

# *Zhouyi* Interpretation from Accounts in the *Zuozhuan*

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THE *Zuozhuan* contains two dozen references to the *Zhouyi* 周易 or stalkcasting divination (*shi* 筮) in accounts dated 672 to 485 B.C.<sup>1</sup> About two-thirds of these describe efforts to interpret the hexagrams and line statements of the *Yi*. Even at that time, we may be gratified to learn, the *Yi* was not easy to understand. I take these attempts to grapple with a difficult text as my object of study. First I will examine ten of these cases in detail. Then I will draw some general conclusions regarding the nature of the *Zhouyi* and the usefulness of the *Zuozhuan* to its investigation.

I would like to acknowledge my gratefulness for the careful readings and useful suggestions of Alison Black, Barry B. Blakeley, David Keightley, Sarah McMahon, John Major, Edward Shaughnessy, and especially the encouragement and vision of Steve Tobias. My thanks as well to the Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, Berkeley, for support during initial stages of research.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for a complete listing of these references in table format. For the text of the *Zuozhuan* I have used James Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen (The Chinese Classics, Vol. 5, Hong Kong, 1872 [Taiwan reprint, n.d.]*). A citation "Min 1, Legge 124/125" indicates "the first year of Duke Min, Chinese text page 124, English translation page 125." I have also referred to Takezoe Shin'ichirō 竹添進一郎, *Saden kaisen* 左傳會箋 (Taipei: Fenghuang chubanshe, 1961 photo reprint of 1912 Tokyo edition) and Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: 1983).

For the *Yijing* I have used the Harvard-Yenching variorum edition, *A Concordance to Yi Ching* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement No. 10, Taiwan photo reprint, 1973).

These accounts speak to a host of topics—the techniques of *Zhouyi* divination, of course, but also how people balanced ritual, personal and rational considerations in their decision-making, the relationship of morality to augury, how diviners responded to political pressures imposed by their patrons, and how the *Zhouyi* changed and thus survived. Particularly revealing are accounts in which interpreters fought over the “correct” meaning of the *Yi*. These indicate the fault-lines of interpretive practice, where old ideas were breaking down and people argued over what would take their place. By the end of the Spring and Autumn the *Yi* had assumed a variety of new meanings.

Several factors complicate this investigation. To begin with, the two dozen citations of the *Yi* suggest general developments but are too few to support a detailed history of the text. Even among these few accounts, interpretive practices vary considerably. While I will posit a basic framework within which interpretation took place, the ways that accounts stretch these norms are often their most significant aspect. As well, our evidence consists of stories contained in the *Zuozhuan*, a text whose sources, author and precise date of composition are unknown. Its commitment to a moral-retributive view of history, however, is famous, and this molds the *Zhouyi* stories in ways that we must take into consideration.

These factors suggest that we examine three aspects of the accounts: the technical methods of *Zhouyi* divination, the literary nature of the *Zuozhuan* records, and the place of these in the larger context of Spring and Autumn history. The technical methods are primarily a matter of how the *Yi* hexagrams and texts were interpreted. For example, did the diviners make reference to the component trigrams? If so, what images did they associate with each? Are certain terms used only in certain periods? I will devote much of Cases 1 and 2 to this sort of question.<sup>2</sup> Second, the *Zuozhuan* itself

<sup>2</sup> Several previous studies have investigated these issues. See Gao Heng 高亨, “Zuozhuan, Guoyu di Zhouyi shuo tongjie” 左傳國語的周易說通解 in *Zhouyi zalun* 周易雜論 (Ji’nan: QiLu shushe, 1979 [1962]), pp. 70–110; Gao Heng, “Zhouyi shifa xinkao” 周易筮法新考 in *Zhouyi gujing tongshuo* 周易古經通說 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983 [1958]), pp. 112–130; Honda Wataru 本田濟, “Saden ni mieru Eki” 左傳に見える易 in *Ekigaku* 易学 (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1960), pp. 52–71; Imai Usaburō 今井宇三郎, “Saden, Kokugo zeisen kō” 左傳國語筮占考, *Kokubungaku kanbungaku ronsō* 14 (1969): 51–97; Li Jingchi 李鏡池, “Zuozhuan zhong Yishih zhi yanjiu” 左傳中易筮之研究 in *Zhouyi tanyuan* 周易探源 (Bei-

consists of stories. As such, it must meet certain narrative criteria, such as consistency and the need to appear attractive to its readers. These values, of course, may conflict with other criteria, such as historical accuracy. Third, as historians, we will want to know how the *Zhouyi*—an obscure and increasingly archaic text—interacted with its changing cultural context.

This article consists of two kinds of analysis. One addresses ten *Zuozhuan* accounts of the *Yi*. I take up six cases of *Zhouyi* divination first, three from the mid-seventh century and three from the mid-sixth. The two groups are distinguished by the disputes over interpretation that mark the second three cases. Then I address four cases that may be called “rhetorical” in that the *Yi* is cited as a part of someone’s argument without divination having been performed. The second kind of analysis draws some general conclusions from these researches. First I address the nature of *Zhouyi* divination and assesses our knowledge of its techniques. Second I examine the uncertainty that is implicit in all divination. Third I evaluate the *Zuozhuan* as a historical source for these investigations. Finally I look at how concepts of politics, morality and fate interacted with *Zhouyi* divination in several Spring and Autumn accounts.

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jing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978 [1930]), pp. 407–421; Liu Dajun 劉大鈞, *Zhouyi gailun* 周易概論 (Ji’nan: QiLu shushe, 1986); Pan Yuting 潘雨廷, “Lun Zuozhuan yu Yixue” 論左傳與易學 (photo-copied ms. distributed at International Conference on the *Yijing*, Ji’nan, December 1987); Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *XianQin HanWei Yili shuping* 先秦漢魏易例述評 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1975 [1942]); Stuart H. Sargent, “The *Yi Ching* in the *Tso-chuan* and *Kuo-yü*,” (Paper presented to the Berkeley Regional Seminar in Confucian Studies, November 1977); Edward L. Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983); Song Zuoyin 宋祚胤, *Zhouyi xinlun* 周易新論 (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1982); Takezoe Shin’ichirō, *Saden kaisen* 左傳會箋 (Taipei: Fenghuang chubanshe, 1961 [1912]); Toda Toyosaburō 戶田豊三郎, “Sa, Koku no Ekizei kiji kanken” 左國の易筮記事管見, *Shinagaku kenkyū* 16 (1957): 1–11; Wang Yongjia 王永壽, “Zhouyi zuozhe kao” 周易作者考, in *Zhouyi xinjie* 周易新解 (Ningbo: privately published, 1985), pp. 1a–12a; Léon Wiegier, *Textes philosophiques* (Hien-hien: Imprimerie de Hien-hien, 1930); Hellmut Wilhelm, “*I-ching* Oracles in the *Tso-chuan* and the *Kuo-yü*,” *JAOS* 79.4 (1959): 275–280; Zhang Liwen 張立文, *Zhouyi sixiang yanjiu* 周易思想研究 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1980); and Zhu Bokun 朱伯崑, *Yixue zhhexueshi* 易學哲學史, vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1986).

*Case 1. The ruler's son (i)—Min 2, 660 B.C.*<sup>3</sup>

When Chengji was about to be born, Duke Huan [of Lu, his father] had Crackmaker Chuqiu's father make cracks about it.<sup>4</sup>

[The crackmaker] said, "A male.

His name is You 友, [rhyme A]

At the duke's right hand. [rhyme A]

Between the two altars,

Assisting the ducal house. [rhyme A]

When Ji's family dies, [rhyme B]

Then [the state of] Lu won't flourish." [rhyme B]

[The crackmaker ?] also cast stalks about it and met with Dayou's Qian 大有☰之乾☰. He said,

"He shall be the same again as his father [rhyme C]

And be respected as if in the ruler's place." [rhyme C]

When [Chengji] was born, there was a graph on his hand that said *you* 友, which he was accordingly named.<sup>5</sup>

On the surface this case is a model of simplicity. Chuqiu's father predicts that the state of Lu will flourish as long as the present ducal family remains in power. (Later history bears him out on this.) Duke Huan's son also receives an auspicious, if somewhat vague, augury. Nevertheless, certain aspects of this story require examination. First I will inquire why this account might have satisfied its audience and suggest why it might not satisfy us as modern readers. Then I will raise two specifically textual questions.

What is convincing about this prognostication? To begin with, the Duke hears what we may assume he wants to hear: "Your son will do all right." Furthermore, the child's name is You; he sits on the duke's right (*you*); and the diviner obtains the hexagram Dayou. All three *you*'s are Karlgren's \**giug*.<sup>6</sup> Thus the turtle and stalks coincide remarkably, creating a striking coherence.

A seventh-century ducal court might find this convincing, but we should be uneasy with certain aspects of the narrative. Here I

<sup>3</sup> But this is a flashback of about forty years to the son's actual birth ca. 700 B.C.

<sup>4</sup> That is, to divine using a turtle shell or ox plastron.

<sup>5</sup> Legge, 126/129; Takezoe, 4.14-15; Yang, 263-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Grammata Serica Recensa*, MBFEA 29 (1957) #995, where all three are also said to be loans for each other.

will merely anticipate questions that will form the subject-matter of a later section, "Using the *Zuozhuan* Evidence." Who is the narrator of this and other accounts? How does his perspective—his needs and objectives—shape its telling? Who is his audience? Is this story preserved because its paronomastic coincidence and/or foreknowledge were so compelling? That is, how do the demands of the narrative medium affect this account?

Is this whole story a fraud? If it is, might not its fabrication paradoxically strengthen it as evidence of *Zhouyi* interpretation techniques in the Spring and Autumn? That is, might not forgery make it especially reliable in this regard? I suggest this because a forger can only tamper with certain details—he must incorporate enough genuine material to make his story as a whole ring true. An account of divination, it seems to me, is more likely to falsify a prognostication than the details of its interpretive method, which a forger would have every motive to describe accurately. Thus, whether the present account is real or false, it should reflect its author's best knowledge of the *methods by which* the *Zhouyi* was interpreted in the Spring and Autumn.

There are also two technical questions to address. The first is the use of the word *zhi* 之 in the phrase *Dayou zhi Qian*. From at least the Western Han, this use of *zhi* has been taken verbally as "to go, to change into." In that usage *Dayou zhi Qian* would be read as "the Dayou hexagram, which went to (changed into) the Qian hexagram [as the fifth, broken, line transformed into a solid line]." Indeed in later times the term *zhigua* is simply the standard way of referring to that second hexagram.

If we follow the usage that we discover in Cases 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 of this study, however, then *Dayou zhi Qian* is a possessive, "Dayou's Qian." It means "the fifth line and line statement of the Dayou hexagram." For example, in Case 3 the diviner, "meeting with Guan's Pi 觀☱之否☷," quotes the fourth line statement of Guan as it exists in today's *Yijing*. "Guan's Pi" here indicates the one line of the Guan hexagram that differentiates it from the Pi hexagram. More convincing examples occur in Case 10, where two men are discussing the several line statements of the first hexagram, Qian 乾☰. To indicate the first line statement, one says *Qian zhi Gou* 乾之☱姤; to indicate the second he says *qi Tongren* 其同人☲; the fifth,

*qi Dayou* 其大有☰; etc. This *qi* cannot be a contraction of the verbal usage of *zhi*. Thus we have conclusive evidence that in Spring and Autumn usage *zhi* indicated the possessive.<sup>7</sup>

But there is a further complication. In Case 3 the diviner speaks as if he had two hexagrams to interpret—both Guan and Pi. We know this because he refers us to “heaven,” the primary symbolic association of the Qian trigram; that trigram is found only in the Pi hexagram. And this is true of five other cases as well, or sixty percent of all examples.<sup>8</sup> If we assume that originally divination led to a single line statement,<sup>9</sup> it appears that the phrase indicating that line statement evolved into a way of identifying two hexagrams, both of which might profitably be interpreted. Eventually this practice came to obscure the original usage of *zhi*, which by backformation became a verb.

