

CHAPTER X

On The Use of Yang Lines

用九，見羣龍无首，吉。

USE OF YANG LINES:

A HOST OF DRAGONS APPEARING WITHOUT
EXPOSING THEIR HEADS.

THERE WILL BE GOOD FORTUNE.

象曰：用九，天德不可爲首也。

LESSER SYMBOLISM: "USE OF YANG LINES".








SPIRIT WITH ITS ATTRIBUTES CANNOT REVEAL
ITSELF AS THE GODHEAD (THE FIRST CAUSE).

The texts of the Ch'ien and K'un hexagrams have each an extra paragraph by the Duke of Chou, the former dealing with the use of Yang lines (or the number Nine) and the latter with the use of Yin lines (or the number Six). These are followed by two extra paragraphs in Lesser Symbolisms by Confucius explaining what the Duke meant. There are at least four different interpretations of the meaning of these four extra paragraphs.

First Interpretation

According to Lai Chih-teh (來之德) and Liu Yuan (劉沅), they are integral parts of the Yaotz'us and the Lesser Symbolisms concerning the topmost lines of the first two hexagrams, and embody the advice given by the Duke of Chou to those who find themselves in the extreme positions indicated by those two lines. In the Ch'ien hexagram, the six Yang lines are understood as representing a host of dragons. Now a dragon is a Yang creature and his head is the Yang portion of his body. The topmost line of a hexagram represents the head, while the lowest line represents

the tail. **Therefore**, when it is said that the host of dragons should appear **without** exposing their heads, it means that the topmost line of Ch'ien **should** not appear as a Yang line. As intimated in the preceding commentary on Line 6, it should either conceal itself, through transposition, in the humble correlative position 3 of K'un, or transform itself into Yin so as to become submissive and acquiescent instead of assuming a *head-strong*, positive attitude which is usually so **disastrous** to anyone occupying an extreme position. The reason is that even Spirit, with all its divine attributes, does not reveal itself at the head of all things. It follows that no human being who wishes to live in harmony with the law of Spirit should make a show of himself at the head of things.

The correctness of this interpretation is attested by the nature of the analogies and correspondences of the six lines of Ch'ien. It will be recalled that in the five hexagrams which correspond to the first five lines of Ch'ien, namely, Fu 復 , Shih 師 , Ts'ien 謙 , Yü 豫 , and Pi 比 , the Yang line is concealed in the midst of the Yin lines, it does not show itself at the top of the figure. This is one of the reasons why all the five hexagrams in question indicate "good fortune". To be precise, the following lines are particularly auspicious: Line 1 of Fu, Line 2 of Shih, Line 3 of Ts'ien , Line 4 of Yü, and Line 5 of Pi,—*i.e.*, all the Yang lines in those hexagrams. As regards the Po hexagram 剝  which corresponds to the topmost line of Ch'ien, we see at once that a Yang line is exposed at the top of the figure, thus suggesting the idea of a dragon exposing its head or of a headstrong man making his appearance **at** the head of things. The situation is not only inauspicious but actually disastrous, for Line 6 of Po indicates that "the house of the inferior man is overthrown" (小人剝廬), although "a superior man may receive a carriage" (君子得輿).

