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# Making Connections: “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” of the *Book of Change*

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**O**FTEN dismissed as an ambiguous appendix to an enigmatic divination text, the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” (“Hsi tz’u chuan” 繫辭傳) of the *Book of Change* (*Yi ching* 易經) has been for some two thousand years one of the most important statements in the Chinese tradition on knowing how the cosmos works and how humans might relate to that working. Especially from the Sung through the Ch’ing period, the “Great Commentary” (“Ta chuan” 大傳), as it was also called,<sup>1</sup> provided the locus classicus for vocabulary and concepts in nearly every major abstract discussion of the physical world and man’s place in it.

As readers we might reasonably expect that the purpose of a commentary is to explain the text which it addresses, but we would miss part of the intent of the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” if we were to attempt to read it only as an explication of words and phrases in the *Change* and as an explanation of the hows and whys of its technique for prognostication. When we accept the “Commentary” as a set of assertions which are aimed at persuading us to a certain view of how and why we might best operate in the

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Larry Schulz, Chris Murck, and Peter Bol for their contributions to my understanding of the “Commentary,” and to A. C. Graham for his helpful criticisms of an earlier draft.

<sup>1</sup> See below, n. 29. “Ta chuan” is also rendered into English as the “Great Appendix” and the “Great Treatise.”

world we find about us, we will be able to understand it not only as a commentary (*chuan* 傳), but also as a tradition (*ch'uan* 傳), a passed-down set of teachings which takes its point of departure from the verbalizations (*tz'u* 辭) which are attached (*hsi* 繫) to the sixty-four hexagrams of the divination text. The "Commentary" explains the cosmos and our relation to it by reference to the text and technique of the *Change*. At the same time, in the process of establishing its assertions, the "Commentary" subordinates the *Change* to its own purposes.

In turn, I am seeking to interpret the "Commentary" in a manner that suits my purpose. While I have taken into consideration some of the layers of annotation and explanation which the "Commentary" has accumulated, my approach in general has been to avoid depending on interpretations which represent the imposition of post-Han concepts. I am open to the criticisms that my own viewpoint, of course, is not only inevitably post-Han, but also distorts the ideas in the "Commentary" by expressing them in late twentieth-century English. I can only answer that I have tried not to read the "Commentary" through the eyes of earlier discussants, but have confronted the text itself with my own understanding of third and second century B.C. vocabulary, grammar, and ideas. My appeal for support for my interpretations is primarily to the context provided by the "Commentary" itself, and only minimally and implicitly to the intellectual milieu which prevailed when the "Commentary" came into being. At the risk of reading too much into the text, I try to show how it makes sense. Starting from the assumptions that the "Commentary" presents an argument intended to persuade its readers and transform their way of looking at the world rather than to confirm what they already know, I try to bring out what I infer are the main points of that argument in order to establish the relative place of the "Commentary" in the topography of Chinese intellectual history.

The discussion which follows considers first what the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" is, then the four major claims which it makes, and finally the grounds on which the "Commentary" establishes its claims.

## THE "COMMENTARY" AND ITS LABELS

The "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" constitutes two of the so-called Ten Wings (*shih yi* 十翼) of the *Change*. (The Ten Wings are the "T'uan chuan" 象傳, "Hsiang chuan" 象傳, and "Hsi tz'u chuan," each in two parts (*p'ien* 篇), the "Wen yen" 文言, "Shuo kua" 說卦, "Hsu kua" 序卦, and the "Tsa kua" 雜卦.) At the beginning of the twentieth century the text of the "Commentary" was available in two main recensions. One stems from K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達 (574-648), whose *Cheng-yi* 正義 version as printed in the Sung was followed in the imperially sponsored printing of the Thirteen Classics in 1739 (i.e., the Palace, or *Wu-ying-tien* 武英殿 edition); in Juan Yuan's 阮元 (1764-1849) reproduction in 1816 of a Sung edition with his own critical apparatus appended to mark textual variants; and in the compilation of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Index of the *Change*.<sup>2</sup> The *Cheng-yi* version includes the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" with the annotation of Han K'ang 韓康 (Han K'ang-po; third century); for the text of the classic, K'ung Ying-ta included the annotation of Wang Pi 王弼 (226-49). The text of the *Change* used by Wang Pi is traced back by way of the commentator Cheng Hsuan 鄭玄 (127-200) to the *ku-wen* version taught by Fei Chih 費直 (fl. middle of 1st century B.C.). Fei's teachings had not been established, as had the *chin-wen* interpretation, with an official position at court in Western Han.<sup>3</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that the *Cheng-yi* version of the "Commentary" has the same genealogy as the text of the *Change* it accompanies, except that Wang Pi did not prepare annotation on the "Commentary" itself. The first part (*p'ien*) of the *Cheng-yi* version has twelve sections (*chang* 章) and the second part has nine. In the other main recension, Chu Hsi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) *Yi pen yi* 易本義, the "Commentary" is divided into twelve sections in each of the two parts. The two recensions differ over where most of the sections begin, and Chu Hsi rearranged some sentences from two *Cheng-yi* sections, but except for these organizational features the two versions of the text of the "Commentary" are nearly identical.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Chou yi yin te* 周易引得 (1935; rpt. Taipei: Ch'eng wen, 1966).

<sup>3</sup> "Ju lin chuan" 儒林傳, *Han shu* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1962), 88.3602.

<sup>4</sup> Chu Hsi, *Yi pen yi* (rpt. Taipei: Shih-chieh, 1962). There are occasional orthographical

In part the basis for Chu Hsi's rearrangement of the "Commentary" was Lü Tsu-ch'ien's 呂祖謙 (1137–81) synthesis of known rubbings and fragments of Han stone tablets on which the text of the *Change* had been engraved, as well as early quotations from them.<sup>5</sup> The texts of seven classics, including the *Change* with the Ten Wings, had been carved in stone on imperial order in the reign of Emperor Ling (r. 168–88), but they seem to have been lost by the beginning of T'ang.<sup>6</sup>

Fragments began to be recovered again near Loyang in the 1920s and rubbings published, but the provenance, and even the whereabouts, of some of the pieces of stone remains unclear. The most reliable set of fragments are those found by Ma Heng and Hsu Shen-yü and published as rubbings, with transcriptions and comments, in the *Han shih ching chi ts'un*.<sup>7</sup> Although they were able to report only eight characters from the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations,"<sup>8</sup> an exhaustive collation of all known fragments and rubbings of fragments carried out by Ch'ü Wan-li resulted in more than 4,000 characters from the Han stones for the *Change* and the Ten Wings.<sup>9</sup> This includes, by my rough count, 1,240 characters recovered for the present text of the "Commentary" out of a total of approximately 4,480. Although he accounts for nearly half of the characters in the first part (but only Ma Heng's eight in the second part), Ch'ü Wan-li's reconstructed text is not extensive enough to constitute a third recension of the "Commentary." The "Commentary" text carved on the stone tablets in Han was based on the version

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differences, as in Chu Hsi's A12.22, where he has *ts'u* 措 for *ts'o* 錯; the latter should be read *ts'u* in this context.

<sup>5</sup> Ch'ü Wan-li 屈萬里, *Han shih ching Chou yi ts'an tzu chi cheng* 漢石經周易殘字集證 (Taipei: CYYY, 1961), 1.23b–24a. Also see *Ku Chou yi* 古周易 entry in *Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao* (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1933), pp. 34–35.

<sup>6</sup> Ch'ü Wan-li, 1.1b, 1.2b–3a. The order for engraving the texts was given in 175 and the task completed in 183. The classics engraved were the *Shih*, *Shu*, *Yi*, *Yi-li*, *Ch'un-ch'iu*, *Kung-yang chuan*, and *Lun yü*.

<sup>7</sup> Ma Heng 馬衡, Hsu Shen-yü 徐森玉, et al. *Han shih ching chi ts'un* 漢石經集存, 2 vols. (Peking: K'o-hsueh ch'u-pan she, 1957).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 27b. The eight characters are from two columns of the last section of the second part.

<sup>9</sup> Ch'ü Wan-li, preface, 3b. Where no rubbing of the Han stones was available, Ch'ü followed, with some emendations, the text as contained on rubbings of stone tablets carved in T'ang. See 2.1a–b.

taught by Liang-ch'iu 梁丘, after comparison with the texts used by the other three officially recognized schools teaching the *Change*.<sup>10</sup> The reconstructed version supports one of Chu Hsi's main rearrangements and generally shows few variations, except orthographical ones, from the *Cheng-yi* and Chu Hsi recensions, which both derived from Fei Chih's "unofficial" text.<sup>11</sup> Incised on the backs of three stone tablets, with the text of the *Change* on the front, the "Commentary" is divided into two parts (*p'ien*). Sections (*chang*) are preceded by a dot. In the six instances where Ch'ü Wan-li has evidence for the beginning of a section, they correspond to the beginnings of sections in the *Cheng-yi* version.<sup>12</sup> The reconstructed text of the "Commentary" from the Han and T'ang stones indicates that the words in the two main recensions are derived from at least the latter half of the second century.

There is extant, but not yet published, a version of the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" against which the two main recensions must be appraised. It is written on silk and was discovered along with the text of the *Change* in Grave No. 3 at Ma-wang-tui in Hunan. The other Wings were not found. If, as is conjectured, the grave was sealed in 168 B.C., then it is clearly the earliest text known of the "Commentary." According to the reports, it runs to approximately 2,700 characters and is not divided into two parts. The silk manuscript lacks the eighth section and reverses the order of the two which appear as the ninth and tenth sections of the first part of the *Cheng yi* version. Compared with the second part of the *Cheng yi* text, the silk manuscript has a longer fifth section, part of which appears in the present text of the "Shuo kua" wing, and has a shorter fourth section.<sup>13</sup> The discrepancies as they are reported do not seem to account for the disparity in the length of the silk "Commentary"

<sup>10</sup> Ch'ü Wan-li, 1.4a, 1.25a-31a; Ma Heng, 29a.

<sup>11</sup> See Ch'ü Wan-li, 5b. Examples of orthographical differences are the use on the stones of 厶 for the 坤 of the present text, and 辯 for 變.

<sup>12</sup> The six sections are, in the *Cheng-yi* arrangement: A1, A2, A5, A6, A7, and A11; A1 and A2 correspond to the beginnings of Chu Hsi's first and second sections, and A6 to the beginning of Chu Hsi's eighth section.

<sup>13</sup> "Ma-wang-tui erh, san hao Han mu fa-ch'üeh te chu-yao shou-huo" 馬王堆二, 三號漢墓發掘的主要收穫, *KK* (1975), No. 1, p. 50. The silk manuscript reportedly is now under the control of the Archaeology Section (K'ao-ku so 考古所) of the Academy of Social Sciences (She-hui k'o-hsueh yuan) in Peking.

(2,700 characters) in comparison with the modern recensions, which have something like 4,480 characters. Needless to say, publication of a facsimile of the silk manuscript would provide the basis for a re-examination of our present text.

For nearly two thousand years it was generally held that Confucius was the author of the ideas in the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations," even if it did not come directly from his hand. There are still some who hold that view, although the attribution has been doubted as early as Ou-yang Hsiu (1017-72) and by various other writers since.<sup>14</sup> Chu Hsi was speaking for the consensus in his note at the beginning of the "Commentary": "The phrase 'attached verbalizations' basically refers to the verbalizations made by King Wen and the Duke of Chou and to their being attached to the hexagrams and lines, that is to say, what we regard today as the text of the classic [as distinguished from the texts of the Ten Wings]. These [two] parts are the commentary which was transmitted by Confucius on the attached verbalizations."<sup>15</sup> In the last fifty years there has been an influential body of opinion, though hardly unanimous, holding that Confucius had nothing to do with the compilation of the "Commentary."<sup>16</sup> Although the negative assertion has not been proved that the "Commentary" does not represent Confucius' teachings, there is on the other hand a noticeable paucity of incontestable evidence to support the positive assertion that he *did* propound, if not write, the ideas we now have in the form of the Ten Wings.