My second question addresses the provenance of the text quoted in stalkcasting. We should begin by distinguishing between the terms *Zhouyi* (The *Yi* of the Zhou) and *Yijing* (The *Yi* classic, The classic of change). By the former I wish to refer exclusively to the *Yi* as it was in the early Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods; in this narrow definition, the *Zhouyi* has not existed for nearly 2500 years. By the latter I mean the *Yi* and those commentaries canonized in 136 B.C. as we have them today. If *Dayou zhi Qian* normally refers in the *Zuozhuan* to the fifth line statement of the Dayou hexagram, today's *Yijing* would yield *jue fu jiao ru wei ru ji* 厥孚交如威如吉, which of course is not the text that Chuqiu's father cites. A tentative translation of what that line statement might have meant in the Spring and Autumn is: “Their prisoners. How handsome, how awesome. Auspicious.”<sup>10</sup> If indeed *fu* meant “prisoner” (the modern *fu* 俘), rather than the Confucianized “confidence” or

<sup>7</sup> For Edward Shaughnessy's arguments, which independently arrive at the same conclusions, see *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, pp. 84–92.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., also in Case 4; in Min 1, Legge 124/125; in Xi 15, Legge 165/169; in Xi 25, Legge 194/195; and in Zhao 5, Legge 600/604; though not in Cases 6, 7 or 8.

<sup>9</sup> See Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 95–97.

<sup>10</sup> Compare the line statement's meaning around the beginning of the first millennium B.C., as reconstructed by Richard Kunst: “Their captives are tied up crosswise, and look terrified. Auspicious” (*The Original Yijing* [Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1985], p. 267). Both in vocabulary and syntax this text belongs to the early Zhou; it must have seemed already somewhat archaic by the Spring and Autumn.

“trustworthy,” then there is good reason why Chuqiu’s father might have preferred not to recite this text when he foretold the career of a Duke’s son.

But what is the source of the rhymed couplet that he does recite? Does it come from another of the mythical “Three *Yi*,” as Gu Yanwu (1613–1682) believed?<sup>11</sup> Is it the *Zhouyi*, but in a recension later discredited, lost or revised?<sup>12</sup> Does it come from an independent folk tradition mixed on this occasion with *Yi* divination? I believe that all these explanations are incorrect; I will attempt to prove this after we have investigated similar examples in Case 2. Whatever the case, the difference between this text and today’s *Yijing* does *not* indicate that the texts of today’s Dayou were unknown in the Spring and Autumn. Indeed Dayou’s third line statement is referred to in Xi 25 (Legge 194/195), where the text quoted is identical with that of the *Yijing*.

*Case 2. Qin’s attack on Jin—Xi 15, 645 B.C.*

During the famine of 646, Qin offers its enemy Jin relief grain, in accord with traditional interstate propriety.<sup>13</sup> Jin does not respond appropriately, and the next year Qin mounts a punitive expedition. In the following passage the Earl of Qin has ordered a divination about his imminent attack on Jin.

Crackmaker Dufu cast stalks about it. “Auspicious. Ford the [Yellow] River, the Marquis [of Jin’s] chariots will be defeated.”

[The Earl] examined him.

He replied: “It’s indeed greatly auspicious. After three defeats you will certainly capture the ruler of Jin. The hexagram met with is Gu 蠱☱. It says:

A thousand chariots thrice dispelled;

Of what remains of three dispellings,

[You will] capture the male fox. [All rhyme]

“Now, the fox-Gu must be their lord. The lower trigram of Gu is wind, its upper mountain. We are now in the autumn of the year. We bring down their fruit [i.e., our ‘wind’ sweeps over their ‘mountain’ and shakes down the crop] and take their possessions. [This is] how we will conquer.

<sup>11</sup> See his *Rizhilu* 日知錄, (*Yuanchaoben Rizhilu*, Taipei, 1974), 1 [juan 1]. The “Three *Yi*” are the *Zhouyi*, the *Lianshan* and the *Guizang* mentioned in the *Taibu* section of the *Zhouli*, (*Sibu jiyao*), 24.6a.

<sup>12</sup> This view is argued by Hellmut Wilhelm, p. 276 and Sargent, p. 5 *et passim*.

<sup>13</sup> Xi 13, Legge 160/161.

“The fruit fallen, possessions gone. If this isn’t ‘defeat,’ what are you waiting for?”

After three defeats [of Jin], the troops [of Qin] reached Han. . . .<sup>14</sup>

Interpretive practices of the imperial period have led us to expect the presence of two items that are absent here: an interpretation of the hexagram name, and the citation of a hexagram or line statement. The *gu* graph 蠱 is a picture of insects in a dish and was said to imply rotting food.<sup>15</sup> This in itself might be good reason not to mention it to the Earl of Qin. But in fact there seems to be a more fundamental cause for its absence: nowhere in the *Zuozhuan* records does someone invoke a hexagram name in order to interpret *Zhouyi* divination. Edward Shaughnessy suggests that this is because in early Zhou the hexagram itself provided only an initial prognostication; the line statement was the source of the final prognostication.<sup>16</sup> Here in Case 2 the diviner seems to be stopping after the first half of this procedure.<sup>17</sup>

We might also expect to find the diviner quoting the hexagram text from today’s *Yijing*.<sup>18</sup> Instead he cites a rhymed tercet of unknown origin. Where is that tercet from? In Case 1 I raised possibilities of an independent folk tradition, of the “three *Yis*,” and of an early or corrupt recension of the *Zhouyi*. The great *Zuozhuan* commentator Du Yu suggests that because Dufu is a crackmaker, not a stalkcaster, he is merely incompetent in the latter enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Legge, 164/167; Takezoe, 5.74; Yang, 352.

<sup>15</sup> See the discussions in Case 9 and in the *Shuowen*, *juan* 13b.

<sup>16</sup> *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, p. 102, summarizing the discussions on pp. 74–101. Thus the common *Yijing* phrase *lizhen* 利貞 would mean “It is profitable to perform [the second] divination.”

<sup>17</sup> Two or three other examples in the *Zuo* parallel this use. See Case 5; Cheng 16, Legge 391/397; and perhaps Zhao 7, Legge 615/619.

<sup>18</sup> The *Yijing* text of the *Gu* hexagram reads: *yuanheng, li se dachuan, xianjia san ri, houjia sanri* 元亨利涉大川先甲三日後甲三日. A possible reading of this text in the Spring and Autumn would be:

Primally successful: profitable to ford the big river,  
Three days before the *jia*-day  
Or three days after the *jia*-day.

There are no foxes or chariots in any of the line statements of *Gu*, which instead speak of attending to one’s mother, father and so on.

<sup>19</sup> See Takezoe 5.74.



I believe that none of these explanations is correct. Instead, I would maintain, Dufu is acting properly, the way a crackmaker ought: he inspects his “text”—in normal circumstances, the cracks in a turtle shell, here, the *Zhouyi*—and delivers his prognostication in extemporaneous rhymed verse. These verses are similar in diction to many other turtle prognostications recorded in the *Zuo* (see, for example, the sestet in Case 1). The present case also has much in common with another account found in Cheng 16 (Legge 391/397). All three contain texts different from, rather than merely variations of, today’s *Yijing*. And that text is in every case a verse in mid-Zhou Chinese—as opposed to the archaism of the *Zhouyi*.<sup>20</sup> I suspect that Dufu, taking his inspiration from the Gu hexagram statement “It is profitable to ford the big river” (*li se dachuan*), tells his lord “Ford the [Yellow] River” (*se He*). The “three” of his tercet’s “thrice dispelled” may also come from the hexagram statement.

The account of interpretation is as complete as any we will see in the *Zuo*. We should distinguish two stages in the divination process. In the first a question is posed, the diviner consulted, stalkcasting performed and a prognostication obtained. (In Case 1 the story ends at this point.) Stage two begins with the patron’s request for elucidation. In response Dufu explains why the prognostication is “indeed greatly auspicious,” drawing on the component trigrams of the Gu hexagram and the rhymed tercet in his explanations. (Such analyses of trigrams and text are by far the two most common interpretive techniques recorded in the *Zuozhuan*.)

Referring to the symbolic associations of Gu’s component trigrams, Dufu states: “The lower trigram of Gu is wind, its upper mountain.”<sup>21</sup> He then proceeds to assign the lower trigram, “wind,” to Qin and the upper, “mountain,” to the enemy Jin.

<sup>20</sup> In two of the three the following conditions also apply: the divination verse rhymes with the hexagram name, divination is performed by a crackmaker, only one hexagram is invoked, the phrases “If this isn’t defeat, what are you waiting for?” and *qi gua yu* 其卦遇 (“the hexagram encountered was”) occur. Some of this information can be obtained in table form from Sargent, pp. 38–40. The only two examples from the *Zuo* of texts that clearly are slight variants of an *Yi* text are both contained in Xi 15, Legge 165/169.

<sup>21</sup> The terms he uses for lower and upper trigrams are *zhen* 貞 and *hui* 悔. These terms appear nowhere else in the *Zuo*, though the *Hongfan* section of the *Shujing* also uses them to refer to the lower and upper trigrams. See Bernard Karlgren, “*The Book of Documents*,” *BMFEA* (1950):33.

Because it is harvest time, he imagines Jin's mountain covered with crops; the wind of Qin causes their downfall. Can't we just as well imagine an interpretation whereby the enemy's "mountain" remains unshaken, even after the fiercest "winds" have exhausted themselves? Equally ambiguous is the first line of the tercet—"A thousand chariots thrice dispelled." To whose chariots does it refer, those of Jin or those of Qin? It is necessarily the former only if we assume that one of the diviner's functions is to offer a politically correct prognostication, in this case building the morale of the Qin troops with a foreordained victory.

Finally, a point regarding the spread of competence in interpreting divination. The Earl requests his diviner to elucidate the prognostication. He seems to hold himself qualified to review *Zhouyi* interpretation in at least some limited fashion. One result of his request is that Dufu is forced to be explicit about his hermeneutics. Though their general outlines were perhaps already familiar to the Earl and his circle, their telling and retelling as this account somehow made its way toward incorporation in the *Zuozhuan* certainly ensured that they would become ever more public knowledge. Thus we see evidence of increasing access to the *Yi*, as that knowledge spread from the Zhou court to feudal courts to the literate class. Broad knowledge of the *Yi* is of course a prerequisite to the rhetorical usage we will examine as Cases 7 through 10.

*Case 3. The ruler's son (ii), Zhuang 22, 672 B.C.*

[Marquis Li of Chen] begat Jingzhong. When [the latter] was young, it happened that the Zhou Registrar came to see the marquis of Chen with the *Zhouyi*. The marquis of Chen ordered him to divine about the boy. He met with Guan's Pi 觀之否 ䷋ and said, "This says,

Beholding the light of the state.

It is beneficial to be the king's guest. [rhyme]<sup>22</sup>

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The trigram associations "wind" and "mountain" are standard in the Ten Wings, notably the *Shuogua*, Wing Seven, and the *Xiangzhuan*, Wings Three and Four. The latter says of the Gu hexagram, "Below the mountain there is wind" (*shanxia you feng*). Though the Wings are late Warring States and early Han texts, clearly some of the trigram associations they record existed in the Spring and Autumn. For a discussion of trigram names used in the *Zuozhuan*, see Hellmut Wilhelm, *passim* and Qu Wanli, pp. 56-59.

