

## **Ta Chuan / The Great Treatise [Great Commentary]<sup>1</sup>**

(also called Hsi Tz'u Chuan, Commentary on the Appended Judgements)

### **PART II**

#### **CHAPTER I On the Signs and Lines, on Creating and Acting**

1. The eight trigrams are arranged according to completeness: thus the images are contained in them. Thereupon they are doubled: thus the lines are contained in them.

Compare part I, chapter II, section 1. The sequence in the order of completeness is: (1) Ch'ien, (2) Tui, (3) Li, (4) Chên, (5) Sun, (6) K'an, (7) Kên, (8) K'un. The trigrams contain only the images (ideas) of the things they represent. It is only in the hexagrams that the individual lines come into consideration, because it is only in the hexagrams that the relationships of above and below, within and without, appear.

2. The firm and the yielding displace each other, and change is contained therein. The judgments, together with their counsels, are appended, and movement is contained therein.

Compare part I, chapter II, section 2. Change (as well as transformation) appears as a result of the alternation of firm and yielding lines. The judgments give their counsels through the appended oracles—"Good fortune," "Misfortune," and so on.

3. Good fortune and misfortune, remorse and humiliation, come about through movement.

Compare part I, chapter II, section 3. Good fortune and misfortune, remorse and humiliation, appear only as a result of conduct of a corresponding kind.

4. The firm and the yielding stand firm when they are in their original places. Their changes and continuities should correspond with the time.

When the firm lines are in firm places and the yielding lines in yielding places, a state of equilibrium exists. However, this abstract state of equilibrium must yield to change and reorganization when the time demands it. The time, that is, the total situation represented by a hexagram, plays an important role in regard to the positions of the individual lines.

5. Good fortune and misfortune take effect through perseverance. The tao of heaven and earth becomes visible through perseverance. The tao of sun and moon becomes bright through perseverance. All movements under heaven become uniform through perseverance.

The secret of action lies in duration. Good fortune and misfortune are slow in the making. Only when a trend is followed continuously do the results of single actions gradually accumulate in such a way that they become manifest as good fortune or misfortune. Similarly, heaven and earth are the results of lasting conditions. In that all clear, luminous forces constantly rise upward, and all that is solid and turbid constantly sinks downward, the cosmos separates itself out of chaos—heaven above and earth

below. So it is also as regards the course of the sun and the moon; their states of radiance are results of continuous movements and conditions of equilibrium. Thus all movements and actions continued over a long period of time channel out definite courses, which then become laws. According to this view, natural laws are not abstractions fixed once and for all, but sustained processes in which the character of law appears the more definitely the longer they are in operation.

6. The Creative is decided and therefore shows to men the easy. The Receptive is yielding and therefore shows to men the simple.

The two fundamental principles move according to the requirements of the time, so that they are continuously undergoing change. But the nature of their movements is uniform and consistent. The Creative is always strong, decided, real, hence it meets with no difficulties. It always remains true to itself; hence its effortlessness. Difficulties always indicate vacillation and lack of clarity. In the same way it is the nature of the Receptive to be consistently yielding, to follow the line of least resistance, and therefore to be simple. Complications arise only from an inner conflict of motives.

7. The lines imitate this. The images reproduce this.

Here a definition of the lines and images is given. In Chinese the word for "line" is hsiao; "to imitate" is also rendered by hsiao (written differently). "Image" and "to reproduce" (in the sense of "to represent") are expressed by hsiang (also written differently in each case). The lines imitate in their changes the way in which good fortune and misfortune arise in a movement by reason of its duration. The images reproduce the way in which all the changes and interrelations of the firm and the yielding issue in the easy and the simple.

8. The lines and images move within, and good fortune and misfortune reveal themselves without. The work and the field of action reveal themselves in the changes. The feelings of the holy sages reveal themselves in the judgments.

The movements of the lines and images, and of the infinitesimal germs of events symbolized by them, are invisible, but their results manifest themselves in the visible world as good fortune or misfortune. So also the changes pertaining to the work and the field of action are invisible, but are revealed by the words of the judgments.

9. It is the great virtue of heaven and earth to bestow life. It is the great treasure of the holy sage to stand in the right place.

How does one safeguard this place? Through men.<sup>1</sup> By what are men gathered together?

Through goods. Justice means restraining men from wrong-doing by regulation of goods and by rectification of judgments.

Here the connection between the three powers is shown. Heaven and earth bestow life. The holy sage is guided by the same principle; but to carry it out he must have the position of a ruler. This position is safeguarded by the men whom he gathers under him. Men are gathered together by means of goods. The means by which goods are administered, and defended against wrong, is justice.

This presents a theory of society, based on cosmic principles, that corresponds with the views of the Confucian school.

Some commentators wish to take this section as an introduction to the next chapter. This has a certain justification, inasmuch as the next chapter gives a survey of the development of civilization, with the Book of Changes as a basis.

## CHAPTER II History of Civilisation<sup>2</sup>

1. When in early antiquity Pao Hsi<sup>3</sup> ruled the world, he looked upward and contemplated the images in the heavens; he looked downward and contemplated the patterns on earth. He contemplated the markings of birds and beasts and the adaptations to the regions. He proceeded directly from himself and indirectly from objects. Thus he invented the eight trigrams in order to enter into connection with the virtues of the light of the gods and to regulate the conditions of all beings.

