

## World of Change

### **The World of Change**

#### **Introduction to *Total I Ching: Myths for Change***

Stephen Karcher Ph.D.

Like it or not, we live in a whirlpool of change. Our lives are a long dialogue with change for, as the poets say, “a creature not busy being born is busy dying.” As the world we live in changes, we find ourselves involved in a deep shift in the ground of our being. Our dreams, too, are a series of changes through which we search for hidden significance in events, seeking the meaning of the crossroads we confront. Indeed, our very being is a continual dialogue between what is stable and what is shifting, and our individual actions in this time of change can have far-reaching effects. We need to know the “right” thing to do.

Some of these changes are predictable and dependable, some unpredictable and surprising. Some bring joy, some bring sorrow. When we experience ourselves as the passive victims of change we feel cut off, isolated, frightened and angry. When we are a part of the dialogue, we feel connected to the basic creative energy that shapes the world we live in.

We in the modern west tend to see change as objective and predictable or totally “random.” We use statistics, norms, the law of averages and mass numbers to describe it. We assume that it is the same for all people at all times. This is scientific law; an experience must be repeatable, independent of the subject, in order to be recognized as a valid experience. The sages and diviners who put together *Yijing*, the Classic of Change, saw things differently. They recognized change and what we call “chance” as the work of the spirit, an individual encounter with reality. They called the basic flow of

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energy that shapes experience *Dao* or Way, and realized that this Way expresses itself as symbols (*xiang*) that articulate a “moment” of time (*shi*). People can use these symbols or images, they felt, to be “in harmony with the time.” Using *Yijing* is the art of finding these images. Through using them our actions can resonate with the spirit and connect with its hidden transformative power. This symbolic approach to change helps us live our lives fully and freely by keeping us in touch with the on-going process of the real, what the old sages called the Way.

*Yijing* or Classic of Change is the world’s oldest and most sophisticated system of wisdom divination, a powerful tool and spiritual vehicle that can help people navigate the voyage of life. It is designed to help us understand and work with the unconscious forces shaping the situations we confront. It brings out our helping spirit (*shen*), the inner voice that helps us on our Way. It does not *describe* change; it *participates in* and *articulates* change. It shows how change happens because it is a part of the process it models.

Philosophically, this is a “gift to humans” that gives us access to the primordial changes that initiate the process of generation and return of the *Wanwu*, the Myriad Beings or Ten Thousand Things. It shows the symbols (*xiang*) and the spirits (*shen*) through which all transformation or change occurs. By using Change, we actively participate in this creative process rather than being its passive and unwilling victim. This can have a profound effect on our lives. It is a transformation of the way we experience and affect the world we live in. Through it we become a part of what was called the “Great Enterprise.”

Like all ancient traditions, the world of ancient China was peopled with gods and goddesses, spirits and ghosts, heroes and helpers and demons. The landscape was dotted with shrines, altars and places of close encounter with these figures. The rhythm of life and the shape of the year were articulated through a series of festivals and rites and most human activities and important events had their presiding fate or spirit. This is an animate or living world and humans were in regular imaginative contact with all its

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powers. This mythic world is woven into the divinatory tradition called *Change* or *Yijing*. It is more than a vanished and foreign past, for it shows us the basic ways we imagine things, how our imagination, our soul, works. By leading our experience back to this mythic ground, we can talk with the spirits, the imaginative powers that are creating the realities we experience. From the perspective of Change, this is a fundamental healing act. From it flow “blessings” (*fu*).

The tradition of *Change* evolved in late antiquity as an instrument to open the world of the Way, focusing on the ideal of a person who is committed to realizing themselves as a true individual. Change helps this person by giving practical advice and making the power and virtue of the spirits (*de*) available by opening the symbolic background to the problems we confront. As we embrace this ideal, we can realize our destiny and, through the connection with fate and the Way, acquire the real ability to aid others.

*Yijing* has been a spiritual and practical guide and a very real help in times of danger for many people over the 3000 years it has existed. It has certainly changed my life, and I feel a deep gratitude for its presence as it guides me and those I love and care for. I sincerely hope something of this spirit comes through in this book and that you, too, may experience *shen ming*, the friendship of this clear and loving spirit.

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Perhaps the best way to imagine Change is as a stream, a living stream of images, words, emblems, mythic associations and magical gates that mark the Way of Water, a fundamental image of the Dao. This flow is described as *wang lai*, going and coming, a river of time and space on which the seeds and symbols of things flow.

**Wang, going**, represents what is leaving the field of awareness, a focused attitude meaning to have a specific direction to go. It is the stream as it flows away from us, carrying away what is finished. It suggests the past, the dead and the waters of the dead and souls

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departing the world. It means leave, flee, as reflected in the *wang*-sacrifice, an exorcism of noxious influences.

**Lai, coming**, is the stream as it flows towards us. It suggests the attitude of letting go of striving and being open to what comes. It means what is arriving from the future, attracting good influences, what comes from Heaven and the High Lord, souls entering the world. It is the Tree on the Earth Altar, giving us the seeds, the spirits (*shen*) and the symbols (*xiang*) through which they unfold into events.

### **Springs, Sources and the Changes of the Moon**

This Way of Water has its source in pre-history, in the myth time of the Paleolithic hunting groups and Neolithic farming communities. It is associated with the activities of the *wu*, the spirit-mediums and Intermediaries, and with the early Moon cults that read the Changes at the time of the Moon Almost Full (*yue ji wang*) to determine the precise point where change was entering the world (*ji*). Its sources are phrases and omens from peasant calendars that describe the change of the seasons in terms of animal metamorphoses and the dances and chants of the Spring and Autumn River-Mountain festivals. It is full of stories of mythic beings and ominous events, events that were turned into emblems of change. It is also connected with the cult of jade and jade objects like the moon-shaped *bi*-discs and pig-figures buried with the dead, and the first tomb burials, where the returning soul was surrounded by gifts designed to help him or her on the way to the other shore.

### **Plant and Number Divination**

The Way of Water begins in a kind of divinatory practice known all over the world that links water, plants, numbers and words. It uses plant substances, like the sacred yarrow stalks or the palm nuts of *Ifa* divination, to produce numbers that key emblematic words and phrases. The words act as the center of a complex series of associations held in the mind of the diviner, who chants or dances them when a divination is made. These magic words are capable of almost infinite expansion, adding new images and reshaping events. They are told and re-told by the diviner through the performative linguistic act.

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### **The Bronze Vessels**

Fairly early, as the Bronze Age began, the divinatory stream of Change crossed over and picked up a range of images and practices from the other major divinatory stream, what we call Fire and Bone divination. This stream is based on animal sacrifice, using fire to produce cracks in bone or shell, cracks whose patterns are read by the king or power-person. In China it was directly associated with the rise of the Bronze Age kings and the Royal Cycle of ancestral rituals and sacrifices. The tradition of Change is full of references to these rituals. Even more, it took over the image of the beautiful cast-bronze sacrificial vessels covered with dragon and animal images, particularly the tripod vessel known as *ding*, used to make the sacrifices and hold the ritual meal shared with the spirits, and the water mirror or *jian*, used to reflect one's fate and helping spirit. They became images of Change itself and the act of divining and offering sacrifice in order to connect with the spirit.

### **The Books of Change and the Mandate of Heaven**

By about 1000-800 BCE this divinatory stream of images had become a written tradition known as *Yi* or Change, also called the yarrow, after the yarrow stalks used in the consultation process. There were at least three *yi*-books in existence and a class of diviners who used them called book-people, literally bamboo-shamans, after the bamboo strips used to make early books.

Only one of these books of change has survived, the *Zhouyi* or Changes of Zhou. Through this text, probably first transcribed about 1000 BCE and re-edited about 800 BCE, the tradition was associated with a series of historical events that acquired mythic proportions, the Change in the Mandate of Heaven (*tian ming*) that brought the Zhou Kings to power, enabling them to overthrow their corrupt feudal Lord, the Shang. These events, inscribed throughout the text, are what make the *Zhouyi* unique.

### ***Tian Ming*: The Mandate of Heaven**

The story of the Mandate of Heaven revolves around the idea that Heaven (*Tian*) confers a Mandate (*ming*) on a ruling family, a mandate that can be

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revoked for immoral or evil behavior that flaunts the ancestors or harms the people. According to this story, the last Shang kings were tyrants who ignored the ancestors, oppressed the people and indulged in murderous drunken debauchery. Their overthrow by the rising Zhou line is the story of the establishment of an order that renews the time, an order under which communication with the spirits is re-established and the blessings once again flow for all in a Golden Age.