<sup>22</sup> This is the same text found in today's *Yijing*, as the fourth line statement of the Guan hexagram, no. 20.

“Will he dominate Chen and possess the state? If not in this [state], it will be in a different state. If it is not he himself, it will be among his descendants.

“The ‘light’ [of the *Yi* text] is distant and shines [reflected] from something else. Kun [the lower trigram of the Guan and Pi hexagrams] is earth. Sun [the upper trigram of Guan] is wind. Qian [the upper trigram of Pi] is heaven. Wind becoming heaven above the earth [means] mountain. If the treasures of the mountain are illuminated by the light of heaven, then he will occupy the earth. Therefore it says,

“ ‘Beholding the light of the state.’ ”

“ ‘It is beneficial to be the king’s guest.’ [When a feudal lord pays a visit to the king’s court, the king] spreads out a hundred gifts, offering gems and silks, the lovely things of heaven and earth. Thus it says, ‘It is beneficial to be the king’s guest.’<sup>23</sup>

“ ‘Still, there is [the word] ‘behold’ in it. Thus I said that it might be in a later [generation]. The wind in motion appears upon the earth. Thus I said that it might be in a different state. If it is in a different state, it must be [one where the ruling house is] surnamed Jiang 姜. The Jiang are the descendants of the Taiyu 太兪 (great peak). The mountain peak corresponds with heaven. No two things can be [equally] great. [Though the state of] Chen decay, his [descendants] will prosper.’ ”

When Chen first began to perish, Chen Huanzi was beginning to be great in [the state of] Qi. When afterwards [Chen] perished, Chengzi had obtained [control of the state’s] government.<sup>24</sup>

This prognostication is both complex and imprecise. Instead of decoding it extensively, let us ask how these factors are not allowed to impede its effectiveness.

The Zhou Registrar, like most *Zhouyi* interpreters recorded in the *Zuo*, addresses two distinct kinds of information from the *Yi*: trigrams and a short text. Following common practice, he associates the Qian trigram with heaven, the Kun trigram with earth, etc.<sup>25</sup> Thus his determination of the symbolic association of each trigram is relatively straightforward, even objective, and this reduces the

<sup>23</sup> An anonymous reader has suggested that *bin* may not have originally meant “guest” but rather indicated the *bin* sacrifice mentioned in the oracle bone inscriptions. The line would then read: “It is beneficial to perform the *bin* sacrifice for the king.” If this is indeed the case, then this seventh-century Zhou Registrar is no longer able to read the original *Zhouyi*.

<sup>24</sup> That is, Jingzhong’s descendants had indeed encroached on the Jiangs, who were the rulers of Qi. Legge 102/103; Takezoe, 3.63; Yang, 222.

<sup>25</sup> As Hellmut Wilhelm has pointed out, the “earth” that the Registrar associates with Kun is *tu* 土, not the *di* 地 that both the *Shuogua* and the *Xiangzhuan* associate with that trigram (p. 280). Wilhelm and Qu Wanli have also identified in the *Zuo* a moderate number of symbolic correlates of other trigrams that, like *tu*, are not found in the Ten Wings. See Wilhelm, *passim*, and Qu, pp. 42–45. Since the *Shuogua* lists easily a dozen associations for each trigram, this overall discrepancy is small.

number of initial interpretive choices the Registrar must make. But of itself this determination does not provide him with a prognostication.

The same issues are at play in the interpretation of the fourth line statement of the Guan hexagram, "Beholding the light of the state./ It is beneficial to be the king's guest." By what process does the Registrar make this statement intelligible? That is, how does he transform a text into a prognostication? Essentially he constructs a scenario by connecting elements suggested in the text. He can justify some of these connections to the marquis, and to us. Others, however, are simply personal, subjective associations. Furthermore, not only is the logic of the Registrar's prognostication partially mysterious, he can provide only imprecise information regarding the Marquis's son Jingzhong.

It is essential, I believe, not to regard these phenomena as "flaws" in the divination process. They merely mark the boundaries between what the *Zhouyi* and the Registrar can and cannot tell us. After all, the Registrar has done a masterful job creating a coherent account from a large amount of information, including bits that are now invisible to us, e.g., the Marquis of Chen's peculiar predispositions. Instead of being overwhelmed by these difficulties, he seems to have made strategic use of them, phrasing his prognostication with just enough precision to satisfy the Marquis and still protect both himself and the *Yi* against unforeseen developments. Nowhere in this account is the implication that this prognostication is somehow "not clear enough." Marquis Li of Chen would no doubt prefer a more precise prognostication. But he seems to understand that the *Zhouyi* is not that sort of instrument.

The passage in the *Zuo* that immediately precedes this uses crackmaking to make essentially the same prediction about the state of Chen, with even greater precision of date. Thus these accounts can be used to show that the *Zuo* was put together sometime after 478 B.C., when the state of Chen was extinguished. The implication is that the accounts must have been altered to conform to later historical developments. (A similar implication might be drawn from the prophecy in Case 1 regarding the eventual decline of the Dukes of Lu.) Couldn't we just as well argue that these accounts are preserved in the *Zuo* precisely because their accuracy in foretelling

events was so uncanny? After all, if a final editing of the *Zuo* was done by a follower of Confucius, he would surely feel that a prediction of the decline of Lu was worth calling to our attention.

*Case 4. Cui Wuzi's proposed marriage—Xiang 25, 548 B.C.*

The wife of the Commandant of Tang in [the state of] Qi was the elder sister of Dongguo Yan. Dongguo Yan was a minister of Cui Wuzi. The Commandant of Tang died. Yan drove Wuzi [to her house] to offer condolences about it. [Wuzi] saw Tang Jiang [the widow] and, finding her beautiful, ordered Yan to marry her to him.

Yan said, "Man and woman [should be of] different patrilans. Now, my lord descends from [Duke] Ding and your minister descends from [Duke] Huan. [Because we are both of the Jiang patriclan,] it is not possible."

Wuzi cast stalks about it and met with Kun's Daguo 困 ䷮之大過 ䷛. The Registrars all said "Auspicious." He showed it to Chen Wenzhi. Wenzhi said, "The man follows wind. The wind brings down the wife. She cannot be married.

"Moreover its oracle-text says, 'Difficulties in rocks. Holding to caltrop.'<sup>26</sup> He enters his palace and does not see his wife. Inauspicious.' 'Difficulties in rocks'—he proceeds but does not get across. 'Holding to caltrop'—that which he relies on wounds. 'He enters his palace and does not see his wife. Inauspicious.'—there is nothing to go home to.'<sup>27</sup>

Cuizi said, "A widow, what harm? Her previous husband matched it (*dang zhi* 當之)" [i.e., the prognostication applied to him, not Cui]. Thereupon he married her.<sup>28</sup>

This is our first case from the late Spring and Autumn, and all its issues center around morality. To begin with, Chen Wenzhi makes several appearances in the *Zuo*. He is in every case a model of the upright minister, offering counsel based in ethical considerations. He is often prescient as well. In one instance he predicts a rebellion (Xiang 23, Legge 498/502), in another the imminent overthrow of a ruling family (Xiang 28, Legge 538/541). Two years prior to this account he has a similar run-in with Cui Wuzi, which leads him to remark that Cui will not die of natural causes.<sup>29</sup> In each case his prediction is based on knowledge of someone's particular moral

<sup>26</sup> For the identification of *jili* 疾藜 with caltrop, a plant with sharp, spiny seeds, see Donald Harper, *The Wu Shih Erh Ping Fang: Translation and Prolegomena*, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1982), p. 244.

<sup>27</sup> This is the same text that is found in the *Yijing* at hexagram no. 47 Kun, line three.

<sup>28</sup> Legge 510/514; Takezoe, 17.31; Yang, 1095.

<sup>29</sup> Xiang 23, Legge 498/502.

violations. The present story combines all three roles—political advisor, moralist and seer—into a single function.

This coadunation of roles is fully consistent with the outlook of the *Zuozhuan*, which, as we know, presents a moral-retributive view of the world. Its accounts consistently describe the triumph of the good and downfall of the iniquitous, sometimes at the expense of historical accuracy.<sup>30</sup> The present story of Cui Wuzi is clearly such a cautionary tale. Here Cui is the perpetrator of a host of improper (and therefore foolish) acts: incest, marrying a woman during her period of mourning, and rejecting his counsellor's sage advice. Quite naturally each of Chen Wenzhi's prophecies comes true in hideous detail.<sup>31</sup>

The vindication of Chen's prophecies seems to bolster, among other things, the institution of *Zhouyi* divination. Presumably attitudes like Cui's needed to be discouraged, even more in the fourth or third century B.C., when the *Zuozhuan* was put together, than in the sixth. But this account is not an argument for the possibility of foreknowledge as much as for the certainty of moral retribution. Both Chen and the *Zuo* author, convinced of the latter, seek to warn contemporary Cuis of their destructive folly. Divination merely clarifies what must be already plain to a practitioner of applied ethics such as Chen Wenzhi.

Given Cui Wuzi's approach, the *Yi* is totally vulnerable to subversion. His task is simple. He need not reject either Chen Wenzhi's interpretive method, nor the text obtained, nor even the judgment that his intended bride is inauspicious. It is sufficient that he assume the authority to determine to whom the prognostication applies. If the prognostication matches her dead husband instead of him, then it meets his needs well enough.

Finally, we might wonder why Cui Wuzi consults the *Zhouyi* in the first place, since he is so easy about turning aside an unwanted prognostication. He clearly risks an inauspicious augury, unless his Registrars are wholly owned. Presumably he feels that the auspicious message he might obtain would undermine the general conviction that his marriage is improper. He may even believe that

<sup>30</sup> These questions are addressed at some length below in the section entitled "Using the *Zuozhuan* Evidence."

<sup>31</sup> For the dramatic conclusions, see Xiang 27, Legge 531/535.

an auspicious prognostication will determine his fate for him, overruling any lack of propriety. But Cui is wrong if he thinks Chen Wenzi will go along with this sense of things. Believing in the moral-retributive nature of reality, Chen cannot separate fate from ethics. Thus the *Yi*, functioning within such a world, becomes a textual equivalent of Chen's own role as advisor, moralist and seer.

The views I am attributing to both Cui and Chen are more clearly articulated by actors in Cases 5 and 6; let us turn now to those accounts.

*Case 5. Mu Jiang under house arrest—Xiang 9, 564 B.C.*

Mu Jiang died in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she cast stalks about it and met with Gen's eight. The Registrar said, "This means Gen's Sui 艮 誥之隨誥. Sui is 'getting out.' You will certainly get out quickly."

She said, "No. On this the *Zhouyi* says, 'Sui: primal, successful, beneficent, pure. Without fault.'<sup>32</sup> 'Primal' is the eminence of the person; 'successful' the bringing together of excellences; 'beneficent' the harmonizing of righteousness; 'pure' the trunk of all affairs.

'Personifying benevolence (*ren*) is sufficient to make one eminent; making virtue excellent is sufficient to bring the rites together; benefiting creatures is sufficient to harmonize righteousness; being pure and firm is sufficient to be the trunk of things.

"But it cannot be an empty claim. Now, even though it is 'Sui, without fault,' I am a woman who is associated with disorder, definitely in low position. Moreover, often not benevolent, I cannot be called 'primal.' Not quieting the state, I cannot be called 'successful.' Acting so as to harm myself, I cannot be called 'beneficent.' Abandoning my position for intrigue, I cannot be called 'pure.' Those who possess the four virtues are 'Sui' and 'without fault.' I am without any of them—how am I Sui? Since I chose evil, how can I be without fault? I will certainly die here. I will not get to get out."<sup>33</sup>

I will first discuss Mu Jiang's history and the implications of her interpretation. Then I will consider some textual problems, for I am sure Mu Jiang said very little of what is attributed to her here.

