

Introduction

The *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing*) or *Changes of the Zhou* (*Zhouyi*) was originally a divination manual, which later gradually acquired the status of a book of wisdom. It consists of sixty-four hexagrams (*gua*) and related texts. The hexagrams, formed by combinations of two trigrams (also *gua*), are composed of six lines (*yan*) arranged one atop the other in vertical sequence and read from bottom to top. Each line is either solid (yang —) or broken (yin --). For example, Hexagram 59, *Huan* (Dispersion), is represented with the hexagram \equiv : First Yin, Second Yang, Third Yin, Fourth Yin, Fifth Yang, Top Yang—the bottom trigram being *Kan* \equiv and the top trigram being *Sun* \equiv . The combinations are determined by the numerical manipulation of divining sticks, originally yarrow stalks (*Achillea millefolium*, also known as *miffoi*) or, later, by the casting of coins. In the translation, each hexagram graph or schema appears at the head of the section devoted to the particular hexagram, immediately below the hexagram number.

It is likely that, by the time the *Changes* was put together as a coherent text in the ninth century B.C., hexagram divination had already changed from a method of consulting and influencing gods, spirits, and ancestors—the “powerful dead”—to a method of penetrating moments of the cosmic order to learn how the Way or Dao is configured and what direction it takes at such moments and to determine what one’s own place is and should be in the scheme of things. By doing so, one could avert wrong decisions, avoid failure, and escape misfortune and, on the other hand, make right decisions, achieve success, and garner good fortune. What exactly the Dao was in the thought of traditional China—at different times and with different thinkers—is a com-

plex question. It was generally held throughout traditional Chinese society that Heaven was good and that human beings lived in a morally good universe—however it operated. Beyond that, it can only be said that a spectrum of opinion existed, at one end of which, the Dao—especially when it was understood as the manifestation of the will of Heaven—was seen as an unconscious and impersonal cosmic order that operated purely mechanistically, and, at the other, as something with a consciousness that heeded the plights of both humankind as a whole and the individual in particular and could answer collective and individual pleas for help and comfort. Although intellectual, elite culture tended to hold to the former view and popular culture favored the latter, much ambivalence concerning this issue can be found in the writings of many a sophisticated thinker.

Each hexagram is accompanied by a hexagram name (guanming), a hexagram statement (guaci) or “judgment” (nan), and line statements (yaoci) for each of the six lines. The line statements have a sequential or associational organization based on the general topic given in the Judgment, each states a specific, differentiated instance or variation of the topic, which in complete line statements (many statements seem to be fragments) is followed by a charge or injunction that one should take some action or refrain from it and a final determination (“misfortune,” “good fortune,” etc.).

The hexagrams, hexagram statements or Judgments, and line statements are the oldest parts of the *Changes*. The names and statements probably date from the ninth century B.C.—the hexagrams themselves may be much older—and constitute the first layer in what appears to be a three-layered text. The second layer consists of another two parts: commentary on the Judgments called Tuanzhan and commentary on the abstract meanings or “Images” (xiang) of the Judgments and the line statements called Xiangzhan. The Judgments have “Great Images” (Daxiang)—the abstract meanings of hexagrams as whole entities—and the line statements have “Little Images” (Xiaoxiang)—the abstract meanings of individual lines.

The traditional format of the *Changes* divides the Tuanzhan and the Xiangzhan each into two sections; together, they form the first four of the so-called Ten Wings (Shiyi) of the exegetical material included in the *Classic of Changes*. All Ten Wings are traditionally attributed to Confucius (551–479 B.C.); however,

individual Wings actually date from different periods, with some predating his time while others date from as late as the third century B.C. Only the Commentaries on the Judgments and Commentaries on the Images, which for the most part seem to date from the sixth or fifth century B.C., appear to have been the direct product of Confucius’s school, if not the work of Confucius himself. The remaining Ten Wings consist of later materials, which may contain some reworking of earlier writings—even from before Confucius’s time. These constitute the third layer of the *Changes*.

The fifth of the Ten Wings comprises two fragments of an apparently lost commentary on the hexagrams as a whole called the *Wuyuan* (Commentary on the Words of the Text). Only those parts attached to the first two hexagrams—*Qian* (Pure Yang) and *Kun* (Pure Yin)—survived into the period of textual redaction, which began with the early Han era in the third century B.C. The Commentary on the Words of the Text actually seems to be a borderline text that contains elements of both the second and the third layers. It deals with the philosophical and ethical implications of the Judgments, line statements, and images—all very much in a Confucian vein.

The sixth and seventh Wings are formed by the two sections of the so-called Commentary on the Appended Phrases (*Xici zhuan*) or Great Commentary (*Daxiuan*). This commentary seems to consist of fragments of two different texts, one a general essay or group of essays dealing with the nature and meaning of the *Changes* in general and the other a collection of specific remarks about the Judgments and line statements of individual hexagrams (not all are discussed).

The eighth of the Ten Wings, Explaining the Trigrams (*Shiwo gua*), consists of remarks on the nature and meaning of the eight trigrams (*bagua*), the permutations of which form the sixty-four hexagrams. Much of this is couched in terms of yin-yang dualism and the theory of the *wuxing* (five elements) and so probably dates from the early Han era (third century B.C.). It is among the latest of the exegetical materials included in the *Changes*.

The ninth Wing is Providing the Sequence of the Hexagrams (*Xugua*), a collection of remarks on each of the hexagrams that attempts to justify their order in terms of various etymological and rational considerations—often extremely farfetched. This also seems to be quite late material.

Introduction

The tenth Wing, the Hexagrams in Irregular Order (*Zagwa*), is a collection of brief remarks that attempts to define the meanings of individual hexagrams, often in terms of contrasting pairs—another late addition to the text of the *Classic of Changes*.

Traditionally, the hexagrams are thought to have been developed by King Wen of the Zhou (reigned 1171–1122 B.C.) out of the eight trigrams invented by the legendary culture hero and sage Fu Xi of remotest antiquity. King Wen is also supposed to have composed the Judgments. The line statements are attributed to the Duke of Zhou (died 1094 B.C.). However, the assertion that historically identifiable sages are responsible for the origins of the hexagrams and the composition of the first layer of the material in the *Classic of Changes* has been questioned throughout the twentieth century, both in China and abroad, and more recent advances in archaeology, paleography, and textual studies, which compare the earliest textual layer of the *Changes* with roughly contemporary inscriptions on bone, shell, metal, and stone, as well as with other ancient writings that exhibit similar syntax and vocabulary, have thoroughly discredited the myth of its sagely authorship. Modern scholarship has also discovered that the original meaning of the Judgments and line statements—as they were composed sometime probably during the two or three centuries preceding their compilation and final editing during the ninth century B.C.—is radically different from what the earliest layer of exegesis took it to be and that it often has very little to do with the values and ideals of Confucian morality and ethics. Either the writers of the *Tuanzhuan* (Commentary on the Judgments) and the *Xiangzhuan* (Commentary on the Images) were ignorant of this original meaning—concerned largely with the mechanics of divination and (often) its amoral consequences—or they knowingly suppressed it in order to replace it with a Confucian (or proto-Confucian) reading. However, with this first layer of exegesis, the collection of texts, which eventually developed into the *Classic of Changes* as we know it, was given a Confucian slant that shaped all subsequent interpretation—right up to modern times. This largely Confucian reading required a radical revision of syntax and the meaning of individual words—even the way the texts are divided into phrases and clauses. Therefore the original meaning of the earliest parts of the *Changes* is not represented in the commentary tradition—except perhaps, distantly, in some

Introduction

Qing dynasty (1644–1911) philological approaches to the *Classic of Changes*—and thus plays no part in this translation, either of the *Classic of Changes* itself or of the Wang Bi commentary.²

The Translation

This work consists of an integral translation of Wang Bi's (226–249) *Zhouyi zhu* (Commentary on the *Changes of the Zhou*), including Wang's interpretations of the sixty-four hexagrams (Judgments, line statements, Commentary on the Judgments, Commentary on the Images, and—for the first two hexagrams—the Commentary on the Words of the Text) and his treatise on the *Changes*, the *Zhouyi lueji* (General Remarks on the *Changes of the Zhou*). The work also contains the commentaries of Wang's latter-day disciple, Han Kangbo (d. ca. 385), on those parts of the *Changes* not commented on by Wang himself: the *Xizi zhuan* (Commentary on the Appended Phrases), the *Xigua* (Providing the Sequence of the Hexagrams), the *Zagwa* (The Hexagrams in Irregular Order), and the *Shao gua* (Explaining the Trigrams). Han was not an original thinker, but his remarks consistently seem to reflect Wang's approach, and so, while in no way as vital and interesting as Wang's own commentary, they probably are reasonably close to the kinds of things Wang himself might have said if he had chosen to comment on these parts of the *Classic of Changes*.

All translations are based on texts included in Lou Yulie, ed., *Wang Bi yijian shi* (Critical edition of the works of Wang Bi with explanatory notes), 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980). Some passages in Wang Bi's commentary are dense, cryptic, and difficult to understand. Also, Wang did not comment on a few passages in the *Changes*, and it is unclear how he might have read particular phrases and sentences. Where I was uncertain or Wang was silent, I referred to the commentary on the *Changes* written by Kong Yingda (574–648), the *Zhouyi zhengyi* (Correct meaning of the *Changes of the Zhou*), largely a subcommentary to Wang's *Zhouyi zhu* (which is also included in the *Zhouyi zhengyi* in its entirety). Kong's commentary is often wordy and redundant, but he seems to have tried to read the *Changes* as he understood Wang to have read it, so his remarks are often the only guide to understanding the more cryptic passages in Wang's commentary and how Wang might have read

passages in the text on which he did not actually comment. References to and translated excerpts from Kong's *Zhouyi zhenyi* are included in endnotes, along with other explanatory materials. I have used the text of the *Zhouyi zhenyi* that is contained in the critical edition prepared by Ruan Yuan (1764–1849) of the *Shiyanjing zhushu* (Commentaries and subcommentaries on the thirteen classics) (1815; reprint, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1975).

As this translation of the *Classic of Changes* is based exclusively on the Wang Bi/Han Kangbo commentary and the subcommentary of Kong Yingda, it is significantly different in many places from other translations, which for the most part are principally derived directly or indirectly from some combination of the commentaries of the Neo-Confucians Cheng Yi (1033–1107) and Zhu Xi (1130–1200). The most important of these are James Legge, *The Yi King's or, Book of Changes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882); Richard Wilhelm, *I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1924), translated into English by Cary F. Baynes as *The I Ching or Book of Changes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950); and *I Ching: The Book of Changes* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), translated by John Blofeld. Except for works that attempt to reconstruct the so-called original meaning of *Zhouyi* as a western Zhou document,² most modern editions of the classic published in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, which often include translations or paraphrases into modern Chinese, also closely follow the commentaries of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi. Modern Japanese and Korean studies and translations of the classic do much the same thing.

All this means that the contemporary reader of the *Changes*, regardless of the language in which it is read, will usually know it in some version largely shaped by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi. Therefore where my Wang Bi version differs significantly from the readings of Cheng and Zhu, I include appropriate references to and translated excerpts from their commentaries in the endnotes to the passages concerned so that the reader may compare the different readings. Cheng's commentary is called the *Yichuan Yiqhuan* (Yichuan's Commentary on the *Changes*) and Zhu's is called the *Zhouyi banyi* (Original Meaning of the *Changes of the Zhou*). Both these commentaries are included in Li Guangdi (1642–1718), editor, *Yuzuan Zhouyi zhenyong* (Compiled upon imperial order: Equitable judgments on interpretations of the

Changes of the Zhou) (1715; reprint, Taipei: Chengwen, 1975); all references to Cheng's and Zhu's commentaries are to this edition.

Wang Bi may be said to have written the first philosophical commentary on the *Changes*—that is, apart from those sections of the classic that are themselves commentaries. His approach synthesizes Confucian, Legalist, and Daoist views, with Confucian views predominant. His version of the *Changes* was extremely influential and became the orthodox interpretation during the course of the pre-Tang and Tang eras (fourth through tenth centuries A.D.) and was finally canonized in Kong Yingda's *Zhouyi zhenyi*. Although the commentaries of the later Neo-Confucians largely eclipsed Wang's interpretation, much of what he had to say was incorporated into what eventually became the official Neo-Confucian orthodox view of the *Changes*, and what they rejected also helped to shape that view. A comparison of Wang's commentary with those of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi reveals how carefully Cheng and Zhu must have read Wang's remarks and how his arguments tended to shape theirs, whether they agreed with him or not (the disagreements largely result from their rejection of what they perceived to be elements of Legalism and Daoism in Wang's thought). The synthetic Neo-Confucian version of the *Changes* that emerged after the thirteenth century would have been very different if there had been no Wang Bi commentary first.

A comparison of Wang's interpretation with those of Cheng and Zhu also helps to emancipate the *Changes* from the notion that it can only be understood and appreciated as a timeless book of wisdom that somehow came into existence and maintained itself outside history and that there is one perfect and unchanging meaning to be extracted from it, if we only knew how. The "book of wisdom" approach to the *Changes* in modern times is, of course, extremely prevalent, and, although we can credit it largely to the great popularity of the Wilhelm/Baynes version, which interprets the *Changes* in such terms and includes an enormously influential foreword by Carl Jung, it also derives from the fact that the *Changes* was canonized as one of the Confucian classics at the beginning of the tradition and that throughout the centuries commentators, Wang Bi among them, attempted to wrest from it some kind of perfect meaning that could serve its readers for all time.

In my view, however, there is no one single *Classic of Changes* but rather as many versions of it as there are different commentaries on it. The text of the classic is so dense and opaque in so many places that its meaning depends entirely on how any particular commentary interprets it. Some interpretations, especially those of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, have become standard and orthodox, but the authority they carry, it seems to me, was derived not from any so-called perfect reading of the text but from the fact that the Cheng-Zhu version of Neo-Confucianism became the cultural and intellectual orthodoxy of traditional China; thus their commentaries, including those on the *Changes*, had to be correct. My approach to the *Changes* is entirely different. The commentary of Wang Bi is the historical product of a certain time and place—as are those of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi or anyone else—a product that can tell us much about the development of Chinese intellectual thought during a particularly creative period of the tradition. It stands in great contrast to the later commentaries of the Song Neo-Confucians, the products of a different but equally creative age, and its presentation in the form of an integral English translation—with comparisons with the commentaries of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi—should, it is hoped, reveal how much variety and vitality traditional Chinese thought could achieve.

In preparing this translation, I have tried—as much as it is within my capabilities—to be true to the literal meaning of the texts involved and to re-create the original tone of discourse that pervades them. Thus there has been no attempt to modernize what is being said, no effort to avoid offending contemporary sensibilities and values shaped by democracy, egalitarianism, individualism, feminism, or any other movement that might affect the way we think, feel, and express ourselves. There is much in the way Wang Bi and the other commentators cited here approached the *Changes* that can offend contemporary values and sensibilities, for what they said was the product of a culture that took for granted certain things that now largely do not go unquestioned:

1. Human society is by nature hierarchical.
2. The state is the family writ large, and the family is the state in miniature.
3. Both state and family are by nature patriarchies.

4. The universe is dualistic by nature; everything in it has either a yin or a yang character and exhibits—or, more precisely should exhibit—either yin or yang behavior.
5. Human society—as a natural part of the universe—is also characterized by yin-yang dualism.

Superiors are yang, and subordinates are yin, and they should fill their respective roles accordingly. Yang is the hard and strong, the assertive, the authority, the initiator, the male; yin is the soft and yielding, the submissive, the one subject to authority, the follower, the female. Political roles are conceived analogously: rulers are like fathers, the ruled masses like children; the sovereign is to his minister as a husband is to his wife; a senior official is to his subordinate as an older brother is to a younger brother; a subordinate should be submissive and loyal—that is, exhibit “female” behavior, and so on. Such assumptions are readily apparent throughout the commentaries; any translation that attempts an accurate reconstruction of the original tone and meaning could not possibly ignore or suppress them. For instance, when choosing equivalents in English, the use of gender-neutral terms for such a patriarchal mode of discourse would be entirely out of place.

How then should one read this translation of a Chinese classic and its commentaries, rooted as they are in value-laden assumptions that many may find, if not alien and offensive, at least out of date and superfluous? The work is so rich in meaning that it should be read on several levels. To get at this richness, I suggest that the reader accept the historical reality of the text’s assumptions, let them inform a historical appreciation of traditional Chinese society, and then bracket or put them aside and allow the work to address the primary issues with which it is concerned: the interrelatedness of personal character and destiny; how position defines scope of action; how position and circumstances define appropriate modes of behavior; how the individual is always tied to others in a web of interconnected causes and effects; how one set of circumstances inevitably changes into another; and how change itself is the great constant—and flexible response to it the only key to happiness and success. There is a core of insights here concerning the structure of human relationships and individual behavior that can, I believe, speak to this and any other age—if we but allow it to do so.

Wang Bi

Wang Bi (226–249) lived at a time of great social and political uncertainty and military strife, marked by rebellion, usurpation, civil war, invasion, desperate economic conditions—all the elements that contribute to the precariousness of life. It was the beginning of that time of disunity in China between the great Han and Tang dynasties—initially, the period of the Three Kingdoms; later, the Six Dynasties Era or Southern and Northern Dynasties—a disunity that lasted nearly four centuries. Wang's own short lifetime coincided with the middle years of the Wei Kingdom (220–265), which had been founded on the chaos accompanying the disintegration of the Han dynasty. The Han general Cao Cao (155–220) usurped power in 220, and his eldest son, Cao Pi (187–226), became the first emperor of Wei.

During its existence, the Wei had to share the territory of the once-unified empire with two rivals, the later Han state in Sichuan, which occupied the southwest, and the state of Wu, which controlled the southeast. Even within its own polity, the Wei was far from secure. The imperial Cao family was quickly losing power to another clan, the Sima, which was packing both civil and military offices with its own members. The Sima, led by Sima Yi (179–251), eventually carried out its own usurpation of power in 249, the year of Wang's death. It held de facto state power, the Wei emperors mere puppets, until 265, when Sima Yan (236–290) became the first emperor of the Jin dynasty (265–420). Before this, from 240 to 249, the imperial clansman Cao Shuang dominated the government, and it was under him that Wang Bi served his stint at court. Sima Yi murdered Cao Shuang in 249 and ordered the execution of most of Cao's core-tire. As we see from a biography of Wang written by He Shao,⁴ Wang escaped execution, apparently not close enough to Cao and not a perceived political threat, only to die of disease later in the same year.

