

THE POWER OF Yi

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY FOR A BETTER LIFE



By the Author of
Yijing and the Art of War
Dao De Jing in Reality

Dejun Xue



Every thing in the world holds yang and carries yin. Yin and yang interact with each other to achieve harmony.

— Laozi (老子)

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Preface

“Yi”—or “Yi Jing”—is the Chinese spelling of the two Chinese characters: 易经 (Yì Jīng), which literally means “change”. Around 6,500 years ago, when there was no written language, the Chinese philosophy of Yi was created. Completely abstract, its core is “yin and yang”, eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams, which are fully elucidated in this book.

This book is composed of two parts:

- **PART I** introduces Yi
- **PART II** explains the texts associated with the 64 hexagrams

Those who wish to consult Yi right away, may spend less than an hour reading the first chapter (on love, about 13 pages) or the second chapter (on business, 10 pages), follow the example on selecting a hexagram, and then find the advice from the associated text in Part II, “Commentary on Yi Text.”

Those who wish to know the Yi way of thinking, or the Chinese culture, may just read Part I. Readers who have a strong interest in Yi, wanting to appreciate the depth of insight of Yi or research it, may read through the entire book.

Origin and interpretations of Yi

Yi was created around 6,500 years ago. As stated in *Zhou Li* (~1100 BC), there are three versions of Yi: *Gui Cang Yi* (归藏易/歸藏易), *Lian Shan Yi* (连山易/連山易) and *Zhou Yi* (周易). All three address eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams.

Around 500 BC, Confucius and his disciples compiled ten commentaries (十翼) on Zhou Yi. These commentaries emphasize Confucianism, and provide instruction on how to handle fifty yarrow sticks for divine reading. Later on, around 200 AD, Zhou Yi and the commentaries were combined, into what is known today as Yi.

Based on fifty years' experience in science and research on Chinese classics, the author of *The Power of Yi* reveals the true nature of Yi and how to use it to live in harmony with others and benefit yourself.

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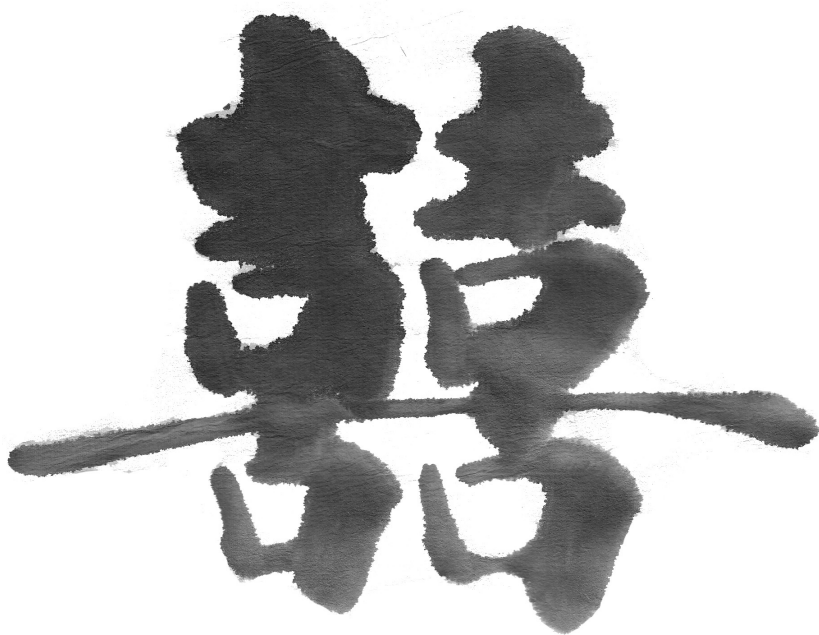
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PART ONE
Introduction to Yi



Happiness in Love

CHAPTER 1

Enjoy Successful Marriage

YOU PROBABLY KNOW AT LEAST one couple like Karen and Ronald, who, after eight years of marriage, is beginning to drift apart.