Mu Jiang (?-564 B.C.) was an intelligent, capable and strong-willed woman. She was the wife of Duke Xuan of Lu, mother of Duke Cheng and grandmother of Duke Xiang, who give their names to three books of the *Chunqiu/Zuozhuan*, and she outlived the first two. Earlier accounts in the *Zuo* indicate her education (she can quote an appropriate verse from the *Shi* to acknowledge a minister

<sup>32</sup> This is equally the hexagram statement of no. 17 Sui in today's *Yijing*.

<sup>33</sup> Legge 437/439; Takezoe, 14.57; Yang, 964.

of state);<sup>34</sup> her concern for her own status (she refuses to allow her husband's brother to marry his own son's mother, thereby raising a concubine to the station of full sister-in-law with Mu Jiang);<sup>35</sup> and her independence and treachery (after her husband's death she had an affair with a rebellious officer of Lu and attempted to subvert the government of her son, Duke Cheng).<sup>36</sup> Because of the last she was confined to the Eastern Palace. The story I have translated as Case 5, which begins with her death-notice, is thus a flashback to the time of her incarceration, about ten years before.<sup>37</sup> Characteristically, Mu Jiang's reading of the *Yi* involves a challenge to male authority. In this instance she is successful—though had her arguments not served to condemn her own lack of virtue, they might not be so prominently displayed in the *Zuo*.

Heretofore we have seen interpreters of *Zhouyi* divination making up their own rhymed texts (Cases 1 and 2) and blending trigram associations and line statements (Cases 3 and 4). Mu Jiang's technique is different. The Sui hexagram statement reads: *Yuanheng lizhen wuyiu* 元亨利貞無咎. The original meaning of this text when the *Yi* came together in late Shang or early Zhou may well have been "Initial receipt: profitable to divine. Without fault."<sup>38</sup> Mu Jiang, however, reads each of its first four graphs as a discrete term—"primal, successful, beneficent, pure"—and proceeds to analyze each in turn.<sup>39</sup>

But Mu Jiang's speech makes another, more radical innovation in how the *Yi* is read. We will best appreciate this if we first review

<sup>34</sup> Cheng 9, Legge 369/371.

<sup>35</sup> Cheng 11, Legge 375/376. For further details see also Xuan 17, Legge 332/333.

<sup>36</sup> Cheng 16, Legge 393/398.

<sup>37</sup> Following the flight of her lover Shusun Qiaoru after his rebellion fails. See both the *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* entries for Cheng 16, Legge 390/395 and 394/399.

<sup>38</sup> Following Edward Shaughnessy's reading in *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, pp. 124–133.

<sup>39</sup> Compare the example in Zhao 7 (Legge 615/619), about thirty years later, where the expression *yuanheng* is taken to mean "Yuan [the younger son's name] will be successful."

As Song Zuoyin points out, the case of Mu Jiang is the first record we have of a *Zhouyi* text being read this way, graph by graph (Song, p. 63). However, the *Zuo* contains a multitude of similar cases in which a speaker such as Mu Jiang lists several terms and provides her or his own definition of each. See, for example, Cheng 9, Legge 369/371, where someone redefines the well-known virtues *de*, *xin*, *zhong* and *zhi*. This is a common Spring and Autumn device for introducing new interpretations of traditional concepts. Cf. the discussion in Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, ed., *Zhongguo zhexue fazhan shi* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), vol. 1, p. 152.



the interpretation the Registrar gives her. He maintains that if the *Yi* predicts something, it will come true: since “Sui is ‘getting out,’ you will certainly get out quickly.” Mu Jiang sees the *Yi* differently. Although she agrees with the Registrar that “Sui is ‘getting out,’” she claims that this prognostication means that she will get out only if she already possesses the four virtues mentioned in its hexagram statement. Since she has none of them, she will not. She does not reject the divination; on the contrary, it is a clear indication to her that she will remain under house arrest for the rest of her life. And history proves her right.

I have no doubts that “Mu Jiang died in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she cast stalks about it. . . .” But there are various reasons to doubt that Mu Jiang said much of what is recorded here. Her speech is uncharacteristically self-deprecatory. As well, her disquisition on *yuan*, *heng*, *li* and *zhen* is replicated almost verbatim in the *Wenyan*, the sixth of the Ten Wings, canonized with the *Zhouyi* as the *Yijing* in 136 B.C. It is difficult to imagine any of Mu Jiang’s sentiments containing sufficient piety to merit such treatment.

Four slightly peculiar technical matters also cast doubt on her story. By itself, none of these is extraordinary, but the concatenation of all four is unusual. The first is the troubling phrase *Gen zhi ba*, “Gen’s eight.” No one today knows quite what this phrase means, and it appears in no later texts.<sup>40</sup> Second, in contrast to other complex divinations (especially those that are disputed), the Registrar never explains how *Gen zhi ba* means “Sui.” Third, the fact that Mu Jiang cites the Sui hexagram statement is unusual in the *Zuo*, where, as we have seen, diviners almost always address line statements instead. It is, however, the norm in imperial times. Finally, the hexagrams Gen and Sui have only one line in common, the opposite to every other case we are examining here.

If Mu Jiang never spoke as she is reported to have here, what

<sup>40</sup> For an extended review of several unlikely explanations, see Liu Dajun, *Zhouyi gailun* (Ji’nan: QiLu shushe, 1986), pp. 127–33. The phrase appears nowhere else in the *Zuo*, though two of the three examples of *Zhouyi* divination in the *Guoyu* employ it (*Sibu beiyao* ed., 10.10a and 10.11b). In the present study I have deliberately omitted references to the *Guoyu* records of *Zhouyi* divination. They comprise a much smaller sample with a separate set of problems, and it is not at all evident how they relate to the *Zuo* records.

historical value can we give her text? Certainly, someone put this speech together to be a convincing moral document, and a convincing interpretation of the *Zhouyi* as well. At the very least, it shows how later scholars viewed the moral potential of the *Yi*. I will address this question below, when we examine in detail the reliability of the *Zuo* text as a record of *Zhouyi* use.

*Case 6. Nankuai's revolt—Zhao 12, 530 B.C.*

Nankuai, a minister of the state of Lu, feels badly treated and plans a revolt against his lord.

Nankuai cast stalks about it and met with Kun's Bi 坤☷之比☱, which said, "Yellow skirt, primally auspicious,"<sup>41</sup> which he took to be greatly auspicious. He showed this to Zifu Huibo, saying "There is a matter I am about to undertake. How will it be?"

Huibo said, "I have studied this. If it is a matter of loyalty and fidelity (*zhongxin*), then it is possible. If not, it will certainly be defeated. The outer strong, the inner mild—this is loyalty. Harmonious in order to lead forth the pure—this is fidelity.

"Thus it says, 'Yellow skirt, primally auspicious.' 'Yellow' is the color of the center. 'Skirt' is the ornament of the inferior [part of the body]. 'Primal' is the increase of goodness. If the center is not loyal, it will not obtain its color. If the inferior is not respectful, he will not obtain his ornament. If the matter is not good, it will not obtain its ultimate development.

"The outer and inner [respectively] leading and harmonizing—this is loyalty. Using fidelity to direct matters—this is respectfulness. Nourishing the three virtues—this is goodness. If it is not these three, then it doesn't match (*dang* 當).<sup>42</sup>

"Moreover, the *Yi* cannot be used to divine about [morally] dangerous things. What matter will you undertake that is so ornamented? If the center is good, it can be 'yellow.' If the superior part is good, it is 'primal.' If the inferior part is good, then it is a 'skirt.' If the three are realized, you can cast stalks. If there is still some deficiency, although the stalkcasting says 'auspicious,' it is not."<sup>43</sup>

Nankuai, however, disregards Huibo's counsel and proceeds with his revolt. Within a year he is dead.

As a youth Zifu Huibo became convinced that heaven (*tian*) regularly rewards good and punishes evil.<sup>44</sup> He was therefore tem-

<sup>41</sup> This is equally the text of the fifth line statement of hexagram no. 2 Kun in today's *Yijing*.

<sup>42</sup> If these three virtues do not obtain, claims Huibo, then the prognostication does not apply to or "match" the situation divined about after all. I will explain Huibo's reasoning below.

<sup>43</sup> Legge 637/640; Takezoe, 22.46; Yang, 1337.

<sup>44</sup> He is the grandfather of Zifu Jingbo of *Analects* 14.36; see Suzuki Yoshijirō 鈴木由次郎,

porarily confused by a corrupt man whose wealth continuously increased. An elder, however, explained that heaven was merely setting up the fellow's downfall.<sup>45</sup> Of course this view was born out, for so sure is heaven's moral calculus that one can indeed count upon it.

By now Huibo's philosophical understanding has caught up with his intuitions, as his elegant and effective inversion of Nankuai's prognostication shows. It rests on four assumptions regarding the line statement "Yellow skirt, primally auspicious." First, that this statement divides into two sections, "yellow, skirt, primal" and "auspicious"; second, that the former describes some situation and the latter constitutes a prognostication; third, that the relationship between the two sections is "if (situation) then (prognostication)"; and fourth, that the situation it describes has an essential moral aspect. I would like to set out the stages through which Huibo develops these assumptions into an argument. The details of that argument are unimportant, but its structure will demonstrate the complex coherence of Huibo's world. This coherence is the basis for his overturning of Nankuai's interpretation of the same *Zhouyi* text.

Huibo opens by stating his conclusion, that this passage of the *Yi* pertains specifically to matters of loyalty and fidelity. He illustrates these two terms and then begins his five-staged demonstration. The text provides the three terms

yellow, skirt, primal, (stage 1)

which he identifies with

central, inferior, goodness, (stage 2)

which he sees in reference to

loyalty, respect, goodness. (stage 3)

If these three sets are in order, each element will then respectively obtain (*de*)

its [true] color, its [proper] ornament, its complete [development].

(stage 4)

These things obtaining, we have the following results:

outer and inner in harmony, directing in fidelity, nourishing the three virtues. (stage 5)

*Kan'eki kenkyū* 漢易研究 (Meitoku, 1963), p. 15, for this identification.

<sup>45</sup> Xiang 28, Legge 538/542.

The three terms of this final stage embody the “three virtues” of stage 3 (loyalty, respectfulness, goodness). But, cautions Huibo, “If it is not these three, it doesn’t match (*fudang* 弗當).” In other words, if one lacks the three virtues, then one’s situation does not match the prognostication, which cannot come true. We have encountered the term *dang* (“match”) in Case 4, where Cui Wuzi attempts to deflect the widow’s inauspiciousness from himself by declaring that “her previous husband matched it.” In both these cases *dang* indicates the applicability of the prognostication to one party or another. Here Huibo has gone to great lengths to establish the conditions of this applicability. “If there is still some deficiency” in meeting these conditions, says Huibo, “although the stalkcasting says ‘auspicious,’ it is not.”

We are now in a position to appreciate how Huibo inverts Nankuai’s interpretation. Nankuai meets with the line statement “Yellow skirt, primally auspicious,” which, says the *Zuo*, “he took to be greatly auspicious.” Underlying this assumption is what Huibo would consider Nankuai’s naive expectation, that the *Yi* would reveal the future to him—it would provide a simple message of “auspicious” or “inauspicious,” or even bring about that which it had predicted, as if by magic. Nankuai, in other words, expects something with the logical structure of “You will get rich.” Huibo, however, sees messages like “The rich get richer.” Where Nankuai sees the *Yi*’s messages as true, Huibo sees them as truths. As such they are also problems in deduction, because the truth must be applied to the specific circumstances under consideration.

