



# Jesuit Interpretations of the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in Historical and Comparative Perspective

Richard J. Smith  
Rice University

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## Summary

This essay, based on research for a series of scholarly studies on the *Yijing* (*I Ching* or *Classic of Changes*),<sup>1</sup> argues

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<sup>1</sup> The first volume, a general overview, has been tentatively titled: *The Yijing (I-Ching or Book of Changes) in Global Perspective: The Evolution of a Classic*. For some of my preliminary work on this vast topic, see Richard J. Smith, "The Place of the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in World Culture: Some Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," *Journal of Chinese Philoso-*

that the use of the *Changes* by the Jesuits in eighteenth century China, like the "accommodation strategy" of the Society of Jesus more generally, must be viewed in broad historical and comparative perspective. What I seek to show here is that the Jesuit effort to emphasize affinities between the Bible and the *Yijing* in Qing dynasty China was part of a much larger process by which the *Changes* came to be transmitted to other cultures, and that this process of transmission and transformation, sometimes described as "globalization,"<sup>2</sup> sheds useful light on questions of cross-cultural contact and cross-cultural understanding. Although the Jesuit hermeneutical strategy described as "Figurism"<sup>3</sup> was severely condemned by the other Catholic orders, eventually proscribed by the Church, and maligned even within the Jesuit establishment itself, this interpretive approach was part of a long tradition of *Yijing* exegesis and

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*phy*" (Winter, 1998), 391-422; "The *Yijing* (Classic Of Changes) in Global Perspective: Some Reflections," Guoji *Yijing* xuehui [International *Yijing* Association], ed., *Erlingling'er nian shijie Yijing dahui lunwen ji* (Collected Papers of the 2002 Classic of Changes World Conference), Zhongli, Taiwan, 2002, 754-791; and "The Jesuits and Evidential Research in Late Imperial China: Some Reflections," *Ex/Change* (February 2002), 7-12. For one of several useful Chinese language studies on this topic, consult Yang Hongsheng, *Bentu yu yuwai: Yixue di xiandaihua yu shijiehua* (The Native Land and Beyond: The Modernization and Globalization of Changes Studies), Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue yuan, 1995.

2 For a useful discussion of the concept of "globalization" in an Asian context, consult Grant Evans, "Between the Global and the Local There Are Regions, Culture Areas, and National States: A Review Article," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 33.1 (February, 2002), 147-162.

3 Figurism, to be described more fully below, refers to an effort on the part of certain Jesuit missionaries to find "signs" (*figurae*) in the Chinese classics that indicated God's revelations.

textual transmission--one that not only predated the Jesuits by several centuries but also proved remarkably tenacious well after the Society of Jesus had been disbanded. Indeed, evidence of its tenacity can still be found today, both East and West.

### Introduction

During the past three thousand years or so, the *Yijing* or *Classic of Changes* has gradually become a global property. By stages, in a process that is still rather poorly understood, the *Changes* gradually spread from China to other realms of East Asia-- notably Japan, Korea, Annam (Vietnam) and Tibet. The Jesuits brought knowledge of the classic to Europe during the eighteenth century, and from there it travelled to the Americas, finding a particularly receptive audience in the United States from the 1960s onward. A recent annotated bibliography on the *Yijing* lists more than 500 books and dissertations and about the same number of articles related to the *Changes* in English alone.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, in Asia itself, the work continues to flourish, even on the Chinese Mainland, where an *Yijing*-fever (*Yijing re*) erupted in the 1980s and continues to this day. Every year for the past two decades or so, literally thousands of books, articles, essays and conference papers have been written on the *Changes* in dozens of different languages. How do we account for the remarkable transnational spread and enduring popularity of this document, both East

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<sup>4</sup> See Edward Hacker, Edward, Steve Moore and Lorraine Patsco, eds. *I Ching: An Annotated Bibliography*, London, New York, etc.: Taylor and Francis, 2002.

and West?

Clearly the "globalization" of the *Yijing* was in part the product of its alluring "special features" (*tese*, *tezhi*, etc.): its exalted position as "the first of the [Chinese] classics;" its challenging basic text; its elaborate numerology and other forms of symbolic representation; its utility as a tool of divination; its philosophically sophisticated commentaries; its psychological potential (as a means of attaining selfknowledge); and its reputation for a kind of encyclopedic comprehensiveness. The spread of the *Yijing* was also facilitated by the self-conscious strategies employed by those who sought to use it in various environments for their own political, social, intellectual or evangelical purposes. In the process the *Changes* invariably became "domesticated," but not always in ways that its advocates might have originally envisioned.<sup>5</sup>

The Jesuit approach to the *Yijing* provides a particularly interesting glimpse into the process of globalization--first, because it involved not only the transmission of the Chinese classic to the West but also the transmission of the *Bible* to China through the *Changes* (and other canonical writings); and second, because the Jesuit strategy had certain striking unintended consequences. That is, although the Jesuits developed certain positive interpretive strategies that appealed to kindred spirits both in China and Europe, by engendering a powerful negative reaction in each place, they also helped to shape in significant ways alternative approaches to the *Yijing*.

Before exploring the specific contributions of the Jesuits,

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. J.A.G. Roberts, *China to Chinatown: Chinese Food in the West*. London: Reaktion, 2002, which insightfully discusses the "globalization" of Chinese food.

and the later history of their "biblical" approach to the classic, it may be useful to consider the question of cultural transmission in a somewhat broader context. Let me begin by discussing with specific examples some of the distinctive characteristics of the *Changes* that almost certainly affected the way it was received and understood, both in East Asia and the West.

### The "Special Characteristics" of the *Yijing*

One of the most distinctive features of the *Yijing* is its cryptic "basic text," consisting of sixty-four divinatory symbols known as hexagrams (*gua*). [FIGURE 1 (a hexagram)] These symbols represent cosmic forces that operate in conjunction with variables of time and space to shape change in the universe. Each hexagram consists of a combination of six "solid" ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) and/or broken ( \_ \_ \_ ) lines, and each has a name that refers to a physical object, an activity, a state, a situation, a quality, an emotion, or a relationship--for example, "Waiting," "Contention," "Peace," "Obstruction," "A Well," "A Cauldron," "Radical Change," "Fellowship," "Modesty," "Observation," "Elegance," "Compliance," "Joy," etc.

In addition, each hexagram possesses (A) a short statement, often called a "judgment" (*tuan* or *guaci*), which epitomizes its overall symbolic significance, (B) at least two constituent trigrams--each with a name and several symbolic associations (see below), and (C) a brief written "line statement" (*yaoci*) indicating something significant about each of its six lines. Taken together, and interpreted correctly--either in the course of divination or as the result of careful contemplation-

-the *tuan*, trigram associations and *yaoci* provide a general map of the field of possibilities represented by a given hexagram (or hexagrams)--a practical navigational guide designed to facilitate an understanding of one's place in the cosmos. The trick has always been to read the map correctly.<sup>6</sup>

A look at the hexagram Gou (#44), conventionally translated as "Encounter," indicates some of the difficulties. One philologically rigorous translation of its judgment and line statements reads:

Judgment: A maiden will be healthy. Don't use this [divinatory information] to take a maiden as a wife.

Line 1: Tied to a metal spindle: the determination is auspicious. Ominous for going [out] and seeing someone. An emaciated pig; the captive is balky.

Line 2: There are fish in the slaughterhouse [i.e. the kitchen; *pao*]: there will be no misfortune. It will not be favorable to be a guest.

Line 3: With no skin on the buttocks, his walking is ... labored. Threatening, but there will be no great misfortune.

Line 4: There are no fish in the slaughterhouse: ominous for rising to action.

Line 5: Wrap the melon with purple willow leaves. Hold a jade talisman in the mouth. Something fell from the sky.

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<sup>6</sup> For an excellent general discussion of the "problematic" aspects of the *Yijing*, see Kidder Smith, "The Difficulty of the *Yijing*." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 15 (1993), 1-15.

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Line 6: They lock their horns: distress. There will be no misfortune.<sup>7</sup>

In some respects, statements of this sort suggest the rich imagery and obscure metaphorical language of the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. Consider, for instance, the first six verses of Chapter 13 (from the King James version):

1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.
2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.
3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.
4. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

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<sup>7</sup> Based primarily on Richard A. Kunst, *The Original "Yijing": A Text, Phonetic Transcription, Translation, and Indexes, with Sample Glosses*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985, 326-327; cf. Richard John Lynn, trans., *The Classic of Changes (As Interpreted by Wang Bi)*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, 411-414 and notes; Edward L. Shaughnessy, trans., *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1996 (1996), 8 and notes.

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5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

A rendering in the *Yijing* style might yield something like:

Line 1: A beast arises from the water; seven heads, ten horns; outrageous irreverence. Line 2: Like a leopard, with the feet of a bear, the mouth of a lion, and the power, position and authority of a dragon. And so forth.

Naturally enough, commentaries were needed to make sense of such texts.<sup>8</sup> The most influential set of early commentaries to the *Yi*, which evolved during the late Warring States period, became known collectively as the "Ten Wings" (*shiyi*). According to tradition, Confucius himself wrote these commentaries, which became an inextricable part of the

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<sup>8</sup> John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, places Chinese classical exegesis in valuable comparative perspective. For the general role of commentary in Chinese history and culture, consult Daniel K. Gardner, "Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57.2 (May 1998), 397-422 and Yen-zen Tsai, "*Ching and Chuan: Towards Defining the Confucian Scriptures in Han China (206 BCE-220 CE)*," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1993. Shaughnessy, Edward L. "Commentary, Philosophy, and Translation: Reading Wang Bi's Commentary to the *Yi jing* in a New Way," *Early China*, 22 (1997), 221-245, provides an excellent analysis of early *Yijing* commentary in his review of Lynn *The Classic of Changes*.

*Changes* in the early Han period. Had it not been for this close (albeit spurious) association with the Sage, we may doubt whether Chinese scholars throughout the imperial era would have given the document so much careful scrutiny, and searched so relentlessly for its deeper significance. We may also doubt whether the *Changes* have been designated a "classic," as it was in 136 B.C.E.

What the "Ten Wings" did, among other things, was to encourage an interpretive approach to the *Changes* that emphasized correlative thinking, a humane cosmological outlook, and a fundamental unity and resonance between Heaven, Earth and Man. From the Han period onward, the logic of the *Changes* became relentlessly associational, impelling commentators to devise ever more elaborate interpretive systems designed to reveal the relationship between the lines, trigrams and hexagrams of the *Yijing* and the natural order. These correspondences were generally viewed as "effective," and not simply "descriptive." That is, exponents of the *Changes* generally assumed that "like things" of all sorts—including, of course, lines, trigrams, and hexagrams—interacted with other "like things" in predictable patterns of mutual response" (*tonglei ganying*).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See A.C. Graham, *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking*, Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, National University of Singapore, 1986; Richard J. Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society*, Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, England: Westview Press, 1991; John B. Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984; and Willard Peterson's review of Henderson's book in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46.2 (December, 1986), 657-674. Note also the several illuminating articles in the special issue of the *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 72 (November, 2002), titled "Reconsidering the Correl-

The "Ten Wings" did more than simply encourage the process of correlative thinking. They also identified a number of concrete "images" (*xiang*) associated with, and reflected in, each of the hexagrams and their constituent "trigrams," thus supplementing the already rich symbolic repertoire embodied in the written judgments and the line statements.<sup>10</sup> This development vastly amplified the interpretive possibilities of any given hexagram. Qian (#1), for example, came to symbolize not only certain "core" qualities, such as activity, creativity and virility, but also a great many other attributes and identifications: hardness and firmness, Heaven, the father, ordering and controlling, functioning like the head, ruling, and waging war. The "Explanation of Trigrams," one of the "wings," states succinctly: "Qian is Heaven, is round, is the sovereign, is father, is jade, is metal, is coldness, is ice, is pure red, is a fine horse, an old horse, an emaciated horse, a piebald horse, is

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ative Cosmology of Ancient China."

**10** The term *xiang* referred not only to things that could be seen, but also to ideas that could be grasped, processes that could be discerned, and relationships that could be defined. Words "captured" (i.e. expressed) images, just as images expressed ideas ("concepts"). This sort of logic applied not only to hexagrams and trigrams, but also to individual lines and numbers. Thus, for example, the "image" of yang, represented concretely as a solid line or an odd number, came to be viewed as representative of some things that were visible--e.g. the father (as opposed to the wife), men (as opposed to women), etc.--and some things that were not--e.g. Heaven, firmness, spirit, formlessness and so forth. *Yin* lines and numbers represented the opposite, of course. Similarly, the images of "greater" and "lesser" *yin* and *yang* might be represented by the "doubling" of *yin* (broken) and *yang* (solid) lines. See Jiang Yong, *He Luo jingyun* (The Quintessence of the Yellow River Chart and the Luo River Writing), Beijing: Xueyuan chuban she, 1989 (annotated by Sun Guozhong), 198 ff.

the fruit of the tree."<sup>11</sup>

By the same token, the symbolism of Kun (#2) now included not only docility, passivity and receptivity, but also the attributes and identifications of softness and suppleness, Earth and the mother, supporting and containing, functioning like the stomach, harboring, and nourishing. In the words of the "Explanation of Trigrams," "Kun is Earth, is mother, is cloth, is a cooking pot, is frugality, is impartiality, is a cow with a calf, is a great cart, is the markings on things, is the multitude of things themselves, and is the handle of things. In respect to soils, it is the kind that is black."<sup>12</sup> Other "wings" supplied additional attributes and identifications, while the shape of certain trigrams and hexagrams encouraged visual associations.<sup>13</sup>

The ambiguous language of the line readings, like the multivalent symbolism of the trigrams and hexagrams, not only amplified the range of interpretive possibilities but also produced endless scholarly controversies. Consider, for example, the following phrase from the first line of the Gou hexagram (#44), quoted above: "An emaciated pig; the captive is balky" (*leishi fu zhizhu*). Putting aside the animal symbolism, which is itself quite problematic, we are still left with a sense of uncertainty about what is actually going on. *Zhi* ("to walk"), when pronounced *di*, refers to the hoof of a pig, while *zhu* can mean both to limp and to amble, as a horse might. The term *lei* ("lean" or "emaciated") might be a loan word for *lei* ("to tie with a rope"), which would, of course, reinforce the

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<sup>11</sup> Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 123.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> For one of many examples, see Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 107.

notion of captivity, but *fu* (captive) may well be a loan word for *ru* ("to suckle")--in which case the meaning of the passage (a pig suckling its young) would change considerably, even if *lei* were still understood as a loan word.<sup>14</sup>

But speculation and debate about the terms used in the *Yijing* involved more than borrowed sounds. The etymological analysis of these expressions also revolved around the process of dividing written characters into their constituent elements and then relating them--an interpretive technique known as *huiyi* (combining ideas), employed regularly by the highly influential Han dynasty dictionary known as the *Shuowen jiezi* (Analysis of Characters as an Explanation of Writing). Thus, for example, the word for "to split" (*xi*) is explained in the *Shuowen* as "derived from *mu* (wood) and *jin* (axe)," and the word for "faithful" or "sincere" (*xin*) is "derived from *ren* (human being) and *yan* (words)"--i.e. a person standing by his or her word. Similarly, Chinese commentators often associated the trigram/hexagram *Dui* with verbal communication because the character *Dui* formed part of the word *shuo*, "to speak" or "to explain." This sort of visual word play had its counterpart in Chinese popular culture in the widespread divining practice known as "dissecting" (*chai*) or "fathoming" (*ce*) characters, but even elites often used this type of "character analysis" in their essays as a rhetorical device.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 96-97. For a critique of the "over-reading" of such symbols, see Lai Guisan, *Jiao Xun Diaogu lou Yixue yan jiu* (Research on Jiao Xun's Study of the Changes in the Diaogu lou), Taipei: Liren shuju, 1994, 375-377 and 398 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Discussed in Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 197, 201-202, 209-210, 216-218, etc. and Richard J. Smith, *China's Cultural Heritage*:

The numerology of the *Yijing*--emphasized in particular by the most influential of the Ten Wings, the "Great Commentary" (*Dazhuan*; also known as the *Xici* or "Appended Verbalizations")--was derived initially from the binary structure of the solid and broken lines, from divinatory practices involving the manipulation of yarrow stalks, and from the mathematical possibilities presented by various combinations of lines, trigrams and hexagrams. It naturally introduced another level of interpretive complexity to the *Changes*, encouraging students of the *Changes* to try to correlate the lines, trigrams and hexagrams of the work with other cosmic forces and configurations, including *yin* (represented by even numbers) and *yang* (represented by odd numbers), the five agents or "active qualities" (*wuxing*), the ten heavenly stems (*tiangan*), the twelve earthly branches (*dizhi*), the twenty-eight asterisms (*ershiba xiu*), and so forth.<sup>16</sup>

The numerology of the *Yijing* also encouraged the creation of a great many diagrams and illustrations over time, including the famed Yellow River Chart (*Hetu*) and the Luo River Writ-

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*The Qing Dynasty, 1644-1912*, Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford, England, Westview Press, 1994, 108 ff. Cf. Lai Guisan, *Jiao Xun Diaogu lou Yixue yan jiu* cited in note 11 above. Plays on words having the same or similar sounds were also common in Chinese philosophical discussions.

