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Cheng Yi's Ambiguous Influence on the Wilhelm/Baynes *I Ching*

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Abstract: Richard Wilhelm's 1924 German commentary on the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching* or *Yijing*), translated into English by Cary Baynes in 1950, claims that it is simply a summary of what has already been said by Chinese philosophers of the past. In fact, Wilhelm's own thematic interests often take him far afield from this tradition, and these interests shape both his commentary and his translation of the Chinese text. Wilhelm's primary Chinese source is the Song-dynasty philosopher Cheng Yi, presented as part of the eighteenth-century compilation known as the *Zhouyi zhezhong*. Cheng Yi provides Wilhelm with the subject of the *Book of Changes*: the relationships of superior and inferior people, and the laws by which their fortunes rise and fall. But Wilhelm is less interested in Cheng Yi's account of the inherently oppositional relationship between these people, or Cheng Yi's treatment of *yin* and *yang* as morally neutral forces, each capable of bringing good or bad fortune when improperly situated. If we examine Wilhelm's explicit references to Cheng Yi's commentary, we can see his own interests developing: in the self-sufficient, spiritual nature of *yang*, and in the redemptive care that *yang* shows for *yin*. At the same time, by presenting Cheng Yi's interpretations unaltered side-by-side with his own, Wilhelm makes Cheng Yi's perspective an essential part of the collage that constitutes his work.

Keywords: *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*); Richard Wilhelm; Cheng Yi; yinyang philosophy; comparative commentary

Richard Wilhelm makes no claim to originality in his commentary on the *Book of Changes* or *I Ching* 易經, published in 1924 as *I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen*. He refers to his work simply as a summary of what the philosophers of China have already said. Preeminent among these philosophers is the Song-dynasty Confucian Cheng Yi 程頤 (1,033–1,107), whose commentary "largely shaped" later versions of the

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Book of Changes, first in China and later throughout the world.[1] Although Wilhelm's commentary reflects the influence of Cheng Yi, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the two. More often than not, Wilhelm draws attention to Cheng Yi's commentary when he wants to contrast it with his own interpretation. These moments of contrast, each minor in itself, together sketch the outlines of Wilhelm's own systematic interpretation of the *Book of Changes*. An analysis of Wilhelm's references to Cheng Yi's commentary will reveal Wilhelm to be more of a collage artist than a summarizer, as he sets his own interpretations side-by-side with various Chinese commentators while generally camouflaging their source.

1 Introduction: The *Zhouyi zhezhong* 周易折中 and Chengzi 程子

Two passages in Wilhelm's commentary give a clear, if somewhat misleading, account of how his commentary relates to his Chinese sources. One of them occurs in the introduction to the second of the three books that constitute Wilhelm's commentary, where he explains what he has accomplished in Book I: "What our commentary offers is a summary of what has been said and thought in connection with the hexagrams and the lines in the course of many centuries by China's most distinguished philosophers" (Wilhelm [1924] 1967, 255). I here quote Wilhelm's commentary in the English translation that popularized it around the world, made by Cary Baynes and first published in 1950 as *The I Ching or Book of Changes*. Earlier, in Book I, Wilhelm identifies the source of this summary: "A very good edition was arranged in the K'ang-hsi [Kangxi 康熙] period, under the title *Chou I Chê Chung* [*Zhouyi zhezhong*]; it presents the text and the wings separately and includes the best commentaries of all periods. This is the edition on which the present translation is based" (lxi). If we approach Wilhelm's commentary with these two passages in mind, we should expect to find in it a capsule presentation of the many Chinese commentaries collected in the *Zhouyi zhezhong*.

Wilhelm could easily have been describing the *Zhouyi zhezhong* when he refers to his commentary as "a summary of what has been said" about the *Book of Changes* "by China's most distinguished philosophers." Assembled in 1715 by Li Guangdi 李光地 (1,642–1718), the grand secretary of the Kangxi emperor, the *Zhouyi zhezhong* divides its commentary on each passage from the *Book of Changes*

1 The claim that Cheng Yi, together with Zhu Xi, "largely shaped" modern readings of the *Book of Changes* is Richard John Lynn's, in Wang Bi, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 6.

into four sections.[2] First, it presents the brief comments of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1,130–1,200), taken from *Zhouyi benyi* 周易本義 (The Original Meaning of the *Yijing*). These are followed by the much longer commentary of Cheng Yi, taken from *Yichuan yizhuan* 伊川易傳 (The Yi River Commentary on the *Book of Changes*). Third, Li provides a selection of brief comments from other writers on the *Book of Changes*. And finally, he provides his own comments, often singling out what he takes to be the best of the interpretations offered by the previous commentaries. Cheng Yi's comments are the backbone of the *Zhouyi zhezhong*, eclipsing the others in length and complexity. For a given line in the *Book of Changes*, the commentary of Cheng Yi is often greater in length than the other three sections of commentary put together. Li also regularly omits one or more of the other three parts. And often the other commentators, especially Zhu Xi, adopt Cheng Yi's interpretation. As a result, the *Zhouyi zhezhong* may be understood as an extensively annotated edition of Cheng Yi's commentary.

Before we look at the influence of Cheng Yi's commentary on Wilhelm's interpretation of the *Book of Changes*, we should note the embarrassing fact that Wilhelm does not attribute the commentary to Cheng Yi. He has somehow gotten the idea that it was written by Cheng Yi's elder brother Cheng Hao 程顥 (1,032–1,085). As Wilhelm says in the introduction to Book I: "in the Sung [*Song* 宋] period, the *I Ching* was used as a basis for the *T'ai chi t'u* [*taiji tu* 太極圖] doctrine — which was probably not of Chinese origin — until the appearance of the elder Ch'êng Tzū's [Chengzi's] very good commentary" (Wilhelm 1967, lx). Baynes obligingly adds a note at the bottom of the page to clarify who this elder Cheng brother is: "Ch'êng Hao, A.D. 1,032–1,085." In the remainder of the work, Wilhelm follows the *Zhouyi zhezhong* in referring to the author only as Chengzi, a respectful mode of reference that could refer to either or both of the Cheng brothers. But there is no indication that he ever identifies Chengzi with the younger Cheng brother, that is, with Cheng Yi.