Huibo’s world is interrelated in such a complex manner that Nankuai’s simple conception of divination is no longer adequate to it. For Huibo divination must take account of the fact that future events are determined essentially by present action, that the lines of their determination can be traced out, and that their nature is moral. The *Yi* cannot in any way supercede this reality, for example by proclaiming an immoral act “auspicious.” Thus Huibo claims that “the *Yi* cannot be used to divine about [morally] dangerous things.”

To summarize his approach, we could say that the interpreter’s first task is to determine the situation implied by the *Zhouyi* text. Once this is achieved—and Huibo’s complex analysis shows that it

requires expert skills—one must then examine whether one's particular circumstances “match” that situation or not. If they do, the matter of “auspicious” or “inauspicious” is obvious. In the present instance Nankuai's prognostication of “auspicious” means that a matter of loyalty and fidelity will have success. (Presumably the *Yi*'s role is to tell us which of several morally proper alternatives is best—for example, withdrawal might be preferable to action, and so on.) Thus despite the general truth of every statement of the *Yi*, its value in prognostication depends on the interpreter's analytical ability.

All six cases we have considered here stress the importance of determining the *Yi*'s message and then applying it to the situation at hand. Rhetorical usage of the *Yi* depends on the same skills, but its two elements are reversed—first one examines the situation at hand and then determines which *Yi* text speaks to it. We turn now to an examination of that approach.

#### FOUR CASES OF RHETORICAL USAGE

Rhetorical usage of the *Yi* generally takes the form of someone quoting a short passage to bolster an argument. The *Zuozhuan*'s earliest rhetorical reference to the *Zhouyi* does not occur until 603 B.C. (Xuan 6, Legge 299/299), about a generation before Mu Jiang and Nankuai. However, there are records of people using the *Shijing* rhetorically one hundred years earlier and also throughout the Spring and Autumn period—more than fifty cases in all. Here is the earliest:

Before the Duke had married [Wen Jiang, the daughter of the Marquis of] Qi, the Marquis of Qi had wanted to marry her to Hu, the Heir Apparent of Zheng. Hu declined. Someone asked his reason. The Heir Apparent said: “Each person has his mate. Qi is great. It's not my mate. The *Shi* says, ‘He seeks much fortune for himself.’<sup>46</sup> What would I do with a large state?”<sup>47</sup>

This is a typical way of using the *Shi* to illustrate and so strengthen one's point. It also exhibits a becoming modesty—the Earl is unwilling to overstep his position in the feudal hierarchy and

<sup>46</sup> Mao no. 235, stanza 6, line 4.

<sup>47</sup> Huan 6, Legge 47/49, 706 B.C.

marry into so great a state as Qi. But the example is also typical in that Hu interprets the line to suit his own needs, taking it to mean “he seeks *too much* fortune for himself.” In its original context, however, the line seems to *encourage* fortune-seeking. In Karlgren’s translation, the first half of the stanza reads:

Should you not think of your ancestors,  
and so cultivate their virtues?  
For ever be worthy of [Heaven’s] appointment,  
*and seek for yourself much felicity.*<sup>48</sup>

We might be inclined to call Hu’s reading a “distortion,” but it raises no eyebrows in the *Zuozhuan*. Indeed, the *Shi* texts rarely seem to have carried their original context with them when pressed into rhetorical usage.

We also find the *Shi* quoted in moral arguments proposing the attack of an iniquitous enemy, defending the appropriateness of lenient punishment, opposing improper revenge, and so on.<sup>49</sup> In 510 someone quotes both the *Shi* and the *Yi* to demonstrate that the rise and fall of the earth are as natural as the rise and fall of ruling houses.<sup>50</sup> Rhetorical use of the *Shi* can also assist in another of the politician’s roles—the ability to imagine the future from evidence at hand. In 510 someone in Wei asserts that an associate’s inpropitious behavior will “surely [result in] great calamity”; the substance of his argument is illustrated with a stanza from the *Shi* (Zhao 32, Legge 739/740). A comet was sighted in 516, provoking some to consider divination regarding its inauspiciousness; instead an official quotes the *Shi* to suggest that divination is unnecessary, since the ruler’s indisputable virtue guarantees an auspicious future (Zhao 26, Legge 715/718). Finally, in 493 the troops of Jin perform crackmaking as they consider the appropriateness of ambushing the enemy (Ai 2, Legge 797/799). The turtle, however, merely scorched, rather than cracking, and thus could not be read. In-

<sup>48</sup> Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, (Stockholm: Museum of Far East Antiquities, 1950), p. 186. This is a famous poem, containing the lines “but the actions of High Heaven/have no sound, no smell.”

<sup>49</sup> Respectively Min 1, Legge 123/124; Xiang 26, Legge 521/526; Ding 4, Legge 752/757. Note that the *Shujing* is often used in the same way.

<sup>50</sup> Zhao 32, Legge 739/741.

stead of taking this as an evil omen, someone quotes a similar, auspicious scorching from the *Shi*.

Thus throughout the Spring and Autumn the *Shi* was readily quoted in suasion.<sup>51</sup> Like the *Yi*, it mixed freely with a variety of other cultural tools, sometimes substituting for them, sometimes operating in conjunction. Following are four examples of such rhetorical usage of the *Zhouyi*.

*Case 7. Too great an ambition—Xuan 6, 603 B.C.*

Gongzi Manman of Zheng spoke with the [Zhou] king's son Boliao about his desire to be a minister. Boliao said to someone, "Covetous and without virtue—it's in the *Zhouyi*, at Feng's Li 豐之離. He will not get beyond that."

After a year the people of Zheng killed him.<sup>52</sup>

The text of Feng's Li in today's *Yijing* reads, in Richard Kunst's translation, "Full is the canopy. It screens his home. He peeks through the door. Desolate it is, with no one there. He is not seen for three years. Ominous."<sup>53</sup> Presumably it is this text that Boliao is thinking of. Boliao's remark is meaningless unless his listener (and the *Zuo* readership) can bring to mind this line statement. This has led Sargent to infer correctly that the *Yi* text must have been widely known at this time.<sup>54</sup>

An accurate prognostication is made here without reference to an act of stalkcasting. To what extent does this constitute divination with the *Yi*? This is a major issue of rhetorical usage, to which we will return in Case 10.

*Case 8. The army in peril—Xuan 12, 597 B.C.*

The co-leaders of the armies of Jin are debating whether they should attack the army of Chu. This is an important battle, and the eventual Chu victory will propel Duke Zhuang of Chu to claim the overlordship that had resided in Jin. A rebellious Jin officer named

<sup>51</sup> Jeffrey Riegel, in private communication, has suggested that many *Shi* songs may have been composed explicitly for such use.

<sup>52</sup> Legge 298/299; Takezoe 10.33; Yang, 689. For another example of rhetorical usage that follows the same form, see Xiang 28, Legge 537/541.

<sup>53</sup> Richard Kunst, *The Original Yijing*, p. 349, sixth line statement of hexagram no. 55 Feng.

<sup>54</sup> Sargent, p. 3.

Zhizi leads his portion of the army across the river to attack without waiting for orders. In response, one of his colleagues remarks:

This army [of Zhizi] is in great danger! The *Zhouyi* contains it in Shi's Lin 師 ䷆ 之 臨 ䷒, which says, "The army sets out according to regulations. If it does not preserve them, it will be inauspicious."<sup>55</sup>

Holding to the matter and completing it without hindrance—this is "preserve." Rebelliousness is "does not." The scattering of the group is "weakness" [the quality of Kun, the upper trigram of both hexagrams]. A river obstructed is "marsh" [the quality of Dui, the lower trigram of Lin]. We have "regulations," but each taking them as he [would like]. Thus it says, "The regulations are not preserved."

Moreover, the regulations are dried up. They were overflowing, and they drained them. They are stopped up and out of order. Lin means "not doing it." Having a leader and not following him, what is more Lin than this? This is what it's saying.

If as a consequence we encounter [the enemy], we will certainly be defeated. Zhizi has set it up. Even if he escapes and returns home, there will certainly be a great fault.<sup>56</sup>

Nothing in the manner of interpretation alerts us to the fact that no stalkcasting was performed. As in the usual procedure, a problem is posed, a *Zhouyi* text produced, the text read in terms of trigrams and line statement, its interpretation applied to the current situation, and a prognostication made. Yet this is obviously different from normal divination. The following two cases will highlight that difference and allow us to distinguish more precisely between these two ways of using the *Yi*.

*Case 9. The marquis' illness—Zhao 1, 541 B.C.*

The Marquis of Jin sought a doctor from Qin. The Earl of Qin sent Doctor He to see him. [The doctor] said: "The illness cannot be cured. This is called,

Being close to women [rhyme A]

Produces a disease like *gu* 蠱. [rhyme A]

It's not ghosts, it's not food; [rhyme B]

Sexual excess is causing his derangement. [rhyme B]

. . . [The Marquis' minister] Zhao Meng said, "What does *gu* mean?"

He replied, "That which is produced when one sinks into delusion through debauch. In terms of the graph, a vessel (*min* 皿) and insects (*chong* 蟲) make up *gu*. The flying away of grain is also *gu* [i.e., the insects that appear as if spontaneously

<sup>55</sup> This is the text of the first line statement of hexagram no. 7 Shi in the *Yijing*.

<sup>56</sup> Legge 312/317; Takezoe, 11.1; Yang, 718.



generated in rotting grain]. In the *Zhouyi* a woman deluding a man and the wind blowing down a mountain are called Gu.<sup>57</sup> These are all the same thing.”<sup>58</sup>

*Gu* is the focus of this passage, not the *Yi*. Doctor He explains it in four ways. The first is etiological: it is a disease caused by sexual excess. The second is graph analysis: *gu* means “insects in a dish.” The third comes from an observation of decay in the natural world. The fourth cites the *Yi*, not in reference to its texts, which are all auspicious, but through the associations of its component trigrams. Apparently the doctor has in mind two sets of associations that are also found in today’s *Shuogua*: “younger man” and “older woman” are one, “mountain” and “wind” are the other. Here his analysis imputes “delude” and “blow down” to the two relationships. And, he concludes, “These are all [examples of] the same thing.” Thus the *Yi* functions as one of several resources to articulate the physician’s diagnosis, just as in divination examples it has sometimes shared its mantic authority with the turtle.

Divination and a doctor’s medical analysis are somewhat similar acts, and both English and Chinese have a way to capture the shading over from one to the other. In English it is in the two terms “prognostication” and “prognosis.” In Chinese it is the word *zhen* 診, used both for the interpretation of a dream (*zhenmeng*) and for medical diagnosis.

*Case 10. The prevalence of dragons—Zhao 29, 513 B.C.*

In the autumn of 513 B.C. a dragon was sighted outside the town of Jiang, leading two old friends into discussion. One, an eminent historian, remarks that these days “dragons are not captured alive.” In previous times, however, men had such skill in dragon-culture that intimate observations of dragon behavior were possible. As proof of this, he declares:

The *Zhouyi* has it in Qian’s Gou 乾☰之姤☱, which says, “Hidden dragon, do not act.”

Its Tongren 同人☲☵ says, “See the dragon in the field.”

Its Dayou 大有☲☱ says, “Flying dragon in the heavens.”

Its Guai 夬☱☳ says, “Dragon in a gully—there is remorse.”

<sup>57</sup> Gu ☱ is hexagram no. 18 in the *Yijing*.

<sup>58</sup> Legge 573/580; Takezoe, 20.34; Yang, 1221.

Its Kun 坤☷ says, "See a flock of headless dragons. Auspicious."

Kun's Bo 剝☶ says, "Dragons fighting in the wilds."