**16** This "numerical" approach to the *Changes*, dating from Han times, came to be known as the school of "images and numbers" (*xiangshu*), as distinct from the more philosophically oriented school of "meanings and patterns" (*yili*). For a discussion of the various translations and implications of these terms, see Howard L. Goodman and Anthony Grafton, "Ricci, the Chinese, and the Toolkits of Textualists," *Asia Major* 3.2 (1990), 124 (text and note 93); also the complications and ramifications noted by Limin Bai, "Mathematical Study and Intellectual Transition in the Early and Mid-Qing," *Late Imperial China* 16.2 (December 1995), 23-61, esp. 38 ff.

ing (*Luoshu*), which became the foundation for a substantial branch of mathematical learning as well as the inspiration for a great deal of philosophical speculation, debate and even religious practice.<sup>17</sup> [FIGURES 2 and 3 (the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*)] The standard *Hetu* represents the numbers from 1 to 10 in such a way as to pair odd (small white circles; *yang*) numbers with even (small black circles; *yin*) ones. These numbers are then correlated with the five directions (and hence, with the *wuxing*): 2 and 7 to the south (fire), 1 and 6 to the north (water), 3 and 8 to the east (wood), 4 and 9 in the west (metal), and 5 and 10 at the center (earth). This scheme reflects the so-called mutual production sequence of the *wuxing*. In the *Luoshu* we see a "magic square" consisting of nine subdivisions, in which all of the numbers (again, often represented by small black and white circles) in any row, whether perpendicular, horizontal, or diagonal, add up to fifteen. Even (*yin*) numbers occupy all the corners, and the pattern of change is one of "mutual conquest".<sup>18</sup>

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**17** For an historical overview of the scholarly controversies surrounding these two charts, see the essay by Sun Guozhong in Jiang, *He Luo jingyun*, 445 ff. The illustrations in Shih Wei and Qiu Xiaobo, eds. *Zhouyi tushi da dian* (A Dictionary Explaining Illustrations [Related to the] *Zhou Changes*), Beijing: Zhongguo gongren chuban she, 1994, *passim*, indicate their ubiquitousness. For an overview of the place of the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* in Chinese mathematics, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956-present, 3: 55 ff.; Li Yan, *Zhongguo suanxue shi* (A History of Chinese Mathematics), Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1984, 118 ff.; John N. Crossley and Anthony W.C. Lun, trans., *Chinese Mathematics: A Concise History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, 96-97.

**18** For a convenient discussion by the great Song dynasty scholar, Zhu Xi, see the first section of Joseph Adler's on-line translation of the *Yixue qimeng* (Introduction to the Study of the *Classic of Changes*)

From these two diagrams, ever more elaborate numerological schemes developed--particularly in the late Ming and early Qing periods, a time marked by great interest in schematic illustrations of this sort, as well as a burst of creative and critical scholarship on the *Yijing*. The Ming scholar, Lai Zhide (1525-1604), for instance, viewed the *wuxing* operations expressed in the *Hetu* as a function of ascending values of odd and even digits. According to him, odd numbers began in the north (the origin of all yang tendencies) with one, and passed clockwise through three, seven, and nine, thereby describing one circuit of accumulation (*xi*) and dispersal (*xiao*). Even numbers began in the south and followed a similar clockwise path from two through four, six, and eight. With variations, the same process could be used with the *Luoshu*.<sup>19</sup> [FIGURE 4 (a diagram from Lai's book)]

Paralleling the development of explanatory schemes based on the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* were elaborate configurations of hexagrams--likewise designed to reveal patterns of cosmic relationships and cosmic change. One of the most famous and influential of these, attributed to the brilliant Song dynasty scholar, Shao Yong (1011-1077), is the so-called

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<http://www2.kenyon.edu/depts/religion/fac/adler/Writings/Chimeng.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Lai's many charts can be found in Shi Wei and Qiu Xiaobo, eds. *Zhouyi tushi da dian* (A Dictionary Explaining Illustrations [Related to the] *Zhou Changes*). Beijing: Zhongguo gongren chubanshe, 1994, 803-937. The most complete account of Lai's thought in English is Larry Schulz's "Lai Chih-te (1525- 1604) and the Phenomenology of the *Classic Of Change (I-Ching)*," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1982. See also Zhang Qicheng, *Yijing yingyong da baike* (A Practical Encyclopedia of the *Classic of Changes*), Taipei: Dijing qiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1996, 1: 267-269. For a brief Qing dynasty critique of Lai, see Jiang Yong's *He Luo jingyun*, 198.

"Fu Xi Arrangement of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams"--also known as the "Former Heaven" (*Xiantian*) sequence. In it, a square-shaped configuration of the sixty-four hexagrams (in which all the hexagrams in each horizontal row have the same lower trigram) is enclosed by a circle-shaped configuration in a different order (in which all *yin* lines at the bottom of the hexagrams are on the right side of the diagram and all *yang* lines at the bottom of the hexagrams are on the left side. By assigning numerical values to these hexagrams, and by correlating them with sets of four images (greater *yin* and lesser *yang* and lesser *yin* and greater *yang*)--each identified with one or another trigram--Shao believed he could explain all phenomena in the world--all qualities, all processes, all things, all conditions, and all relationships. He developed, in short, a comprehensive correlative system by which numbers linked to the hexagrams of the *Changes* could express non-numerical ideas.<sup>20</sup>

One of Shao's poems, preserved in the eighteenth century Qing encyclopedia *Gujin tushu jicheng* (Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings, Past and Present), suggests the comprehensiveness of his world view:

With nines [changing yang lines] you see  
a flock of dragons;

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<sup>20</sup> See Anne Birdwhistell, *Transition to Neo-Confucianism: Shao Yung on Knowledge and Symbols of Reality*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, 89 ff. *Ibid.*, 78-83 provides a clear explanation of Shao's distinction between word images, visual images, and number images; consult also James A. Ryan, "Leibniz's Binary System and Shao Yong's *Yijing*," *Philosophy East and West* 46.1 (January, 1996), 59-90 and Toda Toyosaburo, *Ekikyo chuyaku shi ko* (An Historical Outline of *Yijing* Commentaries), Tokyo: Kazama shobo, 1968, 451-460.

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The first [line of Qian] engenders all things.  
With sixes [changing yin lines] come  
eternal advantages;  
Because of Qian there are benefits.  
Four images times nine and you get thirty-six.  
Four images times six and you get twenty-four.  
Why is it that with [nothing more than]  
nines and sixes  
All human affairs can be fathomed?<sup>21</sup>

As is well known, Shao's mathematically logical but highly mechanical binary system would later intrigue the great European philosopher and mathematician, Wilhelm Gottfried von Leibniz (1646-1716), who learned of it from Father Joachim Bouvet (see below).<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the Ten Wings of the *Yijing* are significant for the remarkable brevity of their stories of early "mythical" Chinese culture heroes (Fu Xi, Shen Nong, Yao, Shun, etc.) and later historical figures (King Wen, King Wu, the Duke of Zhou, Confucius, etc.)--the distinction is, of course, a modern one. This feature of the work, like the cryptic "basic text," encouraged a great many commentaries of elaboration, speculation and clarification, including, as we shall see, a number produced outside of China.

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<sup>21</sup> Chen Menglei, et al., eds., *Qinding gujin tushu jicheng* (Imperial Edition of the Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings, Past and Present), Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1997, 55: 994.

<sup>22</sup> See Ryan, "Leibniz's Binary System," *passim*.

## The Reputation of the Changes

The *Yijing* had unrivalled prestige in late imperial China. In the minds of most Chinese, it was not only "the first of the classics," but also the origin of both writing and mathematics.<sup>23</sup> The editors of the great eighteenth century Chinese literary compilation known as the *Siku quanshu* (Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries) had this to say about the classic in their introductory remarks:

The *Changes* [allows us to] decipher the way of Heaven and illumine human affairs. ... [Its] way is broad and great, encompassing everything, including astronomy, geography, music, military methods, the study of rhymes, numerical calculations, and alchemy. All [these areas of knowledge] draw upon the Yi for their arguments.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, Chinese thinkers of nearly every philosophical persuasion cited the *Changes* for authority. From the Wei-Jin period onward, Buddhist apologists often used the trigrams, hexagrams and commentaries of the *Yijing* to explain their ideas.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the best known

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Smith, *China's Cultural Heritage*, 105 and Shen, Crossley and Lun, eds., *Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art*, 52-53.

<sup>24</sup> Ji Yun et al., eds., *Qinding Siku quanshu* (Imperial Edition of the Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries), Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987, *zongmu tiyao*, 1: 2b-3a.

<sup>25</sup> My thanks to Professor Hon Ze-ki for providing me with the unpublished notes for his 11/30/02 lecture on "The *Yijing* and the Buddhist Culture" at the Nan Putuo Temple in Xiamen, Fujian. For useful illustrations, consult Wang, Zhongyao's *Yixue yu Foxue* (Changes Studies and Buddhist Stud-

example is Zhixu's (1599-1655) *Zhouyi Chanjie* (A Chan [Zen] Interpretation of the *Zhou Changes*), which often analyzes hexagrams in terms of the various states of *dhyana* (meditation, absorption, etc.) and *prajna* (wisdom, insight, etc.).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Zhixu's work adds significantly to the symbolic repertoire of each hexagram. For example he tells us that:

Qian means strength. In Heaven it is [i.e. symbolizes] *yang* [or the sun]; on Earth it is firmness [*gang*]. In human beings it is intelligence [*zhi*] and a sense of duty [*yi*]; with respect to the essence of mind [*xing*; i.e. the Buddha nature] it is clear light [*zhao*; i.e. *prabhasvara*]; in spiritual practice it is observation [*guan*; i.e. visualization]. In the physical world it is what provides cover [*fou* (for the sentient beings who inhabit it?)]. In the physical body it is the head, the higher ruler. In the family it is the patriarch; in the country it is the king; in the empire it is the emperor.<sup>27</sup>

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ies), Beijing: Zhongguo sheju, 2001; also Douglass Alan White, "Interpretations of the Central Concept of the *I-Ching* during the Han, Sung and Ming Dynasties," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976, esp. 153 ff.

<sup>26</sup> See White, "Interpretations of the Central Concept," 171 ff.; also Thomas Cleary, trans., *The Buddhist I Ching*, Boston and London: Shambhala Press, 1987. In addition Ouyi wrote an apologetic book on the *Yijing* titled *Zhouyi Qian Kun ergua yuanjie* (A Perfect Interpretation of the Two Hexagrams Qian and Kun in the *Zhou Changes*).

<sup>27</sup> Zhixu, *Zhouyi Sishu Chanjie* (A Chan Interpretation of the Zhou Changes and the Four Books), Beijing: Tuanjie chuban she, 1996, 2. Cf. Cleary, trans., *The Buddhist I Ching*, 1.

Advocates of Religious Daoism, Judaism and Islam in China made similar efforts to promote their respective religious traditions using the authority of the *Changes*.<sup>28</sup> As one of many examples, Ming dynasty inscriptions on a stele from the synagogue at Kaifeng suggest that the ancient Hebrew script was derived from the signs and diagrams revealed to Fu Xi and to Yu in ancient times.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, of course, the *Yijing* became an invaluable source of philosophical inspiration, as well as a repository of several key concepts for Song neo-Confucians, who adopted certain Buddhist interpretations of the *Yijing* even as they sought to undermine Buddhism as a belief system. Their ambivalence is clearly evident in works such as the famous neo-Confucian compilation titled *Jinsi lu* (Reflection on Things at Hand; 1176), where we see a tension between the idea that the hexagram Gen refers to "stopping the mind from wandering"--which leads in turn to quietness, peace, calmness and enlightenment--and the idea that Gen refers simply to "resting at the proper place."<sup>30</sup>

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**28** See, for example, Eric Zürcher, "Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative" in David Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy, Its History and Meaning*, San Francisco: Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, 1994, 31-64; Andrew Plaks, "The Confucianization of the Kaifeng Jews: Interpretations of the Kaifeng Stelae Inscriptions," in Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *The Jews of China* (Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 36-49; Donald. D. Leslie, "Japhet in China." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 104.3 (1984), 403-409; and Thomas Cleary, trans. *The Taoist I Ching*. Boston and London: Shambala Press, 1986.

**29** Zürcher, "Jesuit Accommodation," 35-36. Similarly, in a late Qing treatise Islam is traced back to Fu Xi. *Ibid.*, 37.

**30** Wing-tsit Chan, trans. *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, 41; cf. *ibid.*, 146-147. See also the vigorous and illuminating Song dynasty

Often, however, Buddhists and neo-Confucians viewed the *Yijing* in starkly different ways. For example, the former tended to see the hexagram Fu (#24) as a reference to the notion of achieving *samadhi* (access to *dhyana*) through a process of "returning, extinguishing and resting,"<sup>31</sup> while the latter generally considered the hexagram to be symbol for the eternal process of "producing and reproducing" (*sheng-sheng*)--a gloss designed explicitly to undermine the Buddhist concept of Emptiness in favor of neo-Confucian principle (*li*), which they considered to be "selfevident, self-sufficient, eternal, concrete, definite, unalterable and correct."<sup>32</sup>

From the Song period onward, the prestige of the *Yijing* grew ever greater, inspiring thousands of essays, inscriptions, memorials, eulogies, poems and works of rhyme-prose (*fu*), as well as numerous works of art, from sophisticated literati paintings to popular crafts. It also provided a rich analytical vocabulary, based in part on trigram and hexagram symbolism, that proved extraordinarily serviceable not only in Chinese artistic and literary criticism but also in political and social commentary.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Chinese scientists used hexagram symbolism and *Yijing*-derived numerology to explain a wide

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debate over the dictum (attributed to Zhou Dunyi) that "studying only the Gen hexagram is better than reading the entire *Buddhavatamsaka-sutra*." White, "Interpretations of the Central Concept," 56 ff.