Karen is a musician who likes reading novels in her spare time. Ronald is a physician whose work is very demanding. In the first few years of marriage, they frequently went out for dinner, dancing, a movie, or a concert. Gradually Ronald changed that pattern, saying he was tired and preferred to relax at home, reading medical journals and writing academic articles. He asked Karen to resign from her job, to take care of their children and provide home-cooked meals.

At first she went along with the change, but her resentment over her loss of freedom and independence grew. She saw her future as an endless round of cooking and cleaning, and nothing to discuss at dinner-time but the children's sports and her husband's work.

Now Karen is unsure about her options. Since they no longer go out together, she feels that she has little in common with Ronald. She understands that he has very little free time and is absorbed in his professional life, but she thinks it's unfair of him to want her to give up her own interests and pleasures.

In the following months, she struggles to be the kind of wife her husband seems to expect, but she can't help feeling neglected and restless.

Her manner unsettles Ronald. He feels that he works very hard all day and deserves tranquility and pleasantness at home. He can't understand what has disturbed their happiness. He begins to spend less and less time with Karen, retreating into his study as soon as possible after dinner so he doesn't have to think about what might be bothering his wife.

To find a way out, Karen is seeking help from Yi.

Eight Images

As she washes dishes alone in the kitchen, Karen wonders why she has so little to show for all the sacrifices she has made. She feels like water that has been constrained in a bottle.

Water is one of the eight images associated with the Eight Trigrams.

A trigram is a set of three lines, one above the other, each of which could be solid (—) or broken (---). You can see that the eight trigrams, shown in the diagram below, represent all of the ways the various combinations of three solid and/or broken lines could occur. There could never be any more trigrams because there are no other possible ways to construct a set of three lines with only two types of lines. Historically, in China, the eight trigrams associate the images of: Thunder, Fire, Lake, Heaven, Wind, Water, Mountain and Earth as shown in the diagram.

There are two sides to most things which the Chinese call yin and yang. In our trigrams the broken line is called a yin line and the solid line is called a yang line. You will see the importance of this in later chapters.

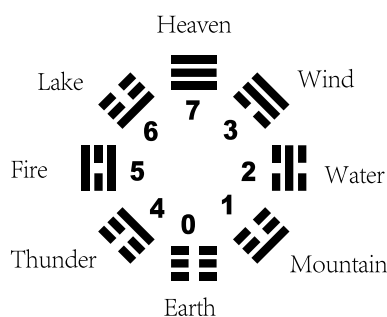


Figure 1.1: Eight Trigrams

In the previous diagram, each trigram is drawn with its image. This circle of trigrams is very familiar to every Chinese person, and to you, too, if you have spent time in China or Chinese shops in other cities. The bottom line of the trigram is the line closest to the center of the circle and the top line is the one on the outside. So each trigram has a bottom line, a middle line and a top line. In addition to their images, in this diagram each trigram has been assigned an ID number from 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Consider trigram 4, thunder. Its bottom line is a solid line or a yang line and the middle and top lines are both broken or yin lines.

Now, let's look at the eight images one by one.

0—Earth

Earth is still. It receives energy from heaven, as well as light, heat, and rain. Living things on the earth adapt to the changes imposed by the heavens. Earth is nurturing, sustaining all living things, like a mother caring for her children. Earth is in a lower position. If we consider Heaven as being above, we think of

Earth as below.

A person would be assigned the Earth trigram if he were:

- like students or others with unrealized potential
- jobless, with nothing to do, not moving (still), receiving benefits (nurturing) from society
- divorced — free, leaving the constraints of marriage
- caught by police — yielding, subordinate
- a senior, advanced in years — still, receiving care from outside, with few demands
- in an unknown place, unknown market, unknown country, unknown group
- trying to be calm and waiting for a chance
- relaxed, enjoying peace
- involved in a business that has closed
- ending a relationship

Among the eight images, water is the only one that can represent Karen's situation. She selected trigram 2 for herself.