If they did not appear morning and evening, who could have described them?<sup>59</sup>

Here the *Yi* functions as a book of natural history. It is valued not for its knowledge of the future but for its knowledge of the past. Whereas Cases 1 through 9 depended in some measure on a figurative use of language, in this instance the *Yi* no longer points beyond itself: its dragons are merely dragons.

Returning to the question first posed in Case 7, we find that some clear distinctions can be made between divination and rhetorical usage of the *Yi*. In divination, one consults the *Yi* and applies its message to one's situation; in rhetorical usage, one begins by analyzing one's situation and then finds an appropriate text from the *Yi*. In divination, an *Yi* text is selected by a process of stalkcasting we would describe as mechanical and random. In rhetorical usage, the text is actively chosen by the interpreter. Whereas in both cases the *Yi* is used in a decision-making process, rhetorical usage is primarily a means to bolster the speaker's pre-existing argument. In divination, however, the *Yi* text determines the substance and direction of that argument in significant and unpredictable ways.

What difference do these differences make? Potentially much, as in this example. Or nearly none at all, as in Case 8. In that instance not only are traditional methods of interpretation maintained, the atmosphere also recalls Cases 1 through 3. There the distinctions between divination and rhetorical usage are nearly invisible. Indeed, if one knew the *Yi* very well, as the interpreter in Case 8 apparently does, one might claim that the text's magic causes Shi's Lin to come to mind by the same power that it causes the stalks to produce a hexagram.<sup>60</sup>

Rhetorical usage, however, offers the reader greater conscious control of the text. Perhaps for this reason, all nineteen citations of the *Yi* preserved from the Warring States period are rhetorical. Even Hsun Tzu is able to apply the *Yi* in this fashion, taking short

<sup>59</sup> Legge 729/731; Takezoe, 26.25; Yang, 1500. For the line on "its Guai," I have followed Richard Kunst's reading (*The Original Yijing*, p. 241). These texts are all in today's *Yijing*.

<sup>60</sup> This was suggested to me by an amateur of the *Yijing* when I discussed this material at the University of Iowa in the fall of 1982.

phrases from it to advance arguments that have nothing to do with augury.<sup>61</sup>

## ZHOUYI HERMENEUTICS

Nothing definite is known of the actual practice of *Zhouyi* divination prior to the Spring and Autumn. Scholars suppose that it was originally a royal prerogative, employing hereditary diviners, and fully integrated with the sacred traditions of the Zhou royal estate. It may therefore also have involved complicated invocations of or references to the ancestors, gods or other forces, or been imbedded in the private ceremonials of the Zhou house. The silence of the *Zuozhuan* suggests, however, that by the Spring and Autumn such concerns were no longer significant. (Unfortunately we have no record of divination performed for the Zhou king.)

Fourteen accounts from the *Zuozhuan* allow us to piece together the broad outlines of *Zhouyi* divination practices at this time. The most complete of these accounts include the following elements: a topic is proposed, a diviner is consulted, the *Zhouyi* is addressed by casting stalks, stalkcasting indicates a line statement from the *Yi*, and an expert (who may or may not be the diviner) interprets the results. In two-thirds of the *Zuo* records most of these elements are present.

In only about half the *Zuozhuan* accounts does a professional diviner, or registrar (*shi* 史), perform the divination. Crackmakers sometimes assume the stalkcasting role, as in Cases 1 and 2. Otherwise the diviners or interpreters are generally, as Sargent has shown, “political advisors and office-holders.”<sup>62</sup> These are amateurs who move freely between turtle and stalks; their primary function is still political analysis rather than divination. Thus while the stalkcaster once presumably held a distinct role in the Zhou hierarchy, by the Spring and Autumn his functions are routinely shared throughout the court. In Case 5 we even saw a woman interpreting the *Yi*. This is further indication of the distance of late Spring and Autumn readers from early Zhou models, and the liber-

<sup>61</sup> For the list of Warring States citations, see Qu Wanli, *XianQin Han Wei Yili shuping*, pp. 66-71.

<sup>62</sup> Sargent, p. 21.

ty with which they appropriated the text. It also reminds us of the difficulty of using the *Zuozhuan* to reconstruct those earlier practices.

There are four ways in which early and late techniques of interpretation differ. First, in all but one of the seven earliest examples, if a hexagram is cited, the interpreter also makes reference to the trigrams; only a third of the later examples use this method. (See the table in the Appendix for these and other statistics.) Second, none of the seven earliest accounts are rhetorical, whereas nearly half the later ones are. Apparently the *Yi* was becoming both more familiar and more secular, finding new applications like medicine and natural history outside its traditional compass. This indicates a spread of knowledge of the *Yi* from the Zhou house to educated people generally. Rhetorical usage testifies to this—it makes no sense to allude to a text (as in Case 7) if your listener cannot supply it mentally. Third, paralleling this, in the early Spring and Autumn registrars or crackmakers are involved in *Zhouyi* interpretation twice as often as anyone else. In the later period, a registrar is mentioned only once in ten cases, and crackmakers not at all.

Fourth, in the seven earliest examples of stalkcasting, the narrator never once mentions the name of the text that is being used. Since in this period divination still tended to be the act of a specialist, it may have been taken for granted by the original seventh-century audience of these tales that the *Zhouyi* is the book in question. In the middle set of seven cases, if a text is mentioned it is always called the *Zhouyi* (four out of seven times); it is as if more people were becoming exposed to divination, some of whom needed to be told what text was being used. In the final eight cases, the text is with one exception always named, but as well as being called the *Zhouyi* it is also referred to as the *Yi*,<sup>63</sup> or reference is made to the *Yixiang*<sup>64</sup> or to an *Yigua*.<sup>65</sup> This suggests a greater familiarity with the text and the divorce from its Zhou origins.

These developments are significant not only in their own right, but also because they establish a pattern no Warring States or Han forger could have built into the *Zuo*. They are therefore strong

<sup>63</sup> Zhao 12, Legge 637/640.

<sup>64</sup> Zhao 2, Legge 582/583.

<sup>65</sup> Zhao 32, Legge 739/741.

evidence that—on the whole and from the perspective of interpretive method—the *Zuozhuan* records of the *Yi* are highly accurate and reliable. Of course this does not guarantee that any individual record is genuine. But if I am interpreting the fourth point correctly, the absence of the name “*Zhouyi*” in all the early accounts suggests that the original seventh-century stories were eventually incorporated into the *Zuo* with extraordinary devotion to detail.<sup>66</sup>

*Zuozhuan* evidence suggests that the *Yi* text was stable throughout the Spring and Autumn. Sargent, following Wilhelm, proposes that the odd texts we saw in Cases 1 and 2 indicate that only after about 600 B.C. did a settled, written text exist.<sup>67</sup> As I argued in Case 2, it makes better sense to consider these odd texts not as variants but as three- and four-word verses improvised on the spot, usually by crackmakers. Because the two genuine variants that the *Zuo* contains are only slight rearrangements of phrases,<sup>68</sup> I would suggest that today’s *Yijing* hardly differs from the text used in the Spring and Autumn period as the *Zhouyi*.

We have seen that methods of *Zhouyi* interpretation in the early and late Spring and Autumn differ from each other in only a few points. In fact, most of the techniques described in the *Zuo* can also be seen in records from the imperial period. The use of the *Yi*, however, changed much more rapidly. In the early Spring and Autumn, *Zhouyi* divination was used to foresee the outcome of battles, marriages, sons and other difficult matters. By the end of the period the *Yi* was also used in medical prognosis, as a source of dragon-lore, in suasion, and to pass judgment on an ambitious minister, as well as in debates on morality. Such cases represent new relationships of reader to text, with the interpreter shaping not only the meaning of a single line statement, but in some instances the very structure through which *any* meaning could emerge.

Twentieth-century scholars have hoped to learn much more than this about specific Spring and Autumn techniques for interpreting

<sup>66</sup> A. C. Graham has come tentatively to the same conclusion regarding the reliability of the *Zuozhuan* records of *wuxing*, or Five Phases. See his *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking* (Singapore: The National University of Singapore, The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), p. 74n52.

<sup>67</sup> Sargent, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Xi 15, Legge 165/169.

the *Zhouyi*.<sup>69</sup> They have been largely unsuccessful. One difficulty is that diviners never explicitly discuss their methods. As well, fewer than ten accounts are long enough to provide substantial amounts of data. Most significantly, however, the *Zuo* records indicate that interpretation of the *Yi* was a rather ad hoc affair; as we have seen, interpretive practices were multiple and often contradictory. This is epitomized by the disputes over interpretation from the late Spring and Autumn.

These inconsistencies have important consequences for the present study. Because of them, it makes little sense to postulate simple and regular methods of *Zhouyi* interpretation, especially in the late Spring and Autumn. Insofar as this has been a goal of previous scholars, it has led them to overlook other aspects of the *Zuo* accounts. For however poor these accounts are in consistent method, they are rich in other kinds of historical data: they reveal the particular hazards and opportunities of interpreting a difficult text, the nature of the arguments between proponents of competing views of the *Yi*, and those moments when new ideas may successfully challenge traditional readings.

What is more, the true nature of *Zhouyi* divination is obscured by the impulse to rationalize it. Not only is the attempted resolution inconsistent with the evidence of how the text was actually being used, the attempt itself subtly misrepresents the role that the *Yi* has played in Chinese tradition. For the difficulties of the *Yi* are fundamental to its function, whether as a book of divination or of philosophy. Its force and wide application have derived in part from the unexpected possibilities of so simple a statement as "It is profitable to ford the big river." Thus it is important that the Spring and Autumn diviners did not succeed in ending the disputes over *Zhouyi* interpretation and so reduce the *Yi* to an unambiguous, closed field of meaning.

#### UNCERTAINTIES OF DIVINATION

People in the Spring and Autumn consulted the *Zhouyi* to help make decisions. Yet the divination process itself was fraught with

<sup>69</sup> For a list of these works, see footnote 2 above.

uncertainties that must be understood in order to appreciate the *Yi*'s role in addressing them. Here I will discuss four types of uncertainty that characterized *Zhouyi* divination throughout the Spring and Autumn period. These are (1) the uncertainty of divination as such, (2) the uncertainty of *Zhouyi* interpretation, (3) uncertainty arising from competing methods of divination, and (4) the possibility of subverting the divination process entirely.

First, every sort of divination, Chinese or other, is inherently uncertain inasmuch as it attempts knowledge of things removed from direct perception—generally, of the future. Spring and Autumn Chinese were well aware of this difficulty. In Case 3 we saw a diviner acknowledging his uncertainty with the phrases “Thus I said that it might be in a later generation,” and “Thus I said that it might be in a different state.” The converse of this is the recognition that if the matter is certain, there is no need to divine. Thus in 701, when Chu contemplates battle, someone suggests making cracks. Another replies: “Crackmaking is to decide about the doubtful. [This battle] is not doubtful. Why make cracks?”<sup>70</sup>

Divination is of course only one way to acquire knowledge of the future. More common but also uncertain alternatives are rational thought—analysis and inference—and non-rational thought—intuition or projection. Spring and Autumn Chinese made use of all these methods, in varying combinations, though they did not differentiate between them in the terms I have used here. For example, in Case 4 Cui Wuzi combines the analysis of his intended bride's past, projection of his own desires, and *Zhouyi* divination in an attempt to predict (or influence) the outcome of their union. Even with the more sophisticated thinking we saw in Cases 5 and 6, *Zhouyi* divination is not perceived to be in conflict with rationality. Neither does it occur in isolation from other human cognitive functions, nor supplant them. It rather attempts to supplement their inadequacy.