No reference or allusion can be cited from pre-Han times to connect Confucius with the Ten Wings. The earliest statement which associates some of them with Confucius is in the *Records of the Histo-*

<sup>14</sup> See Li Ching-ch'ih 李鏡池, "Yi chuan t'an yuan" 易傳探源, *Ku shih pien* 古史辯, III (1931), 97-99; and Chu Yi-tsun 朱彝尊, *Ching yi k'ao* 經義考 (*SPPY*), 4.17a. For a summary of Ou-yang Hsiu's views on the "Commentary," see Iulian K. Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, trans. William L. MacDonald and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 67-71.

<sup>15</sup> Chu Hsi, *Yi pen yi*, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup> See the lecture given in 1928 by Ch'ien Mu 錢穆, "Lun 'Shih yi' fei K'ung tzu tso" 論十翼非孔子作, *Ku shih pien*, III (1931), 89-94. Ch'ien Mu acknowledged that he was not the first to make some of the ten points in his argument. Also see Ch'ien Mu, *Hsien Ch'in chu tzu hsi nien k'ao pien* 先秦諸子繫年考辯 (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1936), pp. 13-14. Shchutskii independently concluded that the "Commentary" was not compiled by Confucius.

rian, completed in about 100 B.C. "Late in his life, Confucius delighted in the *Change* and put in order (*hsu* 序) the 'T'uan,' the 'Attached,' the 'Hsiang,' the 'Shuo kua,' and the 'Wen yen.' He read the *Change* so assiduously that the leather thongs broke three times. He said, 'If I had a few more years and went on like this, then from the *Change* I would combine being both accomplished in our culture and firmly based in my own self.'"<sup>17</sup> Some commentators (notably the *Cheng-yi* commentary on the *Records of the Historian*) have suggested that the word *hsu* in the first sentence is not a verb but refers to the "Hsu kua," another of the Ten Wings. If that reading is followed, then the purport of the sentence is that Confucius knew nine of the Ten Wings and was fascinated by them and the text of the *Change*, but not that he had a hand in compiling or editing them. The three sentences thus might be taken as an aside in the discussion on Confucius' involvement in compiling and ordering the texts of the *Poetry, History, Ritual, and Spring and Autumn*. The biography goes on to record that "Confucius taught poetry, history, ritual, and music,"<sup>18</sup> and his concern for these subjects, and their texts, is repeatedly evidenced in the biography as well as in the *Analects*. Confucius may have "delighted" in the *Change*, but any number of critics have noticed that nowhere else in this earliest biography of Confucius is there any mention of his involvement with the *Change* or with commentaries on it. It has even been suggested that the three sentences associating him with the *Change* were added to the biography after Ssu-ma Ch'ien's death.<sup>19</sup> Be that as it may (and I might interject that I see no necessity for doubting that the three sentences are Ssu-ma Ch'ien's), if the first sentence is evidence that Confucius authored the Ten Wings, then it must be acknowledged that the crucial word, *hsu*, is ambiguous, and in either case seems a weak way of assigning responsibility to Confucius for the commentaries.

The other reference in the *Records of the Historian* to Confucius and the *Change* is merely that a certain Shang Ch'ü 商瞿 of Lu was taught the *Change* by Confucius and transmitted the teaching after Con-

<sup>17</sup> "K'ung tzu shih chia" 孔子世家, *Shih chi* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1959), 47.1937. I have taken *pin-pin* 彬彬 to mean combining *wen* 文 and *chih* 質. Cf. *Lun yü*, 6.18: "One is a gentleman only after he has combined being accomplished in our culture and being firmly based in his own self." Also see *Lun yü*, 7.17.

<sup>18</sup> *Shih chi*, 47.1938.

<sup>19</sup> Li Ching-ch'ih, *Ku shih pien*, III, 103.



fucius' death.<sup>20</sup> But the historical veracity of this statement, too, can be doubted. The context is a discussion of the line of transmission of teaching by specialists on the *Change* in early Han; the names of Confucius and Shang Ch'ü appear as the origins of the teachings, and then there is, in effect, a hiatus until the appearance of T'ien Ho 田何 at the beginning of Han.<sup>21</sup>

A source of doubtful value, the *Ch'ien k'un tso tu* 乾坤鑿度, ostensibly from the last decades of Western Han but more probably compiled in Sung, explicitly credits Confucius with "making" (*tso* 作) the Ten Wings. It reports that at the age of fifty he investigated the *Change* and made the Ten Wings after turning away from study of ritual and history because he was frustrated in his ambitions. If the present text of the *Ch'ien k'un tso tu* were from Western Han, then it would also be the locus classicus for the term "Ten Wings."<sup>22</sup>

The earliest indisputable and explicit assertion that Confucius was involved with the commentaries to the *Change* is in the *Han History*. Completed about A.D. 100, it says of Confucius, "Late in his life he began to like the *Change* and, reading it so assiduously that the leather thongs broke three times, he prepared commentaries for it."<sup>23</sup> The only ambiguity here might be over what the commentaries were, and that question is dealt with in the bibliographical chapter of the *Han History*. "Confucius made ten *p'ien* [of commentaries] for it, including the 'T'uan,' the 'Hsiang,' the 'Attached Verbalizations,' the 'Wen yen,' and the 'Hsu kua.'"<sup>24</sup> On the basis of the available evidence, then, it seems that Confucius' name begins to be linked with the commentaries on the *Change* in the second half of Western Han at the earliest. Such tardy testimony helps justify the inference that Confucius was not the author, whether directly or indirectly, of the ideas in the Ten Wings.

<sup>20</sup> "Ju lin lieh-chuan," *Shih chi*, 121.3127.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. It should be added that in "Ju lin chuan," *Han shu*, 88.3597, the hiatus is filled with five otherwise unknown names to constitute a continuous line of transmission from Shang Ch'ü to T'ien Ho. Cf. Shchutskii, p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> *Yi wei* 易緯, *Ch'ien k'un tso tu* (in Wu-ying-tien chü-chen ts'ung-shu, 1777), B.8a. Cf. *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao*, 110-11, where it is pointed out that the title *Ch'ien k'un tso tu* seems to have made its first appearance only after the 11th century, although it may include earlier material.

<sup>23</sup> *Han shu*, 88.3589.

<sup>24</sup> "Yi wen chih 藝文志" *Han Shu*, 30.1704.

If the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" was not compiled by Confucius or those directly under his influence, then when was it written? There is no direct evidence that it existed before the founding of the Han dynasty,<sup>25</sup> but it is apparently quoted or paraphrased in writings from the second century B.C. The extant text of the *Hsin yü* 新語, which may be the work of Lu Chia 陸賈, advisor to Han Kao-tsu, has a quotation which begins, "The *Change* says," followed by a sentence nearly identical to one in the "Commentary" (A8.17),<sup>26</sup> and has a close, but unattributed, paraphrase of the first two parts of A4.2.<sup>27</sup> The *Han shih wai chuan* 韓詩外傳 quotes a sentence from the end of the first section of the "Commentary" (A1.16).<sup>28</sup> Ssu-ma T'an's 司馬談 discussion of the schools of thought, as presented in the postface of his son's *Records of the Historian*, begins with a near quotation from the "Commentary" (B5.2-3),<sup>29</sup> and it is apparently paraphrased in a piece written by Tung

<sup>25</sup> In making this assertion, I also refer the reader to Hu Tzu-feng 胡自逢, *Hsien Ch'in chu tzu Yi shuo t'ung k'ao* 先秦諸子易說通考 (Taipei: Wen-shih-che, 1974), which attempts to record all pre-Ch'in references, including quotations and allusions, to the *Change* and the Ten Wings. I find his citations (pp. 16, 26-29, 36-45) purporting to relate to the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" do not demonstrate the existence of even a hypothetical proto-"Commentary." Chang Tai-nien 張岱年, "Lun 'Yi Ta chuan' te chu-tso nien-tai yü che-hsueh ssu-hsiang" 論易大傳的著作年代與哲學思想, *Chung-kuo che-hsueh* 中國哲學, 1 (1979), 125, cites sentences in a *fu* ascribed to Sung Yü 宋玉 which seem to parallel sentences in the "Commentary," and from that Chang infers the "Commentary" was in existence in the Warring States period. According to the *Shih chi* (84.2491), Sung Yü was active in Ch'u after the death of Ch'ü Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340-277 B.C.), but the "Hsiao yen fu" 小言賦 attributed to him is only available to us through Sung versions of a T'ang compendium, the *Ku wen yuan* 古文苑, and in my judgment the sentences are so vaguely related that they are inconclusive evidence. Chang Tai-nien also argues on the basis of a presumed sequence of ideas that the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" should be dated before the time of Chuang Chou 莊周 and Hui Shih 惠施, in the fourth century B.C. (pp. 126-27).

<sup>26</sup> Lu Chia, "Pien huo" 辨惑 *Hsin yü* (Taipei: Shih-chieh, 1962), 8.

<sup>27</sup> "Tao chi" 道基, *ibid.*, 1. These two passages from the *Hsin yü* are cited in Chang Tai-nien, pp. 122 and 124. Chang also found similarities between the "Tao chi" section and parts of B2 in the "Commentary," but to me the differences are more significant than the similarities.

<sup>28</sup> Han Ying 韓嬰, *Han shih wai chuan* (SPTK), 3.1a. Cf. J. R. Hightower, trans., *Han shih wai chuan: Han Ying's Illustrations of the Didactic Applications of the Classic of Songs* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1952), p. 76. The source of the sentence is given simply as "the *Change*," which again suggests that the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" was already closely linked with the prognosticating text.

<sup>29</sup> *Shih chi*, 130.3288. The sentence given is the same as the one in the "Commentary" except that the order of the two clauses is reversed. The sentence is attributed to the

Chung-shu 董仲舒.<sup>30</sup> There is, of course, the possibility that the four Han writers were using the same source(s) that went into the compilation of the "Commentary," rather than the "Commentary" itself,<sup>31</sup> but these bits of parallel text, coupled with the silk manuscript found in the Ma-wang-tui tomb of 168 B.C., strongly suggest that by the middle of the second century B.C. the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" existed and was circulating, though not necessarily in the exact form in which it was engraved on stone at the end of the second century A.D.

Who wrote it? Names from early Han which have been put forward as possible authors of the "Commentary" and the other Wings include Wang T'ung 王同, Chou Wang-sun 周王孫, Ting K'uan 丁寬, and Fu Sheng 服生, all of whom were mentioned in the *Han History* as having "prepared commentaries" (*tso chuan* 作傳) on the *Change* in the first half of the second century B.C.<sup>32</sup> The discovery of the silk manuscript makes it awkward to maintain that it was authored by any of the four when they were contemporary, or nearly so, to the Ma-wang-tui grave. Moreover, the bibliographical chapter in the *Han History* credits all four with titles of their own on the *Change*, and lists the title *Book of Change* (*Yi ching*) separately as being in twelve *p'ien*, which Yen Shih-ku 顏師古 (581–645) explained as the text of the classic in two parts together with the Ten Wings, each consisting of one *p'ien*.<sup>33</sup> A more likely candidate as author is T'ien Ho 田何, who gave instruction on the *Change* to the four men and who lived in Ch'in and early Han times, but there is no evidence that he wrote the "Commentary" either, although any of the five men mentioned might have had an editorial influence as teachers of

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"Great Commentary" (*Ta chuan*), which became an alternative way of referring to the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations."

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in the biography of Tung Chung-shu in *Han shu*, 56.2521. The similar passage in the "Commentary" (A8.39–41) explains a line attached to the hexagram *hsieh* 解, as do the two sentences Tung Chung-shu quoted, or paraphrased, with no indication of his source.

<sup>31</sup> See Li Ching-ch'ih, pp. 121–22. Li argues that the "Commentary" was compiled in Western Han only after the death of Ssu-ma Ch'ien.

<sup>32</sup> *Han shu*, 88.3597. *Shih chi*, 121.3127, mentions Wang T'ung, whose student Yang Ho was summoned to court in 134 B.C., but does not list the other three men.