The Pai Hu T'ung<sup>4</sup> describes the primitive condition of human society as follows:

In the beginning there was as yet no moral nor social order. Men knew their mothers only, not their fathers. When hungry, they searched for food; when satisfied, they threw away the remnants. They devoured their food hide and hair, drank the blood, and clad themselves in skins and rushes. Then came Fu Hsi and looked upward and contemplated the images in the heavens, and looked downward and contemplated the occurrences on earth. He united man and wife, regulated the five stages of change, and laid down the laws of humanity. He devised the eight trigrams, in order to gain mastery over the world.

The name of the mythical founder of civilization is written in various ways; its meaning seems to point to a hunter or an inventor of cooking. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the sixty-four hexagrams or only the eight trigrams are to be ascribed to him. As he himself is a mythical personality, the dispute may rest where it stands. It would seem to be certain that the sixty-four hexagrams were already in use in the time of King Wên.

2. He made knotted cords and used them for nets and baskets in hunting and fishing. He probably took this from the hexagram of THE CLINGING (Li, 30).

This chapter tells us how all the appurtenances of civilization came into existence as reproductions of ideal, archetypal images. In a certain sense this idea contains a truth. Every invention comes into being as an image in the mind of the inventor before it makes its appearance in the phenomenal world as a tool, a finished thing. Since, according to the school represented by the Hsi Tz'u, the sixty-four hexagrams present, in a mysterious way, images paralleling nature, an attempt can be made here to derive from them the inventions of man that have led to the development of civilization. However, this must be understood not in the sense that the inventors simply took the hexagrams of the book and made their inventions in accordance with them, but rather in the sense that out of the relationships represented by the hexagrams the inventions took shape in the minds of their originators.

Li, THE CLINGING, Fire  
(30)



A net consists of meshes, empty within and surrounded by threads without. The hexagram Li, THE CLINGING (30), represents a combination of meshes of this sort. Furthermore, the written character means "to cling to" or "to be caught on something." For example, in the Book of Songs<sup>5</sup> it is frequently said that the wild goose or the pheasant was caught in the net (li).

3. When Pao Hsi's clan was gone, there sprang up the clan of the Divine Husbandman.<sup>6</sup> He split a piece of wood for a plowshare and bent a piece of wood for the plow handle, and taught the whole world the advantage of laying open the earth with a plow. He probably took this from the hexagram of INCREASE (I, 42).

The primitive plow consisted of a bent pole with a pointed stick fastened on in front for scratching the earth. The advantage of this method over hoeing was that draft animals could be used and part of the work shifted to oxen.

I, INCREASE (42)



The hexagram I, INCREASE (42), consists of the two trigrams Sun and Chên, both associated with wood. Sun means penetration, Chên movement. The nuclear trigrams<sup>7</sup> are Kên and K'un, both associated with the earth. This led to the idea of constructing a wooden instrument that would penetrate the earth and when moved forward would turn up the soil.

4. When the sun stood at midday, he held a market. He caused the people of the earth to come together and collected the wares of the earth. They exchanged these with one another, then returned home, and each thing found its place. Probably he took this from the hexagram of BITING THROUGH (Shih Ho, 21).

Shih Ho, BITING THROUGH (21)



The hexagram Shih Ho, BITING THROUGH (21), consists of Li, the sun, above and Chên, movement, below. Chên also means a great road, while the upper nuclear trigram K'an means flowing water, and the lower, Kên, small paths. Thus the connotation is of movement under the sun, a streaming together. This is hardly enough to convey the idea of a market, but the words shih ho when written differently can also mean food and merchandise, and the market might be suggested in this way. Evidently the hexagram formerly had the secondary meaning of market (cf. the explanation of this hexagram in bk. I).

5. When the clan of the Divine Husbandman was gone, there sprang up the clans of the Yellow Emperor, of Yao, and of Shun.<sup>8</sup> They brought continuity into their alterations, so that the people did not grow weary. They were divine in the transformations they wrought, so that the

people were content. When one change had run its course, they altered. (Through alteration they achieved continuity.)

Through continuity they achieved duration. Therefore: "They were blessed by heaven. Good fortune. Nothing that does not further."

The Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun allowed the upper and lower garments to hang down, and the world was in order. They probably took this from the hexagrams of THE CREATIVE and THE RECEPTIVE.

In this section two different strata are to be distinguished. The closing paragraph seems to be the older stratum. The introduction of clothes is depicted. Accordingly, Chêng K'ang Ch'êng<sup>9</sup> says: "Heaven is blue-black, the earth is yellow; therefore they made the upper garments dark blue and the lower garments yellow."

Allowing the garments to hang down was later taken to mean that the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun sat quietly without stirring, and as a result of their inaction things automatically righted themselves. Then, from previously known material, there was appended a description of their cultural activity and the blessing that grew out of it. The parenthetic sentence seems in turn to be a later addition to this description. The meaning of the activity of the three rulers is that they constantly carried out timely reforms.

6. They scooped out tree trunks for boats and they hardened wood in the fire to make oars. The advantage of boats and oars lay in providing means of communication. (They reached distant parts, in order to benefit the whole world.) They probably took this from the hexagram of DISPERSION (Huan, 59).

Huan, DISPERSION (59)



The sentence in parentheses has been questioned by Chu Hsi. The hexagram Huan, DISPERSION (59), consists of the trigram Sun, wood, over K'an, water. That is why it is said in the Judgment, "It furthers one to cross the great water," and in the Commentary on the Decision, "To rely on wood is productive of merit." A boat as a means of communication across rivers and for travel to distant places is represented here. Wood over water—this is the meaning of the primary trigrams. The nuclear trigrams Kên and Chên mean large and small roads.

