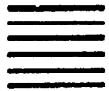


## 1. Ch'ien | The Creative



*Nuclear trigrams* CH'IEN ☰ and CH'IEN ☰

The ruler of the hexagram<sup>1</sup> is the nine in the fifth place. THE CREATIVE indicates the way of heaven, and the fifth place is the symbol of heaven. THE CREATIVE also indicates the way of the superior man, and the fifth place, as that of the ruler, is his appropriate place. Moreover, the nine in the fifth place possesses the four attributes of firmness, strength, moderation (central position in the upper trigram), and justice (correctness, the yang element being in the yang place). Hence this line possesses the character of heaven in all its perfection. This hexagram is correlated with the fourth month (May-June), because the light-giving power is then at its zenith.

### Miscellaneous Notes on the Hexagrams<sup>2</sup>

THE CREATIVE is strong.

Strength and firmness constitute the character of this hexagram. Its image is the trigram of heaven doubled, that is, two successive rotations or days. It is made up of positive lines only.

### THE JUDGMENT

THE CREATIVE works sublime success,  
Furthering through perseverance.

### Commentary on the Decision<sup>3</sup>

NOTE. This commentary, no doubt correctly ascribed to Confucius, explains the names of the hexagrams as well as the words appended by King Wên to the hexagram as a whole [the Judgment]. In general, the commentary first explains the name of the hexagram, taking into consideration as occasion demands its character, its image, and its structure. Next it elucidates the words of King Wên, either using the sources just named or else starting from the situation of the ruler of the hexagram or from the change of form that has given rise to the hexagram. No explanation of the names of the eight primary trigrams is given, because it is assumed that this is known.

In the Chinese, the sentences in this commentary are for the most part rhymed, probably in order to make it easier to remember them. The rhymes have not been reproduced in this translation, because they are of no material significance. However, it is well to remember the circumstance, because it explains much of the abruptness in the style, which is often somewhat forced.

Great indeed is the sublimity of the Creative, to which all beings owe their beginning and which permeates all heaven.<sup>4</sup>

The commentary separates the two pairs of attributes given in the Judgment into the four individual attributes of the creative power, whose visible form is heaven. The first attribute is sublimity, which, as the primal cause of all that exists, forms the most important and most inclusive attribute of the Creative. The root meaning of the Chinese word for it—yüan—is literally "head."

The clouds pass and the rain does its work, and all individual beings flow into their forms. This explains the expression "success." The success of the creative activity is revealed in the gift of water, which causes the germination and sprouting of all living things. The first passage tells of the beginning of all beings in general; here the separate species in their particular forms are instanced. These two passages show the attributes of greatness and success as they manifest themselves in the creative force in nature. The attributes of sublimity and success take shape correspondingly in the creative man, the sage, who is in harmony with the creative power of the godhead.

Because the holy man is clear as to the end and the beginning, as to the way in which each of the six stages completes itself in its own time, he mounts on them toward heaven as though on six dragons. The holy man, who understands the mysteries of creation inherent in end and beginning, in death and life, in dissolution and growth, and who understands how these polar opposites condition one another, becomes superior to the limitations of the transitory. For him, the meaning of time is that in it the stages of growth can unfold in a clear sequence. He is mindful at every moment and uses the six stages of growth as if they were six dragons (the image attributed to the individual lines) on which he mounts toward heaven. This is the sublimity and success of the Creative as it shows itself in man.

The way of the Creative works through change and transformation, so that each thing receives its true nature and destiny and comes into permanent accord with the Great Harmony: this is what furthers and what perseveres.

Here the two other attributes, power to further and power to persevere, are explained in their relation to the creative force in nature. The mode of the Creative is not rest but continuous movement and development. Through this force, all things are gradually changed until they are completely transformed in their manifestations. Thus the seasons and all living beings change and alternate in their course. In this way each thing receives the nature appropriate to it, which, from the divine viewpoint, is called its appointed destiny. This explains the concept of furthering. With each thing thus finding its mode, a great and lasting harmony arises in the world: this is expressed in the concept of perseverance (lastingness and integrity).

He towers high above the multitude of beings, and all lands are united in peace.

This describes the creative power of the holy man, who makes it possible for everything to attain its appropriate place, thus bringing about peace on earth, when he occupies an eminent ruling place.

In all these explanations there is an evident parallelism between the Creative in nature and the Creative in the world of man. What is said about the Creative in nature is based on the image of heaven symbolized by the hexagram. Heaven shows the strong, ceaseless movement that by its nature causes everything to happen in due time. The words about the Creative in man are based on the position of the ruler of the hexagram, the nine in the fifth place. The "flying dragon in the heavens" is the image of the sublimity and success of the holy ruler. The eminent place held by the holy man, through which peace comes to the world, has its basis in the line, "It furthers one to see the great man."

### Commentary on the Images<sup>5</sup>

NOTE. This commentary, starting with the combination of the two trigrams, deduces from it the situation represented by the hexagram as a whole. With the attributes of the two trigrams as a basis, it then gives advice for correct behavior in this situation.