### **King Wen, King Wu and the Duke of Zhou**

The story centers on King Wen, the spiritual father of the Zhou or “Pattern King who brought them to prominence, and his sons King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, the Martial King and his War Leader who received the mandate and launched the armies. The key events begin with the marriage of the daughters of the Shang ruler to King Wen, spiritual father of the Zhou, seen in Figures 11 and 54. From this marriage came King Wu and the Duke of Zhou. King Wu received the Mandate for Change when he was in mourning for his father at his military capital, Feng (name of Figure 55). Empowered by clear omens from Heaven, he left the Mourning Hut and ordered his war leader, the Duke of Zhou, to launch the armies. They crossed the Great Stream into Shang and fought a critical battle at Muye, the Mu wilderness, which ended in a complete rout of the Shang armies, many of whom deserted and fought with the Zhou. After the battle, King Wu and his entourage entered the Shang capital and executed the Shang tyrant and his concubines.

### **Renewing the Time**

The result of this, in Chinese thought, was the re-establishment of the ritual connection with Heaven and a re-ordering of the world through which blessings (*fu*) could flow once more. The story of the Mandate of Heaven was inscribed into the book and tradition of Change and became an enduring myth in the culture. It is the story of the good king who, with Heaven’s blessing, overthrows a corrupt tyrant, renews the time and helps the people, restoring a golden age of ancient virtue to the land. Even today, using the Change is called “talking to King Wu.”

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### **The Flowering of a Hundred Schools**

By about 500 BCE, the last of the Zhou influence had fallen apart and the culture entered what is called the Warring States period, a period of disintegration and civil war that was, paradoxically, a cultural flowering that saw the development of all the major ideas in later culture. A hundred schools of thought flourished, all discussing and debating over the definition of the Way, how it was lost and how the world might be restored to order. These developments found a place in the Way of Water and the evolution of the *Yijing*.

### **Disputers of the Dao**

In this period, Change or yarrow-divination was widespread and its images and omens had become proverbial. It carried an entire world of efficacious myth and ritual, omens, magic signs and emblematic histories from the ancient Wu and the Bronze Age kings, to a rising class of iron-age nobles, merchants and spiritual seekers. In later periods, it was used in noble courts by a wandering class of specialist diviners (*fang-shi*) to determine the potentials inherent in an action and the correct stance or attitude, spiritual and strategic, to adopt in a given situation.

The tradition of Change incorporated the thought of Confucius and the development of the Confucian school, Laozi, Zhuangzi and the development of Daoist thought and Mozi's universal love and logic. Much of this assimilation was facilitated by the Cosmologists and their way of describing the actions of the ghosts and spirits (*guishen*) through the symbols of the yin and the yang and the Five Processes (*wuxing*). These formed a kind of shorthand that facilitated the development of a new view of nature and the actions of Heaven and Earth that could be directly associated with the linear figures, the *gua*, of Change.

### **The Great Enterprise**

The Warring States period (c. 500-220 BCE) also saw a radical evolution of the ritual practices associated with the ancient sages and magicians who originated the Way of Water. The religious feeling in these new practices

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centered on a union between personal and ritual acts, acts that shape the participant's imagination through a cycle of images that mark critical moments or gates of change. These rituals were felt to produce a significant transformation in the awareness and state of being of those who participate in them, an inner change that in turn has a profound affect on the world around us. The Warring States Sages inscribed this re-imagining of the power of ritual action into a complex and magical Matrix, seeing it as a way to change the world by changing individual awareness. This is the foundation of the Great Enterprise (*Da yeh*) described in *Dazhuan*, the Warring States text on Change as a vehicle of transformation.

### **The Portable Altar**

This perspective, the culmination of the myth-world of Change, responds to the innate human need for individual contact with and experience of the transpersonal world of the Way. It turns Change and the mythology that it carries into a kind of portable altar, a personal link to the great river of time and space on which the symbols that unfold the Way flow toward us. *Dazhuan* tells the story:

One day the Master said:  
*Qian* and *Kun* - are they not the two-leafed gate of Change?  
Dark yin and light yang join virtues  
to give the strong and the supple a form.  
The fates given by Heaven and Earth  
take shape through these forms.  
This is how we can penetrate to the bright spirits.  
The names are different, but they cover the way of all things.  
What is upstream from the moment we call the Way.  
What is downstream from the moment we call the vessel or tool.  
The moment of transformation we call Change.  
Raising *Change* and setting it forth for the people to use,  
That we call the Great Enterprise.

### **The Classic of Change**

In the Han Dynasty (202BCE-220CE), the dynasty that emerged after the short-lived universal empire of Chin ended the Warring States period, Change became a Classic or *Jing*, a book recognized as carrying ancient wisdom. The literal image in the word is the warp threads of a loom, so the



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*Yijing* that was assembled in the Han Dynasty can be called the Classic, Scripture or Loom of Change.

Han Dynasty scholars codified and organized the old language of Change around a set of radicals or “roots.” They assembled and transcribed the old divinatory texts in this new modernized form of writing, a system that was used for the next 2000 years. A range of oral interpretive traditions were also collected, transcribed and added to the basic text as the *Ten Wings*. Three of these wings, the two parts of the *Dazhuan*, the Great Treatise or Commentary on the Attached Words, and the *Shuogua* or Explanation of the Diagrams became founding documents in the evolution of philosophical, medical and scientific thought.

### **Confucians and Daoists**

This period also saw the development of Confucianism as the official Imperial philosophy. Confucians enshrined an official set of meanings in the tradition of Change that were later made a part of the great civil service examinations. This split off another version of Change, a populist Daoist under layer associated with the imaginative use of the old vocabulary of the ghosts and spirits. By the end of the Han period the text and the various circles of association around it were a fundamental part of the new world on many, often quite contradictory, levels.

*Yijing* and the divinatory stream that flows through it became the most revered sourcebook in the culture, sponsoring ever-growing circles of commentary and criticism. It reflected and assimilated many of the influences that entered Chinese culture over the centuries, most notably the development of Buddhist practice that culminated in the Tang. It provided the basis for poetry, magic and philosophical speculation, particularly the Song dynasty re-visioning of Confucianism by philosophers such as Zhuxi. It also sponsored both the growing magical use of the diagrams and numbers that became Religious Daoism and the predictive divinatory tradition called *Wenwang Bagua*.

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### **Change in the West**

The stream of Change spread into Japan, Korea, and Tibet and was carried by the Chinese diaspora throughout the east. The twentieth century saw one of the most dramatic moments in its evolution, its globalization and the re-discovery of its mythic roots, primarily through translations into western languages. Archeological discoveries and historical scholarship, both eastern and western have revealed the layers of myth and ritual practices hidden in the old word meanings of the *Yijing* and its World of Change. Archetypal psychology and chaos theory, coupled with an enormous dissatisfaction with formal religious systems, opened a window for this thought in the west. A series of usable translations beginning with the landmark Wilhelm-Baynes version of 1950, and Wilhelm's encounter with the depth psychologist C. G. Jung, has made versions of the text available worldwide. Change became a part, albeit often an underground part, of western imagination and spirituality. It is to this bend in the river, this entrance of the World of Change into western spirit and culture, that this translation is particularly addressed.

### **The Landscapes of Change**

The magical way of divination that connects us with the spirit of Change unfolds in and through a particular imaginative landscape, a dynamic yet timeless world that grew out northern China and its frontier regions. We can imagine this landscape and its points of encounter with the spirit as an archetypal landscape of the soul, directly reflected in many of the figures or hexagrams.

### **Setting the Stage**

This is a world of wide plains (Figures 26, 34) bounded and divided by mountains (Figures 51, 33), with arching skies where the weather comes sudden and violent (Figures 51, 30, 9). It is a land of extreme contrasts, cut by great rivers (Figure 29), dense thickets and fertile marshes (Figure 58) that drain into the Nine Rivers. There are farms and fields, village clusters (Figure 37), fortified cities (Figure 45), great palaces, tombs and towers

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(Figures 19, 20). The areas of culture are surrounded and divided by dense brush, wild rivers and rugged mountains inhabited by wild animals, nomads, outlaws and barbarians, tribal groups apart from the civilizing movement of the plains peoples. This world was a civilized island in a sea of barbarians, with permeable boundaries that allowed a constant fertile interchange with the worlds outside the borders (Figures 56, 38).

### **Sites of Close Encounter**

The entire landscape, literal and metaphorical, is dotted with sites of close encounter with the spirit world: ancestral temples (Figure 18), tombs (Figure 19), grave mounds, earth altars (Figure 2), hidden mountain shrines (Figures 10, 33) and River-Mountain festival sites (Figure 31) that were an image of paradise. This is a place where a great variety of people go about their lives. We see peasants, nomads, merchants, wandering sages, nobles and kings, shamans, officials and magicians, husbands and wives, slaves and prisoners, children, craftsmen, soldiers and officers, courtesans, and wide range of spirits and heroes as they eat and drink, carry out a variety of ritual actions and feasts, love and hate, work, hope and scheme, make war and find peace, despair or are enlightened, face death and disaster or sudden joy. This magical landscape is a direct parallel to the shape of our inner lives as we walk the streets of our modern cities.