7. They tamed the ox and yoked the horse. Thus heavy loads could be transported and distant regions reached, for the benefit of the world. They probably took this from the hexagram of FOLLOWING (Sui, 17).

Sui, FOLLOWING (17)



The hexagram Sui, FOLLOWING (17), consists of Tui, liveliness, in front and Chên, movement, behind—an image of the way in which the ox and horse go ahead and the wagon moves along

behind. Oxen were for heavy carts, horses for fast carriages and war chariots. The use of horses for riding was unknown to China in the earliest period.

8. They introduced double gates and night watchmen with clappers, in order to deal with robbers. They probably took this from the hexagram of ENTHUSIASM (Yu, 16).

Yu, ENTHUSIASM (16)



The hexagram Yu, ENTHUSIASM (16), consists of the trigram Chên, movement, above and K'un, the earth, below. The nuclear trigrams are K'an, danger, and Kên, mountain. K'un symbolizes a closed door, while Kên likewise means a door; hence the double gates. K'an means thief. Beyond the gates, movement, with wood (Chên) in the hand (Kên), serves as a preparation (yü also means preparation) against the thief.

9. They split wood and made a pestle of it. They made a hollow in the ground for a mortar. The use of the mortar and pestle was of benefit to all mankind. They probably took this from the hexagram of PREPONDERANCE OF THE SMALL (Hsiao Kuo, 62).

Hsiao Kuo, PREPONDERANCE OF THE SMALL (62)



The hexagram Hsiao Kuo, PREPONDERANCE OF THE SMALL (62), is composed of Chên, movement, wood, above and Kên, Keeping Still, stone, below. Kuo also means transition. The mortar was the primitive form of the mill, and signifies the transition from eating whole grain to baking.

10. They strung a piece of wood for a bow and hardened pieces of wood in the fire for arrows. The use of bow and arrow is to keep the world in fear. They probably took this from the hexagram of OPPOSITION (K'uei, 38).

K'uei, OPPOSITION (38)



The hexagram K'uei, OPPOSITION (38), consists of Li, the Clinging, above and Tui, the Joyous, below. The nuclear trigrams are K'an, danger, and, again, Li. The whole hexagram indicates strife. Li is the sun, which sends arrows from afar. Li means weapons, K'an danger. The danger is hedged around by weapons, therefore one is not afraid.

11. In primitive times people dwelt in caves and lived in forests. The holy men of a later time made the change to buildings. At the top was a ridgepole, and sloping down from it there was a roof, to keep off wind and rain. They probably took this from the hexagram of THE POWER OF THE GREAT (Ta Chuang, 34).

Ta Chuang, THE POWER OF THE GREAT (34)



The hexagram Ta Chuang, THE POWER OF THE GREAT (34) has Chên, thunder, above; the upper nuclear trigram Tui, lake, is at the top of Ch'ien, heaven, which is the lower nuclear trigram. The lower primary trigram is also Ch'ien, heaven, the atmosphere. Thus the hexagram as a whole means a heaven, a strong, protected space with thunder and rain above it. The trigram Chên also means wood, and as the eldest son it means the ridgepole at the top. The two yielding lines at the top are then thought of as the sloping roof.

12. In primitive times the dead were buried by covering them thickly with brushwood and placing them in the open country, without burial mound or grove of trees. The period of mourning had no definite duration. The holy men of a later time introduced inner and outer coffins instead. They probably took this from the hexagram of PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT (Ta Kuo, 28).

Ta Kuo, PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT (28)



The hexagram Ta Kuo, PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT (28), consists of the trigram Tui, the lake, above and Sun, wood, penetration, below. Forming the nuclear trigrams in the middle is Ch'ien, heaven, doubled. The hexagram must be taken as a whole; the two yin lines above and below mean the earth, within which the double coffin, represented by the double heaven, is enclosed. Entering (Sun) their last resting place in this way, the dead are made glad (Tui). Here we have a link with ancestor worship.

13. In primitive times people knotted cords in order to govern. The holy men of a later age introduced written documents instead, as a means of governing the various officials and supervising the people. They probably took this from the hexagram of BREAK-THROUGH (Kuai, 43).

Kuai, BREAK-THROUGH (43)



The hexagram Kuai, BREAK-THROUGH (43), has Tui, words, above and Ch'ien, strength, below. It means giving permanence to words. The notch at the top also indicates the form of the oldest documents: cut in wood, they consisted of two halves that fitted into each other when held together. As a rule the ancient writings were scratched on tablets of smoothed bamboo. Here the significance of writing in the organization of a large community is emphasized.

NOTE. In its main features the sketch of the development of civilization given in this chapter corresponds to an extraordinary degree with our own ideas. The fundamental thought, that all institutions are based on the development of definite ideas, is likewise undoubtedly correct. It is not

always easy to recognize such ideas in the complexes of ideas presented by the hexagrams, nor is it improbable that there were once certain connections that are now obliterated. There are indications that in the period preceding that of the Chou dynasty the hexagrams had meanings different from those which are traditional today. Possibly this chapter affords insight into these earliest meanings. That still another change in meaning took place later becomes evident when we compare the Judgments with the Images.

### CHAPTER III On the Structure of the Hexagrams

1. Thus the Book of Changes consists of images. The images are reproductions.

The hexagrams are reproductions of conditions in the heavens and on earth. Therefore they are to be applied productively; they have creative power, so to speak, in the realm of ideas, as explained above.

