

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project had one beginning in the winter of 1971, when I was “retooling” from biology to religious studies and taking a night school course in “Theories of Personality” at Boston University. One day I was reading my homework in the employee lunchroom of the Harvard Coop and came across a discussion of the psychologist Carl Jung’s theory of synchronicity, which he had described in his foreword to Richard Wilhelm’s translation of the *I Ching* (now written *Yijing*). Shortly after that a friend asked what I’d like for my upcoming birthday; I mentioned that book, and she gave it to me.

Fast-forward eight years, and I’m in Berkeley studying Neo-Confucianism with Tu Weiming, who encouraged me to drop Shao Yong as a research topic and focus on Zhu Xi. My resulting dissertation, completed in 1984 at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was titled “Divination and Philosophy: Chu Hsi’s Understanding of the *I Ching*.” Most of my subsequent writing focused on Zhu Xi, although not specifically on the *Yijing* except for my translation of his shorter book on the *Yi*, the *Yixue qimeng* (Introduction to the study of the *Classic of Change*) in 2002. Writing a chapter on the *Yijing* for *Religion and Ecological Sustainability in China* (2014), edited by James Miller, also helped to rekindle my interest in the *Yi*.

After retiring from teaching at Kenyon College in 2014 I decided that returning to Zhu Xi’s full commentary, the *Zhouyi benyi* (The original meaning of the *Yijing*), might be a good long-term project that could, possibly, occupy me for the rest of my active (scholarly) life. Completing the circle, as it were. Although it didn’t take quite that long, I am pleased now that a new circle can begin.

I am grateful to Tze-ki Hon (SUNY Geneseo), Kirill Ole Thompson (National Taiwan University), and my Kenyon colleagues Yang Xiao and Chengjuan Sun for their help on some problems in the translation. I also thank Provost Joe Klesner of Kenyon College for publication financial assistance; my editors at Columbia University Press, Christine Dunbar and Leslie Kriesel; and the sharp-eyed copyeditor Mike Ashby. My greatest debt is to my wife, Ruth Woehr, for enthusiastically supporting my interest in Chinese thought and religion for so these many years.