### **The Shape of the Turtle**

The sacred shape of this world was the form of *Linggui*, the Numinous Turtle that provided one of its main oracles. The *Fu-sang* or Sun Tree from which the Ten Suns rise (Figure 35) lies to the east; in the far west the *Ruo* or Moon Tree on which they set (Figure 36). Each tree has a pool at its base in which the Mothers bathe the suns and the moons. Beneath the earth are the underground Ghost River (Figure 29) and the Yellow Springs that connect the two trees and make them one, the World Tree or Bushy Mulberry (Figures 3, 12). Above is Sky, Heaven (Figure 1) and the Great Bear or Dipper (Figure 55), the court of *Shang Di*, the Lord Above who gives the fates and his court of Royal Ancestors.

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The flat, square earth (Figure 2) is spread between the round sky and the underworld waters, extending to the Four Sides or Directions (*si fang*), home of mysterious bird-headed wind spirits who are objects of high sacrifice. The Fang are lands from which spirits enter the human world, lands of imagination, home of the winds with power over rain, weather and harvest in which humans cannot survive.

### **The World Tree and the Axis Mundi**

The Great Sacrifice (Figure 11) performed to the Directions was also performed to The Mountain or Peak (*Yue*) and The River (*He*). These sites go back to Neolithic times as cult centers. The Mountain was also known as the capital of Yu the Great (Figures 8, 39, and 50), who tamed the waters, brought forth the land and forged the first bronze vessels, the Nine *Ding*. It is reflected in the sacred mountains throughout the landscape (Figures 11, 33, and 52).

The Four Hidden Lands and the square earth (Figure 2) revolve around an axis that connects Heaven, Earth and the rushing Ghost River beneath (Figure 29). This ceremonial axis is a World Tree (Figure 3) or *axis mundi*, a zone of absolute reality where there is perfect access to the spirit world. It can be established or invoked at any site where the high ritual or divination is performed, particularly through the use of the bronze sacrificial vessels (Figure 50) or at the monumental Royal Tombs, gates to the Ancestors and the High Lord. This center of the world is where the dead rest in peace and receive the great offerings, the place from which their blessings flow. This sacred cosmos also reflects the shape of the human heart (*xin*).

### **Guishen: the Souls and Spirits**

This world is not only populated by humans, but by various types of souls, ghosts and spirits, the *guishen*. “Between heaven and earth there is no place the *guishen* do not exist.” These spirits of heaven and earth are of many kinds and their identities are constantly changing like the shifting figures in dream, but they were all once souls and partake of the soul’s numinous

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quality, *ling*, a direct expression of the Way. They express what I call a functional polytheism.

### **Varieties of Souls and Spirits**

The varieties of *guishen* include the Sun Mother and Moon Mother, the bird-headed Fang or Directions, Mountain and River, Directors of Destinies, Lords of the Hearth, First Ancestors, heroes such as Yu the Great, Yi the Archer and Tang the Completer, the Horse Ancestor and a series of other totem or omen animals, a variety of demons and angry souls, the High Lord and his court in the Dipper, the Earth Lord at the Earth Altar, the Royal Ancestors and the Moon Goddesses. The boundaries between these spirits are permeable, as is the boundary between spirit and human. These spirits are loosely divided into two types or appearances.

**Shen are bright spirits**, spirits that vivify and inspire and are centered in the heart, the spirits of Heaven that draw out and animate the Myriad Beings. They are stars, mountains and rivers. They make things appear and unfold. They inspire awe and wonder; cut across boundaries, combine categories, and “cannot be comprehended by the yin and the yang.” The Shen change things; their main characteristic is transformation.

**Gui, souls or ghosts**, are darker spirits who live in the tomb and the earth. They are protectors, but can be angered or offended by mistreatment. They can turn into furies, plagues, haunting spirits of vengeance and hungry ghosts and demons (*li*) who have been offered no sustenance in the other world. Though they represent the whole world of the dead, angry Gui usually manifest as specific individuals who are trapped by their passions between the world of the living and the world of the dead (Figure 38).

**Zong or Ancestors** partake of both categories, living in the tomb and, at the same, time sitting at the court of the High Lord. They bestow blessings and act as intermediaries to heaven and all of the powerful *shen*. The ancestors are animating spirits. They ensure a continuous flow of blessings from the invisible world. The “worship” of ancestors, giving them the recognition they need in order to exercise their power, is an image of a

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creative relation to the figures of the psyche. These complexes that people our imagination both came before us and will outlive us.

### **Ancestors and Spirit-Intermediaries**

Ancestors do not simply exist. They are created and empowered (Figures 19, 20, 23, and 24). One had to know how to establish them in order to make them into protectors. The creation and enshrining of an ancestor spirit (Figures 19&20) is an extremely important ritual that involves fixing and feeding the ghost in the tomb and a mourning ceremony that enshrines the “bright spirit” in an image or tablet on the ancestral altar. This process of releasing and enshrining the spirit is one of the most important manifestations of Change and its way of transformation, a paradigm of sacrifice and blessing seen throughout the texts (Figures 23 & 24, 31 & 32, 39 & 40, 41 & 42, 59 & 60). Of particular importance is the act of *heng* (Figure 32) or fixing the omen an ancestor represents and giving it an enduring place in human life.

### **Feeding the Ancestors: The Sacred Meal**

Each noble family had its protectors, ancestor spirits made from the two kinds of soul that join together at birth to form the human being. The *hun* or spirit-soul must ascend to the realms of the High Lord and has to be guided on its way, the job of the *wu*-intermediaries: “She signs to you, the skilful *wu*, going backwards she walks before you.” The *po* or body-soul has to be escorted to and made comfortable in the tomb and a connection made to it through the spirit tablet. This soul lives on offerings made at the time of the burial and afterwards and can turn into a *gui* or *li*, an angry ghost or a demon if neglected, wandering to inflict suffering on the living.

The ancestor is fed through sacrifice and ritual attention. (Figure 27) that culminates in the sacred meal which humans and spirits share (Figures 21, 50). At this time a *shi* or Embodier, literally a person acting as a “corpse,” would be possessed by the installed ancestor spirit. Through his or her medium, the spirit would be present in the human community, sharing the

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meal and extending its radiant and liberating blessings (*fu*) to ten thousand generations of its descendants.

### **Technicians of the Sacred**

Communication with the ghosts and spirits was handled through several kinds of intermediaries. They basically fell into three classes: experts on ritual (*shì*) who knew the formulae and procedures involved in important ceremonies; intermediaries and exorcists (*Wu*) who handled spirits directly, personified in the *Bagua* or Eight Trigrams; and diviners (*shì*) who read the signs and kept the ancient virtue (*de*) inherent in the oracle books.

### **The Wu or Intermediaries**

The *wu* or Intermediaries are without doubt the oldest and the most enduring of the technicians of the sacred, originating far back in the mists of pre-history. The power of the *wu* was used to see, feel and know the spirits. The *wu* could call the spirits down to be present at a ceremony or a healing and dissipate malign influences. They were involved with the cult of the Moon Almost Full (*yuejiwang*) and the masked animal-transformation dances, early forms of change-divination. Three times a year the exorcists or *fang-xiang*, a particular type of *wu*, would perform the great exorcism, driving the outmoded and baneful spirits from palace, house and countryside.

As time went by, the *wu* were allowed a smaller and smaller part in official cult, but continued to play a considerable role in the life of the people. Widespread on the personal level, their vivid spirituality was an antidote for an increasingly arid official worship. Though often suppressed and edited out of the classic texts, the *wu* were indispensable intermediaries in personal worship and spiritual practices.

### **The Shi or Diviners**

In the earliest times a form of the *wu*, the *shi*, were diviners, historians and scribes, men of the book or bamboo-*wu*, imaged as a “hand that holds the center.” They were painters of word pictures and their work with the oracle

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books was described as eating ancient virtue (*de*). They became the wandering *fangshi* of the Warring States period, “book-*wu* of the Hidden Lands.” The word that describes them is cognate with character pronounced *shi*, “signs from heaven that reveal the activity of the shen and instruct humans.”

### **The King**

The King (*wang*) shared certain basic functions with both kinds of intermediaries. The King was the single great ritual channel through which communication and blessing flowed from the High Ancestors and the High Lord. There are certain ceremonies only he could perform. He was responsible before the High Lord or Heaven, who had given him the Mandate, to rule for the welfare of his people and the proper functioning of the cosmic order. The King’s court was the center of literacy and the oracle books used by the *shi*-diviners. The King, through his person and his actions could put the messages from the spirits into effect, fixing the omens and spreading the blessings to all.

### **Places of Close Encounter**

These technicians of the sacred exercised their powers and functions at a series of sacred sites. There were the Earth Altar and Pit for the earth powers (Figures 2, 29); the Heaven Altar for the Sun and the High Lord; the Outskirts Altars for major ceremonies that gathered the people, welcomed incoming spirits and invoked the rain (Figures 9, 10, 13); the Hidden Temple and Mountain Shrines to connect directly with Sky and the Ancestors as revealers of fate (Figures 10, 33, 51); the sacred River-Mountain places for the Spring and Autumn Festivals (Figures 31, 44); the Ancestral Temples in every palace and noble dwelling place (Figures 37, 45); and the Altar of the Protectors in each hamlet.

