



DETERRITORIALIZED SIGNIFIER: THE BOOK OF CHANGES FROM THE ANCIENT, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

Xirui Chu¹

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Foreign Languages, Lunghwa University of Science and Technology, Taiwan

Abstract

Yijing (*I Ching*, commonly known as the *Book of Changes*), regarded as the leader of all the Chinese classics and a profound influence on Chinese thoughts, has been puzzling both the Western and the Chinese themselves from the ancient to the present. Still, its cryptic text is elusive to the scholar and the common nowadays. Since Fuxi legendarily devised the eight trigrams, King Wen and his son, the Duke of Zhou in the Western Zhou period (1000–750 BCE) wrote the hexagram and line judgments.¹ At length, Confucius and his disciples compiled the Ten Wings to *Yijing*, the core text of *The Book of Changes*, which has been completed into the modern version, a complex semiotic system called *Zhouyi* in about 136 BCE.² Since Fuxi and the sages afterward continued supplementing its complicities, the *Book of Changes*, replete with signifiers, has long been implemented as a scripture of divination, especially in the royal seeking for auspices of wars, weddings, rituals, etc.

So elusive and obscure is the core text of the *Book of Changes* that the mystic scripture eludes the ancient sages and modern scholars. Hence, every era has its way of interpreting or divine via the hexagrams and its core text. This significant diversity of divination, from casting coins out of empty turtle shells to using poker cards nowadays, and its loose and wild interpretation derived from various schools greatly complicate the *Book of Changes*. The paper traces back to the ancient texts, stories, and anecdotes, which demonstrate how official diviners of the royal resorted to the *Book of Changes* to interpret auspices or ominousness of their actions and choices and how the general public nowadays employs the hexagram utterly different from the origin to interpret their daily life.

Keywords

I Ching; Confucius; Hexagram; Divination; *Bagua*

Interpreting the *Yijing*, or the *Book of Changes* (hereafter referred to as *Changes*), is akin to playing chess, where no two games are identical, and possibilities are infinite. Each diviner or commentator might offer unique interpretations, even within the same school of thought. Additionally, every interpretation or “commentary... builds on previous commentators” (Balkin 628); these building blocks build upon those that came before, creating a layered tradition that has continued since Fuxi is said to have first drawn the eight trigrams four thousand years ago.

Legend has it that Fuxi invented symbols and signs to educate the uncivilized, developing a writing system from the prevalent practice of tying knots on ropes. These knots functioned similarly to dashes and dots (— · —), akin to the binary system of zero and one. Over time, this evolved into solid and broken lines (— / --), eventually transforming into the eight trigrams (Tao 615-616).³

Later, during his captivity, the Duke of Zhou, the founder of the Zhou Dynasty, reorganized these trigrams into sixty-four hexagrams. Only when the Duke of Zhou and his son, King Wen, added their hexagram and line judgments to each of the sixty-four hexagrams did these semiotic hexagrams acquire their signifieds; not until Confucius and his disciples supplemented “Ten Wings” (hereafter referred to as the Wings) to those semiotic

¹ Eight trigrams—*bagua* (八卦); hexagram and line judgments—*guaci* (卦辭)/*yaoci* (爻辭).

² Ten Wings—*shiyi* (十翼); *Zhouyi* (周易)

³ Stories about Fuxi creating a writing system and eight trigrams can also refer to Guo 10, Balkin 76-78, and Cleary 3.

hexagrams and commented on both judgments did *Yijing* become *Zhouyi* or *Changes*, a full-fledged masterpiece (Guo 30-33). *Changes* has since been a cornerstone of ethical philosophy for scholars and a tool for divination for the common people.

Before *Changes*, divination involved observing the cracks on cauldrons or turtle shells heated by fire to predict auspices and ominousness, primarily within the royal family. With the advent of *Changes*, common people began using yarrow stalks or throwing coins out of a turtle shell for divination (Shang 1).⁴ The oracle was interpreted by royal diviners consulting gods, who then carved the results on cauldrons or shells. In contrast, the hexagrams and judgments in *Changes* served as signifiers and signifieds, guiding individuals in their actions.

During the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BCE), Chong'er (671-628 BCE), a royal heir of Jin, was exiled by his younger brother and fled his country for many years. Upon reaching Qin, Duke Mu of Qin decided to assist Chong'er in reclaiming his regime, escorting him back to his country. When they arrived at the Yellow River, Chong'er, uncertain about his prospects, consulted his diviner, who used *Changes* to deduce the hexagram: Earth over Heaven: Peace (☷ #11).⁵

The diviner interpreted this hexagram—earth over heaven—as auspicious, with qian (☰) representing heaven and kun (☷) representing earth. This symbolized a harmonious interaction between heaven ascending and earth descending, a “perfect concord” of yin and yang (Balkin 193). Furthermore, “three yang lines are at the bottom, moving upward and displacing the three yin lines, symbolizing the arrival of the great and the departure of the small” (*ibid.*). “When heaven and earth commune, there is tranquility. Thus does the ruler administer the way of heaven and earth and assist the proper balance of heaven and earth, thereby helping the people” (Cleary 248). The diviner further explained that Chong'er was the great and his young brother was the small, and thus assured him he could regain his regime and attain a harmonious achievement.⁶

The diviner based his conclusion on the following hexagram judgments from *Changes*:

The hexagram judgment: The small goes, the great comes. This is auspicious and developmental.⁷

Top yin: The castle walls crumble back into dry moats. Don't use the army.

Giving orders in one's domain, even if right, there will be regret.

5th yin: The emperor marries off his younger sister, whereby there is good fortune; this is very auspicious.

4th yin: Unsettled, one is not rich, along with the neighbors, being loyal without admonition.

3rd yang: There is no levelness without incline, no going without returning. If one is upright in difficulty here will be no fault. One should not grieve over one's sincerity; there will be prosperity in sustenance.

2nd yang: Accepting the uncultivated, actively crossing rivers, not missing the remote, partisanship disappears, and one accords with balanced action.

1st yang: When pulling out a reed by the roots, other reeds come with it. It is auspicious to go forth.⁸

The reader can detect auspicious omens in this exegesis from the first yang line to the top yin one, reading *auspicious, crossing the river, along with the neighbor*, etc. The hexagram judgment especially foretells the return of the prince, the great one. The top yin line, however, is the most obscure among the six lines, possibly indicating

that extreme peace incurs misfortune if the ruler cannot maintain justice and restraint, as seen with Chong'er's brother. Two interpretations can infer that the top yin line either lectures Chong'er to uphold his justice or reveals

⁴ The ancient divination practices can refer to W. A. Sherrill and W. K. Chu, *An Anthology of I Ching* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); Edward A. Hacker, *The I Ching Handbook: A Practical Guide to Personal and Perspective from the Ancient Chinese Book of Changes* (Brook-line, Mass.: Paradigm Publications, 1993), Binghe Shang 294-96 (尚秉和,《周易占卜故事》中央編譯出版社, 2010), and Jianxun Guo 30-33; 511-513 (郭建勳,《新譯易經讀本》台北:三民書局版社, 2012).

⁵ Hexagram #11—*dī tien tai* (地天泰).

⁶ Shang 2.

⁷ The hexagram judgment—*guaci* (卦辭) is the exegesis of the signifier image of every hexagram; therefore, there are sixty-four hexagram judgments. Correspondently, the line judgment—*yaoci* (爻辭) is to explain every line of the hexagrams; accordingly, there are three hundred and eighty-four line judgments.