Wang Bi was not only in the middle of all this political and military turmoil, he was also right at the center of the major intellectual currents of the day, a fact that is immediately obvious from a reading of He Shao's biographical essay:

Wang Bi revealed his intelligence and wisdom even when still a child. By the time he was only about ten years of age, he had already developed a liking for the *Laoyi*

[*Daode jing*], which he understood thoroughly and could discuss with ease. His father was Wang Ye, a Secretarial Court Gentleman [*shangshu lang*]. At the time when Pei Hui was serving as Director of the Ministry of Personnel [*litu lang*],⁵ Wang Bi, who then had not yet been capped [i.e., had not yet reached the age of maturity at twenty *sui* (nineteen years)], went to pay him a visit. As soon as Pei saw him, he knew that this was an extraordinary person, so he asked him, "Nonbeing [*wu*] is, in truth, what the myriad things depend on for existence, yet the Sage [Confucius] was unwilling to talk about it, while Master Lao expounded upon it endlessly. Why is that?" Wang Bi replied, "The Sage embodied nonbeing, so he also knew that it could not be explained in words. Thus he did not talk about it. Master Lao, by contrast, operated on the level of being [*you*]. This is why he constantly discussed nonbeing; he had to, for what he said about it always fell short." Shortly after that he also came to the attention of Fu Jia.⁶

At this time, He Yan [190–249] was president of the Ministry of Personnel [*litu shangshu*], and he too thought Wang Bi most remarkable. Sighing in admiration, he said, "As Zhongni [Confucius] put it, 'Those born after us shall be held in awe.' It is with such a person as this that one can discuss the relationship between Heaven and Mankind!" During the Zhengshi era [240–249], the position of Director of the Chancellery [*huangmen shilang*] became vacant a succession of times, and He Yan had managed to fill it with Jia Chong [217–282], Pei Xiu [224–271], and Zhu Zheng; now he also proposed Wang Bi for that office. However, it was then that Ding Mi and He Yan were vying for power [within the Cao Shuang clique], and, when Ding recommended Wang Li of Gao District to Cao Shuang, Cao appointed him to that position, in consequence of which he made Wang Bi a Court Gentleman [*kaitang*]. When Wang Bi first took up his post and paid his ceremonial visit to Cao Shuang, he asked for a private interview. Cao dismissed his entourage, and Wang Bi discussed the Dao with him for an exceedingly long time, giving the impression that no other could equal him in explaining any aspect of it—so Cao jeered at him.

It was at this time that Cao Shuang monopolized political power at court and formed a clique whose members recommended one another for office. Wang Bi, unconventional and brilliant, did not concern himself with high office and reputation. Shortly afterward, when Wang Li suddenly died of illness, Cao Shuang appointed Wang Chen to take Wang Li's place, and Wang Bi failed to find acceptance with him. This made He Yan sigh with regret: Not only was Wang Bi now limited to superficial duties at court, even before that, it had not been his forte to accomplish anything of merit, a goal to which he paid less and less attention.

Liu Tao, a native of Huainan, was good at discussing the science of political strategies and alliances [*kongheng*], for which he had quite a reputation at the time, but on every occasion when he debated these matters with Wang Bi, he was always defeated by him. The talent with which he was endowed by Heaven made Wang Bi an outstanding figure, and what it allowed him to achieve, no one could ever seize from him.

By nature gentle and reasonable, Wang enjoyed parties and feasts, was well versed in the technical aspects of music, and excelled at pitching arrows into the pot.⁷ In his discussion of the Dao, he may not have been as good as He Yan was at forcing language to yield up meaning, but, in his handling of the natural [*ziran*], his unique insights often excelled anything He Yan could come up with. To some extent, he used the advantages with which he was blessed to make fun of other people, so he often incurred the enmity of the scholars and officials of his day. Wang Bi was, however, good friends with Zhong Hui,⁸ who was an established expert in disputation, thanks to his well-trained mental discipline, but he was always vanquished by Wang's high-flying élan.

It was He Yan's opinion that the sage is free of pleasure, anger, sadness, or happiness, and his discussion of this issue was meticulously argued. People such as Zhong Hui transmitted what he had to say, but Wang Bi took a different position from them and thought that what makes the sage superior to people in general is his intelligence [*shenming*] and what makes him the same as people in gen-

eral is his having the five emotions [happiness, anger, sadness, pleasure, and desire]. It is because his intelligence is superior that he can embody gentleness and amiability and, in so doing, identify with nonbeing. It is because he is the same as other people in having the five emotions that he is unable to respond to things free from either sadness or pleasure. Nevertheless, the emotions of the sage are such that he may respond to things but without becoming attached to them. Nowadays, because the sage is considered free of such attachment, one immediately thinks it can be said that he no longer responds to things. How very often this error occurs!

When Wang Bi wrote his commentary to the *Changes*, Xun Rong, a native of Yingchuan, found fault with Wang's *Deyuan yi* [Meaning of the great expansion],⁹ to which Wang made a general reply, drafting a note that teased him:

Even though one may have intelligence sufficient to delve into the most profound and subtle things, such a person will still be unable to distance himself from the nature he has thanks to his natural endowment [*ziran zhi xing*]. Whatever capacity Master Yan¹⁰ had, it was something already realized beforehand in Confucius, yet when Confucius met him, he could not but feel pleasure and, when Confucius buried him, he could not but feel sadness. Moreover, we often belittle this Confucius, considering that he was someone who never succeeded at pursuing principle [*li*] via the path of the emotions [*qing*]. But nowadays we have come to realize that it is impossible to strip away the natural. Your capacity, sir, is already fixed within your breast, yet here we are parted only about half a month or so, and you feel the pain of separation as much as all that! Thus we know, when we compare Confucius to Master Yan, that he could not have surpassed him by very much!

Wang Bi wrote a commentary to the *Laoyi*, for which he provided a general introduction [*shilu*] marked by clear reasoning and systematic organization. He also wrote a *Dao luelun* [General discussion of the Dao] and a commentary to the *Changes*, both of which frequently exhibit lofty and beautiful language.¹¹ Wang Ji [ca. 240–ca. 285] of Taiyuan was prone to disparage the *Laoyi* and the *Zhuangzi*, yet he once said, "When I saw Wang Bi's com-

mentary to the *Laoyi*, there was much that I became enlightened about!"

However, Wang Bi was shallow in his personal behavior and obtuse concerning how others felt. At first, he was good friends with Wang Li and Xun Rong, yet when Wang Li stole his chance to be Director of the Chancellery, he came to hate him, and he did not manage to finish up with Xun Rong on good terms either.

In the tenth year of the Zhengshi era [249], Cao Shuang was deposed, in consequence of which Wang Bi was dismissed from service at court. In the autumn of that year he fell prey to a pestilence and died, then twenty-three years of age. He had no son, so his line stopped with him. Concerning his death, when Prince Jing of the Jin dynasty [the posthumous title of Sima Shi (208–255)] heard of it, he sighed and moaned over it for days on end; regret at his passing was felt as keenly as this by those of the intelligentsia!

Wang is commonly referred to, because of his famous commentary on the *Laoyi* and other discussions of the Dao, as a "Neo-Daoist" thinker, an adherent of the so-called *xuanxue* (studies of the mysterious) that so characterized intellectual thought during the Wei-Jin era, when so many sought to penetrate the realm of spontaneous creation and uncover the mysterious constants that ruled both the natural and human worlds. However, as we see from He Shao's biography, this does not appear entirely accurate. Whereas Wang certainly contributed to the development of the *xuanxue* tradition in a variety of ways, it is also readily apparent that he had an intense interest and commitment to Confucian values and principles. Note that he seems to have regarded Confucius, at least at times, as superior to Laozi, as Confucius had "embodied nonbeing" and Master Lao had not. By "nonbeing" (*wu*), Wang seems to have meant the undifferentiated unity of things ontologically prior to their phenomenal existence, the permanent—indescribable and unnameable—reality underlying the "being" (*you*) of the phenomenal universe.¹² It requires a sage—Confucius, for example—to achieve a state of mind or spirit that allows the recovery of that sense of unity in the here and now—to obtain mystic insight into the equality of all things. If Wang had written only or primarily about such things, we could place him simply in the Neo-Daoist camp, but

he also had a great deal to say about the real sociopolitical world of statecraft and military strategy, of personal and public ethics and morality—all of which suggests that he was a multifaceted thinker about whom we should keep an open mind. Most germane to our purposes here, we should note that whereas his commentary to the *Changes* at times refer to nonbeing and other Daoist concepts—especially when he attempts to explain how and why change itself occurs—the text as a whole focuses on the phenomenon of human existence and is in the main a Confucian statement.

Wang Bi's Approach to the Changes of the Zhou

The best introduction to Wang's approach is his own *Zhouyi lueli* (General Remarks on the *Changes of the Zhou*), and anyone who consults his commentary is advised to read this essay first, for without a basic understanding of how Wang himself interpreted the classic, much of what he says in the commentary will not be immediately accessible. I shall attempt to summarize its main points here.

In the first section, Clarifying the Judgments, Wang asserts that each hexagram is a unified entity and that its overall meaning or "controlling principle" is expressed in its name, which then is amplified in the hexagram Judgment. Moreover, the controlling principle usually resides in the master or ruler of the hexagram, one line that is sovereign over all the others. Rulership differs from hexagram to hexagram, but we can know what kind of rulership is involved by referring to the Judgments. He also notes that some hexagrams are exceptions to this general rule, as their meaning derives from the relationship between the constituent trigrams.

The next section, Clarifying How the Lines Are Commensurate with Change, Wang states a basic principle: change occurs because of the interaction between the innate tendency of things and their counterendencies to behave in ways opposed to their natures. "Things" include individual human beings, and the lines of a hexagram represent—either directly or through analogy—different kinds of people in different positions and different situations. In fact, Wang often describes the action and interaction of the lines as if they were people all involved in some

particular set of circumstances. Some lines respond to each other and resonate together—signifying harmonious relationships—and some lines repel and clash—signifying opposition and divergence of interests—and this resonance or clash produces movement and change. By understanding this principle, one can know the innate tendencies of things—“how things are going”—and, by adjusting one’s behavior accordingly, success can be had.

The third section, *Clarifying How the Hexagrams Correspond to Change and Make the Lines Commensurate with It*, explains how certain hexagrams signify moments of either obstruction or facility and thus serve as indicators that one should either refrain from action or engage in it. It is also here that Wang sets out his scheme of yin and yang lines, yin and yang positions, congruent and incongruent relationships between pairs of lines, and the mechanics of resonance and discord. Yin lines are soft and weak; yang lines are hard and strong. The positions of a hexagram are calculated from bottom to top. The odd number places—first (bottom), third, and fifth—are strong yang positions, and the even number places—second, fourth, and sixth (top)—are weak yin positions.¹³ Yin and yang lines form resonant pairs; yin and yin or yang and yang lines form discordant pairs: the unlike attract; the like repel. Proper resonant relationships can take place between lines of the lower and upper trigrams—one with four, two with five, three with six—but each must pair with its opposite: yin with yang or yang with yin. Secondary harmonious relationships can also occur between contiguous lines when “yang rides atop yin” or “yin carries yang” but never when the reverse occurs, for this is an unnatural, discordant relationship—as, for example, when a superior supports or “carries” his subordinate. The sixty-four combinations of yin and yang lines and yin and yang positions schematically represent all the major kinds of situations found in life. One must know how to cast the hexagrams and how to understand the texts of the *Changes*, for if one can determine which situation prevails at any given moment, what one’s place is in that moment and situation, and how one relates to the other major players involved, as Wang puts it, “change will yield its all.”

The fourth section, *Clarifying the Images*, deals with the images formed by the hexagrams, expressed by the Judgments and line statements and amplified by the “Great Images” and

“Little Images” commentaries. Here Wang argues that the images of the *Changes* should be understood as vehicles of abstract meaning and not be taken literally or as symbolic representations of numbers. In doing so, he breaks completely with the earlier Han era *xiangshu* (image and number) approach to the *Changes*, in which interpreters combined and recombined standardized images, using various arcane mathematical operations, to generate new trigrams and hexagram relationships out of original hexagrams. By freeing the *Changes* from such calculations and from confusion with cosmological and calendrical considerations, Wang Bi allowed it, aided by his commentary, to become a literary text rich in metaphysical, political, and personal significance. He, more than anyone else in the commentary tradition, made it into the classic of philosophy that so attracted the attention of the Song era (960–1279) Neo-Confucians and continues to this day to fascinate readers in both East and West.¹⁴

The fifth section, *Considering the Line Positions*, reiterates and expands on things said in the third section. As first (bottom) and sixth (top) lines are at the beginning and end points, respectively, of hexagrams (and thus signify the beginning and ending of the situation involved), they are at the junctures of what precedes and what follows a given situation, and so “neither of these positions has a constant status.” The other four line positions are either yang and “noble” (three and five) or yin and “humble” (two and four). Yang lines “should” be in yang positions, and yin lines “should” be in yin positions, for this results in hexagrams that generally indicate facility and harmony. Lines “out of position” (yin in yang positions, yang in yin positions) result in hexagrams that generally indicate obstruction and disharmony.

The sixth section, entitled simply *General Remarks, Part Two*, and the seventh section, *Curiosy Remarks on Some Hexagrams*, expand on things said in earlier sections and illustrate the principles and issues raised by reference to specific hexagrams.

One principle of understanding the *Changes*, which is often cited in Wang’s commentary but is not discussed in his *General Remarks*, is the special role of the middle positions in trigrams—positions two and five. These middle positions indicate “centrality” and “the Mean” (*zhong*)—the territory of proper and balanced behavior and action. The middle position in the lower trigram is a yin position (two), and in the upper trigram it is a

yang position (five), so, very often, regardless of other considerations, the line in the fifth position—whether yin or yang—turns out to be the ruler of the hexagram as a whole, for it is the “most noble” place, the “exalted position.”

Another assumption underlying Wang’s approach to the *Changes* is, of course, that the casting of hexagrams is an absolutely sure and accurate method of determining the character of moments of time. This is alluded to throughout his General Remarks and in many places in the commentary, but it is an issue that he never goes into in any detail—he probably did not think it was necessary, since he could not have conceived of anyone challenging its validity. This is true of all traditional commentators on the *Changes*: the way the yarrow stalks or coins fall—the particular configuration that results—is indicative of the shape of that particular moment. This supposes that everything that occurs in a given moment is interrelated and that all such events somehow share in the same basic character. In other words, as far as the *Changes* is concerned, the casting of stalks or coins, when properly done, is the key indicator of the shape of moments of time—which restates, in very simple terms, the way C. G. Jung explained how the casting of hexagrams is supposed to “work.”¹⁵ Jung states that his explanation, based on his theory of synchronicity, “never entered a Chinese mind” and that the Chinese instead thought that it was “spiritual agencies” (*shen*) that “make the yarrow stalks give a meaningful answer.” I do not think this was always necessarily so, for it brings us back to a consideration of whether people in the Chinese tradition, especially those of Wang’s own day, thought Heaven operated impersonally and objectively or consciously and in sympathy with humankind. Wang himself, from various things said in the commentary and in the General Remarks, seems to have been ambivalent about this—as were so many before and after him. My general impression of what he may have believed is that the Dao for him was largely impersonal; it had to be because it operated on such a grand scale. Whether or not he thought gods or other “spiritual agencies” had anything to do with how the yarrow stalks behaved is an impossible question to answer with any certainty. My impression is that he did not think so and would have said instead, if he had been asked, something to the effect that the yarrow stalks manifested the workings of the Dao.

How to Cast a Hexagram

THE YARROW STALK METHOD

Various methods of yarrow (milkfoil) stalk (*Achillea millefolium*) divination had been developed since the Han era—all apparently based on the brief description provided in section nine of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One, and commented upon by Wang Bi and Han Kangbo. The reasons for various steps in the process are given there.¹⁶ Exrant written versions of these methods were critiqued in the twelfth century by Zhu Xi, who then wrote his own account of what he thought the correct method should be.¹⁷ Zhu’s composite or reformed method became the standard way of yarrow stalk divination for the rest of the traditional era and is still the one most generally used today.

The casting of a hexagram requires fifty stalks, manipulated in four stages or operations. These four operations are repeated three times to form a line (one operation set), and, since there are six lines, six operation sets are required for the whole process. However, before these operations begin, one stalk is set aside, which leaves forty-nine.

To complete the first set:

OPERATION ONE: Take up the forty-nine stalks, and divide them randomly into two bunches, placing them down one beside the other.

OPERATION TWO: Take one stalk from the right-hand bunch, and place it between the ring finger and little finger of the left hand.

OPERATION THREE: Grasp the left-hand bunch in the left hand, and, with the right hand, take bundles of four stalks from it until four or fewer stalks remain. Set this remainder aside. Then count off the stalks from the right-hand bunch by fours until four or fewer stalks remain, and set this remainder aside as well.

OPERATION FOUR: Place the remainder from the left-hand bunch between the ring finger and the middle finger and the remainder from the right-hand bunch between the middle finger and the index finger of the left hand. The sum of all the stalks now held in the left hand is either 9 or 5 (either 1 + 4 + 4, or 1 + 3 + 1, or 1 + 2 + 2, or 1 + 1 + 3). In this first set, the first stalk—held between the

ring finger and little finger—is disregarded in counting up the stalks, so the sum is adjusted to either 8 or 4. The result 4 is a single unit and has the numerical value of 3. The result 8 is a double unit and has the numerical value of 2. Therefore if the sum of the first counting is 9, it counts as 2, and if the sum is 5, it counts as 3.

This completes the first set, and the stalks that make up the sum are now set aside.

The second and third sets are identical, the third being performed with the stalks left over after the second set has been completed:

OPERATION ONE: Take up the remaining stalks, and randomly divide them into two bunches, placing the bunches next to each other.

OPERATION TWO: Take one stalk from the right-hand bunch, and place it between the ring finger and little finger of the left hand.

OPERATION THREE: Grasp the left-hand bunch in the left hand, and, with the right hand, take bundles of four stalks from it, until four or fewer stalks remain. Set this remainder aside. Then count off the stalks from the right-hand bunch by fours, until four or fewer remain, and set this remainder aside as well.

OPERATION FOUR: Place the remainder from the left-hand bunch between the ring finger and the middle finger and the remainder from the right-hand bunch between the middle finger and the index finger of the left hand. This time, the sum of the stalks is either 8 or 4 (either $1 + 4 + 3$, or $1 + 3 + 4$, or $1 + 1 + 2$, or $1 + 2 + 1$); again, an 8 has the value of 2, and a 4 has the value of 3.

It is from the sum of the three values that result from the three sets of operations that a line is formed. If the first set results in a 5 (which becomes a 4, with a value of 3) and the second and third sets each result in a 4 (value 3), the sum value is 9, which defines an "old" yang line—one that is about to change into a yin line and so warrants separate consideration when the hexagram is interpreted. If the first set results in a 9 (which becomes an 8, with a value of 2) and the second and third sets each result in an 8 (value 2), the sum value is 6, which defines an

"old" yin line—one that is about to change into a yang line and, again, warrants separate consideration when the hexagram is interpreted.¹⁸ The other possible sum values arrived at by adding the results of the three sets will either be 7 or 8. Sevens result from the following combinations: 9 (i.e., 8, value 2) + 8 (value 2) + 4 (value 3); 5 (i.e., 4, value 3) + 8 (value 2) + 8 (value 2); 9 (i.e., 8, value 2) + 4 (value 3) + 8 (value 2). Eights result from these combinations: 9 (i.e., 8, value 2) + 4 (value 3) + 4 (value 3); 5 (i.e., 4, value 3) + 4 (value 3) + 8 (value 2); 5 (i.e., 4, value 3) + 8 (value 2) + 4 (value 3). A 7 is a "young" yang line, and an 8 is a "young" yin line. Both these are "at rest" and not about to change, thus they are disregarded when the individual lines of a hexagram are interpreted. One repeats this procedure six times (6×3 sets) to form a hexagram, working from the first line at the bottom to the sixth line at the top.

