

THE ORIGINAL  
**I CHING**  
(YI JING)  
**ORACLE**

The Eranos translation  
of  
the Book of Changes  
by  
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Introduction

for the complete text see

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# Introduction

## I. The Oracle

### \*The Book of Yi

#### *The name of the book*

The title of this book, *I Ching*, or *Yi Jing*, as it is written in contemporary *pinyin* romanization, can be translated as "Book of Changes" or "Classic of Changes." An older form of the title is *Zhou Yi*, "Changes of the Zhou," from the name of the Zhou dynasty (1122-256 BC), under which it came into being. *Jing* simply means "classic": its canonization as a classic took place under the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), in the framework of the great unification of Chinese culture undertaken by the empire. Since then, the *Yi Jing* has been regarded as the Classic of Classics: for two thousand years it has been to the Chinese the ultimate map of "heaven and earth."

The essential word in the book's name is *yi*, which means, amongst other things, "change." But the *yi* the title of the book points to is not primarily the regular change involved in the cycle of day and night, in the succession of the seasons or in the organic growth of living things. *Yi* refers in the first place to unpredictable change. We find an expressive description of it in another classic, the *Shu Jing*, Book of Documents:

When in years, months and days the season has no *yi*, the hundred cereals ripen, the administration is enlightened, talented men of the people are distinguished, the house is peaceful and at ease. When in days, months and years the season has *yi*, the hundred cereals do not ripen, the administration is dark and unenlightened, talented men of the people are in petty positions, the house is not at peace.<sup>1</sup>

We have *yi* when things are off track, when chaos irrupts into our life and the usual bearings no longer suffice for orientation. We all know that such times can be very fertile – and extremely painful, disconcerting and full of anxiety. Modern chaos theory pays particular attention to these murky transitions, by which forms transmute into each other. Life itself arises at the boundary between order and chaos: it requires both, it is a daughter of both. On the side of perfect order there is only dead stability, inertia, symmetry, thermodynamic equilibrium. Nothing very interesting can happen there: everything is too predictable, it resembles death more than life. But the side of total disorder is not very interesting either: forms appear and disappear too quickly, there is a total lack of symmetry, everything is too unpredictable. It is on the edge between order and chaos that the subtle dance of life takes place: here the real complexity arises, here forms bend and loop and transmute and evolve.

The *Yi Jing* is the ancient Chinese map of this dance of order and chaos. It is based on two principles, *yin* and *yang*, that are closely related to the ideas of structure and action, form and energy. Pure *yin* is inert structure, dead immobility; pure *yang* is chaotic creation and destruction: it is like an arrow, which in its ceaseless forward movement constantly negates the position it had previously reached. But the interplay of *yin* and *yang* gives birth to the "myriad beings," the endless variety of life and the world. In the *Yi Jing* this dance is encoded in sixty-four hexagrams, figures composed of six opened or whole lines, diagrams of different combinations of the *yin* and *yang* principles.

But the book is not originally a philosophical text, although it has been used that way, and as such it has attracted a huge amount of philosophical commentary. It was born in the first millennium BC as a divination manual, i.e. as a practical tool to help people ride the waves of change and harness their energy: a tool to deal with *yi*, with critical times. In many ancient cultures these times were seen as intrusions of the divine, of gods and spirits, into human life, and a proper interrogation of these higher powers, engaging them in a dialogue, was considered essential in order to overcome the crisis. An important form of this dialogue are the practices we call divination. The *Yi Jing* was born and kept being used throughout its long history as one such method of divination, as an oracle.

### ***Synchronicity***

Like many other forms of divination, the oracular practice of the *Yi Jing* seeks to discern the outlines of a situation and its development through what in modern scientific terms we call a random procedure. That is an approach rather foreign to the contemporary scientific mind, which considers random as essentially equivalent to meaningless. But the assumption of orthodox Western science that there is no meaning to be gleaned from random events was certainly not shared by the ancient Chinese. Their divinatory practices and their whole cosmology were based on a qualitative notion of time, in which all things happening at a given moment in time share some common features, are part of an organic pattern. Nothing therefore is entirely meaningless, and the entry point to understanding the overall pattern can be any detail of the moment, provided we are able to read it. This has been very well described by C.G. Jung in his classic foreword to the translation of the *Yi Jing* by his friend Richard Wilhelm. He writes:

The Chinese mind, as I see it at work in the *I Ching*, seems to be exclusively preoccupied with the chance aspect of events. What we call coincidence seems to be the chief concern of this peculiar mind, and what we worship as causality passes almost unnoticed...

The matter of interest seems to be the configuration formed by chance events in the moment of observation, and not at all the hypothetical reasons that seemingly account for the coincidence. While the Western mind carefully sifts, weighs, selects, classifies, isolates, the Chinese picture of the moment

encompasses everything down to the minutest nonsensical detail, because all the ingredients make up the observed moment.

Thus it happens that when one throws the three coins, or counts through the forty-nine yarrow stalks, these chance details enter into the picture of the moment of observation and form a part of it - a part that is insignificant to us, yet most meaningful to the Chinese mind...

In other words, whoever invented the *I Ching* was convinced that the hexagram worked out in a certain moment coincided with the latter in quality no less than in time. To him the hexagram was the exponent of the moment in which it was cast - even more so than the hours of the clock or the divisions of the calendar could be - inasmuch as the hexagram was understood to be an indicator of the essential situation prevailing in the moment of its origin.

This assumption involves a certain curious principle that I have termed synchronicity, a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality... Synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) state of the observer or observers.<sup>2</sup>

The way in which the oracular use of the *Yi Jing* relates to the configuration of events at any given moment is therefore more akin to the perception of a work of art than to a rational analysis of cause and effect. It is a rich tapestry of meaning, in which all details are subtly connected and somehow necessary – not because of deterministic laws, but because they are part of an organic whole. Of course the Chinese were aware of the existence of causal connections between events; but that aspect was relatively flat and uninteresting to them. On the contrary they were fascinated by and focused their attention on subtler, more complex and less exactly definable connections. The Western notion that comes closest to their approach is Jung's idea of archetypes,<sup>3</sup> and it is no chance that Jung was deeply interested in the *Yi Jing*. He saw the ancient Chinese oracle as

a formidable psychological system that endeavors to organize the play of archetypes, the "wondrous operations of nature" into a certain pattern, so that a "reading" becomes possible.<sup>4</sup>

The *Yi Jing* can therefore be viewed as a catalog of sixty-four basic archetypal configurations, a road map to the realm Jung called "collective unconscious" and Henry Corbin, in a language less susceptible to reification, "*mundus imaginalis*."<sup>5</sup>

### *A kaleidoscope of images*

Historically the texts of the *Yi Jing* are the result of an accretion process whose beginning can be traced back to shamanic practices of the Shang dynasty (1765-1123 BC, see below, *Modern views of the origins of the Yi*). These texts have been described as

a kaleidoscope of images resulting... from combinations and re-combinations of factual oracular statements. Each one of these images incorporates fragments of ancient statements. In each sentence of the *Yi Jing* we find one, two, three, rarely more, of these combined images, simply juxtaposed, and often strewn with forgotten technical divinatory terms. The whole is without any connection, but exactly like with a kaleidoscope, one is seized, in spite of oneself, by an impression of wonder.<sup>6</sup>

The language of the *Yi Jing* is therefore closer to the language of dreams than to that of philosophical discourse. In spite of the many layers of philosophical interpretation that through the millennia have sought to elucidate them, their vitality lies rather in their proximity to the *mundus imaginalis*. Their constituent images have emerged from shamanic trance, while their organization in terms of the interplay of *yin* and *yang* through the geometric code of the hexagrams is the result of a long process of classification, systematization and philosophical reflection. Therefore the *Yi Jing* straddles the divide between two radically different frames of mind, between the right and left hemisphere of the brain, metaphorically speaking, or the intuitive and the logical mind, and offers a bridge to move back and forth between the two. For the oracular use of the *Yi Jing* an understanding of the imaginal nature of its texts is of utmost importance. Because, like dream images, the images of the *Yi Jing* do not have a unique a priori interpretation. Depending on the context, they can be read in many different ways. And the context is given by the consultant's situation and question.

### *A mirror of the present*

It may be useful to state here the approach to the oracular use of the *Yi Jing* that is proposed in this book. The *Yi Jing* has been used and is still used in so many different ways, that it is worthwhile to describe a bit more precisely what the reader can expect from the *Eranos Yi Jing*. The basic philosophy of this approach is an exploration of potential synchronicities. We assume that the random manipulation of the yarrow stalks, or the tossing of the coins, can offer, through the related *Yi Jing* texts and the associative process carried out by the consultant, valid insights about the archetypal energies active in the consultant's situation and psyche and the developmental tendencies contained therein. In this sense we use the *Yi Jing* as a *mirror of the present*.

On the other hand, we do not assume that the *Yi Jing* can foretell the future, because we do not assume that the future is univocally determined. A latent tendency in the present situation may actually develop into an actual consequence: but that is in no way a necessary conclusion, and, what is most important from our human standpoint, the outcome can often be affected by our choices and our actions.

Nor we assume that the *Yi Jing* offers any imperatives, moral or otherwise. Quite understandably, when we are in a quandary we would very much like to be told what

to do, which one is the right choice, and sometimes we approach the *Yi Jing* hoping for that kind of answer. Here again the analogy with dreams may prove a valuable guideline. A *Yi Jing* consultation produces a series of images, which is like a dream connected with a given situation and a given question. Dream images may give us a clear sense of what we want or have to do in a situation, but they never *tell* us what to do. The same applies to the images of the *Yi Jing*. It is crucial to realize that the responsibility for all choices always rests with the consultant herself or himself.

### ***Interrogating the oracle***

From the imaginal nature of the *Yi Jing* texts and from the approach to divination outlined above we can derive a few indications about how best to formulate a question to the oracle.

1. Ask only questions that are emotionally significant for you. The emotional charge in your question is the energy that activates the archetypal images in the answer. Only then they can speak to you and cause a rearrangement of your view of the situation. A question asked out of simple curiosity rarely gets a meaningful answer: the psychic energy required for significantly processing the matter is simply not available.
2. Divination is not meant to replace critical reflection and introspection. Interrogating the oracle is useful only after you have deeply examined the situation and yourself and out of this examination you have distilled an appropriate question.
3. Avoid asking the *Yi Jing* what to do, and avoid asking questions that expect yes or no as an answer (e.g., is it right to do this? will this succeed?). The answer will consist of images, and it will say neither yes nor no: it will be up to you to decide for a yes or a no, based on the resonances that those images call up in you.
4. Avoid alternatives (e.g., should I do this or that?). If the question is formulated as an alternative, it is difficult to decide whether the images contained in your answer refer to "this" or to "that." When you are faced with an alternative, try to make a tentative choice (maybe the choice that is closer to your heart or the one that awakens more energy in you) and "test" it with the *Yi Jing* ("what about doing this?"). The answer will usually indirectly illuminate also the other option. A typical formula we often use at Eranos is "give me an image of... (this situation, this choice, etc.)"
5. Be as specific as possible. Do not be afraid to narrow your question down. The answer to a vast or general question is often difficult to interpret, because the images can be read in too many different ways. On the contrary, starting from a concrete and emotionally significant question, the answer of the oracle frequently expands to include larger issues in the consultant's life (see below, *An example*). In this respect the process of *Yi Jing* divination can be symbolized by an "hourglass shape". In the top half of the hourglass all the complexity and confusion of our existential situation

gets narrowed down to a very pointed, specific question. In the lower half, starting from that narrow focus, the oracle's answer opens up to embrace a much larger dimension.

[Figure 1] The stone slab dedicated to the 'unknown spirit of the place' at Eranos

### *Lines, trigrams, hexagrams*

The hexagrams of the *Yi Jing* are based on a binary code whose elementary units are the *opened line*<sup>7</sup> (--- ---) and the *whole line* (-----). The opened line is *supple* and is associated with *yin*; the whole line is *solid* and is associated with *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* are the fundamental categories of Chinese cosmology, the primary duality arising from the original One:

Dao begets One.  
One begets two.  
Two begets three.  
And three begets the myriad beings.<sup>8</sup>

*Yang* is associated with action, initiating, expanding, heaven, fire, sun, bright, dry, hard, male, etc. *Yin* is associated with form, receptive, contracting, earth, water, moon, dark, moist, soft, female, etc. (see below, *The yin-yang cycle*, for a fuller description of this primary duality). All phenomena, the "myriad beings" are generated by the interaction of *yin* and *yang*.

Just as fundamental as this basic duality in Chinese thought is the idea of change and transformation. The Chinese world view is essentially dynamic and cyclical: all things constantly change, the only permanent reality is change. Thus *yin* and *yang* are not static categories. They are animated by a cyclical movement which transforms them into each other, just as day turns into night and then into day again, and the seasons follow each other in their yearly round.

The key symbol of this cyclical movement is the *tai ji*:

[Figure 2] The *tai ji*

When the light quality (*yang*) reaches its culmination, it gives birth to the seed of the dark quality (*yin*), which at that moment begins to grow. When the dark quality reaches its apex, it develops inside itself the seed of the light quality, which at that moment begins to grow. Noon is when the sun starts setting, midnight is when it starts climbing back towards the horizon. Thus all culmination is necessarily followed by a decrease and all descent by an ascent:

Being and non-being give birth to each other.  
Difficult and easy complement each other.