The ancient worship created few great monuments aside from the ancestral hall of the high nobles and the royal tombs. Almost all of these were temporary sites, erected for an occasion or re-created for each ceremony. Sacrifice and the meal shared with the spirits were common to all levels of



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culture. If anything, the temple of traditional worship is a ritual and a divination book.

### **Common Places of Worship**

The rites centered on a few common practices and places. Souls of the dead ancestors required funerary temples, altars, tombs, and indoor shrines; all others were served in the open air.

Each had a preference for position and shape. Sky gods had round altars and mounds, on which fires were lit. Earth spirits had square altars and sacrificial victims were buried or drowned in the pit beside the altar. The God of the Soil had a mound in the palace grounds facing the Ancestral Temple. The High Lord had a circular mound at the southern Outskirts Altar. First Husbandman had an altar in the royal fields; the Sun had a mound at the eastern Outskirts Altar and the Moon had a pit called Night Brightness (*Yeh-ming*) at the western Outskirts Altar.

### **Shang Di and the Earth Lord**

*Shang Di*, the High Lord or *Tian*, Heaven, ruled from his palace in the Great Bear, where he established the fates and conferred the mandates. The Ancestors lived in his court as well as in their images or spirit tablets. The Altar for the Earth Spirit for each area, from the Protectors of the hamlet to the Great Lord (*Da-she*) who protected the King, was originally a Tree planted on a Mound in the middle of a sacred grove (Figures 2, 53) with an unpolished stone set up to the north of the tree to represent the god. All great initiatives, war, hunting, marriage, opening and closing the fields or the great festivals, had to be announced at this Earth Altar (Figures 7, 55). The Earth Spirit was Lord and Protector; drums were smeared with blood at his altar when the armies marched and he would accompany the troops in a spirit tablet.

### **Ancestral Worship**

Ancestral worship was held in a temple on the east side of the dwelling, with a large court and a *pei*, a standing stone (Figure 37). There were rooms in

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which the celebrants, the Embodiers, dressed. The interior was divided into two rows of small chapels for the two alternating lines of the ancestors, *chao* and *mu*, with a central room dedicated to the First Ancestor. Beyond that were the *tiao*, the rooms for the more remote ancestors where Kings Wen and Wu had their perpetual homes. Each ancestor was present in his spirit tablet, an inscribed wooden tablet enclosed in a stone casket. There were two for each ancestor, one that remained always in the temple and one that traveled with the armies on campaign.

### **Ceremonies**

Ceremonies consisted of offerings, prayers and masked dances or ritual combat which had two aims, to feed the spirits, thus securing their blessings and their participation in the course of human life, and to effect an alteration of consciousness in the participants, “to experience something and be set right.” Offerings included bull, ram and pig for royal ancestors (Figure 26), foal or horses to River and Mountain, a dog to the god of roads. Blue jade was offered to High Lord, yellow to Earth and the underworld spirits. Various wines were important as offerings and were consumed in quantity during the ritual meals and the great festivals. In earlier times, Human sacrifices, usually criminals or prisoners of war, were offered to Ancestors and the Earth God. Offerings to High Lord were burned, to Earth Lord buried or drowned. For ancestors a complete banquet was served and shared – the great ritual meal served in the bronze vessels.

Each ceremony had its own prayers or chants, formulae for calling spirits. The great dances enacted founding moments in myth and assured that the blessings of the event that occurred in myth-time would continue to flow to the descendants. At ancestral ceremonies the spirit would inhabit the body of one of his descendants chosen for the task by divination. This was the Corpse or Embodier, who was possessed by the spirit (*shen*) of the ancestor. Through the Corpse, the ancestor ate, drank and spoke, sharing the meal and blessing the people. At the end of a ceremony he would proclaim “the spirits are drunk,” indicating they were satisfied and looked favorably on their descendants.

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### **Seasons and Religious Cycles**

The basis of the culture we have been looking at developed in the great northeastern plain between the sea and the craggy wall bounding the central plateau, spreading into the beautiful river valleys of the Wei and the Fen and over the passes into the Yangzi Valley. This is a harsh climate, torrid in summer and glacial in winter, when the rivers and earth are frozen solid. The spring thaw is rapid, turning the rivers into torrents full of floating ice. The low lying areas become marshes during the spring and summer, full of a profusion of plants, nesting geese and cranes and swarming fish. They are surrounded by clumps of tall grass and scrub, thickets full of great wild beasts hunted by setting fire to the brush. The fertile border areas of these great marshes were developed into mulberry groves and deep green pastures for horses. The best land was drained and cultivated to produce millet, sorghum and rice, wheat and hemp, beans and gourds.

The fields were cultivated on the well-field model (Figure 48), eight fields surrounding a central well. Nearby were houses of pounded earth, the hamlets where the people lived in winter. The twenty-five families of a hamlet made up a group centered on an Earth Altar with a cult of the Divine Couple, the Protectors. The manors of the nobles, surrounded by a high pounded-earth wall and ditch, were interspersed among the hamlets.

### **The Two Powers and the Religious Year**

For the people who formed the bedrock of the culture, the religious year was tied to the two unequal seasons, the time of nature's great labor and the time of repose when work ended, thanks were given and all people joined in the seclusion and closing of the earth.

These two seasons and their ritual base are the oldest images of the sacred order, with connections to the Two Primal Powers now referred to in the Change Qian and Kun that extend far back into the Neolithic. They were considered necessary to the order of things. Through them, all participated in the changes of the world, assuring people's place within in it and assisting

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it in its movement. The basis of this ritual year was the peasant calendar and the lunar cycle. Throughout the elaboration of a more sophisticated culture they formed a kind of foundation, a social and religious base that reflected the Well and humanity's common needs and common strengths (Figures 47, 48, and 12).

### **Year's Beginning**

The great year began in spring with a series of ceremonies that lifted the winter restrictions, opened the fields and drove off the spirit of cold (Figures 13, 14). The first was the great *jiao* sacrifice at the Outskirts Altar to the High Lord, announcing the movement of the people. The *wu* notified the Four Distant Lands, the King notified First Ancestor, and a Red Bull was offered in an elaborate ceremony, first to High Lord and then to *Houji*, the Millet Lord who would act as intermediary to the High Lord's court in the Big Dipper. A ritual meal was prepared which all the people partook of. The ceremony ended with a great dance and celebration in which even the king participated. This ceremony was repeated in every hamlet throughout the kingdom.

### **The Great Exorcism**

Then came the Great Exorcism, the *Da No*. The *fang-xiang*, male *wu* covered with bearskins with four golden eyes and holding battle axes, drove the old spirits and their pestilence out of the city. The fire was renewed and taken out of the houses, lit with a burning mirror on the great open hearths of the *jing*, the well fields where the peasants would live and work throughout the summer.

### **The Spring River-Mountain Festival**

Finally the great Spring Festival came, the River Mountain ceremonies and the paradise time. At the time of the thaw, the thunder, the rains and the great purification expelled the dead past and new life began. The people crossed the river to the great dance and feast where young men and women, awakened by the great peals of thunder, gathered, danced and sang the ritual songs. Young women called the souls and spirits from the rivers and

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mountains. Lines of young women and men danced to the sound of the earth drums, waving feather fans and egret plumes, exchanging ritual insults in verse in a time-honored manner. Couples formed to sing the love songs transmitted through generations. They came together in the sacred groves and lush meadows, giving the gift of the *orchis*, a magical and aphrodisiac flower, on parting.

### **Autumn River-Mountain Festival**

Summer was dedicated to the freedom of the open air and work in the fields, work that aided nature's bounty. The next great ceremony occurred in autumn, mirroring the spring sacrifice. It marked the harvest and the end of fieldwork, notification of the Earth God and the solemn return to the village houses.

### **The Great Sacrifice**

The great sacrifice that marked the shifting of the time was carried out at the Hidden Temple (Figures 10, 33) inside the palace walls, the ancient site of the sacred kings. Sacrifice was offered to High Lord and to King Wen, the founder of the dynasty who had first received the Mandate of Heaven. Then the King went to meet winter at the northern Outskirts Altar and Earth Pit and proclaimed: "The breath of heaven rises, the breath of earth sinks down, no longer in touch. Shut and barred the passage, winter is established." The peasants returned to the villages. The fire was extinguished and brought into the houses. By the first month of winter the move was completed and all activities ceased. The Earth God and the ancestors were notified. (Figure 12) The King, dressed in white, offered a black bull to the Earth God and reviewed the armies, for this was the beginning of the military season and the time of death. Celebrants offered sacrifice to all who made the harvest abundant.