When a hexagram consists entirely of "new" lines, one should only consult the Judgment, the Commentary on the Judgments, and the Commentary on the Images. However, if there are one or more "old" lines in the hexagram, one should consult the Line Statements and the Commentary on the Images for such lines. Also, one must consider the "new" hexagram that results from the movement or change of the "old" lines and should consult its Judgment, Commentary on the Judgments, and Commentary on the Images. For example, in casting Hexagram 36, *Mingyi* (Suppression of the Light) ☱, if one were to come up with an "old" yang for the third line, it would mean that this line was about to change into a "new" yin—which would result in Hexagram 24, *Fu* (Return) ☱.

THE COIN METHOD

Given the great complexity of the yarrow stalk method, it was inevitable that some other simpler and easier method of casting a hexagram would develop. Of uncertain time and authorship, such a method did, in fact, come into being—the coin method. This may have had origins in popular culture, for it involves the manipulation of coin money—hardly something that one would expect to come out of an elite literati culture. Traditional Chinese coins were made of bronze, had holes in the middle (so they could be strung together), and an inscription on one side. The method is very simple. One takes up three coins and throws

them down together; each throw forms a hexagram line. The inscribed side of a coin is yin —, with a value of 2, and the reverse side is yang —, with a value of 3. If all three coins turn up yang, the sum value is 9, which defines an "old" yang line; if all are yin, the sum value is 6, which defines an "old" yin line. One yang and two yin result in a 7, a "young" yang line; two yin and one yang result in an 8, a "young" yin line. From this point on, one proceeds as for the yarrow stalk method.

NOTES

1. An alternate tradition has the Commentary on the Appended Phrases as the fifth and sixth of the Ten Wings. Richard Wilhelm's translation, for instance, follows this order.
2. The great pioneer in recovering the original meaning of the earliest layers of the *Changes* is Gao Heng, whose *Zhouyi guying jinqiu* (Modern annotations to the ancient classic, the *Changes of the Zhou*) was first published in 1934. Two recent works in English revise Gao's findings, summarize and develop more up-to-date Chinese scholarship, and make new advances of their own: Edward Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, and Richard Kunst, *The Original "Yijing": A Text, Phonetic Transcription, Translation, and Indexes, with Sample Classes*.
3. See note 2 above.
4. He Shao, a prolific essayist on the people and events of his own times, was the son of He Zeng (199–278), high official under both the Wei (220–265) and Western Jin (265–317) courts. This notice on Wang Bi is appended to the biography of Zhong Hui (225–264) in the *Wei zhi* (Chronicles of the Wei) section of the *Sanguozhi* (Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms; see Lou, *Wang Bi jizao*, 2: 639–644). Most of the information provided by He Shao's biography is also found in Liu Yiqing's (403–444) *Shishuo xinyu*, divided among a number of entries, often in passages worded differently from those in He Shao's biography of Wang. Liu's work also contains a few other details concerning Wang's life. See Richard Mather's translation of Liu's work, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, "Biographical Notices," p. 593, and index, p. 722.
5. Pei Hui was the father of Pei Kai (237–291), who also rose to high office. Hui gained a reputation for his expertise in the *Laoyi* and the *Classic of Changes*.
6. Fu Jia (205–255) was a member of He Yan's circle of friends dedicated to "pure conversation" (*qingtan*) but broke with He and joined the Sima party in 249, thus avoiding execution. He authored one of the essays in Zhong Hui's *Siben lun* (Treatise on the four basic relations between talent [cai] and human nature [xing]). See note 8 below.

7. *Tou hu* (pitch [arrows] into the pot) was an elegant game played at formal or ritual feasts.
8. Zhong Hui (225–264) was the editor of the *Siben lun* (Treatise on the four basic relations between talent [cai] and human nature [xing]) and a strict Confucian who was opposed to the subversive (as seen by the Sima forces) Daoist-based "pure conversation" (*qingtan*) circle. He was an ally of the Sima party at the Wei court, but when the Sima usurped power in 264, Zhong attempted a countercoup against his own troops, which had joined the revolt, and was killed.
9. Part of this work seems to have been incorporated into Han Kangbo's commentary on section nine of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One; see note 36 there.
10. Master Yan, Yanzi (also called Yan Hui or Yan Yuan), was supposedly the most virtuous of Confucius's disciples. See *Lunyu* (Analects) 11:1:8.
11. For a discussion of extant, reconstructed, and lost works of Wang Bi, see Lou, *Jianshi shunming* (Collation and annotation: An explanatory note), in *Wang Bi jizao*, pp. 11–17.
12. See Bodde, "Harmony and Conflict," in *Essays on Chinese Civilization*, pp. 275–276.
13. The first (bottom) and sixth (top) positions are problematic. Wang tells us in the fifth section of the General Remarks that there do not seem to be hard and fast rules for these positions—yin or yang lines might both be suitable for either.
14. See Smith et al., *Sung Dynasty Uses*, pp. 18–19 and 22–23.
15. See Jung's foreword to the Cary Baynes English version of Richard Wilhelm's translation, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, pp. xxii–xxv.
16. See note 36 of that section.
17. Smith et al., *Sung Dynasty Uses*, pp. 188–189.
18. I avoid the term *moving line* to designate "old" yin and yang lines that are about to change into their opposites, because this term is used a number of times elsewhere in the translation to refer to any hexagram line (*yaos*)—the attribute *moving* meaning "alive" or "animous." Cf. section ten in the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two. The Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the *Changes* does, however, use *moving line* to designate an "old" yin or yang line; see *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, pp. 722–723.
19. Derivation of a second "new" hexagram from the "old" yin and "old" yang lines of a first hexagram is not mentioned in Wang Bi's writings on the *Changes*, so the method described here may not have been part of how he approached the *Changes*. However, as this became the standard way of interpreting hexagrams from Zhu Xi's time on, I include it here. See Smith et al., *Sung Dynasty Uses*, pp. 176–177.

*General Remarks on the
Changes of the Zhou [Zhouyi I Ching],
by Wang Bi*

Clarifying the Judgments [Ming tuan]

What is a Judgment? It discusses the body or substance of a hexagram as a whole and clarifies what the controlling principle is from which it evolves.

The many cannot govern the many; that which governs the many is the most solitary [the One]. Activity cannot govern activity; that which controls all activity that occurs in the world, thanks to constancy, is the One.¹ Therefore for all the many to manage to exist, their controlling principle must reach back to the One, and for all activities to manage to function, their source cannot but be the One.

No thing ever behaves haphazardly but necessarily follows its own principle. To unite things, there is a fundamental regulator; to integrate them, there is a primordial generator. Therefore things are complex but not chaotic, multitudinous but not confused. This is why when the six lines of a hexagram intermingle, one can pick out one of them and use it to clarify what is happening; and as the hard ones and the soft ones supersede one another, one can establish which one is the master and use it to determine how all are ordered. This is why for mixed matters the calculation [*zhan*] of the virtues and the determination of the rights and wrongs involved could never be complete without the middle lines.² This is why if one examines things from the point of view of totality, even though things are multitudinous, one knows that it is possible to deal with them by holding

fast to the One, and if one views them from the point of view of the fundamental, even though the concepts involved are immense in number and scope, one knows that it is possible to cover them all with a single name. Thus when we use an armillary sphere to view the great [heavenly] movements, the actions of Heaven and Earth lose their capacity to amaze us, and if we keep to a single center point when viewing what is about to come to us, then things converging from the six directions lose their capacity to overwhelm us with their number. Therefore when we cite the name of a hexagram, in its meaning is found the controlling principle, and when we read the words of the Judgment, then we have got more than half the ideas involved. Now, although past and present differ and armies and states then and now appear dissimilar, the way these central principles function is such that nothing can ever stray far from them. Although kinds and gradations of things exist in infinite variety, there is a chief controlling principle that inheres in all of them. Of things we esteem in a Judgment, it is this that is the most significant.

The rare is what the many value; the one that is unique is the one the multitudes make their chief. If one hexagram has five positive lines and one negative, then we have the negative line be the master. If it is a matter of five negative lines and one positive line, then we have the positive line be the master. Now, what the negative seeks after is the positive, and what the positive seeks after is the negative. If the positive is represented by a single line, how could the five negative lines all together ever fail to return to it! And if the negative is represented by a single line, how could the five positive lines all together ever fail to follow it! Thus although a negative line may be humble, its becoming the master of a hexagram is due to the fact that it occupies the smallest number of positions. And then there are some hexagrams for which one may set aside the hexagram lines and take up instead the two constituent trigrams, for here the substance of the hexagrams involved does not evolve from individual lines.¹ Things are complex, but one does not worry about their being chaotic; they change, but one does not worry about their being confused. To tie things together, thus preserving the broad significance involved, and to bring forth the simple nature of things, thus being up to dealing with their multiplicity, there is indeed only the Judgment! To deal with the chaotic and yet manage to

avoid confusion and to handle change and yet manage not to drown in it, only it [the *Changes*], being the most profound and subtle device in the whole world, could ever be up to doing these things! Therefore if we view the Judgments in the light of this, the concepts involved should become clear.

Clarifying How the Lines Are Commensurate with Change [Ming yao tong bian]

What are the hexagram lines? They "address the states of change."² What is change? It is what is brought about by the interaction of the innate tendency of things and their counter-tendencies to spuriousness.³ The actions of this tendency to spuriousness are not to be sought in numbers [i.e., they are beyond count]. Thus when something that tends to coalescence would disperse or when something that tends to contraction would expand, this runs counter to the true substances involved. In form a thing might seem inclined to agitation yet wants to be still, or a material though soft still craves to be hard. Here, substance and its innate tendency are in opposition, and material and its inclination are in contradiction. Even the most meticulous reckoning cannot keep track of the number of such things, and even the most sage of intellects cannot establish standards for them, for change is something that laws cannot keep pace with, something that measurements cannot assess.⁴ Of course, to happen, these things need not be caused by something great! A leader of all the armed forces might be frightened by the etiquette of the court, and a merciless and mighty warrior might come to grief in the pleasures of wine and women.

Contiguous lines are not necessarily well disposed toward each other, and distant lines are not necessarily at odds. "Things with the same tonality resonate together," yet they do not have to have the same pitch. "Things with the same material force seek out one another," yet in material substance they do not have to be equivalent.⁵ That which summons the rain is the dragon.⁶ That which determines the *li* note [i.e., in a yin or minor key] is the *li* note [i.e., in a yang or major key]. Thus two women are beset by contrariness, but the hard and the soft unite to form one body. Drawn-out sighs on lofty heights are sure to fill distant valleys. If [troops] throw down their arms on dispersive ground,

even the six relations [i.e., closest relatives] will not be able to protect one another,¹⁰ but if they were to share the same boat to cross a river, what possible harm could happen to the men of Hu and Yue in spite of the treachery they feel for each other!¹¹ Thus if people recognized the feeling [or "innate tendency"¹²] involved, they would not grieve at contrariness and distance, and if they understood the inclination involved, they would not bring trouble upon themselves by trying to settle things through the force of arms.¹³ To be "able to delight hearts and minds,"¹⁴ to "be able to refine concerns,"¹⁵ to see how things in opposition still yield knowledge of their kinds, and to see how different things still yield knowledge of their continuity,¹⁶ is this possible for anyone who does not understand the hexagram lines! Therefore if one has goodness for the near, those far away will come to one;¹⁷ if one fixes the note *gong*, the note *shang* will respond to it; if one cultivates and nourishes those below, those in high positions [nobility, state officers] will submit, and when one gives to them [those in high positions], they from whom one takes [those below, the common folk] will be obedient.

And so lines that indicate true innate tendencies and lines that indicate spurious countertendencies react with each other; distant lines and contiguous lines pursue each other; lines that attract and lines that repel provoke each other; and lines that indicate contraction and lines that indicate expansion induce each other to action. One who perceives the innate tendency involved will be successful, but if he just goes after something abruptly, it will go against him. Therefore, by forming analogous models, they [the sages] captured the change and transformation involved,¹⁸ and "this means that only when one has developed his instruments will he have the capacity [for action]."¹⁹ They [the myriad things of existence] do not understand how it [change] is the master, but when it provides a beat for the dance, all under heaven follows; this is what appears in the innate tendency of things.¹⁸

This is why they [the hexagram lines] "perfectly [emulate] the transformations of Heaven and Earth and so [do] not transcend them . . . [follow] every twist and turn of the myriad things and so [deal] with them without omission . . . [and have] a thorough grasp of the Dao of day and night . . . and change is without substance."¹⁹ There are only one yin line and one yang line,

but they are inexhaustible. These [the lines] have to be the most facile [i.e., capable of the utmost change] things under Heaven, for what else could ever be up to this!

This is why the hexagrams are the means to preserve moments of time, and the lines are the means to indicate the change involved.

Clarifying How the Hexagrams Correspond to Change and Make the Lines Commensurate with It [Ming gua shi bian tong yao]

The hexagrams deal with moments of time, and the lines are concerned with the states of change that are appropriate to those times. Moments of time entail either obstruction or facility;²⁰ thus the application [of a given hexagram] is either a matter of action or of withdrawal. There are hexagrams that are concerned with growth [of the Dao], and those that are concerned with decrease [of the Dao], thus the texts for them either impart a sense of danger or impart a sense of ease.²¹ The constraint appropriate to one moment of time can undergo a reversal and turn into an occasion to exert oneself, but the good fortune of one moment of time can also undergo a reversal and turn into misfortune. Thus hexagrams form pairs by opposites, and the lines involved also all change accordingly. This is why there is no constant way with which application can comply, and there is no fixed track for affairs to follow. Whether to act or remain passive, whether to draw in or extend oneself, there is only change to indicate what is appropriate. Thus, once the hexagram is named, either good fortune or bad ensues, depending on the category to which it belongs. Once the moment of time is posited, one should either act or remain passive, responding to the type of application involved. One looks up its name in order to see whether the hexagram means good fortune or bad, and one cites what is said about the moment involved in order to see whether one should act or remain passive. Thus, from these things, it is apparent how change operates within the body of one hexagram.

Resonance provides an image of shared purpose, and the position taken provides an image of what it means for a line to be located there.²² *Carrying* and *riding* provide images of incongruity or congruity, and *distance* and *proximity* provide images of

danger or ease.³¹ The *inner* and the *outer* provide images of going forth or staying still, and the first line and the top line provide images of beginning and ending.³⁴ Thus the fact that, although distant, a line indicates that one can make a move is due to its having acquired a resonant partner,³⁵ and the fact that, although in danger, a line indicates that one can occupy a position is due to its having achieved the right moment to be there.³⁶ To be weak yet unafraid of the enemy is due to one acquiring a place where one can entrench oneself,³⁷ and the fact that, though anxious, one should not fear the rebel is due to managing to have someone to attach to for protection.³⁸ To be soft yet free from distress about carrying out judgments is due to acquiring the wherewithal to exercise control.³⁹ A line that though in the rear yet dares to get in the lead does so by resonating with the beginning line [of the upper trigram].⁴⁰ A line that abides quietly alone while the others wrangle has summed up what the end will be.⁴¹ Thus one's observation of the actions of change should be focused on the resonances between lines, and one's examination of safety and danger should be focused on the positions of the lines.⁴² Whether change operates congruently or incongruently is a function of how lines carry and ride on each other, and the clarification of whether one should leave or stay depends on the outer [upper] and inner [lower] trigrams.⁴³

Whether to distance oneself or draw near, whether to heed the ending or the beginning, in each case this depends on the opportunity involved.⁴⁴ To avoid danger, it is best to distance oneself, and to take advantage of the moment, it is most preferable to draw near.⁴⁵ *Bi* [Closeness, Hexagram 8 ䷆] and *Fu* [Return, Hexagram 24 ䷗] have the good involved at the first place. *Qian* [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1 ䷀] and *Zhuang* [i.e., *Daxiang*, Great Strength, Hexagram 34 ䷊] have the bad involved at the head [i.e., the top place]. *Mingyi* [Suppression of the Light, Hexagram 36 ䷄] has one strive for obscurity, and *Feng* [Abundance, Hexagram 55 ䷶] has one regard the growth of his glory to be best.⁴⁶ Good fortune and misfortune have their moments that one must not violate, and activity and repose have their appropriate occasions that one must not overreach. The taboo against violating the moment is such not because the transgression involves something great but because it misconstrues what the moment offers; here overreaching does not have to be in-

involved with anything profound, either. One might be tempted to make the world tremble and dispose of one's sovereign, but one must not fall into such danger. One might be tempted to humiliate one's wife and children and make a show of one's anger, but one must not let himself be so lax in behavior. Thus once one's rank is established as either high or low, one must not act contrary to his position, and once one encounters occasions where one should be anxious about remorse and regret, even small matters must not be treated lightly. If one observes the hexagram lines and ponders change, then change will yield its all.

Clarifying the Images [Ming xiang]

Images are the means to express ideas. Words [i.e., the texts] are the means to explain the images. To yield up ideas completely, there is nothing better than the images, and to yield up the meaning of the images, there is nothing better than words. The words are generated by the images, thus one can ponder the words and so observe what the images are. The images are generated by ideas, thus one can ponder the images and so observe what the ideas are. The ideas are yielded up completely by the images, and the images are made explicit by the words. Thus, since the words are the means to explain the images, once one gets the images, he forgets the words, and, since the images are the means to allow us to concentrate on the ideas, once one gets the ideas, he forgets the images. Similarly, "the rabbit snare exists for the sake of the rabbit; once one gets the rabbit, he forgets the snare. And the fish trap exists for the sake of fish; once one gets the fish, he forgets the trap."⁴⁷ If this is so, then the words are snares for the images, and the images are traps for the ideas.

Therefore someone who stays fixed on the words will not be one to get the images, and someone who stays fixed on the images will not be one to get the ideas. The images are generated by the ideas, but if one stays fixed on the images themselves, then what he stays fixed on will not be *images* as we mean them here. The words are generated by the images, but if one stays fixed on the words themselves, then what he stays fixed on will not be *words* as we mean them here. If this is so, then someone who forgets the images will be one to get the ideas, and someone

who forgets the words will be one to get the images. Getting the ideas is in fact a matter of forgetting the images, and getting the images is in fact a matter of forgetting the words. Thus, although the images were established in order to yield up ideas completely, as images they may be forgotten. Although the number of strokes were doubled⁴⁸ in order to yield up all the innate tendencies of things, as strokes they may be forgotten.

This is why anything that corresponds analogously to an idea can serve as its image, and any concept that fits with an idea can serve as corroboration of its nature. If the concept involved really has to do with dynamism, why must it only be presented in terms of the horse? And if the analogy used really has to do with compliance, why must it only be presented in terms of the cow? If its lines really do fit with the idea of compliance, why is it necessary that *Kun* [Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] represent only the cow; and if its concept really corresponds to the idea of dynamism, why is it necessary that *Qian* [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] represent only the horse? Yet there are some who have convicted *Qian* of horsiness. They made a legal case out of its texts and brought this accusation against its hexagram, and, in doing so, they may have come up with a horse, but *Qian* itself got lost in the process! And then this spurious doctrine spread everywhere, even to the extent that one cannot keep account of it! When the "overlapping trigrams" method proved inadequate, such people went on further to the "trigram change" method,⁴⁹ and when this "trigram change" method proved inadequate, they pushed on even further to the "five elements" method,⁴⁹ for once they lost sight of what the images originally were, they had to become more and more intricate and clever. Even though they sometimes might have come across something [concerning the images], they got absolutely nothing of the concepts. This is all due to the fact that by concentrating on the images one forgets about the ideas. If one were instead to forget about the images in order to seek the ideas they represent, the concepts involved would then become evident as a matter of course.