<sup>33</sup> *Han shu*, 30.1703–1704. Wang, Chou, Ting, and Fu are listed as authors of a total of fourteen *p'ien* on the *Change*, all of which seem to be lost.

the *Change*.<sup>34</sup> My view is that the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" is not the product of a single act of creation, whether by an author or compiler, but was accumulated over a certain period, beginning approximately a generation before the Ch'in dynasty was proclaimed and hardening by the first century B.C. into the form that was taught by Fei Chih and later engraved on the stone tablets.<sup>35</sup>

There is an accretive quality to the "Commentary" that gives the effect of its being not far removed from a tradition of oral teaching, with the master's explanations a necessary accompaniment to suggestive, intriguing, but baffling material. While recognizing that the "Commentary" is a patchwork which was subject to a continuing process of reworking even after it began to be transmitted in written form, I would also emphasize that it does present a coherent intellectual position. As I shall try to show, it is not a random miscellany of scraps about an old divination text, but is a subtly presented selection of statements intended to convey a particular world view.

Not only are there unresolved problems concerning the authorship, the period, and the internal consistency of the "Commentary," there is also the troublesome question of whether it would be more appropriately labeled "Confucian" or "Taoist," or some amalgam of the two. Even when it was accepted that Confucius was the author of the ideas, there was an uneasiness that it led men away from "Confucian" concerns. Su Shih 蘇軾 (1037-1101), for example, complained that some Confucians (*ju*) were using the ideas of Lao Tzu to discuss the *Change*.<sup>36</sup> Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 (1613-82) insisted that in studying the *Change* Confucius emphasized its application to everyday speech and conduct and ignored the numerological and divinatory implications. According to Ku, we should study the core of the *Change* stemming from King Wen, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius, and we should disregard the Taoists' *Change* (*Tao-chia chih Yi* 道家之易), represented by the writings of Ch'en T'uan 陳搏 (d. 989) and Shao Yung 邵雍 (1011-77), and the diviners' *Change*

<sup>34</sup> *Shih chi*, 121.3127, and *Han shu*, 88.3597. Cf. Chang Tai-nien, p. 127.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Ku Chieh-kang, "Chou yi kua yao tz'u chung te ku-shih" 周易卦爻辭中的古事, *Ku shih pien*, III (1931), 25.

<sup>36</sup> Su Shih, *Ching-chin Tung-p'o wen-chi shih-lueh* 經進東坡文集事略 (Peking: Hsin Hua, 1957), p. 112.

(*fang-shu chih Yi* 方術之易), which had been promoted by the interpretations of Ch'eng Yi (1033–07) and Chu Hsi.<sup>37</sup> Included in Ku Yen-wu's charge were those parts of the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" which deal with the world beyond the realm of man and which some Sung writers found to be a point of departure for speculations which might be called metaphysical. The type of criticism put forward by Ku was not uncommon, and it is a reflection of the possibilities men continually discovered in the "Commentary" for justifying views that might otherwise have been too readily dismissed as not congruent with the Master's teachings. If not before, then certainly after the *Change* had been established as one of the Five Classics, it and the Ten Wings were accepted as a legitimate object of study by men who were *ju*, and in consequence the "Commentary" came under the umbrella of "Confucian."<sup>38</sup>

Although it was an acknowledged part of the *ju* repertoire, some scholars in the past hundred years who had no particular commitment to the hegemony of the Five Classics judged the "Commentary" to be, as James Legge put it, "more Taoistic than Confucian."<sup>39</sup> More specifically, the claim has been made, in association with arguments intended to show that Confucius was not the author of the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations," that the Wings were heavily influenced by the ideas of the *Lao Tzu* and also were congruent with positions set forth in the *Chuang Tzu*.<sup>40</sup> Because of its emphasis on phenomena in the physical world, it has even been concluded that "the philosophy in the 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Change* is the natural philosophy of the Taoists (*Tao-chia*)."<sup>41</sup> The "Commentary" has also been interpreted as the product of the so-called "Naturalist" school (*yin yang wu hsing chia* 陰陽五行家) which was closely related to early Taoism.<sup>42</sup> For many

<sup>37</sup> Ku Yen-wu, "K'ung tzu lun Yi," 孔子論易, *Jih chih lu chi shih* 日知錄集釋 (*SPPY*), 1.24b.

<sup>38</sup> Shchutskii, p. 184, noted that "The connection of the *Hsi-tz'u chuan* and the entire later fate of the *Book of Changes* with the Confucian school is for me just as much beyond question as is the fact that Confucius himself had nothing to do with the *Book of Changes*."

<sup>39</sup> James Legge, *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism: Part II, the Yi King*, in *The Sacred Books of the East*, xvi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), p. xvi. Cf. 28–29.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. D. Bodde (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), I, 384–85; Ku Chieh-kang, pp. 44 and 50; Ch'ien Mu, pp. 91–94.

<sup>41</sup> Ch'ien Mu, p. 94.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, II (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1956),

readers in the twentieth century, then, the “Commentary” is decidedly un-Confucian.

The apparent contradiction between regarding the “Commentary” as “Confucian” and regarding it as “Taoist” might be waved away as being of no consequence, but it does point to a problem of some interest. If the views I have sketched here on what the “Commentary” is and when it was produced are acceptable, then how is it to be related meaningfully to other landmark texts in the history of Chinese thought? In order to answer this question, we must consider the claims which are made in the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations.”

#### CLAIMS MADE FOR THE CHANGE

In making its claims, the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” is perforce concerned with words. It does not invent any new characters, but it seeks to establish its own usage for certain terms and to manipulate meanings. Its persuasion often resorts to intentional ambiguities, where one character bears a multiple load of meaning, and thus any interpretation or translation is unavoidably partial and idiosyncratic. Consequently, it will be helpful to present briefly my understanding of some of the terms in which the claims of the “Commentary” are made.

Of central importance in any discussion of the *Change* is the word *yi* 易, which had in Han times, and still has today, the meanings both of “change” and “easy.”<sup>43</sup> The word *yi* had been used in the Warring States period as the name for three apparently distinguishable divination techniques, collectively known as the “Three *yi*,” and named in the *Chou li* as the “Lien shan” 連山, the “Kuei tsang” 歸藏, and the “Chou *yi*” 周易.<sup>44</sup> “Chou *yi*” is the name of the divination book

310. Cf. Hou Wai-lu 侯外庐 et al., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung shih* 中國思想通史 (Peking: Jen-min, 1957), I, 653–56.

<sup>43</sup> Karlgren determined that the two meanings were distinguished from one another in archaic and ancient pronunciation: *d̥iək̚|j̥äk̚* for “change,” and *d̥iək̚|i̯e̯* for “easy.” Bernhard Karlgren, “Grammata Serica Recensa,” *BMFEA*, 29 (1957), 225.

<sup>44</sup> *Chou li* (SPPY), 24.6a.

<sup>45</sup> In the *Tso chuan* and the *Kuo yü* the divination text is referred to both as the *Yi* and the *Chou yi*.

we here refer to as the *Change*.<sup>45</sup> The “Commentary” refers to the book by the title *Change* when quoting it (e.g., “The *Change* says”). The word *yi* is also used in the “Commentary” to allude to the divination technique made manifest in the words and symbols of the book.<sup>46</sup>

(B8.1) Being the book that it is, the *Change* cannot be put at a distance.

易之為書也不可遠

(B8.2) Being the way [of divining] that it is, it repeatedly shifts.

為道也屢遷

Both as book and as technique, the *Change* is built around sixty-four hexagrams (*kua* 卦), each of which is formed of six parallel broken or unbroken line segments (*yao* 爻). The word *kua* in a general sense might best be rendered as “a set of lines with prognosticatory implications.” (The translation of *kua* as “hexagram,” or as “trigram” when it is composed of only three lines, has been used since James Legge’s translation,<sup>47</sup> and I see no reason not to follow that convention.) Each of the sixty-four hexagrams has a name, most of which are words or terms referring to particular objects and activities which are involved in “figuring” (*hsiang* 象) the situation revealed by the act of divination. The word *hsiang*, as used in the “Commentary,” is sometimes rendered into English as “image,” which connotes resemblance and implies an act of perception. *Hsiang* often is the object of the verb “to observe” (*kuan* 觀), which supports translating *hsiang* as image. However, *hsiang* are independent of any human observer; they are “out there,” whether or not we look (cf. A1.5). Therefore, I find that the English word “figure” comes closer to covering the meanings of *hsiang* in the “Commentary.” A figure is

<sup>46</sup> My translations from the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” are marked with A or B to indicate the first or second *p’ien* of the text, then with a number from one through twelve to indicate the section (*chang*) in Chu Hsi’s arrangement, and then, following a period, with a second number of my own to indicate the ordinal place of the sentence within a given section. Thus (B8.2) refers to the second sentence in the eighth section of the second part of the “Commentary.”

<sup>47</sup> Legge used “lineal figures” as well as “hexagrams” and “trigrams” to refer to the *kua*. The only previous translation to which he granted any merit, that of Jean-Baptiste Régis, refers to the *kua* as *symboli* and *figurae*. See Jean-Baptiste Régis, trans., *Y-king: antiquissimus Sinarum liber quem ex Latina interpretatione*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1834, 1839).

an image or likeness, but it is also a form or shape, a design or configuration or pattern, and a written symbol; “to figure” is to represent as a symbol or image, but also to give or bring into shape. Taking *hsiang* as “figure” also maintains a distinction from *hsing* 形, translated conventionally as “form.” *Hsing* is used of classes of physical objects as well as particular physical objects, often with an implication of “that which is tangible.” *Hsiang* is used of classes of objects and particular physical objects (*ch’i* 器) as well as events (*shih* 事), and in the “Commentary” has the added implication of “that which is portentous for human conduct.” Both the form and the figure of a given thing are perceivable; it is the figure, according to the “Commentary,” which is especially meaningful. In the *Change* the “figure” is elaborated by sayings and phrases which are notoriously enigmatic. In contrast, the prognosticating information which the text of the *Change* supplies is given in a succinct and explicit form, usually involving one or the other member of pairs of terms, such as “well-fortuned” (*chi* 吉) or “ill-fortuned” (*hsiung* 凶), “no blame” (*wu chiu* 无咎) or “blame” (*chiu*), and “advantageous” (*li* 利) or “regret” (*hui* 悔) and “remorse” (*lin* 吝).

The “Commentary” provides a summary of these several layers involved in the *Change*.

(B10.7) The way [of divining involving the hexagrams] has flux and movement, and in consequence [the *Change*] speaks of the lines [comprising a given hexagram].

道有變動故曰爻

(B10.8) The lines have gradations [within any given hexagram], and in consequence [the *Change*] speaks of the things [in the sense of the particular objects or events which are associated with and figure a given hexagram and its constituent lines].

爻有等故曰物

(B10.9) The things [which figure a hexagram, its lines, and the circumstances indicated by them] are in confused relation to each other, and in consequence [the *Change*] speaks of the elaborations [of those figures].

物相雜故曰文

(B10.10) The elaborations are not [perfectly] fitting, and in



consequence [explicit terms such as] “well-fortuned” and “ill-fortuned” are generated from it [i.e., from the verbalizations attached to the *Change*].

文不當故吉凶生焉

These four sentences describe the characteristics of each hexagram complex in the *Change*: its six lines, the words detailing the particular phenomena (physical objects as well as events, often involving humans) which serve as the figure for the hexagram, and the terms giving a prognostication. Passages such as this in the “Commentary” are to be read as explanation of what the *Change* is as a particular divination text (*Yi chih wei shu yeh* 易之為書也).

In addition to using the word *yi* to indicate the book and its divination technique, the “Commentary” gives it an implication of “cosmic change,” which is an extended meaning not appearing in any text earlier than the “Commentary.” I follow the “Commentary” in taking the title of the book, *Yi*, to stand not only for the changes of lines and hexagrams, which is the core of the divination process, but also for the change that characterizes the universe. Instances of this general, encompassing meaning of *yi* will be considered below, but it may be pointed out here that this usage of *yi* is an indication that the “Commentary’s” area of concern extends beyond the narrowly commentatorial.