⁸ This English translation is adopted from Thomas Cleary, *The Daoist I Ching*, pp. 71-73 and the Chinese origin: 小往大來, 吉, 亨。/上六: 城覆於隍, 勿用師。自邑告命, 貞吝。/六五: 帝乙歸妹, 以祉元吉。/六四: 翩翩不富, 以其鄰, 不戒以孚。/九三: 無平不陂, 無往不覆, 艱貞無咎。勿恤其孚, 於食有福。/九二: 包荒, 用馮河, 不遐遺, 朋亡, 得尚於中行。/初九: 拔茅茹, 以其彙, 征吉 (Guo 95-102).

the chaotic regime under his brother (Guo 102-103). Under Duke Mu of Qin's assistance, Chong'er restored his regime and became Duke Wen of Jin, one of the five hegemonies during the Spring and Autumn Period.

"The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were: extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings."⁹ Confucius lectured his disciples not to fathom business concerning ghosts and gods. However, Confucius once confessed, "If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the Yi, and might then escape falling into great error" (Legge 1).¹⁰ Confucius was so puzzled by his own fate that before plunging into *Yijing*, he pled a diviner to practice divination, resulting in Fire over Mountain: Travel (☲ over 山 # 56).¹¹

The hexagram judgment: Travel is developmental when small; if travel is correct, it leads to good fortune.

Top yang: A bird turns its nest. The traveler first laughs, afterward cries.

Losing the ox at the border, there is misfortune.

5th yin: Shooting pheasant, one arrow is lost; eventually one is entitled, because of good reputation.

4th yang: Traveling in the right place, one obtains resources and tools, but one's heart is not happy.

3rd yang: Burning the lodge on a journey, you lose your attendants. Even if righteous there is danger.

2nd yin: Coming to a lodge on a journey with money in your pocket, you have attendants, yet are upright.

1st yin: Restless in travel, this is the misfortune you get.¹²

The diviner analyzed the hexagram and told Confucius he could not attain the social status he deserved despite his profound knowledge and noble conduct. (Shan 11). Confucius wandered from country to country for fourteen years (497-484 BCE), a wanderer seeking a lord to support his ideals until he died in 479 BCE.¹³ The hexagram of Travel bestowed on Confucius might explain his restless journey.¹⁴

Hexagram: Travel consists of fire (☲) over mountain (山), symbolizing fire burning on the mountain, which is never stable and "constantly moving" (Shan 11; Guo 429). Fire also represents "light" and "civilization,"

⁹ *Confucian Analects Shu Er*, xxi. (*lunyu* 論語, 述而篇, 21)—子不語: 怪, 力, 亂, 神。 <https://ctext.org/analects/shu-er>.

¹⁰ *Confucian Analects, Shu Er*, xvii. (17) (子曰: 加我數年, 五十以學易, 可以無大過矣。), and the *Records of the Grand Historian (shiji* 史記, 世家, 孔子世家, 61) (讀易, 韋編三絕。曰: 「假我數年, 若是, 我於易則彬彬矣。」) <https://ctext.org/shiji/kong-zi-shi-jia>.

¹¹ Hexagram #56—*huo shan lv* (火山旅) in Balkin's translation is "The Wanderer" (539), but in Cleary's, "Travel" (207), and in Huang's, "Traveling" (440). The hexagram judgment of Cleary is "The Wanderer./In small matters, success./Perseverance brings good fortune/To the wanderer" (540). Huang's hexagram judgment goes: "Traveling./Little prosperity and smoothness./Traveler./Being steadfast and upright: good fortune" (441). The three translations are quite different, and none is quite right. Here *lv* (旅) may be taken as traveling for granted. In Guo's notation, hexagram *lv*, fire over mountain means the fire burning on the mountain, a sign of unsettling traveling (428). The traveling herein is not the traveling for pleasure or wandering aimlessly, but a business trip, a journey, or a predicant quest with "great danger and hardship" (Jou 365). Confucius' traveling for fifteen years (497-484 BCE) from country to country was not an entertaining or aimless one, but a quest to seek an eminent Lord to support fulfilling his ideal society. In Guo's example (248), he illustrates Chong'er's fleeing from his own country, a refugee unsettled moving from place to place, as the example of Hexagram *lv* (# 56).

¹² English translation adopted from Cleary pp.207-09, and Chinese origin: 旅: 小亨, 旅貞吉。/初六: 旅瑣瑣, 斯其所取災。/六二: 旅即次, 懷其資, 得童仆貞。/九三: 旅焚其次, 喪其童仆, 貞厲。/九四: 旅于處, 得其資斧, 我心不快。/六五: 射雉一矢亡, 終以譽命。/上九: 鳥焚其巢, 旅人先笑后號咷。 喪牛于易, 凶 (Guo 428-34).

¹³ *Records of the Grand Historian, Confucian Pedigree*, cvi (*Shiji* 史記, 孔子世家 56)—孔子之去魯凡十四歲而反乎魯。 <https://ctext.org/shiji/kong-zi-shi-jia>

¹⁴ The anecdote of Confucius' divination can be read in Shan pp. 10-12, and the original text is derived from *Yiwei qianzaodu* (易緯乾鑿度 47) (孔子附仲尼魯人生, 不知易本, 偶筮其命, 得旅, 請益於商瞿氏, 曰子有聖智而無位, 孔子泣而曰, 天也命也鳳鳥不來, 河無圖至, 嗚呼天命之也。) <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=670863>

16 | Deterritorialized Signifier-The Book of Changes from The Ancient, The Present, and the Future: Xirui Chu

while mountain signifies “a stop, an obstacle” (Shan 11; Guo 567).¹⁵ From the first to the top line (*yao*), the hexagram suggests “misfortune,” “danger,” “unhappiness,” and “loss.” The hexagram judgment of Travel indicates, “if travel is correct, it leads to good fortune.” However, this “good fortune” in *Changes* is not a great success, but only a minor one, a minor achievement. According to fundamental sublime, bestowing power, beneficial advantage, and persevering upright (*yuan heng li zhen*) of hexagram judgment of Qian (# 1), the results of divination can be ranked into nine grades from supreme fortune to worst ruin (Fu and Fu 10).¹⁶ Confucius’s quest to educate and civilize people and to fulfill his ideal society would encounter a significant number of obstacles, hindering his path to supreme fortune. Interpreting hexagrams via judgments is one way to analyze a problem; however, there are some other perspectives on fathoming the *gua* images.¹⁷

In the Song Dynasty, Xin Qiji, a renowned lyricist born in the northern kingdom of Jin, and his classmate Dang Huiyin, divined to determine where they could achieve greater success.¹⁸ Xin obtained Hexagram Li (# 30) and Dang, Hexagrams Kan (# 29). Dang decided to stay in the north, the kingdom of Jin, while Xin moved southwards with the Song Dynasty (Shan 51-52).

Xin and Dang did not rely on the hexagram and line judgments but analyzed the hexagram images based on their localities as described in the Wings. In hexagrams of King Wen—the manifested hexagrams (*hotien bagua*), thunder stands for the east, lake the west, fire the south, water the north, wind the southeast, mountain northeast, heaven northwest, and earth southwest relatively (Guo 564).¹⁹ Xin and Dang’s analysis is based on the Discussion of the trigrams (*shuogua zhuan*) in the Wings instead of judgments.²⁰ Hexagram Li (# 30) is composed of fire over fire, associated with the south; on the other hand, Kan (# 29), water over water, belonging to the north. Xin later became one of the greatest warriors in the Song Dynasty.

Each era has its unique way of interpreting the hexagrams through *Changes*. The use of *Changes* for divination has evolved fundamentally from the ancient terrain incognito to the present, especially since the Han Dynasty.