#### THE IMAGE

The movement of heaven is full of power.

Thus the superior man makes himself strong and untiring.

The doubling of the trigram Ch'ien, the Creative, gives the image of powerful and constantly repeated movement. The doubling suggests that one draws strength from within oneself, and that after each action a new one follows, without cease.

#### THE LINES

Nine at the beginning:

- a) Hidden dragon. Do not act.
- b) "Hidden dragon. Do not act." For the light-giving force is still below.

The lowest place is as it were still wholly beneath the earth, hence the idea of something hidden. But since the line is undivided, the image chosen is the dragon, the symbol of the light-giving force.

Nine in the second place:

- a) Dragon appearing in the field.  
It furthers one to see the great man.
- b) "Dragon appearing in the field." Already the influence of character reaches far.

The second place stands for the surface of the earth, hence the idea of a field. Appearing in the field and seeing the great man are indicated by the influential character of the line, since it holds the center of the lower trigram and is moreover related to the ruler of the hexagram through place and affinity of nature.

Nine in the third place:

- a) All day long the superior man is creatively active.  
At nightfall his mind is still beset with cares.  
Danger. No blame.

b) "All day long the superior man is creatively active." One goes to and fro on the right path.

The third place, as the place of transition from the lower to the upper trigram, is naturally unsettled and therefore frequently not exactly favorable. Here, however, owing to the uniform character of all the lines, the transition is merely a sign of tireless activity leading to and fro on the path to truth. "To and fro" means that one is only beginning to acquire moral stability.

Nine in the fourth place:

a) Waving flight over the depths.

No blame.

b) "Waving flight over the depths." Advance is not a mistake.

Here we reach the upper limit of what pertains to man in the hexagram. Advance on level ground is no longer possible. In order to advance, a man must dare to relinquish his foothold on earth and soar into realms of uncharted space and utter solitude. Here the individual is free—precisely because of the possibilities inherent in the position. Each man must determine his own fate.

○ Nine in the fifth place:

a) Flying dragon in the heavens.

It furthers one to see the great man.

b) "Flying dragon in the heavens." This shows the great man at work.

Here the ruler of the hexagram is in the place which is pre-eminently that of the ruler. Hence he is symbolized by a dragon flying in the sky.

Nine at the top:

a) Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent.

b) "Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent." For what is at the full cannot last.

By the law of change, whatever has reached its extreme must turn back.

When all the lines are nines:

a) There appears a flight of dragons without heads.

Good fortune.

b) "All the lines are nines." It is the nature of heaven not to appear as head.

The Creative does indeed guide all happenings, but it never becomes manifest; it never behaves outwardly as the leader. Thus true strength is that strength which, as mobile as it is hidden, concentrates on the work without being outwardly visible. Since all the lines are nines, the hexagram Ch'ien changes into the hexagram, K'un (2), THE RECEPTIVE, which is wholly receptive; hence no head is showing.

### Commentary on the Words of the Text<sup>6</sup>

NOTE. This wing consists of four commentaries on the first two hexagrams in the Book of Changes. Of these, two commentaries deal with the text referring to the hexagram as a whole [the Judgment] and

also with the T'uan Chuan [Commentary on the Decision], while all four also elucidate the individual lines. [The commentaries, here designated as a), b), c), and d), contain a different number of sections each.] In the original text the sequence is arranged as follows: a), 1-9; b), 1-7; c), 1-7; d), 1-13. In the presentation below, for the sake of clarity and to avoid unnecessary repetition, the different commentaries pertaining to the respective hexagrams have been arranged together, and are distinguishable by the classifying letters and numerals.

### **On the Hexagram as a Whole**

a) 1. Of all that is good, sublimity is supreme. Succeeding is the coming together of all that is beautiful. Furtherance is the agreement of all that is just. Perseverance is the foundation of all actions.

Here the four fundamental attributes of the hexagram are related to the four cardinal virtues of Chinese ethics. Sublimity is correlated with humaneness, success with the mores, furtherance with justice, and perseverance with wisdom.<sup>7</sup>

a) 2. Because the superior man embodies humaneness, he is able to govern men. Because he brings about the harmonious working together of all that is beautiful, he is able to unite them through the mores. Because he furthers all beings, he is able to bring them into harmony through justice.

Because he is persevering and firm, he is able to carry out all actions.

The four fundamental attributes of the Creative are likewise the attributes necessary to a leader and ruler of men. In order to rule and lead men, the first essential is to have humane feeling toward them. Without humaneness, nothing lasting can be accomplished in the sphere of authority. Power that influences through fear works only for the moment and necessarily arouses resistance as a counter-effect.

On the basis of this conception, it follows that the mores are the instrument by which men can be brought into union. For nothing binds people more firmly together than deeply rooted social usages that are observed because they appear to each member of society as something beautiful and worth striving for.

