56</sup>

He goes on to suggest that this passage embodies a central truth about the nature of all human interactions, including sexual ones, and he drives home his point about the link between the psychology of such relationships and the Xian (咸) hexagram by noting that the Chinese character for “stimulation” (感) is the same as Xian with the addition of the “heart/mind” radical (部首) at the bottom. Further, he points out, the characters for “stimulus” (感) and “response” (應) which occupy such a prominent position in the *Changes*, and in Chinese philosophy more generally, both contain the “heart/mind” radical.

Finally, Professor Shen links certain references in the Great Commentary--notably, sentences such as “The sages used . . . [the meanings inherent in the *Changes*] to cleanse hearts and minds” and “Through its pronouncements of good fortune and misfortune, [the Yi] shows that it shares the same anxieties as the common folk”--explicitly with Jungian efforts to explore the psyche and the unconscious by means of both “spirituality” and “wisdom.”<sup>57</sup> In Professor Shen’s well-considered

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<sup>56</sup> See Lynn, *Changes*, 329, slightly modified. Cf. Wilhelm, *I Ching*, 122-125 and 540-545.

<sup>57</sup> See Lynn, *Changes*, 64, slightly modified. Cf. Wilhelm, *I Ching*, 316-

view, the symbolism of the *Yijing* provides a natural but somewhat neglected tool to achieve these therapeutic ends.

The above examples represent only the smallest fraction of the interpretive possibilities afforded by every hexagram in the *Yijing*. And, of course, I have said nothing about the scholarly debates surrounding these interpretations, much less their genesis. But perhaps this brief overview will suffice as the general backdrop for a discussion of the way that the classic evolved beyond China's borders.<sup>58</sup>

### III. The Transmission and Transmutation of the *Changes* in East Asia

Although the specific circumstances under which the *Changes* found its way to various East Asian countries naturally differed, there seem to be certain common patterns in the way that it travelled. In the first place, with respect to those areas closest to China in terms of both geography and culture--Korea, Japan, and Vietnam--the literati were thoroughly conversant in the classical Chinese language; hence, there was no significant barrier to written communication. Secondly, since the *Yijing* continued to occupy an exalted position in Chinese culture into the twentieth

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317. Although debate exists among commentators as to whether the former statement about cleansing applies to the sages themselves (e.g. Zhu Xi) or to all human beings (e.g. Kong Yingda), it underscores what Shen considers to be a fundamental principle of Chinese psychology.

58 For a Chinese perspective on the globalization of the *Changes*, see 楊宏聲, 本土與域外: 易學的現代化與世界化 (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue yuan, 1995).

century, there was never a time when it lacked prestige in peripheral areas. Initially, elites--and then other sectors of society--embraced the *Changes*, using it for their own purposes. Finally, and most importantly, the *Yi* became “domesticated” in each of these environments, undergoing sometimes radical transformations in the process. Japan provides a particularly apt illustration of these themes, as the many writings of Professor Benjamin Wai-ming Ng indicate.<sup>59</sup>

Prior to the seventeenth century, the *Yijing* exerted some influence in Confucian, Buddhist, and Shinto circles, but it did not become particularly popular until the Tokugawa era. During that period, however, for reasons that are not entirely clear to me, interest in the *Yi* suddenly took off. From the beginning of the Tokugawa regime in 1603, to the fall of the regime in 1868, more than a thousand books were written on the *Changes*. This amount is not much less than the total number of books written on the *Yijing* during the more-or-less contemporary Qing dynasty in China--which had a population fifteen times as great as Japan's.

Although the *Yijing* was employed primarily to bolster and amplify Tokugawa Confucianism, it was also used to validate or undergird other Japanese cultural traditions-- including both “native” Shinto and “borrowed” Buddhism. Buddhists, for instance, often explained the idea of reincarnation in terms of the following passage from the “Great Commentary” of the *Yijing*:

Tracing things to their origins and then turning  
back to [see] their ends, we understand the

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<sup>59</sup> See, for example *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

lessons of life and death. With the consolidation of material force into essence [精氣], a person comes into being, but with the dissipation of the soul [游魂], change comes about. It is due to this that we understand the true state of gods and spirits [鬼神].<sup>60</sup>