II. Deterritorialized: Han Dynasty

Traditionally, the study of *Changes* can be categorized into two schools: meaning /principle and image/number (Tang 28-30).²¹ The former focuses on the philosophical idea of the *Changes*’ texts expounded mostly in the academic study; the latter, however, is on divination, which is commonly practiced among the common people. During the Western Han Dynasty (202-8 BCE), Jing Fang (77-37 BCE), a Chinese music theorist, mathematician, astrologer, and a *Yijing* master, is deemed the founder of the *Xiangshu* school.

Ching Fang’s [divination] is the name associated with the earliest appearance of numerous other explanatory and integrative devices, among them the systematic application of a hexagram’s “nuclear trigrams (*hut’i* 互體 or *chung-yao* 中爻)” —lines two through four and three through five separately considered—to expound the hexagram’s verbal properties; the “Eight Palaces (*pa-kung* 八宮)” system of arranging hexagrams...; and incorporation of the Five Phases [*wuxing* 五行], the “heavenly stems (*t’ien-kan* 天干)”, and the “earthly branches (*ti-chih* 地支)” designations to amplify the *Changes*’ linear figures in what is called the “*na-chia* 納甲” theory. (Schulz 16)²²

¹⁵ Discussion of the trigrams (*Shuogua zhuan* in Wings, Chapter 7, 說卦傳第七章). “Li, of what is bright and what is catching; Zhen, of stoppage or arrest.” (離，麗也；艮，止也). <https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/shuo-gua>.

¹⁶ Balkin (120) explains *yuan heng li zhen* (元亨利貞), but he does not detail the discrepancy among them. In Fu’s *Analyzing Yiching*, he lists all the good and bad in nine degrees—supreme fortune, very fortune, fortune, without disaster, regret, predicament, danger, disaster, and the worst ruin (*yuan ji, da ji, ji, wu jiu, hui, lin, li, jiu, xion* 元吉, 大吉, 吉, 無咎, 悔, 吝, 厲, 咎, 凶).

¹⁷ Hexagram image or *gua* image (*gua xiang*, 卦象).

¹⁸ Xin Qiji (辛棄疾); Dang Huiyin (黨懷英).

¹⁹ The manifested hexagrams (*hotien bagua* 後天八卦) is arranged differently from the hexagrams of Fuxi, the primordial hexagrams (*xiantian bagua* 先天八卦). Sherrill and Chu translates these two terms into Earlier Heaven sequence and the Later Heaven sequence on pp. 17.

²⁰ *shuogua zhuan* 說卦傳

²¹ Meaning and principle is *yili* (義理), and image and number, *xiangshu* (象術).

²² Jing Fang (also Ching Fang) regarded as the founder of *xiangshu* school can refer to Tang’s *Diagrams of Jing’s Yijing Divination*, pp. 30 (圖解京氏易傳). The only survival of Jing Fang’s work is *Jing’s Yijing Divination* (*Jingshi Yizhuan*, 京氏易傳), which can be available on Chinese Text Project website, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&res=77343>.

Jing Fang's "Eight Palaces," "Five Phases," and "*na-chia*" (*najia*, 納甲) transcend *Changes* to another level and are still commonly practiced nowadays.²³ Through eight palaces—hexagram *qian* (# 1), *zhen* (# 51), *kan* (# 29), *gen* (# 52), representing male family members, and *kun* (# 2), *xun* (# 57), *li* (# 30), *dui* (# 58) as female ones, Jing Fang employs the concept of *yin* and *yan* to allocate heavenly stems and earthly branches on every line of hexagrams which renders five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth) and through which respectively he assigns "six relatives" (*liuqin*, 六親), including parents, brothers, descendants, wife/wealth, and officials/ghosts (respectively shortened as par, bro, des, ww, and og hereafter). Through this *najia* system, Jing also identifies "self/object" (*shiyin*, 世應) lines in every hexagram.²⁴ By way of judging these self, object, and six relatives from concepts of five elements and *yin* and *yang*, the querent or self can analyze the question he/she asked.

If Confucius's divination befell on Jing Fang's hand, it would go like this:

	s/o	<i>najia</i>	Five elements	Six relatives
—		<i>si</i>	fire	bro
--		<i>wei</i>	earth	des
—	other	<i>you</i>	metal	ww
—		<i>shen</i>	metal	ww
--		<i>wu</i>	fire	bro
--	self	<i>chen</i>	earth	des

Chart 1: Confucius' Hexagram: Wanderer in Jing's analysis.

Apart from the interpretation of Hexagram: Wanderer (# 56) according to the text of *Changes* abovementioned, the diviner can first deduce Hexagram of Lake over Wind: Great Exceeding (# 28, *daguo*, 大過) from the two nuclear trigrams of Hexagram: Wanderer.²⁵ Consulting the judgments of Great Exceeding, one can obtain "Da Guo denotes greatly exceeding; taking extraordinary action" (Huang 241), which further explains Confucius' endeavor. But what situation would his fate become in the future? One can delve further up from the hexagram's first line to the top one upwards. Da Guo consists of lake (☵) and wind (☴), the image of lake over

²³ "Eight palaces" is translated as eight houses in Sherrill and Chu's *An Anthology of I Ching*, pp. 18, and five phases as five elements on pp. 48.

²⁴ *Najia* is a complicated system in which ten heavenly stems (*jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙, *ding* 丁, *wu* 戊, *ji* 己, *geng* 庚, *xin* 辛, *ren* 壬, *gui* 癸) are incorporated and intermingled with twelve earthly branches (*zi* 子, *chou* 丑, *yin* 寅, *mao* 卯, *chen* 辰, *si* 巳, *wu* 午, *wei* 未, *shen* 申, *you* 酉, *xu* 戌, *hai* 亥) to create a sixty-hour, -day, and -year cycles known as the sexagenary cycle. As for divination, one will find it useful to have a lunar calendar in which the dates are arranged in the sexagenary cycle according to 24 solar terms. The earthly branches are regularly used by the diviner. The following chart refers to the twelve earthly branches representing a great number of articles, especially in terms of five elements and significance for divination.

	Time	Month*	Year of Animals	Five elements
<i>zi</i>	23:00-01:00	Nov	rat	water
<i>chou</i>	01:00-03:00	Dec	ox	earth
<i>yin</i>	03:00-05:00	Jan	tiger	wood
<i>mao</i>	05:00-07:00	Feb	rabbit	wood
<i>chen</i>	07:00-09:00	Mar	dragon	earth
<i>si</i>	09:00-11:00	April	snake	fire
<i>wu</i>	11:00-13:00	May	horse	fire
<i>wei</i>	13:00-15:00	Jun	goat	earth
<i>shen</i>	15:00-17:00	July	monkey	metal
<i>you</i>	17:00-19:00	Aug	rooster	metal
<i>xu</i>	19:00-21:00	Set	dog	earth
<i>hai</i>	21:00-23:00	Oct	pig	water

The self and object are translated as self and other in Sherrill and Chu's *An Anthology of I Ching* on pp. 38-39, and both have a pattern to allocate on the hexagram.

* Here months represent the month of solar terms. Nowadays, ten heavenly stems are rarely used to predict auspices. More concepts about *najia* can refer to Sherrill and Chu's *An Anthology of I Ching*, Advanced Divination on pp. 37.

²⁵ The translation is Alfred Huang's, pp. 241. Every hexagram consists of two nuclear trigrams, one from the second line to the fourth line, the other from the third line to the fifth line. The two nuclear trigrams are compiled to form another hexagram to predict the future outcome.

wind (☳). The four *yang* lines within are too strong to hold the two external *yin* lines, representing “a supporting beam that is strong and thick in the middle and weak and thin on the ends” (Balkin 317). Something needs to be rectified, or a “breaking point” (318) will be rendered. One also can detect the lines from first to top saying, no blame, no beneficial, misfortune, humiliation, no praise, finally, misfortune (320-23). The future would not be a bright one.