Wherever it is possible to construct a framework of mores in which each person feels content, it is easy to unify and organize the masses. Furthermore, as the foundation of social life there must be the greatest possible freedom and the greatest possible advantage for all. These are guaranteed by justice, which curtails individual freedom no more than is absolutely necessary for the general welfare. Finally, to reach the desired goals, there is the fourth requisite of wisdom, manifesting itself by pointing out the established and enduring paths that, according to immutable cosmic laws, must lead to success.

a) 3. The superior man acts in accordance with these four virtues.

Therefore it is said: The Creative is sublime, successful, furthering, persevering.

d) 1. The sublimity of the Creative depends on the fact that it begins everything and has success.

d) 2. Furtherance and perseverance: thus it brings about the nature and way of all beings.

Here the attributes are again summed up in pairs. The sublimity of the Creative depends on its absoluteness, on the fact that it is the beginning of all things—for it is not itself conditioned by anything else—and that it is the active principle, i.e., it is itself the cause of all else. Furtherance and perseverance—meaning the urge to life, and the fixed laws of nature—reveal the causality of the Creative in its efficacy. The urge to life—that which furthers and is right for each being—lays the foundation of its nature, and this nature acts according to fixed laws: this is the way of all beings. In the Commentary on the Decision nature is traced back to its origin in the divine decree; here nature is shown in its mode of action.

d) 3. The Creative, by positing the beginning, is able to further the world with beauty.

Its true greatness lies in the fact that nothing is said about the means by which it furthers. Of the Creative it is said only that it furthers by virtue of what eternally belongs to it, by virtue of its very nature. This nature is not defined more exactly. In this lies the suggestion of the infinite possibilities and aspects of its benefits. The Receptive forms a contrast to this, because it is said: "It furthers through the perseverance of a mare." In the phenomenal world, each thing has its specific nature: this is the principle of individuation. At the same time this specific nature fixes a boundary that separates each individual being from every other.

d) 4. How great indeed is the Creative!

It is firm and strong, moderate and correct, pure, unalloyed and spiritual.

Here the attributes of the whole hexagram are deduced from the nature of its ruler, the nine in the fifth place, as is frequently the case in the T'uan Chuan, Commentary on the Decision, to which the entire passage refers. The fifth line is firm because it is in an uneven place, strong because it is undivided (strong means movement, firm means rest); it is moderate because it is in the middle of the upper trigram, correct because it stands in its appropriate place—a strong line in a strong place. In these four attributes the four cardinal attributes of the hexagram are revealed once more. These attributes are present in pure, unalloyed, and spiritual form because the hexagram consists of strong lines only.

d) 5. The six individual lines open up and unfold the thought, so that the character of the whole is explained through its different sides.

Because of the unity of the hexagram, the individual lines stand in a continuous relationship that, as it progresses, clarifies the idea of the whole still further. In this respect the hexagram Ch'ien, THE CREATIVE, forms a contrast to K'un, THE RECEPTIVE, in which the single lines stand side by side without inner relationship. This inheres in the temporal character of THE CREATIVE as contrasted with the spatial character of THE RECEPTIVE.

d) 6. "In his own time he mounts toward heaven on six dragons.

The clouds pass and the rain falls." All this means peace coming to the world.

Because of this closing remark, the corresponding passage in the Commentary on the Decision is interpreted as a reference to historical events, namely, the ordering of the empire.

**On the Lines**

On nine at the beginning:

- a) 4. Nine at the beginning means: "Hidden dragon. Do not act." What does this signify?

The Master said: This means a person who has the character of a dragon but remains concealed. He does not change to suit the outside world; he makes no name for himself. He withdraws from the world, yet is not sad about it. He receives no recognition, yet is not sad about it. If lucky, he carries out his principles; if unlucky, he withdraws with them. Verily, he cannot be uprooted; he is a hidden dragon.

- b) 1. "Hidden dragon. Do not act." The reason is that he is below.

- c) 1. "Hidden dragon. Do not act."

The power of the light principle is still covered up and concealed.

- d) 7. The superior man acts in accordance with the character that has become perfected within him.

This is a way of life that can submit to scrutiny on any day.

Being hidden means that he is still in concealment and not given recognition, that if he should act he would not as yet accomplish anything. In this case the superior man does not act.

On nine in the second place:

- a) 5. Nine in the second place means:

"Dragon appearing in the field. It furthers one to see the great man." What does this signify?

The Master said: This means a man who has the character of a dragon and is moderate and correct. Even in ordinary speech he is reliable. Even in ordinary actions he is careful. He does away with what is false and preserves his integrity. He improves his era and does not boast about it. His character is influential and transforms men.

In the Book of Changes it is said: "Dragon appearing in the field. It furthers one to see the great man." This refers to a man who has the qualities of a ruler.

- b) 2. "Dragon appearing in the field." The reason is that he is not needed as yet.

- c) 2. "Dragon appearing in the field." Through him the whole world attains beauty and clarity.

- d) 8. The superior man learns in order to gather material; he questions in order to sift it.

Thus he becomes generous in nature and kindly in his actions.

In the Book of Changes it is said: "Dragon appearing in the field. It furthers one to see the great man." For he has the qualities of a ruler.