Similarly, Shinto scholars sought to validate their belief system by reference to the *Changes*. A common strategy was to cite the “Commentary on the Judgments” for hexagram #20 (Guan 觀 in Chinese, signifying “Viewing”). It reads: “Viewing the Way of the spirits [*Shendao* 神道 in Chinese; *Shinto* in Japanese], one finds that the four seasons never deviate, and so the sage establishes his teachings on the basis of . . . [this Way], and all under Heaven submit to him.”<sup>61</sup>

There were, of course, other ways of linking the *Yijing* to Shintoism. Kumazawa Banzan (熊澤蕃山; 1619-1691) wrote:

The Way of the sages in China is also the way of the spirits. Shinto in my country [Japan] is the Shinto of Heaven and Earth. The *Ekikyo* [*Yijing*] is also the Shinto of Heaven and Earth . . . The Chinese sage known as Fuxi was the first to draw the lines of Ken [Qian, hexagram #1] and Kon [Kun, hexagram #2], which later developed into the eight trigrams and eventually became the sixty-four hexagrams. Similarly, we [Japanese] have used the number eight, such as the Yatano [Mirror] and the Yasaka [Jade], because the Shinto of Heaven and

60 張其成, 易經應用大百科, 56; Cf. Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 51-52.

61 張其成, 易經應用大百科, 29; Cf. Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 260.



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Earth is one, and it is naturally the same wonderful principle shared by both Japan and China.<sup>62</sup>

As in other areas of East Asia during the same period, Zhu Xi's (朱熹; 1130-1200 C.E.) interpretations of the *Yijing* were considered "orthodox" in Tokugawa times, but this did not prevent scholars in Japan, Korea or Vietnam from criticizing Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy, using the "evidential research" (考證學) techniques of contemporary Chinese critics as well as their own distinctive methodologies.

Individuals of all outlooks and backgrounds embraced the *Yijing* in Tokugawa Japan- not only Confucians, Buddhists, and Shinto clergymen, but also exponents of Kokugaku (古學), Mito (水戸) scholars (emphasizing reverence for the emperor), and advocates of Western ideas or "Dutch Learning" (蘭學). As a result, the *Changes* quickly penetrated all levels of Japanese society. Samurai scholar-warriors and members of the clergy studied it and also divined with it; merchants used the *Yijing* to make all kinds of business decisions, and as a justification for their profession. There were even commercial divination manuals, which used the sixty-four hexagrams of the Yi to predict price fluctuations in the rice market.<sup>63</sup>

As in China, the symbolism of the *Yijing* could be found in virtually every realm of Japanese life, from the tea ceremony, flower arranging, popular drama, military tactics, martial arts, medicine and board games, to artistic, literary and musical criticism. Even distinctly Japanese cultural forms, such as *tanka* poetry (consisting of five lines of 31 syllables, broken

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<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Ng, *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*, 99-100, modified.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 89 ff.

down 5-7-5-7-7), came to be explained in terms of *Yijing* numerical categories.<sup>64</sup>

Not surprisingly, the *Changes* played a major role in Japanese politics, as Professor Ng's excellent paper for this conference abundantly indicates. For instance, Shogun Tsunayoshi, who reigned from 1680-1709, presided over at least 240 *Yijing* seminars in 7 years. The *Yijing* was often used to support the central notion of loyalty to the ruler but it was also used to justify political reform. And when the Tokugawa rulers began to lose their political authority in the mid-nineteenth century, the *Yijing* was increasingly used to attack the Shogunate.<sup>65</sup>

In the meantime, the *Yijing* had become increasingly assimilated to the indigenous culture of Japan, at least in some circles. Thus we find Jiun Sonja (慈雲尊者; 1718-1804) arguing that:

The images of the River Chart [*Hetu*, which provided the model for the eight trigrams], were manifested through the Okitsu Mirror [a round bronze mirror kept at the sacred Ise shrine] . . . . Every word of the *Ekikyo* [*Yijing*] is interesting and significant . . . [and] the whole book is completely borrowed from us [the Japanese].<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, Hirata Atsutane (平田篤胤; 1776-1843) asserted that the ancient Chinese culture hero Fuxi was actually a Shinto deity!<sup>67</sup>

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64 Ibid., 188 ff.