2. The decisions provide the material.

The Commentary on the Decision [i.e., on the Judgment],<sup>10</sup> which is probably what is meant here, presents the material out of which each hexagram, taken as a whole, is constructed. Thus it describes the situation as such before it undergoes change. Naturally this also applies to the Judgment itself.

3. The lines are imitations of movements on earth.

Here the lines are equivalent to the judgments appended to them; the judgments apply in the case of lines that move, that is, when they are nines or sixes. They reflect the changes within the individual situations.

4. Thus do good fortune and misfortune arise, and remorse and humiliation appear.

This movement reveals the direction that events are taking, and warnings or confirmations are added.

### CHAPTER IV On the Nature of the Trigrams

1. The light trigrams have more dark lines, the dark trigrams have more light lines.

The "light" trigrams are the three sons, Chên, K'an, and Kên, each of which consists of two dark lines and one light line. The "dark" trigrams are the three daughters, Sun, Li, and Tui, each of which consists of two light lines and one dark line.

2. What is the reason for this? The light trigrams are uneven, the dark trigrams are even.

The light trigrams are made up of the lines 7+8+8, or 7+6+8, or 7+6+6, or 9+8+8, or 9+6+6, or 9+6+8.<sup>11</sup> Using the relevant numbers, the numerical values of the lines in the dark trigrams can be found in the same way. Hence the sum of the values of the lines in light trigrams is always an uneven number, and the line representing the uneven number [an undivided line] is therefore the determinant of the light trigram. In the case of dark trigrams, the reverse is true.

3. What is their nature and how do they act? The light trigrams have one ruler and two subjects. They show the way of the superior man. The dark trigrams have two rulers and one subject. This is the way of the inferior man.

Where one alone rules, unity is present, whereas when one person must serve two masters, nothing good can come of it. This truth is here more or less accidentally linked with the structure of the trigrams.

### *Notes*

1. The reading "kindness" instead of "men" is contradicted by the context.
2. [Many of the citations from the Great Commentary appearing in bk. III under the heading "Appended Judgments" are from this chapter.]
3. [Same as Fu Hsi.]
4. [Written in the Han period by Pan Ku (A.D. 32-92).]
5. [Shih Ching, an anthology of poems said to have been arranged by Confucius. The latest of the poems belong to the year 585 B.C.; the oldest are earlier by many centuries.]
6. [Shên Nung, who is said to have taught the people agriculture.]
7. [For explanation of the nuclear trigrams, refer to The Structure of the Hexagrams, in .pdf IChing1.]
8. [Yao, Shun, and Yü are the three rulers held up as models by Confucius.]
9. [Chêng Hsüan, A.D. 127-200.]
10. [First Wing, Second Wing.]
11. [For numerical values see On Consulting the Oracle, in .pdf IChing1.]

### **CHAPTER V Explanation of Certain Lines**

1. In the Changes it is said: "If a man is agitated in mind, and his thoughts go hither and thither, only those friends on whom he fixes his conscious thoughts will follow."

The Master said: What need has nature of thought and care? In nature all things return to their common source and are distributed along different paths; through one action, the fruits of a hundred thoughts are realized. What need has nature of thought, of care?

2. When the sun goes, the moon comes; when the moon goes, the sun comes. Sun and moon alternate; thus light comes into existence. When cold goes, heat comes; when heat goes, cold comes. Cold and heat alternate, and thus the year completes itself. The past contracts. The future expands. Contraction and expansion act upon each other; hereby arises that which furthers.

3. The measuring worm draws itself together when it wants to stretch out. Dragons and snakes hibernate in order to preserve life. Thus the penetration of a germinal thought into the mind promotes the working of the mind. When this working furthers and brings peace to life, it elevates a man's nature.

4. Whatever goes beyond this indeed transcends all knowledge. When a man comprehends the divine and understands the transformations, he lifts his nature to the level of the miraculous.

In this explanation of the nine in the fourth place in hexagram 31, Hsien, INFLUENCE (bk. III), a theory of the power of the unconscious is given. Conscious influences are always merely limited ones, because they are brought about by intention. Nature knows no intentions; this is why everything in nature is so great. It is owing to the underlying unity of nature that all its thousand ways lead to a goal so perfect that it seems to have been planned beforehand down to the last detail. Then, in connection with the course of the day and the year, we are shown how past and future flow into each other, how contraction and expansion are the two movements through which the past prepares the future and the future unfolds the past.

In the two succeeding sections the same thought is applied to the man who, through supreme concentration, so intensifies and strengthens his inner being that mysterious autonomous currents of power emanate from him: thus the effects he creates proceed from his unconscious and mysteriously affect the unconscious in others, attaining such breadth and depth of influence that they transcend the individual sphere and enter the realm of cosmic phenomena.

5. In the Changes it is said: "A man permits himself to be oppressed by stone, and leans on thorns and thistles. He enters his house and does not see his wife. Misfortune."

The Master said: If a man permits himself to be oppressed by something that ought not to oppress him, his name will certainly be disgraced. If he leans on things upon which one cannot lean, his life will certainly be endangered. For him who is in disgrace and danger, the hour of death draws near; how can he then still see his wife?

This is an example of an unfavorable pronouncement. Compare the explanation of the six in the third place in hexagram 47, K'un, OPPRESSION (bk. I).