Long and short appear in contrast to each other.  
High and low incline toward each other.<sup>9</sup>

Diminishing, augmenting.  
Increasing: the beginning belonging to decreasing indeed.<sup>10</sup>

In the *Yi Jing*, *yin* and *yang* are represented by the opened and the whole line. The opened line is *yin*, supple, flexible, pliant, tender, adaptable. The whole line is *yang*, solid, firm, strong, unyielding, persisting. And just like the two fundamental qualities they represent, the opened and the whole line are animated by a movement that transforms them into each other. For each type of line we are thus led to consider two possibilities: the line can be "young," i.e. still fully expressing its own nature, or "old," i.e. past its culmination and ready to transform into its opposite. Altogether we have therefore four types of lines:

<i>lao yin</i> , old <i>yin</i>	--- x ---
<i>shao yang</i> , young <i>yang</i>	-----
<i>shao yin</i> , young <i>yin</i>	--- ---
<i>lao yang</i> , old <i>yang</i>	-----o-----

The young lines are stable lines, while the old lines are *transforming*: they are animated by a movement into their opposite and are therefore dealt with in a special way.

Leaving aside for the moment the issue of transformation and focusing merely on the *yin* or *yang* quality of the lines, we see that they can be combined to form a three-line figure, a *trigram*, in eight possible ways:

[Figure 3. The eight trigrams]

The eight trigrams, *ba gua*, have a special significance in Chinese cosmology (see below, *The eight trigrams and their attributes*), and they are the building blocks of the sixty-four *hexagrams* (also called *gua*) of the *Yi Jing*. Each hexagram consists of a lower (or inner) trigram and an upper (or outer) trigram:

[Figure 4. Hexagram table]

The hexagrams are triggers for the inner process that will lead you to your answer. Each corresponds to a basic configuration of archetypal energies. The Chinese saw the sixty-four hexagrams as an exhaustive catalog of all possible processes between heaven and earth:

The Book of Changes is vast and great. When one speaks of what is far, it knows no limits. When one speaks of what is near, it is still and right. When one speaks of the space between heaven and earth, it embraces everything.<sup>11</sup>

You will use the specific hexagram texts identified by casting the yarrow stalks or tossing the coins as entry points to a deeper intuitive understanding of your situation, as seeds of an associative process to clarify the dynamic forces at work in your psyche.

### **\*The consultation procedure**

Energy moves in the hexagrams from the bottom up, like sap rising in a tree. The lines in a hexagram are numbered accordingly: the bottom line is the first and the top line the sixth. When you find the lines of your hexagram by counting the yarrow stalks or by tossing the coins, you start from the bottom and sequentially work your way up to the top line. Each toss of the coins or each counting the yarrow stalks gives you one of the four types of line: old *yin*, young *yang*, young *yin*, old *yang*. Before you begin the procedure it is advisable to have your question written down in front of you. Sometimes the exact formulation of the question really makes a difference in the interpretation of the answer.

#### ***The coins method***

Tossing three coins six times is the simplest and quickest way to form a hexagram. This procedure became popular during the Southern Sung dynasty, in the 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century of our era.

Take three coins and decide which side is *yin* and which is *yang*. The *yin* side takes the value 2, the *yang* side the value 3. Each toss of the three coins then gives you, upon summing their values, 6, 7, 8 or 9. Write this number down and next to it draw the appropriate type of line according to the following table:

6	old <i>yin</i>	--- x ---
7	young <i>yang</i>	-----
8	young <i>yin</i>	--- ---
9	old <i>yang</i>	-----o-----

Six tosses of the coins identify the six lines of a hexagram (from the bottom up), including their stable or transforming quality.

#### ***The yarrow stalk method***

This is the traditional way to form a hexagram. It is quite a bit more involved and slower: it is a form of active meditation, and each step of the procedure has a symbolic significance. A further difference between the two procedures is the fact that the probability of obtaining a transforming *yin* or *yang* line is symmetric in the coins method and asymmetric in the yarrow stalk one: in the latter a *yang* line transforms three times more often than a *yin* line, i.e. a 9 is cast three times more

often than a 6. This is traditionally seen as reflecting an intrinsic difference between the two types of line, *yang* being more "ready to transform" than *yin*.

You need fifty short sticks, traditionally prepared from stalks of yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), a common plant in all temperate climates. Yarrow stalks are cut during the summer, when the plant is fully developed, and are left to dry for a few months. If you do not have yarrow stalks, any sticks of manageable size, say between three and ten inches long, will do.

[Figure 5] Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

The procedure, which will be described explicitly in the following paragraphs, is thus outlined in the *Xi Ci*, the Great Treatise, the fundamental commentary on the cosmological symbolism of the oracular texts:

The number of the total is fifty. Of these forty-nine are used. They are divided into two portions, to represent the two primal forces. Hereupon one is set apart, to represent the three powers. They are counted through by fours, to represent the four seasons. The remainder is put aside, to represent the intercalary month. There are two intercalary months in five years, therefore the putting aside is repeated, and this gives the whole.<sup>12</sup>

### *The witness*

From the bunch of fifty yarrow stalks take one and put it aside. It will be a silent witness to your whole consultation. It symbolizes the center of the world, the axis of heaven and earth, the one, the unmoving center of all change. The Taoist philosopher Wang Bi (226-249) wrote:

Fifty is the number of the great expansion (the number accounting for the transformations of heaven and earth). The fact that only forty-nine [yarrow stalks] are used means that one is not used. Since it is not used, its use is fully realized; since it is not a number [like the others], numbers can accomplish their work. It is the *tai ji* of change...<sup>13</sup>

### *Forming a line*

#### *First step*

Divide the remaining forty-nine stalks into two random portions. This opening gesture (which will be repeated three times for each line of the hexagram) is the crucial moment of divination: symbolically it corresponds to opening up to receiving the answer to your question.

Take a stalk from the left portion and put it between the little finger and the ring finger of your left hand. Count the stalks of the right portion by dividing them in groups of four, until you have a remainder of one, two, three or four stalks (if there is

an exact number of groups of four stalks, the whole last group is the remainder). Put this remainder between the ring finger and the middle finger of your left hand. Now count the stalks of the left portion in groups of four in the same way, and put the remainder between the middle finger and the index finger of your left hand. Set aside the stalks you have between your fingers (if you have done things right, their number will be either five or nine) and collect all groups of four (right and left) in a single bunch again.

### *Second step*

Again divide the bunch into two random portions; again take a stalk from the left portion; and again count the stalks in the right and left portions in groups of four, exactly as before, putting the remainders between the fingers of your left hand. Set aside the stalks you have between your fingers (this time their number will be either four or eight). Keep them separate from those you have set aside before (a convenient way of doing this is laying them across each other): this will remind you that you have just performed the second step of the procedure. Then collect all groups of four (right and left) in a single bunch again.

### *Third step*

Repeat the same sequence of operations a third time: divide in two random portions, take a stalk from the left portion, count the stalks in the right and left portions in groups of four, set aside the remainders (again their number must be either four or eight). This time leave the groups of four spread out in front of you and count them. Their number will be 6, 7, 8 or 9.

Write this number down and next to it draw the appropriate type of line according to the table:

6	old <i>yin</i>	--- x ---
7	young <i>yang</i>	-----
8	young <i>yin</i>	--- ---
9	old <i>yang</i>	-----o-----

This is the first (i.e., bottom) line of your hexagram.

### *Forming a hexagram*

Repeat the same three steps for each of the following lines of your hexagram, building the hexagram from the bottom up.

### ***Primary and potential hexagram***

Whether you have used the coins or the yarrow stalk method, after six tosses of the coins or after repeating six times the three steps outlined above you will have a

complete hexagram. For the sake of concreteness, we will follow through a specific example of consultation.

Let us assume that you have obtained the sequence of numbers:

8, 8, 9, 7, 8, 7.

You will draw the following picture:

```

7  -----
8  ---  ---
7  -----
9  -----o-----
8  ---  ---
8  ---  ---

```

This is your *primary hexagram*, the main key to answering the question you have brought to the oracle. If there are no transforming lines (no sixes or nines), the primary hexagram is the whole answer.

If there are transforming lines (as in the above example), then you need to take their transformation into account also. Beside your primary hexagram you will draw a *secondary* or *potential hexagram* by copying the stable lines (the sevens and eights) unchanged and replacing the transforming lines (the sixes and nines) with their opposite. Thus in the example above:

<pre> 7  ----- 8  ---  --- 7  ----- 9  -----o----- 8  ---  --- 8  ---  --- </pre>	<pre> ----- ---  --- ----- ---  --- ---  --- ---  --- </pre>
primary hexagram	potential hexagram

(Notice that in your potential hexagram the lines are no longer marked as "young" or "old.")

You are now ready to identify your primary and your potential hexagram and to read your answer. The easiest way to identify a hexagram is to look it up in a hexagram table (inside front cover of this book). Find the upper trigram of the hexagram in the top row and the lower trigram in the left column of the table. (Disregard the "young" or "old" quality of the lines: now you only consider their opened or whole quality.) The hexagram and its number are given at the intersection of the corresponding column and row. Thus in the above example the primary hexagram is number 56, Sojourning, and the potential hexagram is number 35, Prospering:

[Figure 6. Hexagram table with example column and rows highlighted]

### ***Reading your answer***

In the *Eranos Yi Jing* the oracular texts are printed in red, while all the added explanatory material is in black. The oracular and the explanatory texts of each hexagram are distributed in various sections, which will be illustrated in detail below (see *Sections of a hexagram*).

*When in your consultation you have no transforming lines*, your answer consists of all the texts of your primary hexagram, except the *Transforming Lines* section.

*When in your consultation you have transforming lines*, your answer consists of:

- all the texts of your primary hexagram, except the *Transforming Lines* section;
- in the *Transforming Lines* section only the texts referring to the specific transforming lines you have got;
- the *Image of the Situation* section of your potential hexagram.

Thus, in the example given above, your answer would include:

- all the texts of hexagram 56, except the *Transforming Lines* section;
- the text of *Nine at third*, in the *Transforming Lines* section of hexagram 56;
- the *Image of the Situation* of hexagram 35.

The language of the *Yi Jing* is an imaginal language (see below, *The language of the Yi Jing*). Its words have multiple layers of meaning, which the *Eranos Yi Jing* makes available to the reader through the *Fields of meaning* associated with the oracular texts. While reading your answer, try to hold all these meanings simultaneously and feel free to replace any word in the oracular texts with one of its associated meanings, if that meaning has a particular resonance in you.

There are no rules for interpreting these texts. They do not have an intrinsic meaning, independent from you and from your question. The Chinese commentary tradition suggests that *turning and rolling the words in one's heart* is the key to accessing the "light of the gods." Focus on the words and images that have the strongest impact on you. Remember that the answer does not reside in the words, but arises in the process those words trigger in you. Just as the emotional content of your question is important, so it is important that you let yourself be touched by the answer.

The openness of the oracular texts can be unsettling at first. You may feel overwhelmed by a flood of potential meanings. This wealth of possibilities is an expression of the archetypal nature of the divinatory language. The guiding principle is to listen to the resonances the oracular images arouse in you.

## \*The language of the Yi Jing

### *Chinese as an imaginal language*

The structure of Chinese is very different from that of Western languages. Its grammar is minimal. Its words are signs (ideograms) which evoke images. A single ideogram can function as a verb, a noun or an adjective. By itself a ideogram does not specify a mode, tense or person and it does not distinguish between singular and plural. Furthermore it frequently embraces various related clusters of meanings that slide into each other by a sort of free play of the imagination. In this respect Chinese ideograms are a bit like those iridescent gems that appear of a different color depending on the angle you look at them. Their fluidity of meaning is remarkably similar to the interconnectedness which characterizes archetypal images, as Jung has pointed out.

As an example of the "play of archetypal motifs" in Chinese ideograms let us consider the word "open," *dui*, which is the name of one of the trigrams of the *Yi Jing*.

**Open, DUI:** an open surface, promoting interaction and interpenetration; pleasant, easy, responsive, free, unhindered; opening, passage; the mouth; exchange, barter; straight, direct; meet, gather; place where water accumulates. Ideogram: mouth and vapor, communication through speech.

The ideogram for *dui* is composed of the signs for mouth and vapor, which suggest speech and communication. *Dui* includes the idea of openness, permeability, ease of communication and exchange. Therefore a cluster of meanings extends in the direction of commercial transactions: to barter, to buy, to sell, price, value, equivalent. A market is a meeting place *par excellence*, so *dui* is also to meet, meeting place, gathering; and by extension also a place where water is collected, a marsh, a lake, a pond. The image of this body of water still contains the idea of vapor and of permeability: it is conceived as a wide, flat water surface from which vapors rise, so that there is a permeability, an openness not only horizontally, but vertically as well. And still from the idea of meeting place and gathering, or maybe from the peaceful landscape of the pond, comes another cluster of meanings, which has to do with joy, happiness, satisfaction.

Modern Chinese of course has a number of devices apt to contain this fluidity and make the language more precise. Not so the archaic language of the *Yi Jing*, in which the imaginal fields of single ideograms stand next to each other as islands in an archipelago or as figures in a dream. They are more akin to patterns of a kaleidoscopic image than to building blocks of a logical structure. That is the elusive character of the oracular texts – and the source of their potency as mirrors of psychic reality.

### ***Basic features of the Eranos translation***

The *Eranos Yi Jing* attempts to preserve as much as possible of the mirroring potency of the oracular language in English by adopting a translation strategy whose main criteria are outlined below.

#### *Core-words*

Each Chinese ideogram is translated consistently by the same English word, which becomes a sort of code identifying the ideogram. This word corresponds as much as possible to a "center" of the field of meanings associated to the ideogram, but is not to be taken as a complete rendering of the ideogram. Rather it is a *core-word*, a key to enter the semantic field of the ideogram.

#### *Fields of meaning*

The semantic field of each ideogram appearing in a given oracular text is described in the *Fields of meaning* immediately following that text. All the associations listed in it resonate together in the Chinese ideogram, and they can be imagined as being simultaneously present in the core-word. They allow the Western reader to access the range of meanings that a Chinese reader immediately perceives in the ideogram. While reading the answer to your question you are free to replace a core-word with any of the words listed in the corresponding *Field of meaning* which evoke a special resonance in you.