This expansion of concern is also exemplified by treatment in the “Commentary” of the two words *ch’ien* 乾 and *k’un* 坤. They are used in the text of the *Change* as the names, respectively, of the trigram and hexagram consisting of only unbroken lines and the trigram and hexagram consisting of only broken lines. The meaning of the characters *ch’ien* and *k’un* has been the subject of considerable, but inconclusive, speculation that need not detain us here; I prefer to leave them untranslated. Before the time when the “Commentary” began to be compiled, the character 坤 (*k’un*) seems never to be used in any extant text except as the name of a particular set of lines, although the written form 𡗗, which was used as late as the Han stone classics, suggests water or wetness (as in *ch’uan* 𡗗). The character 乾, now read *ch’ien* and *kan*, was used respectively as the name of a set of lines and to mean “dry.” The two words *ch’ien* and *k’un* were never presented as a pair in any text which is indisputably

earlier than the “Commentary.” In the “Commentary,” *ch'ien* and *k'un* are, with one exception (B2.26), never used simply and unambiguously to refer to the sets of lines which are either all unbroken or broken, and they are in every instance presented together as a pair, either juxtaposed or in parallel sentences. The usage of *ch'ien* and *k'un* in the “Commentary” demands that we understand them as indicating two fundamental aspects of the *Change*. For example, a section in the “Commentary” begins:

(B6.1)<sub>1</sub> Our master said, *Ch'ien* and *k'un*—are they not the two-leaved gate of the *Change*?

子曰乾坤其易之門邪

(B6.2) *Ch'ien* is a *yang* thing; *k'un* is an *yin* thing.

乾陽物也坤陰物也

On one level, these sentences can be understood to mean that the hexagrams *ch'ien* and *k'un* are the first two, in order, of the hexagrams in the *Change*, and that as “particular sets of lines,” *ch'ien* and *k'un* themselves are things (*wu*) which are associated with *yang* and *yin*. *Yin* and *yang* as words denoting a fundamental polarity at work in the cosmos were, at the time the “Commentary” began to be compiled, of comparatively recent origin; they are not used as a pair in the *Change* or any other text dating from before the Warring States period (403–221 B.C.), with the possible exception of one line in the *Book of Poetry*.<sup>48</sup> On a second level, *ch'ien* and *k'un* can be read here as two aspects (manifested as unbroken and broken lines) present in all the sixty-two other hexagrams, and thus not just the names of two particular hexagrams. *Ch'ien* and *k'un* are, as it were, a gate with two leaves, open or closed, to which the configurations of lines in all the other hexagrams are related. (“Hard” and “soft” are another pair of words used to denote closed and open, or unbroken and broken, lines.) If the word “thing” (*wu*) in B6.2 is taken in a sense similar to its usage in B10.8 and 9, then we can understand *ch'ien* not only as the name of a set of lines and as an aspect of all hexagrams except *k'un*, but also, on a third level now, as the “figure” for all that

<sup>48</sup> *Shih ching*, “Ta ya 大雅, Sheng min 生民, Kung Liu 公劉.” (Mao #250) 相其陰陽, 觀其流泉. Cf. James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (1871; rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 1960), iv, part 2, p. 488: “He surveyed the light and the shade, Viewing (also) the (course of the) streams and springs.”

is *yang* in the cosmos. In a parallel way, *k'un* is the "figure" for all that is *yin*. By thus reifying *ch'ien* and *k'un*, by positing them as things outside of the *Change*, the "Commentary" has further extended the meaning of the two words. They are put forth as indicating something akin to, if not actually, two cosmic forces, whose relative configuration is related to *yi* as "cosmic change." On this third level, we can reread the first sentence above as

(B6.1)<sub>2</sub> Our master said, *Ch'ien* and *k'un*—are they not the two-leaved gate of change?

In its use, then, of the words *yi*, *ch'ien* and *k'un*, the "Commentary" moves their references beyond a divination book and technique and into the realm of "heaven-and-earth."

The "realm of heaven-and-earth" (*t'ien-ti* 天地, and *t'ien-ti chih chien* 天地之間) was an established term which the "Commentary" adopted as the mode of referring to the physical cosmos as a whole. (The term "realm of heaven-and-earth" is similar in its reference, but not in its implications, to what in the Judeo-Christian tradition could be called "all of Creation" or "Nature.") The realm of heaven-and-earth is filled by the "ten thousand things" (*wan wu* 萬物, with "ten thousand" to be taken in the sense of "all of the many," and "things" in the sense of objects and events). Heaven, in the sense of the sky in which we observe meteorological phenomena and of the heavens in which we observe the sun, moon, planets, and stars moving, has a course traced by its ongoing processes (*t'ien chih tao*, and *t'ien tao* 天道), as does earth, in the sense of the physical place on which our activities are conducted (*ti tao* 地道). The "Commentary" also speaks of the "course of ongoing processes in the realm of heaven-and-earth" (*t'ien-ti chih tao* 天地之道), and if this course can be described in a word, then that word for the compilers of the "Commentary" would seem to be "flux" (*p'ien* 變), which is close in meaning to "change" (*yi*), in the use of which the "Commentary" is reserved.<sup>49</sup>

Within the realm of heaven-and-earth is the more limited realm of human society, which is denoted by the term "all-under-heaven" (*t'ien-hsia* 天下). Here is the scene of operations of sages, or sage men

<sup>49</sup> I have adopted as conventions the translations of "flux" and "fluxion" for *p'ien* 變, "transformation" for *hua* 化, "change" for *yi* 易, and "movement" for *tung* 動.

(*sheng jen* 聖人); accomplished men (*hsien jen* 賢人); superior men (*chün-tzu* 君子), in the sense of men who are in some way (e.g., socially or morally) superior; ordinary but politically potent men (*jen*), in the sense of persons who have a certain legal or social status; petty or mean men (*hsiao jen* 小人), men whose conduct puts, or should put, their status in doubt; and commoners (*min* 民). The “Commentary” seems to be addressed primarily to the “ordinary men” who would be guided to act in such a way as to become “superior men,” and who are especially concerned with what seems to me to be politically consequential conduct, referred to in the “Commentary” as the “enterprise,” or the “great enterprise” (*ta yeh* 大業). The realm of all-under-heaven has a course marked by its ongoing processes (*t'ien-hsia chih tao* 天下之道), and the single word which is most used in the “Commentary” to describe it is “movement” (*tung* 動).

These are some of the terms which the “Commentary” uses in persuading us to its view. We might distinguish three realms of discourse in which it moves: the realm of all-under-heaven, human society; the realm of heaven-and-earth, the cosmos; and the realm of the *Change*, both as text and divination technique. The implicit question to which much of the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” is addressed seems to me to be something like this: given that flux is characteristic of the realm of heaven-and-earth, and within it the realm of human society undergoes movement, then how are we to cope with, or even dwell within, our confusing world of change? The “Commentary” is an attempt to persuade us that we can best do so by accepting the guidance of the *Change*. To persuade us, the “Commentary” makes, and seeks to establish, a series of four claims which are presented in its first four sections.

### *The First Claim*

The first major claim of the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” is that the technique, for which the text of the *Change* is the written repository, duplicates relationships and processes at work in the realm of heaven-and-earth. The second major claim is that these relationships and processes are knowable, and the knowledge is the basis for efficacious action in the realm of human society. The “Commentary” does not make either of those claims so baldly

as I have just stated them, but in the first section leads its readers to be persuaded gradually.

A minimal rendering of the first sentence of the “Commentary” might give us something like “Heaven is eminent; earth is humble; *ch'ien* and *k'un* are fixed,” which is not obviously meaningful, regardless of the level at which we take the words *ch'ien* and *k'un*. Not only might we hesitate over individual words, it is not even clear how the parts of the sentence go together. Guidance can be found in the parallelism which exists among the first three sentences. With some interpolations, we might read:

- (A1.1) [Just as] the heavens are eminent and the earth is humble,  
[the relative positions of] *ch'ien* and *k'un* [as aspects of the  
*Change*] are fixed.  
天尊地卑乾坤定矣
- (A1.2) [Just as] the low-lying and the high-standing are spread  
out [on the surface of the earth],  
[the relative places of] high and low [lines in hexagrams]  
are positioned.  
卑高以陳貴賤位矣
- (A1.3) [Just as] movement and rest have their constancies [in the  
heavens],  
[the movements of] hard and soft [lines] are settled.  
動靜有常剛柔斷矣

A similar parallelism is to be found in the fourth and fifth sentences:

- (A1.4) [Just as] squares [in the sense of clearly bounded sets of  
individual things] are associated together according to  
their categories and [individual] things are differentiated  
from one another according to their groups,  
[forecasts of] “well-fortuned” and “ill-fortuned” are  
generated [from the associating and differentiating of hexa-  
grams with particular categories and groups of circum-  
stances].  
方以類聚物以群分吉凶生矣
- (A1.5) [Just as] in the heavens [flux and transformation] bring  
figures to completion and on the earth [flux and trans-  
formation] bring forms to completion,

flux and transformation are made manifest [in the figures of the hexagrams].

在天成象在地成形變化見矣

On this reading, which is heavily dependent on the bracketed words, the first part of each of the five sentences has been taken to refer to phenomena in the realm of heaven-and-earth, and the second parts are understood as referring to the hexagrams and lines in the *Change*. What relationship between the two parts can be inferred from their juxtaposition? I do not think that it is merely that one may speak “in the same breath” of heaven-and-earth and the *Change*. By supplying the bracketed words, “just as,” I mean that readers of the “Commentary” are intended to grant readily the assertions in the first parts of the sentences about relative distinctions which we can observe in the realm of heaven-and-earth—high and low, movement and rest, groups and individuals, figures and forms—and then to have an inkling, drawn from the second parts of the sentences, that similar distinctions may apply as well to the *Change*. The “Commentary” apparently wants us to think that something has been established by the first five sentences because it goes on to say, “In consequence of this . . .” (*shih ku* 是故).

In consequence of what? A possible inference is that there is some not yet articulated connection which is implied in the first five sentences and by means of which readers can more readily understand the remainder of the sentences in the section.

- (A1.6) In consequence of this,  
Hard and soft [lines] rub against each other;  
the eight trigrams stir against each other.  
是故剛柔相摩八卦相盪
- (A1.7) [The flux and transformation in the hexagrams and in heaven-and-earth] are drummed on by [the figure of] thunder;  
they are moistened by [the figure of] wind-and-rain.  
鼓之以雷霆潤之以風雨
- (A1.8) The sun and the moon make their rounds [i.e., there are the cycles of days and months];  
it is cold and it is hot [i.e., there is the cycle of the seasons].  
日月運行一寒一暑

- (A1.9) The course of *ch'ien* [as an aspect of ongoing cosmic process] brings maleness to completion;  
the course of *k'un* brings femaleness to completion.  
乾道成男坤道成女
- (A1.10) *Ch'ien* [as an aspect of cosmic process] knows [and commands] the great beginnings [of all things];  
*k'un* acts to bring [all] things to completion.  
乾知大始坤作成物

A glance over the five sentences reveals a numerical sequence: the two types of lines and the eight trigrams are mentioned in the first sentence; the second names two things (thunder and wind-and-rain) which also are figures associated with four trigrams (thunder with *chen* 震, lightning [introduced by commentatorial sleight of hand as early as the *Cheng-yi* text] with *li* 離, wind with *sun* 巽, and rain with *k'an* 坎); the third sentence is concerned only with twos—sun and moon, cold and hot—and the alternation of one and the other; male and female in the fourth sentence and beginning and completion in the fifth sentence are two aspects of one whole, as are *ch'ien* and *k'un* in both sentences.<sup>50</sup> Each of the sentences is concerned with dualities; the ending of the sequence in unity suggests that a relationship involving duality and unity was established in A1.1–5. Moreover, in A1.6–10 there is also discernable a progress from changes in the trigrams through changes in immediately apparent phenomena figured in the realm of heaven-and-earth, to an indication of two less obvious, but fundamental and potent, aspects of changes at work in all phenomena. Both this progress and the numerical sequence leave us with the possible inference that there is a continuum from the multiplicity of the lines and phenomena to the underlying unity of processes in the realm of heaven-and-earth. Returning to the first five sentences (A1.1–5), we might ask again, what was established which allows the words “in consequence of this” (*shih ku*) to introduce the sentences following? I think the unstated relationship which makes sense of A1.6–10, taken as a set of sentences, is that the realm of heaven-and-earth is *duplicated* by the processes at work in the *Change*.