Next, she turns to analyzing Ronald's situation and has to acknowledge that he hasn't made an active effort to improve their relationship. He is like the rocky mountain, standing still without caring about her situation and making it difficult for her to enjoy their marriage. The Mountain image fits best with his situation. She selected Trigram 1 for her husband.

1—Mountain

Mountains are tall, and they stop everything that approaches. Mountains are stable, never changing position. Mountainous areas often have beautiful scenery, but are tiring to climb. Mountains look huge, but normally do not exhibit great power to damage or threaten human life, except in the instance of volcanoes, rock slides or collapsing ledges.

A person would be assigned the image of "Mountain" if he:

- were retired, finished working
- insisted on a position, or refused to negotiate
- refused to communicate with others
- split up a relationship

- were a dictator
- defended a stronghold resolutely
- isolated himself
- were stubborn
- became bankrupt, or could not pay his debts
- tried to stop a present action

2—Water

Water exists all over the world, and inside every living thing. Water moves downward only; it never flows upward by itself. It can be contained in a lake, constricted by the banks of a river, held back by a dam, or even kept in a bottle or a cup.

A person would be assigned the image of Water if:

- he were close to retirement age; his effective work energy were limited
- he were suffering loss in business and could find no way to improve it
- he were sick
- he were having difficulty making a correct decision
- he were facing a dangerous situation
- he were bound by a contract or agreement, limiting his freedom
- he were in a battle situation and unable to extricate himself
- he were unable to decide upon a course of action
- he were losing money, his business were in recess, or facing a bad market
- he were in conflict with others in a relationship

3—Wind

Wind blows everywhere. It can go through anything that is open to it, even a tiny hole. If something blocks its way, it detours around, over or under the obstacle. Wind acts with real power, bestowing a cool, chilly feeling, and may even cause serious damage.

A person would be assigned the image of “Wind” if he were:

- middle aged, after thirties
- following, supporting, or inflating the ego of others for his own benefit

regardless if the others were right or wrong

- not successful in business, but trying to use discounts, financing, advertising, etc. to keep afloat
- holding power, but trying to cover wrongdoing with fraudulent evidence, lying
- very tired after hard work
- resigned from a position and trying to do something else.
- cleaning up after a party as the guests are leaving
- trying to do what is easy and feasible; taking the easy path.

4—Thunder

Thunder usually comes abruptly and loudly. It is frightening. It sounds like a huge explosion, shocking and vibrating and often preceding a torrential rain. Even low, rumbling thunder — in remote skies on a clear summer day — shatters tranquility, and threatens rain. Thunder impacts life, but, in itself, causes very little damage and does not directly result in immediate serious consequences.

A person would be assigned the Thunder image if he were:

- a newborn baby
- a new employee
- dating for the first time in a new relationship
- a challenger
- a creator
- starting a new business
- embarking on an adventure
- launching a new offensive action
- angry

5—Fire

Fire is bright and hot. Its airless center is cooler and dim. It always flames upward, but clings to flammable material and consumes oxygen.

A person would be assigned the Fire image if he were:

- a teenager

- a recently promoted employee
- an inventor
- on the offence, and making progress
- a smart person
- beautiful, handsome, fashionable, or sexy
- running a good business with high sales
- boastful
- falling in love, trying to get to know his partner

6—Lake

The symbol refers to a geographical area that abounds in rivers and lakes. These areas are rich in fish and grains. The scenery is beautiful and enjoyable.

A person would be assigned the Lake image if he were:

- an adult in his twenties
- happy and pleasant
- rich
- successful
- emotionally mature
- gaining high profits in business
- healthy
- enjoying happiness or peace of mind
- in a sweet relationship

7—Heaven

Heaven is a donor. It donates energy, light, heat and rain to the earth. Its power is mighty and uncontrollable. Heaven is above it all, at the top position, unreachable and untouchable.

A person would be assigned the Heaven image if he were:

- a mature adult, in his thirties
- powerful
- domineering

- a leader, officer, CEO, manager, supervisor, police
- controlling a monopoly, dominating, or having great success
- running a business with the best product
- a champion
- trying to control, to manipulate, or to use others
- a teacher
- marrying, (at the highest position of the cycle of love)

2 Subject and Object

She puts Trigram 1 on top of Trigram 2, resulting in Hexagram 2:1.