6. In the Changes it is said: "The prince shoots at a hawk on a high wall. He kills it. Everything serves to further."

The Master said: The hawk is the object of the hunt; bow and arrow are the tools and means. The marksman is man (who must make proper use of the means to his end). The superior man contains the means in his own person. He bides his time and then acts. Why then should not everything go well? He acts and is free. Therefore all he has to do is to go forth, and he takes his quarry. This is how a man fares who acts after he has made ready the means.

This is an example of a favorable line. Compare the explanation of the six at the top in hexagram 40, Hsieh, DELIVERANCE (bk. I).

7. The Master said: The inferior man is not ashamed of unkindness and does not shrink from injustice. If no advantage beckons he makes no effort. If he is not intimidated he does not improve himself, but if he is made to behave correctly in small matters he is careful in large ones. This is fortunate for the inferior man. This is what is meant when it is said in the Book of Changes: "His feet are fastened in the stocks, so that his toes disappear. No blame."

Here we have an example of a line that leads to the good through remorse. Compare the explanation of the nine at the beginning in hexagram 21, Shih Ho, BITING THROUGH (bk. I).

8. If good does not accumulate, it is not enough to make a name for a man. If evil does not accumulate, it is not strong enough to destroy a man. Therefore the inferior man thinks to himself, "Goodness in small things has no value," and so neglects it. He thinks, "Small sins do no harm," and so does not give them up. Thus his sins accumulate until they can no longer be covered up, and his guilt becomes so great that it can no longer be wiped out. In the Book of Changes it is said: "His neck is fastened in the wooden cangue, so that his ears disappear. Misfortune."

This is an example of a line showing that misfortune follows hard upon humiliation. Compare the explanation of the nine at the top in hexagram 21, Shih Ho, BITING THROUGH (bk. 1).

9. The Master said: Danger arises when a man feels secure in his position. Destruction threatens when a man seeks to preserve his worldly estate. Confusion develops when a man has put everything in order. Therefore the superior man does not forget danger in his security, nor ruin when he is well established, nor confusion when his affairs are in order. In this way he gains personal safety and is able to protect the empire. In the Book of Changes it is said: "What if it should fail, what if it should fail?" In this way he ties it to a cluster of mulberry shoots."

This is an example of a line showing how one remains free of blame and thus attains success. See the explanation of the nine in the fifth place in hexagram 12, P'i, STANDSTILL (bk. I).

10. The Master said: Weak character coupled with honored place, meager knowledge with large plans, limited powers with heavy responsibility, will seldom escape disaster. In the Changes it is said: "The legs of the ting are broken. The prince's meal is spilled, and his person is soiled. Misfortune." This is said of someone not equal to his task.

This is an example of a line showing that one meets with misfortune through being inadequate to the situation. Compare the explanation of the nine in the fourth place in hexagram 50, Ting, THE CALDRON (bk. I).

11. The Master said: To know the seeds, that is divine indeed. In his association with those above him, the superior man does not flatter. In his association with those beneath him, he is not arrogant. For he knows the seeds. The seeds are the first imperceptible beginning of movement, the first trace of good fortune (or misfortune) that shows itself. The superior man perceives the seeds and immediately takes action. He does not wait even a whole day. In the Changes it is said: "Firm as a rock. Not a whole day. Perseverance brings good fortune."

Firm as a rock, what need of a whole day?

The judgment can be known.

The superior man knows what is hidden and what is evident.

He knows weakness, he knows strength as well.

Hence the myriads look up to him.

This is an example of a line showing that foreknowledge enables one to escape misfortune in good time. Compare the explanation of the six in the second place in hexagram 16, Yü, ENTHUSIASM (bk. I).

12. The Master said: Yen Hui is one who will surely attain it. If he has a fault, he never fails to recognize it; having recognized it, he never commits the error a second time. In the Changes it is said: "Return from a short distance. No need for remorse. Great good fortune."

This is an example of a line showing that one can learn from experience. Yen Hui was the favorite disciple of Confucius. It is said in the Analects too that he never committed the same error twice. See the explanation of the nine at the beginning in hexagram 24, Fu, RETURN (bk. III).

13. The Master said: Heaven and earth come together, and all things take shape and find form. Male and female mix their seed, and all creatures take shape and are born. In the Changes it is said: "When three people journey together, their number decreases by one. When one man journeys alone, he finds a companion."

This is an example of a line that is favorable by reason of unity. Compare the explanation of the six in the third place in hexagram 41, Sun, DECREASE (bk. III).

14. The Master said: The superior man sets his person at rest before he moves; he composes his mind before he speaks; he makes his relations firm before he asks for something. By attending to these three matters, the superior man gains complete security. But if a man is brusque in his movements, others will not co-operate. If he is agitated in his words, they awaken no echo in others. If he asks for something without having first established relations, it will not be given to him. If no one is with him, those who would harm him draw near. In the Changes it is said: "He brings increase to no one. Indeed, someone even strikes him. He does not keep his heart constantly steady. Misfortune."

This is an example of a line showing that everything depends on proper preparation. Compare the explanation of the nine at the top in hexagram 42, I, INCREASE (bk. I).

## CHAPTER VI On the Nature of The Book of Changes in General

1. The Master said: The Creative and the Receptive are indeed the gateway to the Changes. The Creative is the representative of light things and the Receptive of dark things. In that the natures of the dark and the light are joined, the firm and the yielding receive form. Thus do the relationships of heaven and earth take shape, and we enter into relation with the nature of the light of the gods.