<sup>50</sup> In A11.14–17, the numerical sequence of one, two, four and eight is also given.

The critical reader should immediately notice that there is no word in the Chinese or even in my interpolations in the translation which directly supports that interpretation. However, if we look elsewhere in the “Commentary,” we find statements which approach what I have called the “unstated relationship” which the “Commentary” would have us infer from the opening sentences. The tenth section of the second part begins:

- (B10.1) The *Change* being the book that it is, it is broad and great and fully provided.  
易之為書也廣大悉備
- (B10.2) It has in it the course traced by the ongoing processes in the heavens.  
有天道焉
- (B10.3) It has in it the course traced by the ongoing processes among humans.  
有人道焉
- (B10.4) It has in it the course traced by the ongoing processes on the earth.  
有地道焉

These are explicit statements that the *Change* “has in it” the courses (*tao*) traced by phenomena which are outside of or beyond the text itself, even if the reader hesitates over what the words, “has in it,” might mean. There is another section of the “Commentary” which employs some of the same terms to establish its point.

- (A6.1) The *Change* is broad and it is great.  
夫易廣矣大矣
- (A6.2) When speaking of what is far away, it has no hindrances.  
以言乎遠則不禦
- (A6.3) When speaking of what is nearby, it is at rest but accurate.  
以言乎邇則靜而正
- (A6.4) When speaking of the realm of heaven-and-earth, it is fully provided.  
以言乎天地之間則備矣

These sentences can be taken to mean that, considered spatially, the import of the *Change* is applicable everywhere, and thus to every phenomenon in the realm of heaven-and-earth. Change, which is



at work in the cosmos, is also to be found in *ch'ien* and *k'un* as the two fundamental aspects of cosmic processes and of the *Change*.

(A12.14) *Ch'ien* and *k'un* are the wadding of change.

乾坤其易之緼邪

(A12.15) *Ch'ien* and *k'un* bring to completion the arrangements [of the lines in the hexagrams] and change is established in their midst.

乾坤成列而易立乎其中矣

*Ch'ien* and *k'un* in effect “bring” cosmic change into the *Change*.

(A6.5) As for *ch'ien*, in rest it is concentrated, and in movement it is directed straight out.

夫乾其靜也專其動也直

(A6.6) This is the means by which greatness is generated from it.

是以大生焉

(A6.7) As for *k'un*, in rest it is folded together, and in movement it is opened out.

夫坤其靜也翕其動也闢

(A6.8) This is the means by which broadness is generated from it.

是以廣生焉

(A6.9) Its broadness and greatness match heaven-and-earth's.

廣大配天地

(A6.10) Its flux and continuities match the four seasons'.

變通配四時

(A6.11) Its impartial fittingness from [embodying] *yin* and *yang* matches the sun and moon's.

陰陽之義配日月

(A6.12) What it is good at by being easy and simple matches that of the greatest potency.<sup>51</sup>

易簡之善配至德

In the word *p'ei* 配, which I have translated as “matches,” we have the closest the “Commentary” comes to the word “duplicates,”

<sup>51</sup> Rather than follow the well-established and well-justified practice of translating *te* as the intentionally ambiguous word “virtue,” I have slighted the “moral qualities” side in order to give greater emphasis to the “effective power” aspect of *te* by the translation “potency.” I would, of course, still allow that in the “Commentary” *te*, especially when it is possessed by humans, has strong moral overtones, but see the use of *te* in A11.4, translated below.

which I have suggested as descriptive of the relationship which the “Commentary” seeks to persuade us exists between the *Change* and heaven-and-earth. In English “to duplicate” means to double, to provide in double, to exist as a double of something, and the latter meaning is the relationship I infer is posited at the beginning of the “Commentary” and which is pointed to by the phrases “has in it” and “matches.” The *Change* is not separate from but equal to the cosmos, and it is in virtue of that relationship that it “works.” By understanding the relationship as one of imitating, or being parallel to, or representing in microcosm, or as any other formulation which implies a gap between the *Change* and the realm of heaven-and-earth, we immediately trap ourselves with a dilemma which the “Commentary” skillfully avoids: how can a divination text “connect” with the cosmos? By implying, or leaving us to infer, that heaven-and-earth is somehow “duplicated” (and that word is simply my feeble attempt to provide a necessarily inadequate name for the relationship) by the *Change*, and vice versa, an epistemological problem is denied. They are each “one of two things” exactly alike, each a double of the other, each “has in it” the other. Everywhere and always there is change, and the change everywhere and always is the same change, characterized by bipolarity and contained *in* the *Change*. This connection is the first major claim of the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations.”

### *The Second Claim*

The second major claim which is implied in the first section of the “Commentary” is that cosmological processes are intelligible and humans can adjust their conduct on the basis of that intelligence. Again, the claim is not made explicitly; the “Commentary” slips us into a recognition of it by means of ambiguous sentences. Earlier we considered the following two sentences:

- (A1.9) The course of *ch'ien* [as an aspect of ongoing cosmic process] brings maleness to completion;  
the course of *k'un* brings femaleness to completion.
- (A1.10) *Ch'ien* [as an aspect of cosmic process] knows [and commands] the great beginnings [of all things];  
*k'un* acts to bring [all] things to completion.

The first section of the “Commentary” continues:

- (A1.11) *Ch'ien* knows [and commands] by being easy;  
*k'un* is capable [of acting on all things] by being simple.  
 乾以易知坤以簡能
- (A1.12)<sub>1</sub> [Its aspect *ch'ien*] being easy, change [i.e., the process at work in the cosmos] knows [and commands];  
 [its aspect *k'un*] being simple, change [i.e., the process at work in the cosmos] follows along.  
 易則易知簡則易從

In sentences A1.10–11, *ch'ien* and *k'un* as aspects of cosmic processes are the subjects of verbs. In A1.12, the syntax can be construed as a synthesis of the *ch'ien-k'un* duality of the previous three sentences, with *yi* as unitary cosmic change taking their place as the subject of the verbs “knows” and “follows along.” An immediate objection which can be raised against such a construction, which the translation marked (A1.12)<sub>1</sub> represents, is that it would appear to reduce cosmic change to being a function of *k'un*, whereas *k'un* is otherwise to be taken as an aspect of cosmic change. One way to avoid that difficulty is to understand A1.12 as if it had no bearing on the preceding sentence, even though they share the words *yi* (change or easy), *chih* (knows or is known), and *chien* (simple). Thus the sentence can be read:

- (A1.12)<sub>2</sub> What is easy, is easy to know;  
 what is simple, is easy to follow.<sup>52</sup>

A more interesting solution to this unyieldingly ambiguous sentence appears if we follow Chu Hsi's marking of the distinction between the use of the character *yi* as “easy” and as “change” (probably cosmic change); we then have a third version:

- (A1.12)<sub>3</sub> [*Ch'ien*] being easy, change thus [is easy to] know;  
 [*k'un*] being simple, [change] thus is easy to follow.

<sup>52</sup> This is the English translation of Wilhelm's, “Was leicht ist, ist leicht zu erkennen; was einfach ist, ist leicht zu befolgen.” Richard Wilhelm, trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes (New York: Bollingen, Pantheon, 1950), I, 308. Similarly, F. Wakeman, *History and Will* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1973), p. 77: “Ease is ease of knowing. Simplicity is ease of following.”

The process of persuasion which the “Commentary” is working on us is clearer when we look back over the sequence of sentences A1.9 to A1.12:

The course of *ch'ien* brings maleness to completion.

*Ch'ien* knows the great beginnings.

*Ch'ien* knows by being easy.

[As *ch'ien* knows by] being easy, change thus [is easy to] know.

The course of *k'un* brings femaleness to completion.

*K'un* acts to bring things to completion.

*K'un* is capable by being simple.

[As *k'un* is capable by] being simple, [change] thus is easy [i.e., simple] to follow.

The sequences begin with a proposition we might grant with little resistance, and end with an extraordinary claim. We might now see that A1.12 functions as a transition between assertions in A1.6–11 about the realm of heaven-and-earth and a new set of assertions in A1.13–16.

As a transition sentence, A1.12 introduces the second claim of the “Commentary” by bringing human beings into consideration.

- (A1.12)<sub>3</sub> [*Ch'ien*] being easy, change thus [is easy to] know;  
[*k'un*] being simple, [change] thus is easy to follow.
- (A1.13) [Cosmic change] being easy to know, there thus is a sense of kin-feeling [which ensues from knowing it];  
[cosmic change] being easy to follow, there thus are meritorious results [which ensue from following it].  
易知則有親易從則有功
- (A1.14) When there is a sense of kin-feeling [from knowing change], there thus is what can be regarded as enduring;  
when there are meritorious results [from following change], there thus is what can be regarded as great.<sup>53</sup>  
有親則可久有功則可大
- (A1.15) What can be regarded as enduring thus is the potency of an accomplished man;

<sup>53</sup> The words *ch'iu* 久 and *ta* 大, applied to persons here, are similar in intent to the use, seen above in A6.6, 8, of the words *kuang* 廣 and *ta* 大 to describe the *Change*.

what can be regarded as great thus is the enterprise of an accomplished man.

可久則賢人之德可大則賢人之業

In A1.12–15 we have two intermingled sequences of assertions which connect knowing cosmic change and acting on that knowledge with the accomplished man's potency and achievements in human affairs. The first section of the "Commentary" concludes with the explicit point in the final two sentences that knowing about the realm of heaven-and-earth enables humans to adapt their course of action in human society.

(A1.16) [Knowing about cosmic change in the realm of heaven-and-earth] being easy and simple, the patterns of all-under-heaven are apprehended.

易簡而天下之理得矣

(A1.17) The patterns of all-under-heaven being apprehended, one goes on taking up the perfect positions in its midst.

天下之理得而成位乎其中矣

An implication of the second claim of the "Commentary" is that we, too, if we would be an accomplished person, can become one by knowing and following the change at work in heaven-and-earth and in our human society. But assurances about "simple" and "easy" aside, how can we do it?

### *The Third Claim*

We can know by means of the words in the *Change*, and we can be guided by their counsel—this is the third major claim of the "Commentary" and is set forth in the second and third sections. The processes represented in the technique of the *Change* may duplicate the processes at work in heaven-and-earth, but if the technique is to be our guide, two aspects have to be accessible: the implications for our conduct of the figure associated with each hexagram and the manner in which the change inherent in a given moment is represented or manifested to us. For making all of this more explicit to us, we are indebted to sages, from whom we have inherited the text known as the *Change*.

- (A2.1) Sages set out the hexagrams.  
聖人設卦
- (A2.2) [By this is meant that they] observed the figures [of the hexagrams and their associated phenomena] and attached verbalizations to them, and thereby made clear what is well-fortuned and ill-fortuned.  
觀象繫辭焉而明吉凶
- (A2.3) [It also means that they showed that] hard and soft [lines in the hexagrams] push each other on [i.e., one hexagram changes into another as the lines change], and thereby generate flux and transformation [in the divination act].  
剛柔相推而生變化
- (A2.4) In consequence of these [two aspects being available in the *Change*, the following connections are established]:  
[The verbalizations about] well-fortuned and ill-fortuned are figures of failure and success.  
是故吉凶者失得之象也
- (A2.5) [The verbalizations about] regret and remorse are figures of anxiety and apprehension.  
悔吝者憂虞之象也
- (A2.6) Flux and transformation [revealed by changes in the lines] are figures of advancing and withdrawing [from any particular course of action].  
變化者進退之象也
- (A2.7) Hard and soft [lines pushing each other on] are figures of day and night.  
剛柔者晝夜之象也
- (A2.8) The movements of the six lines [as each hexagram changes to another] are the course traced by the ongoing process of the three extremes.  
六爻之動三極之道也

Although the referrants in the phrase “three extremes” are disputable, they are generally taken to be the ultimate pivot or axis of change present in the courses traced by the ongoing processes in the heavens, among humans, and on the earth.<sup>54</sup> (Cf. B10.2–4, page 89

<sup>54</sup> Chu Hsi explained that “An ‘extreme’ (*chi* 極) is ‘reaching an ultimate point’ (*chih* 至). The ‘three extremes’ are heaven’s, earth’s, and man’s ultimate principles (*chih li* 至理).” *Yi pen yi*, 57.

above.) Thus the lines of the hexagrams duplicate the perhaps otherwise incomprehensible forces which are somehow “behind” changes in the realm of heaven-and-earth and in all-under-heaven. The moving lines figure all of the observable bipolar phenomena, represented by “day and night,” in the realm of heaven-and-earth; they also figure what, in effect, we should or should not do in human society. The explicit words of prognostication tell us about our forthcoming states of mind and the results, for us, of our conduct. All of this was made accessible to us by sages. Who among us will take up the opportunity?