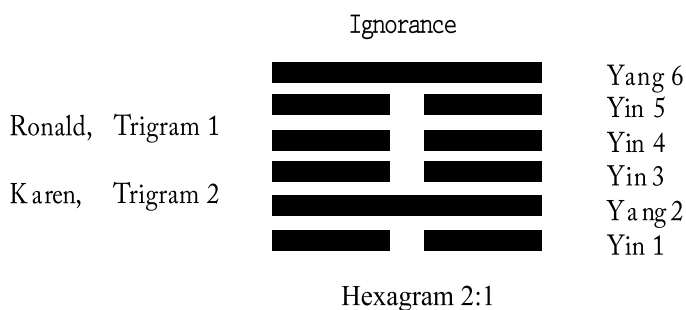


Figure 1.2: Hexagram 2:1, Ignorance

2:1 is the ID number of the hexagram Karen made and indicates that the trigram representing Karen is Trigram 2 and the one representing Ronald is Trigram 1. Because the assessment is from Karen's view, Karen is the subject and Ronald is the object. The trigram referring to the subject is a subject trigram and the one referring to the object is an object trigram. In a hexagram, the subject trigram is on the bottom, and the object trigram is on the top.

The lines in a hexagram are counted from bottom to top. The names of the lines are derived by adding the nature, Yin or Yang, and the line number.

3 Yi Text

In Part II of this book, there are texts of 64 hexagrams. For each hexagram, the text is in three parts:

1. Title
2. General text, explaining the relationship, in general

3. Texts of lines, referring to each line

According to Part II of this book, the title of Hexagram 2:1 is Ignorance, which immediately gives Karen some idea that she and Ronald have a lot to learn about harmonious relationships. She reads the general text for Hexagram 2:1.

*Things are going smoothly.
The teacher says,
“It is not I seeking pupils,
but the pupils beg me.
The question will be answered the first time.
The repeated questions,
which show impertinence,
will not be answered.”
It is beneficial to stay on the current course.*

This text suggests to Karen that staying with her husband is beneficial, but she should not be too obedient to his ignorant demands: “The question will be answered the first time. The repeated questions, which show impertinence, will not be answered.”

Then she goes on to read the texts for each line of the hexagram Ignorance.

Yin 1

*The teacher shows the ignorant the model,
who feels the freedom gained from learning,
like getting rid of fetters and handcuffs.
It is mean to ask pupils to do too much.*

The text suggests that Karen should make an effort for her husband, even if it's very limited — like a teacher exposing an ignorant student to the “model, who feels the freedom gained from learning, like getting rid of fetters and handcuffs.” Then it is up to her husband to learn from this example; Karen should not push her husband too forcefully: “It is mean to ask pupils to do too much.”

Yang 2

*Taking care of an ignorant person is favorable
To marry a woman is favorable.
The woman might give birth to a son,
who will grow up and become a householder.*

The text suggests Karen do something for her husband: “Taking care of an ig-

norant person is favorable.” Despite the fact that her husband is stubborn and uncooperative, this care could turn out to be valuable: If you marry an ignorant woman, she may not be smart, but her child might prove capable of being a householder.

Yin 3

*Do not marry a woman
who seeks a wealthy man,
and loses possession of herself.
It is not beneficial.*

The text suggests that Karen should not be too humble and agreeable, if her husband pursues his own goal, only. “Do not marry a woman, who seeks a wealthy man, and loses possession of herself.” If Karen behaves too humbly and agreeably, “it is not beneficial.”

Yin 4

*Dealing with weary ignorance
is mean.*

The text tells Karen that her husband is like a tired, ignorant student who just wants to sleep or leave the class. Karen needs to compromise. If Karen tries to overcome this sluggishness she seems mean.