Considering the Line Positions [Bian wei]

Commentator's [Wang Bi's] note: The Commentary on the Images contains no statement to the effect that a first line or a top

line is either in correct position or out of position. Also, the Commentary on the Appended Phrases only discusses how third and fifth lines, and second and fourth lines "involve the same kind of merit but differ as to position,"⁴⁴ and it, too, never says anything about first and top lines. Why is this? The only thing we have to go on are the Commentary on the Words of the Text for *Qian* [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1 ䷀], Top Yang, which says "Although noble, he lacks a position" and [the Commentary on the Images for] *Xu* [Waiting, Hexagram 5 ䷛], Top Yin, which says "Although one is not in a proper position here." If we take the top position to be a yin position, then it cannot be said of *Xu*, Top Yin, that "one is not in a proper position here." If we take the top position to be a yang position, then it cannot be said of *Qian*, Top Yang, that "although noble, he lacks a position." Whether a yin or a yang line occupies this position, in both cases it is said of it that it is not in the right position. However, it is not said of first lines either that they "suit the position" or are "out of position." This being so, then lines in the first and top positions signify respectively the beginnings and endings of matters, things for which there are no definite yin and yang line positions. Thus when the first line of *Qian* contains the reference "submerged" and when the line past the fifth line is referred to as one that "lacks a position," these have never meant that, although located in a proper position, a line is still said to be "submerged" and that, although a top line is in a proper position, it is still said to "lack a position." I have looked at every hexagram in turn and discovered that all of them are similar in this way. That there are no definite yin and yang line positions for the first place and the top place should certainly be evident from this.

Positions are places ranked as either superior or inferior,⁴² abodes suitable for the capabilities with which one is endowed. Lines should fulfill the duties proper to their position and should behave in accordance with their superior or inferior rankings. Positions are either noble or humble, and lines are either yin or yang. A noble position is one where a yang line should locate itself, and a humble position is one to which a yin line should attach itself. Thus noble positions are considered yang positions, and humble positions are considered yin positions. If we exclude the first and top places when we discuss the status of the positions,

then the third place and the fifth place each occupy the uppermost position in their respective trigrams, so how indeed could we fail to call them yang positions? And since the second place and the fourth place each occupy the lowest position in their respective trigrams, how indeed could we fail to call them yin positions? The first position and the top position are the beginning and the ending of an entire hexagram and respectively represent what precedes and what follows a given situation. Therefore since neither of these positions has a constant status and since situations have no regular representation in either place, these positions are not to be designated as either yin or yang. Whereas there is a fixed order for noble and humble positions, there are no regular masters for the ending and the beginning positions. This explains why the Commentary on the Appended Phrases only discusses the general rules for determining positions by merit for the four middle lines and does not say anything about the first and the top lines being fixed positions in this way. However, since a situation cannot fail to have an ending and a beginning, so a hexagram cannot fail to have six lines. Although first and top places do not involve positions that are yin and yang by nature, they still are the places where hexagrams end and begin. If we discuss all this in general terms, then since where a line is located is called its position and since a hexagram has to have six lines to be complete, we cannot help but say of it: "The positions of the six lines form, each at its proper moment."⁴³

General Remarks, Part Two [Lueh xia]

Whenever a hexagram embodies all the four virtues, they succeed one another with precedence going in turn to the more prevalent, and this is why it [the order of them] is stated as "fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, constancy."⁴⁴ The hexagram that has constancy take precedence over prevalence is the one that starts with constancy.⁴⁵

All yin lines and all yang lines are entities that seek to form partnerships with the opposite kind. The fact that there are such lines that are contiguous but do not achieve partnership is due to the different goals toward which each line is directed. This is why any two lines, one yin and one yang, very often form con-

tiguous pairs but do not resonate together, so even if they are contiguous, they will not find each other. However, if they do resonate together, even if they are far apart, partnership will be achieved.⁴⁶

However, moments of time involve either danger or ease, and hexagrams involve either decrease or growth [of the Dao].⁴⁷ By practicing mutual cooperation, lines draw each other close; by practicing mutual avoidance, lines draw each other apart.⁴⁸ Thus sometimes there are instances that violate the general rule [that yin and yang lines seek to form partnerships with the other type]. However, if one examines such instances in the light of the kind of moment involved [one of danger or ease], it is possible to discover what the meaning is.

The Commentary on the Judgments always provides a general discussion of the hexagram as a whole. Each Commentary on the Images presents the meaning of an individual line. Thus, in *Li* [Reading, Hexagram 10], Third Yin is the ruler of the trigram *Dui* [Lake, Joy] and so in resonance with the trigram *Qian* [Heaven, Pure Yang]. The formation of the entire hexagram depends on this line. Thus the Commentary on the Judgments reports that, thanks to this resonance, although danger exists, yet prevalence will occur here. The Commentary on the Images, on the other hand, since it talks about the separate meaning of each of the six hexagram lines and explains how fortune or misfortune operates in it, here leaves aside the fact that Top Yang [of *Li*] is responsible for forming the entire hexagram and instead indicates the virtue of this particular line. Thus, since there is danger, one will not reap prevalence here but instead will be bitten.⁴⁹ In *Song* [Contention, Hexagram 6], Second Yang also has this same kind of meaning.⁵⁰

The Commentary on the Judgments always provides a comprehensive discussion of the hexagram as a whole. When an entire hexagram necessarily depends on a single line, which is the ruler of it, it indicates and explains what the quintessence of that line is and thus provides an overall understanding of the meaning of the entire hexagram. Hexagrams such as *Dagou* [Great Holdings, Hexagram 14] are of this type. When a hexagram as a whole does not depend on a single line, then it uses the concepts embodied in the two constituent trigrams to explain it. Hexagrams such as *Feng* [Abundance, Hexagram 5] are of this type.

Whenever "no blame" is stated, all such cases actually involve potential blame, but because one is able to maintain the way [of the noble man], one succeeds in achieving no blame.¹¹ Whenever "good fortune, no blame" occurs, blame is actually involved also, but because of good fortune, one manages to avoid it.¹² Whenever "blame, good fortune" occurs, this means that one will first avoid blame and that good fortune will follow as a result.¹³ Sometimes one is so situated that he can seize the opportunity moment. Here the fortunate one does not have to wait for his achievement to occur to remain untouched by blame, and this is how he reaps good fortune.¹⁴ Sometimes one has committed fault and brings it upon oneself, so there is no reason to resent the blame involved. This situation, too, is called "no blame." Thus *Yi* [Control, Hexagram 60], Third Yin, says: "As this one is in violation of Control, so he should wait, for there is no one else to blame." The Commentary on the Images says: "This one who violates Control should wait, for who else is there to blame for it?" This is exactly what is meant here.

Cursory Remarks on Some Hexagrams [Gua hui]

Zhun [Birth Throes, Hexagram 3 ䷁]: This hexagram consists of yin lines all seeking to pair up with the yang lines. *Zhun* signifies a world of troubles where the weak cannot take care of themselves, so they must rely on the strong. This is a time when the common folk long for a master. Thus the yin lines all first seek to pair up with the yang lines; without being beckoned, they go forth of their own accord. Although as horses they are "pulling at odds,"¹⁶ yet they still do not give up. Unsuccessful at finding a master, they have no one on whom to rely. The yang line in the first place of the hexagram is located at the head place, positioned right at the bottom. One here is in resonance with what the common folk are seeking, in accord with what they hope for. Thus such a one "wins over the people in large numbers."¹⁷

Meng [Juvenile Ignorance, Hexagram 4 ䷃]: This hexagram also consists of yin lines all seeking first to form partnership with the yang lines. Yin is dark, and yang is bright, so as the yin lines are suffering from Juvenile Ignorance, the yang lines are able to release them from it. Anyone who does not know seeks to ask someone who knows. The one who knows does not seek out

the asker, as the bright does not seek counsel from the dark. Thus "it is not I who seek the Juvenile Ignorant but the Juvenile Ignorant who seeks me."¹⁸ This is why when *Meng*, Third Yin, sings out first [i.e., would take the lead], it is in violation of the female principle. The fourth line is far from a yang line, so it suffers ignorance and feels remorse. The first line forms a pair with a yang line, which in consequence releases it from ignorance.

Li [Treading, Hexagram 10 ䷄]: The Hexagrams in Irregular Order says: "*Li* means 'not staying in one's position.'"¹⁹ I also say that Treading means propriety. Modesty is the controlling factor in propriety. For a yang line to occupy a yin position, this is modesty. Therefore, in this particular hexagram, we always consider a yang line occupying a yin position to be a fine thing.

Lin [Overseeing, Hexagram 19 ䷒]: This is a hexagram concerned with the growth of hardness. With the triumph of hardness, softness becomes dangerous. But since softness here has its own virtue, it always manages to avoid blame. Therefore, in this particular hexagram, although the yin lines are in the splendid positions, they commit no fault and incur no blame.

Guan [Viewing, Hexagram 20 ䷓]: In terms of its meaning, *Guan* tells us that what one sees should be something beautiful. Therefore to be near what is noble is estimable [i.e., so that one can "view" it better], but to be far from it is base.

Dagun [Major Superiority, Hexagram 28 ䷆]: This hexagram signifies a world on the verge of collapse. Both major and ancillary foists are weak, and the ridgepole has already begun to sag. However, to try to maintain things as they are would be both dangerous and no help at all; it is the path to misfortune. For a yang line to occupy a yin position is a sign of the utmost softness and yielding. Therefore it is a fine thing here that yang lines all occupy yin positions. The only way to handle decline and deal with danger lies in shared devotion to the same goal, in consequence of which the situation may be saved and repairs done. Thus, since a Fourth Yang is in resonance [with a First Yin], this is why "there will be regret if there are ulterior motives." Since the Second Yang is not in resonance, this is why here "nothing done here fails to be fitting."

Dun [Withdrawal, Hexagram 33 ䷇]: This signifies the gradual advance and growing strength of the petty man. Such trouble

resides in the lower trigram, but prevalence resides in the upper trigram. This hexagram is the opposite of *Lin* [Overseeing, Hexagram 19 ䷋]. In *Lin*, as the hard grows strong, the soft is placed in danger. In *Dun*, since the soft is growing stronger, the hard withdraws.

Dayu [Great Strength, Hexagram 34 ䷆]: It never happens that a person who violates modesty and exceeds the bounds of propriety is also able to perfect his strength. Therefore it is a fine thing here that yang lines all occupy yin positions. To have strength occupy a modest position will result in that strength becoming perfected, but to have strength occupy a position of strength will result in "butting] a hedge."⁹⁸

Mingyi [Suppression of the Light, Hexagram 36 ䷄]: The ruler of darkness here is located at Top Yin. First Yang is the farthest from it, and this is why it says: "this noble man on the move." The fifth line is the closest to it, yet adversity there cannot drown it. This is why [the Commentary on the Images for Fifth Yin] says: "The constancy of a viscount of Ji is such that his brilliance cannot be extinguished." The third line is located where the light is at its brightest [at the top of the bottom trigram *Li* (Cohesion, Fire)], the place from which is launched the expedition into the darkness [the upper trigram *Kun* (Earth, Pure Yin, i.e., the Dark)]. This is why it says: "On a southern hunt . . . he captures the great chief [Top Yin]."⁹⁹

Kui [Contrariety, Hexagram 38 ䷥]: This hexagram shows how in Contrariety there is yet accord. If one looks at this hexagram in terms of the tops of its two trigrams, its meaning becomes most apparent. When the trigrams are at their respective limits of Contrariety, they come together, and when they are at their respective limits of disparity, they find accord. Thus both first suffer the accusations of the other, but once they form an agreeable union, such suspicions vanish.

Feng [Abundance, Hexagram 5 ䷇]: This is a hexagram that is concerned with how to act guided by brightness. It is one that places value on the manifestation of light, the bursting forth of an all-encompassing yang principle. Therefore it is a fine thing that all the lines that occupy yang positions do not resonate with yin lines. Their unity lies in nothing other than their common hatred of the darkness. Small darkness is called a "screening," and big darkness is called a "curtaining." When darkness be-

comes severe, brightness is all gone, but when it is not yet all gone, it is then "dim." When brightness is all gone, the Pole Star appears, but since the brightness is still faint, its appearance is "dim." If one is without any brightness at all, he will lack the means to interact with the world, and if he but makes a "dim" appearance, he will be incapable of accomplishing anything great. If one loses his right arm, although his left arm is still there, how could it ever be enough for his needs? If one does nothing more than appear "dim" in the peak brightness of the day, how could such a person ever be worthy of appointment to office?

NOTES

1. This line is a paraphrase of a passage in section one of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two.
2. This sentence is almost an exact quotation from section nine of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two; see note 54 there.
3. Such hexagrams in particular include *Guinei* (Marrying Maiden), Hexagram 54, and *Feng* (Abundance), Hexagram 5, where the hexagram names and main concepts involved derive from the relationships between the constituent trigrams. See the remarks in the Commentary on the Judgments of these two hexagrams.
4. See section three of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One.
5. "The innate tendency of things and their counter-tendency to spuriousness" translates *qing wei*—that is, "things as they really are and their tendency to become what they by nature are not." *Qing wei* also seems to occur in this sense in section twelve of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One. However, Lou Yule interprets *qing wei* as a single concept equivalent to "selfish desire" (*qingyu*) or the "cunning and deceit of 'wisdom.'" In support, he cites Wang's commentary on *Laoti*, section 18. "Thus wisdom appears and so great falsehood (*wei*) arises," and Xing Shou's (Tang era 618–907) commentary on this passage in the *Zhouyi laizi* here: "What *qingwei* tends to is the multifarious designs of cunning and deceit." See *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 2: 598 n. 2. This alternate interpretation would result in a different translation: "It [change] is what desire and cunning produce."
6. Cf. section seven of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two: "The hard and the soft lines change one into the other, something for which it is impossible to make definitive laws, since they are doing nothing but keeping pace with change."
7. Xing Shou's commentary says: "In innate tendency resides clever

deceit. The way that change happens and contrariness occurs has nothing to do with large things. Although sage intellect and meticulous reckoning might try to fathom it, it defies comprehension, so how could it ever have anything to do with grand matters?" See Lou, *Wang Bi's I Ching*, 2: 199 n. 6.

8. The quotations are from a passage in the Commentary on the Words of the Text in Hexagram 1, *Qian* (Pure Yang), Fifth Yang.

9. Reference to the dragon here alludes to the passage cited in note 8 above.

10. "Dispersive ground" (*sand*), i.e., where troops tend to break rank and run away, is an allusion to a passage in the *Sunzi bingfa* (Master Sun's [fifth century B.C.] art of war): "When a feudal lord fights in his own territory, he is in dispersive ground." Cao Cao's (155–220) comment on this passage reads: "Here officers and men long to return to their nearby homes." The translations are from Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, p. 130.

11. Cf. *Sunzi bingfa*: "Can troops be made capable of such instantaneous co-operations? I reply: 'They can.' For, although the men of Wu and Yueh mutually hate one another, if together in a boat tossed by the wind they would co-operate as the right hand does with the left." See Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, pp. 135–136. Hu can be identified with the state of Wu.

12. King Shou's commentary reads: "If one recognizes the feeling involved with a common purpose, why worry about the difference between Hu [Wu] and Yue, and if one understands the tendency to run away and disperse, one does not trouble oneself to use military force." See Lou, *Wang Bi's I Ching*, 2: 600 n. 15.

13. See section twelve of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two.

14. The last two phrases allude to the Commentary on the Judgments of Hexagram 38, *Kui* (Contrariety): "Heaven and Earth may be contrary entities, but their task is the same. Male and female may be contrary entities, but they share the same goal. The myriad things may be contrary entities each to the other, but as functioning entities they are all similar."

15. There is an allusion here to section eight of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One: "The noble man might stay in his chambers, but if the words he speaks are about goodness, even those from more than a thousand li away will respond with approval to him, and how much the more will those who are nearby do so." In Wang Bi's passage the implied sentence subject "one" seems to refer to one who would be a true sovereign.

16. This is a paraphrase of a passage in section eight of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One.

17. This alludes to section five of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two: "The noble man lays up a store of instruments in his own person and waits for the proper moment and then acts, so how could there ever be anything to his disadvantage! Here one acts without impediment; it is due to this that when one goes out, he obtains his catch. What

this means is that one should act only after having first developed his instruments." Just as a hunter gets his bow (the instrument of hunting) in perfect working order, so the noble man perfects the instrumentality of his own person and accomplishes his affairs without hindrance.

18. This translation follows the gloss provided by Lou Yü-lin in *Wang Bi's I Ching*, 2: 603 n. 22. However, another, more sociopolitical interpretation is possible: "Without anyone knowing how he [a true sovereign] has become the master, he provides the beat for the dance, and all under heaven follows. This is someone who has a perception of how the innate tendencies of things operate."

19. This is a quotation from section four of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One, where, however, the subject seems to be the sage who perfectly grasps the working of change rather than the hexagram lines—which, of course, "grasp" the workings of change as well.

20. "Facility" and "obstruction" translate *zai* and *pi*, which are also the names of Hexagram 11, *Zai* (Peace—i.e., interaction, facility), and Hexagram 12, *Pi* (Obstruction—i.e., stagnation).

21. This alludes to section three of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One: "There are hexagrams that deal with decrease and those that deal with growth [of the Dao], and . . . there are appended phrases that impart a sense of danger and those that impart a sense of ease." Han Kangbo's commentary says: "When this Dao shines brightly, it is said to be growing large, and when the Dao of the noble man is dwindling, it is said to be decreasing. If a hexagram is tending toward Peace [*Zai*, Hexagram 11], its phrases impart a sense of ease, but if a hexagram is tending toward Obstruction and Stagnation [*Pi*, Hexagram 12], its phrases impart a sense of danger." See Lou, *Wang Bi's I Ching*, 2: 605 n. 3.

22. Lou Yü-lin comments: "'Resonance' [*ying*] means mutual response [*xiangying*]. For example, the first line and the fourth, the second and the fifth, and the third and the top are in positions of mutual responsiveness. 'Position' signifies the second, third, fourth, and fifth yin and yang line positions." (We should note here that even-numbered line positions are considered yin and odd-numbered line positions are considered yang.) Lou then goes on to quote from King Shou's commentary: "When one gets a resonance, it signifies the mutual harmony of purpose shared. Yin positions are where the petty man should be located, and yang positions are where the noble man should be located." See *Wang Bi's I Ching*, 2: 606 n. 8.

23. Lou Yü-lin comments:

"Carrying" refers to a line below carrying the one above, and "riding" refers to a line above riding on the one below. When a yin line carries a yang line, this indicates congruity, but when a yang line carries a yin line that indicates incongruity. When a yin line rides on a yang line, this indicates incongruity, but when a yang line rides on a yin line, that indicates congruity. When a line is far from trouble, this indicates ease [smooth going], but when a line is close to trouble, this indicates danger.