#### *Oracular and exegetic texts*

Oracular texts are distinguished from appended explanatory texts by their typographical face: they are printed in *red*, while all else is in *black*. Furthermore within the oracular texts core-words are printed in *boldface*. Wherever articles, prepositions and conjunctions have been added to render the text at least minimally legible, these are printed in *lightface* characters. The lightface words are to be taken only as suggestions: the "naked" Chinese text consists only of the boldface words.

#### ***An example***

Let us return to the example given above in *Primary and potential hexagram*. The answer obtained in that consultation was hexagram 56, Sojourning, with the third line transforming. Let us look at how you would read the oracular text of the third line:

**Nine at third**

**Sojourning: burning one's camp.  
Losing one's youthful vassal.**



## Trial, adversity.

### Comments

**Sojourning: burning one's camp.**

**Truly using injury actually.**

**Using sojourning to associate below.**

**One's righteousness lost indeed.**

#### *Fields of meaning*

**Sojourn**, LÜ: see *Image of the Situation*. **Burn**, FEN: set fire to, destroy, die.

**One/one's**, QI: see *Preceding Situation*. **Camp**, CI: resting place, inn, shed; halt, breathing-spell. Ideogram: two and breath, pausing to breathe. **Lose**, SANG: be deprived of, forget; destruction, ruin, death; corpse; lament, mourn; funeral. Ideogram: weep and dead. **Youthful**, TONG: young person (between eight and fifteen); childish, immature; servant, slave. **Vassal**, PU: servant, menial, retainer; helper in heavy work; palace officers, chamberlains; follow, serve, belong to. **Trial**, ZHEN: see *Image of the Situation*. **Adversity**, LI: danger, hardship, severe; threat or difficulty that must be encountered, rather than avoided; grinding stone; polish, sharpen; a challenge that strengthens and perfects the character; stimulate, excite; cruel demon.

**Truly**, YI: in fact; also; nevertheless. **Use**, YI: see *Patterns of Wisdom*. **Injure**, SHANG: hurt, wound, damage; grief, distress, mourning; sad at heart, afflicted. **Actually**, YI: truly, really, at present. Ideogram: a dart and done, strong intention fully expressed. **Associate**, YU: consort with, combine; companions; group, band, company; agree with, comply, help; in favor of. Ideogram: a pair of hands reaching downward meets a pair of hands reaching upward, helpful association. **Below**, XIA: anything below, in all senses; lower, inner; lower trigram. **Righteous**, YI: proper, just, virtuous, upright; the heart that rules itself; benevolent, loyal, devoted to public good. **Indeed**, YE: see *Hexagrams in Pairs*.

The oracular text is printed in red, and in it each boldface word correspond to a Chinese ideogram. (In the third line of the *Comments* the particle "to," which is in lightface, does not correspond to a Chinese ideogram: it is only a suggestion, inserted for smoother reading.) Each ideogram is described by its core-word plus the corresponding *Field of meaning*. E.g., for **losing** we find: "**Lose**, SANG: be deprived of, forget; destruction, ruin, death; corpse; lament, mourn; funeral. Ideogram: weep and dead." All these nuances of meaning are present in the ideogram rendered in the text by **losing**. When, like here, the graphic image of the ideogram itself adds significantly to its semantic field, this is also described.

In order to avoid cumbersome repetitions, when a word has occurred in one of the previous sections of the same hexagram you are simply referred back to that section for the corresponding *Field of meaning*. E.g., for **sojourning** you are invited to go back to the *Image of the Situation* section, where you find "**Sojourn**, LÜ: travel, stay

in places other than your home; itinerant troops, temporary residents; visitor, guest, lodger. Ideogram: banner and people around it."

While reading your answer, for each word of the oracular texts read all the associations listed in the corresponding *Field of meaning* and select those that have the strongest resonance in you. E.g., **losing one's youthful vassal** might mean something like "losing someone who is in the position of a subordinate or a helper to you," but also "mourning the death of an immature 'helper' part of yourself." The last reading indeed struck a chord in the case we have taken as an example. That consultation was done by a woman we will call Nora. This is her story:

At the age of forty-five Nora hasn't left her parents' home yet. She has been a language student at university for fifteen years, and after graduating has been a teacher in a private school near her parents' home. Since her father's death she is taking care of her mother, who is eighty years old. She doesn't like teaching and she didn't feel accepted in the school, but she kept the job for five years because it allowed her to live at home and to assist her mother. Since she left her job at the school, her only occupations are caring for her mother and shopping. She is unhappy with her life and feels that a change is needed, but doesn't know what to do and moreover feels that her choices are limited by the moral obligation to 'serve' her mother.

At first she says that she doesn't have a precise question. She is confused. Maybe she should go back to university for a Ph.D.? Or she should resume teaching? Or she should move into something new? But then what to do with her mother? She goes in all directions at once, she feels lost. The only clear feeling is that she has to decide about her life. The question she would like to ask is: 'What orientation should I give to my life?'

That's an example of a question too open for the oracle to give a precise answer. After a long discussion, Nora mentions that actually there is an immediate decision she has to make, but that does not seem important enough to her. She has been offered a job in a trading company where her language skills would be used. But she feels reluctant to give up her ambition for an academic career, and accepting this job would mean putting her mother in an old people's home. She has to answer within four days.

This is a concrete, present matter, which definitely has an emotional impact on Nora, although intellectually she considers it unimportant. What about taking this job? Nora feels a bit disappointed by such a limited question, but finally agrees to ask it. Her answer is hexagram 56, Sojourning, with a transforming line, nine in the third place.

Immediately the answer of the oracle goes to the core of Nora's situation, her being bound to her parental home. The image of Sojourning suggests that it's time to let go of residence in her mother's house. Moreover it addresses Nora's preoccupation about this job not fulfilling her life dreams by describing it as a 'temporary residence'. It doesn't need to be a final and irrevocable choice. It is a temporary move in the process of her moving out of her nest. The texts of the transforming line are even more explicit. They talk about "**burning one's camp**": she should burn her bridges behind her. This move implies "**losing one's youthful vassal**": giving up her 'serving' attitude

towards her mother. That in turn involves "**truly using injury actually**": painful as it may be, it is necessary to accept the fact of putting her mother in an old people's home. Nora has to cut the umbilical cord connecting her to the mother in order to start living her own adult life. The line texts end with "**one's righteousness lost indeed**": Nora must injure not only her mother but also her own sense of righteousness, the image of herself she's identified with, a challenge she has never faced before.

The potential hexagram is 35, Prospering. The corresponding *Field of meaning* is "**Prosper**, *JIN*: grow and flourish as young plants in the sun; increase, progress, permeate, impregnate; attached to. Ideogram: sun and reaching, the daylight world."

The *Image of the Situation* talks about "**day-time sun thrice reflected**." It is one of the brightest and sunniest hexagrams in the whole book, suggesting that the proposed course of action can break the deadlock of Nora's life and open up new possibilities.

### ***Sections of a hexagram***

The standard reference for all modern versions of the *Yi Jing* is the Palace Edition, published by the emperor Kang Xi in 1715. In it the *Yi Jing* consists of ten books, known as the Ten Wings, and the references to each hexagram are spread throughout the Ten Wings. For ease of consultation, in contemporary use all the texts relating to the same hexagram are collected under that hexagram's title. The *Eranos Yi Jing* also adopts this much more practical format.

Nevertheless the texts extracted from various places in the Ten Wings differ widely in origins, style and function. Therefore in each hexagram they are presented in different sections, which are briefly described below.

Under the title of each hexagram you will also find a brief introductory sentence, supplied by the present authors. This sentence is meant only as a suggestion, to give you a first impression of the hexagram when you are not yet familiar with it.

### ***Image of the Situation***

This is the fundamental oracular text of each hexagram and its first word is the name of the hexagram itself. Traditionally called *Tuan* (head), this text belongs to the most ancient layer of the *Yi Jing* and together with the main text of the *Transforming Lines* constitutes the First and Second Wing (*Tuan Zhuan*).

If you imagine your answer as a system of concentric circles expanding from a center, the name of your primary hexagram is the center and the *Image of the Situation* of your primary hexagram is the next circle. These two together define the basic archetypal configuration you are dealing with. In a sense, everything else comes on top of this as an amplification or a modification, adds or subtracts emphasis on specific aspects, traces possible lines of development and so on; but the overall frame of reference is defined by the *Image of the Situation* of your primary hexagram.

The next two sections do not include oracular texts, but contain explanatory material related to the structure of the hexagram.

### *Outer and Inner Trigram*

This section analyzes the hexagram in terms of the two trigrams that constitute it. The upper trigram is traditionally associated with the outer aspects of your situation, while the lower trigram reflects the inner (psychic) aspects of your situation. In this respect the transition from the third line (top of the lower trigram) to the fourth line (bottom of the upper trigram) often corresponds to a transition from the inner gestation to the outer manifestation of a certain archetypal image.

The attributes of the two trigrams outlined in this section are drawn from the Eighth Wing, *Shuo Gua*, Discussion of the Trigrams, and their placement in the *Universal Compass* (see below) is based on the correlative system outlined in the *Bo Hu Tong*, Discussions in the White Tiger Hall,<sup>14</sup> the proceedings of the scholarly gathering that consolidated the interpretation of the Confucian classics under the Han in 79 AD.

### *Counter Hexagram*

Beside the upper and lower trigram, two inner or "nuclear" trigrams have attracted the scholars' attention since Han times (206 BC - 220 AD). They consist of the second, third and fourth line and of the third, fourth and fifth line respectively. When these two trigrams are placed one on top of the other, we obtain a *hu gua*, a "twisted hexagram," also called, in modern use, a "nuclear hexagram." The nature of the procedure is such that in a nuclear hexagram the two top lines of the lower trigram are identical to the two bottom lines of the upper trigram: therefore there are only sixteen nuclear hexagrams for the sixty-four hexagrams. (Furthermore the nuclear hexagrams of number 1 and number 2, composed of all *yang* and all *yin* lines respectively, coincide with the hexagrams themselves.)

There is no traditional consensus on the interpretation of nuclear hexagrams. In the *Eranos Yi Jing* they are called "counter hexagrams." They correspond to a shift in emphasis – often a shift in the opposite direction compared to that of the primary hexagram, which generally is to be avoided. The "counter hexagram" therefore points to something that is not the case or that should not be done in the given situation.

### *Preceding Situation*

The text of this section is drawn from the Ninth Wing, *Xu Gua*, Sequence of the Hexagrams, which connects the sixty-four hexagrams in a series, deriving the action of each as a natural consequence of some aspect of the action of the previous one. This section always contains the sentence "**To anterior acquiescence belongs the use of...**," followed by the name of the hexagram. This rather awkward formula means that fully availing yourself of the present hexagram requires understanding and

accepting its connection with the preceding one. This connection may highlight some aspect of what precedes your situation and your question.

### *Hexagrams in Pairs*

This section, drawn from Tenth Wing, *Za Gua*, Mixed Hexagrams, draws a comparison between adjacent hexagrams which are structurally related to each other (an odd numbered one and the following even numbered one) by emphasizing a specific characteristic of each, sometimes by contrast, sometimes by a more subtle differentiation.

### *Additional Texts*

This section is present in ten hexagrams only. It comes from the *Xi Ci*, Additional Texts,<sup>15</sup> also known as *Da Zhuan*, Great Treatise, which constitutes the Fifth and Sixth Wing and is the largest and most important commentary on the oracular texts. This section relates the action of the hexagram to the realization of *dao*, the exercise of virtue or fulfillment of one's true nature.

### *Patterns of Wisdom*

Together with the *Comments* part of the *Transforming Lines*, the texts of this section constitute the Third and Fourth Wing, *Xiang Zhuan*, Treatise on the Images (or Symbols). They consist of two parts.

The first part identifies the hexagram through the symbols of the two trigrams that compose it (e.g. "**Clouds and thunder: sprouting,**" or "**Below the mountain emerges springwater. Enveloping**"). See *The eight trigrams and their attributes* for the symbols of the trigrams.

The second part describes an exemplary behavior, offering as a model a *jun zi*, a "disciple of wisdom," one who strives to manifest *dao* in her or his actions, the "crown-prince," or the "earlier kings," sovereigns of a mythical age when humans were in tune with heaven and earth.

### *Transforming Lines*

This section contains the oracular texts connected with the individual lines of the hexagram. Each line has a main text and a commentary text. The main text comes from the First and Second Wing, together with the *Image of the Situation*. The commentary text, together with the *Patterns of Wisdom*, comes from the Third and Fourth Wing.

Only the texts corresponding to the transforming lines you have obtained while casting your hexagram (the sixes and nines) belong to your answer. They introduce specific features that complete or alter more or less significantly the general picture given by the *Image of the Situation*. Generally speaking, if the texts of the hexagram

as a whole indicate the overall flow of events in the given situation, the single lines can be taken to describe currents and eddies within that "river."

We do not know how oracular responses containing more than one transforming line were traditionally interpreted. Integrating the messages of a number of transforming lines when these are at variance with each other is one of the challenging aspects of *Yi Jing* divination. Sometimes these messages refer to aspects of the situation which develop sequentially in time, and sometimes they describe complementary aspects coexisting in the present.

### *Image Tradition*

This is a commentary text on the *Image of the Situation*, also included in the *Tuan Zhuan*, the First and Second Wing. It amplifies and paraphrases words and sentences of the *Image* and offers a technical analysis of the structure of the hexagram in terms of:

- *solid and supple*, i.e. relationships between whole and opened lines in the hexagram;
- *appropriate or non appropriate position* of individual lines (a whole line is in an appropriate position in an odd numbered place, an opened line is in an appropriate position in an even numbered place);
- *correspondence or non correspondence* between lines occupying the same position in the upper and the lower trigram, i.e. between the first and fourth, second and fifth, third and sixth line of the hexagram (these are said to be in correspondence if one is whole and the other is opened).