31 See the discussion by Chengguan (738-838) in White, "Interpretations of the Central Concept," 58-60.

32 Chan, trans., *Reflections on Things at Hand*, xxi, 6, 11-12 and 26-27, 38, 53, etc.

33 For examples of the *Yijing*'s pervasive influence in various realms of Chinese culture, see Zhang Qicheng, *Yijing yingyong da baike*, 1: 401-501 and 2: 3-418; also Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 119-128 and *China's Cultural Heritage*, 101-103, , 118-119, 120-128, 139-141, etc.

range of natural processes and phenomena in realms that we would today call mathematics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, meteorology and geology.<sup>34</sup>

We should not be surprised to find, then, that during the imperial era the *Yijing* exerted a profound cultural influence in several other countries of East Asia.<sup>35</sup> Although the specific circumstances under which the *Changes* found its way to these countries naturally differed, there seem to be certain common patterns in the way that it travelled. In the first place, because elites in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam were familiar with the classical Chinese language, there was no need to "translate" it—except, perhaps, to render it in vernacular prose to make it accessible to commoners. And since the *Yi* continued to occupy an exalted position in China for some two thousand years, there was never a time when it lacked prestige in these peripheral areas. Initially, scholars in each of the three societies embraced the *Changes*, using the work for their own varied purposes. Then other sectors of society followed suit. In this way, the *Yi* gradually became "domesticated," undergoing sometimes radical transformations in the process.

Japan provides an excellent illustration of these themes. The *Yijing* found its way to Japan as early as the 6th cen-

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34 Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 126-127.

35 See Yang, *Bentu yu yuwai*, 113-178; also the discussion in Smith, "The *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in Global Perspective." I am deeply indebted to Professor Benjamin Wai-ming Ng for his pioneering studies on the travels of the *Yijing* to Japan, Korea and Vietnam. See, for example, his *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000, his "The textitl Ching in Late Choson Thought," *Korean Studies* 24 (2000), and his "*Yijing* Scholarship in Late-Nguyen Vietnam: A Study of Le Van Ngu's *Chu Dich Cuu Nguyen* (An Investigation of the Origins of the *Yijing*, 1916), forthcoming in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*.

ture C.E., but it was not until the seventeenth century that interest in the document blossomed. From the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603, to the fall of the regime in 1868, more than a thousand books were written on the *Changes*--an amount is not much less than the total number of books written on the *Yijing* during the more-or-less contemporary Qing period in China--which had a population about fifteen times greater than Japan's. The *Yijing* was employed primarily to bolster and amplify Tokugawa Confucianism, but it was also used to validate or undergird other Japanese cultural traditions--including both "native" Shinto and "borrowed" Buddhism.

As a result, the *Changes* penetrated all levels of Japanese society. As in China, political leaders regularly sought its spiritual and practical guidance and elites studied it assiduously. Manuals for artisans explained crafts in terms of the *Yijing*, and in polite society its symbolism appeared everywhere--from artistic, literary and musical criticism to popular drama, the tea ceremony, flower arranging and even board games. It also played a significant role in Japanese science, medicine, military affairs and martial arts.<sup>36</sup>

Over time, the *Yijing* became increasingly assimilated to the indigenous culture of Japan, at least in some circles. Thus we find Jiun Sonja (1718-1804), a Shinto priest, arguing that:

The images of the River Chart [*Hetu*, which by some accounts provided the model for the eight trigrams], were manifested through the Okitsu Mirror [a round bronze object kept at the sacred

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<sup>36</sup> These points are abundantly documented in Ng, *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*, passim.

Ise shrine] . . . [and the authors of the *Changes*] copied our ancient divination of Takam-ga-hara [the plain of the high heaven where Izanagi and Izanami lived] in formulating its text and style. The whole book is completely borrowed from us [the Japanese].<sup>37</sup>

Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), for his part, went so far as to assert that the ancient Chinese culture hero Fu Xi, putative inventor of the trigrams, was actually a Shinto deity.<sup>38</sup>

Like Hirata, and perhaps influenced by him, the nationalistic Korean scholar, Sin Ch'aeho (1880-1936), attempted to "domesticate" the *Yijing* in a similar way, arguing, on the basis of forged texts, that Fu Xi was in fact a Korean prince who had learned the *Changes* from Hang Wong, an early Hangguk ruler. And even earlier, in a similar expression of cultural pride, Chong Yagyong (1762-1836), suggested that the brother of the last Shang dynasty king, the Viscount of Ji (Jizi)--who allegedly left China for Korea and was viewed by many Koreans as a kind of ancient "patriarch"--might have written part of the basic text of the *Changes*. Another strategy of domestication in Korea was to invent a book derived from, but different than, the *Yijing*--rather like Yang Xiong's (53 B.C.E.-18 C.E.) *Taixuan jing* (Classic of Great Mystery), or the apocryphal Han treatise known as the *Qianzuodu* (A Penetration of the Laws of Qian) in the Chinese tradition. The most prominent example in Korean history is the nineteenth century derivative work known as the *Correct Changes*

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 107. I have modified this translation somewhat, and patched two disconnected but related passages together.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

(Chongyok).<sup>39</sup>

I have not yet found evidence for similar strategies of domestication in the case of Vietnam, but it is clear that use of the *nom* script in works such as Dang Thai Phuong's *Chu dich quoi am ca* (Songs of the *Zhou Changes* in National Pronunciation; 1815) had this effect, even though they explained the cryptic text of the *Yijing* explicitly in terms of the Chinese exegetical tradition known as *xungu*. As the preface of Dang's book puts the matter, "Our [Confucian] learning in Vietnam is the same as that of the Chinese, but our pronunciation [of the words in the texts] is different."<sup>40</sup>

In many respects, pre-modern Korean and Vietnamese intellectuals approached the *Yijing* in the same spirit as that of the Japanese. In both of these cultural environments, the work retained its aura as a Chinese classic; and in both, it had wide application at all levels of society as an explanatory device, extending into the realms of language, philosophy, religion, art, literature, science, medicine, and social customs.<sup>41</sup> In both Yi dynasty Korea (1392-1910) and Le dynasty Vietnam (1428-1789), Vietnamese and Korean scholars seem to have

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39 See the discussion in Smith, "The *Yijing* (*Classic of Changes*) in Global Perspective," 758.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 758-759. For some refinements and qualifications, see Ryu Sung-guk, "Hanguk Yokhak sasang ui tukchil kwa ku munhwa jok yonghyang" (On the Distinctive Features of Korean Thought and Their Influence on Studies of the *Changes*), in *Hanguk Chuyok hakhoe, Chuyok kora Hanguk Yokhak* (The *Zhou Changes* and *Changes* Scholarship in Korea). Seoul: Pomyangsa, 1996; also the various pertinent essays in Benjamin Elman, John B. Duncan, and Herman Ooms, eds., *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam*. Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2002.

appreciated the school of "images and numbers" (*xiangshu*) more than the school of "morality and principle" (*yili*),<sup>42</sup> but the sharp distinctions that are often drawn between these two exegetical traditions in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam tend to blur significantly when individual thinkers and their texts are examined closely.

In the case of Tibet, the process of transmission involved substantial modification--in part, no doubt, because unlike Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese elites, many Tibetans knew little or no classical Chinese. The *Yijing* (*Yeekyin* in Tibetan) first came to Tibet as a respected Chinese "classic" during the early Tang dynasty, in the 7th century C.E. Soon, Tibetan diviners began using the trigrams of the *Changes* in more or less the Chinese fashion. Later they also borrowed some of the numerological diagrams of the *Yijing*-- notably the Luoshu (Luo River Writing)--but they also created new divinatory symbols, including four-lined tetragrams (there was, of course, a Chinese precedent for this sort of permutation with Yang Xiong's well-known *Taixuan jing* (Classic of Supreme Mystery), based on five-lined pentagrams).<sup>43</sup> Like the Japanese, the Tibetans seem to have been particularly eager to assimilate the *Yijing* to their indigenous culture. Some Tibetan commentators emphasized affinities between

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42 See Ng, "The *I Ching* in Late Choson Thought" and "*Yijing* Scholarship in Late-Nguyen Vietnam."

43 Smith, "The *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in Global Perspective," 759. See also Phillipe Cornu, *Tibetan Astrology*, Boston: Shambala, 1997, Gary Dickinson and Steve Moore, "Trigrams and Tortoises: Sino- Tibetan Divination." *Oracle* (special issue) 1.5 (Summer, 1997), 1-48, and Sangye Gyatso, *Tibetan Elemental Divination Paintings: Illuminated Manuscripts from The White Beryl of Sangs-rgyas rGyamtscho with the Moonbeams Treatise of Lo-chen Dharmasri*, London: John Eskenazi and Sam Fogg, 2001.

the *Yijing* and Tantric Buddhism, and other scholars in both the Buddhist and Bon traditions transformed Confucius--the putative transmitter of *Yijing* divination (and other forms of fortune-telling) into their own religious figures. Moreover, in at least some cases, the eight trigrams acquired significantly different symbolic identifications in Tibet than their traditional Chinese ones. Zhen, for example, usually associated with Thunder, came to be linked in certain Tibetan divination systems with "meteoric iron."<sup>44</sup>

A distinctive feature of the process by which various East Asian peoples borrowed from Chinese culture was their periodic use of emissaries--individuals and groups who visited China and brought back Chinese texts and traditions to their home countries in a self-conscious and sometimes quite systematic way. Westerners, too, sent missions to China, and they brought back all kinds of information, but these missions proceeded from very different motives, and had a different focus from their East Asian counterparts.

### The Jesuit Enterprise

The Jesuit missionaries labored under a double burden. Their primary duty was, of course, to bring Christianity to China (and to other parts of the world), but they also had to justify their evangelical methods to their colleagues and superiors in Europe (including, of course, Rome). A kind of "double domestication" thus took place. In China, the Jesuits had to make the Bible appear familiar to the Chinese, while in Europe they

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44 Ibid. (Smith), 759.

had to make Chinese works such as the *Yijing* appear familiar (or at least reasonable) to Europeans.<sup>45</sup> In neither case were they ultimately successful, but not for lack of effort.

As is well known, from the time of Matteo Ricci onward the strategy of "cultural assimilation" involved assiduous study of the Chinese language, as well as a concerted effort to learn as much as possible about Chinese philosophy, religion, literature and customs.<sup>46</sup> The Jesuits also engaged in some inventive strategies of accommodation, such as Giulio Aleni's attempt to equate the City Gods (*chenghuang*) of Chinese tradition with guardian angels.<sup>47</sup> But recent scholarship on the

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45 See Paul Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius?: The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, Sydney and London: Allen and Unwin, 1987, 158-159, 165, and 284, notes 46-48, and esp. 315 ff. Edward Malatesta, *The Society of Jesus and China: A Historical-Theological Essay*, St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1997, provides a convenient overview of the Jesuit mission in China. For up-to-date and reasonably comprehensive bibliographies of Western and Asian materials relating to the Jesuits, consult the relevant sections of Nicholas Standaert, ed. *Handbook of Christianity in China*, Volume 1: 635-1800. Leiden, Boston and Koln: Brill, 2001. Note also Standaert's "New Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in China," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 83.4 (October 1997), 569-613.

46 Significantly, the Jesuits did not have the same respectful attitude toward all alien peoples. See, for example, J. S. Sebes, "A Comparative Study of Religious Missions in the Three Civilizations: India, China and Japan" in *Colloque international de sinologie* (3rd: 1980: Chantilly, France), *Appréciation par l'Europe de la tradition chinoise à partir du XVIIe siècle: actes du IIIe Colloque international de sinologie*, Centre de recherches interdisciplinaire de Chantilly (CERIC), 11-14 septembre 1980, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1983, 271-290.

47 Chinese converts such as Yang Tingyun became similarly adept, comparing, for example, the "virgin birth" of Jesus to the births of Laozi and the Buddha. See, for example, Claudia von Collani, "Did Jesus Christ Really Come to China?," *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* 20 (1998), 34-

Jesuits reveals that their encounter with Chinese civilization involved far more complex cultural negotiations than the standard narrative of "adaptation" and "acculturation" suggests--negotiations involving the individual personalities, educational backgrounds and national identities of the missionaries as well as the elaborate interplay between the "corporate culture" of the Society of Jesus and Chinese elite and popular culture.<sup>48</sup>

One important factor in this process, which deserves further study, was the ability of particular individuals to satisfy the specific political, intellectual, and psychological needs of the Chinese throne. This had been the case, for example, with the Shunzhi emperor (r. 1644-1661), whose spiritual "grandfather," Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592-1666), reportedly brought the young Qing dynasty ruler closer to conversion than any other Chinese emperor. In the case of the great Kangxi emperor (r. 1662-1722), it is quite clear that his deep interest in mathematics, science and cartography, together with his particular personal and intellectual preoccupation with the *Yijing* as a practical divinatory tool and a book of Confucian wisdom, gave individuals such as Father Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730) extraordinary leverage with the Manchu monarch--at least for awhile.<sup>49</sup>

In 1688 Bouvet arrived in Beijing, and two years later he entered the service of the Kangxi emperor, becoming one of his

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48 See, for example, the studies by Ross, Standaert, Zhang and others in John W. O'Malley, S.J. et al., eds. *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540-1773*, Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

49 See Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius?*, 158-159, 165, and 284, notes 46-48.

mathematics instructors and spending as much as two hours a day tutoring the Qing monarch in algebra and geometry. Along the way he learned Chinese and Manchu, translating technical tracts and participating in various mathematical, scientific and cartographic activities.<sup>50</sup>

Before leaving for Asia, Bouvet had already laid the groundwork for an approach to esoteric knowledge that the Kangxi emperor would find congenial. He (Bouvet) tells us: "I brought with me [to China] a special knowledge of the Hebrew Mosaic cabbala [aka Kaballa, etc.], and of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy, which are the true elements of the whole hieroglyphic wisdom of the Chinese, or rather [that] of the Old Patriarchs."<sup>51</sup> Thus armed, Bouvet became the initiator and a leading exponent of "Figurism" in China (also known as "Bouvetism," "Symbolism," "Enochism," "Mythologism," and "Kinism" ["Jingism," from the common Jesuit transliteration of the Chinese term for "classic, *jing*]).<sup>52</sup> Other prominent Figurists in China during the early Qing period were Jean-François Fouquet (1665-1741), Joseph de Prémare (1666-1736) and Jean-Alexis de Gollet (1664-1741).