Yin 5

*Teaching youthful ignorance
is favorable.*

The text tells Karen that her husband is in a weak position, like anyone who displays “youthful ignorance.” He needs help from Karen. While Karen helps her husband, Karen also gains. That is favorable for Karen.

Yang 6

*Teach violent ignorance
that it is beneficial not to be a robber,
but to be a defender against robbers.*

The text suggests that her husband is in the grip of “violent ignorance.” Karen should help her husband change this rough attitude, and bring out the best in her husband, teaching that “it is beneficial not to be a robber, but to be a defender against robbers.”

From the texts above, first, Karen learned that she needs to talk with her husband like a teacher, tutor, and a student. After Karen talked with Ronald, he understood that staying home every night is making her feel restless and bored. Second, she learned that she needs to take care of her husband like “an ignorant person”. She engaged in a discussion with her husband and decided to hire a babysitter and go out the following weekend.

Karen and Ronald look forward to enjoying many more years of a successful marriage, following the change that they were fortunate enough to rediscover.

4 Follow The Example

You may want to follow the example above, selecting two images for you and for the others, making a hexagram, and looking at the attached texts in Part II of this book.

You must first take the time to become familiar with the eight trigrams presented above, in order to begin to understand the process used to evaluate relationships and decision making. Once this familiarity has become second nature, it is a simple matter to consider a person or a situation in terms of one of the trigrams. But you don't have to be an expert to make use of this information. This book provides the expertise for you and eventually, you will discover that you need not refer to it as often. Later on in this book, the fundamental qualities of each trigram will be discussed in more detail.

If you wish to use Yi immediately, with no further interest in knowing the insight of Yi, you may skip the next chapters. If you prefer to know more about Yi, continue reading.

To enjoy a successful marriage, remember: if there are any problems, do the following three steps:

- *Select two images: one for you, and one for your spouse.*
- *Make a hexagram, your trigram on bottom, your spouse's trigram on top.*
- *Look at the corresponding texts of the hexagram.*

CHAPTER 2

Yi in Business

VICKI AND CAROL ARE HAVING dinner at Friendly's. Vicki asks Carol, "What are you going to do this weekend?"

"Drive to Macy's," Carol said.

"I will be going to Kohl's," replied Vicki. "The clothes there are cheaper."

"I used to shop at Kohl's," said Carol. "But I switched to Macy's. We customers are like the wind, blowing to and fro. We like to go where the quality of merchandise, or the service, or the price is better."

"I agree," said Vicki. "Customers are like the wind."

"That is trigram 3," replied Carol.

"What?"

"Trigram 3 of Yi. It's associated with the wind image."

A trigram is a symbol with three lines. The lines may be solid or broken; the solid line symbolizes yang, and the broken line denotes yin. Yang and yin are the concepts in Chinese philosophy. In general, yang closely resembles the nature of heaven, while yin closely resembles the nature of earth.

There are eight possible combinations of three lines with two types; therefore, three lines with the two types, yang or yin, make eight trigrams. The eight trigrams associated with eight images are as shown below:

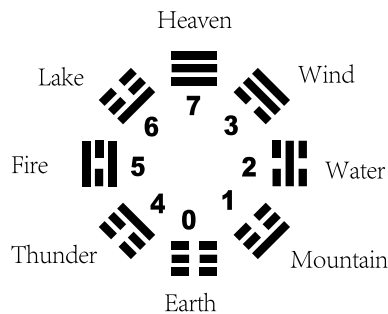


Figure 2.1: Eight Trigrams

The three lines of the trigram associated with wind are yin, yang and yang. If we replace yang line with 1, and yin line with 0, this trigram becomes 011, a

three digit number of the binary number system. The value of binary number 011 is 3. “3” is the numeric value of this trigram, unique in eight trigrams and serves as its ID number. That is why Carol said the nature of customers can be expressed with trigram 3.

“Which trigram is for Macy’s?” Vicki asks.

“Macy’s is successful in business,” Carol replied.

“How can a business succeed?” Vicki asks.

“It must perform as trigram 4, like thunder,” Carol said.

“Why?”