On nine in the third place:

- a) 6. Nine in the third place means: "All day long the superior man is creatively active.

At nightfall his mind is still beset with cares. Danger. No blame." What does this signify?

The Master said: The superior man improves his character and labors at his task. It is through loyalty and faith that he fosters his character. By working on his words, so that they rest firmly on truth, he makes his work enduring. He knows how this is to be achieved and achieves it; in this way he is able to plant the right seed. He knows how it is to be brought to completion and

so completes it; thereby he is able to make it truly enduring. For this reason he is not proud in his superior position nor disappointed in an inferior one. Thus he is creatively active and, as circumstances demand, careful, so that even in a dangerous situation he does not make a mistake.

- b) 3. "All day long he is creatively active." This is the way in which he carries out his undertakings.
- c) 3. "All day long he is creatively active." He moves with the time.
- d) 9. The nine in the third place shows redoubled firmness and is moreover not in a central place. On the one hand, it is not yet in the heavens above; on the other hand, it is no longer in the field below. Therefore one must be creatively active and, as circumstances demand, careful. Then, despite the danger, no mistake is made.

On nine in the fourth place:

- a) 7. Nine in the fourth place means: "Wavering flight over the depths. No blame."

What does this signify?

The Master said: In ascent or descent there is no fixed rule, except that one must do nothing evil. In advance or retreat no sustained perseverance avails, except that one must not depart from one's nature. The superior man fosters his character and labors at his task, in order to do everything at the right time. Therefore he makes no mistake.

- b) 4. "Wavering flight over the depths." He tests his powers.
- c) 4. "Wavering flight over the depths." Here the way of the Creative is about to transform itself.
- d) 10. The nine in the fourth place is too rigid and not moderate.

It is not yet in the heavens above, neither is it any longer in the field below, nor in the middle regions of the human. Therefore it is said: "Wavering flight..." To waver means that one has freedom of choice, therefore one makes no mistake.

On nine in the fifth place:

- a) 8. Nine in the fifth place means: "Flying dragon in the heavens."

It furthers one to see the great man." What does this signify?

The Master said: Things that accord in tone vibrate together. Things that have affinity in their inmost natures seek one another. Water flows to what is wet, fire turns to what is dry. Clouds follow the dragon, wind follows the tiger. Thus the sage rises, and all creatures follow him with their eyes. What is born of heaven feels related to what is above. What is born of earth feels related to what is below. Each follows its kind.

- b) 5. "Flying dragon in the heavens." This is the supreme way of ruling.
- c) 5. "Flying dragon in the heavens." This is the place appropriate to heavenly character.
- d) 11. The great man accords in his character with heaven and earth; in his light, with the sun and moon; in his consistency, with the four seasons; in the good and evil fortune that he creates, with gods and spirits. When he acts in advance of heaven, heaven does not contradict him. When he follows heaven, he adapts himself to the time of heaven. If heaven itself does not resist him, how much less do men, gods, and spirits!

On nine at the top:

- a) 9. Nine at the top means: "Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent." What does this signify?  
The Master said: He who is noble and has no corresponding position, he who stands high and has no following, he who has able people under him who do not have his support, that man will have cause for regret at every turn.
- b) 6. "Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent."  
Everything that goes to extremes meets with misfortune.
- c) 6. "Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent." In time he exhausts himself.
- d) 12. Arrogance means that one knows how to press forward but not how to draw back, that one knows existence but not annihilation, knows something about winning but nothing about losing. It is only the holy man who understands how to press forward and how to draw back, who knows existence and annihilation as well, without losing his true nature. The holy man alone can do this.

On all the nines changing:

- b) 7. When THE CREATIVE, the great, undergoes change in all the nines, the world is set in order
- c) 7. When THE CREATIVE, the great, undergoes change in all the nines,  
one perceives the law of heaven.

NOTE. The hexagram Ch'ien, THE CREATIVE, occupies a unique position, in that it is uniformly composed of firm lines all having a certain relation to one another. They form a sequence of stages, so that a genetic development in time can be observed. For this reason the judgments attached to the individual lines in this hexagram differ from those pertaining to any of the other hexagrams. In the case of THE CREATIVE, there can be no question of relationships of correspondence and holding together<sup>8</sup> between firm and yielding lines, such as determine the character of the other hexagrams; instead, the judgment takes into account solely the relation of the place to the nature of the line. A characteristic difference between the upper and the lower trigram is to be noted. The lower pictures the development of the character of the creative power; the upper, the development of the external position. The first line and the fourth each mark a beginning. The first line, at the very bottom, still within the realm of earth (first and second places), is designated as hidden, latent. The fourth line, in the lowest place of the upper trigram, likewise indicates a beginning, that is, a changing of position. In themselves, the omens for this line are not favorable. Being firm in a yielding place, the line does not fit its place, and this might well imply a defect somewhere. But because the essence of the Creative is strength, it is explicitly emphasized that there is no mistake. The divergence between the character and the place of the line manifests itself instead in the potentiality of the decision, which is still in doubt. The middle lines in the two trigrams, the second and the fifth, are extraordinarily favorable. The second line is central and as such is immediately to be conceived as correct. Since it is still in the lower trigram, it shows the inner nature of the great man, who is already becoming known ("in the field") but does not yet hold an appropriate position. He must see the "great man" in the fifth place, with whom he is connected by kinship of character, and who, as ruler of the whole, can assign him the position

suitable to him. These favorable omens hold in regard to the fifth line in a yet more marked degree.