As Claudia von Collani and others have noted, the "Figurist"

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50 On Bouvet's life and work, see Claudia von Collani, *P. Joachim Bouvet S.J. Sein Leben und sein Werk*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1985.

51 Ibid., 156. Bouvet's position, summarized neatly by Michael Puett in *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 4-5, was that there was a single figure--known by different names in different places (Fu Xi in China, Hermes Trismegistus in Egypt and Greece, Enoch among the Hebrews, and Zoroaster in Persia)--who transmitted God's laws to all ancient peoples.

52 Rule (1987), 154 ff. Rule (1989), 307 identifies an early Figurism in Bouvet's evaluation of Thai mythology.

approach to the Bible was based on three interpretive traditions within European theology: (1) Typological exegesis, designed to reveal hidden meanings in the Old Testament that unlocked the mysteries of the New Testament (Witsius Cocceius [d. 1669] and his followers are a European example of this sort of orientation); (2) "Ancient Theology" (*prisca theologia*), predicated upon the idea of a "divine revelation" by pagan saints (including Melchizedek, the Queen of Sheba, the Three Wise Men from the East, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Orpheus, Zoroaster and others); and (3) the Jewish mystical tradition of the Kabbala, which, during the Renaissance, had produced, among its various permutations, a Judaeo-Christian version that drew upon Ancient Theology and neo-Platonism.<sup>53</sup>

The writings of Bouvet, Foucquet and Prémare provide numerous examples of their Figurist approach to the Confucian classics, which often involved rather far-fetched etymological speculations. Dissection of the Chinese character for Heaven (the number two and the word for Man), for instance, indicated, among other things, a prophecy of the second Adam, Jesus Christ; the character for boat, *chuan*, could be broken down conveniently into the semantic indicator for a

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<sup>53</sup> See the excellent description of Figurism by Claudia von Collani in Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 668-679. The literature on the Figurists in Western languages is quite substantial, and much of it has been produced by Dr. Collani. For a relatively small but useful sample, see *ibid.*, 676- 679. In Chinese, consult Zhuo Xinping, "Suoyin pai yu Zhongxi wenhua rentong" (The Figurists and the Acknowledgment of Similarities in Chinese and Western Culture), *Dao feng Hanyu shenxue xuekan* [Logos and Pneuma: Chinese Journal of Theology], 8 (1998), reprinted in *Jidu zongjiao lun* [Discussions of the Christian Religion], n.d., 292-317. See also Yang Hongsheng, *Bentu yu yuwai*, 179 ff.

"vessel that travels on water" (the character *zhou*) on the left side, and the characters for "eight" and "mouth(s)" on the right-- signifying China's early awareness of Noah's Ark, which contained, of course, the eight members of Noah's family.<sup>54</sup> In Figurist discourse, a wide variety of Chinese philosophical terms closely associated with the *Changes* came to be equated with the Christian conception of God, including not only Tian and Shangdi, but also Taiji, Wuji, Taiyi, Dao, Li and even *yin* and *yang*.<sup>55</sup>

Certain trigrams and hexagrams were similarly revealing. The three solid lines of the Qian (Heaven) trigram, like the three "ones" of the character for three (*san*), indicated an early Chinese awareness of the Trinity.<sup>56</sup> The first hexagram, Qian, naturally referred to Creation, and the hexagram Xu (Waiting, #5), with its stark reference to "clouds rising up to Heaven" (in the Commentary on the Big Images), symbolized the "glorious ascent of the Saviour." The hexagrams Bi (#12, Obstruction) and Tai (#11, Peace) referred, respectively to "the world corrupted by sin" and "the world restored by the Incarnation,"

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**54** For other common examples, see Standaert, ed. *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 675, von Collani, *Joachim Bouvet S.J.*, 133 ff., 173 ff., etc. Cf. the approach of Alexandre de Rhodes in Vietnam discussed in Peter C. Phan, *Mission and Catechesis: Alexandre de Rhodes and Inculturation in Seventeenth Century Vietnam*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998, 78 ff., esp. 79, 82-83, etc. The "ark" dissection has endured from the time of the Figurists (see, for example, Bouvet's *Yiyao*, 9a) down to the present (<http://home.planet.nl/~keesnoor/signs.htm>).

**55** See, for example, Knud Lundbaek, *Joseph de Prémare (1666-1736), S.J.: Chinese Philology and Figurism*, Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1991, 116.

**56** The prominence of the number three in all forms of Chinese discourse naturally encouraged the Figurists to find correlations with the Trinity.

etc.<sup>57</sup> Efforts to link Chinese culture heroes to biblical figures produced a number of creative connections: Peng the Ancestor (Pengzu), for example, became Adam, and Fu Xi, putative inventor of the eight trigrams, was the mysterious Patriarch Enoch, who reportedly "walked with God," learning about creation, mathematics, astronomy and the end of the world.<sup>58</sup>

The effort by Bouvet and his colleagues to find hidden biblical messages in the *Yijing* was fully consistent not only with the belief of contemporary Chinese *kaozheng* scholars that the *Changes* held the key to an "authentic reconstruction of antiquity," but also with the spirit of the Great Commentary, which described the *Yi*'s discursive style as one that "twists and turns but hits the mark" (*yan qu er zhong*)." The things and events dealt with, the commentary states, "are obviously set forth, but hidden implications are involved."<sup>59</sup> Bouvet's steadfast goal was to recover the "original meaning" of the *Changes*, and the hexagrams, trigrams and cryptic judgments and line statements of the "basic text" gave him a great deal of interpretive latitude.

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57 Lundbaek, *Joseph de Prémare (1666-1736)*, S.J., 116; also Zhou Zhi, cited in note 62 below.

58 In Bouvet's mind, Fu Xi was Hermes Trismegistus and a "figure" of Christ (as were the Yellow Emperor and the *qilin*). See Lundbaek, *Joseph de Prémare (1666-1736)*, S.J., 128-129. Zhu Xi, it may be noted, placed special emphasis on the contributions of Fu Xi in his *Yixue qimeng* (Introduction to the Study of the *Changes*). Niccolo Longobardo (1565-1655), for his part, claimed Fu Xi was Zoroaster, who came to China and whose magic power was expressed in the trigrams.

59 The Jesuits used this phrase and this general argument to justify their own exegetical efforts. See, for example, Bouvet, *Yiyao zixu*, Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (2), 2a-b. Cf. Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 87.

Of all the Figurists (about one-third of all French Jesuits in China, eventually), none enjoyed the emperor's favor as much as Bouvet, and none became as preoccupied with the *Changes* and with prophecy. It is not clear exactly when Bouvet began to study the *Yijing* in earnest (probably in the mid- or late-1690s), but we can assume that familiarity with the classic and its commentaries took him a number of years, even taking into account the French Jesuit's sharp intellect and the assistance of dedicated individuals such as the Catholic convert and *juren* scholar, Lu Ruohan, who helped Bouvet render his ideas on the *Changes* into classical Chinese.<sup>60</sup>

In focusing his attention primarily on the imagery, allusions and numerology of the *Yijing*, Bouvet was following a path blazed by Chinese Christian writers such as the late Ming convert, Shao Fuzhong (*jinshi*, 1596), whose book, *Tianxue shuo* [On the Heavenly Learning], draws upon the Great Commentary, hexagram analysis and the writings of Shao Yong and others in comparing concepts and images in the *Yijing* with various Catholic doctrines such as the Trinity and the Immaculate Conception.<sup>61</sup> Other Chinese scholars, including a Fujian Christian named Zhang Geng,, and Bouvet's rough con-

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60 See Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu he Kangxi de shidai de 'Xi xue Zhong yuan' shuo" (Joachim Bouvet's Research on the *Yijing* and the Idea of the "Chinese Origin of Western Learning" during the Kangxi Period), *Hanxue yanjiu* 16.1 (1998), 185-202.

61 See Huang Yinong, "Shao Fuzhong *Tianxue shuo* xiaokao" (A Brief Analysis of Shao Fuzhong's *Tianxue shuo*), *Guoli zhongyang tushuguan guankan*, 27. 2 (1994), 163-166; also Goodman and Grafton, "Ricci, the Chinese, and the Toolkits of Textualists," 114 ff. This fascinating document is included in Xu Guangqi, et al., eds., *Tianzhu jiao dongchuan wenxian xubian* (Continuation of Documents on the Eastward Transmission of Catholicism), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1965, 1: 3-18.

temporary, Zhou Zhi, wrote similar tracts identifying affinities between Catholic theology and the *Changes*.<sup>62</sup>

Bouvet's effort to link the religious traditions of China and the West through the *Classic of Changes* can be found not only in his well-known correspondence with Leibniz and other Europeans, beginning in 1697, but also in his many Chinese-language writings--most of which seem to date from 1711 to 1716. One succinct statement of his major theme appears near the beginning of his *Yigao* (Draft [Essay] on the *Changes*): "The inner ideas [*neiyi*] of the *Yijing* are very similar to the teachings of Christianity."<sup>63</sup>

In a preface to his *Yiyao* (Key to the *Changes*)--after emphasizing not only the extraordinary comprehensiveness of the classic but also the role it can play in guiding people to the kind of behavior that leads to a "heavenly reward"--Bouvet draws on the "Great Commentary" to make his case for the unity of all mankind:

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<sup>62</sup> On Zhang's *Xiantian Yi yi* (The Former Heaven Meaning of the *Changes*), see the Jesuit Archives in Borgo Santo Spirito, Rome, Jap.Sin. I, 34/37.3/1-3/3. On Zhou Zhi, consult Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing yanjiu*," 190 note 19. He is the author of the 1678 work on the *Yijing* titled *Du Yi ji* (Record of Reading the *Changes*), a 36-page tract that refers repeatedly to concepts such as "original sin" and "the Trinity," and uses several standard interpretive techniques involving line and trigram relationships to analyze a total of nine hexagrams, drawing in particular on the rich symbolism of the first, Qian. See Bor. Cin. 357 9 (C) under the name "Jacques Tcheou Tche." Of course the enemies of Christianity also drew upon the *Changes*. See, for example, John D. Young, "An Early Confucian Attack on Christianity: Yang Kuanghsien and his *Pu-te-i*," *Journal of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 3 (1975), 155-186, esp. 178-80.

<sup>63</sup> Vatican Library, Borg. Cin. 439 A (h). Cf. Liao, Mingchun, et al., *Zhouyi yanjiu shi* (History of Research on the *Zhou Changes*), Changsha: Hunan chuban she, 1991, 458.

## Jesuit Interpretations of the *Yijing*

The people of China and of the four corners of the world originally came from one ancestor and are [thus] brothers. They are all born of the same great parent [*da fumu*], who gave birth to Heaven, Earth and Man ... . Since all people belong to one family and are connected to the one great parent, they should all follow the same Way, the same principle, the same learning and the same teachers ... From this [line of reasoning, we can see that] the Chinese and foreigners are all connected to the Heavenly Lord. If the ancient Chinese had the true tradition of Heavenly learning [*tianxue*] and the learning of the mind [*xinxue*], how could it be that the myriad states [outside of China] in the four corners of the world [have no such teachings and beliefs] at all?<sup>64</sup>

He goes on to argue that the truths of the *Changes* and the Bible are essentially the same, and he devotes the rest of his essay to a more or less systematic effort to demonstrate this point.

Bouvet's *Yikao* (Examination of the *Changes*; also labeled *Yiyin* [Introduction to the *Changes*]) repeats several of the arguments contained in the *Yiyao*, making the point that although the West did not ever have a document with the exactly the same "illustrations and script" (*tuwen*) as the *Yijing*, it did have similar texts and illustrations, which contained the same subtle messages about the beginning and end of the universe. This work also draws upon standard Chinese reference works, such as Ma Duanlin's famous

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<sup>64</sup> Bouvet, *Yiyao zixu*, Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (2), 1b.

*Wenxian tongkao* (Comprehensive Examination of [Chinese] Literature; 1224), to demonstrate early linkages between China and ancient Rome.<sup>65</sup>

In his *Yiyin yuangao* (Original Draft of an Introduction to the *Changes*), Bouvet argues explicitly that Catholicism is not simply the religion of Westerners; it is also an authentic teaching "passed down by the former Sage [Confucius]." People therefore ought to follow it, he says--Chinese and Westerners alike. If they do, "no one will fall" (*xiazhui*); all will presumably be saved. This teaching, Bouvet argues, will be to the great advantage not only of people from afar, but also to the Chinese themselves.<sup>66</sup>

One of Bouvet's greatest and most persistent desires was to demonstrate a relationship between the numbers and diagrams of the *Yijing* (especially as expressed in the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*) and the systems of Pythagoras, the neo-Platonists, and the Kabbalah.<sup>67</sup> This is evident not only in his Chinese-language writings, but also in his broad-ranging Latin manuscripts. For example, in identifying the black and

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65 See Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (4), 1a-b.

66 Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (6), 49-50. See also Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu," 190, note 18.

67 See, for example, François Secret, "Quand la Kabbale expliquait le 'Yi king,' ou un aspect oublié du figuratisme du Joachim Bouvet," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 195 (1979), 35-53; Claudia von Collani, "Cabala in China," in Roman Maleck, ed., *Jews in China: From Kaifeng... to Shanghai*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 46), 527-558; Genevieve Javary, "Le Pere Bouvet a-t-il retrouvé Pythagore en Chine," *Hexagrammes* 6 (1991), 113-122. John Witek, *Controversial Ideas in China and Europe: A Biography of Jean-François Foucquet S.J. (1665-1741)*, Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1982, 201 ff. contrasts the approaches of Bouvet and Fouquet in this regard.

white Ain Soph ["God"] symbol at the top of the Ten Sephiroth of Moses (i.e. the so-called Tree of Life) with the "Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate" (*Taiji tu*), Bouvet remarks:

once upon a time in the first schools of the ancient Chinese wise men the doctrine existed about the one and triune God, founder of all things, about the incarnation of the Son of God and the reformation of the world through him: in a word the doctrine is very similar to evangelical doctrine, and not different from it except in symbol and prophecy and therefore clearly similar to the ancient Kabbala of the Hebrews which, because the founder of all things and the Lord Restorer of the world ordered everything in number, weight and measure, as it enigmatically comprehends the whole arcane mystery of the divine works, under the figurative clothing either of the ten elementary numbers or of the 22 letters of its mystic alphabet, so the hieroglyphic wisdom of the ancient Chinese monuments preserves this same whole hidden mystery of divine wisdom, under the symbols of the 22 characters of its mystic cycle *Kia Y* [*Jiayi*], and the coverings of the same 10 elementary numbers of the mystic figure *Ho tu* [*Hetu*].<sup>68</sup>

Similarly, he writes that the first two hexagrams of the *Yijing*, Qian and Kun,

are the two principal characters of God creator and redeemer; and of which first Kien [Qian] with the

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<sup>68</sup> Cited in Secret, "Quand la Kabbale expliquait le 'Yi king,'" 40.

## Jesuit Interpretations of the *Yijing*

numerical power 216, the triple of the Tetragram number 72, is the symbol of justice and later with the numerical power 144, double the number 72, is the symbol of mercy: and both together taken up with the power of the same tetragram number 72 quintupled, are the symbolic mark of the two principal virtues of the divine Redeemer, outlined in the hieroglyphics of the Chinese just as in the sephirotic system of the Hebrews.