To make the best strategy for business, the company has to adapt well to its market. If we have a trigram representing its customers, we need to choose a trigram to represent the company. From the view of the company, the company is the subject, while the customer is the object. The trigram representing the subject is a subject trigram, and the trigram representing the object is an object trigram. Two trigrams, with the subject trigram under the object trigram, form a hexagram. The ID of the combined hexagram is the combination of the two component trigrams with “:” between, such as 4:3 (Be aware, it is just an ID, not a ratio). Each hexagram has a unique title.

Since there are eight trigrams, when the object trigram is trigram 3, there are eight options for selecting an object trigram to form a hexagram.

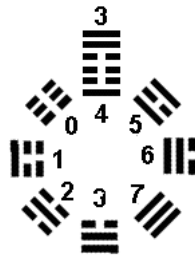


Figure 2.2: Options of subject trigrams

The IDs and titles of the resultant hexagrams are:

- 0:3 Watching
- 1:3 Gradual
- 2:3 Flood
- 3:3 Yield
- 4:3 Gain

- 5:3 Matriarch
 6:3 Sincerity
 7:3 Accumulation

From the eight titles shown above, we know that hexagram 4:3 is the best choice. Its title is Gain, meaning the company will gain from the relationship with customers. The three lines of trigram 4 representing the company are yang, yin and yin, while the three lines of trigram 3, representing customers, are yin, yang and yang. The corresponding lines on both of them are yang with yin, or yin with yang. That is to say, all of the lines in this hexagram are complementary, in the best status of harmony. In the world, everything naturally tends to be in harmony. Harmony is favorable, while discord is unfavorable. Like the sounds of music, the sounds in harmony are enjoyable and help us feel good, while the sounds in discord create the opposite effect.

You may be aware, that the sum of the IDs of the two component trigrams of hexagram 4:3 is 7. If the sum of the IDs of the two component trigrams of a hexagram is 7, the component trigrams are complementary. In general, if the two IDs of component trigrams in a hexagram is 7, the hexagram might be favorable to the subject; although, it is not the only criteria for favorability of a hexagram, as can be noted in latter parts of this book. Therefore, if the object trigram is known, you might select a complementary trigram as a subject trigram, and make a strategy, behaving as the image associated with the subject trigram.

In Yi, a hexagram associates with a text (Yi text) that comments on the hexagram. Below is the Yi text for hexagram 4:3.

General Text: (Comment on the whole hexagram)

It is beneficial to go further.

It is beneficial to cross a big river.

Texts of Lines: (Comment on each line of the hexagram. Yang 1 and Yin 2, etc. denote the name of the line, yang and yin denote the nature of the line, and 1 and 2, etc. denote the location of the line, counting from bottom to top)

Yang 1

*This situation is promising for great work,
 It is very favorable and blameless.*

Yin 2

It is impossible to refuse the contribution of

*A tortoise worth ten pairs of seashells.
It is favorable to stay on this course forever.
The king performs a ritual
Praying to his ancestors for favor.
It is favorable.*

Yin 3

*Receiving help at a bad time
Is blameless.
Holding a jade tablet and
Speaking gingerly,
Like walking in the middle of a road,
One advises the lord.*

Yin 4

*Like walking in the middle of a road,
One speaks with the lord gingerly.
The lord accepts one's advice.
Based on that,
The capital is relocated.*

Yang 5

*Sincerity makes people feel better.
Certainly it is very favorable.
Sincerity makes me want to be more virtuous.*

Yang 6

*Do not help
But beat.
Not persistently being virtuous
Is unfavorable.*

The text describes how the situation is favorable to the company. The text for line 3 and 4 advises the company to provide the best service to the customers, like a servant holding a jade tablet, which was used by the servants of the emperor as a symbol of their sincerity and trustworthiness. The servants choose words and actions deliberately, like walking carefully in the middle of a road. The customers are like a “lord” following the advice of a servant and relocating the capital of the country.

The text of line 5 stresses sincerity in the service of the company.