These technical aspects are the foundation of a complex geometry and numerology of the *Yi Jing*. The *Eranos Yi Jing*, focusing on the imaginal content of the oracular texts, does not particularly pursue this line of thought. For this reason the *Image Tradition* has been placed at the end of each hexagram: although adding useful insights, it doesn't fundamentally change the picture defined by the other sections.

<b>Eranos Yi Jing</b>	<b>Wilhelm translation</b>	<b>Palace Edition</b>
Image of the Situation	The Judgment	<i>Tuan Zhuan</i> (Wings 1 and 2)
Outer and Inner Trigram	Book II - Discussion of the Trigrams	<i>Shuo Gua</i> (Wing 8)
Counter Hexagram	Book II - The Eight Trigrams and Their Application	
Preceding Situation	The Sequence	<i>Xu Gua</i> (Wing 9)
Hexagrams in Pairs	Miscellaneous Notes	<i>Za Gua</i> (Wing 10)
Additional Texts	Appended Judgments	<i>Xi Ci</i> (Wings 5 and 6)
Patterns of Wisdom	The Image	<i>Xiang Zhuan</i> (Wings 3 and 4)
Transforming lines - main text	The Lines a)	<i>Tuan Zhuan</i> (Wings 1 and 2)
Transforming lines - comments	The Lines b)	<i>Xiang Zhuan</i> (Wings 3 and 4)
Image Tradition	Commentary on the Decision	<i>Tuan Zhuan</i> (Wings 1 and 2)

[Figure 7] Sections of a hexagram in the Eranos, Wilhelm and Palace Edition of the *Yi Jing*

### ***Note to the reader***

*If you are not yet familiar with the Yi Jing, the instructions given so far should be amply sufficient to start practicing. Consulting the oracle is the best and easiest way to get acquainted with the book. With practice you will become familiar with the language of the oracular texts and with the unique way in which they speak to you. The rest of this introduction, while not strictly necessary for a divinatory use of the book, is geared to a more in-depth appreciation of the oracular texts and offers useful background information on the history of the book and on the correlative thinking underlying its divinatory use and its philosophy.*

### *Additional remarks about the Eranos translation*

The *Eranos Yi Jing's* aim is to open up as much as possible of the imaginal richness and flexibility of the oracular texts to a Western user who does not read Chinese. The following remarks are meant to allow the reader to form a clearer picture of the original Chinese texts through the Eranos translation.

#### *Romanization of Chinese ideograms*

The romanization of Chinese ideograms in this book follows the *pinyin* system, officially adopted by China. In the past a variety of systems have been used in the West, originating considerable confusion. The most widespread of these, and formerly the standard in English-speaking countries, is the *Wade-Giles* system. Wade-Giles in most cases offers a more transparent key to the actual pronunciation of Chinese words, and some terms are much more familiar to the Western reader in their Wade-Giles transcription than in the pinyin one (two examples are the word *tao - dao* in pinyin - and the title itself of this book, *I Ching - Yi Jing* in pinyin). But pinyin is now fast becoming the international standard, and it is definitely worthwhile having a single universal system.

#### *Sources of the Fields of meaning*

The associations listed in the *Fields of meaning* are drawn from the classic Chinese dictionary published by the emperor Kang Xi in 1716 and from a number of valuable Western sources, particularly Wells Williams,<sup>16</sup> Couvreur<sup>17</sup> and the excellent recent dictionary of the Ricci Institute<sup>18</sup>.

The description of the ideograms is based on the *Shuo Wen*, the fundamental Han dictionary published in 121 AD. This traditional way of understanding ideograms does not necessarily fit with modern philological theories about their origins; but it has been kept here because it describes the "aura" surrounding these terms in Chinese literature and poetry.

#### *Composite entries*

A basic concept of the *Eranos Yi Jing* is to preserve a one-to-one correspondence between Chinese ideograms and English core-words, so that a core-word unerringly identifies a certain Chinese ideogram. This device allows a Western reader to form as precise an idea as possible of the original Chinese text and makes a concordance to the *Yi Jing* in the English language possible for the first time.

A rigorous application of the above criterion, though, is a very stringent constraint: in some cases a single English word effectively representing the core-meaning of a given ideogram simply does not exist. Two further devices have been introduced in order to obviate this.



*Hyphen*: when two or more English words are needed to render the core-meaning of a single Chinese ideogram, they have been joined by a hyphen. Hyphenated words therefore must be read as a single word. Examples: **actualize-dao**, **before-zenith**, **big-toe**, **break-up**, **bushy-tailed**, etc.

*Slash*: when the core-meaning of a Chinese ideogram has two equally important and intimately connected faces which are rendered in English by two distinct words, a slash has been used. Examples: **almost/hint**, **big-toe/thumb**, **day/sun**, etc. In these cases in the text only one aspect of the word will appear, e.g. **sun**, but the entry in the following *Fields of meaning* will list both aspects, e.g. "**Day/sun**, *RI*: the sun and the time of a sun-cycle, a day," reminding us that the words "day" and "sun" are interchangeable and correspond to the same Chinese ideogram.

### *Special cases*

A special case of composite entry is the word **belong/it**, *zhi*, which has two distinct uses in the *Yi Jing*:

**Belong/it**, *ZHI*: establishes between two terms a connection similar to the Saxon genitive, in which the second term belongs to the first one; at the end of a sentence it refers to something previously mentioned or implied.

The first use of *zhi* is a somewhat emphasized Saxon genitive, in that the Chinese language also has a plain Saxon genitive expressed by simply juxtaposing two terms (this has been rendered by a lightface "apostrophe s" in the oracular texts). Therefore in the body of a sentence *zhi* has been rendered with **belong** together with a reversal of the order of the two terms it connects. E.g., in

**Humbling: the handle belonging to actualizing-dao indeed.**

the structure of the Chinese sentence is:

**humble actualize-dao *zhi* handle indeed.**

The meaning of course is that "humbling is the handle of actualizing-dao ." At the end of a sentence *zhi* has been rendered with **it**. In

**Using enveloping the great: heaviness.  
The Pattern King uses it.**

**it** refers to the previously mentioned "heaviness of enveloping the great." (The king mentioned, by the way, is King Wen, the mythical author of the *Yi Jing*, about whom see below, *The Pattern King*.)

Another special case is the general third person pronoun **one/one's**, *qi*, which also means **it/its**, **he/his**, **she/her**, **they/their**. A proper entry for this word in the *Fields of meaning* would be rather cumbersome, as it would list all of the above separated by slashes. In this case we have made an exception to the general rule, adopting in the *Fields of meaning* different listings for the same ideogram, but including a reference to all the other forms. E.g.:

**Dragons struggle tending-towards the countryside.**  
**Their blood indigo and yellow.**

**They/their**, *QI*: general third person pronoun and possessive adjective; also: one/one's, it/its, he/his, she/her.

**A tiger observing: glaring, glaring.**  
**Its appetites: pursuing, pursuing.**

**It/its**, *QI*: general third person pronoun and possessive adjective; also: one/one's, he/his, she/her, they/their.

**Their** in the first example and **its** in the second are the same word, *qi*. Notice also that the **it** of **belong/it** is not the same as the **it** of **it/its**.

### *Idiomatic phrases*

Frequently two or more ideograms are used as a unit, they make a short idiomatic phrase which has in the *Yi Jing* a specific sense. One such expression, e.g., is **below heaven**, which indicates "the world." In such cases the *Fields of meaning* describe the whole phrase, rather than the single terms. E.g.:

**Below heaven**, *TIAN XIA*: human world, between heaven and earth.

These idiomatic phrases have their own specific listing in the concordance. E.g., all the occurrences of **below heaven** are listed separately from the occurrences of **below** and those of **heaven** in other contexts (and a reference "see also: **below heaven**" is added to the last two).

### *Great and small*

Some terms are used in the *Eranos Yi Jing* in a special way. The most significant of these are probably the words **great** and **small**. The corresponding *Fields of meaning* are:

**Great**, *DA*: big, noble, important, very; orient the will toward a self-imposed goal, impose direction; ability to lead or guide one's life; contrasts with small, *XIAO*, flexible adaptation to what crosses one's path.

**Small**, *XIAO*: little, common, unimportant; adapting to what crosses your path; ability to move in harmony with the vicissitudes of life; contrasts with great, *DA*, self-imposed theme or goal.

In the context of the oracular use of the *Yi Jing* these terms more often refer to a way of dealing with situations than to something literally (or even metaphorically) great or small. Accordingly, in the *Eranos Yi Jing* they are generally used in the substantive form **the great** and **the small**. E.g., the expressions usually translated as "great people" (or "the great man") and "small people" are here rendered as **the great in the person** and **the small in the person**, referring to attitudes the consultant can identify in herself/himself, rather than to "great" or "small" people outside.

### *The Concordance*

The reader who wishes to acquire an in-depth understanding of the language of the *Yi Jing* is warmly encouraged to make use of the concordance. Comparing all the contexts in which a given term occurs adds significantly to the understanding of how that term is used in the *Yi Jing*. Noticing in which sections of the hexagrams specific words recur more frequently (or exclusively) offers interesting insights into the language of the various layers of the book. And the possibility of searching for a sentence by simply remembering one or two words is a precious tool for reconstructing past consultations or comparing answers obtained in different occasions.

## II. Myth and History

### \*The tradition

#### *The first emperor*

The tradition concerning the birth of the *Yi* is intertwined with the myths of origin of Chinese civilization. According to the traditional narrative, the book came into being through the insights of three legendary Sages, figures belonging to a liminal space between myth and history. The first author is a fully mythical being, Fu Xi, the first emperor, sometimes represented with a serpent body and a human head. The third one, who is supposed to have carried the work to completion, is a fully historical person, although surrounded by a legendary aura: Confucius, the "master of ten thousand generations." Between them stands the man who is considered the principal author of the book, a figure straddling history and legend: King Wen, the founder of the Zhou dynasty, who ruled China during most of the first millennium BC, the time when the *Yi* actually came into use.

This illustrious genealogy had considerable cultural and political relevance. When the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) engaged in consolidating the empire by culturally unifying the diverse peoples they were ruling, milestones of the imperial policy were the standardization of writing and the ideological unification of the administration by elevating Confucianism to the rank of official doctrine of the empire. An important step of this program was the canonization of five ancient texts, first and foremost among them the *Yi*, as *jing*, classics, i.e. basic reference works for the whole culture. These books thereby acquired a status comparable to that of religious scriptures: they were commented upon and elaborated by scholars of later generations, but their authority and their sacred origins were never doubted for the next two thousand years.

Contrary to the views of modern scholarship, in the traditional account of the origins of the *Yi* the book developed in a logical progression from trigrams to hexagrams to oracular texts and hermeneutic commentaries. The invention of trigrams is attributed to Fu Xi. The Great Treatise describes this discovery in the following way:

When in early antiquity Bao Xi ruled the world, he looked upward and contemplated the images in heaven; he looked downward and contemplated the forms on earth. He contemplated the patterns on the fur of animals and on the feathers of birds, as well as their adaptation to their habitats. He took as a model, close by, his body, and farther away, things Thus he invented the eight trigrams in order to enter into connection with the divine light's actualizing-dao and to classify the nature of the myriad beings.<sup>19</sup>

Fu Xi is not here a mythical being with a serpent body, but the first civilizing hero, the one who introduced culture in the natural world. He is called by his appellative of Bao Xi, variously interpreted as Hunter, Tamer of animals and Cook, and a bit later in the same text we are told that

he made knotted cords and used them for nets and baskets in hunting and fishing.

Significantly the invention of the trigrams is connected here with "classifying the nature of the myriad beings." The word "classify," *lei*, has both the connotation of distinguishing and subdividing in rational categories (the beginning of the work of reason) and that of establishing connections and correlations between things on different planes. The eight trigrams are therefore fundamental cosmological categories embracing the totality of "heaven and earth": as we shall see, they define radii in a *Universal Compass*, a map embracing concepts belonging to entirely different realms, yet mirroring each other through a web of subtle interconnections (see below, *Correlative Thinking*).

## *The Pattern King*

The tradition is somewhat ambiguous about whether Fu Xi discovered just the eight trigrams or the sixty-four hexagrams (the old texts often speak interchangeably of the ones and the others, and the same word, *gua*, refers to both). But generally the invention of the hexagrams, as well as the authorship of the basic oracular texts, is attributed to King Wen, the founder of the Zhou dynasty. We find only two brief allusions to the circumstances of such invention in the Great Treatise:

The *Yi* came in use in the period of middle antiquity. Those who composed the *Yi* had great care and sorrow.

The time at which the *Yi* came to the fore was that in which the house of Yin came to an end and the house of Zhou was rising, that is, the time when King Wen and the tyrant Di Xin were pitted against each other.<sup>20</sup>

"Those who composed the *Yi*" are King Wen and his son, the Duke of Zhou. Usually the texts of the *Tuan Zhuan* (*Image of the Situation* and main text of the *Transforming Lines* in the *Eranos Yi Jing*) are attributed to the first and the texts of the *Xiang Zhuan* (*Patterns of Wisdom* and *Comments on the Transforming Lines* in the *Eranos Yi Jing*) to the second. The "house of Yin" is the Shang dynasty, who ruled over most of China from 1765 BC to 1123 BC.

Si Ma Qian (145-86 BC), the first historiographer of the empire, attempts a more detailed account of the genealogy of the *Yi* in his *Shi Ji*, Records of the Historian:

The ancients said that Fu Xi, who was simple and sincere, built the eight trigrams of the *Yi*.