The *Zhouyi zhezhong* by itself would not have helped Wilhelm to realize his mistake. It never uses the name Cheng Yi, referring to the author only as "Chengzi" and to the text as "the Cheng commentary 程傳." Li Guangdi may even have led Wilhelm astray with a line from his introduction to the *Zhouyi zhezhong*. The line says, "first came Cheng and afterward Zhu 先程後朱," meaning that Cheng Yi preceded Zhu Xi in both time and authority. If Wilhelm misread this line as saying that "there was the elder Cheng and afterward Zhu," he would understand the older brother, Cheng Hao, to be the author of "the Cheng commentary." Or he may simply have misremembered which was the elder brother while writing the introduction.

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2 On Li Guangdi and the *Zhouyi zhezhong*, see Richard J. Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The* Yijing *(I Ching, or Classic of Changes) and Its Evolution in China* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 177–79.

This mistake, amounting to a single word, was then magnified by the note referring to Cheng Hao in the Baynes translation, and repeated again when Chengzi was identified as Cheng Hao in the index added to the third edition of Baynes's translation (732).

After his mistaken identification of Chengzi in the introduction to Book I, Wilhelm refers to Chengzi by name three additional times in his commentary. The first of these acknowledges him not as an interpreter but as an editor, noting that he was responsible for reordering the text of the ancient commentary known as "The Great Treatise 大傳." Wilhelm says that traditionally the beginning of the Great Treatise's ninth chapter "comes just before chapter x. It was transposed to its present position by Ch'êng Tzu in the Sung period and joined with the section that follows, which originally came after Section 3" (308).[3] One might expect Wilhelm's other references to give Chengzi similar credit either as an interpreter or an editor. But in fact, Wilhelm provides only one other such citation of Cheng Yi's commentary. In a case where the reader might not understand or agree with Wilhelm's privileging of a certain hexagram line as the so-called "ruler 主" of the hexagram, he provides a note saying that the same step is taken explicitly "in the text of the commentary" (Wilhelm 1967, 390). Because the reader might mistakenly assume that Wilhelm is referring to one of the ancient commentaries on the *Book of Changes*, such as the "Commentary on the Decision 彖," Baynes adds: "The reference here is not to the Commentary on the Decision but to another commentary not presented in Wilhelm's translation." Like Wilhelm, Baynes does not name the title or author of this commentary, but in the *Zhouyi zhezhong*, only Cheng Yi provides the support Wilhelm is relying on here. Baynes may not have been aware of Wilhelm's source, but he is clearly using Cheng Yi's commentary without mentioning it by name.

Wilhelm's remaining references to Cheng Yi's commentary, whether crediting it explicitly to Chengzi or describing it as "another interpretation" or "another translation," present it as an alternative to Wilhelm's own position. Although Wilhelm derives from Cheng Yi his understanding of the *Book of Changes* as largely about the interaction of the "superior man 君子" and the "inferior man 小人," Wilhelm's thematic interests lead him away from Cheng Yi at important points. Namely, whereas Cheng Yi stresses the forming of factions by superior and inferior people to remove each other from positions in government, Wilhelm stresses the need for them to be friendly to each other. Where Cheng Yi makes no metaphysical distinction between superior and inferior people, Wilhelm regards the superior as belonging to a higher world, while the inferior remains mired in the world of the senses. To see how these differences shape Wilhelm's treatment of Cheng Yi's commentary, we will

3 On this reorganization of the text, see Lynn's comments in Wang Bi, *The Classic of Changes*, 71–72, nn. 33 and 37.

proceed step-by-step through his references to Chengzi, beginning with the two remaining citations of Chengzi by name, then proceeding through his references to "another interpretation" or "another translation," and finally considering important points at which Wilhelm departs from Cheng Yi without mentioning him at all. The following sections do not aim to provide the philosophy of Wilhelm's commentary independent of his conflicted relationship with Cheng Yi. Instead, they will reveal those aspects of Wilhelm's philosophy that motivate him to distance himself from Cheng Yi, and often from the entire Chinese commentary tradition represented by the *Zhouyi zhezhong*.

2 Literalism (Hexagram 63)

Of Wilhelm's final two references to Chengzi by name, one can be mentioned briefly as it does not reflect any major thematic difference between them. The reference occurs in Wilhelm's commentary on the fourth line of Hexagram 63, and it concerns whether one should take the character *xu* 繻 in the line statement literally as referring to "silk" or "fine clothes." Wilhelm chooses to read the character literally, and so he translates the part of the line statement in which it occurs as: "The finest clothes turn to rags 繻有衣袽." Wilhelm interprets: "This is a yielding line in a yielding place at the beginning of danger. Hence the warning that even the finest clothes turn to rags" (712). To understand what Wilhelm means by "a yielding line in a yielding place," we need some familiarity with the structure of the 64 hexagrams that constitute the *Book of Changes*. Each hexagram consists of six lines, each of which may be solid, symbolizing *yang* 陽, or broken, symbolizing *yin* 陰. Each of the six positions in the hexagram may also be either *yang* or *yin*. Here, the "yielding line in a yielding place" refers to a *yin* line in a *yin* position. According to Wilhelm, this doubling up of *yin* prompts the warning that "the finest clothes turn to rags" — that is, one's weakness can cause one to decay. But Wilhelm acknowledges that "Chêng Tzu gives another explanation. He employs the image of a boat, and says: 'It has a leak, but there are rags for plugging it up'" (712–13). In fact, Cheng Yi says that the character *xu* 繻 should be replaced by the character *ru* 濡, which means "wet" (Cheng 2019, 496). Then the line can be read as saying that there is a leak, but there are also rags to plug it up.