65 Ibid., 55 ff.

66 Ibid., 107.

67 Quoted in *ibid.*, 109-110, slightly modified.

Like Hirata, and perhaps influenced by him, the nationalistic Korean scholar, Sin Ch'aeho (申采浩; 1880-1936), attempted to "domesticate" the *Yijing*, arguing, on the basis of forged texts, that Fuxi was in fact a Korean prince who had learned the *Changes* from Hang Wong, an early Hangguk ruler. And even earlier, in a similar expression of cultural pride, Chong Yagyong (丁若鏞; 1762-1836), suggested that the brother of the last Shang dynasty king, the Viscount of Ji (箕子; Korean: Gija)--who allegedly left China for Korea and was viewed by many Koreans as a kind of ancient "patriarch"--might have written part of the basic text of the *Changes*.<sup>68</sup> Another strategy of domestication in Korea was to invent a book derived from, but different than, the *Yijing*--rather like Yang Xiong's (揚雄; 53 B.C.E.-18 C.E.) *Classic of Great Mystery* (太玄經), or the Han apocryphal treatise known as *Penetration of the Laws of Qian* (乾鑿度) in the Chinese tradition.<sup>69</sup> The most prominent example in Korean history is perhaps Kim Ilbu's (金一夫; 1828-89) derivative work known as the *Correct Changes* (正易; Korean: Chongyok).<sup>70</sup>

I have not yet found evidence for similar strategies of domestication in the case of Vietnam. It is clear, however, that use of the *Chu Nom* (字喃) script in works such as Dang Thai Phuong's (鄧泰滂) *Chu dich quoi am ca* (周易國音歌; 1815) had this effect--even though Dang and others explained the

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68 楊宏聲, 本土與域外, 119 ff.

69 On these works, see 鄭萬耕, 太玄校釋 (Beijing: Beijing Shifan daxue chubanshe, 1989) and 鄭玄, ed., 易乾鑿度鄭氏注 (Huai quan tang, 1925).

70 See Han Chang-gyong 韓長庚, 周易.正易: 易學原理總論; 易經大意; 正易 (Seoul, Sam kwa kkum, 2001); also Jung Young Lee, "The Origin and Significance of the Chongyok or Book of Correct Change," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 9 (1982): 211-241.

cryptic text of the *Yijing* explicitly in terms of the Chinese exegetical tradition known as *xungu* (訓詁). As Dang's book puts the matter succinctly, "Our [Confucian] learning in Vietnam is the same as that of the Chinese, but our pronunciation [of the words in the texts, including Chu Nom characters] is different."<sup>71</sup>

In many respects, pre-modern Korean and Vietnamese intellectuals approached the *Yijing* in the same spirit as that of the Japanese.<sup>72</sup> In both of these cultural environments, the work retained its aura as a Chinese classic; and in both, it had wide application at all levels of society as an explanatory device, extending into the realms of language, philosophy, religion, art, literature, science, medicine, and social customs. Despite the esteem of Zhu Xi's thought in both Yi dynasty Korea (1392-1910) and Le dynasty Vietnam (1428-1789), Vietnamese and Korean scholars seem to have appreciated the school of "images and numbers" (象數) more than the school of "meaning and principles" (義理). This is quite evident from the materials I have seen in Seoul University's Kyujanggak (奎章閣) Archives as well as Hanoi's National Library. Nonetheless, most of the premodern writings on the *Yijing* that I have perused in both Korea and Vietnam acknowledge explicitly the value of Cheng-Zhu learning (程朱學). Thus, it ap-

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71 From the preface of the published edition (積善堂), archived in the Hanoi National Library. There are several unpublished versions in this library with similar titles (e.g. 周易國音歌訣).

72 For refinements and qualifications, see Benjamin Wai-ming Ng, "The *I Ching* in Late Choson Thought," *Korean Studies* 24 (2000): 53-68; Wai-ming Ng, "Yijing Scholarship in Late-Nguyen Vietnam: A Study of Le Van Ngu's *Chu Dich Cuu Nguyen* (An Investigation of the Origins of the *Yijing*, 1916), *Review of Vietnamese Studies*. 3.1 (2003): 1-24.

pears that the sharp distinctions that are often drawn between different exegetical traditions in Japan, Korea and Vietnam tend to blur somewhat when individual thinkers and their texts are examined closely--just as they do when we look closely at Chinese scholarship on the *Changes*.<sup>73</sup>