The text of line 6 advises how the company has to deal with the customer, who is not sincere, but rude and bossy.

“Does Macy’s act like thunder?” asks Vicki.

“Yes. Macy’s often gives a big impact, like the loud exploding sounds of thunder,” responds Carol.

“What?”

“I receive coupons from Macy’s almost every month,” said Carol. “Some coupons offer 20% off, some offer \$20 off with a purchase of \$50 or more. I bought two shirts for \$45, then I added one pair of slacks for \$5.25. I was charged only \$30.25 plus tax, for two shirts and one pair of slacks. I receive advertisements from Macy’s every other week and find interesting items in them. Recently, I bought a beaver fur coat.”

“A beaver fur coat must be very warm,” claims Vicki.

“I believe so. I saw beavers while touring Denali. To nest, the lively animals built their lodges on the surface of lakes. As they live in such a cold area, their fur must be very warm. They swim and dive through water in order to enter their lodges, so their skin and fur must be strong. I think beaver fur is good fur, so I wanted to have a beaver fur coat.”

“Well, why don’t you buy a beaver fur coat from Alaska?”

“I tried. I found a web site www.denalifur.com displaying many pictures of beaver fur coats. But when I clicked on the item that interested me, I was instructed to call for pricing. I don’t know why they don’t like to post their price. Then I sent them an email, telling them I wanted a woman’s 44” long, beaver fur coat with hat, size PL, and asked for their price. When I did not receive any response that day, I called the company the next night, and a lady confirmed that they did receive my email. She asked me, ‘How much do you want to spend?’ You know, I hate questions like that.”

“Me too,” interjected Vicki. “Why should we expose our privacy to them?”

“I asked,” Carol continued, “‘How much do you want?’ She told me, ‘Seven to eight thousand dollars.’ I said, ‘Okay, please send me some pictures showing the options for the coat I want.’ She promised to do so but a week passed before I received the pictures.

“That is not nice,” Vicki said.

“That afternoon I received a phone call from them stating they would like to custom make a long beaver fur coat with hat for me for \$3,800 dollars, with free shipping.”

“They dropped the price!”

“Yes,” Carol replied, “The price was good. But the call came too late. I had already bought a coat. Do you understand what this company is like?”

“Their performance is not like thunder.”

“Correct,” replied Carol. “They are like a mountain. When we, the wind, blow to them, they stand still, not moving, even blocking us.”

“Did you get your coat from Macy’s.”

“Not Macy’s in Smith Haven Mall, but the one in Manhattan.”

“How did you know Macy’s in Manhattan had the beaver coat you wanted?”

“When I drove to Macy’s in Smith Haven Mall, I was very disappointed. All the fur coats there were made of mink. But the attitude of the saleslady was so great. She comforted me and made several calls for me. Finally, she found Macy’s in Manhattan, their biggest store, had beaver fur coats. She said she could order one for me, and have it shipped free to my home. However, I preferred to go to Macy’s in Manhattan, and try on the coat before buying it. So I drove to Macy’s in Manhattan and do you know what?”

“What?”

“I found a beaver fur coat that fit me just right. The length is below my knees, and shoulder, chest and sleeves fit me very well. The hat, a hood, lies on my shoulder like a shawl collar. Most interesting is, it’s my favorite color.”

“Well. Good for you.”

“The price was very good, as well. With 50% off the original price, which was \$5,995 and another 20% off from my coupon, plus tax, I paid only \$2,608.65.”

“That’s even cheaper than the offer from the Alaskan fur company.”

“So many exciting events come from Macy’s. Macy’s performs just like thunder. And that is what I believe: to run a successful business, the company must behave like thunder.”

“It makes sense,” agreed Vicki. “Apple Computer is also a success. Mac, Iphone, Ipad, etc. are so many loud explosions of thunder emitted from Apple.”

“There are so many computer makers in the world; all of them make black boxes

of laptops, but only Apple made the exception,” exclaims Carol. “Their Mac is so delicate, even its power socket is magnetic, helping users to easily connect their laptops to AC.”