Wilhelm is not just departing from Cheng Yi in his reading of this line statement. None of the five other commentators on this line in the *Zhouyi zhezhong* takes Wilhelm's approach. Even James Legge, in his 1899 translation of the *Book of Changes*, renders this line as "rags provided against any leak (in his boat)" (Legge

[1899] 1963, 206).[4] So Wilhelm's choice here indicates an independence of thought on his part, as well as a literalist approach to the text. That is, Wilhelm prefers to follow what appears to be the literal meaning of the words, even when it violates a long and authoritative tradition of interpretation.[5] It is tempting to consider this preference as a holdover from a broadly Protestant approach to scriptural interpretation, suspicious of metaphorical or allegorical readings whose authority comes only from the past commentary tradition.

3 Friendliness (Hexagram 24, Hexagram 3)

Wilhelm's other reference to Chengzi by name reflects one of the thematic axioms of his commentary: that *yang* should adopt a friendly attitude toward *yin*. He puts the necessity for this attitude in moral terms. When *yin* "is activated and led" by *yang*, then "it is productive of good. Only when it abandons this position and tries to stand as an equal […] does it become evil" (Wilhelm 1967, 11). Unlike *yang*, which is essentially good, *yin* has a goodness that dissipates if it is left to its own devices. To prevent such moral degradation, *yang* must foster a guiding relationship with *yin* that takes the form of "friendliness" (*freundlichkeit*). This relationship allows *yin* to produce good rather than evil. *Yang* also serves its own interests in fostering such a relationship with *yin*, because cutting its ties would be "productive of evil to both" *yin* and *yang*. *Yang* would not become evil itself, but it would still suffer evil from outside, both because of the evil acts committed by *yin* and because it would not be able to rely on the assistance of *yin* in its own work.

The judgment of Hexagram 24 is a rare case where the word "friend" occurs in the *Book of Changes* itself. Namely, the judgment contains the line: "Friends come without blame 朋來無咎" (97). Each hexagram has such a judgment, which provides a brief statement concerning the overall structure of the hexagram. In the case of Hexagram 24, the structure consists of one *yang* line below five *yin* lines. To understand what the judgment is saying about this structure, the commentator must first answer the question: Who are these friends who come without blame?

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4 Legge may have gotten his reading from the *Zhouyi zhezhong*, which he employed in producing his translation, as Tze-ki Hon observes in "Constancy in Change: A Comparison of James Legge's and Richard Wilhelm's Interpretations of the *Yijing*," *Monumenta Serica* 53 (2005): 320.

5 For two apparent exceptions to this literalism, see Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 421 and 424. To understand why Cheng Yi is not a literalist, and why his interpretive practice more closely resembles the medieval European tradition that the Protestant Wilhelm has left behind, see L. Michael Harrington, "The Postulate of Clarification in Cheng Yi's Commentary on the *Book of Changes*," *Signs and Media* 1 (1): 102–6.

Wilhelm provides two possible answers to this question: "The friends who come are either the other *yang* lines about to enter the hexagram after this first line (according to Ch'êng T'zū), or the five *yin* lines, which meet the *yang* line cordially [*freundlich*]" (506).[6] Cheng Yi's position, accurately presented by Wilhelm, is that the "friends" referred to in the judgment are not lines in the current hexagram but lines that will occur in future hexagrams. Cheng Yi treats Hexagram 24 as belonging to a sequence of hexagrams known as the "ruling hexagrams 君卦" or "sovereign hexagrams 辟卦" (Nielsen 2003, 275–76). In this sequence, Hexagram 24 with its single *yang* line at the bottom will be followed by Hexagram 19, with two *yang* lines at the bottom, and so on until Hexagram 1, composed entirely of *yang* lines, is reached. When the judgment of Hexagram 24 says that "friends come," it is referring to the *yang* lines that will appear in these future hexagrams, as together they gradually expel the *yin* lines occupying the upper positions.

Cheng Yi does not, then, advise *yin* and *yang* to become friends here. He considers Hexagram 24 in the context of what Tze-ki Hon has called "the continuous tug-of-war between two groups of officials in the imperial court" (Hon 2005b, 124). This is the constant struggle between the superior people, those officials whose actions benefit the public good, and the inferior people, those officials whose actions benefit only themselves. Cheng Yi interprets the initial *yang* line as the reappearance of a superior person in public life. It cannot fulfill its task at first: "How could it be victorious from the start over small people? It must wait for friends of its own kind to become abundant step by step, and then they will be able to join forces and be victorious 豈能便勝於小人, 必待其朋類漸盛, 則能協力以勝之也" (Cheng 2019, 196). The superior people must form factions so that they can eventually drive the inferior people out of their positions in government.

Wilhelm does not treat the hexagrams as depicting "the shifting balance of power of good officials (*yang*) and bad officials (*yin*) in government," as Cheng Yi does (Hon 2005b, 124). Even in hexagrams belonging to the ruling hexagrams sequence where there is a clear conflict between *yang* and *yin*, Wilhelm says that the action of *yang* must be "based on a union of strength and friendliness [*freundlichkeit*]" (Wilhelm 1967, 167), and that "the inferior element is not overcome by violence but is kept under gentle control" (172). These cautionary pieces of advice for *yang* reflect Wilhelm's observation that if *yang* breaks with *yin*, then *yin* will become evil and harm *yang*. The reader unfamiliar with the *Zhouyi zhezhong* may assume that the two interpretations of the "friends" in Hexagram 24 are two Chinese positions, and that Wilhelm is simply providing a summary of them. Such an assumption is in line with Wilhelm's own description of his commentary. But in fact, none of the eight commentaries on the judgment of Hexagram 24 provided in the *Zhouyi zhezhong*

6 This occurrence of "Chengzi" does not appear in the book's index.

says that the friends are the five *yin* lines. Wilhelm presents Cheng Yi's position not so as to distinguish it from another Chinese position, but to distinguish the Chinese positions generally from his own position on how good can come from the relationship between *yin* and *yang*.