In short, God

made everything in number, weight and measure (Sap. XI, 21), . . . perfecting] these in wisdom; from there it follows by necessity, that the numbers are, so to speak, the fundamental base of all true philosophy, or of the sacred wisdom of the old patriarchs, first infused in the very first-formed parent of human beings.<sup>69</sup>

The opening chapter of Bouvet's *Yijing zonglun gao* (Draft of a General Discussion of the *Classic of Changes*) articulates his basic hermeneutical strategy--which sounds quite conventional from the standpoint of traditional Chinese exegesis:

The *Yi* as a classic contains principles (*li*; also rendered "patterns"), numbers (*shu*), images (*xiang*; also rendered "figures"), and charts

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 39. "Sap." refers here to the "apocryphal" work known as *Liber Sapientiae* or "Book of Wisdom." Epiphanius and Athanasius quote the book under the name "All-Virtuous Wisdom" (Panaretos Sophia).

(*tu*). The charts cannot be separated from the images, the images cannot be separated from the numbers, and the numbers cannot be separated from the principles. The principles generate the numbers, the numbers generate the images, and the images generate the charts. When the charts are prepared, the images become manifest; when the images stand out, the numbers are set forth; when the numbers emerge, the principles show. Therefore, for knowing the principles, there is nothing better than understanding the numbers; for understanding the numbers, there is nothing better than observing the images; and for observing the images, there is nothing better than exploring the charts.<sup>70</sup>

Bouvet thus quite naturally held great stock in diagrams of various sorts. Some of these, like Shao Yong's "Chart of the Fu Xi [Former Heaven] Arrangement of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams," and the triangles and "magic squares" (*zongheng tu*) from Cheng Dawei's (1533-1606) *Suanfa tongzong* (Systematic Treatise on Arithmetic, 1592),<sup>71</sup> were, of course, Chinese

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<sup>70</sup> Bouvet's subsequent explanation of the relationship between *li*, *shu*, *xiang*, and *tu* suggests an understanding derived not only from the orthodoxy of Zhu Xi but also from the far less orthodox speculations of Shao Yong. See, for example, Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 439 A (C) 1. For a useful analysis of various Jesuit responses, including Bouvet's, to Shao's ideas, see Knud Lundbaek, "Shao Yong et les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine," in *Colloque International de Sinologie* (5th: 1986: Chantilly, France), *Succès et échecs de la rencontre Chine et Occident du XVIe au XXe siècle*, Paris, San Francisco and Taipei: Ricci Institute, 1993, 175-190.

<sup>71</sup> I do not know for certain which of the "magic squares" Bouvet bor-

in origin. Others, Bouvet devised himself.<sup>72</sup> In general, Bouvet's "mystical mathematical vision--aptly described by David Mungello as a combination of "the Pythagorean-Platonic tendency toward mathematics" and "the Aristotelian- Thomistic tendency toward classification"--focused on three types of numerical progressions, together with the rules of proportion and geometry, and the "laws of statics."<sup>73</sup> These progressions, rules and laws, expressed in the lines, trigrams, hexagrams and charts associated the *Yijing* (notably the *Hetu* and *Lu-oshu*), became the foundation for most of Bouvet's illustrations, and the means by which to mirror nature, and thus to understand all natural processes.

Perhaps the most important single diagram to Bouvet was his triangular *Tianzun dibeitu* (Chart of Heavenly Superiority and Earthly Subordination). As we can see from the versions

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rowed from Cheng Dawei, but it is clear that he drew upon Cheng's version of "Pascal's Triangle." See Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (3) loose diagram, and Borg. Cin. 361 (2) 73a.

**72** Claudia von Collani, "La chronologie chinoise, base de la méthode missionnaire du Joachim Bouvet, S.J." in Colloque International de Sinologie (4th: 1983: Chantilly, France), *Chine et Europe: évolution et particularités des rapports est-ouest du XVIe au XXe siècle*, Centre de recherches interdisciplinaire de Chantilly (CERIC), 8-11 septembre 1983, Paris: Institut Ricci; San Francisco: Institute for Chinese- Western Cultural History, 1991, 107-124, esp, 110 ff. Page 116, note 35, discusses some of the diverse sources of Bouvet's ideas. For a fairly complete list of Bouvet's works on the *Yijing* in the Vatican library, see Yu Dong, *Catalogo delle opere cinese missionarie della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (XVI-XVIII). Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1996, 9-11.

**73** See the illuminating discussion in David E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989, 312-328. For evidence of Bouvet's use of Cheng Dawei's mathematics to explicate the *Yijing*, see Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu," 193-194.

reproduced in Claudia Collani's excellent 1985 study of Bouvet's life and times,<sup>74</sup> and also from several closely related diagrams and discussions from earlier periods, contained in documents housed in both the Vatican Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale,<sup>75</sup> the *Tianzun dibeitu* is a version of the so-called *Jia Xian sanjiao*, known in the West as "Pascal's Triangle."<sup>76</sup>

Bouvet's title was inspired by first four characters of the Great Commentary of the *Changes*, and his diagram sought to integrate the numerology of the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* in a single mathematical "grand synthesis," similar in certain respects to Shao Yong's "Chart of the Fu Xi [Former Heaven] Arrangement of the Sixty-Four Hexagrams."<sup>77</sup> Like Shao's "Former Heaven" chart, but with less schematic specificity, the *Tianzun dibeitu* attempts to convey "the quintessence of heavenly patterns and earthly configurations" (*tianwen dili zhi jingyun*), illustrating not only the evolution of, but also the mutual interaction between, the hexagrams and their constituent trigrams

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74 See Claudia von Collani, *Joachim Bouvet S.J.*, frontespiece and 168 ff.

75 See the one-page diagrams in Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 361 (1) C (IV), Borg. Cin. 361; (4) II, and Borg. Cin. 361 (6) III; also Borg. Cin. 361 (1), 1a-74a, passim, Borg. Cin. 361 (10), 57ff., and Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. n.a. lat. 1173, f. 136. See also the illustration in Javary (1991), 112.

76 On the Chinese version of "Pascal's Triangle," see Needham (1956-present), 3: 133 ff., esp. 136 and Li Yan (1984), 109 ff. Cf. Jiang Yong (1989), 292-294.

77 To both Shao and Bouvet (and to most Chinese scholars as well), the *Yijing* had the capacity to reveal the nature of "ten thousand affairs and ten thousand transformations, from beginning to end." See *Yixue zongshuo hui* (A Classified General Discussion of *Changes* Scholarship), Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (8).

and lines.<sup>78</sup> And like Shao's numerical calculations, Bouvet's diagrams were supposed to yield an understanding of good and bad fortune as well as an appreciation of the larger patterns of cosmic regularity and cosmic change.<sup>79</sup> But unlike Shao's round and square "Former Heaven" chart, Bouvet's diagrams tended to be triangles. This, it seems, for at least two main reasons: First, triangles occupied a prominent place in the mathematics that Bouvet had been teaching to the Kangxi emperor at court, and they were especially well-suited to portraying the mathematical progressions of which the French Jesuit was so very fond.<sup>80</sup> Second, triangles lent themselves particularly well to the depiction and analysis of various triadic relationships, not least (but also not solely) the Holy Trinity.<sup>81</sup>

Bouvet's diagrammatic speculations on the Second Coming of Christ suggest certain similarities with Shao Yong's

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**78** Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (8-12), esp. (8), 32a ff. and (10), (*Yixue waipian*, section 7), 57a ff. and (11), 8a ff.

**79** *Shi Xiantian weibian shizhong zhi lei you tianzun dibi tu er sheng* (An Explanation of the Numbers of the Former Heaven [Sequence], Unchanging from Beginning to End, According to the *Chart of Heavenly Superiority and Earthly Subordination*), Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. (11) 8a.

**80** See Isabelle Landry-Deron, *Les leçons des sciences occidentales de l'empereur de Chine Kangxi (1662-1722): Texte des Journals des Pères Bouvet et Gerbillion*, Paris: E.H.E.S.S., 1995., passim and Catherine Jami, "Scholars and Mathematical Knowledge in the Late Ming and Early Qing," *Historia Scientiarum*, 42 (1991), 99-109.

**81** Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius?*, 163, tells us that right triangles represented to Bouvet the "hypostatical union of God and man," but most of the triangular diagrams drawn by Bouvet that I recall are not rightangled. See the many illustrations and related discussions in Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 361 (14) and Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (8-11), es317 (8), 32a ff. Bouvet asserts on more than one occasion that the triangle is "the beginning of heavenly images and earthly forms" (*tianxiang dixing zhi shi*).

stages of cosmic change as articulated in the *Huangji jingshi* (Supreme Principles that Rule the World). But contrary to Shao's idea of endlessly repetitive cycles of 129,600 years, Bouvet naturally predicted the "end of time"--a termination that would come about much sooner than Shao's cyclical one, with no possibility of, or any need for, further cyclical patterns. According to Bouvet, the 55 numbers of the *Hetu*, when added to the 45 numbers of the *Luoshu*, yielded 100--the number of cycles representing the duration of the world. By his calculations, the product of the first eight natural numbers resulted in one cycle of 4,032,00 days, equivalent to 120 "sabbatical years" or 91 "solar years".<sup>82</sup>

Initially, Bouvet divided the 100 cycles of the duration of the world into a "Former Heaven" (*Xiantian*) period and a "Later Heaven" (*Houtian*) period, in which the "Former Heaven" era indicated the time between Creation and the first appearance of the Messiah, and the "Later Heaven" stage indicated the period spanning from the death of Christ until the Second Coming. This first stage, symbolized by the hexagram Tai (Peace; #11), Bouvet called the age of the "Heavenly Way" (*Tiandao*), and the second stage, symbolized by the hexagram Pi (Obstruction; #12) was designated the era of the "Earthly Way" (*Didao*). A third period of Redemption then followed, which Bouvet called the "Way of Man" (*Rendao*), symbolized again by the Tai hexagram. Later, Bouvet designated these three stages of human history as (1) the *Xiantian weibian* (Former Heaven, not yet changed) period,

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<sup>82</sup> For details, see Collani, *Joachim Bouvet S.J.*, 169 ff. and Collani, "La chronologie chinoise," 112 ff. Knud Lundbaek, "Shao Yong et les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine," 180 indicates, correctly I think, that in a certain sense Bouvet viewed Shao Yong as a "rival."

(2) the *Xiantian yibian* (Former Heaven, already changed) period, and (3) the *Houtian bubian* (Later Heaven unchanged) period.<sup>83</sup> In this latter scheme, Bouvet ascribed 50 cycles to the *Xiantian* period, but only 49 to the *Houtian* era, since no one knew the exact date of the Second Coming of the Messiah.

Prior to 1711, Bouvet seems to have discussed his theories about the *Yijing* with the Kangxi emperor only sporadically and unsystematically. But in the spring and summer of that year, encouraged by the throne, he began to introduce his thoughts on the classic in a more methodical way, sending the emperor a flurry of charts, diagrams and written texts in rapid succession. It is difficult to know exactly which documents Bouvet conveyed to the Qing monarch for his perusal--in part because some of the essays and illustrations that have been attributed to him bear two different titles or exist in multiple versions, and also because comments concerning these documents in memorials and edicts of the period are often quite cryptic. In any case, between June and July of 1711 Bouvet sent many dozens of documents to the throne, including one or more versions of the *Tianzun dibeitu* and a similar looking diagram from Cheng Dawei's *Suanfa tongzong* (Systematic Treatise on Arithmetic, 1592), titled the "Chart of Extracting the Root" (*Kaifang qiulian tu*) or the "Chart of Methods of Transformation by Doubling" (*Jibei bianfa tu*).<sup>84</sup> In fact, Bouvet used this lat-

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83 For Bouvet's written account of these three periods, see his *Zhouyi yuanzhi tan* (An Investigation into the Original Meaning of the *Zhou Changes*), Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 312 (L) 1. 1a-4a. It would appear that inspiration for some of Bouvet's initial ideas may have come from the writings of Zhou Zhi (see note 62 above)

84 For the various memorials and edicts dealing with Bouvet's essays,

ter document to help explain the mathematics of the former, as we can see clearly in his *Yixue waipian* (A Study of the *Changes*, Outer Part).<sup>85</sup>

Although prohibited by his superiors from discussing anything other than physics and mathematics with the emperor,<sup>86</sup> Bouvet probably forwarded to the throne excerpts from at least some of the following Chinese manuscripts (most of them undated or unreliably dated), in addition to the *Yixue waipian*: the *Yikao* (aka *Yiyin*), the *Yiyin yuangao*, the *Yiyao*, the *Zhouyi yuanzhi tan* (An Investigation into the Original Meaning of the *Zhou Changes*), the *Yijing zonglun gao* (Draft of a General Discussion of the *Classic of Changes*; aka *Yijing zongshuo gao*), the *Taiji lueshuo* (A Brief Discussion of the Supreme Ultimate), and the *Shi Xiantian weibian shizhong zhi shu you tianzun dibi tu er sheng* (An Explanation of How the Numbers of the Former Heaven [Sequence], Not Yet Changed, from Beginning to End, Arise from the *Chart of Heavenly Superiority*

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charts and diagrams on the *Yijing* during 1712, see Guan Xiaolian and Qu Liusheng, eds. *Kangxi chao Manwen zhupi Zhouzhe quanyi* (Complete Translation of the Manchu Language Vermillion Rescripts on Memorials of the Kangxi Reign). Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1996, 718 ff., esp. documents 1716, 1719, 1724, 1725, 1731, 1734, 1738, 1741, 1752, 1755, 1759, 1760, 1761, 1764, 1767, 1768, etc. One replica of the *Jiabei bianfa tu* appears as a loose item in Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 317 (3); cf. Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 361 (2) 73a, which has the same item under a different title. This diagram is also included in the *Qimeng fulun* (Appendix to the *Yixue qimeng*) in Li Guangdi, ed., *Zhouyi zhezong* (A Balanced [Edition of the] *Zhou Changes*), Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1998, 1205-1206 for an illustration and clear explanation this chart.

**85** See Borg, Cin. 317 (10), esp. 57a-67b. Cf. Li Guangdi's memorial cited in Han Qi, "Bai Jin de Yijing yanjiu," 194.

**86** See Witek (1982), 166 ff., esp. 176-177.

and *Earthly Subordination*).<sup>87</sup>

According to a recent article by Han Qi in *Hanxue yanjiu* (1998), Bouvet's broad-ranging investigations of the *Yijing*, and his study of various charts in the *Suanfa tongzong*, not only nourished the Kangxi emperor's already existing interest in the *Changes*, but they also gave him a new-found appreciation for Cheng Dawei's book on mathematics.<sup>88</sup> The result was that the emperor arranged for the *Suanfa tongzong* to be republished immediately with additions and corrections. He also ordered his trusted Grand Secretary, Li Guangdi (1642-1718) to begin compiling a huge annotated edition of the *Yijing* which was published under the title *Zhouyi zhezhong* (A Balanced [Edition of the] *Zhou Changes*; 1715). As chief compiler of this latter work, Li not only took into account Bouvet's scholarship on the *Changes*, but he also shared his *Yijing*-related work with the French Jesuit. (Significantly, each man claimed to admire the contributions of the other.)<sup>89</sup> In Han's opinion, by helping the Kangxi emperor to understand the "mathematical mysteries" (*shuxue aomi*) contained within the *Yijing*, Bouvet

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87 For the shelf numbers of these and other works attributed to Bouvet, consult Pelliot (1995), 9-12. The dating of these materials, and even the determination of authorship, is often quite problematical, as Pelliot's original notes indicate. See Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu," 192-193 and Luo, Lida, "Bai Jin yanjiu *Yijing* shishi jikao" (An Examination of Joachim Bouvet's Research on the *Classic of Changes*), *Hanxue yanjiu* 15.1 (1997), 173-85, passim.