At this juncture, the “Commentary” introduces a third type of human—not the accomplished man (*hsien jen*) whose achievements we might emulate, or the sage man (*sheng jen*) who set out the hexagrams for us, but the superior man (*chün-tzu*), a term of long standing, but which in the “Commentary” seems to warrant the gloss “one who understands and follows the *Change*.” He is the model which we ordinary humans can approximate by immersing ourselves in the text provided by sages.

- (A2.9) In consequence of these [connections being established in the text of the *Change*],  
That from which the superior man takes his place and finds contentment is the order [of the hexagrams] of the *Change*.  
是故君子所居而安者易之序也
- (A2.10) That which he takes joy in and rolls [in his mind] are the verbalizations [attached] to the lines.  
所樂而玩者爻之辭也
- (A2.11) In consequence of this [immersion by the superior man in the *Change*],  
When the superior man is at his place he observes the appropriate figure and rolls [in his mind] the appropriate verbalizations.  
是故君子居則觀其象而玩其辭
- (A2.12) When he moves [i.e., pursues a course of action], he observes the appropriate flux [of the lines] and rolls [in his mind] the appropriate prognostications.  
動則觀其變而玩其占

- (A2.13) This is the means by which he is aided by Heaven, [and thus he is given such advice as] “Well-fortuned” and “Nothing that is not advantageous.”  
 是以自天祐之吉无不利

The model of the superior man shows that the *Change* can be our counsel.

If we accept that the *Change* is the means for knowing about change in the realm of heaven-and-earth and in all-under-heaven, then we find that the words in the *Change* shape our perceptions. The verbalizations “are speaking of” what takes place in the world outside of us, a point implicit in sentences A3.1–5. In the other direction, an influence works back onto our minds and our thoughts “are present in” the text of the *Change*, which is the theme in sentences A3.6–10. Recalling two sentences from the second section, we can more readily discern the connections that are being made between the realms of heaven-and-earth, human affairs, and our understanding and intentions, with the text of the *Change* as the means of connecting them.

- (A2.4) [The verbalizations about] well-fortuned and ill-fortuned are figures of failure and success.  
 吉凶者失得之象也
- (A3.3) [The verbalizations about] well-fortuned and ill-fortuned are speaking of failure or success [in a particular course of action].  
 吉凶者言乎其失得也
- (A3.8) Our distinguishing between well-fortuned and ill-fortuned is present in the verbalizations.  
 辯吉凶者存乎辭

And:

- (A2.5) [The verbalizations about] regret and remorse are figures of anxiety and apprehension.  
 悔吝者憂虞之象也
- (A3.4) [The verbalizations about] regret and remorse are speaking of the small defect [of a result in a particular course of action].  
 悔吝者言乎其小疵也
- (A3.9) Our feeling anxiety about regret and remorse is present in



the interstices [between the lines of the hexagrams].  
 憂悔吝者存乎介

The second section does not say what is figured by verbalizations about no blame, but we do have:

(A3.5) [The verbalizations about] no blame are [speaking of] being good at recovering from transgressions.

无咎者善補過也

(A3.10) Our feeling stimulated about being without blame is present in [the concept in the text of] regret.

震无咎者存乎悔

The implication of these three sequences of sentences is that the text of the *Change* is, in effect, a participatory agent in the circumstances of any moment.

(A3.11) In consequence of this,  
 the hexagrams have lesser and greater [results],  
 and the verbalizations have dangerous and easy [consequences].

是故卦有大小辭有險易

(A3.12) As for the verbalizations [attached to the figures and lines], each indicates where [the particular circumstances about which the *Change* has been consulted] is going.

辭也者各指其所之

The words and the dynamics of the *Change* thus should be the guide on which we act, because they are part of change itself.

The “Commentary” anticipates the objection that words surely are an inadequate means of conveying the sages’ understanding of the complexities of change in the realm of heaven-and-earth and in human society.

(A12.7) The master said: [It is well known that] writing does not bring out exhaustively what is said, and what is said does not bring out exhaustively what is thought.

子曰書不盡言言不盡意

(A12.8) That being so, is it the case that the thinking of the sages [which the *Change* supposedly represents to us] cannot be [fully] perceived?

- 然則聖人之意其不可見乎
- (A12.9) The master said [in response to this question]: Sages set up figures [rather than rely on words] in order to bring out exhaustively what is thought.  
子曰聖人立象以盡意
- (A12.10) They set out hexagrams in order to bring out exhaustively the actual circumstances and the false.  
設卦以盡情偽
- (A12.11) They appended verbalizations to them [that is, the figures and the hexagrams,] in order to bring out exhaustively what they said.  
繫辭焉以盡其言
- (A12.12) They made it in flux as well as comprehensive in order to bring out exhaustively what is advantageous.  
變而通之以盡利

The *Change* is a text with words, but it includes much that is not susceptible of verbalization; it cannot be dismissed as mere verbiage.

#### *The Fourth Claim*

In the fourth section of the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” the three major claims established in the preceding sections are drawn together to show that following the *Change* is more potent than any other way of conducting oneself in the world. The sentences move continuously, and ambiguously, between change in the realm of heaven-and-earth, the technique and text of the *Change*, which was made accessible by sages, and the superior man who accepts the guidance of the *Change* to optimize his “well-fortuned” conduct among the change in all-under-heaven. The section begins with a statement similar to the claim that the *Change* duplicates heaven-and-earth.

- (A4.1) In consequence of the *Change* being on a level with heaven-and-earth, [the *Change* and the superior man who knows it] are capable of remaining wholly in alignment with the course of the ongoing processes of heaven-and-earth.  
易與天地準故能彌綸天地之道
- (A4.2) [To establish the technique of the *Change*, sages] looked upward to observe the markings in the heavens and looked

downward to examine the patterns on the earth; in consequence of this, [the *Change* and the superior man] know the causes of what is obscure and what is obvious.

仰以觀於天文俯以察於地理是故知幽明之故

- (A4.3) In consequence of [sages'] having gone to the source of beginnings and turned back to [find] ends, [the *Change* and the superior man] know the explanations of death and birth.

原始反終故知死生之說

- (A4.4) [Sages understood that] quintessential *ch'i* constitutes a thing [by joining with corporeal *ch'i*, as in a human body], and that the floating up of the soul [i.e., quintessential *ch'i* becoming detached again from corporeal *ch'i*, as occurs after death,] constitutes a fluxion; in consequence of this, [the *Change* and the superior man] know the actual circumstances of ghosts and divinities.

精氣為物游魂為變是故知鬼神之情狀

The sentences A4.2–4 are about knowing. The next set of sentences is about acting and feeling. They also begin with a statement about a relationship between something and heaven-and-earth. The “something,” however, is not named. If, as in A4.1, it is the *Change*, the claim of duplication would seem to be compromised; if, following on from A4.2–4, it is “the understanding of the sages who made the *Change* accessible to the superior man,” then an important distinction is being maintained.

- (A4.5) In consequence of [the sages' understanding] and heaven-and-earth resembling each other, [the superior man] does not go astray.

與天地相似故不違

- (A4.6) In consequence of [the sages'] knowledge continuing to encompass the ten thousand things and of the help given to all-under-heaven by the course traced [by the sages in their activities, the superior man] does not transgress [by following the guidance of the *Change*].

知周乎萬物而道濟天下故不過

- (A4.7) In consequence of [the sages'] acting from the side and not flowing along [with everyone else], and of their finding joy in Heaven and understanding its decrees, [the superior

man] has no anxiety.<sup>55</sup>

旁行而不流樂天知命故不憂

- (A4.8) In consequence of [the sages'] bringing security to their territorial domain and of their being earnest about being humane, [the superior man] is capable of loving others.

安土敦乎仁故能愛

Sentences A4.2–4 contend that, by means of the *Change*, we can know about things which are sometimes regarded (as by Confucius in the *Analects*, for example) as unknowable—what is behind the alternation of dark and light, why there is death and birth, what is the character of ghosts and divinities—in short, the course of all the ongoing processes, whether inanimate, animate, or “beyond” animate, in the realm of heaven-and-earth. This “knowing,” based on the *Change* and made accessible by sages, is a more effective guide for acting than any other way (*tao*, in the sense of a set of precedents or teachings). Why? Because the knowing available to us from the *Change* resembles heaven-and-earth, and just as heaven-and-earth includes all that is, the *Change* is the guide to which all other ways are subordinate. This point is not argued, but implied, in A4.6–8. Some men (e.g., adherents of the *Tao te ching*) teach us to model our conduct on the course of the ongoing processes of the ten thousand things in heaven-and-earth; guiding knowledge of them is contained in the *Change*. Other men (e.g., adherents of the *Mencius* or the *Hsun tzu*) teach us to seek to follow the mode of conduct of sages of antiquity who did so much to improve the lot of all members of human society; guidance derived from their beneficial course of action is contained in the *Change*. Some men (e.g., followers of the *Chuang Tzu*) might urge us to protect ourselves by withdrawing from

<sup>55</sup> Because of the strong parallelism between sentence A4.8 and the last seven characters of the sentence which I have labeled A4.7, some commentators have proposed moving the first five characters of A4.7 somewhere else, to A4.5, for example. See Liu Pai-min 劉百閔, *Chou yi shih li t'ung-yi* 周易事理通義 (Taipei: Shih-chieh, 1966), p. 811. Another reading would be to take the five as roughly parallel to A4.6, except that the “consequence” clause has dropped off; the missing clause might have been similar to the final clause in A4.6. Thus, if we also were to accept the gloss of *p'ang* 旁 as *p'ien* 邊, or even *fang* 方, the reconstituted sentence might have read, “In consequence of [the sages'] acting within the bounds [of society] and not roaming, [the superior man] does not transgress.” Rather than impose an arbitrary solution, I have followed Chu Hsi, and Liu Pai-min, in taking the five characters as part of the sentence A4.7.

human society and to gain peace of mind by identifying with Heaven rather than other humans and by accepting all that happens as fate; the means of finding security and certainty are contained in the *Change*. Many men teach us about morality, whether based on the notion of being content with one's portion, so to speak,<sup>56</sup> or on the concept of being humane (*jen*, as stressed by followers of Confucius), or on the idea of loving others (*ai*, as stressed by followers of Mo Tzu); conduct with such moral implications is possible by acting on the guidance of the *Change*. The means of knowing about change which is at work in the realm of heaven-and-earth, and a guide to action which incorporates and transcends all teachings—this is the two-fold potency of the *Change* which makes it the superior guide that it is.

The final four sentences of the fourth section can be read as an affirmation of why the *Change* is both potent and reliable.