### **Harvest Home**

Then came the Harvest Festival, a great masked celebration with cat and tiger maskers, men dressing as women, and people giving away their possessions. Everyone changed into rural costume and offerings of meat

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and wine were distributed among the people. An immense orgy began during which all was eaten and, as at the spring festival, the men and women paired and copulated with their potential partner. These ceremonies were carried out in every region and canton.

### **Closing the Gates**

This great celebration marked the end of the year; from this point on all work on the earth was forbidden. The palace gates were closed, the people's doors sealed with earth and the souls of the dead returned to the houses. Life was suspended until, in the last month of the year, seed grain and tools were prepared, the doors re-opened and the *fang-xiang* drove away the spirits who had dwelt with the people during the dead time. The new season was begun.

### **The Four Seasons and the Rituals of the Ancestors**

Another cycle, that of the Four (rather than Two) Seasons regulated the offerings made to the ancestors. These were noble or patrician ceremonies, connected with the High Lord, the powerful Earth Lord and the Four Sides, the Four Hidden Lands that were sources of weather, blessing and pestilence. The king "went out to meet" these spirits at the Outskirts Altars, as he did the sun at the equinoxes and solstices: "Sun, who illuminates above and below, who spreads blessing (*fu*) through the Four Hidden Lands, who displays majesty in all places, here am I, the Solitary Man. I go out to meet you at the Outskirts."

### **Noble Ritual**

Noble ritual was above all ancestor ritual. Every meal began with a libation, every gift was first shared with the ancestors, and every crop was first offered to them. Each of the seasons brought a festival at the ancestral temple, when sacrifice was offered to all. There were also two great celebrations, the *xia* and the *ti* connected with the five-year cycle that installed an ancestor. *Xia* was held when the mourning period finished, re-uniting the ancestor with the whole line of the predecessors. The *ti*, held the following spring, set a departed one among the ranks to the right and left of the High Lord.

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### **Form of the Ancestor Ceremony**

The form of the ancestor ceremony was basically the same wherever and whenever it was held. At the beginning of the sacrifice, the priest escorted the spirit tablets to the chamber of the First Ancestor where they would be fed. On the day of a royal ceremony the King and Queen in dragon robe and pheasant dress proceeded separately to the temple to receive the Seven Corpses, the specially chosen Embodiers (*shi*) who would be possessed by the spirit of the Ancestors during the ceremony. The spirits were then invited to come down and the libations poured, the first of nine libations that made up the ceremony and the Corpses drank. Then they went to their places on white mao-grass mats facing their spirit tablets.

### **The Red Bull**

The king went down into the court and faced the first victim, the Red Bull for *Hou chi*, First Ancestor, tied to a stone pillar set in the middle of the court. The king cut some head hairs and took blood with the belled knife, offering them in the temple. Then he killed the Bull with arrows, as he did victims for the other ancestors. The ministers took fat from the Bull and gave it to the Corpses, who burned it so the ancestors could smell the ritual purity of the offering. Then they called the souls throughout the temple and at the gate, the Distant Ones.

The cooks meanwhile prepared the sacrifices and the king himself set out the dishes, a great variety that allowed the spirits to choose what pleased them. The Corpses took the lungs of the Bull cooked with millet and offered it to the spirit they each represented. At this point, the spirit who had been summoned entered their bodies and was present. When they then sat to eat and drink, the spirits were present in their bodies and were offered several courses. The King and Queen offered pure water, then a variety of wines. The Corpses would rise, pour out several drops for the souls in the earth and drink, offering the cup in turn to the king and queen. At the fifth round it was passed to the ministers, at the seventh to the great officers, at the ninth to the lesser officers. Then, when hosts and guests were offered the cup, six of the Corpses passed among the people offering wine. When the feast ended,

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the Corpses expressed the satisfaction of their spirits with the sacrifice, the food and wine, and extended their blessings (*fu*): “blessings a hundred fold ... forevermore they grant you highest favors, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands.” The bells and drums sounded and the priest proclaimed: “The spirits are completely drunk!” The Corpses then retired to stately music.

### **The Sacred Meal**

The final part of the sacrifice was a grand banquet for all, ending in a set of dances that enacted the events of the story of the Mandate of Heaven: the departure from the military capital at Feng, when King Wu received the sign from Heaven, came out of the mourning hut and set the armies marching; the great battle in the Wilds of Mu and the defeat and execution of the Shang tyrant and his two concubines; the victorious return to Zhou; King Wu fixing the southern frontier; and the final dance of peace attributed to Yu the Great, the hero and mythical founder who drained the flood and opened the ways of all civilized people. This pattern was followed, in great or in small, in all ancestral ceremonies, whether in the Royal Temple or in the rooms set off in the house of every noble family.

## **Shaping Change**

We tend to underestimate, indeed can hardly understand the immense creative shaping power of the mythological imagination of early cultures and its holographic capacity to produce dynamic models of very complex realities. Levi-Strauss described this modeling capacity through the figure of the *bricoleur*, one who picks among the rubble of traditional images and symbols, re-arranging them until a quantum change occurs. This quantum change is what the ancient smiths described as the melting of the metals and their re-casting into a dynamic new form, portrayed in Figures 49 and 50, Revolution and Casting the Vessel. It is what occurred when the Warring States Sages assembled the Matrix of Change as we know it now.



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### **The College of Diviners**

Let us imagine a convocation of the *Wu* and the *Shi*, the shamans and scribes gathered together to revise the sacred traditions at a critical point in history. Such a meeting could have occurred at various times in ancient China: in the Tower where King Wen waited for a sign from Heaven; in the court of King Wu and his immediate successors after the victory over the Shang; in the court of King Yuan, when the Zhou kingship was failing; in numerous monasteries or centers throughout the civil wars of the Warring States period; and, perhaps, in the court of King Huai Nan, before his imprisonment and execution ended free thought in Han China. The purpose of the meetings, and the meetings of the College of Diviners that go on today is to create or re-create an instrument that can renew the time, connecting the fallen world we live in with the sources of ancient virtue.

### **The Loom of Change**

The character for “classic” (*jing*) is the picture of a loom. It means weave, the weaving of the Watercourse Way, common to all, immutable. The character shows the warp threads in the loom, the fundamental principles. They are the lines traced from north to south in the cosmos and the energy channels of the body, the paths of the *qi*-energy that forms all things. These warp threads represent the timeless world of the Water Way and the goings and comings (*wang lai*) of the soul. They are a prayer of the heart, a magical spell woven of words, available to all.

### **The Paradigm Shift**

In the creation of the Classic of Change, this stream of images, the warp threads of Change, intersects with another stream, the weft, as it were, of history. This is the history of the Change of the Mandate of Heaven, a dynamic thread that challenges the warp of the timeless mythic world. Historically, it describes the revolution that occurred between the Shang and the Zhou dynasties. Symbolically, it describes both the great revolution at the end of the Neolithic and the emergence of the Bronze Age Kings, and a great shift in awareness that characterized the Warring States revision of

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their old myth and ritual world. Archetypically, it is a paradigm for any great revolution in human culture that changes the basic way we see and understand the world. After such a paradigm shift, the world is different. We cannot go back. What we can do, however, is to seek to re-connect the new world we live in with the timeless world out of which it grew. This is the task that faced the magicians, shamans and sages who gave us the Classic of Change.

### ***Ming*: the Mandate**

The makers of Change were faced with explaining and bringing forward, re-imagining, the most momentous thing that could happen to human beings: a change in the Mandate, the *ming*, of Heaven. This change echoed through the fate and affected the essence of every human being. It was, in their eyes, a true renewal of the time and it was their job to give it a voice, to create a vessel through which the change could be carried forward, “completing the ceaseless activity of heaven.”

***Ming*, mandate**, connects individual fate and the orders of heaven. It is an edict from heaven that affects the life of each person as fate, setting the length and quality of life, individual destiny, the limits and crossroads that are written in the stream of time. It is an oracular pronouncement that must be fixed (*heng*) through the *de*, the power and virtue of the individual. This covenant with Heaven can lead to brightness, brilliance and true awareness. It is the splendid shining of the ancestors and a perception of the *shen ming*, the light of the gods and their bright symbols. It unites the insight of the Sun and the clairvoyance of the Moon, a true union of the primal powers that connects fate destiny and self determination.

### **The Great Enterprise**

The Warring States sages who created the Matrix of Change sought to inscribe the history of the change of the Mandate of Heaven in the timeless world of the Way. They sought to create a locus whereby this great change could be eternally re-experienced and re-enacted. In doing so they created what I call a Bardo explorer or Portable Altar, a vehicle capable of investigating and clarifying the states of liminal reality that negotiate all

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profound changes in form. Central to this is the paradigm of the New King and the Old King and the sacrifice involved in renewing the time.