Second Interpretation

The second interpretation is given by Chu Hsi (朱熹) and those

authorities quoted in the *Chou I Che Chung* (周易折中) and the *Tu I Hui T'ung* (讀易會通). According to their views, the extra paragraphs of the Ch'ien and K'un hexagrams embody the principle of divination, as has been described in the Introduction. It may be recalled here that, when the balance of the stalks, left over after their correct manipulation, is divided by four, the quotient is always one of four numbers: 6, 7, 8 and 9. Since 7 and 9 are Yang numbers and 6 and 8 are Yin, a Yang line is drawn when the quotient is either 7 or 9, and a Yin line is drawn when the quotient is either 6 or 8. But a special mark is attached to the Yang line whenever the quotient is 9, and another to the Yin line whenever the quotient is 6. The 9 and the 6 are the "old Yang" and "old Yin" respectively and must be used in divination as the very symbols indicating the prognosis in question. The rule is that, when the whole hexagram is formed as a result of the divination process, all the old-Yang and old-Yin lines (if any) must be transformed into their polar opposites to form a new hexagram. We have thus an original hexagram (Pen Kua 本卦) and a transformed hexagram (Chih Kua 之卦). Now which hexagram is to be considered and which paragraph read as the response to the particular divination depends upon the transformation of the lines or the absence of such transformation. For the adequate understanding of the extra paragraph in question, three instances are sufficient. First, when there is no transformation at all in the established hexagram, the T'uan of the hexagram (*i.e.*, the explanatory paragraph by King Wen) is to be considered and interpreted as the given prognosis. Secondly, if only one line in the hexagram is to be transformed, then that particular line is to be regarded as representing the situation of the consulting party, and the Yaotz'u of that line should be considered as the required instruction for his guidance. Thirdly, if all the lines of the hexagram are to be transformed, then the T'uan of the *transformed hexagram* is to be considered and interpreted as the prognosis. In regard to this third instance, an exception is made in the case of the first two hexagrams, Ch'ien and K'un. The exception is this: if the Ch'ien hexagram is obtained in divination, and if all the six lines happen to be old - Yang lines (all represented by 9) which must be transformed, then it is not the T'uan of the transformed hexagram (*i.e.*, the K'un hexagram) but this extra paragraph of Ch'ien

that is to be considered and interpreted for the necessary instructions. The same applies to the K'un hexagram. If all the lines of this hexagram are to be transformed, its seventh extra paragraph by the Duke of Chou is to be considered as the correct response.

It seems that this exception to the general principle of divination was duly recognized in the ancient commentaries on the *I-Ching*, because a passage from one of them was quoted by Ts'ai Mo (蔡墨) in the 29th year of Chao Kung of Lu (recorded in the *Tso Chuan*, i.e., Tso Ch'iu Ming's Commentary on Confucius's *Spring and Autumn Annals*), (左傳昭公二十九年，蔡墨曰，周易有之，在乾之始曰，潛龍勿用……其坤曰，見羣龍无首，吉)， and this quotation of Ts'ai Mo was accepted and followed by Chu Hsi and his contemporaries. The reason for this exception as given by many scholars is that the Ch'ien and K'un hexagrams represent Spirit and Earth, and that it is not natural for the consulting party who obtains the Spirit-symbol of six old-Yang lines to disregard it entirely and consider only the T'uan of the Earth-symbol. Therefore, to meet such an unusual case, a special paragraph is introduced into the Ch'ien hexagram to serve as a substitute for the T'uan of K'un, while another is introduced into K'un for the same purpose.

Now, supposing this second interpretation to be the correct one as originally meant and intended by the Duke of Chou, what does such a pictorial idea as "a host of dragons appearing without heads" signify to the consulting party in the divination? According to Chu Hsi, the transformation of the six Yang lines into Yin means the conversion of a strong and assertive attitude into one of tenderness and pliability. Such a change is symbolized by the host of dragons who withhold the expression of their masculine powers by concealing their heads in the clouds. To the consulting party it means that he should moderate his temperament or his mode of life by changing his headstrong and assertive attitude into one of tenderness and acquiescence and that good fortune will result from such a change.

The treatment of this special paragraph as a response to divination applicable only to the Ch'ien hexagram has been severely criticized by

other authorities on the *I-Ching*, according to whom the consulting party who obtains the Ch'ien hexagram of all old-Yang lines should study, not this special paragraph, but the T'uantz'us of both the Ch'ien and K'un hexagrams, for the required instruction and guidance. This means that the same couple of T'uantz'us are to be studied no matter whether the hexagram obtained is Ch'ien or K'un provided all the lines are to be transformed. But there is a marked difference in meaning between the two cases, and it is to explain this that the two extra paragraphs are introduced into the text. The difference is this: the transformation of Ch'ien into K'un signifies that Yang is rooted in Yin (自乾而坤，則陽而根陰之義也), and that the strong subject of Ch'ien, while preserving his positive and assertive character, should at the same time be capable of softness and passive acquiescence (六爻皆變，剛而能柔). On the other hand, the transformation of K'un into Ch'ien means that the weak subject of K'un, while retaining his soft and acquiescent nature, should at the same time be capable of positive assertion and creative activity (自坤而乾，則順而體健之義也). The significance of the former transformation is borne out by the host of dragons rooting themselves in Yin by appearing without exposing their heads (*i.e.*, the Yang portions of their bodies), while that of the latter transformation is expressed by the extra paragraph of K'un which advises the consulting party to "perpetuate his correctness-firmness" and attain his goal by tempering his passive and acquiescent nature with some suitable creative activity. (永守其貞，而以大終，順而體健故也).¹