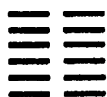
The second line shows the strong man in a weak, lowly place; in the fifth line, however, character and position accord. It is a strong line in a strong place, in the sphere of heaven (fifth and sixth places); moreover, it is the ruler of the whole. Therefore it represents the great man whom it is worth while to see. Hence the two central lines carry no warning at all; they are altogether favorable.

It is different in the case of the two end lines, the third and the top line. Of the two, the third has the more favorable position. It is indeed too strong for the place of transition (strength of character intensified by strength of place), so that it would seem that mistakes are to be feared. However, since the whole hexagram deals with creative powers, excess of strength does no harm, for at the place of transition it can be applied to inner preparation for the new conditions. For the top line, however, matters are quite different. Here the end of the whole situation is reached. Although the place is weak, the line character is still strong. This divergence between what one wants to do and what one is able to do leads to remorse, since there is no possible way out.

### *Notes*

1. [For explanation, see The Structure of the Hexagrams, in .pdf IChing1.]
2. [Tsa Kua: Tenth Wing. See Introduction in .pdf Material1, bk.II.]
3. [T'uan Chuan: First wing, Second wing. "Decision" is the equivalent of "Judgment."]
4. [See Hex.1, bk.I, where this passage is quoted. Here, as in a number of other instances, the phrasing differs somewhat from one book to another.]
5. [Hsiang Chuan: Third wing, Fourth wing. In bk. I, under the heading "The Image," the reader has become familiar with the portion of this commentary known as the Great Images. It is repeated in bk.III under the same heading. The rest of the commentary, which explains the line judgments—though called Small Images (see Introduction, in .pdf Material1, bk.II)—appears in the passages designated under the heading "The Lines." The passages designated a) repeat the line judgments of bk. I. The German edition omits this repetition in the treatment of the first two hexagrams. However, the presence of the line itself makes the commentary so much more intelligible that it has seemed desirable here to supply the omission. Under "six in the third place" in K'un, a parenthetic completion of the line text under b), and a sentence in the comment explaining this interpolation—both supplied by Wilhelm for elucidation in the absence of a)—have been omitted as superfluous.]
6. [Wên Yen: Seventh Wing.]
7. [In the German rendering, these correlations are stated in four sentences so printed that they appear as a passage from the Wên Yen. Actually they do not occur in the Wên Yen. It is to be assumed therefore that they are part of Wilhelm's comment on a )1.]
- 8.[See The Structure of the Hexagrams, in .pdf IChing1.]

## 2. K'un | The Receptive



*Nuclear trigrams* K'UN ☷☷ and K'UN ☷☷

The ruler of the hexagram is the six in the second place. K'un, THE RECEPTIVE, represents the nature of the earth; the number two symbolizes the earth. Furthermore, THE RECEPTIVE demonstrates the nature of the man who serves, and the second place is his station. In addition, this line expresses perfectly the fourfold character of the Receptive: it is yielding, devoted, moderate (i.e., central), and correct (i.e., yielding in a yielding place). For this reason, it is the ruler of the hexagram. The statements made in the Judgment all refer to the nature of an official: "If he tries to lead, he goes astray; but if he follows, he finds guidance. It is favorable to find friends in the west and south, to forego friends in the east and north." This hexagram is linked with the tenth month (November-December), when the dark power in nature brings the end of the year.

**Miscellaneous Notes**

THE RECEPTIVE is yielding.

**THE JUDGMENT**

THE RECEPTIVE brings about sublime success,  
 Furthering through the perseverance of a mare.  
 If the superior man undertakes something and tries to lead,  
 He goes astray;  
 But if he follows, he finds guidance.  
 It is favorable to find friends in the west and south,  
 To forego friends in the east and north.  
 Quiet perseverance brings good fortune.

**Commentary on the Decision**

Perfect indeed is the sublimity of the Receptive. All beings owe their birth to it, because it receives the heavenly with devotion.

This is the explanation of the word "sublime" in the Judgment. The greatness of the Receptive is characterized as perfect. That which attains the ideal is perfect. This means that the Receptive is dependent upon the Creative. While the Creative is the generating principle, to which all beings owe their beginning, because the soul comes from it, the Receptive is that which brings to birth, that which takes the seed of the heavenly into itself and gives to beings their bodily form.

The Receptive in its riches carries all things. Its nature is in harmony with the boundless. It embraces everything in its breadth and illumines everything in its greatness. Through it, all individual beings attain success.