In the case of Tibet, the process of transmission involved substantial modifications-- in part, no doubt, because unlike Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese elites, comparatively few Tibetan monks knew Chinese. The *Yijing* (Tibetan: *Yeekyin*) first came to Tibet as a respected Chinese "classic" during the early Tang dynasty, and there is some evidence of a scholarly interest in the document at that time. Meanwhile, and not surprisingly, Tibetan diviners began using the trigrams of the *Changes* in more or less the Chinese fashion. Later, they borrowed the numerological diagrams of the *Yijing*--notably the *Luoshu*--creating new divinatory symbols, including four-lined tetragrams (there was, of course, a precedent for this in China with Yang Xiong's *Taixuan jing*), and five-lined pentagrams--which were still, however, normally organized in groups of eight.<sup>74</sup>

Like the Japanese, the Tibetans seem to have been particularly eager to assimilate the *Yijing* to their indigenous culture. Some Tibetan commentators emphasized affinities between the *Yijing* and Tantric Buddhism, and other scholars

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73 Oddly enough, Yang Hongsheng's *Bentu yu yuwai* (see note 51 above) devotes substantial attention to Japan and Korea, but not Vietnam.

74 王堯 and 陳踐, *Tufan shiqi di zhanbu yanjiu 吐蕃時期的占卜研究* (Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu suo zhuan kan 香港中文大學中國文化研究所專刊 9 (1987). See also Gary Dickinson and Steve Moore, "Trigrams and Tortoises: Sino-Tibetan Divination," *Oracle* (special issue), 1.5 (Summer, 1997): 1-48.

in both the Buddhist and Bon traditions transformed Confucius, as the most famous transmitter of *Yijing* divination (and other forms) into their own religious figures. Moreover, in at least some cases, the eight trigrams acquired significantly different symbolic identifications in Tibet than their traditional Chinese ones. Zhen, for example, usually associated with Thunder, came to be linked in some Tibetan divination systems with iron. The famous late 18th century work on Tibetan divination by Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho (Sangye Gyatso; 1653-1705)--known popularly as the *White Beryl Treatise* (*Vaidurya dKar-po*) and recently translated and annotated by Gyurme Dorje--provides a wealth of detail on the various ways that the Tibetans drew upon, and departed from, Chinese divinatory traditions associated with the *Yijing*, amplifying the excellent study of Tibetan divination produced by Phillipe Cornu in 1997.<sup>75</sup>

A distinctive feature of the process by which various East Asian peoples borrowed from Chinese culture was their periodic use of emissaries--individuals and groups who transmitted Chinese texts and traditions to their home countries in a self-conscious and sometimes quite systematic way. Westerners, too, sent missions to China, and they brought back all kinds of information, but these missions tended to proceed from very different motives.

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<sup>75</sup> See Gyurme Dorje, trans. *Tibetan Elemental Divination Paintings: Illuminated Manuscript from the White Beryl of Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho with the Moonbeams treatise of Lo-chen Dharmasri*. London: John Eskenazi in association with Sam Fogg, 2001; also Phillipe Cornu, *Tibetan Astrology* (Boston: Shambala, 1997).

## The Changes in Western Hands: Some Concluding Remarks

In several respects, the transmission of the *Changes* to the West parallels the process by which Buddhism and Daoism traveled westward. As Stephen Batchelor, James Coleman, J.J. Clark and others have indicated, in each case Western missionaries have played a part in the process, and in each case there have been varied responses over time, ranging from “blind indifference,” to “rational knowledge”, “romantic fantasy” and “existential engagement.” But in nearly every instance, as in case of East Asia, there has been some sort of an effort, often quite self-conscious, to “domesticate” the classic.<sup>76</sup>

Initially, Jesuit missionaries played the major role in transmitting Chinese culture to the West. From the late sixteenth century onward, in a pattern replicated in many other parts of the world, the Jesuits attempted to assimilate themselves as much as possible to the host country. They studied its language, learned its customs, and sought to understand its philosophical and religious traditions. In the course of their study they proved to be inveterate collectors of alien artifacts. During the past few years I have done a good deal of research in the Chinese archives of the Vatican Library, and I have been astonished at the range of materials that the Jesuits brought back to Rome from China--everything from sophisticated philosophical tracts to children’s games.