Lou here cites a comment by Xing Shou: "In the hexagram *Xu* [Waiting, Hexagram 1], Third Yang is close to trouble, so it is in danger, but First Yang is far from the danger, so it is at ease." See *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 606 n. 9. *Xu* consists of the trigrams *Kan* (Sink Hole) above and *Qian* (Pure Yang) below. The third line, right next to the water hole, is in danger of falling in, but the first line, far from it, is in no such danger and can remain at ease.

24. Lou Yüle comments: "Inner refers to the lower trigram, which indicates a 'staying still' [remaining], and 'outer' refers to the upper trigram, which indicates a 'going forth.'" He also adds that, for the first (beginning) and top (ending) positions in hexagrams, "no distinction is made between yin and yang lines." See *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 606 n. 10.

25. Xing Shou comments: "Although the one above and the one below may be distant, yet the one that indicates action has a resonant partner [and so has support]. Although in *Ge* [Radical Change, Hexagram 49] Second Yin is far removed from the fifth line, their yin and yang resonate together, so if one were to go out and do something here [at the second line], he would be without blame." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 606 n. 11.

26. Xing Shou comments: "In *Xu* [Waiting, Hexagram 5], Top Yin is located at the top of danger, but one should not worry about falling into the pit [the upper trigram, *Kan*, Sink Hole], for here it has achieved the right moment to be there." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 606 n. 11. See also Wang's commentary on *Xu*, Top Yin.

27. Xing Shou comments: "[In] *Shi* [The Army, Hexagram 7], Fifth Yin is the master of the entire hexagram; it is yin and weak. . . . Since it manages to occupy an exalted position, it thus can remain unafraid." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 12.

28. Xing Shou comments:

Dun [Withdrawal, Hexagram 33 a], Fifth Yang, states: "Here is praiseworthy Withdrawal, in which constancy brings good fortune." To be located in *Dun* means that the petty man's powers of encroachment are in the ascendancy and that the way of the noble man is in decline, so one should escape and withdraw to the upper trigram, where he may attach himself to the exalted position there [i.e., the yang line in the fifth position]. This always keeps the behavior of the petty man [the second, yin line] in correct check so he does not dare make rebellion.

Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 12. See also Wang's comments on *Dun*, Second Yin and Fifth Yang.

29. Xing Shou comments: "Even though the substance of a line is soft and weak, here one should not find making judgments a matter for distress, for good will come from the fact that a weak line is controlled by a yang position, and in the end one will have strength prevail. An example of

this is *Shi* [Blue Together, Hexagram 21], Fifth Yin: "Bring through-died meat, he obtains yellow metal!" Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 13. See also Wang's own commentary on *Shi*, Fifth Yin.

30. Xing Shou comments: "A first line occupies a position at the bottom of a hexagram and has resonance with the fourth line. This is why, although in substance it belongs in the rear, yet it still dares to get in the lead of the hexagram. An example of this is *Jai* [Peace, Hexagram 11], First Yang: "When one pulls up the rush plant, it pulls up others of the same kind together with it, so if one goes forth and acts, there will be good fortune." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 13. See also Wang's own commentary to *Jai*, First Yang and Fourth Yin.

31. Xing Shou cites *Deyou* (Great Holdings, Hexagram 14), Top Yang, as such an example. See Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 14.

32. Lou Yüle comments: "The meaning of this sentence is: Observation of the actions of change should be focused on the resonance between lines. If they resonate with each other, this produces the action of change. Observation of safety and danger should be focused on the positions of the lines. If a line obtains a proper position, then there is safety, but if it is wrongly positioned, then there is danger." See *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 15.

33. For the factors governing congruity and incongruity, see note 23 above. Xing Shou comments here on the inner and outer trigrams: "In *Dun* [Withdrawal, Hexagram 33], the noble man stays in the outer trigram, and in *Lin* [Overseeing, Hexagram 19], he stays in the inner trigram." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 16. Where the noble man "stays" is apparently a function of the central yang lines.

34. Xing Shou comments: "To take proper advantage of the moment results in good fortune, but if one misses the essential opportunity involved, this will mean misfortune." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 17.

35. Xing Shou comments: "*Dun* [Withdrawal, Hexagram 33], Top Yang, says: 'This is flying Withdrawal, so nothing fails to be fitting.' This is an example of 'it is best to distance oneself.' *Guan* [Viewing, Hexagram 20], Fourth Yin, says: 'Here one's Viewing extends to the glory of the state, so it is fitting therefore that this one be guest to the king.' This is an example of 'it is most preferable to draw near.'" Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bijijiaoshi*, 2: 607 n. 17.

36. For these characterizations of *Bi*, *Fu*, *Qian*, *Dazhuang*, *Mingyi*, and *Feng*, see their judgments, line statements, Commentaries on the Judgments, and Commentaries on the Images.

37. This is a quotation from the *Zhuangzi* (fourth century B.C.); see *Zhuangzi yinde*, 75/26/48.

38. This refers to the doubling of the trigrams to form the hexagrams; see section one of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two. The "strokes" are, of course, the hexagram lines.

39. The "overlapping trigrams" (*huiz*) method and the "trigram change"

(*guanbian*) method were popular ways to interpret the *Changes* during the Han era. Lou Yülie comments:

The "overlapping trigrams" was a method used by the Han era specialists on the *Changes* to interpret the hexagrams. Wang Yinglin [1223-1296], in his preface to the *Zheng shi Zhouyi* [Mr. Zheng's *Changes of the Zhou*], states:

Zheng Kangcheng [Zheng Xuan (127-200)] emulated Mr. Fei [Fei Zhi (ca. 50 B.C.—10 A.D.)] and made an annotated edition of the *Changes* in nine scrolls, which often frames its discussions in terms of overlapping trigrams. The practice of using overlapping trigrams to seek the meaning of the *Changes* has existed since Mr. Zuo [i.e., since the *Zuozhuan* (Zuo's commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals), fifth century B.C.]. In all hexagrams, sets of the second, third, and fourth lines and sets of the third, fourth, and fifth lines mingle together but each set separately forms a trigram. This is what is meant in this practice by "one hexagram contains four trigrams."

The "trigram change" method employs changes in the middle, upper, and lower trigram positions or changes in one of the lines to convert a trigram into a different trigram, and this consequently is supposed to explain the meaning of hexagrams and individual lines.

See *Wang Bi jiyiaoshi*, 2: 612 n. 20.

40. Concerning "They pushed on even further to the 'five elements' method," Lou Yülie observes: "This refers to the use of individual images to represent one or another of the five elements [wuzing] and then to use various theories of how the five elements sequentially generate and vanquish each other to interpret the hexagrams, something quite tainted with arcane mysticism [*shenmi tuiyi*]." See *Wang Bi jiyiaoshi*, 2: 612 n. 21.

41. See section nine of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two.

42. This paraphrases section three of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One.

43. See Hexagram 1, *Qian* (Pure Yang). Commentary on the Judgments. 44. Hexagrams whose hexagram statements contain this kind of characterization are *Qian* (Pure Yang, Hexagram 1), *Kun* (Pure Yin, Hexagram 2), *Zhuan* (Birth Thrice, Hexagram 3), *Sui* (Following, Hexagram 17), *Lin* (Overseeing, Hexagram 19), *Wuwang* (No Errancy, Hexagram 25), and *Ge* (Radical Change, Hexagram 49).

45. This is *Li* (Cohesion, Hexagram 30). Wang Bi's comment on its Judgment says: "The way Cohesion is constituted as a hexagram means that rectitude is expressed by the soft and yielding [yin] lines, and this is why one here must practice constancy first, for only then will prevalence be had. Thus the text says: 'It is fitting to practice constancy, for then it will result in prevalence.'"

46. Wang Bi's comment on *Ji* (Ferrying Complete, Hexagram 63), Second Yin, illustrates an example of such partnerships:

Second Yin abides in centrality and treads the path of righteousness [it is a yin line in a central, yin position], so it occupies the highest point of civility and enlightenment. Moreover, it is in resonance with Fifth Yang [the ruler of the hexagram], which means that it achieves the greatest glory possible for a yin. However, it is located between First Yang and Third Yang, with which, though contiguous, it does not get along well. Above it will not give carriage to Third Yang, and below it will not form a pair with First Yang.

47. See note 21 above.

48. Xing Shou's commentary makes this cryptic statement intelligible: [In] *Kui* (Contrariness, Hexagram 38), First Yang and Fourth Yang do not resonate as a pair of yin and yang lines, but both are incompatible loners that occupy the bottom places in their respective trigrams. Engaging in mutual trust, they cooperate with each other and so manage to make remorse disappear. This is what "by practicing mutual cooperation, lines draw each other close" means. [In] *Kun* (Impasse, Hexagram 47), First Yin has a resonance with the fourth line. It says that one should hide himself in a secluded valley, and Fourth Yang, having a resonance with this first line, says that one should come forward slowly and carefully and harbor doubts about the object of his ambition. In this way, they both avoid the metal cart and draw each other apart.

For an explanation of "metal cart," see the line statement for Fourth Yang of *Kun*. The text of Xing's comments is quoted in Lou, *Wang Bi jiyiaoshi*, 2: 617 n. 7.

49. See Hexagram 10, *Li* (Reading), Third Yin, and the Commentary on the Images for that line, as well as Wang Bi's commentary on both.

50. See Hexagram 6, *Song* (Contention), Commentary on the Judgments, and Second Yang, Commentary on the Images.

51. Xing Shou comments: "*Qian* [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1], Third Yang, says: 'The noble man makes earnest efforts throughout the day. . . . no blame.' In this way, he takes steps to avoid losing the way, which would result in incurring blame for the faults involved." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bi jiyiaoshi*, 2: 617 n. 13.

52. Xing Shou comments: "The Judgment for *Shi* [The Army, Hexagram 7] says: 'If an army's constancy is subject to a forceful man, there will be good fortune and with this no blame.' Wang Bi's commentary says: 'It would be a crime to raise soldiers and mobilize the masses and then have no success.' This is why the text says: 'There will be good fortune and with this no blame.'" Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bi jiyiaoshi*, 2: 618 n. 14.

53. Xing Shou comments: "*Bi* [Closeness, Hexagram 8], First Yin, says: 'If there is sincerity, joining in closeness will not lead to blame. . . . So there will be good fortune brought on by others.' This provides an example of this." Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bi jiyiaoshi*, 2: 618 n. 15.

54. Xing Shou comments: "*Xu* [Waiting, Hexagram 3], Second Yang,

says: 'When waiting on the sand, it might slightly involve rebuke, but in the end, good fortune will result.' Wang Bi comments: 'Here one is close but not so close that he is oppressed by danger and far but not so far that he will be too late for the moment when it happens. He treads on a place of strength and abides in the Mean and in this way awaits the right opportunity. Although it might slightly involve rebuke, . . . in the end, good fortune will result.' Quoted in Lou, *Wang Bi jiyao*, 2: 618 n. 16.

55. As they stand, a number of passages in the following section require elaboration in order to understand exactly what they mean. However, instead of burdening readers with a separate set of notes, I suggest that they compare Wang Bi's comments here about various hexagrams with the actual statements—and his comments on them—that make up the entries for the hexagrams themselves. Any notes that might be added here would consist of exactly those materials.

56. See Hexagram 3, *Zhun* (Birth Threes), Second Yin.

57. See Hexagram 3, *Zhun* (Birth Threes), First Yang, Commentary on the Images.

58. See Hexagram 4, *Meng* (Juvenile Ignorance), Judgment.

59. See Hexagram 34, *Daqiang* (Great Strength), Third Yang.

60. See Hexagram 36, *Mingyi* (Suppression of the Light), Third Yang.

Commentary on the Appended Phrases

[Xici zhuan], Part One

1. As Heaven is high and noble and Earth is low and humble, so it is that *Qian* [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] and *Kun* [Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] are defined. {It is because *Qian* and *Kun* provide the gateway to the *Changes* that the text first makes clear that Heaven is high and noble and Earth is low and humble, thereby determining what the basic substances of *Qian* and *Kun* are.} The high and the low being thereby set out, the exalted and the mean have their places accordingly. {Once the innate duty of Heaven to be high and noble and that of Earth to be low and humble are set down, one can extend these basic distinctions to the myriad things, so that the positions of all exalted things and all mean things become evident.} There are norms for action and repose, which are determined by whether hardness or softness is involved. {Hardness means action, and softness means repose. If action and repose achieve normal embodiment, the hardness and softness involved will be clearly differentiated.²} Those with regular tendencies gather according to kind, and things divide up according to group; so it is that good fortune and misfortune occur. {Thus similarities and differences exist, and gatherings and divisions occur. If one conforms to things with which he belongs, it will mean good fortune, but if one goes against things with which he belongs, misfortune will result.} In Heaven this [process] creates images, and on Earth it creates physical forms; this is how change and transformation manifest themselves. {"Images" here are equivalent to the sun, moon, and the stars, and "physical forms" here are equivalent to the mountains, the lakes, and the shrubs and trees. The images so suspended revolve on, thus forming the darkness and the

HEXAGRAM 1



Qian [Pure Yang]
(*Qian* Above *Qian* Below)

Judgment

Qian consists of fundamentality [*yuant*], prevalence [*heng*], fitness [*li*], and constancy [*zhen*].

COMMENTARY ON THE JUDGMENTS

How great is the fundamental nature of *Qian*! The myriad things are provided their beginnings by it, and, as such, it controls Heaven. It allows clouds to scud and rain to fall and things in all their different categories to flow into forms. Manifestly evident from beginning to end, the positions of the six lines form, each at its proper moment. When it is the moment for it, ride one of the six dragons to drive through the sky. The change and transformation of the Dao of *Qian* in each instance keep the nature and destiny of things correct. {The term *tian* [Heaven] is the name for a form, a phenomenal entity; the term *jian* [strength and dynamism: *Qian*] refers to that which uses or takes this form. } Form as such is how things are bound together. To have the form of Heaven and be able to maintain it forever without loss and, as the very head of all things, stay in control of it, how could this be anything but the ultimate of strength and dynamism! This is manifestly evident in its Dao from beginning to end. Thus each of the six positions forms without ever missing its moment, its ascent or descent not subject to fixed rule, functioning according to the moment involved. If one is to remain in repose, ride a hidden dragon, and if one is to set forth, ride a flying dragon. This is why it is said: "When it is the moment for it, ride one of the six dragons." Here one takes control of the great instrument [*daqi*, Heaven] by riding change and transformation. Whether in quiescence utterly focused or in action straight and true, *Qian* is never out of step with the great harmony, so how could it fail to keep the innate tendencies [*qin*] inherent in

the nature and destiny of things correct? It is by fitness and constancy that one preserves the great harmony [*dake*] and stays in tune with it. {If one does not so stay in accord, he will be hard and cruel.} So one stands with head above the multitudes, and the myriad states are all at peace. {The reason why the myriad states are at peace is that each one has such a one as its true sovereign.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

The action of Heaven is strong and dynamic. In the same manner, the noble man never ceases to strengthen himself.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"Fundamentality" is the leader of goodness [*shan*]. "Prevalence" is the coincidence of beauty [*yi*]. "Fitness" is coalescence with righteousness [*yi*]. "Constancy" is the very trunk of human affairs. The noble man embodies benevolence [*ren*] sufficient to be a leader of men, and the coincidence of beauty in him is sufficient to make men live in accordance with propriety [*zhi*]. He engenders fitness in people sufficient to keep them in harmony with righteousness, and his constancy is firm enough to serve as the trunk for human affairs. The noble man is someone who practices these four virtues. This is why it says: "*Qian* consists of fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy."

Qian manifests its fundamentality in providing for the origin of things and granting them prevalence. It manifests its fitness and constancy by making the innate tendencies of things conform to their natures. {If it were not for the fundamentality of *Qian*, how could it comprehensively provide for the origin of all things? If nature did not control their innate tendencies, how could things long behave in ways that are correct for them? This is why the origin of things and their prevalence must derive from the fundamentality of *Qian*, and the fitness of things and their rectitude must be a matter of making the innate tendencies of things conform to their natures.} The power in *Qian* to provide origins is such that it can make all under Heaven fit by means of its own beautiful fitness. One does not say how it confers fitness; it just is great! How great *Qian* is! It is strong, dynamic, central, correct, and it is absolutely pure in its unadulteratedness and unsulliedness. The

six lines emanate their power and exhaustively explore all innate tendencies. In accord with the moment, ride the six dragons to drive through the sky. Then clouds will move, and rain fall, and all under Heaven be at peace.

COMMENTARY ON THE APPENDED PHRASES

As Heaven is high and noble and Earth is low and humble, so it is that *Qian* [Pure Yang] and *Kun* [Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] are defined.

The Dao of *Qian* forms the male. . . . *Qian* has mastery over the great beginning of things.

Qian through ease provides mastery over things. . . . As [*Qian*] is easy, it is easy to know. . . . If one is easy to know, he will have kindred spirits.

When [the Dao] forms images, we call it *Qian*.

As for *Qian*, in its quiescent state it is focused, and in its active state it is undeviating. This is how it achieves its great productivity.

Opening the gate is called *Qian*.

Qian and *Kun*, do they not constitute the arcane source for change? When *Qian* and *Kun* form ranks, change stands in their midst, but if *Qian* and *Kun* were to disintegrate, there would be no way that change could manifest itself. And if change could not manifest itself, this would mean that *Qian* and *Kun* might almost be at the point of extinction!

All the activity that takes place in the world, thanks to constancy, is the expression of the One. *Qian* being unyielding shows us how easy it is.

The Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun let their robes hang loosely down, yet the world was well governed. They probably got the idea for this from the hexagrams *Qian* and *Kun*.

The Master said: "*Qian* and *Kun*, do they not constitute the two-leaved gate into the *Changes*? *Qian* is a purely yang thing, and *Kun* is a purely yin thing."

Qian [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] is a yang thing.

Qian is the strongest thing in the entire world, so it should always be easy to put its virtue into practice. Thus one knows whether or not there is going to be danger. [It] is able to delight hearts and minds?

Hexagram 1: Qian

PROVIDING THE SEQUENCE OF THE HEXAGRAMS

Only after there were Heaven [Qian, Pure Yang] and Earth [Kun, Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] were the myriad things produced from them. What fills Heaven and Earth is nothing other than the myriad things.

THE HEXAGRAMS IN IRREGULAR ORDER

Qian is hard and firm.

First Yang

A submerged dragon does not act.

{The Commentary on the Words of the Text says all that can be said}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"A submerged dragon does not act": the yang force is below.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"A submerged dragon does not act." What does this mean? The Master says: "This refers to one who has a dragon's virtue yet remains hidden. He neither changes to suit the world {One does not change for the sake of the profane world} nor seeks fulfillment in fame. He hides from the world but does not regret it, and though this fails to win approval, he is not sad. When he takes delight in the world, he is active in it, and when he finds it distresses him, he turns his back on it. He who is resolute in his unwillingness to be uprooted, this is a submerged dragon."

"A submerged dragon does not act" because one is too far below.

"A submerged dragon does not act": the yang force is hidden in the depths.

The noble man performs deeds out of his perfected virtue. Daily one can see him performing them. The expression "submerged" means that one remains concealed and does not yet show himself, his conduct such that it is not yet perfected. Therefore the noble man does not act.