In *The Complete I Ching*, Alfred Huang dissected the Chinese characters 大過 (Great Exceeding) written in seal script.²⁶

There are two ideographs constituting the name of the gua. The first ideograph, da, represents “great.” It is an image of a person standing upright with arms and legs wide open, showing his greatness. The second ideograph consists of two parts. Three curved strokes at the top left symbolize three footprints going forward. Underneath the footprints is the ideograph zhi, which means stop. On the right side is the ideograph guo; its function is to provide the sound of the character. (242)

Through the name of the Hexagram: Great Exceeding (*daguo* 大過), one can understand Huang’s interpretation in accordance with the following diviners’ analysis of Confucius’ wandering endlessly and his political career not moving onwards anymore.

Second, one can focus on “self” and “object,” which Jing emphasizes unprecedentedly. According to his *Yijing Divination* (*Jingshi Yizhuan*, 京氏易傳), the first line to the top of the hexagram can represent inferior officials, ministers, three dukes, vassals, emperors, and ancestor shrines, respectively. In Confucius’ Hexagram: Wanderer, the self falls on the first line and the object, the fourth line.²⁷ The self on the first line, with the earth element representing the querent himself, generates metal, the object, on the fourth line. The relationship of self and object then can be interpreted as follows: the inferior politician who is ambitious and helpful is eagerly and actively searching for a lord who can vouchsafe a proper status. Jing Fang’s self-and-object relationship explains Confucius’s attempt, ambition, and expectation. Nevertheless, the loss as well.

Besides Jing Fang’s self-and-object relationship, one of his great achievements is to rearrange the traditionally sequent order of sixty-four hexagrams in *Changes* into “Eight Houses.”²⁸ Each house contains one peculiar hexagram, the so-called “wandering spirit” hexagram (*youhun gua*, 遊魂卦). Eight of them are Hexagram: Proceeding Forward (#35), Great Exceeding (#28), Brilliant Injured (#36), Innermost Sincerity (#61), Needing (#5), Little Exceeding (#62), Contention (#6), and Nourishing (#27).²⁹ Among these hexagrams of wandering spirits, Jing Fang points out that *yin* and *yang* change capriciously; their advancing and receding are not stable. *Yin* goes extremely while *yang* returns inextinguishably, but not yet back to its proper place. That is hexagram of wandering spirit.³⁰ Confucius is taking the action to remedy the upcoming misfortune according to the Hexagram: Wanderer, but the future, according to the Hexagram: Great Exceeding derived from the nuclear trigrams of Hexagram Wanderer, would be unstable and moving constantly and aimlessly (Liu 121) as a wandering spirit. Consulting in *Kangxi Dictionary*, one also can find Jing Fang’s “不居” (*buju*) denotes “uninhabitable,” “not staying” and “unoccupied,” all meanings of which correspond to Confucius’ ensuing predicament.

Nonetheless, something is missing in Confucius’s hexagram and things will deteriorate further.

III. Further Deterritorialization

Liu Ji (1311—1375), also known as Liu Bowen, was the key advisor to Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming dynasty (1368—1644). Legendarily, he wrote a divinatory guideline called *Golden Book* (*huangjin ce*, 黃金策, GB hereafter) of which only fragments were left and incorporated into three books: the *Compendium of Divination* (*bushi quanshu*, 卜筮全書, CD hereafter) by an author unknown during the Ming Dynasty, into *Authentic Divination* (*bushi zhenzong*, 卜筮正宗, AD hereafter) written by Wang Hongxu (1669—1749), and in the *Collection of Wild Crane*, (*yehe zhanbu quanshu*, 野鶴占卜全書, WC hereafter), also known as *Addition and Deletion of*

²⁶ The seal script of 大過 is rendered as 大過.

²⁷ The first line is inferior officials (*yuangshi* 元士), the second, ministers (*dafu* 大夫), the third, three dukes (*sangong* 三公), the fourth, vassals (*zhuhou* 諸侯), the fifth, emperor (*tianzi* 天子), the top, ancestor shrines (*zongmiao* 宗廟). According to Jing Fang, the hexagram #56 renders “the one occupying the first *yin* line is an inferior official; the object on the fourth *yang* line is a vassal.” (其居初六元士，九四、諸侯見應。) See original text, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=77366&page=84>.

²⁸ The eight hosts of eight houses are two metal houses of *qian* and *dui*, two earth houses of *kuen* and *gen*, two wood houses of *zhen* and *xun*, fire house of *li*, and water house of *kan*. These eight hosts of hexagrams lead their own seven hexagrams respectively.

²⁹ The translation is Alfred Huang’s.

³⁰ “陰陽返復，進退不居，精粹氣純，是謂遊魂...陰極剝盡，陽道不可盡滅，故返陽道。道不復本位，為遊魂例入卦。” The original text can refer to <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=77366&page=16>.

Divination (*zengshan buyi*, 增刪卜易, ADD hereafter) written by a penname called Wild Crane the Elderly, both of the later written in the Ching Dynasty.³¹ Three of them adopted *GB* into their own works with considerable variations; it is believed three infused their divinatory notions into the ordinances adopted from *GB*. (Lin 6). Nowadays, *CD*, *AD*, and *WC* are regarded as bibles for interpreters and are implemented in their everyday divination.

Based on the *Changes* and evolving from the methodology of Jing Fang's divination, *CD*, *AD*, and *WC* have their own way of predicting according to the semiotic images of the *Changes*, but not consulting an iota of its original text. Take a hexagram, for example, asking about the future official position in *WC*.³²

Date: Month *Chen*, Day *Yi Wei*

		<i>najia</i>	Five elements	Six relatives	Changed line	Hidden relative
--		<i>you</i>	metal	par		
--		<i>hai</i>	water	bro		
--x	self	<i>chou</i>	earth	og	<i>wu/fire/ww</i>	
—		<i>hai</i>	water	bro		<i>wu/fire/ww</i>
--		<i>chou</i>	earth	og		
—	object	<i>mao</i>	wood	des		

Chart 2: Hexagram #36 asking for an official position in *WC*.

In Chart 2, the Hexagram: Darkening of the Light (#36) is replenished with more information, including changed lines and hidden relatives.³³ What is emphasized according to the ordinances of *CD*, *AD*, and *WC*, besides the relationship between the self and the object abovementioned, is the useful-spirit or matter-element (*yongshen* 用神), which is affected by the other five lines, the date of which force influences the self/object, and the moving line which generates or conquers the self/object.³⁴

When one divines for an official position in the future, resulting in Hexagram: Darkening of the Light (#36) of Chart 2. The self is on the fourth line, juxtaposed with officials/ghosts. When one asks for an official position or civil service, the matter- element of officials/ghosts is taken into account significantly. One of the ordinances in *WC* is that the prosperous parents and officials/ghosts bring good fortune in examination and official career (Liu 282).³⁵ Another one in *AD* manifests that officials/ghosts without harm results in a great official position, and the parents with great force bring about glorious fame (Zhen 169).³⁶ Among six relatives, parents represent academic papers and officials/ghosts, positions of career when academic performance and careers and jobs are inquired. That the self-line holding officials/ghosts, matter-element moving itself, creates a great deal of force (*qi*, 氣) manifests what sought will turn out auspice.