Following out what has been said in part I, chapter XII, section 3, the method of the Book of Changes is presented here. The first two trigrams, the Creative and the Receptive, are shown as representatives of the two polar primal forces. The aim is to explain that matter is the product of energy. The light and the dark are energies. The interaction of these forces gives rise to matter—that is, the firm and the yielding. Matter makes up the form, the body, of all beings in heaven and on

earth, but it is always energy that keeps it in motion. The important thing is to maintain connection with these divine forces of light.

2. The names employed are manifold but not superfluous. When we examine their kinds, thoughts about the decline of an era come to mind.

The names of the sixty-four hexagrams are diverse, but they all keep within the sphere of the necessary. Actual situations, just as life brings them, are described. The situations throughout are of such a nature as to make it plain that the reference is to an era of decline, the aim being to provide the means of reconstruction. It is pointed out that the body of ideas in the hexagrams stems from a time already confronted with phenomena of decline.

3. The Changes illumine the past and interpret the future. They disclose that which is hidden and open that which is dark. They distinguish things by means of suitable names. Then, when the right words and decisive judgments are added, everything is complete.

The wording of this section, and indeed of the whole of this chapter, seems to be rather uncertain, but the general meaning is easy to understand. Here again the various connotations of the Book of Changes are pointed out: hidden things are revealed in time and space, first symbolically by means of names and relationships, then explicitly by means of the judgments.

4. The names employed sound unimportant, but the possibilities of application are great. The meanings are far-reaching, the judgments are well ordered. The words are roundabout but they hit the mark. Things are openly set forth, but they contain also a deeper secret. This is why in doubtful cases they may serve to guide the conduct of men and thus to show the requital for reaching or for missing the goal.

The abstract, allegorical content of the hexagrams is here pointed out. The hexagrams permit of a general extension to all sorts of situations, because they present nothing but the laws that pertain to various complexes of conditions.

## **CHAPTER VII The Relation of Certain Hexagrams to Character Formation**

1. The Changes came into use in the period of middle antiquity. Those who composed the Changes had great care and sorrow.

This passage refers to King Wên and his son, the Duke of Chou, who both lived through very difficult times. The writer of the lines quoted above feels himself in sympathy with them in this respect, for he too can do nothing more than preserve for posterity the framework of a perishing civilization.

2. Thus the hexagram of TREADING (10) shows the basis of character. MODESTY (15) shows the handle of character; RETURN (24), the stem of character. DURATION (32) brings about firmness of character; DECREASE (41), cultivation of character; INCREASE (42),

fullness of character; OPPRESSION (47), the test of character; THE WELL (48), the field of character; THE GENTLE (57), the exercise of character.

3. The hexagram of TREADING (10) is harmonious and attains its goal. MODESTY (15) gives honor and shines forth. RETURN (24) is small, yet different from external things.

DURATION (32) shows manifold experiences without satiety. DECREASE (41) shows first what is difficult and then what is easy. INCREASE (42) shows the growth of fullness without artifices. OPPRESSION (47) leads to perplexity and thereby to success. THE WELL (48) abides in its place, yet has influence on other things. Through THE GENTLE (57) one is able to weigh things and remain hidden.

4. TREADING (10) brings about harmonious conduct. MODESTY (15) serves to regulate the mores. RETURN (24) leads to self-knowledge. DURATION (32) brings about unity of character. DECREASE (41) keeps harm away. INCREASE (42) furthers what is useful.

Through OPPRESSION (47) one learns to lessen one's rancor. THE WELL (48) brings about discrimination as to what is right. Through THE GENTLE (57) one is able to take special circumstances into account.<sup>1</sup>

Here nine hexagrams are used to show the development of character. First the relations of the hexagrams to character are given, then the material of the hexagrams, and finally their effect. The movement is from within outward. What is wrought in the depths of the heart becomes outwardly visible in its effects. The nine hexagrams are as follows:

1. Lü, TREADING (10). This hexagram deals with the rules of good conduct, compliance with which is a prerequisite of character formation. This good conduct is harmonious—in conformity with the trigram Tui, the Joyous, which is inside—and hence attains its goal even under difficult circumstances ("treading upon the tail of the tiger"). Thus it brings about those harmonious forms which are a prerequisite of outward behavior.

2. Ch'ien, MODESTY (15). This hexagram shows the attitude that is necessary before character formation can be undertaken. Modesty (mountain under the earth) honors others and thereby attains honor for itself; it regulates human intercourse in such a way that friendliness evokes friendliness. To the outward forms it adds the right attitude of mind as content.

3. Fu, RETURN(24). This hexagram is characterized by the fact that a light line returns from below and moves upward. It means the root and stem of character. The good that shows itself below is at first quite insignificant, but it is strong enough to be able constantly to prevail in its own unique character against any temptation of the surroundings. In the sense of return, it also suggests lasting reform following upon errors committed, and the self-examination and self-knowledge necessary for this.

4. Hêng, DURATION (32). This hexagram brings about firmness of character in the frame of time. It shows wind and thunder constantly together; hence there are manifold movements and experiences, from which fixed rules are derived, so that a unified character results.

5. Sun, DECREASE (41). This hexagram shows a decrease in influence of the lower faculties, the untamed instincts, in favor of the higher life of the mind. Here we have the essence of character training. The hexagram shows first the difficult thing—the taming of the instincts—then the easy phase, when character is under control; thus harm is kept away.