Third Interpretation

The third interpretation is set forth by Jen Ch'i-yun (任啓運) in his commentary on the *I-Ching* called *Chou I Hsi Hsin* (周易洗心). According to his interpretation, this extra paragraph explains the general rule for the determination of the ruling line or the "lord" of a hexagram. The subject of ruling lines has been dwelt upon in the commentary on the Yao-tz'u of Line 5. In connection with this special paragraph, the ruling line of a hexagram is either Yang or Yin according as the trigram to which

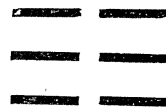
1 周易折中：羣龍雖現而不現其首，陽而根陰故也，永守其貞，而以大中，順而體健故也。

it belongs is derived by the "use of nine" (*i.e.*, the application or appeal of K'un to Ch'ien for a Yang line) or by the "use of six" (the application or appeal of Ch'ien to K'un for a Yin line). The meaning of this will be clearly understood when we bear in mind the fact that the Ch'ien and K'un trigrams are generally regarded as the parent trigrams, while the remaining six trigrams are considered as their "six children" (乾坤六子). Just as Creation depends upon the interaction and co-operation of the Masculine and Feminine Principles, just as child-birth presupposes the interrelationship of father and mother, so the "six children" of Ch'ien and K'un are the outcome of the interaction of the two parent trigrams. Thus the Chen, K'an and Ken trigrams (☳, ☵ and ☷), which consist of one Yang and two Yin lines, are produced by the "use of nines", *i.e.*, by the appeal of K'un to Ch'ien for Yang lines and the consequent employment of those Yang lines in the three positions of K'un (震坎艮皆乾元用其九於坤). This can be illustrated as follows:—

CH' IEN TRIGRAM



K'UN TRIGRAM



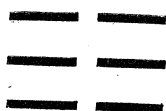
Use of 1st Nine, *i.e.*, employment of 1st Yang line of Ch'ien in 1st position of K'un: ☳ → ☳ = ☳ Chen (震), eldest son (長男).

Use of 2nd Nine, *i.e.*, employment of 2nd Yang line of Ch'ien in 2nd position of K'un: ☳ → ☵ = ☵ K'an (坎), second son (中男).

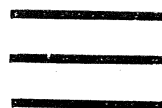
Use of 3rd Nine, *i.e.*, employment of 3rd Yang line of Ch'ien in 3rd position of K'un: ☳ → ☷ = ☷ Ken (艮), youngest son (少男).

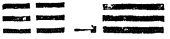
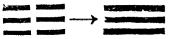
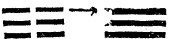
Similarly the Sun, Li and Tui trigrams (☱, ☲ and ☴), which consist of one Yin and two Yang lines, are produced by the "use of sixes", *i.e.*, by the appeal of Ch'ien to K'un for Yin lines and the consequent employment of those Yin lines in the three positions of Ch'ien (巽離兌皆坤用其六于乾) thus:




K'UN



CH' IEN



Use of 1st Six:  Sun 巽, eldest daughter (長女).
 Use of 2nd Six:  Li 離, second daughter (中女).
 Use of 3rd Six:  Tui 兌, youngest daughter (少女).

In the course of our study of the *I-Ching*, we shall frequently find trigrams representing sons or daughters of the three orders. Thus the Hsien hexagram 咸 , which signifies mutual attraction or mutual influence, consists of the Ken and Tui trigrams ( & ) representing “the youngest son” and “the youngest daughter” respectively. This shows that the “Nines” used by Ch’ien and the “Sixes” used by K’un upon each other for the production of the six children-trigrams are diffused among various hexagrams of the *I-Ching*, and, wherever they appear, they are generally recognized as the lords of the respective hexagrams. Since Yang is the Creative and Yin the Receptive, the use of Nine generally denotes positive activity, while the use of Six denotes negative passivity. Hence, in studying any hexagram it is essential first of all to consider the ruling lines, then find out whether they are both Yang or both Yin lines, or one Yang and one Yin, and then ascertain whether they harmoniously respond to each other as correlatives or conflict with each other as antagonists. The totality of these Yang ruling lines scattered throughout the sixty-four hexagrams is, according to Jen Ch’i-yun, metaphorically called “the host of dragons”.