- (A4.9) [The technique of the *Change*] is molded on and embraces the transformations in heaven-and-earth, and [the *Change*] does not transgress.  
範圍天地之化而不過
- (A4.10) [The technique of the *Change*] twists with and brings to completion all of the ten thousand things, and [the *Change*] leaves nothing out.  
曲成萬物而不遺
- (A4.11) [The technique of the *Change*] comprehends the course of the ongoing processes of day and night, and [the *Change*] knows.  
通乎晝夜之道而知
- (A4.12)<sub>1</sub> In consequence, what is *shen* has no squareness, and the *Change* [like change in heaven-and-earth, which it duplicates,] has no embodiment.  
故神无方而易无體

The first three sentences are understandable in terms of the claims of duplication and intelligibility. The final sentence (A4.12) is one of the most enigmatic in the “Commentary on the Attached Verbaliza-

<sup>56</sup> In the *Book of Poetry*, the *Mo tzu*, the *Records of the Historian*, and elsewhere there occur a variety of terms conveying the idea of having security (*an* 安) in territory or place. I do not know of any “school” which advocated this, unless it was the Mohists.

tions.” What does it mean that is “in consequence” of the preceding sentences? I take *fang* to mean “squareness” in the sense of “having the characteristic of being bounded by a regular (quadrilateral) shape.” Above, in A1.4 (page 86), the word *fang* was understood as “clearly bounded sets of individual things,” and below, in A11.4 (page 109), the word *fang* is used in conjunction with the idea of knowledge. Here in A4.12, again a conceptual more than a physical or territorial limit is being implied. To have no “squareness” is to be not susceptible of being differentiated into parts and to be not adequately delimited by any conceptual bounds. My understanding of the quality of “squareness” which “what is *shen*” does not have may be more clear when the meaning of the word *shen* has been considered with some care.

In contexts such as A4.4 and A9.4, where it appears in conjunction with the word “ghosts,” *shen* can be understood and translated as “divinities” without much risk of being misled or misleading. In this usage it is closely similar to the Japanese reading of it as *kami*, referring to spirits or divinities as beings or powers which inhabit, even if in another “dimension,” the realm of heaven-and-earth and which make their presence felt to humans. Thus in B2.10 and B2.18 we read of the exploits of the Divinity of Agriculture, or, personified, the Divine Nung. More often, however, when the “Commentary” uses the word *shen* adjectivally, it is in a more extended sense than “partaking of the defining quality or characteristic of divinities.” For conveying this broader meaning, the English words “divine” and “spiritual” seem too weak in their current usage. Another possibility is daemonic, but I find the word cannot avoid the connotations of evil which the Christian tradition has laid on it, and, when taken narrowly, it seems too close to the meaning of a particular kind of being or presence (whether as demon or daemon) which, like “spirits” and “divinities,” does not seem consonant with the intentions of the “Commentary”. An interesting case has been made for translating *shen* as “psychic” in its adjectival use in the “Commentary,”<sup>57</sup> but again there are unwanted connotations, of “breath” and “life” from the Greek, and of “mind” in modern English, which cannot simply be defined away. The English word I use to approxi-

<sup>57</sup> A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers* (London: Lund Humphries, 1958), pp. 111-18.

mate *shen* as an adjective in the “Commentary” is “numinous,” which is derived from the Latin *numen* (divinity). Primarily a twentieth-century word promoted by Rudolf Otto,<sup>58</sup> “numinous,” if we reduce or neglect its intended religious overtones, points to a certain quality, state or condition which cannot be fully apprehended and which some of us today might acknowledge as present more in an abstract and depersonalized manner than was perhaps characteristic of the divinities, spirits, demons, and *numen* (and *shen*) which some of our ancestors recognized. In the fifth section of the “Commentary” a partial explanation of *shen* is given.

(A5.18) Being incommensurate with *yin* and *yang* is what is meant by “numinous.”

陰陽不測之謂神

An inference to be drawn from this sentence is that *shen*, whether as “divinity” or as “what is numinous,” is the word used to refer to a quality, state, or dimension present in the realm of heaven-and-earth which is not explicable in terms of *yin* and *yang*, although *yin* and *yang*, as the two fundamental aspects of change in heaven-and-earth, otherwise can be used to understand all phenomena. (My formulation here might be taken to imply that the word *shen* represents something like Kant’s “noumenon,” a concept derived from words associated with perceiving and mind. Noumenon refers to a “thing in itself” which cannot, by definition, be an object of our sensible intuition. On the contrary, in the usage of the “Commentary”, what is *shen* is present “out there” and can be taken on by a person; it impinges on our lives as well as our mental processes.)

The sentence A5.18 also invites us to ask, does the “Commentary” hold that what is numinous is unknowable? The “Commentary” itself raises this question in a rhetorical way while making it clear that the *Change* is numinous.

(A9.18) [The *Change*] makes apparent the course traced by ongoing processes [in the realm of heaven-and-earth] and makes numinous that conduct which is potent [in the realm of

<sup>58</sup> See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1950), pp. 5–7.

all-under-heaven by being in accord with the *Change*].

顯道神德行

- (A9.19) In consequence of this,  
[he who understands and follows the *Change*] can be given recompense [such as those who sacrifice to divinities are thought to receive], and can be given a helping numinous quality [such as those who are protected by divinities are thought to receive].

是故可與酬酢可與祐神矣

- (A9.20) As our master asked: Is not he who knows the course traced by the ongoing process of flux and transformation he who knows how what is numinous acts?

子曰知變化之道者其知神之所爲乎

Elsewhere the “Commentary” says:

- (B5.16) Fathoming numinosity and knowing transformation is the utmost of potency.

窮神知化德之盛也

This statement still allows us to suspect that numinosity is not “known,” or consciously understood, in quite the same way as phenomena in the realm of heaven-and-earth are known. It is, moreover, possible to infer that numbers may be a means for fathoming numinosity. Chu Hsi may have tacitly recognized this when he rearranged the order of the important sentences which involve numbers, grouped them all into his ninth section, and then suggestively concluded the section with the rhetorical question of A9.20. In A9 and A10, the word “number” and the numbers discussed are related to the realms of heaven-and-earth and all-under-heaven as well as to the processes at work in the technique of the *Change*, but on the whole “number” and numbers are treated only secondarily in the “Commentary.” It remained for later writers to find more significance for them. The “Commentary” itself wants us to recognize that the *Change* is the means by which we can have access to the powerful, numinous presence which is hidden and difficult, perhaps even impossible, to perceive, just as it gives us access to knowledge of the subtle origins of change in heaven-and-earth and in



human society. The *Change* is numinous in the same way that it *is* change.

(A10.14) The *Change* [and change in the realm of heaven-and-earth] is without conscious thought and is without purposive action.

易无思也无爲也

(A10.15) It is still and unmoving.

寂然不動

(A10.16) When stimulated, it comprehends all causes in the realm of all-under-heaven.

感而遂通天下之故

(A10.17) If it were not the ultimate numinosity in all-under-heaven, what could participate in this [that is, have the four aspects of the course traced by sages as described in A10.2–5]?

非天下之至神其孰能與於此

“Sages” are humans who have taken onto themselves some degree of numinosity (that is, as mentioned above, we can speak of the divine, or now the numinous, Nung), and, the “Commentary” maintains, they achieved it by means of the *Change*.

(A10.18) As for the *Change*, it is that by which sages [achieve] the extreme depths and thoroughly [comprehend] what is seminal [in the sense of being the incipient stages of all movement].

夫易聖人之所以極深而研幾也

Elsewhere we have the rhetorical question:

(B5.45) As our master asked: Is it not numinous to know what is seminal?

子曰知幾其神乎

In short, we who are not sages can connect up with that nonphysical but potent numinous presence through the medium of the *Change*, which itself is numinous. The sentence at the end of the fourth section should now seem less enigmatic.

(A4.12)<sub>2</sub> In consequence, numinosity has no squareness, and the

*Change* [like change] has no embodiment.

故神无方而易无體

One purpose for making this statement is to anticipate the objection that a mere book, or a mere technique involving the manipulation of some yarrow stalks, cannot possibly duplicate *all* that is going on in the realm of heaven-and-earth when there is a “numinous presence,” or a “godlike influence,” or a “mysterious dimension,” or however one might phrase it, which is “out there” and not the product of our minds. According to the “Commentary,” the *Change* goes and is everywhere, for it is numinous presence.

In affirming the potency of the *Change*, the “Commentary” wants to persuade us not only that the *Change* is numinous, but also that it can be our medium, in a double sense. First, the *Change* in effect will be our *wu* 巫, a shaman or diviner or “possessed person,” who puts us in touch with *shen*, whether we interpret that word as spirits, divinities, demons, numinosity, or whatever. In this context, *shen* is that “other” realm with which we make contact only through some process of “divination.” Like a shaman summoning a spirit with music and dance,

(A12.13) [Sages] drummed it [that is, the numinous presence] and danced for it in order to bring out exhaustively the divinity [or the numinosity].

鼓之舞之以盡神

The *Change* can “transport” us, shamanlike.

(A10.21) Only in consequence of its being numinous were they [and are we able to] hurry without haste and to arrive at the ultimate point without going.

唯神也故不疾而速不行而至

The “Commentary” suggests that other types of divination are included within the *Change*.

(A11.26) In consequence of this [that is, the realms of heaven-and-earth and all-under-heaven, as well as the realm which we divine, all being the way they are], Heaven [in the sense of the ancestral deity of the Chou kings] gives rise to numinous things [such as the tortoise

carapace, the scapula, and the milfoils],  
and sages modeled [the *Change* in part] on them.

是故天生神物聖人則之

- (A11.27) Heaven [in the sense of the sky] and the earth have flux and transformations [such as colored sunsets and flights of birds which are omens],  
and sages imitated them [in the *Change*].

天地變化聖人效之

- (A11.28) By hanging figures [in the form of planets and stars],  
the heavens make manifest what is well-fortuned and ill-fortuned,  
and sages made figures of this [in the *Change*].

天垂象見吉凶聖人象之

- (A11.29) The Diagram was produced from the Yellow River and the Writing was produced from the Lo River [with both the Diagram and the Writing being taken to refer to arrangements of numbers with fortune-telling potential],  
and sages modeled [the *Change* in part] on them.

河出圖洛出書聖人則之

The technique of the *Change* thus contains the prognosticating capabilities of the figures in numinous things, omens, astrological signs, and numerological devices, and it is superior to them by having verbalizations attached to it as well as the predictive words “well-fortuned” and “ill-fortuned.”

- (A11.30) The *Change's* having these four [types of] figures is the means by which it shows.

易有四象所以示也

- (A11.31) [The *Change's* having] verbalizations attached to it is the means by which it announces.

繫辭焉所以告也

- (A11.32) [The *Change's*] fixing it [the prognostication] by “well-fortuned” and “ill-fortuned” is the means by which it settles [our uncertainties].

定之以吉凶所以斷也

Thus the *Change* is the medium also in the sense of being the means of passing from the realm of what is intelligible to us to the realm of what is not directly or only imperfectly knowable.

- (A11.4) In consequence of this,  
 the potency of the stalks is circular and numinous,  
 the potency of the hexagrams is square in order to be  
 knowledgeable,  
 and the meanings in the six lines change in order to  
 present [a prediction for the particular, changing circum-  
 stance].  
 是故著之德圓而神卦之德方以知六爻之義易以貢

In other words, the technique and text of the *Change* include, and mediate between, the unknown and the known, both in the present moment, with phenomena as known and numinosity as what is not directly knowable, and over time, with the past as known and the future as unknown.

- (A11.7) [The *Change* and the sage,] being numinous, know what is to come, and, being knowledgeable, store up what has come to pass.  
 神以知來知以藏往
- (A11.8) What [or who] is it that is capable of participating in this?  
 其孰能與於此哉
- (A11.9) It is that which [and those who] in ancient times were [perceptually] open and bright, were perspicacious and knowing, and were numinous and martial but did not kill.<sup>59</sup>  
 古之聰明叡知神武而不殺者夫

Sages of antiquity by means of the *Change*, and the *Change* through the person, or medium, of a sage, are thus able to prognosticate.

- (A11.10) By this it and they are clear about the course traced by the ongoing processes of heaven [both as the sky where omens and celestial phenomena appear and as the name of the potent presence representing the dead ancestors to whom sacrifices are made] and are discerning about the causes at work among the commoners.  
 是以明於天之道而察於民之故
- (A11.11) From this it and they give rise to numinous things in

<sup>59</sup> I speculate that the words “but did not kill” are an allusion to the *Change* being a divination technique which is not dependent on sacrificial victims, such as were employed in Shang times.

order to anticipate what is useful for the commoners.