Hexagram 1: Qian

Second Yang

When there appears a dragon in the fields, it is fitting to see the great man.¹ {It has come out of the depths and abandoned its hiding place; this is what is meant by "there appears a dragon." It has taken up a position on the ground; this is what is meant by "in the fields." With virtue [de] bestowed far and wide, one here takes up a mean [zhong] position and avoids partially [bian]. Although this is not the position for a sovereign, it involves the virtue of a true sovereign. If it is the first line, he does not reveal himself; if the third, he makes earnest efforts; if the fourth, he hesitates to leap; if the top line, he is overreaching. Fitness to see the great man [daren] lies only in the second and the fifth lines.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"There appears a dragon in the fields": the operation of virtue spreads widely.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"When there appears a dragon in the fields, it is fitting to see the great man." What does this mean? The Master says: "This refers to one who has a dragon's virtue and has achieved rectitude [zheng] and centrality [zhong, the Mean]. He is trustworthy in ordinary speech and prudent in ordinary conduct. He wards off depravity and preserves his sincerity. He does good in the world but does not boast of it. His virtue spreads wide and works transformations. When the *Changes* says, 'when there appears a dragon in the fields, it is fitting to see the great man,' it refers to the virtue of a true sovereign."

"When there appears a dragon in the fields," it is the time for it to lodge there.

"There appears a dragon in the fields": all under Heaven enjoy the blessings of civilization.

The noble man accumulates knowledge by studying and becomes discriminating by posing questions. {When one who has a sovereign's virtue occupies a position in the lower trigram, it is an occasion for him to draw on the resources of others.} It is magnanimity that governs his repose, and it is benevolence that guides his actions. The *Changes* say: "When one sees a dragon in the

fields, it is fitting to see the great man." This refers to one who has the virtue of a true sovereign.

Third Yang

The noble man makes earnest efforts throughout the day, and with evening he still takes care; though in danger, he will suffer no blame. {Here one occupies the very top of the lower trigram and is located just below the upper trigram, situated in a nonmean position and treading on the dangerous territory of the double strong.⁵ Above, he is not in Heaven, so cannot use that to make his exalted position secure, and below he is not in the fields [Earth] so cannot use that to make his dwelling place safe. If one were to cultivate exclusively here the Dao of the subordinate, the virtue needed to occupy a superior position would waste away, but if one were to cultivate exclusively the Dao of the superior, the propriety needed to fill a lower position would wither. This is why the text says such a one should "make earnest efforts throughout the day." As for "with evening he still takes care," this is equivalent to saying that there is still danger. If in occupying a high position one were free of arrogance, in filling a low position were free of distress, and were to take care appropriate to the moment, he would not fall out with the incipient force of things and, although in danger and beset with trouble, would suffer no blame. To be located at the very top of the lower trigram is better than being at the overreach connected with Top Yang. Thus only by making full use of one's intellect can one remain free from blame here. It is because the third line of Qian occupies the top position in its lower trigram that one is spared the regret of the dragon that overreaches [in the top line]. It is because the third line of Kun [Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] occupies the top position in its lower trigram that one is spared the disaster brought about when dragons fight [in the top line]. }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"He makes earnest efforts throughout the day": whether going back up or coming back down, it is a matter of the Dao. {In terms of an ascent, this is not something about which to be arrogant, and in terms of a descent, this is not something about which to be distressed. Thus, whether one goes back up or comes back down, he is always with the Dao. }

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"The noble man makes earnest efforts throughout the day, and with evening he still takes care; though in danger, he will suffer no blame." What does this mean? The Master says: "The noble man fosters his virtue and cultivates his task. He fosters his virtue by being loyal and trustworthy; he keeps his task in hand by cultivating his words and establishing his sincerity. A person who understands what a maximum point is and fulfills it can take part in the incipency of the moment. A person who understands what a conclusion is and brings it about can take part in the preservation of righteousness. {When one is located at the very top of a trigram, this is a "maximum point," and when one is at the very end point of a trigram, this is a "conclusion." One who, when he reaches the maximum point of a matter, manages to avoid blame for any transgression is someone who understands maximum points and thus can take part in the accomplishment of great affairs.⁶ One who, when he finds himself at a conclusion, can bring that conclusion to perfect fulfillment is someone who understands conclusions. For speeding up the progress of things, righteousness is not as good as expediency, but for preserving the completion of things, expediency is not as good as righteousness. This is why "nothing is ever without a beginning, but only the rare thing can have completion."⁷ Who else but someone who can take part in the preservation of righteousness could ever understand conclusions? } Thus when he occupies a high position, he is not proud, and when he is in a low position, he is not distressed. To be at the top of the lower trigram is still to be below the upper trigram. As one understands that lowness has merely concluded, he is not proud, but as he also understands that he has reached a maximum point and fulfilled it, he is not distressed either. This is why, making earnest efforts, he takes care when the moment requires it and, though in danger, will suffer no blame." { "To take care" means to be alert and fearful. When one is at the maximum point of a matter but neglects to take advantage of the moment, he will miss it, or if he is idle and remiss, it will be lost through neglect. This is why, when the moment requires it, one "takes care" and, though in danger, "will suffer no blame." }

"Make earnest efforts throughout the day" because this is how one should do things.

"Make earnest efforts throughout the day": act in step with the moment. { This means always be in step with the moment of Heaven without cease. }

Nine in the third place signifies a double strength but one that is nonmean.⁸ It is neither in Heaven above nor in the fields [Earth] below. Thus one makes earnest efforts here and, in accordance with the moment, takes care; thus, though in danger, he will suffer no blame.

Fourth Yang

Hesitating to leap, it still stays in the depths, so suffers no blame. } To leave the topmost line in the lower trigram and occupy the bottom line of the upper trigram signifies the moment when the Dao of *Qian* undergoes a complete change. Above, one is not in Heaven; below, one is not in the fields [Earth]; and in between one is not with Man.⁹ Here one treads on the dangerous territory of the double strong and so lacks a stable position in which to stay.¹⁰ This is truly a time when there are no constant rules for advancing or retreating. Drawing close to an exalted position [the ruling fifth line], one wishes to foster the Dao involved, but, forced to stay in a lower position, this is not something his leap can reach. One wishes to ensure that his position here remains quiescent, for this is not a secure position in which to stay. Harboring doubts, one hesitates and does not dare determine his own intentions. He concentrates on preserving his commitment to the public good, for advancement here does not lie with private ambitions. He turns his doubts into reflective thought and so avoids error in decisions. Thus he suffers no blame. }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"Hesitating to leap, it still stays in the depths": when it advances there will be no blame.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"Hesitating to leap, it still stays in the depths, so suffers no blame." What does this mean? The Master says: "Although there is no fixed rule for one's rise or fall, one should not engage in deviant behavior. Although there is no constant norm governing advance or withdrawal, one should not leave one's fellows and strike off on one's own. The noble man fosters his virtue, cultivates his task, and wishes to be ready when the moment arrives. Therefore he suffers no blame."

"Hesitating to leap, it still stays in the depths": this is because one should test himself.

"Hesitating to leap, it still stays in the depths": here the Dao of *Qian* is about to undergo change.

Nine in the fourth place signifies a double strength but one which is nonmean. It is neither in Heaven above, nor in the fields [Earth] below, nor with man in the middle.¹¹ Thus one regards it as a matter for hesitation. A matter for hesitation means that one should have doubts about it. This is why he will suffer no blame.

Fifth Yang

When a flying dragon is in the sky, it is fitting to see the great man. {Not moving, not leaping, yet it is in the sky. If it is not flying, how could it be done? This is what is meant by "a flying dragon." When a dragon's virtue is present in the sky, then the path of the great man will prevail.¹² A sovereign's position depends on his virtue to prosper, and a sovereign's virtue depends on his position to have practical expression. When this grand and noble position is filled by someone with such paramount virtue, all under Heaven will go to him and look up to him with hope—is this not indeed appropriate? }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"When a flying dragon is in the sky": a great man takes charge.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"When a flying dragon is in the sky, it is fitting to see the great man." What does this mean? The Master says: "Things with the same tonality resonate together; things with the same material force seek out one another. Water flows to where it is wet; fire goes toward where it is dry. Clouds follow the dragon; wind follows the tiger. The sage bestirs himself, and all creatures look to him. What is rooted in Heaven draws close to what is above; what is rooted in Earth draws close to what is below. Thus each thing follows its own kind."

"A flying dragon is in the sky": rule on high prevails.

"A flying dragon is in the sky": it now takes a position amid the virtue of Heaven.

Hexagram 1: *Qian*

The great man is someone whose virtue is consonant with Heaven and Earth, his brightness with the sun and the moon, his consistency with the four seasons, and his prognostications of the auspicious and inauspicious with the workings of gods and spirits. When he precedes Heaven, Heaven is not contrary to him, and when he follows Heaven, he obeys the timing of its moments. Since Heaven is not contrary to him, how much the less will men or gods and spirits bel

Top Yang

A dragon that overreaches should have cause for regret.

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"A dragon that overreaches should have cause for regret": when something is at the full, it cannot last long.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"A dragon that overreaches should have cause for regret." What does this mean? The Master says: "Although noble, he lacks a [ruler's] position; although at a lofty height, he lacks a people's following. {Beneath there are no yin lines.} He has worthies in subordinate positions, but none help him. {Although there are worthies below filling appropriate positions, they provide no help to him.} Thus, when he acts, he should have cause for regret."

{One is located at the top of the upper trigram and is not appropriate for the position he holds. Thus he thoroughly reveals all his deficiencies. Standing alone, he makes a move, and no one will go along with him. The Commentary on the Words of the Text for *Qian* does not first discuss *Qian* but begins instead to talk about "fundamentality" and only later does it say what *Qian* is. Why does it do that? *Qian* designates the unified control that governs the four entities [fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy]. "The noble man never ceases to strengthen himself"¹³ as he puts these four into practice. This is why the text here does not first discuss *Qian* and only later says: "*Qian* consists of fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy." It explains the rest of the hexagram lines in terms of the dragon, except for Third Yang, for which it makes the noble man the topic. Why does it do that? This is be-

Hexagram 1: *Qian*

cause the *Changes* consist of images, and what images are produced from are concepts. One first has to have a particular concept, which one then brings to light by using some concrete thing to exemplify it. Thus one uses the dragon to express *Qian* and the mare to illustrate *Kun*. One follows the concept inherent in a matter and chooses an image for it accordingly. This is why at First Yang and at Second Yang the respective virtues of the dragon in each correspond to the concepts involved. Thus one can use discussions of the dragon in order to clarify them. However, at Third Yang, "the noble man makes earnest efforts" and "with evening he still takes care" are not references to the virtue of a dragon, so it is obvious that it employs the noble man to serve as the image here. As a whole, the *Qian* hexagram is a matter of dragons throughout, but when it is expressed in different terms, these are always formulated in terms of the concepts involved.}

"A dragon that overreaches should have cause for regret": this signifies the disaster that results from the exhaustion of resources.

"A dragon that overreaches should have cause for regret": it is at extreme odds with the moment. {This means to be at complete odds with the dynamics of the moment.}

The expression "overreaches" means that one knows how to advance but not how to retreat, knows how to preserve life but not how to relinquish it, knows how to gain but not how to lose. Could such a one ever be a sage? But if one knows how to advance, to retreat, to preserve life, and to relinquish it, all without losing his rectitude, how could such a one be but a sage?

COMMENTARY ON THE APPENDED PHRASES

The Master said: "One might be noble yet lack the position, might be lofty yet lack the subjects, and might have worthy men in subordinate positions who yet will not assist him. If such a one acts with all this being so, he will have cause for regret."¹⁴

All Use Yang Lines

When one sees a flight of dragons without heads, it is good fortune. {The nines [yang lines] all signify the virtue of Heaven. As we are able to use the virtue of Heaven [for all the lines], we see the concept of a flight of dragons in them. If one were to take up a

Hexagram 1: Qian

position of headship over men by using nothing but hardness and strength, that would result in people not going along with it. If one were to engage in improper behavior by using softness and compliance, that would result in a dao of obsequiousness and wickedness. This is why the good fortune of Qian resides in there being no head to it, and the fitness of Kun [Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] resides in its perpetual constancy.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"All use yang lines": the virtue of Heaven is such that it cannot provide headship.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

Here the fundamentality of Qian is expressed in all nines [Yang lines], signifying the entire world well governed. {This entire section [of the Commentary on the Words of the Text] uses the affairs of men to clarify what is meant. Nine signifies the positive principle [Yang], and yang is exemplified by things that are strong and inviolable. The ability to employ strength and inviolateness completely and to renounce and drive far away those who are good at toadying can never emerge except when the entire world is perfectly governed.¹⁵ This is why the text says: "Here the fundamentality of Qian is expressed in all nines, signifying the entire world well governed." Once one recognizes how a thing acts, then all the principles of its existence can be understood. The virtue that a dragon signifies is such that it precludes doing anything inopportune. "Submerged" and "does not act," what do these mean? It means that it is sure to locate itself at the lowest possible place. "Sees" and "in the fields" mean that it is sure to lodge there because of the suitability of the moment. Regard the lines as signifying the ways there are to be a man and the positions among them to signify moments. If a man refrains from inopportune behavior, then all moments can be known by him. The fact that King Wen had to suffer suppression of his bright virtue allows us to know what kind of ruler there was then,¹⁶ and the fact that Zhongni [Confucius] had to travel about among strangers allows us to know what his own state was like.¹⁷

Here the fundamentality of Qian is expressed in all nines [Yang lines], thus we see the law of Heaven. {This entire section talks about the material force of Heaven in order to clarify what is meant.

Hexagram 1: Qian

The nines [Yang lines] signify something that is strong and inviolable. Only the Qian hexagram can use them throughout. If one observes Heaven from the point of view of this pure strength, the law of Heaven can be seen.}

NOTES

1. It is likely that Wang has used *jian* (strength) as a pun on *Qian* (both characters seem to have had the same pronunciation in the archaic Chinese of his day: **ʃian*), implying that as the two sound alike, so their meanings are similar if not identical. In his commentary on Kun (Pure Yin), Hexagram 2, Commentary on the Judgments, Wang uses almost the same sentence structure: "The term *Zan* is the name of a form, a phenomenal entity; the term *Kun* refers to that which uses or takes this form." We should note also that *Qian* is also identified with *jian* in section seven of Explaining the Trigrams.
2. This and all subsequent text set off in this manner is commentary by Wang Bi.
3. See sections one, five, six, eleven, and twelve of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One, and sections one, two, six, ten, and twelve of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two.
4. "The great man" translates *daren*, a term used, like *junzi*, to designate the noble man, one worthy of being a sovereign.
5. I.e., the third line is on top of two yang lines.
6. Wang here seems to have had section ten of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One, in mind here: "It is a grasp of incipience alone that thus allows one to accomplish the great affairs of the world."
7. *Shijing* (Book of odes), no. 235.
8. Nine is a "positive" (yang) and "strong" number, and so is three. "Mean" refers to the middle line in a trigram; since the third line is at the top of the trigram, it is "nonmean."
9. Kong Yingda's subcommentary helps to clarify this passage: "The *Changes* forms its hexagrams in such a way that the third and fourth lines signify the Dao of Man, but what Man is close to is below him [Earth], not what is above him [Heaven]. This is why Fourth Yang is said to be 'not with Man' and differs from Third Yang." See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 9a. Note also that Wang's comment here is derived from a passage in the Commentary on the Words of the Text.
10. See note 5 above.
11. See note 9 above.
12. "Reveal" translates *kezg*, consistent with the Judgment to Qian: "Qian consists of fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy" (respectively, *yan*, *hang*, *li*, and *zhan*). Lou Yulie, however, glosses *kezg* here

Hexagram 2: Kun

as "clear" (*tongde*), as in "the road is clear." See *Wang Bi's jiaoshi*, 1: 220 n. 18.

13. See the Commentary on the Images for this hexagram.

14. See section eight of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One.

15. "Except when the entire world is perfectly governed" translates *feitianxia zhihi*. The text in *Zhouyi zhengyi* has *zhi* (perfect principle), but this has been shown to be a Tang era alteration to avoid the taboo use of the personal name of Li Zhi, Emperor Gaozong (reigned 650—684). There is good evidence to prove that the text originally was either *zhi* (well governed) or *zhihi* (perfectly governed). See Lou, *Wang Bijiaoshi*, 1: 224 n. 49. Wang-tsit Chan's translation of this passage as "only because there is ultimate principle in the world. . . ." apparently follows the later, altered text. See *Source Book*, p. 320.

16. King Wen, the father of King Wu who overthrew the Shang and founded the Zhou state (1122 B.C.), was supposedly the long-suffering vassal of Zhou, the wicked last Shang king.

17. Lu, the home state of Confucius, was so badly governed that he had to travel abroad to try to find a worthy sovereign to serve.

HEXAGRAM 2



坤

Kun [Pure Yin]

(Kun Above, Kun Below)

Judgment

Kun consists of fundamentality, and prevalence, and its fitness is that of the constancy of the mare. {The constancy of *Kun* is fitting just in the way constancy is fitting for the mare. The horse is a creature that travels by staying down [on the ground], but even more important we have the female of it, so it is something that repre-

Hexagram 2: Kun

sents the acme of compliance [*shun*]. Here one will prevail only after becoming perfectly compliant, and this is why the text says that one will only achieve fitness in the constancy of the mare.} Should the noble man set out to do something, if he were to take the lead, he would go astray, but if he were to follow, he would find a master. It is fitting to find friends in the southwest and to spurn friends in the northeast. To practice constancy with serenity means good fortune. {The southwest is the land of utmost nurturing and belongs to the same Dao as *Kun*.² Thus the text says "find friends." The northeast is the opposite of the southwest. Thus the text says "spurn friends." When yin is manifest in something, that something must distance itself from its own ilk and go to the opposite [yang] kind, for only then will it garner the good fortune derived from practicing "constancy with serenity."}

COMMENTARY ON THE JUDGMENTS

How great is the fundamental nature of *Kun*! The myriad things are provided their births by it, and in so doing it compliantly carries out Heaven's will. It is the generosity of *Kun* that lets it carry everything, the integrative force of its virtue that accounts for its limitlessness, and its vast power to accommodate that makes it glorious and great—so that things in all their different categories can prevail as they should. The mare is a metaphor for the Earth, for it travels the Earth without limit. {The way the Earth manages to be without limit is by acting with humility. *Qian* rides through Heaven as a dragon, but *Kun* travels the Earth as a horse.} For one who is yielding and compliant, it is fitting to practice constancy here, and the noble man who sets out to do something, if he takes the lead, will be in breach of the Dao, but if he follows and is compliant, he will find his rightful place. "To find friends in the southwest" means to travel with one's own kind, and "to spurn friends in the northeast" means that in the end one will have blessings. The good fortune that here derives from practicing constancy with serenity is a matter of resonating with the limitless qualities of the Earth. {The term *Earth* is the name of a form, a phenomenal entity; the term *Kun* refers to that which uses or takes this form.³ Two males will be sure to fight, and two masters will involve peril. That which has the form of the Earth [*Kun*] joins together with the hard and the strong [*Qian*] to form a matched pair, by means of which things are preserved "without limit." Of course,

to put Kun into practice will certainly achieve the utmost complacency, but if this were to be done without regard to the qualities of the mare or if one were to try to achieve fitness without regard to the perpetual maintenance of constancy, the one approach would make him not just square and solid but also inflexible, and the other would make him not just compliant but also irresolute, so in either case his search for security would be difficult indeed!