### **The Idea of Sacrifice**

No idea is more foreign to modern sensibilities than the mythic idea of sacrifice; no idea is more important to understanding the function of Change. The mythic world revolves around the magic or numen of the sacrifice and the access to the threshold between the world of the living and the dead that it represents. We see this in all the world's mythologies, from the self-sacrifice of the hero or the death of the Christ to the simple pouring out of libations or offerings of the first fruits. It is at the core of all ceremonies of initiation, where the old identity is offered to the spirit and taken apart, to be put back together in a new way. Sacrifice establishes an interchange between the world of life and action and the Other Side, the seed and source of all. An inner attitude of offering is the way that we know and attune ourselves to the change of the times and the change in the will of Heaven.

### **New King and Old King**

In ancient China, this offering revolved around the idea of the New and the Old King as images for the time that is coming and the time that must pass away. It is symbolized in the Pairs 11:12 and 41:42. The transformation is effectuated by two Operators or spirit-workers seen throughout Change, the Rouser and Exorcist (*Zhen*) of Figure 51 who calls up the new and drives out the ghosts of the old, and the Sacrificer (*Gen*) of Figure 52, who cuts apart and offers up what has become fixed and outmoded.

### **The King and his Double**

The proper behavior of the King ensured a connection with Heaven and the continual flow of its blessings and benefits to both the human and the natural world. However, the King has a double, a Minister or Sage who connected his bright virtue with the darker side of life. These two were portrayed in the Pair 55:56, the New King who received the Mandate and the Wandering Sage who circulated it through the shadow worlds of the borders. This Other, the Minister, Sage or Alter Ego represented the King's connection

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to death, his responsibility, when called on by Heaven, to offer himself for the good of the people. Through this sacrificial act, the King became a guardian of the frontier of life and death, an archaic ancestor who stands guard at the edges of the world.

### **The Gates Between the Worlds**

The sacrificial interplay between the worlds of the living and the dead is at the center of all rituals of changing the times. It is enacted at all points of critical transition, regulating the balance between our striving for individual identity and achievement and the necessity of returning to the common source. These are times when we are called on to sacrifice our old identity in order to participate in the advent of the new. The diviners who created Change sought to describe the precise points when such sacrifice was called for and could be efficacious, placing them in an overall model of the goings and comings (*wang lai*) in the All-Under-Heaven, the world in which we live in. To do this they sculpted a Matrix, a sequence of the 64 six-line figures available to them. They used this Matrix to organize and display the vast oral and written omen tradition, inscribing the history of the Mandate into the arrangement and re-imagining it for their own time. The Matrix or Vessel they created not only *describes* the fundamental changes that occurred in the world of Heaven and Earth; it magically *participates* in that process.

### **Prima Materia: the Dynamics of the Pair**

The Pairs of hexagrams are the *prima materia* used in the construction of the Matrix of Change. Each locates and describes a transformation, a specific paradigm of the stages of Change, with its own thematic concerns. The problem confronting the College of Diviners would be the arrangement of these Pairs.

The Pairs reflect a basic mytheme in eastern thought, an underlying understanding about the nature of reality at what we might call a fractal level: nothing stands alone; each thing is only possible when held in tension with its opposite. Some examples of this mytheme are Yin and Yang, the interconnection of the Sun Tree and the Moon Tree, and the constant

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interchange between light and dark, life and death, acting and being. A basic way of imagining these Pairs is as a set of spindles on which an unbroken thread is wound back and forth. The thread is the thread of life itself as it passes back and forth between the Two Powers at every level of our lives.

### **The Nature of the Pairs**

Each Pair in this Matrix creates a field of meaning, a model that holds *inspiration* and *realization*, yin and yang, in a single effective image. There is a basic difference amongst the 32 Pairs of six-line diagrams or *gua* that were available to the assembled group of Technicians of the Sacred. This difference would be immediately apparent to those who contemplated them and would have had a deep significance for them. This distinction is reflected in the two Chinese words for “change”.

***Hua*, accumulative change**, describes a gradual change within a being or situation, the slow changes over time inherent in all things that permit their manifestation and evolution. It is a gradual and predictable passage from one stage to another, a “normal” change that occurs in the “natural” course of life. It is digestion and assimilation, the growth of an embryo in the womb; to instruct, educate or reform the character; to spread the word and change the way people think. It is the slow *growth and maturation* of the yin and the yang.

***Bian*, transformation**, with the root word, name or command, describes a quantum change, a sudden and radical change of state. It is a spiritual transformation, a conversion, as well as a sudden, unexpected death or accident. *Bian* is not normal; it is extraordinary, a marvelous happening. It is the *conversion* of yin and yang.

The 64 *gua* or six-line diagrams constitute 32 pairs. Of these, 28 pairs or 56 diagrams are related to each other by a process called *inversion* or *rotation*: one figure in a pair becomes the other when it is inverted or rotated on its central axis. These are called Rotational Pairs. They reflect *hua*: gradual, normal change. It is the norm in the matrix and reflects what anthropologists call a mythic connection, the regular exchange between the two halves of a theme or story. The other smaller group of four Pairs are Symmetrical or Conversional (Pairs 1:2, 27:28, 29:30, 61:62). They do *not*

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change when rotated or inverted. To effectuate the change here, each individual line must be *transformed* or *converted (bian)* into its opposite.

### **Primary Sites of Radical Transformation**

In the mind of the bricoleur, these symmetrical pairs are quite extraordinary. They represent Primary Sites of Radical Transformation, discontinuities where the stream of time is disconnected, turned and re-connected and re-charged. They reverse entropy, re-charging a situation by connecting it to primal sources of energy. They represent what anthropologists call natural symbols, categories or ways of thought that embodies the most basic ways our mind organizes the flux of experience that surrounds us.

These Conversional Pairs or Sites of Radical Transformation are distributed at key points in the matrix, beginning, middle and end, and act as the Engines of Transformation. We can describe them in mythic terms.

The Pair 1:2 are Gates of Change, The Dragon and the Dark Animal Goddess:

### **The Gates of Change: Dragon and Dark Animal Goddess**

1 Inspiration: ***Force means being strong.***

2 Field of Realization: ***Field means being supple.***

Here we see the action of the two primal powers, the Inspiring Force of the Dragon and the Realizing Power of the Dark Animal Goddess that form the Two-Leafed Gate of Change. This is a Primary Site of Radical Transformation, mediating between the worlds and recharging our existence with meaning and energy. It projects Zones of Transformation throughout the sequence where we are led back to the continual act of creation and is the Gate of the first stage of the symbolic life, the Decade of childhood, when the child seeks to create a world in which to find a self. *Hidden Possibilities:* 1:2: you are connected to the interaction of the primal seeds.

The Pair 27:28 is The Tiger's Mouth and the Great Transition through which we become an individual:

### **27:28 Tiger's Mouth and Great Transition**

27 Inspiration: ***Jaws means correcting the source of nourishment.***

28 Field of Realization: ***Great Traverses means shaking things up and pushing them over.***

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Here we see an ordeal that transforms the soul, correcting the sources of nourishment and giving the power to become an individual free of the concern for collective judgments. This is a Primary Site of Radical Transformation that mediates between the worlds and recharges our existence with meaning and energy. It projects Zones of Transformation throughout the sequence where we are led back to the continual act of creation and is the Mission of the third stage of the symbolic life, the Decade of the 20's, initiation and search for a Self. *Hidden Possibilities: 2:1*, you are connected to the interaction of the primal powers to realize and inspire.

The Pair 29:30 is The Ghost River and the Bright Omens, the Fire and Water that establish the microcosmic orbit within the individual:

### **29:30 The Ghost River and the Bright Omens**

29 Inspiration: *Pit means what is below.*

30 Field of Realization: *Radiance means what is above.*

Here we see the fundamental powers, Fire and Water, as they establish an inner axis of change. This is a site of radical transformation when the Ghost River releases Bright Omens that guide people's lives. It is a Primary Site of Radical Transformation that mediates between the worlds and recharges our existence with meaning and energy. It projects Zones of Transformation throughout the sequence where we are led back to the continual act of creation and acts as the Transition to the fourth stage of the symbolic life, the Decade of 30's and the heroic struggles to found a dwelling, family and career. *Hidden Possibilities: 27:28 > 2:1*, passing through the great ordeal connects you with the primal powers.

The Pair 61:62 is The Opened Heart and the Flying Bird who carries the message of a life lived fully across the threshold of life and death to the next generation.

### **61:62 The Opened Heart and the Flying Bird**

61 Inspiration: *Connecting means it becomes trustworthy.*

62 Field of Realization: *Small Traverses means it moves through being excessively small.*

Here we see a connection of the inner and the outer worlds in the thought of the heart, a connection that articulates the meaning of life into words that cross the threshold of life and death. This a Primary Site of Radical Transformation that mediates between the worlds and recharges our existence with meaning and energy. It projects Secondary Zones of Transformation where we are led back to the continual act of creation and acts as the Gate to the final stage of the symbolic life, the passage across the River of Life and Death and birth into the spirit. *Hidden Possibilities: 27:28 > 2:1*, accept the ordeal and nourish the ability to stand alone. This connects you to the primal powers, the Gates of Change.