Now, why is it that the host of dragons must appear *without exposing their heads*? Because the Chief Trigram, the Master-Symbol, Ch’ien, which is the source of all the Yang ruling lines, conceals or loses its own identity as soon as those Yang lines emanating from it merge into K’un to form separate trigrams, just as the identity of the father, who is in reality the “cause” of his son, is concealed in the son who grows up as an entirely new creative individuality, essentially unique and independent of the father. A most interesting illustration of this truth is furnished by chemistry in the remarkable fact that when elements unite to form compounds, they completely lose their identity. An excellent example of this is found in common salt, which contains sodium (a soft, silvery metal that liberates hydrogen from water) and chlorine (a greenish-yellow,

poisonous gas). In a chemical union, however, these elements form salt, a white compound which is agreeable to the taste. The mystery is that, having united to form salt, the two elements completely lose their identity and cannot by any means be distinguished. This applies not only to trigrams, children and chemical compounds, but also to World-Creation at large. When Spirit as the Efficient Cause of all things permeates Nature, different realms of living things appear in their developed forms. Everywhere signs of spiritual penetration are perceptible but the Efficient Cause itself cannot by any means be distinguished (无首者，首即元也，乾坤各有四德，而乾資始，主元亨，乾既用其九，則已之于亨，而元不可見矣，故无首).

In accordance with this fact, the spiritual man devotes himself to the culture and nourishment of his inner Being which is not apparent to the senses. Although he expresses this inner Being in creative activities of all kinds, yet he ever maintains an attitude of absolute detachment, standing aloof from his creations just as Absolute Reality transcends Creation in spite of its being the very cause of it. Being always himself, alone with "the Alone", he is absolutely free, effortlessly and spontaneously responding to external events without ever identifying or entangling himself with them. Thus, it is recorded in the Confucian Analects that "there were four things from which the Master was entirely free. He had no foregone conclusions, no arbitrary predeterminations, no obstinacy, and no egoism" (子絕四，毋意、毋必、毋固、毋我). This signifies that the perfect sage is one with "Spirit" in his spontaneity. He may have led the whole world "from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality", yet he conceals his Spiritual Self and quietly and unostentatiously lives on as if he has accomplished nothing and is entirely "non-acting" (順乎物而已不與，即至功冒天下，澤被生民，而斂却神功，寂若無爲，庶可語于羣龍之無首矣). Such, indeed, is the complete man—the spiritual dragon who appears without exposing his head!

Fourth Interpretation

We have now come to the last of the four interpretations which is,

perhaps, the most philosophical of them all, and which exhibits a distinct congruency between the ideas of the extra paragraph of the Ch'ien hexagram and those embodied in the following two corresponding passages from the Wen Yen Treatise:

(1) "The use of Nines (*i.e.*, Yang lines) by Ch'ien Yuan indicates there will be perfect order on Earth" (乾元用九，天下治也).

(2) "The use of Nines by Ch'ien Yuan reveals the mode of operation of the Law of Spirit" (乾元用九，乃見天則).

The Absolute

The gist of this fourth interpretation is found in Yao P'ei-chung's Commentary on the *I-Ching* (姚配中周易姚氏學).

According to Yao, there is first of all an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable Principle, on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and cannot be expressed by any human skill. It is beyond the range and reach of thought, ——"unthinkable and unspeakable" (不可思議).

This Principle is the One Absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned Being. This Infinite and Eternal Cause is the Rootless Root of "all that was, is, or ever shall be". It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is "Be-ness" rather than Being, and is beyond all thought or speculation.

This One Absolute Reality is called, in the *I-Ching*, *T'ai Chi* (太極), *i.e.*, The Supreme Ultimate. It is symbolized by an unbroken circle ○ —a forcibly limited symbol, in view of the limitation of the human mind. It is symbolized also as consisting of two aspects, namely, Yang or the Masculine Aspect and Yin or the Feminine Aspect. Thus it is written in the *Great Treatise*, "In the *I* there is the Supreme Ultimate, from which are derived the two primary forces" (易有太極，是生兩儀).¹

¹ Section I, Chapter XI, Paragraph 70.

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