Concern for *yin-yang* friendliness also appears to motivate Wilhelm's interpretation of the relationship between the initial and second lines of Hexagram 3, which closely resembles Hexagram 24. In both hexagrams, the initial line is *yang* and the second line is *yin*. At issue is how one is to interpret the second line statement, which refers to a situation in which there are "wooing" (婚媾) and "a robber" (寇). Here, as in Hexagram 24, Wilhelm wishes to emphasize friendliness between the initial *yang* line and the second *yin* line. And so he silently adopts Zhu Xi's interpretation of "wooing" and "robber" from the *Zhouyi zhezhong*, according to which the initial line is not a robber but only wants to woo the second line (Zhu 2020, 77). Wilhelm translates this part of the line statement as follows: "He is not a robber; He wants to woo when the time comes 匪寇婚媾." His explanation is that the initial line "has no evil intentions but seeks to be friendly [freundliche Verbindung sucht] and to offer help" (Wilhelm 1967, 18). In giving advice to the initial line, he says: "To rule by serving is the secret of success. Thus this line is the efficient helper needed to overcome obstacles" (401). The *yang* line, in other words, will help the *yin* line to overcome the obstacle that it faces. Again, Wilhelm stresses the friendliness that enables *yin* and *yang* to work together, rather than treating *yang* as itself the obstacle to *yin*.

In a note, Wilhelm observes that "another translation is possible here, which would result in a different interpretation" (18). The translation and interpretation he goes on to present is in fact Cheng Yi's. According to this alternate interpretation of "wooing" and "a robber," the initial *yang* line of the hexagram is a robber, and the second line wishes to avoid it and be wooed by the fifth *yang* line, which is the line to which it straightforwardly corresponds.[7] In his note, Wilhelm provides a translation of the relevant lines that is consistent with this interpretation: "If the robber were not there, the wooer would come." That is, if the initial line were not there, then the fifth line would come. Both Zhu Xi and Cheng Yi expect the second line to be eventually wooed by the fifth line, and they regard this as a happy outcome, despite their disagreement about the intentions of the initial line. Wilhelm, in contrast, has little interest in the fifth line. Although he follows both Zhu Xi and Cheng Yi in setting the initial line aside, it is only so that the second line can free itself from entanglement. As Wilhelm puts it in Book I, when "unexpected relief is offered from a source unrelated

7 *Yang* and *yin* lines have a "straightforward correspondence 正應" when they occupy the same position in their respective trigrams. A line in the second position corresponds straightforwardly to a line in the fifth position, as both are in the central position of their respective trigrams.

to us, we must be careful and not take upon ourselves any obligations entailed by such help; otherwise our freedom of decision is impaired" (Wilhelm 1967, 18). The initial line is not so much preventing the second line from marrying the fifth as it is impinging on the second line's freedom of decision. We use that freedom of decision so that "we shall attain what we have hoped for."

That "what we have hoped for" is not a relationship of dependence on the fifth line becomes clear in Book III of Wilhelm's commentary. Here he adopts a satirical tone in considering the *yin* character of the second line as "weak" when it seeks to be wooed by the fifth line. He abandons the first-person plural that he used in Book I and refers to the line in the third person. Such a line "must fall back on outside help — 'If only something would come along and take care of me!'" (405) As we will see, Wilhelm's low estimation of dependent relationships is another persistent theme in his commentary. In the case of the second line in Hexagram 3, he prefers that it not behave "like a girl who finds a suitor to rescue her." In Book I, he provides advice in the first-person plural for "us," as to how we should use our "freedom of decision" to relate to the fifth line as "the friend intended for us." That is, the second line meets the fifth line not as its ruler or its suitor but as its friend.

4 Self-Reliance (Hexagram 27, Hexagram 40)

Wilhelm makes two further explicit references to Cheng Yi's commentary, now presented simply as "another interpretation" and not as the work of Chengzi. Both references are to an interpretation that conflicts with another of Wilhelm's thematic axioms: that the activity of *yang* is self-reliant. Unlike the weakness of *yin*, which depends on *yang* for its goodness, *yang* itself is essentially good and benefits only from friends who share this goodness.

The first of these references concerns the second line of Hexagram 27. As with the two hexagrams we have just examined, Hexagram 27 has a *yang* line in the initial position and a *yin* line in the second position above it. As with Hexagram 3, there is only one additional *yang* line in the hexagram. In Hexagram 3 it is in the fifth position; in Hexagram 27 it is in the top position. The line statement for the second *yin* line in Hexagram 27 contains an ambiguous character, *dian* 顛, which can be read either as "summit" or as "inverting." Wilhelm chooses to read it as "summit," and so he translates the part of the line statement in which it occurs as: "Turning to the summit for nourishment 顛頤" (109). Wilhelm is not getting this reading of the line statement from the *Zhouyi zhezhong*. The *Zhouyi zhezhong* provides five commentaries on this line, and none of them interpret the turning as being toward the "summit." Wilhelm takes this "summit" as identical with the "hill 丘" mentioned

later in the line statement: "deviating from the path to seek nourishment from the hill 拂經於丘頤."