From the perspective of five elements, the relationship of the self and the object in Chart 2 is in collision—wood conquers earth, and descendants hurts officials/ghosts. Descendants representing playfulness and coziness in divining for an official position or academic performance stands for ominous symbol (Liu 338, 346, 360).³⁷ However, in Chart 2, the fourth line is moving and changes into wife/wealth, the changed line with *wu/fire*, which turns back to generate more force to the self. The date also plays an essential part in interpreting the good and bad omens. The self on the fourth line with *chou/earth* still holds force in the month of *chen*, and both the month of *chou* and the day of *wei* holds the same element of earth as the self, regarded as the month and day of officials/ghosts, strengthening the force of the self. All those forces coming from the changed line, the month, and the day prevent the other descendants from hurting the self-line on official/ghost.³⁸ In summary, the Hexagram: Darkening of the Light (#36) divining for one's political career would turn out auspicious.

³¹ *CD* is available on <https://ctext.org/searchbooks.pl?if=en&searchu=%E5%8D%9C%E7%AD%AE%E5%85%A8%E6%9B%B8>. *AD*, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=112056>, and *WC*, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=497805>.

³² See *Collection of Wild Crane*, (*yehe zhanbu quanshu*, 野鶴占卜全書), pp. 282.

³³ The translation "Darkening of the Light" (*ming yi* 明夷) is based on Balkin's, pp. 383.

³⁴ To understand more about the concepts of useful-spirit/matter-element, self/object, and generate/conquer, readers can refer to *When I Ching Has No Text* by Alfred Kee.

³⁵ The original text is "官父興隆，文章見用。" <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=398174>, 146.

³⁶ The original text is "官鬼無傷，曹彬取印終封爵；父身有氣，車胤囊螢卒顯名。"

<https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=801184>, 366.

³⁷ The original text is "子搖財動，名落孫山。" <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=398174>, 563, 618, and 720.

³⁸ To understand more about the concept of how five elements and *najia* affect one another, readers can refer to *When I Ching Has No Text* by Alfred Kee.

The reader may find out those interpretations are entirely detached from the *Changes*; none of the ordinances is based on the hexagram and line judgments, the original text of the *Changes*. Quite different from the academic research, the most commonly practiced divinations, all the examples of divinations in *CD*, *AD*, and *WC*, obtain their interpretation from their own judgments instead of those in the *Changes*. Could the prediction be based on *CD*, *AD*, and *WC* without the *Changes*' original texts precisely foretelling the auspices and omens? If not, how come the commonly practiced divinations nowadays forsake the judgments of the *Changes*? What if Confucius' Hexagram: Wanderer adopts the methodology of *CD*, *AD*, and *WC*? What will the result be?

	s/o	najia	Five elements	Six relatives	Changed line	Hidden relative
—		<i>si</i>	fire	bro		
--		<i>wei</i>	earth	des		
—	object	<i>you</i>	metal	ww		
—		<i>shen</i>	metal	ww		og
--		<i>wu</i>	fire	bro		
--	self	<i>chen</i>	earth	des		par

Chart 3: Confucius' Hexagram: Wanderer according to *GB*³⁹

According to *GB*, the information available is properly arranged in Chart 3. Now, in the first step, the self and the object are examined. The relationship of the self and the object is harmonious. *Chen* earth and *you* metal can be united together, and *chen* generates *you*.⁴⁰ The self contains proactive action and initiative; on the other hand, the object is passive. Second, in *CD*, *AD*, and *WC*, one regulation says if the self holds descendants, nothing has to be worried about.⁴¹ Generally speaking, indeed, especially for one diving for health and wealth because descendants are deemed as playfulness and as the god of blessing. Ironically, when one divines for official positions and public service, descendants conflict with officials/ghosts, which is ominous for a public career.⁴² In Confucius' hexagram, the self holds descendants, actively looking for a suitable position from the object, but to no avail.

Furthermore, when one divines for public service, the priority of the six relatives is based on officials/ghosts, and parents representing academic papers (examination) is second. What is worse, in Confucius' hexagram, both parents and officials/ghosts are missing, hiding in the first line and the third. According to *AD*, *WC*, and *GB*, many ordinances manifest that officials/ghosts and parents have to be strong without harm if one looks for the official position. Examining Confucius' hexagram, he is eager to be a part of public service, however, unfortunately, without holding his parents and officials/ghosts. Confucius is a great academic educator but never a charismatic politician. Reviewing Confucius' life, one can find that not until the age of 51 did he occupy a higher official position as minister of Crime and, at the same time, an acting prime minister in the state of Lu. Before that, he never held a decent position long enough to fulfill his dream of promoting his ideal society. Before long after becoming the minister, he was disappointed by the Machiavellian politics and dismissed by the Lord of Ji.⁴³ When the diviner told Confucius at the age of seventy-one the interpretation of his Hexagram Wanderer, he sighed, "The Feng bird does not come; the river sends forth no map—it is all over with me!"⁴⁴

IV. The future: Reterritorialization

Again, when it comes to interpreting the *Changes*, it is akin to playing chess, where no two games are identical, and possibilities are infinite. Probably, the *Changes*

³⁹ In Chart 3: Confucius' Hexagram: Wanderer, according to *GB*, there is no changed line in his divination.

⁴⁰ The six unions of the earthly branches: *zi* and *chou*, *yin* and *hai*, *mao* and *xu*, *chen* and *you*, *si* and *shen*, and *wu* and *wei*. See Liu's *ADD*, pp. 76.

⁴¹ *WC*, pp. 26, (子孫持世，無虞). *CD*, pp. 156, (見子，則身不犯刑).

⁴² See: <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=398174>. 166 (增刪卜易三卷 *ADD*, Vol. 3, 166. 福德動搖，豈是朝廊之客。凡得子孫持世發動，終非朝廊之貴客。If the descendants are moving, it is difficult to obtain an official position. If the self-line holds the descendants, one will not prosper in the government business.)

⁴³ The story can be referenced in the *Kongzi Jiayu* (*The Family Sayings of Confucius*, 孔子家語), *Zilu Chujian* (子路初見) 7. <https://ctext.org/kongzi-jiayu/zi-lu-chu-jian/zh>, and in Sun's *Confucius: In Search of a New Model for World Development*, pp. 246-255.

⁴⁴ See: *The Analects*, *Zi han* (子罕), 9. <https://ctext.org/analects/zi-han>. (子曰：「鳳鳥不至，河不出圖，吾已矣夫！」).

has passed through several stages: from the stage of being the *diagrams of knots* of legendary King Fu-hsi to the stage of constituting divinatory hexagrams, and from being used as a guide to strengthen one's conviction in decision-making to becoming an inspiration source for Chinese cosmological and metaphysical speculations.⁴⁵

Also, the methodologies of divination have developed from Scapulimancy, burning bones to see the cracks, to yarrow stalks, deducing the fifty sticks eighteen times to form a hexagram, and finally to the mostly-practiced method nowadays—the three-coin tossing or drawing cards. Each dynasty has its own way of divination, new annotations, and innovative auguries. Ten diviners at the same date and time to interpret the same hexagram can result in ten various explanations according to diviners' experiences and references (including the querents' psychology individually) they base on. However, this great variety also casts a great mistrust and shadows the credibility of divination developed from the *Changes*. Since Confucius' hexagram can be diagnosed through the *Changes* without its text, i.e. based on *CD*, *AD*, and *WC*, without damaging its original interpretation, how would it be if the example of Chart 2: Hexagram #36 asked for an official position in *WC* is dissected through the methodology of the origin, the judgment of the *Changes*.

In Chart 2, one can derive its hexagram and line judgments as follows:

The hexagram judgment: it will be advantageous to realize the difficulty (of the position) and maintain firm correctness.