88 For some of the many links between the *Yijing* and Chinese mathematics, see Needham (1956-present), 3: 40, 56, 57, 59, 69, 119, 140, 199, 287, 291, 301, 464, 470, 625, etc.

89 Bouvet's influence can be detected in the *Qimeng fulun*; see Li Guangdi, ed., *Zhouyi zhezhong*, 1168-1206; note also Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu," 194-195.

played a significant role in sustaining the emperor's interest in the classic, and in so doing he contributed in a direct way to the general burst of scholarship on the *Yijing* in the Kangxi era and thereafter.

This account of Bouvet's influence is perhaps a bit too sanguine. To be sure, at times the emperor complimented the French Jesuit for his hard work and the clarity of his numerological interpretations of the *Changes*.<sup>90</sup> But the emperor also periodically expressed frustration with his slow progress, and criticized Bouvet for being too independent and for failing to take into account relevant Chinese works. A succession of critical edicts in July and August called into question his piecemeal scholarship, describing his writings as prolix, repetitive and tedious, and stigmatizing some of his ideas as either strange, confused, redundant or unfathomable.<sup>91</sup> Although the emperor remained intrigued by Bouvet's effort to explain the "magic squares" of the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* by means of his *Tianzun dibeit tu* and other diagrams, and although he clearly appreciated Bouvet's attempt to link Chinese musical notation with the *Yijing*, he felt that the French Jesuit needed additional assistance from both Western and Chinese scholars in order to complete his work.<sup>92</sup> Overall, it appeared to the Qing monarch that Bouvet,

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**90** See, for example, the edict cited in Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu," 193.

**91** Guan and Qu, eds. *Kangxi chao Manwen zhupi zhouzhe quanyi*, 722 ff., esp. documents 1724, 1734, 1738, 1752, 1755, 1760, 1764, and 1768; also Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin.439 A (c) 1 and Han Qi, "Bai Jin de *Yijing* yanjiu," 193.

**92** As a result, Fouquet was summoned from the provinces to assist Bouvet.

as an exponent of religious (as opposed to scientific) views, really had nothing more to offer than the fragmentary texts compiled by Buddhist monks, Daoist priests and Tibetan lamas.

Emboldened by the Kangxi emperor's criticisms, officials such as He Su and Wang Daohua, who had been serving as liaisons for Bouvet, quickly joined the chorus. For instance, in a memorial dated August 3, 1711, they wrote:

After looking repeatedly at Bouvet's [studies of the] *Yijing* and his charts, we really don't understand [what he is trying to say]. The charts have things like ghosts and spirits, and things that [look] like flowers. Although we don't [claim to] know their secrets, they look ridiculous. In addition, [Bouvet] continually draws upon writings from Chinese books only to claim paradoxically that they belong to Western teachings.<sup>93</sup>

Complicating matters was Bouvet's involvement in factional disputes revolving around one of the Kangxi emperor's sons, Yinzhi, who was at that time responsible for overseeing the activities of the Jesuits and other Western "specialists" at court.<sup>94</sup> Although the Kangxi emperor may have been amused or even slightly flattered by Bouvet's claim that

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<sup>93</sup> See Guan and Qu, eds. *Kangxi chao Manwen zhupi zhouzhe quanyi*, 734, document 1760 and 735, document 1764.

<sup>94</sup> Hu Minghui has analyzed the "succession politics" of the Kangxi reign with great clarity and insight. See "Measuring the Cosmos: Tension between Confucian Cosmology and Jesuit Cosmography in High Qing China, 1705-1753. Paper for the University of California Multi-Campus Research Unit in World History, U.C. Irvine, February 7-9, 2003.

together the Chinese ruler of "All under Heaven" and the French "Sun King" were destined to usher in a new era of world peace and universal redemption,<sup>95</sup> Bouvet's religious reading of the *Yijing* seems to have made the Kangxi emperor increasingly uneasy. In a nutshell, he admired Bouvet's mathematical abilities but rejected his theology.

Meanwhile, the Figurist enterprise continued to endure vigorous attacks by other members of the Christian community. Charles Maigrot (1652-1730), for example--justly famous for alienating the Kangxi emperor with his ignorance of classical Chinese in a 1705 audience--assailed the *Yijing* as a "despicable medley of obscure nonsense," no better than the *Book of Nostradamus* or the *Prophecies of Merlin*.<sup>96</sup> And even Father de Prémare, who had nothing but contempt for the "deep ignorance and the intellectual poverty of Monsieur Maigrot," criticized the chaotic approach and excessive claims of Bouvet (who, for example, equated the ancient Chinese kingdom of Lu with Judea). Prémare wrote that he "would not dream" of comparing the *Classic of Changes*, the *Classic of History* or the *Classic of Songs* "with our Holy Writ."<sup>97</sup>

During the next few years Bouvet's fortunes waned,

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**95** See *Yijie* (Explanation of the Changes), Vatican Archives, Borg. Cin. 316 (3-4) and the discussion in Hu, "Measuring the Cosmos," 17 ff.

**96** Knud Lundbaeck, "Joseph Prémare and the Name of God in China" in David Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy, Its History and Meaning*. San Francisco: Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, 1994, 129-148, esp. 136.

**97** *Ibid.*, 138. Lundbaek [sic], *Joseph de Prémare (1666-1736), S.J.*, 117 quotes Father Prémare in April of 1716 as saying that the Kangxi emperor "got tired" of Bouvet "more than a year ago and believes this poor old man has gone mad from meditating on the *Yi Jing*."

although the emperor never gave up completely on him.<sup>98</sup> Then, in April of 1716, a delegation of Jesuit missionaries hostile to Figurism managed to convince the Qing monarch, whose enthusiasm for Western science had already diminished significantly, that Bouvet's ideas were not only eccentric but also dangerous. From this point onward, Bouvet fell completely out of imperial favor, although he continued to write on the *Yijing* until his death in 1730-- convinced to the end that the astrologically grounded numerology of the *Changes* revealed the apocalyptic prophecies of the Book of Revelation, presaging the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>99</sup>

Although the Figurism practiced by Bouvet and his followers has often been stigmatized--not only in its own time but also by later scholars--for its highly inventive etymologies, its numerological emphasis, its wide-ranging correlations and its farreaching allegorical interpretations, we should remember that exegetical strategies of this sort were a part of the *Yi* tradition well before the arrival of the Jesuits in China. One prominent Qing intellectual whose ideas show certain clear affinities with those of Bouvet is Jiang Yong (1681-1762)--a wholehearted supporter of Jesuit astronomy and mathematics, a loyal follower of Zhu Xi (although a critic of his math and science), a famous evidential scholar, and an ardent exponent of divination.<sup>100</sup> A man of wideranging and eclectic interests--

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98 See Paul Rule, "Moses or China?," *Actes*, 6 (1995), 303-331, esp. 330.

99 See Bouvet's letter to Souciet, dated October 12, 1729, in Janette Gatty, "Les recherches de Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730)" in *Colloque international de sinologie* (1st: 1974: Chantilly, France), *La mission française de Pékin aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: actes du Colloque international de sinologie*, Centre de recherches interdisciplinaire de Chantilly, 20-22 septembre 1974, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1976, 141-162, esp. 143.

100 Chu Pingyi's insightful article, "Ch'eng-Chu Orthodoxy, Evidential Stud-

including ritual, phonology, mathematical astronomy and harmonics<sup>101</sup>--Jiang wrote at least two books on the numerology of the *Yijing*--only one of which appears to be still extant.<sup>102</sup> This extant work is the *He Luo jingyun* (Quintessence of the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*), originally published in 1756.

The *He Luo jingyun* ranges broadly, from *kaozheng*-influenced textual exegesis (Jiang includes, for example, a long and illuminating analysis of *Yijing* divinations in the *Zuozhuan*), to medicine, mathematics, astrology, geography, and various divination systems, including *qimen dunjia* and *fengshui*. Not surprisingly, given Jiang's broad outlook and interests, among the many illustrations to be found in the *He Luo jingyun* is a comprehensive three-page chart purporting to show that the principles for all things had their source in the Yellow River Writing.<sup>103</sup>

John Henderson identifies Jiang as an ardent critic of correlative cosmology, which in some respects he certainly was.<sup>104</sup> But Jiang embraced a number of beliefs, abundantly docu-

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ies and Correlative Cosmology: Chiang Yung and Western Astronomy," *Philosophy and the History of Science*, 4.2 (October, 1995), 71- 108 alerted me to the richness and complexity of Jiang's world view.

**101** Yuan Shushan, *Zhongguo lidai buren zhuan* (Biographies of Diviners in China by Dynastic Periods), Shanghai: Rude shuju, 1948, 16: 25 indicates that Jiang also had an interest in medicine. His preface to the *He Luo jingyun* appears in the "Confucian Scholars" section (*rulin*) of the Draft History of the Qing (*Qingshi gao*).

**102** The other book was titled the *Buyi yuanji* (The Perfect Mechanics of Changes Divination).

**103** Jiang Yong, *He Luo jingyun*, 337-339. Not surprisingly, the *He Luo jingyun* figures prominently in Shi Wei and Qiu Xiaobo, eds. *Zhouyi tushi da dian*, 1386-1477.

**104** See Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*, 188, 243-44, 248, 250, 252.

mented in the *He Luo jingyun* and his other works, that seem utterly incompatible with the Western science he so ardently defended. One was the view that China occupied a superior geographical and cosmological position among the various countries of the world. Although ideas of this sort, often linked with geomantically oriented *fenye* (field allocation) schemes, had been under attack since the early Qing, Jiang claimed that *fenye* divination could be specifically and uniquely applied to China-- despite the astronomical fact that the constellations on which it was based were shared by all people on earth.<sup>105</sup> This strain of cosmological thinking, also reflected in the "evidential" writings of Jiang's contemporary, Li Fu (1675-1730), proved to be remarkably tenacious, even in late Qing times.<sup>106</sup>

For Jiang Yong, the myriad things had their origins in the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*, which he persisted in believing, against mounds of solid *kaozheng* evidence, originated with the early *Classic of Changes*. As Jiang notes in his preface to the *He Luo jingyun*:

The *Hetu*, *Luoshu*, trigrams and hexagrams, and individual lines all emanate from the same source, [they reflect] common trends, and are mutually interactive; hence, concepts such as *gougou* [right-angled triangles; trigonometry] and *chengfang* [multiplication by "squaring"] in mathematics, the five sounds and six notes (*wuyin liulü*) in music,

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<sup>105</sup> See Smith, "The Jesuits and Evidential Research," 11. On the *fenye* system, and critiques of it, consult Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 34, 67 ff., 136, 152, 177, 199.

<sup>106</sup> See the discussion in Smith, "The Jesuits and Evidential Research," 7-12.

the positions of the seven luminaries (*qiyao*) in astrology (*tianwen*), the *najia* and *nayin* systems of five agents specialists, the resonant and pure consonants in phonetics, the *li* and *qi* of the geomancers' compass, the *doushou* and *qimen* methods of the 'day-selection' (*zeri*) experts, and even the foundations and principles of medicine, including the five movements and six 'breaths' of heaven and the veins of the human body, all emanate from the *Hetu*, *Luoshu*, trigrams, hexagrams, and lines.<sup>107</sup>

In Jiang's view, all celestial and terrestrial phenomena fit into certain mathematical patterns and regularities which, when revealed in the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*, guaranteed the comprehensibility and commensurability of the natural order. Thus, for example, the degrees of the celestial sphere, the zodiacal signs, and the twenty-four fortnightly periods were all derived from the *Hetu* and *Luoshu*. So were mathematical harmonics and the pitch-pipe, which Jiang linked, in turn, with standard units of length, capacity, weight and even money.<sup>108</sup>

Other correlations, including the harmonic sounds (*fansheng*) of the *qin* or "lute," focused on the "two poles" (*liangyi*) of *yin* and *yang*, the "three powers" (*sancai*) of Heaven, Earth and Man, and the five phases or qualities (*wuxing*). These, in turn, became linked to a crosswise diagram of the Former Heaven sequence of the eight trigrams (*Xiantian bagua*

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<sup>107</sup> Jiang Yong, *He Luo jingyun*, personal preface, 16-17. Jiang discusses these technical terms at length in the *Hetu jingyuan*. See *ibid.*, pp. 292 ff., *passim*.

<sup>108</sup> See, for example, Jiang Yong, *He Luo jingyun*, pp. 292 ff., *passim*.

*hengtu*), a similar arrangement of the sixty-four hexagrams, the fortnightly periods, and the *nayin*. Even phonology found its way into Jiang's vast correlative system. Since language was unique to man, it corresponded naturally to the *wuxing*, as manifested in the five major human organs. Not surprisingly, Jiang found a way to connect the thirty-six classificatory characters used in Chinese phonology with the *wuxing* and then integrated this system into the *Hetu*.<sup>109</sup>

The work of Jiao Xun (1763-1820), a gifted and innovative Qing mathematician, reveals a similar numerological bent. Although there was a sophisticated "computational logic" lying at the heart of Jiao's theory of analogues or proportions (*bili*), he sought to "use the mathematics of *bili* to seek the *bili* of the *Changes*," not the other way around.<sup>110</sup> In other words, his primary concern seems to have been finding a way to correlate the hexagrams, trigrams and line statements of the *Yijing* in order to reveal, and understand more fully, "the [moral] Way of Fu Xi, King Wen, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius."<sup>111</sup> Indeed, according to Fang Chao-ying, Jiao's main contribution to the study of the *Changes* was "his application of the principles of mathematics to determine comparatively the amount of good fortune or calamity which . . . [according to the *Yijing*] ensued from various types of conduct."<sup>112</sup> It was the divina-

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109 Ibid. See also Chu Pingyi, "Ch'eng-Chu Orthodoxy," 95 ff.

110 See the preface to the *Yi tongshi*, 2a, in Jiao Xun, *Yixue sanshu* (Three Works on the *Changes*), Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1970. For details on Jiao's theories, consult Lai Guisan's *Jiao Xun Diaogu lou Yixue yan jiu*.

111 See, for example, the judgment of Wei Tat, *An Exposition of the I-Ching or Book of Changes*, Hong Kong: Dai Nippon Printing Co., 1977, 8-9. Toda Toyosaburo devotes more attention to Jiao than to any other Qing scholar in his *Ekikyo chuyaku shi ko*, 718-728.

112 Cited in Smith, "The Jesuits and Evidential Research," 7-8.

tory potential of the classic-- specifically its value as a guide to moral behavior--that held the greatest attraction for Jiao.