When the Count of the West was imprisoned at Youli, he probably developed the eight trigrams into sixty-four hexagrams.

King Wen, imprisoned at Youli, developed the *Zhou Yi*.

At the end of his life, Confucius, who loved the *Yi Jing*, set in order the *Tuan*, the *Xiang*, the *Xi Ci*, the *Shuo Gua* and the *Wen Yen* [the first eight Wings].<sup>21</sup>

King Wen's legend is as follows. The Zhou were originally one of the nomadic tribes roaming the Western border areas of the Shang empire, particularly the Shan Xi, the passes located on the Bronze Road, connecting China with the steppes of Central Asia (the same which became many centuries later the Silk Road). Recruited as military allies, they became vassals of the empire and settled in the plains at the foot of Mount Qi, the "Twin-peaked Mountain." They became sedentary, and their wealth and power gradually increased thanks to the culture of millet, husbandry and commerce with the neighboring empire.

Around the middle of the twelfth century BC the fortunes of Shang dynasty were declining, while the star of the Zhou was steadily ascending. The emperor Di Yi, worried about the growing power of his Western neighbors, tried to bind them to his house by giving in marriage his three daughters to the crown-prince of the Zhou, Chang, the Shining. Shortly after that, Chang ascended to the throne of the Zhou, and Di Yi was succeeded by his son Di Xin.

Chang's rule was a model of wisdom, while Di Xin "disobeyed heaven and tortured the beings."<sup>22</sup> The luminous example of his Western neighbor was odious to the tyrant, who had Chang arrested and thrown into a walled cave. In the darkness of this confinement Chang spent seven years meditating on the "great care and sorrow" of the current state of human affairs and on how to bring them back into alignment with "divine actualizing-dao."

He is the one posterity remembers as King Wen: a meaningful name, which defines him as another fundamental civilizing hero. Indeed *wen* means both pattern of wood, stone or animal fur and language, civilization, culture, literature, the written symbol as revelation of the intrinsic nature of things. It is a fitting description of the "classification of the nature of the myriad beings" initiated by Fu Xi through the eight trigrams and perfected by the "Pattern King" in his dungeon. In his meditations he started with Fu Xi's eight trigrams and developed the system further by pairing them into hexagrams and appending a text to each hexagram as well as to the each individual line. These texts, constituting the *Tuan*, the first two Wings, were later expanded by King Wen's second son, the Duke of Zhou, who added his own commentary (the *Xiang*, Third and Fourth Wing) to elucidate his father's words. Finally to Confucius (551-479 BC) the tradition attributes the authorship of all the remaining commentaries, particularly of the Great Treatise. Thus the authority of the Classic of Classics is solidly founded and firmly meshed with the ideology of the empire; and the Confucian interpretation, occasionally incorporating insights of other schools, becomes the canonical reading of the *Yi*.

## **\*Modern views of the origins of the Yi**

### ***Bones and tortoise shells***

Modern scholarship tells a very different story about the origins of the *Yi*. In this reconstruction the book does not emerge from the philosophical reflections of a few individual Sages, but from the divinatory practices of many generations of shamans. The texts did not come at a later date as elucidation of the patterns of lines, but the other way around: divinatory statements came first, and they were later compiled and classified through a symbolic system (or a number of symbolic systems), which eventually evolved into the patterns of lines of the *Yi*.

The first discovery of *jia gu wen*, divinatory inscriptions on tortoise shells and cattle bones, dates from a little over a century ago (1899). It has been described as the most important finding in modern Chinese historiography. These inscriptions are an almost daily record of all kinds of natural and social events of the Shang (1765-1123 BC)

and early Zhou dynasty. They constitute a vast reservoir of information, which is still far from being completely interpreted and classified. In 1995 Wang Dongliang cited 160.000 pieces identified, from which a repertory of 4500 words had been compiled, not even half of them deciphered.<sup>23</sup>

The practice which generated these inscriptions was a form of pyromancy, divination by fire. The Shang shamans applied heat through glowing hard wood rods to specific points of animal bones (particularly scapulae of bovines) or tortoise shells, and in a state of trance read the patterns of cracks thus produced as messages from the world of gods and spirits. The resulting oracular statements were often recorded in abbreviated form on the bones or shells themselves, and these physical supports were kept for future reference, eventually constituting real divinatory archives.

As far as the *Yi* is concerned, the essential problem historians are confronted with is how this vast collection of disparate statements having to do with specific times and circumstances evolved into a well-organized book, with a universal system of signs and corresponding oracular texts applicable to all situations. A final answer will have to wait for a more thorough understanding of the available material to emerge and maybe also for future discoveries. But the existing evidence is sufficient for tracing at least some hypothetical lines of development.

Léon Vandermeersch has proposed an evolution marked by three stages: cattle bone divination, tortoise divination and yarrow stalk divination.

Originally divination may have been an occasional practice accompanying the offering of sacrifices. Cracks spontaneously produced by fire in the bones of sacrificial victims were read as indications of the acceptance or rejection of the offering by gods and spirits, and therefore of success or failure of specific enterprises. Human concern about the future eventually brought about a reversal of the roles of the sacrifice and the ensuing divination: from an accessory quest, the pyromantic interrogation of the victim's bones became the main goal of the process and the sacrifice only a means to that end.

That shift in emphasis brought about the transition from the so-called proto-scapulomancy to scapulomancy proper. It was a shift in meaning and in technique. Pyromantic cracks started being understood as images of transformation processes in a larger context of universal movements; and shamans no longer confined themselves to simply reading what the sacrificial fire had left for them to read, but started preparing the bones in specific ways in order to obtain clearer pyromantic patterns. With the emergence of the divinatory purpose as primary, a significant attitude change took place, a shift from an original transcendent religious orientation to an immanent "divinatory rationalism":

The work of fire happening through the diviner's ember rather than on the priest's altar favors the representation of an immanent dynamism over the representation of a transcendent divine will. Literally as well as metaphorically, divination moves away from the altar.<sup>24</sup>

This shift was further emphasized by the tortoise shell replacing the bovine scapula as the medium *par excellence* of pyromantic divination. This "great progress in divinatory thought," writes Vandermeersch, went hand in hand with "the development of symbolic thought." Indeed in China the tortoise is a powerful cosmological symbol, with its round back representing the heavenly vault, its flat square ventral shell the earth and the soft flesh of the animal the human world between heaven and earth. The adoption of the tortoise shell as support for divination therefore mirrored the intent of viewing the single incidents of individual consultations in the context of a larger cosmological frame: divination no longer revealed the will of the gods, but the subtle laws of transformation of the cosmic dynamism.

It was at this stage that divinatory records started being collected in archives of inscribed tortoise shells. And with this development the oracular formulas started taking on a life of their own, increasingly independent from the circumstances of the original consultation. They gradually assumed a more stereotyped form and were eventually collected in divination manuals, the ultimate example of which is the *Yi*.

### *The yarrow stalk oracle*

Classic texts talk about yarrow divination and tortoise divination as two parallel techniques, and occasionally discuss how their responses are to be integrated when both are applied to the same query. The archeological evidence is insufficient to definitely decide whether there was filiation of the yarrow technique from the tortoise one. But Vandermeersch claims that there is good reason to think so. One of the arguments in favor of this view is an etymological one: the radical of the ideogram *gua*, "hexagram" or "trigram," is the "reclining T" which is thought to depict a tortoise shell crack. And the same is true for the words *zhan* and *zhen*, both meaning "to divine" and referring to yarrow divination and to tortoise divination without distinction.

According to tradition, the yarrow stalk consultation procedure was invented by a diviner of the early Zhou dynasty, a historical person about whom we know very little, called Wu Xian, the Conjoining Shaman. His name, once again, is meaningful, since his technique created a bridge between the wild oracular statements of the ancient shamans and the rational philosophy of *yin* and *yang*. About this invention Vandermeersch writes:

Ancient Chinese historians did not know that trigrams and hexagrams, as we know them, did not exist under the Shang-Yin; thus they thought that Wu Xian invented a random procedure to select a *gua*. Now we know that *gua* are much more recent, and we understand that what Wu Xian invented was a random procedure for the selection of a [standardized] set of tortoise shell cracks.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, a common pattern in the bone and tortoise shell inscriptions are columns of strange signs, vaguely reminiscent of hexagrams (although the number of lines is not



necessarily six). The "line" signs belong to only a few types, which have been identified as numbers written in paleographic form. Some numbers, e.g. 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, recur with particular frequency. We do not know what these numbers refer to, but a plausible guess is that they are codes for specific types of cracks. Indeed actual cracks were also often vertically aligned (we must remember that in mature scapulomancy shells and bones were prepared so that they would crack at specific points). And these coded crack configurations may well have been associated with standard oracular responses.

Once the tortoise oracle had developed this abstract symbolic form, it was no longer necessary to engage in the cumbersome ritual of pyromancy. Any random procedure to select one of the coded configurations (and the associated divinatory formulas) would do. Very naturally then at this stage the yarrow stalk procedure came into play as a simplified method to achieve the same results as standardized scapulomancy.

**[Figure 8] Evolution of divinatory techniques in ancient China<sup>26</sup>**

Neolithic proto-scapulomancy

- crude burning of unprepared omoplates (left)
- irregular star-shaped cracks on the other side (right)

Yin epoch scapulomancy (14th-11th century BC)

- use of tortoise ventral plates
- preparation by incision before burning
- standardized 'reclining T' cracks on the other side (right)

Proto-achilleomancy (end of Yin – beginning of Zhou epoch, 11th – 10th century BC)

- fragment of tortoise shell with numerical hexagrams; the numbers represent canonical types of cracks, selected by a random procedure

Numerical achilleomancy (middle of the 1st millennium BC)

- rationalization of the number system used in the numerical hexagrams

Canonical achilleomancy (end of the 1st millennium BC)

- algorithmic hexagrams made of odd-valued *yang* monograms and even-valued *yin* monograms

To obtain the *Yi Jing* divination system as we know it, only two more steps were needed:

- the types of lines/cracks are reduced to four, coded by the numbers 6, 7, 8 and 9, and the even or odd character of the number gets connected with the philosophical notions of *yin* and *yang*;
- the number of lines/cracks is standardized at six.

Quoting Vandermeersch once again:

We can follow the great developmental phases of Chinese divinatory techniques from Neolithic proto-scapulomancy, based on the crude burning of residual bones of bovine holocausts, to the system of the *Yi Jing*. These phases are: first, the remarkable standardization of scapulomantic diagrams; then, the typological classification of these standardized forms; finally, the algorithmic coding of the system in terms of even and odd numbers. Throughout this process the same logic operates: it is a logic of rationalization of the formal structures of the diagrammatic, numerical or algorithmic configurations produced by divinatory techniques, taken as coded representations of the hidden cosmic connections existent between all phenomena in the universe. As Granet noted so well, Chinese thought works according to a logic of correspondences. The history of divination is an admirable illustration of how this logic works...<sup>27</sup>

## \*The evolution of the book

### *The Book of Encompassing Versatility*

The *Yi* did not therefore arise as a complete book, but evolved through many centuries. From one of a number of divinatory manuals, it eventually became not only the oracular book *par excellence*, but the Classic of Change, the ultimate reference of Chinese wisdom, revered by all philosophical schools.

Initially, there were archives of inscribed bones and tortoise shells, kept in order to record key events and to evaluate the accuracy of the corresponding predictions. Eventually these pieces were grouped and classified, and their inscriptions formed the material of the first divinatory manuals.

The simpler yarrow consultation method gradually replaced the pyromantic practices, and the recourse to the tortoise shell was reserved for special occasions and very important people. In the *Zhou Li*, Rites of the Zhou, the word *yi* denotes the science of yarrow divination, and three *yi* manuals are mentioned, all based on eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams, associated with the three mythical/historical dynasties (Xia, 2207-1766 BC; Shang, 1765-1123 BC; Zhou, 1122-256 BC). The last of these is the *Zhou Yi*, whose title can be translated as "Changes of the Zhou," but also as "Encompassing Changes," or "Encompassing Versatility," since the name of the Zhou dynasty means, among other things, "a complete circle, from all sides, universal, encompassing;" and *yi* means, beside "change," "easy, simple, versatile." We have no idea of what that *Zhou Yi* was like, but it is highly probable that it is the ancestor of the *Zhou Yi* that has come down to us.

In 771 BC, the Zhou capital moved East to Luoyang. That date marks the end of the Western Zhou and the beginning of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (771-256 BC), which saw a progressive weakening of the central power and a general destabilization of the social system. The emperor remained nominally master of the whole country, but in practice rebellious feudatories exerted their power independently of the central government and set up autonomous states warring with each other everywhere. It was

a time of great *yi*, of great upheavals and insecurity, in which individuals were often at the mercy of unpredictable changes. The *Huai Nan Zi*, an early Han philosophical treatise, gives an impressive description of the final chaotic phase of the Eastern Zhou, the Warring States period (403-256 BC):

In the later generations, the Seven States set up clan differences. The feudal lords codified their own laws, and each differed in his practices and customs. The Vertical and Horizontal Alliances divided them, raising armies and attacking one another. When they laid siege to cities, they slaughtered mercilessly.... They dug up burial mounds and scattered the bones of the dead. They built more powerful war chariots and higher defense ramparts. They dispensed with the principles of war and were conversant with the road of death, clashed with mighty foes and ravaged without measure. Out of a hundred soldiers who advanced, only one would return....<sup>28</sup>

We can imagine that in these circumstances, in which traditional values were overrun by violence and choice could be a matter of life or death, recourse to the oracle may have often been the only resource. The *Huai Nan Zi* says that at that time "the tortoise had holes bored in its shell until it had no undershell left, and the divining stalks were cast day after day."