6. I, INCREASE (42). This hexagram gives needed fullness to character. Mere asceticism is not enough to make a good character: greatness is also needed. Thus INCREASE shows an organic growth of personality that is not artificial and hence furthers what is useful.

7. K'un, OPPRESSION (47). This hexagram leads the individual of developed character finally into the field where he must prove himself. Difficulties and obstacles arise; these must be overcome, yet they often prove insuperable. He sees himself confronted by bounds that he cannot set aside and that can be surmounted only by recognizing them for what they are. In thus recognizing as fate the things that must be so taken, one ceases to hate adversity—of what use would it be to storm against fate—and through this lessening of resentment, character is purified and advances to a higher level.

8. Ching, THE WELL (48). This hexagram represents a wellspring, which, though fixed in one spot, dispenses blessing far and wide and so makes its influence far-reaching. This shows the field in which character can take effect. We perceive the profound influence emanating from a richly endowed and generous personality, an influence that is not any the less because the person exerting it keeps in the background. The hexagram shows what is right, and thus makes it possible for the right to take effect.

9. Sun, THE GENTLE, THE PENETRATING (57). This hexagram gives the proper flexibility of character. What is needed is not rigidity that holds fast to established principles and is in reality mere pedantry, but mobility: thus one weighs things and penetrates to the needs of the time without exposing oneself to attack, so learning to take circumstances into account and to preserve a strong unity of character along with intelligent versatility.

### **CHAPTER VIII On the Use of the Book of Changes: The Lines**

1. The Changes is a book

From which one may not hold aloof.

Its tao is forever changing—

Alteration, movement without rest,

Flowing through the six empty places;

Rising and sinking without fixed law,  
Firm and yielding transform each other.  
They cannot be confined within a rule;  
It is only change that is at work here.

2. They move inward and outward according to fixed rhythms.

Without or within, they teach caution.

3. They also show care and sorrow and their causes.

Though you have no teacher,  
Approach them as you would your parents.

4. First take up the words,

Ponder their meaning,  
Then the fixed rules reveal themselves.  
But if you are not the right man,  
The meaning will not manifest itself to you.

In half rhythmic and half rhymed prose, we are here admonished to study the Book of Changes diligently. It is pointed out with praise that continuous change is the rule of the book. In conclusion, attention is called to the fact that an innate capacity is essential to an understanding of the book, otherwise it will remain locked as if with seven seals. If the person consulting the oracle is not in contact with tao, he does not receive an intelligible answer, since it would be of no avail.

#### CHAPTER IX The Lines (continued)

1. The Changes is a book whose hexagrams begin with the first line and are summed up in the last. The lines are the essential material. The six lines are interspersed according to the meaning belonging to them at the time.

This section discusses the relation of the lines to the hexagram as a whole. With the individual lines as the material, the hexagram is built from the bottom upward. The individual lines have within this sequence the meaning imparted to them by force of the particular situation.

2. The beginning line is difficult to understand. The top line is easy to understand. For they stand in the relationship of cause and effect. The judgment on the first line is tentative, but at the last line everything has attained completion.

Here in the first instance the reciprocal relationship between the first and the top line is stated. Both stand, as it were, outside the essential hexagram and the nuclear trigrams. At the first line the action is only just beginning to develop, and at the last it is concluded.

3. But if one wishes to explore things in their manifold gradation, and their qualities as well, and to discriminate between right and wrong, it cannot be done completely without the middle lines.

The "things in their manifold gradation" result from the manifold gradation of the places. Their qualities inhere in their firm or their yielding character. Right and wrong are distinguishable according to whether or not the lines occupy the places appropriate to them in view of the meaning of the time.

4. Yes, even that which is most important in regard to surviving or perishing, in regard to good fortune or misfortune, can be known in the course of time. The man of knowledge contemplates the judgment on the decision, and thus he can think out for himself the greater part.

In the Commentary on the Decision the rulers of the hexagrams are always indicated. By pondering the relationships of the other lines to these rulers, one can gain an approximate idea of their position and meaning in the hexagram as a whole.

5. The second and the fourth place correspond in their work but are differentiated by their positions. They do not correspond as regards the degree to which they are good. The second is usually praised, the fourth is usually warned, because it stands near the ruler. The meaning of the yielding is that it is not favorable for it to be far away. The important thing, however, is to remain without blame; its expression consists in being yielding and central.

The fifth place is that of the ruler. The second and the fourth place are those of officials. The second, which stands in the relationship of correspondence to the fifth (each being centrally placed, the former in the inner, the latter in the outer trigram), is the official who, far from the court, is attending to his work in the country. The fourth place is that of the minister. Therefore the two places, both dark—that is, dependent—are not equally good, despite their correspondence with respect to their work. The second usually carries a favorable judgment, the fourth a warning one: because it is too close to the prince, it must be doubly cautious. Now it is not in the nature of the yielding to prosper when it is far from the firm, hence one would expect the second place to be less favorable than the fourth. However, an important factor is that it is centrally placed and so remains without blame.

6. The third and the fifth place correspond in their work but are differentiated by their positions. The third usually has misfortune, the fifth usually has merit, because they are graded according to rank. The weaker is endangered, the stronger has victory.

The fifth place is that of the ruler. The third, as the top place of the inner [lower] trigram, has at least a limited power. But it is not central; it is in an insecure position on the boundary between two trigrams. Therein, as well as in its lower rank, lie elements of weakness that in most situations show the place to be endangered. The fifth place is central and strong, the ruler of the hexagram; these are all elements of strength, promising victory.