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### **Primary Sites in the Matrix**

In Change the Two Powers are seen as the Dragon and the Dark Animal Goddess, Figures 1 and 2, Qian and Kun. The Matrix evolved by the College of Diviners begins with this primordial Pair, the lines of which are maximally distant from one another, Qian being all yang lines and Kun being all yin lines. It progresses to the ultimate Pair 63:64, the Burning Water, the lines of which maximally integrate yin and yang values and thus bring the system to its point of closest integration. The same logic is present in the middle of the text, at the Pair 29:30, The Ghost River and the Bright Omens, where we see water and fire hexagrams establish a vertical axis at the traditional division between the first half and second half of the text. The entire matrix develops as space/time swings open and shut between these figures, which act as doors opening and closing.

### **Sites of Intense Mediating Activity**

There are also four Pairs that partake of *both* categories, *hua* and *bian*. They change into each other through *both* rotation and conversion. These reflect another sort of activity. They act as sites of intense shamanic and ritual activity and reflect archetypal liminal or borderline states. Mythically and structurally they funnel energy from the first half of life through the site of the Great Marriages that change the time, connecting to the Burning Water (Pair 63:64) that is the goal of the entire series.

There are two sites in the first half of life, the Pairs 11:12 and 17:18. The Pair 11:12 is the paradigm of the New and the Old King and the idea of sacrifice:

### **On the Sacred Mountain: New King and Old King**

***This means you reverse the way you categorize things.***

11 Inspiration: ***Pervading and the New King.***

12 Field of Realization: ***Obstruction and the Old King.***

Here we see the great symbols of what is coming and going on the river of time: the New King and Old King, the one who sacrifices on the Great Mountain to ensure blessings for all and the one who must die and be



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offered to the Ancestor. This is a site of intense shamanic and ritual activity, connecting the primary powers to personal life, a connection between Heaven and Earth and the sacrifice of the fixations of the past. It is the Gate to the second stage of the symbolic life, the Decade of the Teens when we struggle with identity and its relation to society. *Hidden Possibilities*: 54:53 > 64:63, the Great Marriages that change the time. Prepare and make the crossing.

The Pair 17:18 is the place where we actively work to renovate the corruption of the past and the Ancestral Images:

### **Follow the Spirit to Renovate the Ancestral Images**

17 Inspiration: ***Following: leave old grounds for dissension behind.***  
18 Field of Realization: ***Renovate Corruption and you find the foundation of the new.***

This is a flow of inspiring new energy that leads to the renovation of inner ancestral and parental images. It is a site of intense shamanic and ritual activity, connecting the primary powers to personal life, and is the Mission of the second stage of the symbolic life, the Decade of the Teens when we struggle with identity and its relation to society. *Hidden Possibilities*: 53:54 > 63:64, the great marriages that change the time. Make the crossing to prepare a decisive new move.

### **Mediating Sites in the Second Half of Life**

There are also two mediating sites in the second half of life, these are the Pairs 53:54 and 63:64. The Pair 53:54 is the Great Marriages that change the time, an image of the soul's journey to completion:

### **The Great Marriages that Change the Time**

53 Inspiration: ***Gradual Advance means the marrying woman awaits the man's move.***  
54 Field of Realization: ***Marrying the Maiden means the woman's completion.***

Here we see marriage as an image of the soul's journey to realization. It contrasts a marriage that proceeds in a recognized manner with one that involves a radical change of state, opening a dialogue between stability and radical change through hidden forces at the highest levels of power. This is the Approach to the Royal Center of the sixth stage of the symbolic life, the Decade of the 50's when we must deal with power and its responsibilities to the human community. *Hidden Possibilities*: 64:63, make the crossing and prepare the new.

The Pair 63:64 represents the Final Crossings of the River of Life and Death and the prima materia, the Burning Water:

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### **63:64 The Final Crossings: Burning Water**

63 Inspiration: ***Already Crossing means setting things right.***  
64 Field of Realization: ***Not Yet Crossing means exhausting the masculine will.***

These are the final crossings of the river of life and death, the Burning Water. They portray making the crossing and preparing the new, an image of the soul entering the Great Stream of Life and Death and its eternal return. This is a site of intense shamanic and ritual activity, connecting the primary powers to personal life. It acts as an Approach to the true centers of power and birth into the life of the spirit. *Hidden Possibilities:* 64:63 > 63:64, preparing for and making the crossing.

### **The Time Cycle and the Hidden Winds**

With these landmarks established, we can begin to look at the further effects of Change within the Matrix. The first thing that becomes apparent is a hidden grouping of families of figures around a set of Core Themes or Nuclear Hexagrams, their energy being circulated through the action of the Time Cycle or model of the Four Seasons, the oldest image of time as divinatory process.

The 64 hexagrams group into 16 families of four hexagrams that share a common core, the same four inner lines, differing only in their top and bottom lines. These top and bottom lines are the sets of two line diagrams that represent the Four Seasons and the four kinds of lines which make up all of the figures in the Matrix.

There are 16 possible first generation Nuclear Figures. If these in turn are reduced to their Nuclear Figures, we find four second-generation figures: the first two and the last two figures of the book, *1 Force* and *2 Field* and *63 Already Crossing* and *64 Not Yet Crossing*. These four are unique. The first two are their own Nuclear Figures; the last two are each other's Nuclear Figures. These point at a set of central hidden themes can be used to trace any situation back to one of four basic landmarks or Gates of Change through which things enter the world of the Ten Thousand Things. These interconnected figures seem to represent the hidden themes of the Change, Hidden Winds that blow through the heart of the Matrix.

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### **The River of Time**

Each of the 64 Figures or hexagrams that make up the Matrix can change into any one of the other Figures through the conversion of its lines into their opposites. A Rotational Pair generates a regular set of six other paired figures when each line changes to form a new hexagram. These are the Crosslines. They describe the interchange between the interconnected lines of the two hexagrams that make up a Pair and relate it to six other Pairs. This establishes a basic site where the omens can be displayed in their complexity across the spindles of Inspiration and Realization, circulating us through a series of related images that establish the deep background and prognosis of a situation, echoing backwards and forwards in the stream of time.

### **Projection and Echo-location**

This forward and backward movement in the stream of time, projection and echo-location, includes a direct *exchange* of energy with another Pair in the series, seen as the figures generated by the bottom line of the first figure and the top line of the second (1 and 6) an exchange that indicates a special hidden communication. It establishes an image of the *inner drive* that powers the dynamics of the Pair as the Inspiring and Realizing phases of a process, seen as the figures generated by the top line of the first figure and the bottom line of the second (6 and 1). It establishes *interconnections* between the transforming lines that show how the omens develop, seen as the interchange between the middle lines (2 and 5, 3 and 4). Together, they explain the working of the spindles and set up what I call the Crossline Omens, image pathways that represent a deep and hidden dialogue between the Primal Powers in a very specific situation.

### **The Decades and the Symbolic Life**

When we contemplate how the Rotational Pairs, are set into the Matrix, we encounter another major shaping principle used in sculpting the local logics of Change, a system common to many traditional cultures. This is what cultural anthropologists call an age-grade system that describes the

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progressive formation of an individual's character (*de*) throughout life in terms of Decades.

Scholars have shown that the Decades are used throughout ancient texts to describe the shape of a human life, indicating its major events, initiations and passages from one state of being to another. The Decades give shape and meaning to an individual experience by locating it in relation to the ritual progression of the symbolic life, connecting the different stages we typically pass through.

It seems that those who shaped Change applied their experience of Decades to the Matrix for Change, assigning each hexagram a number corresponding to the age and stage of development in an ideal lifetime trajectory. This is an important discovery because it means that hexagrams identified as part of the matrix of an answer from Change can be considered both for the meaning of the hexagram itself *and* for the age and developmental issues it represents.

### **The Significance of Ten and the Sacred Cosmos**

The system of Decades is based on the number *ten*, which has a special place in ancient thought.

**Xun, ten**, shows the shape of a life and the shape of the completed periods within it. With the root “sun” or “day,” describes the ten-day week, the oldest mythic method of describing time. It means loyal, faithful, universal, everywhere, distributed equally and describes a time where the king made a tour of the boundaries and the diviners looked into the spirit worlds to see the ghosts and spirits that would influence the next period.

Each Decade recreates the shape and dynamic of the sacred cosmos at a different level. Each is a birth, death and re-birth ordeal existing on the individual, cultural and mystical levels. We can envision a Decade as a personal or narrative experience; as the progressive development of the nervous system; as the evolution and devolution of culture; and as a metaphysical experience of birth, death and rebirth, a *creatio continua*.

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### **Developmental Tasks in the Decades**

There are specific tasks associated with each of the Decades as they appear in the Matrix of Change.

#### *First Half of Life*

First Decade (Figures 1-10, childhood): The child seeks to create a world in which to find a self.

Second Decade (Figures 11-20, the Teens): Struggles with identity and Society.

Third Decade (Figures 21-30, the 20's): Initiation and search for a Self.