This is the explanation of the word "success" in the Judgment. Here also there is the contrasting complement to the Creative. While the Creative shields things—that is, covers them from above—the Receptive carries them, like a foundation that endures forever. Infinite accord with the Creative is its essence. This produces its success. The movement of the Creative is a direct forward movement, and its resting state is standstill; the movement of the Receptive is an opening out, and in its resting state it is closed. In the resting, closed state, it embraces all things as though in a vast womb. In the state of movement, of opening, it allows the divine light to enter, and by means of this light illumines everything. This is the source of its success, which shows itself in the success of living beings. While the success of the Creative lies in the fact that individual beings receive their specific forms, the success of the Receptive causes them to thrive and unfold.

A mare belongs to the creatures of the earth; she roams the earth without bound. Yielding, devoted, furthering through perseverance: thus the superior man has a direction for his way of life.

While the Creative is symbolized by the dragon flying in the heavens, the Receptive is symbolized by the mare (combining strength and devotion) coursing over the earth. Being yielding and devoted must not exclude strength, for strength is necessary to the Receptive if it is to be the helper of the Creative. This strength is expressed in the words, "furthering through perseverance," appearing in the commentary as the model for the way of life of the superior man. (The punctuation of the commentary deviates from that of the Judgment. Because of the rhyme, the commentary requires the literal translation, "Furthering through perseverance. Thus the superior man has somewhere to go." In the Judgment, on the other hand, most interpreters make the last words a dependent clause linked with what follows, and the sentence reads: "If the superior man undertakes something . . . he goes astray."<sup>1</sup>)

Taking the lead brings confusion because one loses his way. Following with devotion—thus does one attain his permanent place.

In the west and south one finds friends, so that he proceeds with people of his own kind. In the east and north one must do without friends, so that he finally attains good fortune.

If the Receptive were to push ahead on its own initiative, it would deviate from its natural character and miss the way. By submitting to and following the Creative, it attains its appropriate permanent place. The west and south, according to King Wên's arrangement, are the region in which the feminine trigrams are placed. Here K'un is in the midst of the daughters. But the masculine trigrams (Ch'ien and the sons) are in the east and north, so that the Receptive in this region is alone. But the very fact that it is alone with the Creative is to its advantage. Thus the earth must be alone with heaven, the official must serve only the ruler, the wife must cleave only to the husband.

The good fortune of rest and perseverance depends on our being in accord with the boundless nature of the earth.

The earth is still. It does not act of itself but is constantly receptive to the influences of heaven. Thus its life becomes inexhaustible and eternal. Man likewise attains eternity if he does not strive vaingloriously to achieve everything of his own strength, but quietly keeps himself receptive to the impulses flowing to him from the creative forces.

### THE IMAGE

The earth's condition is receptive devotion.

Thus the superior man who has breadth of character

Carries the outer world.

Heaven moves with power; therefore it is said of it that "it moves." The earth completes within the form; hence, in reference to it, one says "condition." Earth is doubled, indicating massiveness, which is necessary in order that it may dedicate itself without forfeiting its nature. Thus man too must possess inner strength, weight of character, and breadth of view, that he may endure the world without being swayed by it.

### THE LINES

Six at the beginning:

a) When there is hoarfrost underfoot,

Solid ice is not far off.

b) "When there is hoarfrost underfoot, solid ice is not far off." When the dark power begins to grow rigid and continues in this way, things reach the point of solid ice.<sup>2</sup>

The first line contains a warning not to minimize the beginnings of evil, because, left to itself, evil increases as inevitably as the ice of winter follows on the hoarfrost of autumn.

O Six in the second place:

a) Straight, square, great.

Without purpose.

Yet nothing remains unfurthered.

b) The movement of the six in the second place<sup>3</sup> is straight and, because of this, square.

"Without purpose, yet nothing remains unfurthered": for in the nature of the earth lies the light. Because the Receptive in its movements adapts itself to the Creative, these movements come to be exactly as they should be. Thus the earth brings forth all beings, each in its own kind, according to the will of the Creator. Square, firm, refers to unchangingness. Each kind of living being has a fixed law of existence, according to which it develops in a way that is unchanging. In this lies the greatness of the earth.

For this very reason the earth has no need of a purpose. Everything becomes spontaneously what it should rightly be, for in the law of heaven life has an inner light that it must involuntarily obey.

Six in the third place:

a) Hidden lines.

One is able to remain persevering.

If by chance you are in the service of a king,

Seek not works, but bring to completion.

- b) "Hidden lines. One is able to remain persevering." One must let them shine forth at the right time. "If by chance you are in the service of a king. . ." This shows that the light of wisdom is great.

To hide beauty does not mean to be inactive; it means only that beauty must not be displayed at the wrong time. When the right time arrives, one must reveal oneself. If one does not boast of one's merits, but sees to it that everything is carried out, it is a sign of great wisdom<sup>4</sup>.

Six in the fourth place:

- a) A tied-up sack. No blame, no praise.

- b) "A tied-up sack. No blame." Through caution one remains free of harm.