In short, *Yijing* exegesis of the sort indulged in by Bouvet, Jiang, Jiao and a great many other Qing scholars,<sup>113</sup> opened up a vast field of speculative endeavor in premodern China, as it does to this day. Although the *Changes*-based numerological, historical, and theological speculations of the Figurists may have been a bit far-fetched in terms of traditional Chinese categories of concern, they were part of a long hermeneutical history of creative *Yijing* interpretations, textual transmissions and cultural transformations--one that not only preceded the Jesuits in East Asia by several centuries, but one that would also continue to manifest itself in various parts of the world for several centuries to come. Moreover, it is important to remember that the criticisms of Bouvet's work lodged by some Qing scholars and the throne in the eighteenth century were no more severe than the ones Chinese savants had been leveling against one another for nearly two thousand years before him. Charges of obscurity, deception, wrong-headedness, over-reading, superficiality and "forcing" an interpretation (*qiangci*) or "forcing a fit" (*qiangpei*) were common in the history of *Yi-*

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<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Yuan, *Zhongguo lidai buren zhuan*, 1: 19; 2: 7; 5: 2; 5: 25-26; 6: 17; 8: 11; 8: 16; 9: 6; 9: 17-18; 12: 10; 14: 14; 15: 27; 15: 29; 16: 25; 17: 13; 18: 7; 18: 15; 18: 25; 18: 26-27; 19: 34; 22: 7; 22: 15; 22: 16-17; 22: 21; 22: 24; 22: 25; 24: 7; 24: 19; 26: 4-5; 28: 2; 28: 15-16; 28: 20; 29: 36-37; 31: 18; 31: 25; 31: 26; 32: 14; 33: 25-26; 34: 8; 34: 9; 34: 10; 34: 22-23; 35: 11; 35: 11-22; 35: 12-13; 36: 16; 36: 18; 36: 26; 37: 31. Note also the large number of Qing dynasty works (more than 100) in the bibliographical section on the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* in Duong Ngoc Dung and Lê Anh Minh, *Kinh dich va cau hinh tu tuong Trung Quoc* (The *Classic of Changes* and the Structuring of Chinese Thought), Hanoi: Nha xuất bản Khoa học xã hội, 1999, 748-760.

*jing* exegesis--particularly during the *kaozheng* debates of the early- and mid-Qing period.<sup>114</sup>

## The *Yijing*'s Journey to the West

Despite the unhappy fate of the Figurists in China, their writings captured the attention of several prominent European intellectuals in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries--most notably, of course, Leibniz.<sup>115</sup> And these individuals, in turn, provoked a sustained and substantial Western interest in the *Yijing* and other Chinese classics that

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114 See, for example, Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*, 178 ff.; cf. Smith, *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 70 ff.

115 See David E. Mungello's *Curious Land* as well as his *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, New York, Oxford, etc.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999, and his *Leibniz and Confucianism: The Search for Accord*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977. For just a few of a great many other relevant works, consult Li Wenchao and Hans Poser, eds., *Das Neueste über China: G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sinica von 1697*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000, Claudia von Collani, *Eine wissenschaftliche Akademie für China: Briefe des Chinamissionars Joachim Bouvet S.J. an Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz und Jean Paul Bignon*, Wiesbaden: Steiner 1989, Daniel J. Cook, and Henry Rosemont, Jr., *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Writings on China*. Chicago: Open Court, 1994, David B. Honey, *Incense at the Altar: Pioneering Sinologists and the Development of Classical Chinese Philology*, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2001 and David Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. To this day, Chinese scholars continue to celebrate the connection between Leibniz (and other Western scientists) and the *Yijing*. See, for example, Zhang Qicheng, *Yijing yingyong da baiké*, 1: 5.

has lasted to this day.<sup>116</sup> A systematic examination of the westward movement of the *Changes* would go well beyond my allotted space, but a few important points should be emphasized here.

First, it is clear that in certain respects the process by which the *Yijing* has moved to Europe and the Americas during the past four centuries parallels the earlier (and, in fact, on-going) process by which the document has travelled to East Asia.<sup>117</sup> Most significantly, in both cases, conscious efforts have continually been made by devotees of the *Changes* to "domesticate" it by various means.

But the effort by both missionaries and lay people to introduce the *Yijing* to Western audiences from the eighteenth century onward has involved unprecedented problems of translation and accommodation--not least, because the text has moved from a "mainstream" cultural environment in East Asia to a "counter-cultural" one in the West. And in this latter process, particularly during the twentieth century, market forces have come increasingly into play, complicating the already "complex dialectic" by which the words of the text have interacted with the intellectual concerns of its translators and commen-

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**116** For an excellent summary of the early stages of this process, see Colani, Claudia von. "The First Meeting of the *Yijing* and the West." Forthcoming in *Monumenta Serica*.

**117** For general accounts of the process by which the *Yijing* travelled westward, consult Smith, "The *Yijing* (*Classic of Changes*) in Global Perspective," Iulian Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979 (translated by William MacDonald and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa.), 13-55, Richard Rutt, trans., *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi)*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996, 60-82, and William Fancourt, "Figurism," *The Oracle: The Journal of Yijing Studies* 3 (Spring 1996), 28-34.

tators.<sup>118</sup>

Significantly, the first complete translation of the *Changes* in a Western language (Latin) was undertaken by three missionary-scholars who were extremely critical of the allegorical approach of Father Bouvet and his followers. Although completed in 1736, this translation of the *Yijing* did not actually appear in print until the 1830s.<sup>119</sup>

Within decades, several additional translations of the *Changes* appeared in Europe, including Canon Thomas McClatchie's *A Translation of the Confucian Yi-king* (1876), Angelo Zottoli's 1880 rendering of the *Changes*, which appeared in volume 3 of his *Cursus literaturae sinicae neo-missionariis accomodatus* (1879-1882), James Legge's *The Yi King* (1882), P.L.-F. Philastre's *Tscheou Yi* (1885-1893), and Ch. de Harlez's *Le Yih-king: Texte primitif, rétabli, traduit et commenté* (1889).<sup>120</sup> These works, as Norman Girardot suggests, reflect a "scholarly vogue in European culture at this time concerned with the uncovering, and the rational and historical explanation, of all manner of apparent Oriental

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**118** For an insightful analysis of this process, see Gardner, "Confucian Commentary," esp. 416-418. On the general development of Western "Sinology," consult Honey, *Incense at the Altar*, passim.

**119** For a cogent and illuminating evaluation of this work, see Knud Lundbaek, "Notes sur l'image du Néo-Confucianisme dans la littérature européenne du XVII à la fin du XIX siècle" in *Colloque international de sinologie* (3rd: 1980: Chantilly, France), *Appréciation par l'Europe de la tradition chinoise à partir du XVIIe siècle: actes du IIIe Colloque international de sinologie*, Centre de recherches interdisciplinaire de Chantilly (CERIC), 11-14 septembre 1980, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1983, 131-176, esp. 154-155.

**120** These works were evaluated by the relentlessly critical Terrien de Lacouperie in "The Oldest Book of the Chinese (the Yh-King) and Its Authors," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, new series, 14 (1882), 781-815 and new series, 15 (1883), 237-289.

mysteries," including not only Buddhism and Daoism, but also theosophy, spiritualism, the Golden Dawn, and various occult novels.<sup>121</sup>

Like Bouvet, but with no acknowledgement of him, McClatchie believed that the *Yijing* had been carried to China by one of the sons of Noah after the Deluge. But whereas Bouvet tried to use the *Changes* to prove that the Chinese had knowledge of "the one true God," McClatchie believed that the work reflected a form of pagan materialism, "perfected by Nimrod and his Cushites before the dispersion from Babel." He identified Shangdi as the Baal of the Chaldeans.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to offering a relatively straightforward but not very illuminating translation of the *Changes*, McClatchie published two articles in the *China Review* at about the same time--one titled "The Symbols of the *Yih-King*" and the other, "Phallic Worship." In these two works, particularly the latter, he identified the two primary hexagrams of the *Changes* with the male and female sexual organs:

From the statements of the Yih King, and of Confucius in his Commentary, Kheen-khwan [Qian-Kun] or Shang-te [Shangdi; identified by McClatchie as the Baal of the Chaldeans] is evidently the phallic God of Heathendom represented unmistakably by the usual symbols. Kheen or his Male portion is the membrum virile, and Khwan or his Female portion is the pudendum muliebre; and these two

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<sup>121</sup> Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 371-372.

<sup>122</sup> See Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, 23-24.

## Jesuit Interpretations of the *Yijing*

are enclosed in the circle or ring, or phallos, the "Great Extreme" [Taiji] or globe of Air [qi], from and by which, as the "Great Monad" [Taiyi], all things are generated.<sup>123</sup>

Scholars like Legge, and later, the eminent Russian Sinologist Iulian Shchutskii, ridiculed this decidedly sexual view, but recent work by Edward Shaughnessy and others suggests its essential correctness--particularly in the light of research on the Mawangdui version of the *Changes*.<sup>124</sup>

De LaCouverie, for his part, believed that the *Yijing* was originally a dictionary-- "a handbook of state management . . . set forth under the sixty-four words [hexagram names]." Hostile to the Chinese commentarial tradition (the product of what he derisively described as "tortured minds" and "maddened brains") and to most Western interpretations of the work as well ("amusing enough to dispel the spleen"), with misplaced erudition he posited Near Eastern origins for the basic text of the *Changes* (but not the commentaries). His intent was not to "domesticate" the *Yijing*, however, for he held it in very low esteem. According to de LaCouverie, the *Changes* originated in the ancient kingdom of Akkad, which he believed to be Bactria. Following a great flood, the Bak people (Baixing) supposedly migrated eastwards to China, having previously struggled with the descendants of the Assyrian king, Sargon (i.e. Shen Nong, successor to Fu Xi). Led by Prince Hu-Nak-kunte (i.e. Yu, founder of the Xia dynasty), the Bak people settled in the

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<sup>123</sup> See T. A. McClatchie, "Phallic Worship," *China Review* 4 (1875-1876).

<sup>124</sup> See Edward L. Shaughnessy, trans. *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1996, 17. Cf. Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, 23-24.

Yellow River valley around the year 2282 B.C.E.<sup>125</sup> De Harlez held a somewhat similar view of the *Yijing*, arguing that the *Changes* was originally the notebook of some ancient political figure, which had been turned into a book of divination by another political figure at a later date. Iulian Shchutskii points out, however, that something of the opposite process actually took place.<sup>126</sup>

James Legge, the object of some of de LaCouverie's most vitriolic criticisms, began his translation of the *Changes* in 1854, but for various reasons it was not completed for another twenty years or so.<sup>127</sup> Like the Jesuits, Legge believed that the Confucian classics were compatible with Christian beliefs, but he was not a Figurist.<sup>128</sup> In addition to denouncing McClatchie for focusing on the *Yijing*'s sexual imagery, Legge assailed him for resorting to the methods of "Comparative Mythology." In Legge's words: "I have followed Canon McClatchie's translation from paragraph to paragraph and from sentence to sentence, but found nothing which I could employ with advantage in my own."<sup>129</sup>

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**125** De LaCouverie, "The Oldest Book of the Chinese," esp. 15: 253 ff.. One might note that the Jesuit priest Niccolo Longobardo (1565-1655) once asserted that Fu Xi was none other than Zoroaster, the king of Bactria, whose powers as the discoverer of magic invested the trigrams with their special potency.

**126** Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, 27.

**127** On Legge's translation of the *Changes*, and the debates that surrounded it, see Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, esp. 366-374. Girardot offers a particularly insightful appraisal of Legge as a "comparativist" in the "meager disciplinary history of nineteenth-century sinological Orientalism." See *ibid.*, chapter 5, *passim*.

**128** He did, however, insist that the term Di (or Shangdi) should be rendered "God." See the discussion in *ibid.*, 372-373.

**129** James Legge, *The I Ching* [originally rendered *Yi King*], New York:

Legge had no love of China and no respect for the *Yijing*. Indeed, he described it as "a farrago of emblematic representations." Although he admitted the *Changes* was "an important monument of architecture," he characterized it as "very bizarre in its conception and execution."<sup>130</sup> Legge's highly literal translation, published in 1882, followed the prevailing neo-Confucian orthodoxy of the Qing dynasty as reflected in the *Zhouyi zhezong*, a work that probably encouraged Legge to separate the "basic text" from the Ten Wings. This intellectual orientation also informed the more famous and more influential rendering of the *Changes* by the German scholar Richard Wilhelm, which first appeared in 1924. Like Legge, Wilhelm had been a missionary in China before embarking on a more "scholarly" career.

The standard English translation of this work was carried out by one of Carl Jung's students, Ms. Cary Baynes, and published in 1950. The standard comparison of the two works--somewhat of a distortion on both ends--is that Legge's text indicates what the *Yijing* says while Wilhelm's conveys what it means.<sup>131</sup> The interesting point about Wilhelm's translation is that it bespeaks a man not only in love with China, but also one who believed that the *Yijing* had something important to say to all mankind. Like Bouvet, he considered the *Changes* to be

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Dover Publications, 1963 (reprint of 1899 edition), xvii.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., xiv-xv, 10, 17, 25-26, 38, etc.

<sup>131</sup> See Gerald Swanson's introduction to Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, xi-xii. For an excellent, historically sensitive analysis of these two works, see Tze-ki Hon's "Constancy in Change: A Comparison of James Legge's and Richard Wilhelm's Interpretations of the *Yijing*." Paper for the international conference on "Fascination and Understanding: The Spirit of the Occident and the Spirit of China in Reciprocity" Smolenice Castle, Slovakia, February 21-25, 2003. Forthcoming in *Monumenta Serica*.

a global property and a work of timeless wisdom, but unlike Bouvet he treated it solely as a Chinese document, with no genetic links with the ancient West or Near East.<sup>132</sup>

This said, it should be noted that Wilhelm--like many before him, both East and West--tried to "domesticate" the *Yijing* in various ways. One was to call upon the authority of classical German philosophers and literary figures, like Kant and Goethe, to illustrate "parallel" ideas expressed in the *Changes*. Another was to cite the Bible in the same way. Yet another was to argue that the *Yijing* drew upon "some common foundations of humankind that all our cultures--unconsciously and unrecognizedly--are based." Wilhelm believed, in other words, that "East and West belong inseparably together and join hands in mutual completion." The West, he argued, had something to learn from China.<sup>133</sup>

Wilhelm also tried to "demystify" the *Changes* by providing elaborate commentaries that paraphrased and explained the "spiritual" material that he felt might "confuse the European reader too much with the unusual." This strategy of "rationalization," as Michael Lackner points out, was somewhat similar to that of the French Jesuit Figurists, "who frequently prepared second translations of certain texts because they claimed to know the intrinsic meaning of these texts: the prefiguration of

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<sup>132</sup> Hon (2003) makes the important point that whereas Legge "was confident that the West had something to offer to the East," Wilhelm's profound disillusion with the mass destruction of World War I led him to believe that Chinese wisdom was, in Wilhelm's own words, "the cure and salvation of modern Europe."

<sup>133</sup> See Michael Lackner, "Richard Wilhelm: A 'Sinicized' German Translator" in Viviane Alleton and Michael Lackner, eds. *De l'un au multiple. La traduction du chinois dans les langues européennes*, Paris: Maison des Science de l'Homme, 1998.