Top yin: shows the case where there is no light but (only) obscurity. (Its subject) had at first ascended to (the top of) the sky; his future shall be to go into the earth.

5th yin: shows how the count of Ki fulfilled the condition indicated by Ming I. It will be advantageous to be firm and correct.

4th yin: entered into the left side of the belly (of the dark land). (But) he is able to carry out the mind appropriate (in the condition indicated by) Ming I, quitting the gate and courtyard (of the lord of darkness).

3rd yang: (in the condition indicated by) Ming I, hunting in the south, and taking the great chief (of the darkness). He should not be eager to make (all) correct (at once).

2nd yin: (in the condition indicated by) Ming I, wounded in the left thigh. He saves himself by the strength of a (swift) horse and is fortunate.

1st yang: (in the condition indicated by) Ming I, flying, but with drooping wings. When the superior man (is revolving) his going away, he may be for three days without eating. Wherever he goes, the people there may speak (derisively of him).⁴⁶

In the hexagram and line judgment, one can detect *fortunate*, *correct*, *appropriate*, and *advantageous*. The hexagram judgment suggests that the querent, especially when encountering a predicament, such as being injured and repressed, should remain firm and righteous, and the result will be advantageous. Basically, its prediction based on the hexagram judgment is auspicious and in accordance with the one derived from the rules of *WC*. Moreover, the Great Image (*da xiang* 大象) ䷋ of Hexagram #36: earth over fire reads that

The light has descended into the center of the earth:

This is the image of the Darkening of the Light.

Thus the superior person oversees the masses.

He hides his light, yet it still shines.⁴⁷

Since the hexagram Ming Yi (#36) means the intelligent injured, the image suggests the querent should keep a low profile, biding his time (hiding his light); for as long as one maintains the inner light, one will not be defeated.⁴⁸

Judging from the interlocking hexagram of Ming Yi (#36), one obtains thunder over fire, leading to Hexagram Feng (#55). *Feng* means abundance. The hexagram judgment reads, "Abundance./ Success./ The king approaches./ Do not be sad./ Be like the sun at midday."⁴⁹ It denotes prosperity. "In moments of your actions should be enlightened and generous, bestowing light on everyone."⁵⁰ This echoes the Great Image of Hexagram Ming Yi: it still shines. Further analysis in Chart 2 shows that its fourth line is moving, creating a new changed hexagram, Jie (#40). The fundamental hexagram is the current situation; on the other hand, the changed one is the

⁴⁵ See Chen, Shih-chuan. "How to form a Hexagram and Consult the I Ching." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 92.2 (1972), p. 247-248.

⁴⁶ The translation is based on Legge's, pp. 134-35, with my rearrangement of six lines from Top yin to 1st yang.

⁴⁷ The translation is Balkin's, p. 385. (明入地中，明夷：君子以蒞眾，用晦而明。)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 533.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 532.

future.⁵¹ The hexagram judgment of Jie reads, “Deliverance.../Return brings good fortune.../An early start brings good fortune.”⁵² In the predicament of Hexagram Darkening of the Light, “[l]ater it came to mean to release; and eventually, to relieve a person from difficulty or suffering.”⁵³

Last, the moving line is also essential in all the interpretations. According to Zhu Xi’s *Yixue qimeng* (易學啟蒙), if all the six lines are not moving, consult the hexagram judgment; if one of the six is moving, consult the judgment of the moving line; two of the six are moving, consult judgments of the two moving line, but focus on the top one; if three of the six are moving, consult both hexagram judgments of the original and changed hexagrams; four of the six are moving, consult the two unmoving line judgments of the changed hexagram, but focus on the lower one; if five of the six lines are moving, consult the only unmoving line judgment of the changed hexagram; if all the lines are moving, consult the changed hexagram judgment.⁵⁴

Based on Zhu Xi’s instruction, the fourth line is foregrounded, reading the subject entered into the left side of the belly (of the dark land). (But) he is able to carry out the mind appropriate (in the condition indicated by) Ming I, quitting the gate and courtyard (of the lord of darkness).⁵⁵

The fourth line “is weak but in its right place.”⁵⁶ From WC’s interpretation in Chart 2, the first line object, the descendant-line, could hurt the self-line, officials/ghosts, injured and wounded, which might echo Legge’s translation: “enter into the left side of belly.” “The subject of the line evidently escapes from his position of danger with little damage.”⁵⁷ In Gou’s annotation, the belly is the softest part of the body and is inconspicuous.⁵⁸ It suggests the querent must be docile and even hermitic (quitting the gate and courtyard), awaiting the turning point.

Through cross-examination of Confucius’ hexagrams and the example in WC, in respect of the predictions, they all share something in common. Despite the popularity of the methodology and interpretation employed by diviners nowadays based on Jing Fang’s methodology, traditionally scholars in academic circles are reluctant to employ those ordinances based on the CD, AD, and WC to interpret hexagrams because of Confucius’ teaching: The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were: extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings. They treat Jing Fang’s *najia* and his followers’ generation and the conflict between *yin* and *yan*, among six relatives, etc., as nonsense.⁵⁹ Some even fundamentally deny the divine-oriented purpose of *I Ching*.⁶⁰ Indeed, there is a massive gap between Jing Fang’s *I Ching* without the original text and its origin, but there is no denying that Jing Fang’s and his followers’ methodologies enrich the *Changes*.

V. The Rhizomatic Future

In the 21st century, marked by the rise of artificial intelligence, the practice of divination may undergo a transformative evolution. Notably, specific well-established online platforms now enable querents to input their birth date and specific questions for divination. A corresponding hexagram is generated within mere seconds, accompanied by detailed recommendations. These suggestions provide guidance to the querents on how to address their concerns effectively.⁶¹ There also exist AI-powered applications that facilitate divination for users with remarkable ease and accessibility.⁶² This study concludes by utilizing ChatGPT to generate a divinatory hexagram for Confucius, aiming to evaluate whether the result aligns with the preceding arguments and analyses.

To cast a hexagram for Confucius, it is essential to determine his date of birth. According to Sun’s *Confucius: In Search of a New Model for World Development*, Confucius was born in 551 BCE (the 22nd year of Duke Xiang of Lu, 魯襄公). The year 551 BCE corresponds to the *geng-xu* year (庚戌) in the Chinese lunar

⁵¹ *Ben wei ti ben wei yong* (本為體，變為用). Simply put, “essence as the core” refers to the fundamental nature or origin of something, which is the foundation of its existence. “Function as the application” describes how this core essence develops into practical uses or functions. It emphasizes the transformation from fundamental essence to practical application.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 415

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 414

⁵⁴ Fu and Fu, pp. 54.

⁵⁵ Legge’s translation, pp. 135. (入于左腹，獲明夷之心，出于門庭。)

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 137

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gou’s, pp. 284.

⁵⁹ Lin’s *I Ching* is easy, pp. 16.

⁶⁰ Guo pp.30

⁶¹ *Yixuewang* (易學網). The website provides many *Yi Ching* lessons and divination online, but only in Chinese. <https://www.eee-learning.com/content/9>.