Because the first type of uncertainty is common to all forms of divination, we can consider it pre-textual as regards the *Yi*. The second form of uncertainty is specifically textual: the *Yi* is just difficult to interpret. Part of the problem is that it does not offer pro-

<sup>70</sup> Huan 11, Legge 55/56.

gnostications such as “On the next *xinhai* day you will capture five prisoners.” Instead it may remark, “It is profitable to enfeoff a marquis,”<sup>71</sup> or “One sees a band of dragons without heads. Auspicious.”<sup>72</sup> If one is not in a position to enfeoff, or if dragons are only rarely encountered (as is asserted in Case 10), such statements require an explicit act of interpretation to be transformed into prognostications. In Cases 2 and 3 we saw the elaborated steps two diviners took in order to accomplish this.

Such a process is necessarily ungovernable by any set of explicit rules. Were this not the case, the *Yi* texts would be nothing more than a code, and interpretation merely the indexing of that code to situations in the world. This ungovernability makes the *Yi* more flexible and thus more powerful a divination tool. Yet at the same time it renders it vulnerable to disputation, as we saw in Cases 4, 5 and 6. In any event, this uncertainty of interpretation is necessary to the survival of the *Zhouyi* as a method of divination, given the more general uncertainty of divination discussed immediately above. For if the *Yi* did not offer legitimate opportunities for retrospective reinterpretation of its messages, it would soon be discredited.

While the first type of uncertainty is intrinsic to divination and the second intrinsic to *Zhouyi* interpretation, the third type concerns instead the *Yi*'s competitors among the methods of augury available in the Spring and Autumn. We might thus call it “con-textual.” The turtle is the most familiar and respected of these alternatives, but we should note that the *Zuo* also contains accounts of the *Yi* being used in combination with paronomasia,<sup>73</sup> graph analysis<sup>74</sup> and dream interpretation.<sup>75</sup> Other Spring and Autumn divination methods, such as the interpretation of astronomical and meteorological phenomena, no doubt were combined with the *Yi* at various times, though no records of these encounters survive.

The relationship of turtle and stalks can be complementary or antagonistic. In Case 1 we saw a Duke of Lu employing first crackmaking, then stalkcasting, in an attempt to ascertain his son's future;

<sup>71</sup> Hexagram no. 3 *Zhun*, *et passim*.

<sup>72</sup> Hexagram no. 1 *Qian*, sixth line statement.

<sup>73</sup> See Case 1.

<sup>74</sup> *Min* 1, 661 B.C., Legge 124/125; see also Case 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ai* 17, 478 B.C., Legge 849/850.



here the two prognostications reinforce each other. Apparently both divinations were conducted by the same man, identified as “Crackmaker Chuqiu’s father.” Thus, by the early Spring and Autumn, we see a single person practicing divination traditions that were distinct in origin, method and, presumably at one time, personnel.

Inevitably, however, there were times when stalks and turtle disagreed. In such cases scholarly opinion has tended to hold crackmaking the more reliable.<sup>76</sup> Indeed the *Zuo* contains the story of Duke Xian of Jin, who, finding the message of the *Yi* more congenial, disregards this procedure and loses his life because of it. Duke Xian’s crackmaker had argued, in somewhat partisan fashion, “The stalks are short, the turtle is long (*chang*, ‘successful’ or ‘powerful’). It is better to follow the long.”<sup>77</sup>

But in reality the relationship of stalks and turtle is much more complex. In a long note on this passage, Takezoe analyzes a half-dozen conflicting pre-Qin discussions of this relationship and concludes that “crackmaking and stalkcasting are in reality without long or short.”<sup>78</sup> That is, in certain cases pre-Qin interpreters argued that one should follow the turtle, in others the stalks. Takezoe can discern no single principle or rule in these discussions that could be consistently applied to every case. There is then no clear dominance of turtle over stalks in the Spring and Autumn. Equally significant, neither do the conflicts that arise between the methods push interpreters to develop a comprehensive framework in reference to which such disputes could be resolved. The modern equivalent to this is a small-claims court, where the judge’s decision does not set legal precedent. The conflicts are settled pragmatically, without implications for the future relationship of the two methods.

We can contrast this level of solution to a Warring States discussion found in the “Hong-fan” (Great plan) chapter of the *Book of Documents*. This attempts to resolve potential disagreements between the king, turtle, stalks, nobles and common people. The passage mentions six permutations of agreement and disagreement

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Takezoe’s citations of Yang Shen 楊慎 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達 in 5.20–21.

<sup>77</sup> Xi 4, Legge 139/141.

<sup>78</sup> Takezoe, 5.20–21.

among these five elements, including one in which the stalks oppose the proposed course of action while the turtle consents to it. In the latter case, following Karlgren, “in internal affairs it is auspicious, in external affairs [*sc.* outside the state] it is baleful.”<sup>79</sup> Such a need to derive formal, rationalized methods for integrating the two kinds of divination found no expression in the Spring and Autumn.

Beyond these three uncertainties lies a more extreme reaction in which someone ignores, manipulates or simply rejects the prognostication of the *Yi*.<sup>80</sup> Because these possibilities subvert *any* reading of the *Yi*, we could call them “extra-textual.” They point to an uncertainty of the very ground on which divination rests. The story of King Ling of Chu, self-proclaimed candidate for the role of overlord, is an extreme case of this attitude. In 529 his empire crumbles. Deserted, he kills himself. The *Zuozhuan* reports:

Previously King Ling had made cracks, saying, “I would attain all under heaven.” It was inauspicious. He threw the turtle shell, railed at heaven and cried: “Such a tiny thing you will not serve me. I must take it myself.”<sup>81</sup>

In throwing the turtle shell and cursing heaven, King Ling rejects both divination and its foundation. All that remains to replace them is his own will and acumen.

We might expect such examples to be legion. After all, the Spring and Autumn Chinese are mightily contentious; in every divination situation the patron has considerable personal and political fortune at risk; and each of the three types of uncertainty provides the perfect invitation to legitimately challenge someone else’s reading. Yet in fact there are remarkably few such instances. The reason seems to be the continuing authority of Zhou tradition and the *Yi*’s position in its midst. Such disputes as do occur are thus doubly interesting. They are not merely disagreements over the interpretation of a text but are also challenges to some type of authority—the personal authority of the expert prognosticator, the authority of the *Zhouyi* institution, or even that of divination itself. Thus their presence and absence are both important indicators of the stability of current cultural practices.

<sup>79</sup> “*The Book of Documents*,” *BMFEA* (1950): 33.

<sup>80</sup> See, respectively, Xi 15, Legge 165/169; Xi 28, Legge 206/212; and Case 4.

<sup>81</sup> Zhao 13, Legge 644/649.

## USING THE ZUOZHUAN EVIDENCE

*Three loyalties*

Throughout the *Zuo* we see an author struggling to reconcile three potentially conflicting goals: to record events as they actually occurred, to create a narrative that will be convincing and attractive to the reader, and to give a didactic account that will reflect his convictions that the universe operates according to the principles of morality. In modern terms we could say that these represent every historian's concern with what happened, how it can be told, and what it means.

The *Zuozhuan* probably takes its name from a certain Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 or, more likely, Zuoqiu Ming. Though we know nothing about him, nor what connection he has with the *Zuozhuan*, there is scholarly consensus about certain features of the text. To begin with, the body of the *Zuo* is not a Han dynasty forgery, as Kang Youwei had insisted, though it may contain a number of interpolations. In refuting Kang's charge, Bernard Karlgren established an additional claim for the *Zuo*: its stylistic consistency. Through an examination of its use of grammatical auxiliaries ("particles"); he concluded that the *Zuo* possesses "a grammar of its own, a constellation of grammatical phenomena which is quite unique. . . ," which "no forger could have imagined and consistently carried through."<sup>82</sup> Thus it "was written either by a single person, or—if Chavannes' idea is right—by several men belonging to one and the same school and the same region."<sup>83</sup> From the work of Karlgren and others it is also generally assumed that the *Zuo* was put together out of existing traditions around the late fourth or early third century B.C.—at least 150 years after its last entry in 481 B.C. and as much as 450 years after its first in 722.<sup>84</sup>

Despite this late date, the *Zuo* is reliable regarding such details of public life as names, lineages and offices. We can gather this from

<sup>82</sup> "On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Tso Chuan*," *Göteborgs Högskolas Aorsskrift* 32 (1926): 30.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>84</sup> See Barry B. Blakeley, "Notes on the Reliability and Objectivity of the Tu Yü Commentary on the *Tso Chuan*," *JAOS* 101.2 (1981): 209n17.

Barry Blakeley's study of Du Yu 杜預 (222-281), the *Zuo's* greatest commentator. Du's notes supply additional information on these matters of public record. But Blakeley has shown that in such cases Du derives information from the *Zuo* text itself for fewer than half his remarks. Thus Blakeley believes that a large body of material relating to Spring and Autumn history still circulated in the Han, when Du's outside sources were compiled. Because Du demonstrates extreme scruple in his treatment of historical data,<sup>85</sup> his use of these Han sources is strong evidence of their reliability. From this we can surmise that the *Zuozhuan* records of names and offices are consistent with these Han documents, which thus offer an independent confirmation of the *Zuo's* historical accuracy.

Narrative concerns influence the *Zuo* in at least two ways. First, the author has taken various materials—the names and offices discussed above, for example—and turned them into a coherent account of the Spring and Autumn. As readers we rely on him to perform this service for us; nevertheless it is impossible for us as researchers to uncover the more raw version(s) that the author had at hand.<sup>86</sup>

The second way in which narrative demands shape the *Zuo* relates to the need for stories to be attractive. For all its didacticism, the *Zuo's* subject is "violent conflict—political, military, and personal," as David Johnson has noted.<sup>87</sup> The story of Cui Wuzi, part of which we examined as Case 4, is an excellent example. After marrying a widow despite strong counterindications, Cui grants her sons position and privilege that make his own sons jealous. In a complex intrigue, his sons kill their step-brothers, Cui's own sons are killed, and his wife hangs herself. When Cui arrives at his palace and views the devastation, he hangs himself as well. Truly it is as his

<sup>85</sup> Blakeley considers Du's work "judicious, objective and therefore reliable" ("Tu Yü's Commentary," p. 210), and calls him "a sterling example of the best in Chinese exegetical scholarship" (p. 212).

<sup>86</sup> For a thoroughgoing investigation of what form these sources might have taken, see David Johnson, "Epic and History in Early China: The Matter of Wu Tzu-hsu," *JAS* 40.2 (1981): 255-271. Johnson argues for the existence of "large narrative structures" (p. 268) or epics at the time such works as the *Zuozhuan* came together. I am unconvinced that such stories existed in epic form, largely because Johnson's assiduous research has produced no direct evidence of their existence.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

nemesis Chen Wenzhi had foretold. This story, I would claim, suggests a conflict between the author and his own narrative voice. The author intends Cui as an example of how moral retribution ever falls upon the perpetrator. The narrator, however, sets out Cui's destruction in such dramatic detail that his evil becomes fascinating, and thus attractive. The popularity of the *Zuo* throughout Chinese history has no doubt depended on the presence of both qualities.