Christian revelation."<sup>134</sup> In the case of the Figurists, this process often involved the willful misrepresentation (or at least the ignoring) of traditional commentaries in order to "dehistoricize" the "original" text, but in Wilhelm's case, the impulse to explain away material that might be considered as "superstitious" reflected the general climate of "rational" academic discourse in early twentieth century Europe. Wilhelm remained a "missionary," so to speak, but a secular one, whose rendering of the *Changes* seemed to confirm Carl Jung's theories about archetypes and "synchronicity"--just as Bouvet's representations of the work had confirmed Leibniz's binary system and fed his speculations about a "Universal Characteristic" and a "Primitive Language."<sup>135</sup>

By contrast, Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), an Englishman who travelled to China for awhile during the first decade of the 20th century, adopted a selfconsciously mystical approach to the *Changes*--a harbinger of counter-cultural enthusiasm for the document that would peak worldwide in the 1960s. Upon his return from China, Crowley undertook the study of various Chinese texts, including the *Yijing*. At first he relied heavily on Legge's translation, but found it wanting--not least because of the Scottish missionary-translator's hostility to the document ("what pitiable pedantic imbecility," Crowley once wrote). Eventually he developed an approach to the classic that dispensed with the conventional attributes of some of the trigrams and tried to assimilate them, in the fashion of Bouvet, to the Kabbalistic "Tree of Life." J. Edward Cornelius and Mar-

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> On Leibniz and Bouvet, see Mungello, *Curious Land*, 312 ff. and 356 ff. As is well known, Jung wrote a revealing preface to Wilhelm's translation of the *Changes*.

lene Cornelius have provided an excellent overview of Crowley's highly idiosyncratic approach in "*Yi King: A Beastly Book of Changes*," which appears in special edition of *Red Flame: A Thelemic Research Journal* (1998).

According to Crowley, the *Yijing* "is mathematical and philosophical in form," and its structure "is cognate with that of the *Qabalah*; the identity is so intimate that the existence of two such superficially different systems is transcendent testimony to the truth of both." In Crowley's view, the *Dao* as expressed in the *Yijing* was "exactly equivalent to the Ain or Nothingness of our *Qabalah*," and the notions of *yang* and *yin* "correspond exactly with *Lingam* and *Yoni*." Furthermore, he equates *jing* (essence) with *Nephesh*, *qi* (material force) with *Ruach*, and *hun* (soul) with *Neschamah*. For Crowley, the Confucian virtues of *ren* (humaneness), *yi* (duty), *li* (ritual) and *zhi* (knowledge) suggested the principles of "Geburah, Chesed, Tiphareth, and Daath."<sup>136</sup>

In Crowley's decidedly sexual interpretation of the *Changes*, reminiscent of McClatchie, the eight trigrams represent the male and female reproductive organs, the sun, the moon, and the four Greek elements--earth, air, fire and water. Thus he writes:

In the place of Chesed, which is water in our *Qabalah*, we find Tui [Dui; "Lake"], which is water in the Chinese system. In Geburah, our Fire, is Kan [Zhen; "Quake" or "Thunder"]. In the place of Netzach, which is Earth in our *Qabalah*, there is Kan

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<sup>136</sup> J. Edward Cornelius and Marlene Cornelius, "*Yi King: A Beastly Book of Changes*," *Red Flame: A Thelemic Research Journal* 5 (1998), 1-226, esp. pp. 19 ff..

[Gen; "Restraint" or "Mountain"] on the Chinese plan. Finally, for the Sephira Hod, which in our system is Airy and Mercurial, we find Sun [Sun or Xun; "Compliance" or "Wind"], the Chinese trigram of Air.<sup>137</sup>

Qian ["Pure *Yang*" or "Heaven"] is equated with Daath, Kun ["Pure *Yin*" or "Earth"] with Malkuth, Li ["Cohesion" or "Fire"] with Tiphareth, and Kan ["Sink Hole" or "Water"] with Yesod. With similar abandon, Crowley equates the four attributes of the judgment for the first hexagram, Qian--*yuan, heng, li* and *zhen*--with the four spheres of the Tree of Life and the four parts of the human soul, representing wisdom, intuition, reason and the animal soul.<sup>138</sup>

In more recent times, a great many books and articles (including website publications) have appeared that relate the *Yijing* to the conventional values of Christianity and that employ Figurist techniques and logic. The many writings of Jung Young Lee are representative.<sup>139</sup> Lee asserts, for example, "God the Father is closely associated with the image of a dragon in *The Book of Change*." As the "hidden dragon," Lee writes, "he is "the source of [all] creativity."<sup>140</sup> C. H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson make the same kinds of

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>138</sup> For a similar effort to link the *Yijing* to ancient mysticism--including not only the Kabbalah, but also various forms of astrology and Tarot card reading--see Charlie Higgins' on-line article, "The Hexagram and the Kabbalah" [http://www.mension.com/del\\_3.htm](http://www.mension.com/del_3.htm) (1997).

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Jung Young Lee, *Embracing Change: Postmodern Interpretations of the I Ching from a Christian Perspective*, Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1994.

<sup>140</sup> See *ibid.*, 136-150.

connections in their 1979 book, *The Discovery of Genesis*. In it, they dissect several dozen characters in an effort to show that "the ancient picture writing of the Chinese language embodies memories of man's earliest days," and that "when broken down into component parts . . . [these characters] reflect elements of the story of God and man recorded in the early chapters of Genesis."<sup>141</sup> I. Mears and L.E. Mears, for their part, try to show in *Creative Energy* (1931) that "God-like qualities" can be found in the various symbols of the *Yijing*, from the characters of the text, to the trigrams, to the hexagrams.<sup>142</sup>

In a more strictly "Figurist" vein, but without an acknowledged debt to Bouvet or his followers, Joe E. McCaffree's *Bible and I Ching Relationships* (1982; first published in 1967) tries to show in 446 extraordinarily convoluted pages that: (1) certain Chinese characters were "specially designed" for correlative purposes in works such as the *Changes*; (2) the texts of the *Yijing* and the Hebrew Bible "follow the same sequence with respect to the order of events and their inherent characteristics" (for example, McCaffree maintains that the first fifty hexagrams of the *Yijing* correspond with the fifty chapters of the Book of Genesis); (3) various biblical personalities, including Joseph of Genesis, Moses and Soloman, are identified in the *Yijing*; (4) Biblical accounts have "a hexagrammic structure" which includes literal references to the trigrams; (5) the

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<sup>141</sup> C.H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson, *The Discovery of Genesis: How the Truths of Genesis Were Found Hidden in the Chinese Language*, St. Louis: Concordia, 1979.

<sup>142</sup> I. Mears, I and L.E. Mears, *Creative Energy: Being an Introduction to the Study of the Yih King, or Book of Changes, with Translations from the Original Text*, London: John Murray, 1931.

Zhou people were "probably" Israelites; (6) the *Yijing* "fulfills" biblical prophecy; and (7) the *Changes* were intended as a "study guide" to the Bible. In short, the *Yijing* unveils a "divine plan for the culture of man," and in so doing "consumates" what the Torah has "generated." In the process, McCaffree attempts to establish connections between the symbolism of the *Changes* and that of ancient Egypt, India and the Middle East.<sup>143</sup>

Dr. Ong Hean-Tatt's *The Chinese Pakua* (1991), one of the most recent and most comprehensive works of this sort, clearly draws a good deal of self-conscious inspiration from the Jesuit model, as well as other "Figurist" interpretations. Indeed, he even acknowledges Jesuit precedents explicitly on occasion. Moreover, he covers much the same ground that Bouvet and others covered in the 16th and seventeenth centuries: the "common origin" of Chinese-Hebrew "Kabalic [sic] Magic Squares," the "link between [the] Chinese and Hebrew languages," "similarities in [the] Structures of Chinese and Sumerian-Egyptian Characters," the identity between the twenty-two symbols of the Chinese stem-branch (*gan zhi*) system and the 22 letters of the Kabbala, and the appearance of "Middle East legends in Chinese ideograms" (for instance he asserts that the long ["dragon"] is the winged "seraphim" of the Bible). Like the Figurists, he breaks down a number of Chinese characters into their constituent elements to reveal

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<sup>143</sup> For a convenient summary of McCaffree's basic argument, see *Bible and I Ching Relationships*, Hong Kong and Seattle: South Sky Book Co, 1982, 428-432. At various points in his book, McCaffree links the Li hexagram (#30) with (A) the Torah as a whole, (B) the thirtieth chapter of Genesis, (C) Jesus at age thirty, (D) Jacob, (E) the Kabbalistic "Tree of Life," (F) the fleur-de-lis, and (G) the unicorn.

biblical "messages," arguing, for example, that the "sheep," "hand," "knife" and "self" components of the character yi (righteousness, duty, etc.) depict a "hand using a spear to sacrifice the lamb," meaning that "the Chinese knew righteousness will come from [a] slain lamb."<sup>144</sup>

### Some Concluding Remarks

In retrospect, the westward movement and eventual "globalization" of the *Yijing* is easy to comprehend. As indicated at the outset of this paper, the *Changes* was in many ways an ideal instrument for building bridges across cultures. Challenging, sophisticated, useful and adaptable, it was a potentially valuable commodity in the ever-widening marketplace of ideas. Simple only to the simple-minded, it encouraged inventive people to make creative connections of all sorts, linking in various ways not only the past, the present and the future, but also heavenly and earthly phenomena, numbers and images, moral principles and practical predictions. It generated innovative scholarship in a wide range of areas--from philology and philosophy to math and science--and it continues to do so to this day, not only in East Asia, but also in Europe and the Americas.<sup>145</sup> Efforts by contemporary scholars in China and the West to identify the "original meaning" of the *Changes*,

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<sup>144</sup> Hean-Tatt Ong, *The Chinese Pakua*, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1991. For dozens of Ong's Figurist-style etymologies, see *ibid.*, 166 ff.

<sup>145</sup> For some examples, see Smith, "The *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in Global Perspective" and "The Place of the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in World Culture."

like those of the Figurists two and a half centuries before them, proceed unabated, with greater or lesser degrees of methodological sophistication. That the *Yijing* has provoked much silliness and superficiality over the years is not the fault of the document.

Recognizing the *Yijing's* unparalleled prestige, its rich and provocative symbolism, its deep philosophical content and its practical utility, Bouvet and his followers, facing East and West simultaneously, saw the document as a convenient means by which to link two seemingly different philosophical and religious traditions. The document was, in their eminently reasonable view, a capacious vehicle of crosscultural understanding. Moreover, in using the *Yijing* to carry out their own evangelical agenda, the Figurists did nothing with the document that their predecessors in East Asia, and, of course, their successors on both sides of the Atlantic, did not also do.

What then, went wrong? The failure of the Figurists in eighteenth century China was clearly not a matter of will or intellect. It was simply, or perhaps not so simply, a product of politics. To be sure, the scholarship of Bouvet and his followers was flawed-- at least by conventional Chinese standards of the time. But, as I have tried to suggest, the Figurists worked within interpretive traditions that virtually all Chinese scholars recognized and respected, and one suspects that if they had been allowed greater latitude in matters such as the choice of Chinese terms by which to render the Christian concept of "God," they would have made far more headway with the emperor and scholarbureaucrats. The constraints imposed by the Church authorities on what Bouvet and others could say or write, however, had a deadening effect on Figurist discourse,

and their embroilment in the factional politics of both the imperial court and the Catholic Church put them in an extraordinarily vulnerable position. After the failure of the Tournon Mission of 1706, the Jesuits fought an increasingly uphill battle, as Kangxi grew ever more distrustful of them.

In short, the Figurists in China had the right medium, but they lacked the freedom to articulate their cross-cultural message. The situation in Europe was considerably different—although there, too, politics, personalities and intellectual fashions affected the reception and interpretation of the *Yijing*. Complicating matters was the problem of language, for unlike the spread of the classic to Japan, Korea and Vietnam, where elites were completely comfortable with the classical Chinese script, in Europe and the Americas the *Changes* required translation.

In this and several other respects, the transmission of the *Changes* to the West parallels the process by which Buddhism and Daoism travelled westward. As Stephen Batchelor, James Coleman, J.J. Clark and others have indicated, in each case "missionaries" have played a role in the process of translation, and in each case there have been varied responses in the West over time, ranging from "blind indifference," to "rational knowledge", "romantic fantasy" and "existential engagement."<sup>146</sup> And as with the sophisticated texts of

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<sup>146</sup> See Stephen Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture*, Berkeley, Parallax Press, 1994, xi; also James W. Coleman, *The New Buddhism: The Western Transformation of an Ancient Tradition*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, Martin Baumann and Charles Prebish, eds. *Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, J. J. Clark, *The Tao of the West: Western Transformations of Taoist Thought*, London and New

Buddhism and Daoism, the *Yijing* has been subjected to rigorous scholarly analysis as well to superficial punditry. It has provoked fascinating speculations and idiotic drivel.

One of the most revealing examples of the way philosophical and religious systems intersect in the process of cross-cultural communication is the work of Ernst Lothar Hoffman, a German citizen who became a "homeless" lay Buddhist in the late 1920s and was given the name Lama Anagarika Govinda. In the 1980s, after many years of Buddhist study and practice, he wrote a book titled *The Inner Structure of the I Ching, the Book of Transformations* (1981). Replete with elaborate diagrams and illustrations, it claims to reveal "what the *I Ching* itself has to say," rather than what "various Chinese and European philosophers and scholars thought about this book."<sup>147</sup> The diagrams and text of this study, which draw upon Tibetan Buddhist traditions as well as Western astrology and Chinese Confucian and Daoist traditions, suggest the same sort of "grand synthesis" that Bouvet attempted more than 250 years before.

In all, the history of the *Changes* in the hands of Western interpreters serves as an especially vivid reminder that exegesis never occurs in a vacuum. It is always "motivated," and the historian's duty is to ferret out the motives and provide a context for them. As Daniel Gardner reminds us, "there simply is no one stable or definitive reading of a canonical text."<sup>148</sup>

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York: Routledge, 2000, etc.

<sup>147</sup> Lama Anagarika Brahmachari Govinda, *The Inner Structure of the I Ching, the Book of Transformations*, Tokyo and New York: Weatherhill, 1981, xi. For details on Govinda, consult Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West*, 312-314, 320-321, 327-329.

<sup>148</sup> Gardner, "Confucian Commentary," 416-417.

## Jesuit Interpretations of the *Yijing*

For some two thousand years, the primary incentive for commenting on the *Yijing* in China was to clarify the meaning of the sages. This generally involved an effort to "fix" or "stabilize" the text in accordance with a particular philosophical or religious outlook, and it often involved an implicit or explicit reaction to previous interpretations. A related goal, also common to many cultural traditions, was to make a work that was diverse in origins appear coherent, consistent, and relevant to readers of a different time. This might be done to "legitimate" a text in the face of claims that the version in hand was not "authentic." And, of course, commentary allowed individuals to associate their own ideas with a classic, another strategy of "legitimation."<sup>149</sup> All of these motives have been evident in *Changes* exegesis, East and West, and they will continue, no doubt, to be.

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<sup>149</sup> Henderson's *Scripture, Canon and Commentary* provides an illuminating comparative study of several commentarial traditions that display common characteristics of the sort discussed in this paragraph.