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

Here is the basic disposition of Earth: this constitutes the image of *Kun*. {In physical form, Earth is not compliant; it is its basic disposition that is compliant.} In the same manner, the noble man with his generous virtue carries everything.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

Kun is perfectly compliant, but the way it takes action is strong and firm; it is perfectly quiescent, but its virtue is square and solid. {Action that is square and straight is incapable of doing evil, but to be so compliant that one becomes irresolute will lead to the deterioration of the Dao. When the virtue involved is perfectly quiescent, that virtue must be "square and solid."}

It is by following that one obtains a master and finds a rightful place, and it is by accommodating the myriad things that the transformative power of *Kun* achieves its glory—both these facts surely indicate how the Dao of *Kun* consists of compliance: in carrying out Heaven's will, its actions are always timely.

COMMENTARY ON THE APPENDED PHRASES

As Heaven is high and noble and Earth is low and humble, so it is that *Qian* [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] and *Kun* [Pure Yin] are defined.

The Dao of *Kun* forms the female. . . . *Kun* acts to bring things to completion.

Kun through simplicity provides capability. . . . As [it] is simple, it is easy to follow. . . . If one is easy to follow, he will have meritorious accomplishments.

When [the Dao] duplicates patterns, we call it *Kun*.

As for *Kun*, in its quiescent state it is condensed, and in its

active state it is diffuse. This is how it achieves its capacious productivity.

This is why closing the gate is called *Kun*.

Qian and *Kun*, do they not constitute the arcane source for change! When *Qian* and *Kun* form ranks, change stands in their midst, but if *Qian* and *Kun* were to disintegrate, there would be no way that change could manifest itself. And if change could not manifest itself, this would mean that *Qian* and *Kun* might almost be on the point of extinction!

All the activity that take place in the world, thanks to constancy, is the expression of the One. . . . *Kun* being yielding shows us how simple it is.

The Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun let their robes hang loosely down, yet the world was well governed. They probably got the idea for this from the hexagrams *Qian* and *Kun*.

The Master said: "*Qian* and *Kun*, do they not constitute the two-leaved gate into the *Changes*? . . . *Kun* is a purely yin thing. *Kun* [Pure Yin] is a yin thing.

Kun is the most compliant thing in the entire world, so it should always be simple to put its virtue into practice. [It] is able to refine the concerns of the feudal lords."

PROVIDING THE SEQUENCE OF THE HEXAGRAMS

Only after there were Heaven [*Qian*, Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] and Earth [*Kun*, Pure Yin], were the myriad things produced from them. What fills Heaven and Earth is nothing other than the myriad things.

THE HEXAGRAMS IN IRREGULAR ORDER

Kun [Pure Yin] [is] soft and yielding.

First Yin

The frost one treads on reaches its ultimate stage as solid ice. {What starts out as frost that one might tread on ultimately becomes hard ice. This is what is meant when it [the Commentary on the Words of the Text] says, "*Kun* is perfectly compliant, but the way it takes action is strong and firm." Yin as a Dao is such that, although rooted in humble weakness, it thereafter brings about

prominence through its accumulated effect. Thus the text chooses "frost one treads on" to clarify how *Kun* begins. Yang as physical manifestation does not involve things that first have foundations established so they can achieve prominence later. Thus the text clarifies yang things in terms of activity and inactivity, as, for instance, [a dragon] "submerged" in the first line [i.e., *Qian*, First Yang]. }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

The frost one treads on becomes solid ice: This yin thing begins to congeal. Obediently fulfilling its Dao, it ultimately becomes solid ice.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

A family that accumulates goodness will be sure to have an excess of blessings, but one that accumulates evil will be sure to have an excess of disasters. When a subject kills his lord or a son kills his father, it is never because of what happens between the morning and evening of the same day but because of something that has been building up for a long time and that should have been dealt with early—but was not. When the *Changes* say "the frost one treads on reaches its ultimate stage as solid ice," is it not talking about complacency [with the Dao involved]?

Second Yin

He is straight [*zhi*], square [*fang*], and great [*da*], so without working at it, nothing he does here fails to be fitting. {Here, finding oneself at the center and obtaining his correct position there, he perfectly realizes in himself the qualities inherent in the Earth: he allows things their natural course, so they produce themselves, and he does not try to improve upon and manage them, so success comes about by itself.} This is why the text says: "Without working at it, nothing he does here fails to be fitting." }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

Actions associated with Second Yin are straight and thus square. {When one reveals himself to be straight and square in his actions,

it means that he has allowed these qualities free play here.} "Without working at it, nothing he does here fails to be fitting": here is the glory of the Dao of Earth.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

"Straight" refers to the rectitude [*zheng*] of *Kun*, and "square" refers to its righteousness [*yi*]. The noble man keeps his inner self straight by means of reverence [*jing*] and keeps his outer life square by means of righteousness. With the establishment of reverence and righteousness, one keeps oneself free from isolation. "He is straight, square, and great, so without working at it, nothing he does here fails to be fitting." Thus he has no doubts about what he should do.

Third Yin

One who effaces his own prominent qualities here will be able to practice constancy. He might attend to his sovereign's business, and if he were to make no claim for its success, he should bring about a successful conclusion. {One who occupies the very top of the lower trigram yet does not excite the suspicions of yang personages [sovereign, superiors] is someone who stays in harmony with the meaning [yi] involved here. He does not involve himself in initiating anything but must respond to the lead of another and must wait for orders before he starts to act: this is someone who effaces his own excellence and in so doing keeps himself correct. Thus the text says: "One who effaces his own prominent qualities here will be able to practice constancy." If there is business to attend to, he should do it but must not dare take the lead. Thus the text says: "He might attend to his sovereign's business." He brings things to a successful conclusion by obeying orders. Thus the text says: "If he were to make no claim for its success, he should bring about a successful conclusion." }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"One who effaces his own prominent qualities here will be able to practice constancy": this means that he starts to act when the moment is opportune. "He might attend to his sovereign's business": his wisdom is glorious and great. Here is someone whose "wisdom is glorious and great," so he does not take the credit for things.

Hexagram 2: Kun

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

Although a yin person has excellence, he effaces it in order to attend to his sovereign's business and does not dare take credit for its success. This is the Dao of Earth, the Dao of the wife, and the Dao of the minister. The Dao of Earth has one "make no claim for... success" but working on behalf of the other [*Qian*—Pure Yang, i.e., Heaven—husband, sovereign], "he should bring about a successful conclusion."

Fourth Yin

Tie up the bag, so there will be no blame, no praise. {Here, located in a yin hexagram, one has a yin position occupied by a yin line, so to tread here does not involve a mean [zhong] position, and those who fill it do not have "straight and square" qualities. These do not engage in yang [the sovereign's] business, for they lack that excellence whose prominence should be effaced. "Tie up" [gud] means "bind up" [jie]—to keep confined. A worthy person should stay hidden here, and only by exercising caution can he get by, for the Dao of Tai [Peace, Hexagram 11] does not operate here.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"Tie up the bag, so there will be no blame": if one exercises caution, he will suffer no harm.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

When Heaven and Earth engage in change and transformation, the whole plant kingdom flourishes, but when Heaven and Earth are confined, the worthy person keeps hidden. When the *Changes* say "tie up the bag, so there will be no blame, no praise," is it not talking about caution?

Fifth Yin

A yellow lower garment means fundamental good fortune. {"Yellow is the color of centrality [zhong, the Mean], and a lower garment adorns the bottom half of the body."} Kun is the Dao of the subject, whose excellence is completely realized below in the position of sub-

Hexagram 2: Kun

ordinate. Someone without hard and strong substance can let things fully realize their innate tendencies only by thoroughly grasping their principles, and he can occupy a noble position with the virtues of compliancy and obedience only if he has the required civil graces and control over those principles. He garners fundamental good fortune by letting his yellow lower garment hang loosely down and not by using martial power. Here, he achieves the utmost nobility of the yin but does not go so far as to excite the suspicions of the yang, and this is due to "the civil graces abiding within," "the very acme of excellence."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"A yellow lower garment means fundamental good fortune": this refers to the civil graces abiding within. {That one wears a yellow lower garment and garners fundamental good fortune here is due to "the civil graces abiding within."}

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

The noble man, garbed in yellow and maintaining the Mean, thoroughly grasps the principles of things. The correct position for him is this place in the trigram. Excellence abides within him, emanating through his four limbs and expressed in his deeds—the very acme of excellence.

Top Yin

Dragons fight in the fields, their blood black and yellow. {Yin as a Dao means to be humble and obedient and to remain within one's limits—this is how its excellence is fully realized. Here, however, it has become all that it can be but does not stop and would take over yang territory, something that the yang principle will not permit. This is why the text says that they "fight in the fields."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"Dragons fight in the fields": the Dao of *Kun* has reached its limits.

COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS OF THE TEXT

As yin provokes the suspicions of yang, it must fight. {Not having taken appropriate steps beforehand, yang becomes suspicious

of yin now at the peak of its strength and so takes action; this is why "it must fight."⁹ It is because yin calls into question the fact that it is totally lacking in yang. {It fights because it calls into question the fact that it is not yang, that it is referred to as a dragon here.² It is because it still has not abandoned its own kind.} It is because it has still not forsaken its yin-ness that it is exterminated by yang, that blood is mentioned here. {As it still fights with yang and because they wound each other, so there is mention of blood.¹⁰ Black-and-yellow refers to how Heaven and Earth are mixed together. Heaven is black and Earth is yellow.

All Use Yin Lines¹¹

It is fitting to practice constancy perpetually here. What is fitting here at All Use Yin Lines is to practice constancy perpetually.

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"All Use Yin Lines" signifies that greatness and final success are achieved through the practice of perpetual constancy. {This refers to one who is able to achieve greatness and final success through the practice of perpetual constancy.}

NOTES

1. This and all subsequent text set off in this manner is commentary by Wang Bi.
2. This paraphrases section five of Explaining the Trigrams "Kun [Pure Yin] here means the Earth. The myriad things all are nourished to the utmost by it."

3. See Hexagram 1, Qian (Pure Yang), note 1.

4. See sections one, five, six, eleven, and twelve of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One, and sections one, two, six, ten, and twelve of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part Two.

5. Zhu Xi points out that since the characters *shun* (compliance) and *shen* (caution) were used interchangeably in antiquity, *shun* ought to be read as *shen* here—referring to how one should deal with things when they have just barely begun. His version would read: "Is it not talking about caution?" See *Zhouyi t'herphong*, 16: 25b. This seems rather forced and unlikely, especially since *compliance* figures so prominently in this and other sections of the text of *Kun*. "Compliance with the Dao involved" makes

good sense from the context and obviously refers to the fact that once a thing starts, it will comply with the dictates of its inner nature—whether for good or for evil.

6. This is similar to Wang's comment on a passage in the fifth section of the *Laozi*: "Heaven and Earth are not benevolent; they treat the myriad things as straw dogs." Wang Bi's comment: "Heaven and Earth allow things to follow their natural course. They do not engage in purposeful action and create nothing, so the myriad things manage themselves. This is why the text says that they 'are not benevolent.'" See Lou, *Wang Bi's j'iaoshi*, 1: 13.

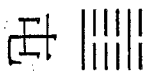
7. This quotes from a passage in the *Zuoq'han* (Zuo's commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*), concerning the twelfth year of the reign of Duke Shao (529 B.C.). Cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 5: 640.

8. This translates *yin yi yu yang bi zhan*. This interpretation and the rendering of Wang's commentary follow Kong Yingda's subcommentary: "As yin has reached the peak of its strength, it comes under the suspicions of yang, which then takes action, wishing to extirpate this yin, but since yin is already at the peak of its strength, it is unwilling to take evasive action. This is why 'it must fight.'" See *Zhouyi t'herphong*, 1: 27b. However, it is also possible to interpret both differently: "When yin feels it can disparage yang, there is sure to be a fight" (for the Commentary on the Words of the Text); "As it was not dealt with before this, its disparagement reaches full measure, and so it takes action. This is why 'there is sure to be a fight'" (for Wang Bi's commentary). This second reading follows Ito T'ogai's (1670—1736) interpretation; see *Shūeki kyōyoku tsūkan*, 1: 28. It glosses *yi* as *nagashiro ni suru*—"treat with contempt, disparage," i.e., "call into question one's viability." Later commentators, notably Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, ignore the remarks of Wang Bi and Kong Yingda and take *yin yi yu yang bi zhan* quite differently: "When yin is an equal match for yang, there is sure to be a fight," deriving the sense of "equal match" for *yi* from another of its basic meanings, "resemble, feign." See *Zhouyi t'herphong*, 16: 31a.

9. Following Kong Yingda's subcommentary: "Top Yin at the peak of its strength seems as if it were yang, and, because it calls into question the fact that it is pure yin and totally lacking in yang, 'it is referred to as a dragon' in order to make this clear." See *Zhouyi t'herphong*, 1: 27b.

10. Zhu Xi comments: "Blood belongs to the yin category. Qi [spirit, material force] is yang, and blood is yin. Black and yellow are the true colors of Heaven and Earth, so this means that yin and yang are both wounded here." This agrees with Cheng Yi's interpretation: "Although yin here is at the peak of its strength, it has not abandoned its yin-ness. As it fights with yang, we can be sure that it gets wounded. This is why 'there is mention of blood.' Yin has already reached the peak of its strength and even goes so far as to do battle with yang, so yang cannot avoid getting wounded. This is why the blood involved is black and yellow." See *Zhouyi t'herphong*, 16: 31a.

11. The All Use Yin Lines of Hexagram 2, the Commentary on the Images, and Wang Bi's commentary to both are all omitted in the *Wang Bi j'iaoshi* edition; translation of these texts here follows Kong, *Zhouyi t'herphong*, 1: 25b.



Zhun [Birth Threes]
(Zhen Below Kan Above)

Judgment

Zhun consists of fundamentality [*wan*], prevalence [*heng*], fitness [*li*], and constancy [*chen*]. {"When the hard and the soft begin to interact," *Zhun* [Birth Threes] occurs. If such interaction fails to take place, *Pi* [Obstruction, Hexagram 12] results. This is why, when *Zhun* occurs, it means great prevalence. With great prevalence, one is free from danger, and this is why it is fitting to practice constancy.} Do not use this as an opportunity to go forth. {"The more one would go forth, the greater the *Zhun* [Birth Threes].} It is fitting to establish a chief. {Stability will come about only with the obtaining of a master.} }

COMMENTARY ON THE JUDGMENTS

Zhun [Birth Threes] means the difficulty of giving birth when the hard and the soft begin to interact. One who takes action in the midst of danger here will greatly prevail and so can practice constancy. {It starts in danger and difficulty but goes on to arrive at great prevalence and, after that, attains perfect rectitude. This is why the text says: "*Zhun* [Birth Threes] consists of fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy."} It is by the action of thunder and rain that the repletion of things occurs, something always brought about by the hard and the soft when they "begin to interact." At this primordial stage of Heaven's creativity, though it is appropriate to establish a chief, it will not mean stability. {The *Zhun* hexagram signifies instability. Thus the text says: "It is fitting to establish a chief." *Zhun* represents the initial stage in the creative activity of Heaven and Earth, the beginning of the creation of things that takes place in primordial obscurity. This is why the text says "primordial stage." When one finds himself located at such

Hexagram 3: Zhun

initial stages of creative activity, there is no more appropriate good to pursue than that of establishing a chief. }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

Clouds and Thunder: this constitutes the image of Birth Threes. In the same way, the noble man weaves the fabric of government. {This is a time for the noble man to weave the fabric of government.} }

PROVIDING THE SEQUENCE OF THE HEXAGRAMS

Only after there were Heaven [*Qian*, Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] and Earth [*Kun*, Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] were the myriad things produced from them. What fills Heaven and Earth is nothing other than the myriad things. This is why *Qian* and *Kun* are followed by *Zhun* [Birth Threes]. *Zhun* here signifies repletion.

THE HEXAGRAMS IN IRREGULAR ORDER

Zhun [Birth Threes] means "making an appearance in such a way that one does not lose one's place."

First Yang

One should tarry here. It is fitting to abide in constancy. It is fitting to establish a chief. {To be located at First Yang of *Zhun* means that any action taken would result in trouble, so one may not advance; this is why the text says: "One should tarry here." When one is located at this moment, what is the fit thing to do? Can it be anything other than to "abide in constancy" and to "establish a chief"? One brings cessation to chaos by means of quietude, and one maintains that quietude by means of a chief. Pacifying the people depends on the practice of quietude, and the promotion of rectitude depends on modesty [*qian*]. In the world of trouble represented by *Zhun*, the yin seek out the yang, and the weak seek out the strong. It is a time when the people long for their master. First Yang is located at the head of *Zhun*, but it also lies at the bottom of it. Its line text perfectly expresses what is meant here, and how just is its way for winning over the people. }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

Although "one should tarry here," may his will be set on practicing rectitude. {One may not advance here; this is why the text says: "One should tarry." But this does not mean seeking one's own happiness and setting aside one's rightful duties. This is why the text says: "Although 'one should tarry here,' may his will be set on practicing rectitude."} It is by the noble subordinating himself to his inferiors that he wins over the people in large numbers. {Yang is noble, and yin is inferior.}

Second Yin

Here *Zhun* [Birth Threes] operates as *impasse*, as yoked horses pulling at odds. She is not one to be harassed into getting married but practices constancy and does not plight her troth. Only after ten years will she plight her troth. {Second Yin, its intent fixed on Fifth Yang, does not acquiesce to First Yang. At this time of difficulty in *Zhun*, the correct Dao does not function, so although Second Yin is contiguous to First Yang, it is not responsive to it. Here Second Yin is hampered by encroachment on the part of First Yang, and this is why *Zhun* is defined as "impasse." As this moment is just at a point of difficulty in *Zhun*, the correct Dao⁴ is not yet open, so although a long journey is in order, it is difficult to make progress here. This is why the text says "as yoked horses pulling at odds." The one doing the harassing is First Yang. If it were not for the difficulty caused by First Yang, Second Yin would, of course, marry First Yang. This is why the text says: "She is not one to be harassed into getting married." As Second Yin has its intent fixed on Fifth Yang and does not acquiesce to First Yang, the text says that she "does not plight her troth." This condition, of a world subject to *Zhun* as difficulty, will not last longer than ten years. After ten years, there will be "a return to the constant Dao," and once that happens, the object of one's original intent will be gained. This is why the text says: "Only after ten years will she plight her troth."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

The difficulty that Second Yin suffers is due to the fact that it rides on a hard [yang] line. "Only after ten years will she plight her troth" refers to a return to the constant Dao.