Yet the *Zuo*'s author clearly wished to make positive morality more compelling than Cui's evil—and the *Zuozhuan*'s later orthodoxy rests on a consensus that the didactic interpretation takes precedence over any other. This interpretation organizes the stories so that they reveal their truths; thus the account of a degraded man like Cui Wuzi can attain the status of History. Ronald Egan has described the author's historiographical principle:

Put in simplest terms, the abiding lesson of *Tso chuan*, a lesson that is illustrated by hundreds of its narratives, is that rulers who are wise and who are dedicated to their people's welfare prosper, while those who are evil or foolish come to a bad end.<sup>88</sup>

But the world is not always like this, which from time to time has created difficulties for the author. To make history conform to his "underlying assumption that good and bad fortune are linked to conduct and are not random,"<sup>89</sup> he must occasionally reconstruct crucial aspects of his narratives. He does not seem to have altered public matters such as office-holding, marriage, military victory or execution. But he was determined to address the moral stature of his actors, upon which, in his view, the result of their actions ultimately depends. Into the battlefield account of a dissolute but successful general, the author inserts an anecdote that displays the man's fun-

<sup>88</sup> "Narratives in *Tso Chuan*," *HJAS* 37.2 (1977): 323–52. This lesson is also attested by several other modern commentators. John Wang for example states: "Put very simply, the pattern is this: just as the evil, the stupid, and the haughty will usually bring disaster upon themselves, the good, the wise, and the humble tend to meet their just rewards" ("Early Chinese Narrative: the *Tso-chuan* as Example," in *Chinese Narrative*, ed. Andrew Plaks, [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977], p. 14). Or Burton Watson: "[It is] firmly dedicated to the proposition . . . that good deeds insure success and evil deeds failure. On the basis of this axiom the *Tso* orders its material, an endless series of variations on the theme. . . ." (*Early Chinese Literature* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1962], p. 44).

<sup>89</sup> Egan, p. 331.

damental cowardice, arguing silently that the final victory occurred despite rather than because of the general's leadership. Of that anecdote Egan remarks: "It is probably the author's creation, from beginning to end."<sup>90</sup>

Such creativity violates the standards of most modern historiographies. But it is not in conflict with the author's evident intent to record the past accurately. Given his understanding of what history is and how it works, the victory of a corrupt general would be unbelievable, not to say inconceivable. I think we can fairly say that from the author's point of view, letting the record show someone at once evil and successful would have been an even greater offense against reality, which, after all, is moral.

### *Effects on the Zhouyi records*

In light of these three loyalties, the usefulness of the *Zuozhuan* accounts depends very much on the questions we ask of them. On the one hand we have seen good reasons to trust their public aspect. Hsu Cho-yun has relied considerably on this kind of evidence to differentiate period and place within the Spring and Autumn.<sup>91</sup> Barry Blakeley has demonstrated in his comparison of the political systems of several major states that the *Zuo* can sustain even finer local distinctions.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, as Egan's work has shown, anecdotes whose primary purpose is to illustrate character or make didactic points are open to doubt. Thus we need to be suspicious of stories that conform *too* well to the author's moral expectations, such as the "confession" of Lady Mu Jiang.

The reliability of technical matters of *Zhouyi* divination is also attested by a variety of evidence. First of all, as we saw earlier, the *Zuozhuan* records demonstrate patterns that no forger could create. In particular, details in the divination accounts support a convincing division into early and late periods. I suspect as well that some of the divination stories, especially the prophecies on the ruling houses of Lu and Chen (Cases 1 and 3), were already well known to

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 338. The general in question is maligned in Cheng 2, Legge 339/345.

<sup>91</sup> See his *Ancient China in Transition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965).

<sup>92</sup> "Functional Disparities in the Socio-Political Traditions of Spring and Autumn China," *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient* 20 (1977): 208-243, 307-343.

the *Zuo* audience, who might be expected to recognize both the prognostication and, perhaps, the terms of its interpretation. These, then, would not be subject to significant tampering. Finally, independent corroboration of the divination records comes from a text buried in 296 B.C., excavated in A.D. 281 with the *Zhushu jinian* 竹書記年, and subsequently lost.<sup>93</sup> Du Yu says of it:

As well there is another text in one *juan*. It exclusively collects and annotates the crackmaking and stalkcasting matters of the *Zuozhuan*. From start to finish, in regard to the meaning (*i*) of the texts, it is completely the same as the *Zuozhuan*.<sup>94</sup>

This text was buried about the same time that scholars believe the *Zuozhuan* was composed. Du's evaluation of it therefore suggests that the *Zuo* material was wholly consistent with fourth- and third-century views of what the *Yi* had been in the Spring and Autumn period.

In many ways the *Zuozhuan* is a remarkably precise record of the *Yi*. Even its conversations, so subject to our suspicion, create a Cui Wuzi who is bad in very specific ways. Yet, after all, the *Zuo* is a work of history—a thorough mixture of fact, narration, didacticism, entertainment, etc. Thus, at the very least, we have a superb Warring States understanding of how the *Yi* “must have been.” Mu Jiang's queer speech fits in here too: even if she never spoke those words, the account still shows us how influential people imagined the role of the *Zhouyi* in the transition from Spring and Autumn to Warring States morality.

#### POLITICS, MORALITY AND FATE

Interpretation of the *Yi* is extremely sensitive to forces in its social environment. To conclude I will examine four ways in which conceptions of politics, morality and fate interacted with *Zhouyi* divination. The role each element assumes differs in each scenario, not merely by whim of the individual interpreter, but also reflecting the social forces of its times.

The early Spring and Autumn continued to be shaped by the Zhou world-view even as the political basis for its assumptions were

<sup>93</sup> See Qu Wanli, *XianQin HanWei Yili shuping*, p. 66.

<sup>94</sup> “Postface,” in Takezoe, 30.66.

increasingly eroded. In this world, politics, ritual propriety (*li*), and fate all derive their force and nature from *tian*, or heaven. These categories are so thoroughly integrated that politics and ritual propriety are nearly coterminous. Using the *Yi* in divination is thus presumably a ritual invocation of the same supra-human powers that are used to sanction current social values. In such a world it is nonsense to divine about something that is ritually incorrect.

This world looks extraordinarily restricted and naive from the perspective of someone like King Ling of Chu, who threw the turtle shell and cursed heaven when it would not grant him the overlordship. To King Ling, everything is politics, but politics is reducible to gain and loss. Morality, fate and texts have importance only in reference to that single value. King Ling's crackmaking seeks to turn others' belief systems to his own advantage, impressing the gullible with an auspicious divination. In the same way, Cui Wuzi of Case 4 believes that the *Zhouyi* might lend a certain lustre of legitimacy to his impending marriage. In neither case is divination used "to resolve doubts."<sup>95</sup>

In a similar example from the year 491, the Viscount of the Man tribe takes refuge from the Chu armies with an official of Jin. The Jin official calls the Rong tribe together, ostensibly

to set aside land to give to the Viscount of the Man to build a walled city. He was also to make cracks about it. When the Viscount of the Man was listening to the crackmaking, [the Jin official] seized him and his five chief officers and handed them over to the Chu army at Sanhu.<sup>96</sup>

In this instance divination is used only because someone else might take it seriously and thus endanger himself. It is silly, these accounts seem to argue, to place faith in any power beyond human ken. Nonetheless it is still possible to know the future. Indeed, King Ling might claim that he is successful because he can accurately imagine what people may do next. Thus, when he learns of the death of his sons, he is made to remark: "I have killed the sons of many others. How could it *not* come to this?!"<sup>97</sup> Surely this is the *Zuo* author preaching moral retribution by putting words in the king's mouth.

<sup>95</sup> As divination is defined in Huan 11, Legge 55/56.

<sup>96</sup> Ai 4, Legge 803/805.

<sup>97</sup> Zhao 13, Legge 643/649. Cf. Burton Watson, *Early Chinese Literature*, p. 46.



But we might reinterpret such words from the king's own point of view to mean, "What I have done to others, others will necessarily want to do to me." For the king and the *Zuo* author would surely agree that it is men who make their own history.

To moralists like Huibo and the *Zuo* author, the king has an extremely shallow understanding of the world. (It is therefore also extremely dangerous.) Just as the king subsumes everything to loss and gain, in Huibo's world morality is the only determinant of fate. Political acts produce results based simply upon their moral status. Wise men can make predictions because of their knowledge of morality. The *Yi*, we may presume, is an aid for those whose moral education is still somewhat defective. Thus the practice of politics and the *Yi* text are both integrated within a moral calculus, recalling their integration in the early Spring and Autumn. But then one's only moral choice had been to follow or reject a role-specific propriety. Now moral choices are overwhelming, as ancient proprieties and hierarchies are increasingly ridiculed and cast aside.

Cases 9 and 10 present a fourth view, at least as far as the *Yi* is concerned. Here the *Yi*'s authority derives not from the access it provides to uncanny cosmic forces, but from its being a repository of the human cultural tradition. As such, it explains things such as the disease *gu* or the erstwhile prevalence of dragons. It does not compel anyone to action, nor does it seem to take any necessary stance on morality or politics.

Cases 4 through 10 show how bold users of the *Zhouyi* transform that text to meet their current needs. If we consider this evolution from the perspective of the Warring States and Han, its most important aspect is the development of the *Yi* into a text capable of attracting philosophical discourse. Even troublemakers like Cui Wuzi contribute to this evolution by posing issues that Chen Wenzi and his ilk are forced to address. The Ten Wings are of course the first great fruit of that transformation, and the creation of an *Yi Jing* in 136 B.C. its most famous political moment. We can see as well a foreshadowing of later discussions in the tension between two possible sources of the *Yi*'s authority: its special access to cosmic forces and its part in the manmade cultural tradition.

By its very complexity, the use of the *Yi* shows us specific ways in which Spring and Autumn society is complex. Using the *Yi* in

divination requires the engagement of a difficult text, a skilled diviner, and resourceful interpreters; it invokes hidden political motives, bends to social pressures, and is liable to various kinds of disruption. The instability of the *Yi* makes it especially vulnerable to these forces. This vulnerability in turn enhances the text's usefulness as a historical object of study.

## Appendix

Table of elements useful for reconstructing the history of *Zhouyi* interpretive methods, adapted from material in Sargent, "The *Yi Ching* in the *Tso-chuan* and *Kuo-yü*," (Paper presented to the Berkeley Regional Seminar in Confucian Studies, November 1977), pp. 38-40.

### Key to symbols

- A Divination is performed by casting stalks
- B(i) Rhetorical usage that makes a prognostication
- B(ii) Rhetorical usage that merely illustrates a point
- C(i) Text referred to as "*Zhouyi*"
- C(ii) Text referred to by other name
- D Disputation occurs
- E Trigrams are used in the interpretation
- F A line statement is quoted
- G A hexagram statement is quoted
- H(i) The interpreter is a *shi*
- H(ii) The interpreter is a crackmaker
- H(iii) The interpreter is other than these

date of account	Case #	A	B i/ii	C i/ii	D	E	F	G	H i/ii/iii	pages in Legge
Zhuang 22 672	3	A		i		E	F		i	102/102
Min 1 661	—	A				E			iii	124/125
Min 2 660	1	A							ii	126/129
Xi 4 656	—	A							ii?	139/141

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Xi 15 645	2	A		E		ii	164/167	
Xi 15 645	—	A		E	F	i	165/169	
Xi 25 635	—	A		E	F	ii	194/195	
Xuan 6 603	7		i	i		iii	298/299	
Xuan 12 597	8		i	i	F	iii	312/317	
Cheng 16 575	—	A				i	391/397	
Xiang 9 564	5	A		D		G	i,iii	437/439
Xiang 25 548	4	A		D	F	iii	510/514	
Xiang 28 545	—		i	i	F	iii	537/541	
Zhao 1 541	9		ii	i	E?	iii	574/581	
Zhao 2 540	—			ii		i?	582/583	
Zhao 5 537	—	A		i	E	F	iii	600/604
Zhao 7 535	—	A		i		G	iii	615/619
Zhao 12 530	6	A		ii	D	F	iii	637/640
Zhao 29 513	10		ii	i		F	iii	729/731
Zhao 32 510	—		i/ii	ii	E		iii	739/741
Ai 9 486	—	A		i		F	iii	818/819
Ai 17 478	—	A						849/850