With this translation, Wilhelm renders the second line statement as a description of a single action: "Turning to the summit for nourishment, deviating from the path to seek nourishment from the hill." Wilhelm understands this action as undertaken by someone who "accepts support as a favor from those in [a] higher place," and he criticizes it as a departure from the norm (109). As he puts it: "Normally a person either provides his own means of nourishment or is supported in a proper way by those whose duty and privilege it is to provide for him." To seek support from those in higher places is "shirking the proper way of obtaining a living" and is generally "owing to weakness of spirit." In the symbolic structure of the hexagram, to be supported "in a proper way" by those in a lower class is symbolized by seeking a relationship with the initial line instead of the top line. In Wilhelm's translation, the line statement does not criticize the relationship between the second and initial lines, and so he is free to describe this relationship as normal and proper.

Wilhelm acknowledges that not everyone translates the line statement as he does. He says: "Another interpretation reads: 'To seek to be provided with nourishment the other way round (by the nine at the beginning) or, leaving the path, to seek nourishment from the hill (the nine at the top) brings misfortune" (522). Wilhelm interprets the line statement as describing one blameworthy action: seeking nourishment from those above. The alternative interpretation, which is Cheng Yi's, followed by Zhu Xi, takes the line statement as describing two blameworthy actions.[8] The first is not "turning to the summit for nourishment," as Wilhelm would have it, but being "provided with nourishment the other way round." That is, the second line is blameworthy when it seeks nourishment from the initial *yang* line. For the *yin* second line to seek nourishment from the *yang* initial line is to look for sustenance from an inferior and so possibly to rebel against the ruler. Cheng Yi is clear that nourishment should come from those in higher positions: "Those below are always nourished by those above — this is the straightforward principle 皆以上養下理之正也" (Cheng 2019, 220). Ideally, a *yang* fifth line would provide the nourishment to the second line, as in Hexagram 3, but here the fifth line is *yin*, so the best choice for the second line is simply to wait until the situation improves.

A final reference to "another interpretation," which turns out to be from Cheng Yi's commentary, occurs in a similar context. The fourth line statement of Hexagram

8 For Cheng Yi's interpretation, see *The Yi River Commentary*, 220–21. For Zhu Xi's, see Paul-Louis-Félix Philastre, *Le Yi king* (Paris: Zulma, [1885-1893] 2006), 361–62: "Chercher à obtenir sa nourriture du premier trait serait subversif et contraire aux principes immuables et à la raison d'être des choses; chercher à l'obtenir du trait supérieur, sera entreprendre et rencontrer le malheur 求養於初, 則顛倒而違於常理; 求養於上, 則往而得兇." Joseph Adler mistranslates these lines in Zhu Xi, *The Original Meaning of the* Yijing, 151 in a way that makes Zhu Xi appear to be in agreement with Wilhelm.

40 reads, in Wilhelm's translation: "Deliver yourself from your great toe. Then the companion comes, and him you can trust 解而拇朋至斯孚" (Wilhelm 1967, 156). We earlier saw Wilhelm translate the character *peng* 朋 as "Freund," rendered by Baynes as "friend." Here he translates it as "Gefährte," rendered by Baynes as "companion." In the earlier case, Wilhelm interprets the arrival of friends as *yin* exhibiting "friendliness" toward *yang*, as he elsewhere speaks of *yang*'s friendliness toward *yin*. Here, however, Wilhelm is not speaking of an attitude of friendliness but of possessing a genuine friend, someone with whom one shares an "inner connection." Such a relationship is symbolized not by *yang* and *yin* but by two *yang* lines. As an inner connection is a special property of *yang* lines, two *yin* lines cannot possess it. The fourth line of Hexagram 40 is *yang*, and there is only one other *yang* line, the second line, so this must be its companion.

Wilhelm breaks with all the commentators in the *Zhouyi zhezhong* by identifying the "great toe" of the fourth line statement with the hexagram's third *yin* line. This *yin* line lies between the two *yang* lines, and so prevents them from joining forces. In Book I, he gives an evocative description of the problem here: "In times of standstill it will happen that inferior people attach themselves to a superior man, and through force of daily habit they may grow very close to him and become indispensable" (157). The action of these inferior people is no different from the second line of Hexagram 27 "turning to the summit for nourishment," showing their "weakness of spirit" in fawning on a superior person rather than taking care of themselves. They must eventually be refused, because they are preventing the *yang* line from joining up with its companion: "When the time of deliverance draws near, with its call to deeds, a man must free himself from such chance acquaintances with whom he has no inner connection. For otherwise the friends who share his views, on whom he could really rely and together with whom he could accomplish something, mistrust him and stay away."

Cheng Yi, too, says that worthy people will "retreat far away 遠退" when the fourth *yang* line is entangled with a *yin* line during the moment symbolized by Hexagram 40 (Cheng 2019, 325). But he identifies the problematic *yin* line, the "great toe," as the initial line rather than the third line. Wilhelm acknowledges: "According to another interpretation, the big toe from which one is to liberate oneself is the six at the beginning; with this line there is a relationship of correspondence from which one must free oneself." Wilhelm does not adopt this interpretation presumably because the initial *yin* line is not between the two *yang* lines and so does not pose a threat to them. When *yin* is not a threat, *yang* should treat it with friendliness and not sever its connection. The third *yin* line, by contrast, is actively preventing the two *yang* lines from accomplishing their task, and so even Wilhelm concedes that the fourth line must free itself from *yin* in this case.