Here there is a yin line in a yin place; that is, the yin power is on the increase, therefore the contraction is as powerful as in the case of a tied-up sack. This naturally brings about a certain isolation, but it frees one of obligations.

Six in the fifth place:

- a) A yellow lower garment brings supreme good fortune.

- b) "A yellow lower garment brings supreme good fortune." Beauty is within.

This line resembles in position the six in the third place. Here also the strength inherent in the place is neutralized by the character of the line—hence, in both cases, hidden beauty.

Six at the top:

- a) Dragons fight in the meadow.

Their blood is black and yellow.

- b) "Dragons fight in the meadow." The way comes to an end.

The six at the top tries to hold firm, although the situation of darkness is already at an end. At this moment the dark principle advances out of the realm of the morally indifferent and becomes positively evil. There ensues a battle with the light-giving primal power coming from without to oppose the darkness, in which both elements suffer harm.

When all the lines are sixes:

- a) Lasting perseverance furthers.

- b) "Lasting perseverance": it ends in great things.

The sixes change into their opposites; they become light or great lines.

### Commentary on the Words of the Text

In contrast to the considerable number of commentaries on THE CREATIVE comprised in the Wên Yen, there is only one on THE RECEPTIVE.

**On the Hexagram as a Whole**

The Receptive is altogether yielding, yet firm in its movement. It is altogether still, yet in its nature square.

The mare is yielding, yet strong. So likewise is the Receptive, for only in this way can it be the peer of the Creative. It is altogether still within, because wholly dependent, yet it is bound immutably to definite laws in its manifestations—the bringing to birth of the different species. "Firm in movement" is the explanation of the text words "sublime success." "Still, yet square" is the explanation of the text words "perseverance furthers "

"If he follows, he finds guidance," and thus obtains something enduring.

"It embraces everything," and its power to transform is light-giving.

These sentences are amplifications of the Commentary on the Decision. The reference here is to the movement of the Receptive, which corresponds with the seasons of summer and autumn (south and west). At these times the Receptive is with "friends" that is, obedient to the laws of heaven: it is giving life to all varieties of beings, each according to its kind—so sharing the eternity of heaven, embracing all things and bringing them to maturity, and thus in bright light showing its power to transform them.

The way of the Receptive—how devoted it is! It receives heaven into itself and acts in its own time. These two activities correspond with winter and spring (north and east). The reference is to the solitary union with the Creative, the receiving of the seed, and its quiet ripening to birth.

The comments on THE RECEPTIVE are based on the character of the six in the second place, the ruler of the hexagram, just as the comments on THE CREATIVE are based on the nine in the fifth place in that hexagram.

**On the Lines**

On six at the beginning:

A house that heaps good upon good is sure to have an abundance of blessings. A house that heaps evil upon evil is sure to have an abundance of ills. Where a servant murders his master, where a son murders his father, the causes do not lie between the morning and evening of one day. It took a long time for things to go so far. It came about because things that should have been stopped were not stopped soon enough.

In the Book of Changes it is said: "When there is hoarfrost underfoot, solid ice is not far off."

This shows how far things go when they are allowed to run on.

According to Chu Hsi the last sentence should read: "This refers to the necessary vigilance," i.e., the vigilance needed to stop in time those things which must naturally have evil consequences.

On six in the second place:

Straightness means righting things; squareness means fulfilment of duty. The superior man is serious, in order to make his inner life straight; he does his duty, in order to make his outer life

square. Where seriousness and fulfilment of duty stand firm, character will not become one-sided.

"Straight, square, great. Without purpose, yet nothing remains unfurthered": because one is never in doubt as to what one has to do.

The inner life becomes right through consistent seriousness; the outer life becomes correct (square) through fulfilment of duty. Duty has a shaping influence on outer life, yet it is by no means something external. Through seriousness and fulfilment of duty, character develops richly of itself; greatness comes unsought, of its own accord. Therefore in all matters the individual hits upon the right course instinctively and without reflection, because he is free of all those scruples and doubts which induce a timid vacillation and lame the power of decision.

On six in the third place:

The dark force possesses beauty but veils it. So must a man be when entering the service of a king. He must avoid laying claim to the completed work. This is the way of the earth, the way of the wife, the way of one who serves. It is the way of the earth to make no display of completed work but rather to bring everything to completion vicariously.

It is the duty of one who subordinates himself to conceal his own worth, without craving an independent position, and to let all the merits for the completed work go to the master for whom he is working.

On six in the fourth place:

When heaven and earth are creating in change and transformation, all plants and trees flourish; but when heaven and earth close, the able man withdraws into the dark.

In the Book of Changes it is said: "A tied-up sack. No blame, no praise." This counsels caution. The six in the fourth place is near the ruler but does not receive recognition from him. In such a case, the only right thing to do is to shut oneself off from the world. This is the resting state of the dark principle, the state in which it closes (cf. above).

On six in the fifth place:

The superior man is yellow and moderate; thus he makes his influence felt in the outer world through reason. He seeks the right place for himself and dwells in the essential.