The Vatican archives reveal that the Jesuits did their home-

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<sup>76</sup> For relevant works by these and other authors, see <http://www.aasianst.org/ea/smith.htm#T9>

work well. To be sure, they had their enemies among certain Ming and Qing literati, but during the early eighteenth century in particular they could boast friends in very high places. One such person was Father Joachim Bouvet (c. 1660-1732). According to Vatican records, there were times when Father Bouvet tutored the emperor every day for two hours in algebra and geometry. In addition, the two men discussed the *Yijing*-which fascinated them both. The emperor showed particular interest in Bouvet's claim to be able to predict the future with numerological charts based on the *Changes*.

I have discussed Bouvet's scholarly interactions with the emperor and various Chinese officials at considerable length elsewhere.<sup>77</sup> He and his colleague, Jean-François Fouquet (1665-1741) represented a development in Western Christianity known as the Figurist movement. In general, the Figurists tried to find in the Old Testament evidence of the coming and significance of Christ through an analysis of "letters, words, persons and events." Apart from the literal meaning of the "outer" text, in other words, there existed a hidden "inner" meaning to be discovered. In China this gave rise to a concerted effort to find reflections (that is "figures") of the biblical patriarchs and examples of biblical revelation in the Chinese classics themselves.

Bouvet and Fouquet were masters of the art. Using a somewhat strained etymological approach to various written texts, as well as an evaluation of the trigrams and hexagrams of the *Yijing*, they found all kinds of hidden messages. Dissection

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<sup>77</sup> The discussion that follows is based on the paper titled "Jesuits and the *Yijing*" posted at <http://asia.rice.edu/yijing.cfm>. See also Claudia von Colani, "The First Encounter of the West with the *Yijing*," *Monumenta Serica* 55 (2007): 227-387.



of the Chinese character for Heaven (天; the number two and the word for Man) indicated a prophecy of the second Adam, Jesus Christ; the three solid lines of the Qian (Heaven) trigram represented an early awareness of the Trinity; the hexagram Xu (需; Waiting, #5), with its stark reference to “clouds rising up to Heaven” (in the Commentary on the Big Image), could only refer to “the glorious ascent of the Saviour.” And, of course, the first hexagram, Qian, referred to Creation itself.

Efforts to link Chinese culture heroes to biblical figures produced all kinds of creative connections: Peng the Ancestor (Pengzu) became Adam; Fuxi, inventor of the eight trigrams, was the mysterious Patriarch Enoch, who reportedly “walked with God;” references to the moral exemplar Yao (堯), they argued, must have been derived from the Hebrew term Yaweh.

Eventually Bouvet developed the idea that the *Yijing* contained the idea of three “states” or stages in the history of the world—a state of original perfection, one of corruption and degeneration, and one of reformation and restoration. By Bouvet’s account, the Kangxi emperor approved of this notion, perhaps because it resonated with similar schemes devised by Chinese scholars (notably Shao Yong) centuries before. The emperor did not, however, accept Bouvet’s assertion that the *Yijing* was originally one of several Jewish-Christian books by Enoch that found its way to China after the flood. Indeed, for the Kangxi emperor the *Classic of Changes* was an ideal example of the “Chinese origins of Western learning” (西學中源).

By some accounts, the Kangxi emperor’s interest in Bouvet’s ideas was so great that he encouraged the French Jesuit to play an active role in the compilation of the huge annotated edition of the *Yijing* that was published under the title *Zhouyi*

*zhezhong* (周易折中; 1715). But eventually Bouvet's Figurist enterprise, like the broader Jesuit evangelical movement, fell victim to harsh criticisms and vigorous attacks by other members of the Christian community in China and abroad.

Nonetheless, Figurist approaches to the *Changes* continued to appear in the West during the remainder of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And although the Figurism practiced by Father Bouvet and others has often been stigmatized for its highly inventive etymologies, its numerological emphasis, its wideranging correlations and its far-reaching allegorical interpretations, roughly comparable exegetical strategies were a part of the Yi hermeneutical tradition in China (and elsewhere in East Asia) well before the arrival of the Jesuits. Chinese scholars of the *Changes* (and other classics) often dissected characters to explain concepts, indulged in elaborate numerological speculations, and established all kinds of creative correlations. What such scholars lacked, on the whole, was any incentive to link Chinese culture heros allegorically to foreign religious figures.<sup>78</sup>

The important point to keep in mind (and it is easy to forget sometimes) is that exegesis never occurs in a vacuum. It is always motivated, and our duty as scholars and analysts is to ferret out the motives of the interpreters and provide a context for them. It is also important, I believe, to place texts in comparative perspective.