Wilhelm nonetheless maintains his usual non-violent approach in the case of the *yang* lines removing the *yin* line that separates them. We can see this approach in how he interprets the line statement for the other *yang* line in the hexagram, the second line. Part of the second line statement reads: "One kills three foxes in the field and receives a yellow arrow." Wilhelm follows Cheng Yi in interpreting the three foxes as inferior people and the yellow arrow as referring to the virtues of "measure and mean 中" and "the straight course 正" (Wilhelm 1967, 155–56). But he differs from Cheng Yi on how the virtues are to be used. Cheng Yi says that one first expels the inferior people ("kills three foxes") and then puts the virtues into action ("receives a yellow arrow"). Wilhelm treats the virtues as themselves the weapons to be used against the inferior people: "The struggle must not be carried on with the wrong weapons. The yellow color points to measure and mean in proceeding against the enemy; the arrow signifies the straight course. If one devotes himself wholeheartedly to the task of deliverance, he develops so much inner strength from his rectitude [Kraft der inneren Geradheit] that it acts as a weapon against all that is false and low" (156). One's own inner strength is the weapon that is used against one's enemies, and so one does not achieve the counterproductive end of killing them, as would happen if the violence of conventional weapons were employed.

5 Inner Strength (Hexagram 19)

Having examined all of Wilhelm's explicit references to Cheng Yi's commentary, we can now consider the common theme that emerges through them. Namely, people symbolized by *yang* in Wilhelm's commentary possess something that makes them capable of both self-reliance and assisting the people symbolized by *yin*. This characteristic is so important to Wilhelm that in certain cases, he prefers to let it shape his interpretations even when the result conflicts with the interpretation of Cheng Yi and sometimes the entire Chinese commentary tradition. We have seen Wilhelm identify this characteristic in the *yang* lines of Hexagram 40 as "inner strength," a phrase he uses throughout his commentary. We have also seen its opposite, an "inner weakness [innere Schwäche]" translated by Baynes as "weakness of spirit," in the second line of Hexagram 27, which shamefully seeks its nourishment from someone in a higher position (109). The same weakness is possessed by the second *yin* line of Hexagram 3, which waits to be rescued by the fifth *yang* line. Hexagram 19 provides a good occasion to explore this theme of inner strength in Wilhelm, particularly because he here sets inner strength in a cosmic context. He describes the two *yang* lines at the bottom of Hexagram 19 explicitly as representing inner strength, and he pits them against what he calls the "universal law of fate."

Hexagram 19 follows Hexagram 24 in the sequence of the ruling or sovereign hexagrams, and so it has two *yang* lines at the bottom instead of just one. The line statements for both of these lines in Hexagram 19 contain the phrase *xianlin* 咸臨. The commentators of the *Zhouyi zhezhong* disagree about how the first character in this phrase, *xian* 咸, is to be interpreted. Zhu Xi reads it literally as meaning "joint," whereas Cheng Yi reads it as standing in for the similarly-formed *gan* 感 character, which means "stimulus."[9] In Book I, Wilhelm awkwardly collages the two positions. In his translation of the line statement, he adopts Zhu Xi's position: "Joint approach." But in his commentary, he adopts Cheng Yi's position, interpreting the line statement as meaning "the stimulus to approach." In Book III, Wilhelm explains this combination of readings by claiming that "the word joint also contains the idea of stimulus, influence" (Wilhelm 1967, 483). Because Wilhelm's commentary in Book I treats *xian* only as meaning "stimulus," why does he not simply translate it in the line statement as "stimulus" rather than "joint"? We may have here another instance of Wilhelm's literalism. The character *xian* does literally mean "joint," and Wilhelm prefers not to depart from the literal meaning of the text when possible (541).[10]

Having ironed out this kink in Wilhelm's text, and understanding that the *yang* lines receive a common stimulus, we can now examine the critical issue in interpreting them. The *Symbol* commentary on the second line reads, in Wilhelm's translation: "One need not yield to fate 未順命也" (483). That is, one need not yield to the stimulus mentioned in the line statements. Wilhelm's word "fate" is an attempt to capture the meaning of the *ming* 命 character as it is found in the phrase *tianming* 天命, which Cheng Yi identifies with the revolution of the seasons (Cheng 2019, 393). Wilhelm translates this phrase as "law of heaven" and identifies it with similar natural processes, such as the rising and setting of the sun, and the waxing and waning of the moon (Wilhelm 1967, 63–64). Both Wilhelm and Cheng Yi understand these cycles as also applying to human affairs. Cheng Yi says that the "principle of things" is that "those that occupy the top will necessarily fall," and Wilhelm says that the "universal law of fate" is that "a descent follows upon every rise" (Cheng 2019, 105; Wilhelm 1967, 80). The term *ming* can also refer to a command given by a human being, as when Cheng Yi identifies it with the "decrees 令" of the ruler, and this is how he reads it in Hexagram 19 (Cheng 2019, 460). The fifth line, the ruler, stimulates the first two *yang* lines by giving them a decree. When the *Symbol* commentary says that

9 On the difference between *xian* and *gan*, see Lynn's comments in Wang Bi, *The Classic of Changes*, 259, n. 8.

10 Wilhelm explains the *xian* character as meaning "objective relationships of a general kind." It thus literally means "joint," as referring to objective relationships, and also "influence," insofar as a relationship is itself a form of influence. But such an "unconscious and involuntary" influence, Wilhelm says, differs from that signified by the *gan* character, which refers to a "conscious and willed" influence.

one need not yield to this decree, it does not mean that the *yang* lines are resisting or rebelling against the ruler, but that their cooperation is rooted in something other than fear or faithfulness. As Cheng Yi puts it, when the second line "uses its growing virtue of firmness, and further, when it acquires centrality, then they [the second line and the ruler] affect each other in their extreme sincerity, not because it [the second line] has submitted to the mandate of those above 以剛德之長而又得中, 至誠相感, 非由順上之命也" (163). The lower *yang* lines work together with the higher line not out of mere obedience but because they possess a common virtue, the virtue of sincerity.