Already during the first part of the Eastern Zhou epoch, the Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BC), the use of the *Yi* had moved outside the environment of the courts of high-ranking nobility and had reached a much larger class of consultants, principally consisting of the scholars-officials who were the backbone of the Chinese social system. This shift in users changed the scope of yarrow divination, expanding it beyond the limits of state affairs to include private and existential matters. And with this, also a change in emphasis and interpretation took place, in which ethical concerns acquired a much greater weight. The notion of an ideal user of the book started developing: the *jun zi*, the noble, became the "disciple of wisdom," the person who in a consultation does not only seek a personal advantage, but the realization of an intrinsic good, the actualization of *dao* in action.

The following consultation, related in the *Zuo Zhuan*, a history of the Spring and Autumn Period, is an interesting testimony of this new ethical concern:

In 530 BC [the feudatory] Nan-kuai plots a rebellion against his ruler. Consulting the *I Ching*, he obtains the fifth line statement of hexagram 2, *K'un*, which reads "Yellow skirt, primally auspicious."<sup>29</sup> Greatly encouraged, he shows this to a friend, without mentioning his intentions. The friend replies: "I have studied this. If it is a matter of loyalty and fidelity, then it is possible. If not, it will certainly be defeated... If there is some deficiency [regarding these virtues], although the stalkcasting says 'auspicious', it is not."<sup>30</sup> Thus Nan-kuai's improper purpose renders his whole prognostication invalid. His friend's fundamental assumption is that an act's moral qualities determine its consequences... Only something that is already moral can ever be "auspicious." Here we see how developments in sixth-century moral-

cosmological thinking change not only the interpretation of a particular line statement of the *I*, but also the very tasks to which the text could be directed. (Nan-kuai, by the way, disregards this analysis, and within a year he is dead.)<sup>31</sup>

This ethical approach to the *Yi* was particularly emphasized in the Confucian school. As we have mentioned, the tradition attributes to Confucius (551-479 BC) all the essential commentaries to the *Yi*. This claim is almost certainly a fabrication of later Confucian scholars. But Confucius may very well have been deeply interested in the *Yi* – since he was very interested in the ancient culture in general and his country of Lu was an important repository of the traditions of the Zhou. Many anecdotes are told about his devotion to the *Yi*. Si Ma Qian, e.g., says that Confucius so much perused his copy of the *Yi* that he had to replace the bindings of the bamboo strips three times (books at that time consisted of thin bamboo strips tied together). The only explicit reference to the *Yi* in the works of Confucius is a quotation of the third line of hexagram 32, Persevering:

The Master said: "The people of the South have a saying: he who does not persevere cannot be a diviner nor a physician. How well said! He who does not persevere in virtue receives embarrassment and shame."<sup>32</sup> The Master said: "Nevertheless, I do not practice divination."<sup>33</sup>

These words possibly hint at what may have been Confucius' real contribution to *Yi* scholarship: a reading of the texts valuing their ethical and educational function over the oracular aspect. This is well in accord with a note contained in the so-called *yi shu*, "lost texts," of the Mawangdui silk manuscript (about this manuscript see below):

Confucius loved the *Yi* in his old age. At home, he had it on his bedside table; while traveling, he had it in his bag. Zi Gong asked him: "Master, do you also believe in yarrow divination?" Confucius answered: "It is the word of the ancients: I am not interested in its use, I enjoy its texts... I observe the ethical meaning... Between the divining scribes and me, it is the same path, but traveled to different destinations."<sup>34</sup>

If such is indeed the case, then Confucius must have contributed to shape the new approach to the *Yi* which fully emerged a few centuries later, under the Han, when the *Yi* became a book to be read and pondered, rather than consulted; from a manual of divination it turned into a *summa* of the wisdom of the ancients and a general map of the cosmos.

### ***The canonization of the Yi***

The feudal strife of the Eastern Zhou period came to an end in the last decades of the third century BC, when the Qin dynasty (221-207 BC) rose to power and brought the

whole country under a single unified administration, building "a centralized state wielding unprecedented power, controlling vast resources and displaying a magnificence which inspired both awe and dread among its subjects."<sup>35</sup>

The rule of the Qin was short lived, but marked a great turning point in Chinese history. When it collapsed, it left to the Han (206 BC – 220 AD) an important legacy: the idea of empire and the governmental structure to embody it. "For almost four centuries under the Han the implications of this great fact were to work their way out in all aspects of Chinese life... [a process that] in several fundamental respects shaped the intellectual tradition of China until modern times, and not of China only but of Korea and Japan as well."<sup>36</sup>

The Han worked gradually to rebuild the great web of central government that had disintegrated with the fall of the Qin, unifying, organizing and standardizing the vast area and the diverse peoples under their control. A central aspect of this unification was the establishment of a common Chinese cultural identity, which in its general outlines was to last for the next two thousand years.

An important step was the standardization of the written language. Even today in China a variety of local dialects are spoken, in which words have widely different sounds (beside that, the same sound in Chinese corresponds to many different words). People belonging to far away regions do not necessarily understand each other when they speak. But they do understand each other when they write. The ideographic language creates a bridge between them and allows them to recognize each other as belonging to a common cultural mold.

Confucian thought played a leading part in the Han unification of culture. Parallel with the expanding function of government, there was a broadening of intellectual interest and a growing concern with questions of cosmology and the natural order. It was the conviction of Han philosophers that when the government was in tune with the laws of Heaven prosperity resulted, while strife and famine prevailed if that was not the case. Equally important, in an agricultural society, was the attunement to the concerns of the Earth (irrigation, land usage, flood control and so on); and so the notion of a necessary harmony between Heaven, Earth and Man became a pivotal idea in Chinese thought.

The great Han design of organizing all knowledge into a coherent whole including the natural world and human society was therefore, beside an intellectual pursuit, an important political task. Confucianism, with its emphasis on traditional wisdom and its focus on perfecting human nature through rites, music and literature, was ideally suited to this task. The final product of the Confucian education was the scholar/sage, the learned man endowed with a refined moral sense, whose natural field of action was in government service. During the Han this class of scholarly officials grew to a position of dominance over the entire social system, replacing the feudal aristocracy of former times. Public service was based on a system of competitive examinations which, in times of peace at least, assured the dominant position of the scholars in the bureaucracy.

A central endeavor in this process of cultural unification was the canonization of the books which were to constitute the base of all learning and particularly of the public

examination system. To this effect two great gatherings of Confucian scholars were held at the presence of the emperor himself, the last one in 79 AD in a hall of the imperial palace in Luoyang called "the White Tiger Hall." The results were compiled and published in a book called *Bo Hu Tong*, Discussions in the White Tiger Hall, establishing the orthodox interpretation of the five *jing*, the classics, and setting the base of a vast system of correlative thinking (see below, *Correlative Thinking*). The *Yi Jing*, or Book of Changes, complete with its Ten Wings, was the first of the classics, and was taken as a description of the metaphysical structure of the whole of "heaven and earth." The other four classics were: the *Shu Jing*, Book of Documents, recording the experience and wisdom of the "earlier kings," model for all later rulers; the *Shi Jing*, Book of Songs, repository of a tradition of folk songs and ceremonial hymns; the *Li Ji*, Book of Rites, the ultimate authority in matters of procedure and etiquette; and the *Lü Shi Chun Qiu*, the Spring and Autumn Annals, a collection of moral and political lessons in the guise of historical narrative. From this time onward the influence of the *Yi Jing* on Chinese culture kept growing. As the first of the classics, it was no longer just a book of divination: it was a tool for structuring thought in all fields, a standard reference for any theory claiming authority. Its influence extended into philosophy, ethics, politics, medicine, esthetics. And, since the openness of its texts allowed many different interpretations, the concise and cryptic oracular core of the book became enveloped in a body of scholarly commentaries.

### ***Philosophical and oracular tradition***

The philosophical reflection on the Book of Yi culminated in the vast and elaborate exegetic work of the Neo-Confucian school, during the Sung dynasty (960-1279). But meanwhile the divinatory use of the book was never lost. And with it survived an oracular tradition much closer to the shamanic origins of the *Yi*. This approach surfaced in a particularly clear form with the sixteenth century philosopher Lai Zhi De.

Lai claimed that the Neo-Confucian school, by focusing exclusively on the discursive meaning of the texts and on their implications for "moral principle," had lost sight of the images, which were the true soul of the book. The *Book of Yi*, said Lai, consists essentially of pre-verbal symbols, its texts are verbalizations of intuitively perceived images. And it can reproduce the natural order of things because it has been generated spontaneously, just like natural phenomena. "The sages," Lai wrote, "did not apply their minds to set it forth."

Therefore these texts, unlike those of the other classics, have no concrete referents. They do not point to any fact or principle, and they cannot be taken as a "definitive outline" of moral action. They acquire a specific meaning only when they answer a specific question, in a concrete life situation.

Lai saw this openness of the *Yi Jing* texts as closely connected with the all-encompassing nature of the oracle. The *Xi Ci* claims that the *Yi* embraces the totality of heaven and earth. But, if each line in the book corresponded to a single occurrence,

384 lines would account for only 384 occurrences. How could then the *Yi*, Lai argued, "be the one and all of heaven and earth"?<sup>37</sup>

### ***The Palace Edition***

The oracular and the commentary texts of the Ten Wings were finally collected in a canonical form in the Palace Edition of the *Yi Jing* by the emperor Kang Xi in 1715. That edition became the standard reference for all later Chinese publications, and is the text on which the present translation is based.

### ***The Mawangdui manuscript***

In 1973 silk manuscripts, including a version of the *Yi* and one of the *Lao Zi* were found in a Han tomb dated 168 BC. It was a crucial discovery, affording insights into the evolution of those great works at a date far antecedent anything available up to that point.

The Mawangdui text of the *Yi* differs from the canonical one (the Palace Edition) in a number of interesting ways.

First of all, the graphic representation of the hexagrams is different, having [paleo7.jpg] and [paleo8.jpg] in place of the whole and the opened line. These are variations on the paleographic form of the numbers seven and eight – and at the same time they are remarkably similar to the final form (----- and --- ---) of the whole and the opened line. Therefore we can regard the Mawangdui hexagrams as a bridge, a kind of "missing link," between the numeric "proto-hexagrams" recorded on tortoise shells and oracle bones and the canonical hexagrams.

Second, the names of thirty-five out of sixty-four hexagrams are different, in spite of the fact that overall the oracular texts are remarkably similar to the canonical version. Third, the order of the hexagrams is different. The Mawangdui order is a systematic sequence obtained by keeping the upper trigram fixed and varying the lower trigram according to a regular rotation. In this way it resembles much more the order of a hexagram table than that of the canonical book. Wang Dongliang<sup>38</sup> interprets this fact as an indication that, at the time of the Mawangdui manuscript, divination was still the prevailing use of the *Yi* and philosophical speculation was not yet the dominant mode. The canonical sequence is "philosophical" in the sense of reflecting a developmental process in which the principles of the cosmos and of the human world are derived from each other according to an internal logic not directly connected with the structure of the signs. The Mawangdui sequence, on the other hand, with its logical arrangement based on the structure of the signs, seems to have the eminently pragmatic purpose of facilitating the search for a given hexagram, i.e. it seems to be tailored to the needs of yarrow stalk consultation.

Finally, the Mawangdui text consists basically of only two sections, corresponding to the *Tuan* (i.e. the *Image of the Situation* and the main text of the *Transforming Lines*) and to the *Xi Ci*, the Additional Texts. Therefore the classic organization of the book in Ten Wings must not have been yet in existence at that time. Instead of the

remaining eight Wings, the Mawangdui manuscript includes an assortment of commentaries in the form of dialogues between Confucius and his disciples (conventionally called *yi shu*, "lost texts.").

### *The Yi Jing comes to the West*

The first glimpses of the *Yi Jing* reached the West by way of Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some of these missionaries had a keen interest in the spirit of the Chinese people they had come to convert, deeply studied their culture and tried to approach them on their philosophical terms, frequently incurring the wrath of the Vatican. One of them, Matteo Ricci, is still remembered in the name of an outstanding contemporary sinological institute.

The early Jesuit missionaries brought to Europe fragments of the Classic of Classics; complete translations came only in the nineteenth century. And it was still a missionary, the German Richard Wilhelm, who finally introduced the *Yi Jing* to the West in a way that won the minds and souls of intellectuals, and eventually also those of a large public of readers and users.

Wilhelm's translation was published in Jena in 1923. It stands out from all previous ones for a radically different attitude toward the *Yi Jing*. Wilhelm regarded it as a book of spiritual guidance of universal value. He wrote in his preface:

After the Chinese revolution [of 1911], when Tsingtao became the residence of a number of the most eminent scholars of the old school, I met among them my honored teacher Lao Nai-hsüan. I am indebted to him... also because he first opened my mind to the wonders of the Book of Changes.<sup>39</sup>

Wilhelm not only steeped himself in Neo-Confucian philosophy, but took it on as a personal spiritual path; and, having first traveled to the East as a missionary of Western religion, eventually he came back to the West as a missionary of Eastern wisdom. His translation moves from this committed and participatory stance. He endeavored to make the ancient book accessible to the Western mind by translating it as a discursive text in a Neo-Confucian philosophical perspective. His translation is a remarkably readable, poetic and profound text.

Carl Gustav Jung was deeply struck by the "formidable psychological system" the book embodied, and he wrote a foreword for it, which no doubt contributed considerably to its popularity. He also asked Cary F. Baynes, an American student of analytical psychology in Zurich, to undertake an English rendering of Wilhelm's German translation. The English translation took quite some time to complete (meanwhile Richard Wilhelm had died in 1930). When the Wilhelm-Baynes translation was published in the Bollingen Series in 1950, it rapidly caught the attention of a large audience.