Fortunately, there are now enough reliable translations of the *Yijing* to enable meaningful cross-cultural comparisons

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78 Smith, "Jesuits and the Yijing" posted at <http://asia.rice.edu/yijing.cfm>.

by non-specialists.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, we have a number of stimulating comparative models to choose from, including the works of such diverse scholars as Clifford Geertz, Frederick Copleston, David Dilworth, Gerald Larson and Eliot Deutch, Hajime Nakamura, Ben-Ami Scharfstein, Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell.<sup>80</sup> I am particularly attracted to the careful Sino-Western comparisons offered by John B. Henderson and Cheng Chung-ying,<sup>81</sup> but I also admire the more freewheeling approach of Wendy Doniger, who reminds us that myths from "other people's culture's" often supply metaphors that are more refreshing, and perhaps even more

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**79** For the Han and immediate post-Han period alone there are two fine translations from different exegetical traditions: Edward Shaughnessy's *I Ching*, based on the Mawangdui edition of the *Changes*, and Richard Lynn's *The Classic of Changes*, based on the commentary of Wang Bi.

**80** Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Frederick Copleston, *Philosophies and Cultures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); David Dilworth, *Philosophy in World Perspective: The Hermeneutics of the Major Themes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Gerald Larson and Eliot Deutch, eds., *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Hajime Nakamura, *A Comparative History of Ideas* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986); Ben-Ami Scharfstein, et al., *Philosophy East/Philosophy West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *A Comparative History of World Philosophy: From the Upanishads to Kant* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). The works by Eliade and Campbell are too numerous (and too well-known) to list.

**81** John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) and *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish and Early Christian Patterns* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1998). See also the stimulating comparative essays by Cheng Chung-ying in *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

revealing, than our own.<sup>82</sup> "Comparison," she writes, "makes it possible for us literally to cross-examine cultures, by using a myth from one culture to reveal to us what is not in a telling from another culture, to find out things not 'dreamt of in your philosophy' (as Hamlet said to Horatio)."<sup>83</sup>

By seeking to understand the *Yijing* in comparative perspective, we may not only shed light on important aspects of "other" traditions, but we also stand to learn more about ourselves as the products of a particular place and time. In the words of George Marcus and Michael Fischer, cross-cultural perspectives of this sort "have an important role to play in carrying out projects of repatriated ethnography, in defining novel approaches to taken-for-granted domestic phenomena, in framing questions, and in suggesting alternatives or possibilities among domestic subjects that are only revealed by comparative contrast with other cultural material."<sup>84</sup>

A number of explicitly comparative studies involving the *Yijing* are already in print.<sup>85</sup> What other cross-cultural compar-

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**82** Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Other People's Myths: The Cave of Echos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995; reprint).

**83** Cited in Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 33-34.

**84** Cited in Richard J. Smith, "China and the West: Some Comparative Possibilities," *Liberal Education*, 73.4 (September/October, 1987).

**85** See for example, Paul K. K. Tong, "A Cross-Cultural Study of the *I Ching*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 3.1 (December, 1975), pp. 73-84; Kuen Tong Lik, "The Concept of Time in Whitehead and the *I Ching*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 1.3-4 (June-September, 1974), pp. 373-93; Whalen Lai, "The *I Ching* and the Formation of the Hua-Yen Philosophy," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 7.3 (September, 1980), pp. 245-258; Kuen Tong Lik, "Whitehead and Chinese Philosophy: From the Vantage Point of the *I Ching*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 6.3 (September, 1979), pp. 297-322; also James A. Ryan, "Leibniz's Binary System and

isons might profitably be made? One might be to relate the *Changes* to the mantic theories and practices of other cultures (and to the ways such theories and practices have travelled across time, space and social class).<sup>86</sup> A recent study of Sino- Tibetan divination by Gary Dickinson and Steve Moore provides a model for this sort of enterprise.<sup>87</sup> Another attractive possibility would be to compare the symbolism (and/or numerology) of the *Yijing* with other great writings in the Islamic, Indic, or Western (Judeo- Christian) traditions. Problems of scope and specific criteria for comparison would have to be worked out, but the studies of biblical symbolism already undertaken by Carl Jung, Paul Diel, Harold Bloom and others

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Shao Yong's *Yijing*," 46.1 (January, 1996), pp. 59-90; Cheng Chung-ying, "Confucius, Heidegger, and the Philosophy of the *I Ching*," *Philosophy East and West*, 37.1 (January, 1987), pp. 51-70; Jung Young Lee's *Embracing Change: Postmodern Interpretations of the I Ching from a Christian Perspective* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1994); Liang, Tao-wei. "A Comparative Study of the I Ching and Buddhism," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*, 15 (1970), pp. 111-14; R. G. H. Siu, *The Man of Many Qualities: A Legacy of the I Ching* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), etc.