Wilhelm begins his interpretation in accord with Cheng Yi, saying that Hexagram 19 symbolizes a situation in which "the good begins to prevail and to find response in influential circles" (Wilhelm 1967, 80). Namely, *yang* is beginning to prevail in the form of the bottom two lines and is finding response in the fifth line. Both Wilhelm and Cheng Yi interpret the moment of the hexagram generally as an "upward trend" for *yang*. Having set the scene in a way that accords well with Cheng Yi, Wilhelm then proceeds to interpret the *yang* lines in terms of the opposition between inner strength and fate, a move that parallels nothing in Cheng Yi. Wilhelm notes that the "upward trend" belongs to the movement of fate. The second *yang* line is "well aware that everything earthly is transitory, and that a descent follows upon every rise, but need not be confused [irremachen] by this universal law of fate." Baynes's use of the word "confused" here to translate the German "irremachen" connects the second *yang* line of Hexagram 19 thematically to the initial *yang* line of Hexagram 24, which we have already examined. In Hexagram 24, Wilhelm describes the initial *yang* line as "one's inner light," which one sees by "turning away from the confusion [Verwirrung] of external things" (505). Though the German word is different, its meaning is the same as "irremachen" in Hexagram 19. Fate, as the sum of external things, has the ability to confuse or captivate us into identifying with it, but we can avoid this confusion by remaining focused on our inner source of light. In Hexagram 19, Wilhelm describes this focus as having "inner strength and consistency." He also gives the warning that "we must not let ourselves be carried away by the current of the time." It is the *yang* power inside us, our "inner strength," that allows us to avoid being carried away by fate, that is, by "the current of the time."

Not only do we have a power within us with which we can identify and so avoid being swept away by fate, but we can also use this power to stand outside of fate altogether. In Book III, Wilhelm makes this more radical claim about the two *yang* lines of Hexagram 19. Here, he reiterates the universal law of fate, as instantiated in this hexagram: "As the joint ascent of the two strong lines is grounded in fate, so fate may in time also bring regression" (483). But, Wilhelm adds, the *yang* lines have the ability to resist fate. Unfortunately, Baynes's translation makes Wilhelm's point

impossible to understand. Here is Baynes's translation of the relevant passage: "If — in accord with the nuclear trigram Chên [*zhen* 震] — an upward movement is initiated in time, this movement is strong enough to counteract fate, should the consequences of fate set in before these precautions are taken." The subject of this passage is a movement signified by the so-called "nuclear trigram," that is, the trigram composed of the second, third, and fourth lines. In Hexagram 19, this trigram consists of a *yang* line below two *yin* lines, which traditionally symbolizes a shaking movement. Baynes's translation incorrectly identifies this shaking movement with the "upward movement" grounded in fate. The original German text does not in fact say "upward," because the movement identified here is not the upward movement of fate but a movement meant to counteract it. Baynes's translation also gets the sequence of precautions and consequences wrong. Rather than Baynes's final clause — "should the consequences of fate set in before these precautions are taken" — the original German text says: "even though the consequences of fate would set in were these precautions not taken [wenn seine Folgen ohne diese Vorkehrungen einzutreten begännen]." That is, one takes the precaution of moving against the upward flow of the hexagram sequence and prevents the consequences of fate that would otherwise set in at a later date. In Book III, Wilhelm does not spell out what the counteracting movement is, but in Book I he describes it in his commentary on each of the *yang* lines. It is to "adhere perseveringly to what is right," and to possess "inner strength and consistency." This movement allows one to stand outside the universal law of fate.

In Book III, then, Wilhelm gives an ambiguous character to the "stimulus" mentioned in the line statements for the two *yang* lines in Hexagram 19. The support of those in higher places provides an "incentive to men of ability" (80), but in reality these men should not change what they are already doing. This scepticism about those in higher places goes hand-in-hand with Wilhelm's advocacy of self-reliance, and may explain why he interprets the second line of Hexagram 27 as criticizing those who seek nourishment from people in power. One should rather derive one's nourishment from within. This is not an egoistic form of self-reliance, for the *yang* power within us is not our own individuality but a manifestation of the divine. To return to Hexagram 24 once again, Wilhelm says that when one is "turning away from the confusion of external things, turning back to one's inner light," then "in the depths of the soul, one sees the Divine, the One" (505). The *yang* power represented by the initial *yang* line in Hexagram 24 and the two *yang* lines of Hexagram 19, which is the source of our inner strength and allows us to resist fate, is itself divine.

6 Spirit (Hexagram 47)

There is a superficial similarity between Cheng Yi and Wilhelm in their descriptions of the *yang* power. Cheng Yi says that the name "heaven 天" refers to the "form and substance 形體" of the *yang* power, that the "mysterious function 妙用" of heaven may be called "spirit 神," and that heaven may be called "lord 帝" in reference to its "mastery and dominion 主宰" (Cheng 2019, 23). Compare these descriptions with Wilhelm's claim that "heaven" is the "external aspect" of the *yang* power, and that "heaven, like all that lives, has a spiritual consciousness, God, the Supreme Ruler" (Wilhelm 1967, 6). We could equate Wilhelm's "external aspect" with Cheng Yi's "form and substance," Wilhelm's "spiritual consciousness" with Cheng Yi's "spirit," and Wilhelm's "Supreme Ruler" with Cheng Yi's "lord." But this superficial similarity should not lead us to overlook the critical difference between Cheng Yi and Wilhelm in their use of these names. For Cheng Yi, "heaven," "spirit," and "lord" are names we give to activities that *yang* performs rather than living things possessing self-consciousness that *yang* becomes. Cheng Yi famously and repeatedly says that spirits are "traces of creation and transformation 造化之跡," using the word "trace" here to mean "characteristic."[11] People refer to certain characteristics of creation and transformation as "spirits." In the case of heaven, it may be called spiritual because "it neither strays nor wavers in the revolution of the four seasons or the transformation and cultivation of the ten thousand things 運行四時, 化育萬物, 無有差忒" (Cheng 2019, 168–69). Cheng Yi here identifies the specifically spiritual characteristic of heaven as the constancy of its activity. Human beings do not act with constancy, but heaven is predictable as it increases and decreases the amount of light and warmth throughout the seasons of the year. In other words, Cheng Yi's understanding of heaven is exhausted by what Wilhelm calls "fate." It belongs to Wilhelm's "natural law" or "nature," which Wilhelm himself identifies with *yin*, rather than to the "invisible world" of his "transcendental" *yang*.[12]