Since then the *Yi Jing* has become popular in the West, and numerous translations and commentaries have been published, at all levels of quality and depth (see



Bibliography). Many of the works by Westerners are translations of previous translations, quite a few of them of Wilhelm's classic translation.

### *The Yi Jing at Eranos*

The present translation originates from the lifelong work of Rudolf Ritsema and from the experiences of the Eranos circle.

Eranos is an East-West research center founded in 1933 in Ascona, Switzerland, by an extraordinarily energetic and intuitive Dutch woman, Olga Froebe-Kapteyn (1881-1962).

An important influence on her development was the theologian Rudolf Otto, who saw the religious phenomenon as a universal aspect of the human soul, centered on the sense of an invisible order underlying the apparent randomness of life events. In the early 1920's, at the School of Wisdom of Count Hermann Keyserling in Darmstadt, Germany, Olga met various people who were to have a decisive influence on her life. One of them was Carl Gustav Jung: in his concept of archetypes Olga found a psychological language articulating her religious intuitions. Another crucial encounter was that with Richard Wilhelm, who in 1923 presented his new translation of the *Yi Jing*, shortly before publication, at the School of Wisdom. In the *Yi Jing* Olga saw a natural bridge connecting the transpersonal archetypal dimension with daily life.

Around 1930 she conceived the idea of turning the Ascona house she has received from her father into a center for the spiritual meeting of East and West. The house was wonderfully situated on the shore of Lago Maggiore, combining the mild Mediterranean climate of the lake with the austere beauty of the surrounding Alps; and Ascona had been, since the beginning of the century, a cauldron of innovative cultural, artistic and political movements. In 1932 Olga sought Otto's support for her project. He was too ill at the time to get personally involved, but he suggested the name "Eranos," a Greek word denoting a feast in which each participants brings a contribution, each one gives and receives.

Carl Gustav Jung, on the other hand, was involved in Olga's project from the very beginning and was a crucial formative influence throughout: for the next twenty years he gave a great personal and intellectual contribution to Eranos. He regularly sojourned there every year, and he presented there many of his ideas at the "work in progress" stage.

The first Eranos Session, or "Eranos Tagung" (German was the main language spoken at Eranos throughout the first decades), was held in 1933 with the title *Yoga and Meditation in East and West*. From then on the sessions convened every summer in August, and they hosted outstanding intellectual exchanges, involving many of the leading cultural figures of the time.<sup>40</sup>

Initially Olga Froebe would have liked the sessions to have a concrete and experiential character, to be a laboratory for personal and spiritual growth. In this spirit in 1934 she asked Jung to introduce the psychological use of the *Yi Jing* in the Eranos Sessions. But Jung felt that the time was not ripe for such an "unsavory"

personal exposure, even within the intimate circle of Eranos. It was much better, he suggested, to focus on the scientific study of archetypal images and of the religious phenomenon in the sense of Rudolf Otto. His view prevailed, and the field of archetypal research provided a vital thread for the Eranos Sessions for over half a century.

Nevertheless Olga Froebe kept nurturing the hope that one day the personal and experiential dimension would be included in the work of Eranos. When she met Rudolf Ritsema in 1948, their common interest in the *Yi Jing* and its use as a tool for self-knowledge created a lasting bond between them.

Rudolf Ritsema (1918) first encountered the *Yi Jing* in 1944 through his analyst, Alwina von Keller. Immediately he realized that the book had a central meaning in his life. He borrowed it for a week (the Wilhelm translation was then a rare book, difficult to find in Switzerland during the war years), and, working relentlessly, typed a copy of the whole first volume.

In the following years he devoted himself to the study of the *Yi Jing*. He became interested in the original Chinese text and studied classical Chinese specifically for this purpose. He tried to recover the full range of meaning of each oracular term and, on the basis of his research, started writing commentaries on various passages of the book for the patients of Alwina von Keller and for others.

When in 1948 Rudolf Ritsema came to Eranos, Olga Froebe felt that his way of using the oracle matched the experiential approach she had wished to introduce in the Eranos Sessions. As the friendship between Olga Froebe and the Ritsemas developed, Rudolf and his wife Catherine became progressively more involved in the work of Eranos. From 1956 on, Rudolf and the Basel biologist Adolf Portmann worked together with Olga in the organization of the annual Sessions. In 1961, a year before her death, Olga asked the Ritsemas and Portmann to be her successors and carry on the work of Eranos. In that she was partly motivated by the hope that someday the psychological work with the *I Ching* would happen at Eranos.

Rudolf Ritsema and Adolf Portmann continued the tradition of the Eranos Sessions devoted to fundamental archetypal research. At the same time Rudolf Ritsema privately carried on his *Yi Jing* research. Around 1970 he grew dissatisfied with writing critical commentaries on the Wilhelm translation, and conceived the idea of an entirely new translation of the *Yi Jing*, a translation in the spirit of the oracular, rather than the philosophical, tradition, avoiding as much as possible any *a priori* interpretation, so as to allow the questioner a direct personal contact with the archetypal images.

In 1988 Rudolf Ritsema carried out the transformation of the Eranos Sessions Olga Froebe had wished fifty-four years before: he brought the *Yi Jing* to the center of the Eranos activities and started the *Eranos Yi Jing Project*. The new sessions, called Eranos Round Table Sessions, were held twice or thrice a year around a large round table. In them all participants asked personal questions of the oracle and the alchemical circle of the people sitting around the table created a resonant body for working on the archetypal images received.

With the collaboration of the American poet Stephen Karcher, Rudolf Ritsema first completed a provisional English translation of the *Yi Jing*, entitled *Chou Yi, The Oracle of Encompassing Versatility*, which was put to the test in the Eranos Round Table Sessions from 1990 to 1992. The work done in these sessions led to an improved version of the English translation, published for the general book market in 1994 by Element Books under the title *I Ching, The Classic Chinese Oracle of Change*.

In 1990 the Italian publisher Maurizio Rosenberg participated in the first Eranos Round Table Session and immediately conceived the project of an Italian version of the *Eranos Yi Jing*. In 1991 Shantena Sabbadini started working with Rudolf Ritsema on this project, again translating from the original Chinese, and their translation was published by Red Edizioni, Como, in 1996 with the title *Eranos I Ching, Il libro della versatilità*. Italian Round Table Sessions using the new translation started happening at Eranos beside the English sessions. In 1997 the Swiss linguist Hansjakob Schneider joined Rudolf Ritsema to produce a German translation, which was published in 2000 by O.W. Barth, Munich, under the title *Eranos Yi Jing, Das Buch der Wandlungen*. Finally, Imelda and Pierre Gaudissart, working under the direction of Rudolf Ritsema, produced a French translation, published in 2003 by Encre, Paris, under the title *Le Yi Jing Eranos*.

By the year 2000 the work done on the Italian and the German translations, together with the experience of the Eranos Round Table Sessions, had suggested a number of significant improvements on the first English translation published in 1994. That consideration moved the present authors to embark on a new translation, incorporating all the insights developed in a decade of research. That is the book you, reader, have in front of you, a compendium of the *Eranos Yi Jing Project* experience. The last Eranos Round Table Session was held in November 2002 with the title *Beyond Consolidated Forms: Emergence of Change*.

### III. Correlative Thinking

#### *The Universal Compass*

The world view embodied in the *Yi Jing* is essentially different from the linear, causal perspective prevalent in our Western thinking. It is based on a system of correlations whose essential features took shape in the Han epoch and were codified by the Discussions in the White Tiger Hall in 79 AD.<sup>41</sup> Everything under heaven can be assigned to a specific phase of a system of interlocked, correlated cycles. The intrinsic dynamics of all phenomena is therefore represented in this system, which is the foundation of all Chinese traditional science. Its logic has been well described by Joseph Needham:

The key-word in Chinese thought is *Order* and above all *Pattern* (and, if I may whisper it for the first time, *Organism*). The symbolic correlations or correspondences all formed part of one colossal pattern. Things behaved in

particular ways not necessarily because of prior actions or impulsions of other things, but because their position in the ever-moving cyclical universe was such that they were endowed with intrinsic natures which made that behavior inevitable for them.... They were thus parts in existential dependence upon the whole world-organism. And they reacted upon one another not so much by mechanical impulsion or causation as by a kind of mysterious resonance.<sup>42</sup>

The words of the *Yi Jing* acquire their full range of meanings when they are understood in this context. The fundamental cycles and their interrelations are displayed in the following diagram, called the *Universal Compass*, which is also reproduced, for ease of consultation, inside the back cover of this book.

[Figure 9] Universal Compass

The cycles represented in the diagram are:

- the cycle of *yin* and *yang*;
- the yearly and daily solar cycles and the quadrant of the four directions
- the cycle of the eight trigrams
- the cycle of the five Transformative Moments

The five Transformative Moments (Woody, Fiery, Earthy, Metallic and Streaming) became prominent among various other correlative systems at the beginning of the Han era. While in earlier thought they still retained some characteristics of material substances, in Han cosmology they came to represent moments of all processes in general, phases of the cyclical change of all things on various time scales. (That is why we avoid the misleading term "elements," which is sometimes used in this context, and we use the adjectival form instead of the nouns "Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water"). The *Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* developed a vast system of correspondences based on the five Transformative Moments, embracing all kinds of natural and social processes.

An outstanding problem of this system was how to harmonize the base five cycle of the Transformative Moments with the base two cycles of *yin* and *yang*, four seasons, four directions and eight trigrams. The solution adopted by Han cosmologists consisted in giving the Earthy Moment, as support of all the others, a special location. There are various versions of this special placement: the one adopted in this book is the arrangement described in the *Huai Nan Zi*, which makes the Earthy Moment coincide with the *Pivot of Equalization*, i.e. with the boundary between the *yang* and the *yin* hemicycles.

The center of the diagram symbolically corresponds to the axis of heaven and earth: it is the axis around which all cycles rotate, the unmoving center of all motions. All processes, actions, qualities and symbols lined up on the same radius are correlated with each other. This correlation is a sort of resonance, similar to that which exists between strings or bells vibrating with the same frequency: even though they may not

be in direct contact with each other, when one of them is activated, the others enter into vibration.

Placing the eight trigrams of the *Yi Jing* in the context of this cosmological system vastly expands their meaning. The locations of the upper (or outer) and of the lower (or inner) trigram of your hexagram in the *Universal Compass* are especially meaningful. Some of their correlations are summarized in the *Outer and Inner Trigram* section of each hexagram. All the resonances that are relevant for your specific question or situation, or that call up a particular emotional response in you, can be included in your answer.

### ***The yin-yang cycle***

*Yin* and *yang* are the fundamental polarity of this system. As soon as the original unity moves into differentiation the interlocked movement of *yin* and *yang* arises: the symbol of the one in this differentiating aspect is the *tai ji*, which we have already encountered (p. 00).

These two basic categories of Chinese thinking cannot be adequately translated in Western terms. In order to understand them correctly, we must keep in mind that they represent aspects of processes and not qualities of things. Nothing is intrinsically *yin* or *yang*.

As a first approximation, we can say that *yang* refers to action, and *yin* to concrete form in space. For example, when we look at writing as the action of tracing signs on paper, it can be described as *yang*; while the signs themselves, the written document produced by this action, can be described as *yin*.

*Yang* is sometimes characterized as "creative," while *yin* is characterized as "receptive." But that is not quite correct, because no creation is possible through pure action without ever reaching a consolidated form (and likewise no creation is possible through form without action). All creation is the result of the interpenetration of these two complementary aspects and of their dynamic interplay.

The following list of qualities associated with *yin* and *yang* can be helpful to get a feeling of how these two basic categories are perceived in Chinese thought:

***Yin* refers to:**

- the shady southern bank of a river
- the shady northern slope of a mountain
- water
- moon
- dark
- moist
- soft
- hidden
- static
- lower
- inner
- incoming
- contracting
- inertia
- completion
- form
- structure
- being
- waiting
- response

The ideogram *yin* suggests clouds and shadows of hills.

***Yang* refers to:**

- the bright northern bank of a river
- the bright southern slope of a mountain
- fire
- sun
- bright
- dry
- hard
- manifest
- dynamic
- upper
- outer
- outgoing
- expanding
- activity
- beginning
- energy
- movement
- doing
- initiating
- stimulus

The ideogram *yang* suggests sunrise and a sunlit flag.

[Figure 10] *Yin and yang*

These two complementary aspects of all processes form a cycle, symbolically represented by the *tai ji*. Their alternation is patterned on the cycle of day and night: during the morning hours the light of *yang* expands into the darkness of *yin*, reaching a peak at noon; then it starts declining, as the darkness of *yin* creeps in, and in the evening takes over, enveloping everything in its nightly veil; midnight is at the same time the culmination of *yin* and the beginning of the rebirth of *yang*. In the *tai ji*, at the point where the dark principle of *yin* reaches its maximum expansion we find a light dot, the seed of the rebirth of *yang*; and at the point where the light principle of *yang* reaches its peak we find a dark dot, the seed of the return of *yin*.

Like the daily cycle, the *yin-yang* cycle is articulated in two hemicycles, separated by an axis called *Pivot of Equalization*, where the two principles balance each other. Each hemicycle starts with a *Pivoting Phase*, the first movement towards the predominance of *yin* or *yang*; it develops into a *Phase of Wholeness*, in which each principle fully expresses its qualities; and it culminates in a *Disclosing Phase*, in which *yin* or *yang* reaches an extreme and breaks out of boundaries, thus starting its own decline and restoring the balance of the *Pivot of Equalization*.