1. The Changes is a book vast and great, in which everything is completely contained. The tao of heaven is in it, the tao of the earth is in it, and the tao of man is in it. It combines these three primal powers and doubles them; that is why there are six lines. The six lines are nothing other than the ways (tao) of the three primal powers.

2. The Way has changes and movements. Therefore the lines are called changing lines. The lines have gradations, therefore they represent things. Things are diverse; this gives rise to line characteristics. The line characteristics do not always correspond. From this arise good fortune and misfortune.

Here the places are divided according to the three primal powers. The first and the second line are the places of the earth, the third and the fourth those of man, and the fifth and the top line those of heaven; this division comes into consideration with the very first hexagram, Ch'ien, THE CREATIVE. According to whether the lines of the different gradations are appropriate to the places, conclusions are drawn as to whether they mean good fortune or misfortune. The Chinese character for "line," hsaio, when written differently may also mean "to imitate." This is why the lines are here called "changing lines"—that is, lines oriented to the pattern of tao. The written character for hsaio consists of two sets of crossed lines, suggesting the crossing of yang and yin .

#### **CHAPTER XI The Value of Caution as a Teaching of the Book of Changes**

The time at which the Changes came to the fore was that in which the house of Yin came to an end and the way of the house of Chou was rising, that is, the time when King Wên and the tyrant Chou Hsin were pitted against each other.<sup>2</sup>

This is why the judgments of the book so frequently warn against danger. He who is conscious of danger creates peace for himself; he who takes things lightly creates his own downfall. The tao of this book is great. It omits none of the hundred things. It is concerned about beginning and end, and it is encompassed in the words "without blame." This is the tao of the Changes.

King Wên, the founder of the Chou dynasty, was held captive by the last ruler of the Yin dynasty, the tyrant Chou Hsin. He is said to have composed the judgments on the different hexagrams during his captivity. Because of the danger of his situation, all these judgments emanate from a caution that is intent on remaining without blame and thus attains success.

#### **CHAPTER XII Summary**

1. The Creative is the strongest of all things in the world. The expression of its nature is invariably the easy, in order thus to master the dangerous. The Receptive is the most devoted of all things in the world. The expression of its nature is invariably simple, in order thus to master the obstructive.

The two cardinal principles of the Book of Changes, the Creative (Ch'ien, 1) and the Receptive (K'un, 2), are here once more presented in their essential features. The Creative is represented as strength, to which everything is easy, but which remains conscious of the danger involved in working from above downward, and thus masters the danger. The Receptive is represented as

devotion, which therefore acts simply, but which is conscious of the obstructions inherent in working from below upward, and hence masters these obstructions.

2. To be able to preserve joyousness of heart and yet to be concerned in thought: in this way we can determine good fortune and misfortune on earth, and bring to perfection everything on earth.

In the text there appear next to the expression, "to be concerned in thought," two other characters that Chu Hsi has quite correctly eliminated as later additions. Joyousness of heart is the way of the Creative. To be concerned in thought is the way of the Receptive. Through joyousness one gains an over-all view of good fortune and misfortune, through concern one attains the possibility of perfection.

3. Therefore: The changes and transformations refer to action. Beneficent deeds have good auguries. Hence the images help us to know the things, and the oracle helps us to know the future.

The changes refer to action. Hence the images of the Book of Changes are of such sort that one can act in accordance with the changes and know reality (cf. also chap. II above, where inventions are traced to the images). Events tend toward good fortune or misfortune, which are expressed in omens. In that the Book of Changes interprets these omens, the future becomes clear.

4. Heaven and earth determine the places. The holy sages fulfill the possibilities of the places. Through the thoughts of men and the thoughts of spirits, the people are enabled to participate in these possibilities.

Heaven and earth determine the places and thereby the possibilities. The sages make these possibilities into reality, and through the collaboration of the thoughts of spirits and of men in the Book of Changes, it becomes possible to extend the blessings of culture to the people as well.

5. The eight trigrams point the way by means of their images; the words accompanying the lines, and the decisions, speak according to the circumstances. In that the firm and the yielding are interspersed, good fortune and misfortune can be discerned.

6. Changes and movements are judged according to the furtherance (that they bring). Good fortune and misfortune change according to the conditions. Therefore: Love and hate combat each other, and good fortune and misfortune result therefrom. The far and the near injure each other, and remorse and humiliation result therefrom. The true and the false influence each other, and advantage and injury result therefrom. In all the situations of the Book of Changes it is thus: When closely related things do not harmonize, misfortune is the result: this gives rise to injury, remorse, and humiliation.

The close relationships between the lines are those of correspondence and of holding together.<sup>3</sup>

According to whether the lines attract or repel one another, good fortune or misfortune ensues, in all the gradations possible in each case.

7. The words of a man who plans revolt are confused. The words of a man who entertains doubt in his inmost heart are ramified. The words of men of good fortune are few. Excited men use many words. Slanderers of good men are roundabout in their words. The words of a man who has lost his standpoint are twisted.

This passage summarizes the effects of states of mind on verbal expression. It becomes plain therefrom that the authors of the Book of Changes, who are so sparing of words, belong in the category of men of good fortune.

### *Notes*

1. [These characterizations are given again with the hexagrams in bk. III. under the heading "Appended Judgments."]
2. [About the middle of the twelfth century B.C., according to traditional chronology.]
3. [See The Relationships of the Lines to One-Another in The Structure of the Hexagrams, in .pdf IChing1.]