Wilhelm's treatment of *yang* as "transcendental," and as belonging to an "invisible world," shapes his interpretation of the language of religious practices in the *Book of Changes*. For instance, Wilhelm connects the reference to sacrifice in the second and fifth *yang* line statements of Hexagram 47 to the *yang* power they symbolize. The second line statement reads, in Wilhelm's translation: "It furthers one to offer sacrifice 利用享祀" (183). The fifth line statement reads: "It furthers one to

11 On Cheng Yi's denial that spiritual entities exist, see Yung-ch'un Ts'ai [Cai Yongchun], *The Philosophy of Ch'eng I*, Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore and Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing Co., [1950] 2018), 71–74.

12 For these identifications, see Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 10 (*yin* as nature), 68 (*yin* lines as governed by natural law), and 621 (a *yang* line as transcendental and as representing the invisible world).

make offerings and libations 利用祭祀" (184). As with Hexagram 40, the two *yang* lines are separated by a *yin* line in the third position, and in both hexagrams, Wilhelm reads the third *yin* line as forming an obstacle to the union of the *yang* lines. What should the *yang* lines do in this case? In Book I, Wilhelm says: "It is important to meet these obstructions in the invisible realm by offerings and prayer" (183). And again, giving advice to the ruler symbolized by the fifth line, Wilhelm says that "he should turn to God, firm in his inner composure [in starker innerer Sammlung], and pray and offer sacrifice for the general well-being" (184). As in Hexagram 40, the inner strength of the *yang* line is essential when facing the obstacle posed by the *yin* line. In Book III, Wilhelm adds an additional significance to the concept of sacrifice here. Because the desired relationship is between two *yang* lines, Wilhelm says: "It is a matter not of natural but supranatural relationships, and therefore the religious act of sacrifice is mentioned" (626). The "supranatural relationship" here is between the *yang* of the fifth line (the prince) and the *yang* of the second line (the helper). The prince desires that *yang* be revealed in the form of the helper, and the helper desires that *yang* be revealed in the form of the prince. So they both pray to God, the "external aspect" of *yang*, that it become manifest in human form (194).[13]

Cheng Yi would not disagree with Wilhelm that Hexagram 47 concerns "a prince […] in search of able helpers" (183). But he interprets the language of sacrifice, and the spirits to which the sacrifice is offered, differently. He connects the performance of sacrifices to the spiritual with a statement that at first appears to be ambiguous, or perhaps a pun. In sacrifices, he says, "extreme sincerity is used to develop one's spiritual enlightenment 以至誠通神明也," but the same characters could mean "extreme sincerity is used to communicate with the spiritually enlightened" (Cheng 2019, 379). In the first interpretation, "spiritual enlightenment" is one's own virtue, which one cultivates by becoming sincere. In the second interpretation, Cheng Yi makes clear that the "spiritually enlightened" person is the ruler. He goes on to make a statement that includes both interpretations, suggesting that his pun is intentional: "When the worthy and wise are trapped in seclusion far away, but their virtue finally rises to be heard and their way is finally employed — it happens only because they themselves guard their extreme sincerity 賢哲困於幽遠而德卒升聞道卒為用者惟自守至誠." Worthy people cultivate their own virtue, and through this virtue they communicate with the ruler. Elsewhere in his commentary, Cheng Yi allows that people may cultivate their virtue by performing literal sacrifices, but here he treats the sacrifice mentioned in the line statements as metaphorical: "As for those who exhaust their sincere intentions — as though they were making sacrifices and libations — when they seek out the worthy people of the world, they will be able to make progress 盡其誠意如祭祀然以求天下之賢則能亨" (383). Rulers cultivate

13 Wilhelm observes that "the supreme revelation of God appears in prophets and holy men".

their virtue not by literally making sacrifices but "as though" they were making sacrifices. And the result is that they learn of the virtue cultivated by worthy people, and the worthy people become willing to assist the rulers. At no point does Cheng Yi suggest that "spiritual enlightenment" is essentially connected with the *yang* power, or that "the spiritually enlightened" are higher beings.

Wilhelm's "idiosyncratic" metaphysics of *yang*, unlike anything found in Cheng Yi or the Chinese tradition represented by the *Zhouyi zhezhong*, makes his commentary something more than a summary (Smith 2008, 265).[14] It is more properly described as a collage, presenting the unaltered interpretations of Cheng Yi and occasionally other Chinese authors side-by-side with Wilhelm's own metaphysical interpretation. As we have seen, Wilhelm's metaphysics treats *yang* as the manifestation of God within us, extending its helping hand to *yin*, which is otherwise at the mercy of fate. On certain occasions when Wilhelm conceives an interpretation more in line with this metaphysics than Cheng Yi's, he presents Cheng Yi's as an alternative to his own. He does not try to bring Cheng Yi in line with his own metaphysics, but allows him to stand aloof, presenting the reader with two possible perspectives. If Wilhelm does not assist the reader in distinguishing the origins of these perspectives, his collage approach does at least allow Cheng Yi now and then to speak with his own voice.

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14 Richard J. Smith refers to Wilhelm adding "his own, sometimes idiosyncratic understandings" to his commentaries, otherwise "based fundamentally on Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy".

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