是興神物以前民用

- (A11.12) Sages use this [participation in the *Change*] to do [their equivalent of a shaman's] austerities of purification and fasting in order to make their potency numinous and luminous.

聖人以此齋戒以神明其德夫

By being numinous, by partaking of divinity, the sage ruler and the technique of the *Change* were, and are, the most potent medium available to us because it is not “physically present” in any person or other physical object, as is the case with other divination techniques.

- (A4.12)<sub>3</sub> In consequence, [just as] numinosity has no squareness, the *Change* has no embodiment.

故神无方而易无體

The fourth major claim in the “Commentary” thus is that by being numinous, the *Change* is the medium giving us access to all that is numinous.

#### GROUNDS FOR MAKING THE CLAIMS

The “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” tells us that the technique and text of the *Change* were made by sages, and we have already seen that their knowledge and understanding of change were derived partly from the processes at work in the realm of heaven-and-earth.

- (A4.2) [To establish the technique of the *Change*, sages] looked upward to observe the markings in the heavens and looked downward to examine the patterns on the earth; in consequence of this, [the *Change* and the superior man] know the causes of what is obscure and what is obvious.

In the second part of the “Commentary,” an expanded version of this statement is given in a quasi-historical account of the origins of the *Change*.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> This account in the second section of the second part of the “Commentary” is sus-

- (B2.1) In antiquity, P'ao-hsi ruled over all-under-heaven.  
古者包犧氏之王天下也
- (B2.2) Looking up, he observed figures in the heavens.  
仰則觀象於天
- (B2.3) Looking down, he observed models on the earth.  
俯則觀法於地
- (B2.4) He observed the markings of the birds and beasts and their suitability [to their particular environments] on the earth.  
觀鳥獸之文與地之宜
- (B2.5) Close by, he drew on his own body [to understand change].  
近取諸身
- (B2.6) Farther away, he drew on things [other than himself].  
遠取諸物
- (B2.7) Therewith he invented the eight trigrams  
in order to comprehend the potency of what is numinous  
and what is luminous,  
and in order to categorize the actual circumstances of the  
ten thousand things.  
於是始作八卦以通神明之德以類萬物之情

Thus, the knowledge contained in the technique and text of the *Change* is in the first instance derived from patternings in heaven-and-earth, the realm which includes living things around us as well as the human body. The sage P'ao-hsi ruled over human society, but his perceptual knowledge which was manifested in the trigrams was not inspired from or dependent on the human realm. The eight trigrams are based on what he observed in the realm of heaven-and-earth, and were used to understand that realm. At later stages, the technique of the *Change* was further elaborated.

After P'ao-hsi had passed from the scene and been succeeded by the Divine Nung, the *Change* was used to guide the humans in the realm of all-under-heaven.

- (B2.18) After the Divine Nung died, the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun became active.  
神農氏沒黃帝堯舜氏作

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pected of being a late Western Han addition. See Ku Chieh-kang, pp. 50–67. Even if Ku's argument does not stand, B2 must be treated with caution as it is the only extended section in the "Commentary" where there is a presumption of special "historical" knowledge.

- (B2.19) Comprehending its [i.e., cosmic change's and the *Change's*] flux, they caused the commoners to be unwearied.  
通其變使民不倦
- (B2.20) Being themselves numinous and transforming [the *Change*], they caused the commoners to treat it suitably.  
神而化之使民宜之

It may even have been at this stage that

- (A2.1) Sages set out the hexagrams.

This can be taken to refer to the formation of the sixty-four hexagrams by combining P'ao-hsi's eight trigrams. Moreover, in this stage the augmented *Change* had come to be applied almost as if it were a tool of civilization. The second section of the second part of the "Commentary" prevents us from inferring that the *Change* had become "merely" another cultural artifact provided by sages. Rather, the argument seeks to persuade us that particular sets of lines (*kua*) and figures were themselves the source of inspiration for the invention by sages of nets and baskets (B2.8), plows (B2.11), periodic markets (B2.15), clothing (B2.25), boats and oars (B2.27), domestication of beasts of burden (B2.30), gates and watches (B2.32), pestles and mortars (B2.35), bows and arrows (B2.38), buildings and houses (B2.42–43), funeral paraphernalia and rites (B2.46), and writing and systems of governance (B2.49). All objects of culture were made by sages. Conversely, their invention "made" the sages by enabling them to be worthy of that name. In contending that the great innovations were inspired by trigrams and hexagrams, the "Commentary" effectively subordinates to the *Change* the sages who were venerated by the society as culture heroes. Moreover, we are to be persuaded of still another potent aspect of the *Change*.

- (B3.1) In consequence of this [that is, sages' taking the inspiration for their inventions from the hexagrams, we can see that] Being the *Change* is a matter of providing figures [which inspired sages].  
是故易者象也
- (B3.2) Providing figures is a matter of resembling [some object or process].  
象也者像也

- (B3.3) Being the *t'uan*<sup>61</sup> is to be the stuff [of each hexagram and figure which inspired sages].  
 象者材也
- (B3.4) Being the lines is to be that which imitates the movements of all-under-heaven [and enables the inventions to move with changes in human society].  
 爻也者效天下之動者也

The *Change* has functioned, and still functions, as a fecund source for those who would draw inspiration from it.

The “Commentary” also tells us of a further stage in the development of the *Change* as text and technique—the period when it came into a position of prominence. In one section it is asked rhetorically:

- (B7.1) Did not the prospering of the *Change* occur in middle antiquity?  
 易之興也其於中古乎
- (B7.2) Did not the makers of the *Change* have anxiety and tribulation?  
 作易者其有憂患乎

By implication, the *Change* is relevant to our own time of troubles although it has the prestige of being ancient.

- (B11.1) As for the prospering of the *Change*,  
 was it not fitting to be [at the time of] the end of the line of Yin kings and [at the beginning of] the bountiful potency of the Chou kings;  
 was it not fitting to be a matter involving King Wen [of Chou] and Tchou [the last king of Yin]?  
 易之興也其當殷之末周之盛德邪當文王與紂之事邪

It seems to have been in “middle” antiquity that the full elaboration of the text occurred, and the inspiration for this stage was derived

<sup>61</sup> The word *t'uan* is of uncertain meaning, but usually taken to mean something akin to *hsiang*, which I have translated as “figure.” In A3.1, we are told that “[The verbalizations attached to?] the *t'uan* are speaking of the figures” 象者言乎象者也. Here in B3.3, I suggest *t'uan* means specific and particular, but preverbal, manifestations of the figures. The *t'uan*, like the *hsiang* and the lines, have verbalizations attached to them.



from perceptive observation of human society as well as from the technique of the *Change* as it had thus far been developed.<sup>62</sup>

(A8.1) Sages, having the means to perceive the mysteries in all-under-heaven and imitate them in their form and characteristics, made figures for what is suitable to particular things [and circumstances in human society].

聖人有以見天下之蹟而擬諸其形容象其物宜

(A8.2) In consequence of this, they are called figures.

是故謂之象

(A8.3) Sages, having perceived the movements in all-under-heaven and observed their conjunctive and comprehensive aspects in order to put forth rules and rituals, attached verbalizations to them, [the lines which duplicate the movements,] in order to settle [the implications for being] well-fortuned or ill-fortuned.

聖人有以見天下之動而觀其會通以行其典禮繫辭焉以斷其吉凶

(A8.4) In consequence of this, they are called lines.

是故謂之爻

Thus the *Change*, with its figures and lines and verbalizations, was developed as the repository of more than just the sages' understanding.

(A10.1) There are four aspects in which the *Change* has in it the course traced by the sages.

易有聖人之道四焉

(A10.2) From their words, esteem is given to its verbalizations.

以言者尙其辭

(A10.3) From their movements, esteem is given to its flux.

以動者尙其變

(A10.4) From their inventing cultural artifacts, esteem is given to its figures.

以制器者尙其象

(A10.5) From their divining by cracks and stalks, esteem is given to its prognostications.

以卜筮者尙其占

<sup>62</sup> The sentences A8.1-4 also appear in A12.23-26, with the addition of a further four characters at the beginning.

We now understand that the relationship between the sages and the *Change* is like the relation between the proverbial chicken and egg: they make each other.

The authors of the “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” knew the four major propositions which they claim for the *Change* from three sources. First, there are the processes at work in the realm of heaven-and-earth. In the Warring States period there were schools which taught that we might conduct ourselves best in this world by emulating heaven-and-earth. The “Commentary” intends to persuade us that even though phenomena in heaven-and-earth are directly perceivable, its subtle aspects are intelligible and its numinous aspects are most accessible to us through the technique, graphic symbols, and attached verbalizations of the *Change*. Secondly, there is the heritage of knowledge and understanding left us by sages. Again, in the Warring States period there were schools which sought to validate their teachings by claiming they stemmed from the sages of antiquity. The “Commentary” intends to persuade us that only through the *Change* can we have access to what is important, subtle and numinous about the sages. Recognition is given in the “Commentary” to the authority of a certain master (“Our master said”), to sages, to insight into the workings of human society (A8.1 and 3), and to understanding the change at work in heaven-and-earth. But the single source of knowing which comprehends all of these others is the *Change* itself.

No label representing any school of thought is appropriate for the “Commentary.” As was seen in A4.6–8, other teachings are subordinate to it. Its emphasis on the sages may accord well with the inclinations of the pre-Han *ju* and seem to warrant the label “Confucian”; it seems likely that arguments such as those in the “Commentary” contributed to the transformation of the status of the *Change* from divination text into one of the Five Classics in Han times. Equally, its emphasis on the processes of change at work outside of as well as within human society associate the “Commentary” with the Taoists (*Tao-chia*). But such labels must be partial and incomplete.

The “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” seeks to establish that the *Change*, as a book and as a technique, effectively crosses the boundary of the square (which symbolically represents

all-under-heaven, human society, the domain of sages, the man-made, what is known and knowable) into the realm of heaven-and-earth, the ten thousand things, what is not man-made, what is not directly and never perfectly known, including what is numinous. The *Change* duplicates but also knows from the ongoing processes in the circle which embraces all change, which includes all in the realm of heaven-and-earth. If we are willing, it enables us sufficiently though temporally to understand that change. Because the “Commentary” bases its claims for the *Change* on this inclusive *Change*, it knows from a source which comprehends all-under-heaven as well as the realm of heaven-and-earth. On its own terms the “Commentary” cannot be partial or incomplete. It cannot be assigned a conventional label, and, like the *Change*, has to remain incomprehensible to us, its explanations of the verbalizations notwithstanding.

When we realize that the *Change* knows from the area bounded by the circle which includes all that is in the realm of heaven-and-earth, then we can better understand that there are two meanings for its common title, the *Chou yi*. One line of interpretation, the predominant one, is that the word Chou refers to the dynasty known by that name, and that the title means the technique developed by or for the Chou kings to know the course of “change” as it is developing in the world around them, and us. A second interpretation, articulated at least as early as the second century by Cheng Hsuan, is also congruent with the explanation of the *Change* provided in the “Commentary”:

Its being the *Chou yi* [as distinguished from the other types of divination techniques] refers to the course traced by the ongoing process of change [in its technique and in heaven-and-earth] being all-encompassing and with nothing that is not included. 周易者言易道周普無所不備也<sup>63</sup>

The “Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations” explains, and knows from the text and technique which also can be called, with suitable ambiguity, *Encompassing Change*.

<sup>63</sup> Cheng Hsuan, “Yi tsan, Yi lun” 易贊易論, in *Chou yi Cheng chu* 周易鄭注, *Ts'ung shu chi ch'eng* Vol. 384 (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1936), p. 140; in *Cheng shih Chou yi chu* 鄭氏周易注, *Ts'ung shu chi ch'eng*, Vol. 382 (Ch'ang-sha: Shang-wu, 1929), p. 68; and quoted in Juan Yuan, “Lun san tai Yi ming” 論三代易名, *Shih-san ching chu su, Yi, hsu chüan*, 8b, where it was observed that there is no evidence to support this interpretation of the historical origin of the title. Also see Shchutskii, pp. 96–98.