#### *Second Half of Life*

Fourth Decade (Figures 31-40, the 30's): Heroic struggles to found a dwelling, family and career.

Fifth Decade (Figures 41-50, the 40's): Emergence into higher levels of culture and empowerment in society.

Sixth Decade (Figures 51-60, the 50's): Dealing with power and responsibilities to the human community.

The Crossings (Figures 61-64): birth into the life of the spirit, passage across the River of Life and Death.

### **Pair Positions in the Decades**

There are five Pairs within each Decade of hexagrams. An analysis of the Pairs occupying the same relative position shows a remarkably similar developmental pattern for each Decade.

1:2 Pair Position: This is the *Axis and Gate* to the world of the Four Directions, governed by Protectors or divine Couple and the Archaic Twins (*Wang Hai* and *Wang Heng*). This is the place we emerge from the fertile chaos, where the Nameless One emerges into the world of manifestation through the Two-leafed Gate of Change. It is the both beginning and hidden center, in that its paired constituents split to become the flanking positions that surround the Royal Power at the apex of the Decade.

3:4 Pair Position: This is the *Approach* to the Royal Center, an offering, a sacrifice and a gift that allows an audience, an approach to the experience of royal power and mystery. Its paradigm might be the Pair 41:42, the Offering and the Blessing. Its images are a container and a sharp instrument that penetrates or punctures it to allow transformation, something stripped, broken and opened. It is associated with the East, green, dawn, wind and wood, early spring when the juices rise and life awakes, Zhen, the

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Rouser/Thunder and Sun, the Lady of Fates. It evokes the violence and fertility of *Wang Hai*, the archaic First Herdsman and War god, the power of the people and the Spring River-Mountain Festival where souls re-enter the world.

5:6 Pair Position: This is the *Royal Center* and apex, the experience of the numinous power and attraction of the King and High Culture, the hierarchical and centralizing power of the Decade. It suggests high religious ritual, councils of war and judgement, high divination and the scribes who possess the secrets of writing, hunting and blood sacrifice and the great marriage alliances. It reflects the desire to found a noble house and an ancestral cult, becoming a great person with an individual existence. It is associated with Li, Radiance and the Bright Omens, fulfilment, sunlight and warmth, celebration, success, fulfilment, the South and the mysteries of fertility and harvest. Here you are both recognized and given a mission or mandate (*ming*) to fulfil.

7:8 Pair Position: This is the the *Mission* or mandate that can lead to a change of state. It is the individuating power that suggests armies, generals in the field, invasion of barbarian territory, fighting at the borders and confronting corruption in the service of the King. It is an ordeal that involves facing angry old ghosts, a challenge you must confront. It evokes the danger of death, harvest and marriages, the autumn River-Mountain Festivals, Dui, the Joyous Dancer, Kun, the Dark Animal Goddess and the Queen Mother of the West, guardian of the souls and spirits.

9:10 Pair Position: This is the *Transition or Liminal Zone*, a passage between stages that opens the world of the ghosts and spirits. It is a place where identity dissolves and is re-formed, an underworld journey through the death realms. It is associated with Winter, the North and the Mountain, Qian, the Dragon, Kan, the Ghost River, and Gen, the Sacrificer. It evokes black waters, midnight, heavy labor and lonely striving. As a connection between Heaven, Earth and the Underworld Waters, it also projects the presence of Yu the Great, the shaman and culture founder.

### **What the Decades Can Show**

The Decades illuminate an important aspect of organization within the overall Matrix of Change. The numerical location of a Pair in the Sequence locates it in a specific Decade, while its relative Pair Position within the system of a Decade locates it in a particular stage of transformation. The Internal Matrix of the Pair connects other particular sites with the development of its central theme, acting as a social or cultural analysis of the key events underlying and influencing a given moment.

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These connections can be seen as a series of what I call *Karmic Nodes* that relate the central theme of a hexagram to an individual's life. We can look at the ages and events these suggest for relevant personal experiences and connections to past and future. These are themes from one's life that are interwoven in the situation. In my personal experience of using Change, these Karmic Nodes can point at past and future events influencing the Moment (*shì*) of the divination. They turn the traditional age-grade system into a true Bardo Explorer, pointing at past and hidden inspiration with an uncanny accuracy.

### **Secondary Zones of Radical Transformation**

The final link in the Matrix weaves the transformative potential of the Primary Sites of Transformation and the Decades into the Matrix through 12 irregular Rotational Pairs.

A normal Rotational Pair generates a regular set of other paired Figures, or Crossline Omens, across its Internal Matrix. However, there is a notable exception to this rule: sometimes two interconnected lines of a Rotational Pair change to produce the *same hexagram*; and when they do the hexagram they produce is *always* one of the 8 Symmetrical Figures, the Primary Sites of Radical Transformation (Figures 1:2, 27:28, 29:30 and 61:62).

This represents a significant irregularity in the normal process of change (*hua*), a place where transformation (*bian*) is possible because the material in question is pulled back through a Primary Site of Radical Transformation. These irregularities function as gates of creative discontinuity: they show us when a radical change of state is possible at various stages of our lives.

### **Location of Transformational Zones**

Secondary Zones of Transformation like this are distributed at pivotal points throughout the Matrix, showing the potential for radical change within a given situation. They are expressed as a discontinuity at the *limits* (lines 1:6), the *centers* (lines 2:5) or the *thresholds* (lines 3:4) of a Pair. They are woven into the sequence of 32 Pairs and the stages of our lives at the Pairs 7:8,

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9:10, 13:14, 15:16, 21:22, 23:24, 31:32, 41:42, 43:44, 47:48, 55:56 and 59:60, clustering around times of intense personal change. When a reading includes any of these, it points at a place where we can effect a real transformation by sacrificing our old ways and participating in the Way of Change.

### **The Offering and the Blessing**

The great depth psychologist C. G. Jung felt that the Way of Change was our mirror. It puts us in contact with the mythic significance of a moment or situation, helping us to see deeper into its transformative potential, its power to help us realize ourselves and thus change the world we live in. It reflects the way our unconscious continually creates new meaning that helps us to become the person we were meant to be.

If all this has a purpose, I think it might be best expressed in a key word that runs like a thread through the texts of Change.

**Fu, connect**, shows the claws of the bird spirit or ancestor holding its young or its prey. With the root “person” the term means to capture prisoners, take spoils, sacrifice to the ancestors and suggests the punishment and sacrifice of the Old King. With the root “one, the One” it describes an accord between inner and outer: sincere, truthful, reliable, verified; have confidence; linked to and carried by the spirits; the sheen of jade; hatch, incubate, a sprout in the womb. A shaman would extend it to other members of the family: *Fu*, return, with the root “heart:” a return to the origin, the incessant return of life, renewal and rebirth; and *Fu*, blessing, with the root “celestial omen:” a ritual offering of food and wine and the blessings it calls down from heaven; protection and celestial favor, a hidden safe place.

When we consider Change and the hearts of those who made it, we might not be too far off if we see those old diviners, magicians and sages offering us their blessings, we who are helping to restore the magical world they lived in. The last Symmetrical Pair in Change, 61:62 The Opened Heart and the Flying Bird, describes a place where the events of life can be seen through, back across the threshold of life and death to the source of all. This, I would suggest, is the imaginal place from which they launched their vehicle of transformation. Wan Fu! they might say to those who read this – may you know Ten Thousand Blessings!



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### **The Limping God**

A final picture emerges here, the figure of Yu the Great, the Limping Shaman who strides across the gap between life and death, one foot in each world. He walks backwards and forwards through time, spreading the word of the great enterprise of transformation, the tutelary spirit of all diviners and culture founder par excellence. Yu the Great is at once shaman and Noble Son, the “child of the chief”. A Wu, a warrior and a metal magician, he created the Ding Vessels and gave people writing. An orphaned son born by a miracle from his father’s belly, Yu carried on and redeemed the work of his disgraced and executed father, saving the world from the flood. He opened the Water Ways and, as a later king remarked, “Without Yu we would all be fishes!”

In the past, when the Hsia were first distinguished by Sky for their Power and Virtue, the Distant Regions gave their Symbols (*xiang*) and the Nine Shepherds sent the Metals of their Provinces. Yu the Great cast the Ding-vessels with these symbols and gave instructions on how to use them, so the people would know the Helping and the Harming spirits. Thus when the people went on rivers, entered marshes, or traveled in mountain and forest they were never attacked by malign beings, for no demon could come near them. A harmony was made between the Above and the Below and all enjoyed the Blessing of Sky. The Ghost River flowed peacefully. People had images of the monsters and no longer suffered from the stormy waves.

Yu the Great haunts the Classic of Change, as do the great Ding-Vessels he created. He is the Intermediary and hero who connects us to the Golden Age of good rulers and lets us discriminate among the ghosts and spirits. In the texts of Change, this is the man in the middle who walks through the texts of the hexagrams, one foot in each world, a noble and a peasant, a shaman and a sage, a spirit and a human, continually suffering in his person the great change of the time.