His beauty is within, but it gives freedom to his limbs and expresses itself in his works. This is the perfection of beauty.

Yellow is the color of the middle and of moderation. Inner moderation has an outer effect, because it imbues all forms of expression with reason. The right place sought by the superior man is found in the good form that makes him yield precedence to others and stay modestly in the background.

Reserved grace, unseen yet present in all movements and deeds, is the perfection of beauty.

There is a characterising difference in what is said about the lines of THE CREATIVE and THE RECEPTIVE. In the former the emphasis is always on the real, the unfailing, while in the latter the

attributes stressed are seriousness, conscientiousness, and modesty. We are dealing with the same thing seen from two sides. Only truth leads to seriousness, and only seriousness makes truth possible.

On six at the top:

When the dark seeks to equal the light principle, there is certain to be a struggle. Lest one think that nothing of the light remains, the dragon is mentioned. But to make clear that there is no deviation from their kind,<sup>5</sup> blood is also mentioned. Black and yellow are heaven and earth in confusion. Heaven is black and earth yellow.

This explanation is somewhat obscurely expressed. The meaning is as follows: In the tenth month, the power of the dark principle has completely triumphed; the last remaining light has been driven away.<sup>6</sup> The sun has reached its lowest position; the dark force rules unrestrained. But this is the very reason for the coming change to the opposite; the solstice takes place, and light struggles anew with darkness. It is the same in all relationships. The dark principle cannot be the ruling one; it is in its proper place only when conditioned by the light principle, and submissive to it. If this is disregarded, and the dark principle tries to issue from its realm within and come forth upon the field of action without, the power of the light principle shows itself. The dragon, the symbol of the light-giving power, appears and drives the dark power back within its confines, as a sign that the light principle still exists. Blood is the symbol of the dark principle, just as breath is the symbol of the light principle. Since blood flows, the dark principle is injured. However, blood comes not only from the dark principle, for the light principle also suffers injury in this struggle; therefore the color is designated as black and yellow. Black, or rather dark blue, is the color of heaven, and yellow that of the earth. (It should be noted that the color symbolism here differs from that in the comments on the eight trigrams, where the Creative is said to be red and the Receptive black, i.e., dark.)

NOTE. Here, in contrast to the relationships in the hexagram of THE CREATIVE, the single lines do not have a developmental relation to one another, but stand side by side without interrelation. Each line represents a separate situation. This is in accord with the nature of the two hexagrams. THE CREATIVE represents time, producing sequence; THE RECEPTIVE represents space, which indicates juxtaposition.

With respect to the individual lines, the following is to be noted. The first and the top line, i.e., the two outside places, are unfavorable. The inner, not the outer place, is proper to the Receptive. The first line shows the dark principle taking the initiative (cf. hexagram 44, Kou, COMING TO MEET); this means danger. Therefore the dark principle is represented as something objective that must be opposed at the right time.

In the top place, the dark principle arrogates leadership to itself and enters into rivalry with the light principle. Here also it is represented objectively as the thing fought against (cf. hexagram 43, Kuai, BREAK-THROUGH); for these two situations are not in harmony with the nature of a superior man, and the Book of Changes is written only for superior men. Hence whatever is inferior is in every case something external or objective.

The middle lines of the primary trigrams, being central, are favorable. But in contrast to the situation in Ch'ien, the ruler here is in the second place instead of the fifth, for it is the nature of the Receptive to be below. Therefore we are here shown the way of the earth, of material, spatial nature, in which everything acts spontaneously. The fifth place shows modesty in human nature. The fact that garments are spoken of points rather to the image of a princess than to that of a prince (cf. hexagram 54, Kuei Mei, THE MARRYING MAIDEN, six in the fifth place).

The two transitional lines are neutral in meaning. The third has the possibility of entering the service of a king, for the weakness of its nature is compensated by the strength of its place. But while the third line of Ch'ien is self-contained, the third line of K'un is self-effacingly concerned only with serving others. The fourth line is too weak (a yielding line in a weak place), and moreover has no relationship with the fifth line. Hence withdrawal into itself is all that is left for it. The heightened passivity of this line corresponds with the heightened activity of the nine in the third place in Ch'ien, just as the third line in K'un corresponds in its undetermined possibilities with the nine in the fourth place of Ch'ien.

### *Notes*

1. [The Commentary on the Decision makes two sentences of the one. "The last words" refers to the last statement in the preceding paragraph of the Commentary on the Decision, and "what follows" refers to the first sentence of the next paragraph.]
2. Another reading of this line is:
 

When there is hoarfrost underfoot,  
The dark [power] begins to grow rigid.  
If this continues,  
Solid ice results.
3. In the text of the commentary, the six in the second place is explicitly named as ruler of the hexagram. [The reference here is not to the Commentary on the Decision but to another commentary not presented in Wilhelm's translation.]
- 4 [See n.5 in the commentary on hex.1, Ch'ien, above, in this .pdf file.]
5. [The nature of yin and yang.]
6. [The twelfth month in our calendar. See n.1, Hex.1, Ch'ien, bk.I.]