Third Yin

To go after deer without a forester would only get one lost in the depths of the forest. The noble man, then, is aware that it would be better to refrain, for if he were to set out he would find it hard going. {Third Yin, having got close to Fifth Yang, is free from any difficulty stemming from harassment, and, although Fourth Yin is right next to Fifth Yang, its intention is fixed on First Yang, so there is nothing to block Third Yin's own path and it can thus advance, free from the *impasse* *Zhun* offers. It might see how easy is the path to Fifth Yang but neglect to reckon on what it is: since Fifth Yang resonates with Second Yin, if Third Yin were to set off for it, it would not be accepted by it. How would this be any different from trying to pursue a quarry without the help of a forester? Although one might sight the quarry, without the forester, he would merely "get . . . lost in the depths of the forest," so how could he ever catch it? *Ji* [then] is an interjection.⁵ How could the noble man in his actions ever bring contempt and humiliation upon himself? This is why "it would be better to refrain" and "if he were to set out he would find it hard going" and "find himself in dire straits."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"To go after deer without a forester": rather than pursuing quarry in this way the noble man refrains. "If he were to set out he would find it hard going" and would find himself in dire straits.

Fourth Yin

Although it involves yoked horses pulling at odds, one seeks to get married here. To set out means good fortune, and all will be fitting without fail. {Although Second Yin is right next to First Yang, it holds fast to constancy and does not acquiesce, as it is not one to harm its own intention. But here Fourth Yin seeks to marry First Yang, and when it sets forth, it surely will be accepted. This is why the text says: "To set out means good fortune, and all will be fitting without fail."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

That one may seek and so go forth here is clear. {It has discerned the conditions pertaining to the other lines.}

Fifth Yang

Benefaction here is subject to the difficulty of *Zhun*. To practice constancy in small ways means good fortune, but to practice constancy in major ways means misfortune. {To be located in difficulties as represented by *Zhun* means that although one here finds himself in a noble position, he cannot extend great measures of largess and nobility to everyone, for his powers to succor others are limited by his own weakness and by obstacles: he may be a pervasive force among this petty crowd, but he is still tied as a matter of resonance to Second Yin. "Benefaction here is subject to the difficulty of *Zhun*." This means that this is not the place where one can extend himself to others in a grand way. He should keep his intention firmly fixed on his comrade [Second Yin] and not let others drive a wedge between them. Thus "to practice constancy in small ways means good fortune, but to practice constancy in major ways means misfortune." }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"Benefaction here is subject to the difficulty of *Zhun*": this means that it is not yet the time to extend one's powers in a grand way.

Top Yin

As one's yoked horses pull at odds, so one weeps profuse tears of blood. {This is to occupy a place of the utmost danger and difficulty: below there is no one to respond with help, and ahead there is no place to which one may suitably advance. Although Top Yin is right next to Fifth Yang, Fifth Yang's "benefaction . . . is subject to the difficulty of *Zhun*," so the situation does not lend itself to their mutual response. To stand fast here will not gain security, and there is no suitable place to which one might move. Here one is trapped in the most dire of predicaments and has absolutely no one on whom to rely. This is why the text says: "So one weeps profuse tears of blood." }

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"So one weeps profuse tears of blood": how can one last long here!

NOTES

1. See Wang's remarks on this hexagram in section seven of his General Remarks. Note that this and all subsequent text set off in this manner is commentary by Wang Bi.

2. "Chief" translates *hou* (skilled archer, i.e., chief). Kong Yingda thinks (after Wang Bi, see below) that this refers to the time when "the Dao of the human world was first created, when things in it were not yet settled, so this is why it is appropriate to establish a chief in order to achieve stability." See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, I: 28a. However, in his next comment on *hou*, Kong seems to have changed his mind and glosses it as *zhuhou* (feudal lords): "It is suitable that the sovereign take this *Zhun* hexagram as guide and appropriate that he establish feudal lords in order to extend his kindness to all creatures everywhere." See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, I: 29a. Although Cheng Yi also glosses *hou* as *zhuhou* in his comment on this passage, Zhu Xi thinks that it refers to First Yang, the ruler of the entire hexagram, which lies beneath yin lines and thus is an image of a sovereign who emerges as a worthy from the common folk—something more in line with Wang's "master." For Zhu's and Cheng's views, see *Zhouyi zhengyi*, I: 20b.

3. "Weave the fabric of government" translates *jinglian*, that is, *jingwei*, the warp and woof of fabric, a metaphor for order/ordering, government/governing. See Cheng Yi's and Zhu Xi's comments in *Zhouyi zhengyi*, I: 7b.

4. This is playing on the literal meaning of *dao* as "way" or "path."

5. The translation of *ji* (then) in Third Yin follows this gloss of Wang Bi; Kong Yingda also takes *ji* this way. See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, I: 30b. However, later commentators such as Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi take *ji* as a substantive noun *incipience* as it occurs in section ten of the Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One: "It is by means of the *Changes* that the sages plumb the utmost profundity and dig into the very incipience of things." *Junzi ji* (the noble man, then, . . .) is glossed by Cheng Yi as *junzi jian shi zhi jiuwei* (the noble man discerns the incipient and imperceptible beginnings of things), and Zhu Xi glosses it as simply *junzhi jian ji* (the noble man discerns incipience). See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, I: 23b. In the light of these glosses, Third Yin would read: "The noble man, discerning what is incipient here, is aware that it would be better to stand fast."

6. "If he were to set out he would find it hard going" translates *wang lin*. Lou Yuli cites Sun Xingyan's (1773–1818) *Zhouyi jiyi* (Collected exegeses on the *Changes* of the Zhou):

The *Shawen Jizhi* [Explanations of simple and composite characters], an etymological dictionary of Chinese compiled about 100 a.d. by Xi Shen], cites *wang lin* [using the *lin* that in various contexts means "regret" or "base"] as *wang lin* [another character], in which *lin* means "hard going." Whenever the expressions *wang lin*, *wang jian lin* [if he were to set out he would experience hard going], and *yi wang lin* [if he were to set out in this way he would find it hard going] occur, they all ought to be interpreted in this way, for *lin* here is not the *lin* in *hulin* [remorse and regret]. See *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, I: 244 n. 14.

Hexagram 4: Meng

This interpretation seems to hold true for occurrences in Wang Bi's commentary, and Kong Yingda usually understands *lin* this way when it occurs together with *wang* (set out), but not always: here, for instance, he understands it as *hulin* (remorse and regret). See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 30b.

HEXAGRAM 4

*Meng* [Juvenile Ignorance]

(Kan Below Gen Above)

Judgment

Meng brings about prevalence. It is not I who seek the Juvenile Ignorant but the Juvenile Ignorant who seeks me. An initial rendering of the yarrow stalks should be told, but a second or a third would result in violation. If there were such violation, I should not tell him. {The yarrow stalks are things that resolve doubts. The reason why a youth beset by ignorance seeks me is that he wants me to resolve the uncertainties that he has. If I resolve them in more than one way, he will not know which solution to follow and would then be thrown back into uncertainty. This is why "an initial rendering of the yarrow stalks should be told, but a second or third would result in violation" and "the one who would bring about this violation is the Juvenile Ignorant." How could other than Second Yang ever manage "an initial rendering of the yarrow stalks"! It is due to its "strength and adherence to the Mean" that it can decide such doubts.} It is fitting to practice constancy here. {The fitness associated with *Meng* means that it is fitting to practice rectitude here. None is more perspicacious than the sage, and none is more benighted than the Juvenile Ignorant. "To take Juvenile Ignorance and cultivate rectitude in it," in fact, "is the meritorious task

Hexagram 4: Meng

of the sage." As this is so, if one were instead to try to achieve perspicacity by cultivating rectitude [in others], this would be to misconstrue the Dao involved.?

COMMENTARY ON THE JUDGMENTS

Meng [Juvenile Ignorance] consists of a dangerous place below a mountain. In danger and brought to a halt: this is *Meng*. {If one retreats, he will come to grief in danger; but if one advances, he will find the mountain a shut door, so he does not know where to go. This is the meaning of *Meng*.} "*Meng* brings about prevalence": *Meng* operates through prevalence and is a matter of timeliness and the Mean. {What this moment of *Meng* wants to achieve is nothing other than prevalence. One makes *Meng* work by means of prevalence, and this is a matter of obtaining both the right moment and a mean position. It is not I who seek the Juvenile Ignorant but the Juvenile Ignorant who seeks me"; their intentions are in resonance. "I" refers to the one who is not the Juvenile Ignorant. The one who is not the Juvenile Ignorant is [Second] Yang. It is always one who does not know who seeks out and asks one who does know; the one who does know does not seek to have things told to him. The unenlightened seeks out the perspicacious; the perspicacious does not solicit the counsel of the unenlightened. Thus the meaning of *Meng* is such that "it is not I who seek the Juvenile Ignorant but the Juvenile Ignorant who seeks me." The reason the "Juvenile Ignorant" comes and seeks "me" is that "their intentions are in resonance."} "An initial rendering of the yarrow stalks should be told": this he can do because of his strength and adherence to the Mean. {This refers to Second Yang. Second Yang is the master of all the yin lines. If it both lacked strength and violated the Mean, what possibly could it draw upon for the telling of "an initial rendering of the yarrow stalks"!} "But a second or a third would result in violation. If there were such violation, I should not tell him." The one who would bring about this violation is the Juvenile Ignorant. To take Juvenile Ignorance and cultivate rectitude in it is the meritorious task of the sage.

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

Below the Mountain emerges the Spring: this constitutes the image of Juvenile Ignorance. {Below the Mountain emerges the

Spring," which is something that does not yet know where to go. This is the image of Juvenile Ignorance.} In the same way, the noble man makes his actions resolute and nourishes his virtue. {"Makes his actions resolute" is the meaning underlying "an initial rendering of the yarrow stalks." "Nourishes his virtue" is the "meritorious task" of "cultivating rectitude."}

PROVIDING THE SEQUENCE OF THE HEXAGRAMS

Zhun [Birth Threes, Hexagram 3] is when things are first born. When things begin life, they are sure to be covered [the literal meaning of *meng*—i.e., encapsulated in membranes, eggs, or seeds]. This is why *Zhun* is followed by *Meng* [Juvenile Ignorance]. *Meng* [covered] here indicates *Meng* [Juvenile Ignorance], that is, the immature state of things.

THE HEXAGRAMS IN IRREGULAR ORDER

Meng [Juvenile Ignorance] indicates confusion first followed by a coming to prominence.

First Yin

With the opening up of Juvenile Ignorance, it is fitting both to subject him to the awareness of punishment and to remove fetters and shackles, but if he were to set out in this way, he would find it hard going. {When one is located at First Yin of *Meng*, Second Yang provides illumination from above, so this is why "the opening up of Juvenile Ignorance" occurs here. "With the opening up of Juvenile Ignorance," one's hesitation to act is cleared up, so both the awareness of punishment and the removal are appropriate. "But if he were to set out in this way, he would find it hard going" means that the threat of punishment cannot long be used.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"It is fitting to subject him . . . to the awareness of punishment": one does this by rectifying what the law is. {The dao of punishment is something that the true Dao finds despicable.⁵ One attempts to control him by rectifying what the law is: thus there is this reference to "subjecting him to the awareness of punishment."}

Second Yang

To treat the Juvenile Ignorant with magnanimity means good fortune. To take a wife means good fortune. His child will be up to taking charge of the family. {It is due to Second Yang's strength and its abiding in centrality [the Mean] that it attracts the Juvenile Ignorant. As Second Yang is magnanimous and does not spurn them, those both near and far all arrive. This is why "to treat the Juvenile Ignorant with magnanimity means good fortune." A wife is someone who serves to complement him and so allows him to perfect his virtue. If one embodies the yang principle and yet can treat the Juvenile Ignorant with magnanimity, if one can abide in the Mean with one's strength intact, and if one takes a mate in this way, then no one will fail to respond positively to him. This is why "to take a wife means good fortune." Here one finds himself situated inside the lower trigram [i.e., the household]: with strength intact, he receives the weak, and, though kind and affable, he manages to maintain the Mean. As he is able to fulfill his duties in this way, he can pass them on to his child. This is what is meant by "his child will be up to taking charge of the family."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"His child will be up to taking charge of the family": the strong and the weak [generation by generation] accept [succeed] one another.

Third Yin

It will not do to marry this woman. Here she sees a man strong as metal and discards her self-possession, so there is nothing at all fitting here. {At the time of Juvenile Ignorance, the yin seek out the yang, and the benighted seek out the perspicacious, when each one seeks to have his lack of understanding alleviated. Third Yin is located at the top of the lower trigram, and Top Yang is located at the top of the upper trigram; they represent a woman and a man, respectively. It is not Top Yang that seeks Third Yin, but Third Yin who seeks Top Yang. This is a case of the woman taking the lead and seeking the man. The true embodiment of a woman is such that it is correct behavior for her to await commands. But here when she "sees a man strong as metal," she seeks him, and this is why the

text says that she "discards her self-possession." If one were to extend himself to such a woman, he would find that her behavior is essentially disobedient. Thus the text says: "It will not do to marry this woman" and "there is nothing at all fitting here."⁸⁷

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"It will not do to marry this woman": her behavior is disobedient.

Fourth Yin

Here confounded by Juvenile Ignorance, one becomes base. {This is the only yin line that is distant from a yang line. It is located between two yin lines, so there is no one to alleviate its darkness. This is why one is "here confounded by Juvenile Ignorance." Confounded by the darkness of Juvenile Ignorance, Fourth Yin is unable to get close to a worthy and so start to develop the right kind of intentions, something that leads as well to meanness. This is why the text says "base."⁸⁸}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

The baseness associated with being "confounded by Juvenile Ignorance" is due to being alone at a distance from the solid and the real. {Yang is referred to here as "the solid and the real."}

Fifth Yin

The Juvenile Ignorant here will find good fortune. {Here is someone with yin character who abides in a noble position. He does not take responsibility for supervising himself but instead relies on Second Yang for that. If he delegates authority so things can be done and if he does not belabor his own intelligence, efforts at achievement will be successful. This is why the text says: "The Juvenile Ignorant here will find good fortune."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

The good fortune associated with Juvenile Ignorance here is due to compliant behavior achieved through an obedient mind. {He

delegates authority so things can be done, neither takes the lead nor initiates action: this is "compliant behavior achieved through an obedient mind."⁸⁹

Top Yang

Strike at Juvenile Ignorance, but it is not fitting to engage in harassment; it is fitting to guard against harassment. {Here one is located at the end point of *Meng*. Occupying the top position with strength, he can strike at and drive away Juvenile Ignorance and so alleviate their [the yin lines] darkness. Thus the text says: "Strike at Juvenile Ignorance." Juvenile Ignorance wishes to be alleviated, and Top Yang itself wishes to strike at it and drive it away. As this meets the wishes of those above and those below [all the yin lines], none fails to comply. If one were to provide protection for them, then all would attach themselves to him, but to try to take them over by force would make them all rebel. Thus the text says: "It is not fitting to engage in harassment; it is fitting to guard against harassment."⁹⁰}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"It is fitting to guard against harassment": For those above and those below will all comply.

NOTES

1. This and all subsequent text set off in this manner is commentary by Wang Bi.
2. See Wang's remarks on this hexagram in section seven of his General Remarks.
3. *Meng* consists of the trigrams *Kan* (Water, Sink Hole), the "danger," and *Gen* (Mountain, Restraint), the "shut door" of the mountain.
4. Kong Yingda comments:

Once Juvenile Ignorance is dispersed, there is nothing to inhibit his actions, and this is why it is fitting to apply the threat of punishment to him. It is also fitting to remove the fetters and shackles of the criminal. As Juvenile Ignorance has been dispersed, matters about which he felt doubt have become clarified. In all such cases, it is

Hexagram 4: Meng

appropriate that the criminal have his fetters and shackles removed. . . . If he were to set out imbued with the Correct Dao, the goodness of his actions would keep on increasing, but if he were to set out subject to the dao of punishment, there would be a mean-spirited aspect to what he does.

See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 33a.

"Mean-spirited" translates *blin* and is thus a gloss on *lin* (hard going). Later Neo-Confucians interpret this passage differently. Although Cheng Yi seems to agree with Wang and Kong that punishment is inimical to the Dao and that what is really needed is the internalization of the sense of goodness, he differs from them in thinking that removing the "fetters and shackles" is a metaphor for the lifting of ignorance itself. Zhu Xi takes another view of how the lifting of ignorance should take place: "One first ought to punish severely and then for a time release him [from the fetters and shackles] in order to see how he behaves afterward. If one lets him set out but does not release him from them, this would result in the utmost shame and remorse." Wang Anshi and some others take an even different approach: If one does not use severe punishments right at the start to correct small faults but instead frees the ignorant youth from his fetters and shackles, this will inevitably lead to a "dao of remorse." See also Hexagram 62, Xiaoguo (Minor Superiority), Fifth Yin, and note 11 there.

5. Cf. *Laoyi*, sections 36 and 49, pp. 89–90 and 129, where a similar idea is expressed.

6. "Man strong as metal" translates *jinyin*. Kong Yingda comments: "Top Yang is called *jinyin* because of its strength and yang-ness." See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 33b. Both Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi explain *jinyin* as "a wealthy man" whom the woman here wants for his money; Cheng also thinks that she has discarded the one she rightly ought to respond to (Top Yang) and instead chases after the nearby and convenient Second Yang; thus, in his view, she is both greedy and opportunistic. See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 29b.

7. "Base" translates *lin* (elsewhere "remorse" or "hard going"). For another such instance of *lin* (including "baseness" and "debasement"), see Hexagram 40, Xie (Release), Third Yin, and note 9 there.

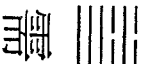
8. "Neither takes the lead nor initiates action" translates *bu xian bu wei*. Wang expresses a similar view in almost exactly the same language in his commentary to *Laoyi*, sections 10 and 28, pp. 23 and 74. "Compliant behavior" translates *sun (shun)*—cf. *Sun* (Compliance), Hexagram 17—and "obedient mind" translates *shun*, following Kong Yingda's subcommentary; see *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 34a.

9. Cheng Yi interprets this passage differently. He thinks that Top Yang represents Juvenile Ignorance at its worst and strongest, at the point where it leads one to banditry and rebellion. Thus one must strike hard at it. In the light of his commentary, the text would mean: "Attack the Juvenile Ignorant. It is not fitting that he engage in banditry. It is fitting to prevent such banditry." Zhu Xi's commentary, however, seems to agree with that of Wang Bi: one should strike at Juvenile Ignorance but avoid excessive force. He

Hexagram 5: Xu

also adds the remark: "All one can do is guard against enticements to evil from without, so that the Juvenile Ignorant can perfect his truth and purity." As such, Zhu provides a more specific gloss on "guard against harassment" than does Wang Bi (or Kong Yingda). See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 1: 31a–31b.

HEXAGRAM 5



Xu [Waiting]

(Qian Below Kan Above)

Judgment

As there is sincerity in waiting, so prevalence shall be gloriously manifest, and constancy result in good fortune. It is fitting to cross the great river.

COMMENTARY ON THE JUDGMENTS

Xu means "waiting," as danger lies in front. Hard and strong, one does not founder here, the meaning of which is, one will not find himself in dire straits. "As there is sincerity in waiting, so prevalence shall be gloriously manifest, and constancy result in good fortune": here one abides in the place of Heaven and does so with rectitude and within the Mean. {This refers to Fifth Yang. Here one abides in the place of Heaven² and practices rectitude and the Mean. It is by doing so that he makes provision against all contingencies. This is how the Dao of Xu is perfectly realized. Thus "prevalence shall be gloriously manifest, and constancy result in good fortune."} "It is fitting to cross the great river": this means that if one were to set forth, he would gain meritorious achievement.