**86** See Michael Loewe and Carmen Blacker, eds., *Oracles and Divination* (Boulder: Shambala, 1981), which includes articles on China, Japan, Tibet, Greece and Rome, Babylonia, Egypt, Israel, the Germanic world and Islamic civilization. Unfortunately, however, the focus is primarily on ancient traditions, and neither the editors of the book nor the authors themselves attempt to make systematic cross-cultural comparisons. Other useful recent works on divination in different cultures include Benjamin Colby, *The Daykeeper: The Life and Discourse of an Ixi Diviner* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981) and Eugene Mendosa, *The Politics of Divination: A Processual View of Reactions to Illness and Deviance among the Sisala of Northern Ghana* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

**87** Gary Dickinson and Steve Moore, "Trigrams and Tortoises: Sino-Tibetan Divination," *Oracle* (special issue), 1.5 (Summer, 1997), pp. 1-48.

provide a potentially useful point of departure.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, as many of you know, there is now a translation of the *Changes* designed explicitly with Jungian "archetypes" in mind.<sup>89</sup>

It is true that the *Yijing* differs in significant ways from the sacred scriptures of most other cultures. The *Rig Veda*, for instance, was a magical, revealed text, which was transmitted orally rather than in writing to preclude the possibility its divine power falling into the wrong hands. The *Mahabharata*, although canonical, was a fluid document, transmitted both orally and in writing, "to be claimed like a piece of uncultivated land, salvaged as anonymous treasure from the ocean of story."<sup>90</sup> The *Qu'ran*, like the *Bible*, represented the holy word of a transcendent God--divinely revealed in the fashion of the *Rig Veda*, but then written down in addition to being passed along as an oral document. (The *Qu'ran* was not, however, supposed to be translated from the original Arabic, since it was regarded as immutable in both form and content. Translations were therefore viewed as "paraphrases," designed to facilitate popular understanding.)<sup>91</sup>

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**88** See Carl Jung, ed., *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1968); Paul Delmonico, *Symbolism and the Bible: The Universality of Symbolic Language: Its Psychological Significance* (San Francisco: 1986); Harold Bloom, *Kaballah and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1983). For an ambitious but, in my view quite unsatisfactory, effort to show that the texts of the *Yijing* and the Hebrew *Bible* (Torah) are "the same in sequence, structure, meanings and relevancy," consult Joe E. McCaffree, *Bible and I Ching Relationships* (Hong Kong and Seattle: South Sky Book Co, 1982). It should be noted, however, that this approach had important antecedents in the "Figurist" speculations of seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuit missionaries discussed above.

**89** See Ritsema and Karcher, *I Ching*, esp. pp. 15-17.

**90** Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Other People's Myths*, p. 59.

**91** See *ibid.* pp. 58-64 on paradoxical elements in the transmission of

But comparisons that reveal differences are as important as those that demonstrate similarities. My point, in any case, is simply that the *Yijing* deserves to be studied more carefully in conjunction with other major sacred scriptures, not only as a localized "Chinese" text but also as a transmitted (and transformed) "global" one. As the world becomes ever more interdependent and interrelated, cross-cultural understanding will become ever more important. The expansion of electronic communications worldwide may unite national cultures to an unprecedented degree,<sup>92</sup> but it will not necessarily homogenize them. Under such circumstances, we in the global community need all the cultural perspective we can get. In my view, the comparative study of the *Yijing* is an excellent starting place.

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oral and written traditions. I have compared the *Yijing* to works such as the Hebrew and Christian *Bible*, the *Qu'ran*, the *Vedas* and certain Buddhist texts in the concluding chapter of *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World*.

**92** For a good introduction to *Yijing*-related resources on the World Wide Web, including links to both "conventional" and "unconventional" commentaries, consult Greg Whincup's "The *I Ching* on the Net (Zhouyi dianlin)" at: <http://www.pacificcoast.net/~wh/Index.html>.