⁶² One of these APPs popular on the internet and mobile phone is Ezy Yi Ching (<https://itsmystyle.github.io/>), where one can easily ask for their puzzled problems.

calendar. Confucius was thus born under the zodiac sign of the Dog.⁶³ His birth date corresponds to September 28th, in the lunar calendar's month of *you* (酉), on the day of *geng-zi* (庚子).⁶⁴

Based on the data, 551 BCE, the year of *geng-xu*, in August, the month of *you*, and on the 27th, the day of *geng-zi*, the prompt to ChatGPT is:

Using the *I Ching*, construct Confucius's hexagram based on his birthdate: 551 BCE, the year of *geng-xu* (庚戌), the 8th lunar month (酉月), and the 27th day, *geng-zi* (庚子), and provide an interpretation.⁶⁵

Based on the information provided for Confucius's birth, what ChatGPT renders is:

1. Upper Trigram (Year Hexagram): Determined by the heavenly stem and earthly branch of the birth year.
2. Lower Trigram (Month Hexagram): Derived from the lunar month number.
3. Moving Line (Active Yao): The day of the lunar month determines which line is active.
4. Combine the primary hexagram (upper and lower trigrams) and derive the transformed hexagram (based on the moving line).⁶⁶

Step 1: Calculate the Upper Trigram (Year Hexagram)

Year: Gengxu Year (庚戌)

Heavenly Stem "Geng" (庚) = 7

Earthly Branch "Xu" (戌) = 11

Total: $7+11=18$ $18 \bmod 8 = 2$

Upper Trigram: (Dui, representing "Lake/Marsh")

Step 2: Calculate the Lower Trigram

Lunar Month: 8th Lunar Month (酉)

The corresponding number for the 8th lunar month is 8.

$8 \bmod 8 = 0$, but by traditional rules, 0 is converted to 8.

Lower Trigram: (Kun, representing "Earth")⁶⁷

Step 3: Determining the Moving Line (Active Yao Position)

Lunar Day: 27th day of the lunar month (庚子)

$27 \bmod 6 = 3$

Moving Line: The 3rd line is active.⁶⁸

⁶³ About the zodiac sign of Confucius, the reader can refer to Huang's 《你不懂其實很有限的生肖：文學與歷史形塑下的十二靈獸》 (*You Don't Understand the Intriguing Zodiac: The Twelve Spirit Animals Shaped by Literature and History*).

⁶⁴ Sun, pp. 88 and 471. The exact birthdate of Confucius remains a subject of debate. However, the most widely accepted date in contemporary scholarship is 551 BCE. Officially, his birthday is celebrated on September 28th, corresponding to the 27th day of the 8th month in the lunar calendar.

⁶⁵ The following text is all from ChatGPT without any alterations; however, the notation is mine.

⁶⁶ It is impossible in modern times to ask Confucius to generate a hexagram using King Wen's method through yarrow stalks, coin tossing, or card drawing. Instead, the hexagram construction method employed here by ChatGPT follows the technique outlined in Shao Yong's *Meihua Yishu* (*Plum Blossom Numerology* 《梅花易數》). In this approach, the upper trigram is derived from the celestial stem and terrestrial branch of the year, the lower trigram is based on the month, and the moving line is determined by the day's heavenly stem and earthly branch. For more details of this methodology of divination, refer to page 5 of *Meihua Yishu* by Shao Yong or pages 38–39 of *Modern Illustrated Diagram Illustration of Numeral Divination of Yi-Chin* 《現代圖解梅花易數》 by Yeh Chin-Chun and Yeh Wei-Ling.

⁶⁷ The meticulous reader might find something inconsistent here. The upper trigram ChatGPT employs both the celestial stem and terrestrial branch; the lower trigram, since the prompt doesn't provide it with the celestial stem, ChatGPT ignores it and forms the trigram based only on the terrestrial branch.

⁶⁸ What is more alienating but interesting here is that, regarding the moving line, ChatGPT discards the celestial stem and terrestrial branch, judging the moving line only based on numerous dates (27) instead of *gen-zi* (庚子). If insisted on *gen-zi*, *gen* is 7, and *zi* is 1. The sum 8 divided by 6 is 2, so the moving line is on the second one, leading to Lake over water: Kun/Exhausting (Huang 374), a disparate hexagram from ChatGPT's rendering. One might question this inconsistency and doubt the credibility of the results. Nevertheless, according to Alfred Huang's interpretation, "Kun means difficulty and hardship. It suggests a difficult position or situation. In ancient times it meant being surrounded by enemies, poverty-stricken, extremely tired, or exhausted" (374). Regardless of whether this reflects determinism, no matter how the moving line transforms, it consistently points to Confucius's struggles in his later years in the realm of politics.

Step 4: Assemble the Hexagrams

Primary Hexagram:

Combine the upper trigram (☱ Dui) and lower trigram (☷ Kun):

Hexagram 45: Lake over Earth (Gathering Together 澤地萃).

Changed Hexagram:

The 3rd line is active, so it changes.

Hexagram 31: Lake over Mountain (Influence 澤山咸).

Step 5: Interpretation

Primary Hexagram: Gathering Together (Hexagram 45, 澤地萃)

Hexagram Meaning: The hexagram represents the act of gathering and uniting forces for a shared purpose.

It suggests collective efforts to achieve a harmonious and beneficial outcome.

Judgment:

“Gathering Together. Success. The king approaches his temple. It is beneficial to see the great man. Success is assured. Perseverance brings good fortune. Great offerings are auspicious. It is advantageous to undertake something.”

Interpretation:

The hexagram indicates success through collaboration and unity, emphasizing the importance of guidance from wise and capable individuals. However, it highlights the necessity of solemnity and preparation when approaching significant undertakings.

Image:

“Lakes upon the earth: the image of Gathering Together. Thus, the superior man renews his weapons to guard against unforeseen danger.”

Interpretation:

The image suggests preparedness in times of unity, warning against potential threats to collective efforts.

Relevance to Confucius:

This hexagram mirrors Confucius’s dedication to uniting disciples and fostering societal harmony. It highlights his philosophy of gathering individuals under a common ethical framework to achieve social and moral order, while also cautioning against complacency in the process.

Moving Line: Third Line

Line Text: “Gathering together with sighs. No benefit. Going forward brings no blame but some small regrets.”

Interpretation:

This line warns of difficulties or discord during the process of gathering forces. While progress may not yield immediate benefits, perseverance in the face of challenges prevents larger missteps. Minor setbacks may occur, but they are ultimately surmountable.

Resulting Hexagram: Influence (Hexagram 31, 澤山咸)

Hexagram Meaning: Influence signifies mutual attraction, resonance, and emotional connection. It emphasizes the harmonious interaction between complementary forces.

Judgment:

“Influence. Success. Perseverance is favorable. Taking a wife is auspicious.”

Interpretation:

This hexagram suggests fruitful outcomes through resonance and mutual understanding. It emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in partnerships and connections, which leads to harmony.

Image:

“Lakes rest on the mountain: the image of Influence. Thus, the superior man accepts people with an open and accommodating mind.”

Interpretation:

The superior man is advised to maintain humility and openness, fostering a receptive attitude toward others to create mutual understanding.

Relevance to Confucius:

This hexagram represents Confucius's enduring influence through his teachings. His ability to inspire and resonate with his disciples and future generations aligns with the principle of mutual responsiveness. This transformation reflects the emotional and intellectual connection fostered by his philosophy.

Comprehensive Interpretation:

Primary Hexagram: Gathering Together (Hexagram 45, 澤地萃)

This symbolizes Confucius's mission to unite people under his ethical and educational framework. The focus on collective effort and shared goals reflects his lifelong dedication to moral and societal reform.

Moving Line (Third Line):

The third line represents challenges and discord in the process of gathering. It acknowledges the resistance Confucius faced during his time, both from society and his contemporaries, yet underscores the value of persistence and ethical conduct.⁶⁹

Resulting Hexagram: Influence (Hexagram 31, 澤山咸)

This transformation reflects Confucius's enduring legacy. His teachings transcended his immediate challenges, fostering a deep emotional and intellectual resonance with subsequent generations.