### ***The yearly cycle and the four directions***

In the *Universal Compass* superposed on the *yin-yang* cycle we find the yearly cycle and the quadrant of the four directions. Four basic divinatory terms in the *Yi Jing* correspond to the seasons of the year. We find them already in the *Image of the Situation* of the first hexagram:

#### **Spring, Growing, Harvesting, Trial.**

"Spring" refers to the vernal season, and is associated with East and with sunrise. It represents the beginning, the source, the primal originating power which causes things to emerge from the ground.

"Growing" refers to summer, and is associated with South and with noon. It represents vigorous life, completion, success, the power which brings to maturity what has sprouted in Spring.

"Harvesting" refers to autumn, and is associated with West and with sunset. It represents benefit, nourishment, the power which harvests the fruit that has ripened in Growing, both reaping and gathering.

"Trial" refers to winter, and is associated with North and with midnight. It represents a test, an ordeal, the power which separates what survives the winter from what decays and dies, the lasting from the perishable; it denotes the act of divination itself, which separates valid from worthless, right from wrong.

### *The five Transformative Moments*

The *yin-yang* cycle, the daily and yearly cycle and the quadrant of the four directions interlock with the cycle of the Five Transformative Moments. As we have previously remarked, these categories are not material substances, but moments or phases of all processes, aspects of the dynamic change of things in general.

The Woody Moment, associated with spring, East and sunrise, begins the cycle. It describes organic growth, typically a young sprout breaking through the crust of the earth: its actions are *butting*, *bending* and *straightening*.

Wood is fuel for fire. Therefore the Fiery Moment follows, associated with summer, South and noon. It describes combustion, glowing and upward motion. The flame remains joined to the wood out of which it arises and gradually changes it into ashes: its actions are *committed following*, *flaming above* and *changing*.

Ashes, or soil, correspond to the Earthy Moment, associated with the *Pivot of Equalization*, with the transition from *yang* to *yin* and vice versa. It is the support of all the other Moments. Its actions are *bringing-forth*, *sowing* and *hoarding*.

The extraction of minerals from the earth brings about the Metallic Moment, associated with autumn, West and sunset. It describes crystallization, concentration, the hard forms of cast metal, the consolidated structures of *yin*. Its actions are those of the metallurgic art: *restraining*, *adhering* and *skinning*.

Melting liquefies solid metallic forms, giving rise to the Streaming Moment, associated with winter, North and midnight. It describes all moving fluids and particularly water. Its actions are *leveling*, *flooding below* and *irrigating*. By seeping into the soil of the *Pivot of Equalization* this water causes wood to grow, starting a new cycle.



### *The eight trigrams and their attributes*

Each trigram of the *Yi Jing* has a name, a symbol, a specific action and a position in a family structure:

TRIGRAM	NAME	SYMBOL	ACTION	FAMILY ORDER
111	Energy	Heaven	Persisting	Father
000	Space	Earth	Yielding	Mother
100	Shake	Thunder	Stirring-up	Eldest son
010	Gorge	Stream	Venturing, Falling	Middle son
001	Bound	Mountain	Stopping	Youngest son
011	Root	Wood, Wind	Entering	Eldest daughter
101	Radiance	Fire, Brightness	Congregating	Middle daughter
110	Open	Pond	Stimulating	Youngest daughter

[Figure 11] The eight trigrams and their attributes

Furthermore the eight trigrams can be arranged in a cyclical order in two main ways. The older one is called the Sequence of Earlier Heaven or the Primal Arrangement. It is traditionally attributed to Fu Xi and it reflects a cosmic order prior to the human world. In it the trigrams form simple pairs of opposites at the ends of each diameter:

[Figure 12] Sequence of Earlier Heaven (Fu Xi's arrangement)

The other cyclical order is called the Sequence of Later Heaven or the Inner World Arrangement. This one is attributed to King Wen and it applies to the human world we inhabit and to its natural cycles:

[Figure 12] Sequence of Later Heaven (King Wen's arrangement)

This rather more intricate arrangement is spelled out in the *Shuo Gua*, the Eighth Wing of the *Yi Jing*, Discussion of the Trigrams, and it is the one that is incorporated in the system of the Universal Compass. The *Shuo Gua* says:

The Supreme [manifests] in the Shake by emerging, in the Root by matching, in the Radiance by reciprocally viewing, in Space by involving service, in the

Open by stimulating words, in Energy by struggling, in the Gorge by toiling, in the Bound by accomplishing words.<sup>43</sup>

The *Shake* corresponds to the first emergence of *yang*: a *yang* line enters from below, arousing the energies of the seed sleeping in the earth. It is the time of *emerging*, associated with spring, East, sunrise and the beginning of the Woody Moment.

The *Root* corresponds to the wholeness of *yang* and to the full development of the Woody Moment, which brings *matching*, coupling and multiplying.

The *Radiance* corresponds to extreme *yang*, associated with summer, South, noon and the Fiery Moment. It is the bright light which allows beings to *view* each other.

*Space* corresponds to the southwestern pole of the *Pivot of Equalization* and to the Earthy Moment. It is the time of agricultural works and *involving service*.

The *Open* corresponds to the beginning of the *yin* hemicycle, to autumn, West, sunset and to the first phase of the Metallic Moment. It is the time of harvest, bringing joyous and *stimulating words*.

*Energy* corresponds to the wholeness of *yin*, where structures have reached their most consolidated form, and a dissolving tendency begins to be felt. It is a time characterized by the *struggle* between these two opposing tendencies.

The *Gorge* corresponds to extreme *yin*, to winter, North, midnight and the Streaming Moment. The tendency to dissolution now prevails. The darkness of winter brings trial and *toiling* to a life cycle nearing its end.

The *Bound* corresponds to the northeastern pole of the *Pivot of Equalization* and marks the end of the cycle. At the end of winter life comes to a still point, suspended between death and rebirth. This time is characterized by *accomplishing words*, which articulate what is ending and prepare the beginning of a new cycle.

## Chronological table

2953-2838 BC (traditional dates)

Fu Xi (legendary first emperor)

Shang dynasty (1765-1123 BC)

Oracular inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells

Western Zhou dynasty (1122-771 BC)

King Wen and Duke of Zhou (mythical authors of the *Yi Jing*)  
Yarrow stalk oracle

Eastern Zhou dynasty Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BC)	<i>Zhou Yi</i> Diffusion of the <i>Yi</i> among the <i>literati</i> Confucius (551-479 BC)
Eastern Zhou dynasty Warring States period (403-256 BC)	Confucian commentaries on the <i>Zhou Yi</i>
Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD)	Mawangdui manuscript (168 BC) Canonization of the <i>Zhou Yi</i> <i>Bo Hu Tong</i> , Discussions in the White Tiger Hall (79 AD)
Song dynasty (960-1279)	Neo-Confucian commentaries
Ming dynasty (1368-1644)	Lai Zhi De's (1525-1604) defense of the oracular tradition
Qing dynasty (1644-1911)	Jesuit missions in China Kang Xi's (1655-1723) Palace Edition First Western translations of the <i>Yi Jing</i>
Republic (1912-1949)	Wilhelm's German translation (1923) The <i>Yi Jing</i> comes to the West as a book of wisdom
Popular Republic (1949-)	Wilhelm-Baynes English translation The <i>Yi Jing</i> becomes popular in the West

[Figure 13] A brief chronology of the *Yi Jing*

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*Xiang Zhuan* · 20; 22; 28  
*Xu Gua* · 20; 22

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## Y

yarrow divination · 31; 32; 33; 34; 35  
 yarrow stalks · 10; 12; 30; 31; 32; 33;  
 34; 35; 39  
 yarrow stalk method · 10  
*yi* · 2  
*yin* and *yang* · 3; 5; 7; 8; 10; 31; 33; 43;  
 44; 46  
*yin-yang* cycle · 7; 44; 46; 47

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## Z

*Za Gua* · 20; 22  
 Zhou dynasty · 2; 27; 28; 30; 31; 33;  
 34; 35; 49  
*Zhou Li* · 33  
*Zhou Yi* · 2; 28; 33  
*Zuo Zhuan* · 34

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, Stockholm, 1950, p. 33, adapted.
- <sup>2</sup> C. G. Jung, Foreword to *The I Ching, or Book of Changes, Richard Wilhelm Translation*, Bollingen Series XIX, Princeton University Press, 1950
- <sup>3</sup> See, e.g., C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, CW 9, I, Bollingen Series XX, Princeton University Press, 1959, 1969
- <sup>4</sup> C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, CW 14, 401, Bollingen Series XX, Princeton University Press, 1963, 1970
- <sup>5</sup> Henry Corbin, "Mundus imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imaginal", in *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam*, trans. Leonard Fox, Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, PA, 1995. See also: Tom Cheetham, *The World Turned Inside Out: Henry Corbin and Islamic Mysticism*, Spring Journal Books, Woodstock, CT, 2003
- <sup>6</sup> Léon Vandermeersch, "Origine de la divination par l'achillée et forme primitive du Yi Jing," in *Hexagrammes N° 4*, Centre Djohi, Paris, 1988
- <sup>7</sup> In the *Eranos Yi Jing* the *yin* line is called "opened," rather than "open," because "open" is the name of one of the trigrams. The two terms correspond to different Chinese ideograms and have different connotations.
- <sup>8</sup> *Lao Zi*, chapter 42
- <sup>9</sup> *Lao Zi*, chapter 2
- <sup>10</sup> *Yi Jing*, Hexagrams in Pairs 41/42
- <sup>11</sup> *Xi Ci*, I, 6, Wilhelm-Baynes translation
- <sup>12</sup> *Xi Ci*, I, 9, Wilhelm-Baynes translation
- <sup>13</sup> Wang Bi, *Xi Ci Zhu*, I, 8
- <sup>14</sup> Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po Hu T'ung, The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1949 and 1952
- <sup>15</sup> *Xi Ci*, II, 2 and 7
- <sup>16</sup> S. Wells Williams, *A Syllabic Dictionary of Chinese Language*, American Presbyterian Mission Press, Shanghai, 1874
- <sup>17</sup> F. S. Couvreur, S. J., *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise*, troisième édition, Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, Ho Kien Fou, 1911

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- <sup>18</sup> Instituts Ricci (Paris-Taïpei), *Dictionnaire Ricci de caractères chinois*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1999
- <sup>19</sup> *Xi Ci*, II, 2, Wilhelm-Baynes translation, adapted
- <sup>20</sup> *Xi Ci*, II, 7 and 11
- <sup>21</sup> Si Ma Qian, *Shi Ji*, chapters 4, 47 and 130
- <sup>22</sup> Ban Gu (39-92), *Han Shu*, chapter 30
- <sup>23</sup> Wang Dongliang, *Les signes et les mutations*, L'Asiathèque, Paris, 1995, p. 52
- <sup>24</sup> Wang Dongliang, op. cit., p. 61-62
- <sup>25</sup> Léon Vandermeersch, op. cit., p. 5-24
- <sup>26</sup> Léon Vandermeersch, "Origine et évolution de l'achilléomancie chinoise," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions*, novembre-décembre 1990, Boccard, Paris, p. 960
- <sup>27</sup> Léon Vandermeersch, op. cit., p. 959-961
- <sup>28</sup> *Huai-nan Tzu*, chapter 6, trans. Charles Le Blanc, Hong Kong, 1985, p. 174
- <sup>29</sup> In the Eranos translation: "A yellow apron. Spring, significant."
- <sup>30</sup> Zuo Zhuan, 12
- <sup>31</sup> Kidder Smith Jr., Peter Bol, Joseph Adler, Don Wyatt, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching*, Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 12-13
- <sup>32</sup> In the Eranos translation: "Not persevering in one's actualizing-dao. Maybe to receiving belongs embarrassment. Trial, abashment."
- <sup>33</sup> Confucius, *Analects*, *Zi Lu*, XIII, 22
- <sup>34</sup> Han Zhongmin, *Boyi shuolüe*, Introduction to the Silk Yi, Beijing, 1992, p. 104-105, quoted in Wang Dongliang, op. cit., p. 92
- <sup>35</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, Burton Watson, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1960, p. 161
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Larry Schultz, *Lai Chih-te (1525-1604) and the Phenomenology of the Classic of Change*, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI, 1982
- <sup>38</sup> Wang Dongliang, op. cit., p. 99



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<sup>39</sup> Richard Wilhelm, *I Ging, Das Buch der Wandlungen*, Eugen Diederichs, Jena, 1923, p. xlv

<sup>40</sup> Among them, beside Jung, Ernst Benz, Jean Brun, Martin Buber, Ernesto Buonaiuti, Joseph Campbell, Henry Corbin, Gilbert Durand, Mircea Eliade, Marie-Louise von Franz, Wolfgang Giegerich, James Hillman, Gerald Holton, Toshihiko Izutsu, Aniela Jaffé, Karl Kerényi, John Layard, Louis Massignon, David Miller, Erich Neumann, Herbert Pietschmann, Manfred Porkert, Adolf Portmann, Ira Progoff, Herbert Read, Shmuel Sambursky, Gershom Scholem, Erwin Schrödinger, Jean Servier, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Paul Tillich, Giuseppe Tucci, Hermann Weyl, Hellmut Wilhelm, Heinrich Zimmer and Victor Zuckerkandl.

For an exhaustive source of the contributions presented at Eranos, see the the *Eranos Jahrbücher/Eranos Yearbooks* (volumes 1-1933 to 13-1945 with articles in German; 14-1946 to 57-1988 with articles in English, French and German; while from 58-1989 on all articles are in English). The *Eranos Yearbooks* are available from Daimon Verlag, Hauptstrasse 85, CH-8840 Einsiedeln, fax +41 55 4122231, and in the USA from Spring Publishers, 299 E. Quassett Road, Woodstock, CT 06281, USA, fax +1 860 9743195.

<sup>41</sup> Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po Hu T'ung, The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1949 and 1952

<sup>42</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 2, Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 281

<sup>43</sup> *Shuo Gua*, 2