These hexagrams collectively portray Confucius's journey: the effort to unite, the challenges along the way, and the eventual success of his philosophy, which continues to inspire and guide.⁷⁰

The above analysis by ChatGPT, using Shao Yong's *Plum Blossom Numerology* to interpret the hexagram cast for Confucius, demonstrates that ChatGPT has synthesized vast online data. It explains Confucius's life and achievements through the primary hexagram, changing hexagram, and moving lines, referencing *The Book of Changes* by interpreting the hexagram texts and line statements. However, readers will notice that ChatGPT did not apply any rules or methods from *CD*, *AD*, or *WC* — traditional divination texts. This is likely because these texts have limited online availability, especially in English, making it difficult for ChatGPT to incorporate hexagram interpretations based on those specific divination principles. However, it is reasonable to believe that ChatGPT will soon be able to process and incorporate these materials as well.

⁶⁹ From the primary hexagram, "Success is assured," "through collaboration and unity," and some "potential threats to collective efforts," in terms of politics, according to Sun's *Confucius*, Confucius reached the pinnacle of his political career at the age of 54, ascending to the position of Minister of Crime and Acting Prime Minister in the state of Lu (230, 472). It seems to fit the hexagram judgment mentioned-above, a great success. However, he was dismissed by the Ji family after merely three months in office. From this hexagram, one can interpret the turning point in Confucius' political life, marking his transition from prosperity to decline. Under Confucius' governance, the state of Lu experienced notable improvements, which alarmed the neighboring state of Qi. In response, Qi official devised a scheme, gifting female entertainers and fine horses to the Duke Ding of Lu, to distract him from state affairs. This maneuver deepened the moral and policy rift between Confucius and Duke Ding of Lu, rendering their differences irreconcilable (251). The third line, the moving line, is the turning point, which annotates bluntly "No benefit," warning of "difficulties or discord." "It emphasizes the harmonious interaction between complementary forces." The moving line stands for "challenges and discord in the process of gathering." Had Confucius been willing to compromise with an "accommodating mind," setting aside his moral standards to form "partnerships" and "connections" with the Ji family, and adopting a more "receptive attitude" toward those female entertainers and fine horses, there might have been room for a reversal of his circumstances. The resulting hexagram emphasizes "the harmonious interaction between complementary forces." And, even "Taking a wife is auspicious." After being dismissed from his position, in the 14th year of Duke Ding of Lu (496 BCE), the 54-year-old Confucius, marginalized and pressured, was compelled to leave the state of Lu. He embarked on a journey to various states, accompanied by his disciples, to present his political philosophy to noble families, ministers, and feudal lords. For 14 years, he faced rejection, expulsion, and even threats to his life, narrowly escaping death from starvation during his travels. At the age of 68, he returned to Lu, dedicating himself to writing and compiling the Six Classics. The story of the conflict between Confucius and the Ji family can also refer to <https://ctext.org/shiji/kong-zi-shi-jia/zh>, 20.

⁷⁰ Based on the conclusions provided by ChatGPT for the above hexagram, one might speculate that ChatGPT is remarkably intelligent, potentially drawing upon its extensive access to information about Confucius' life from online sources. It appears that these conclusions were extrapolated by correlating the hexagram's interpretation with known historical data about Confucius' experiences and legacy.

The practice of divination through the *Changes* has long been regarded by academic circles as superstition, lacking the sophistication necessary to be considered a refined subject worthy of scholarly discourse. Additionally, its profound and often obscure metaphysical concepts have made it difficult for the general public to study and approach with ease. “Practice divination through *Changes* before learning *Changes* might be a better way to understand *Changes*” (Shang 3).⁷¹

Like everything else, the more experience one gains, the closer to perfection one comes.... The *I Ching* will grow on you, and the more you use it, the more its value to you will increase, and the more benefit you will be able to derive from it. Like any other gem, its value increases with age. (Sherril and Chu 36)

The *Changes* resembles an endless mural composed of numerous diverse mosaics, rendering its obscure aspect. Thus, any tiles, different sides, and colors, that clarify its image should be welcomed.

⁷¹ *wei xue yi, xian xue shi*, (未學易，先學筮).

References

Chinese sources:

- Fu, Pei-rong, and Fu Qi-xuan. 傅佩榮與傅琪煊, 《解讀易經》, 新北: 立緒文化事業有限公司, 2022。
- Guo, Jian-xun. 郭建勳, 《新譯易經讀本》, 台北: 三民書局, 2012。
- Huang, Qi-fang. 黃啟方, 《你不懂其實很有限的生肖: 文學與歷史形塑下的十二靈獸》, 台北: 台灣商務, 2022。
- Lin, Ji-min. 林吉閩, 《卦裡玄機》, 台北: 蕨森, 2011。
- Liu, Ben. 劉賁, 編者, 《野鶴占卜全書》, 台北: 進源文化, 2013。
- Liu, Guangben and Rong, Yi. 劉光本和榮益, 《梅花易數白話解》, 濟南: 山東人民出版社, 1993。
- Shao, Yong. 邵雍, 《梅花易數》, 上海: 文明書局, 1925。
- Shang, Bing-he. 尚秉和, 《周易占卜故事》, 宋燁憑, 蘇建利翻譯, 北京: 中央編譯出版社, 2010。
- Sun, Zhen. 孫震, 《孔子新傳—尋找世界發展的新模式》(*Confucius: In Search of a New Model for World Development*), 台北: 遠見天下文化, 2021。
- Tang, Yi. 唐頤, 《圖解京氏易傳》, 陝西: 陝西師範大學出版社, 2009。
- Tao, Yang. 陶陽, 《中國神話》, 鍾秀編輯, 上海: 上海文藝出版社, 1990。
- Yeh, Chin-Chun and Yeh, Wei-Ling. 葉勁君和葉韋伶, 《現代圖解梅花易數》, 台北: 渤海堂, 2013。
- Zhen, Jin-feng. 鄭景峰, 《最新標點卜筮正宗》, 台北: 武陵, 2001。

English sources:

- Balkin, Jack M. *The Laws of Changes: I Ching and the Philosophy of Life*. Schocken, 2002.
- Chen, Shih-chuan. "How to Form a Hexagram and Consult the I Ching." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 92.2 (1972), p. 237-49.1
- Cleary, Thomas. *The Taoist I Ching*. Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1986.
- Huang, Alfred. *The Complete I Ching*. Vermont, 1998.
- Jou, Tsung Hwa. *The Tao of I Ching: Way to Divination*. Tai Chi Foundation. Arizona, 2000.
- Kee, Alfred. *When I Ching Has No Text: Wen Wang Gua coins Divination*. Kindle ed. AK Guru, 2021.
- Legge, James. *The Sacred Books of China: The I Ching*. 2 edition, Dover Publication, 1988.
- Schulz, Larry James. *Lai Chih-Te (1525-1604) and the phenomenology of the "Classic of change" (I Ching)*. University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, 1982.
- Sherrill, Wallace A., and Wen K Chu. *An Anthology of I Ching*. Arkana, 1989.
- Smith, Kidder. "The Difficulty of the Yijing." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (Cleary)*, vol. 15, 1993, pp. 1–15. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/495370. Accessed 23 June 2021.
- Smith, Richard J., et. "The *Book of Changes* as a Mirror of the Mind: The Evolution of Zouyi (周易) in China and beyond." The Fourth International Conference of Analytical Psychology and Chinese Culture. Fudan U., Shanghai April 2009.

Web sources:

- Chinese Text Project (中國哲學書電子化計劃) <https://ctext.org/zh>
- Yixuewang (易學網). <https://www.eee-learning.com/content/9>
- Ezy Yi Ching. <https://itsmystyle.github.io/>