“My son is a business man,” said Vicki. “I will tell him that the best strategy to run a business, is to behave like thunder.”

“Thunder is not the only option, as there are eight options. The other options are certainly not very bad, but they do require some improvements,” explained Carol. “For example, hexagram 6:3 is another option. Its title is Sincerity. That implies the company needs to be more sincere when dealing with customers. Even if the company behaves like a mountain, the corresponding hexagram is 1:3, titled Gradual, and the situation is not too bad for the company. The general text of hexagram 1:3 says:

The marriage is favorable to the lady.

Staying on the current course is beneficial.

In the text, the ‘lady’ refers to the company. The business might still benefit the company, but the progress might be very slow, the company needs to be ‘staying on the current course’ ”

“So,” said Vicki, “acting like thunder is the best option for the company, serving customers with more explorations, more discoveries, and more creations.”

“Yes,” said Carol. “It is true. However there is a predefined condition that the customers must be like the wind.”

“How do we achieve that?”

“Marketing. Investigate what the people want, and make sure people will come to buy like a strong wind during a thunderstorm, not a weak wind.”

“That makes sense,” said Vicki. “But I have a question. When trigram 3 is used for customers and trigram 4 is used for company, they can make two hexagrams. If we locate trigram 3 under trigram 4, we get hexagram 3:4. What is that?”

Carol: “It is the situation from the customer’s point of view. In this case, customers are the subject, while the company is the object. The hexagram shows how the customers should deal with the company.”

“Interesting.”

“The title of hexagram 3:4 is Persistence. That means if the company is like thunder, always exciting us with good products or nice service, we should do business with it persistently.”

To use Yi as a tool for making life strategies, remember to do the following three steps:

Find a trigram associated with an image which best fits with the situation of the others.

- *Select a complementary trigram for yourself.*
- *Pile the two trigrams up with your trigram beneath the trigram for others. Follow the instructions of its title and text.*

CHAPTER 3

Yin and Yang

WHEN MY FRIEND CARL SHOUTED angrily at his wife, Linda, she remained quiet and calm. Once his storm was over, he said to his wife, “I’m sorry I lost my temper. I love you.”

Linda waited until then to ask Carl, “Why did you do that?”

Even though she never learned about Yi, Linda naturally used the rule of harmony of yin and yang to keep her marriage stable. When her husband was verbally abusing her, she remained quiet. She used yin to deal with yang. When Carl apologized to her, he was in retreat and defensive; so, she took a yang action, asking him why he had been so angry, to shed light on their situation.

1 Instances of Yin and Yang

Understanding yin and yang is the gateway to understanding and using Yi. If you understand yin and yang, you will find that our complicated and perplexing world is, at its heart, quite simple.

No exact English translation exists for yin or for yang. The words should be directly imported from Chinese; otherwise, we risk losing the sense of their abstract, universal nature.

The Chinese people have no difficulty in comprehending and using the concepts of yin and yang in daily life. In Chinese, the sunny side of the mountain is called “shan yang,” and the shady side is called “shan yin.” The solar calendar is called “yang li,” and the lunar calendar is “yin li.” An introvert might be described as “very yin”; an extrovert is “yang.”

But the concept of yin and yang is confusing to Western people. Yin and yang were translated as darkness and brightness, yielding and firm, softness and hardness, female and male, evil and good. This is insufficient. Darkness, softness, femininity, and evil are particular instances of yin but not expressions of its entire meaning. Brightness, hardness, masculinity, and goodness can be aspects of yang, but are not synonyms for it.

Often people try to explain yin and yang in terms of paired opposites: night and day, winter and summer, cold and hot, female and male, defensive and offensive, software and hardware, conservative and creative, lower and upper,

evil and good, closed and open, inner and outer, negative and positive, back and forth, off and on, no and yes, minus and plus, etc. These pairs are instances of yin and yang, but their mutual exclusivity can be misleading. Opposite implies that the two qualities are in conflict with each other, and yin and yang are complementary to each other.

In a family, for instance, a husband is yang, and the wife is yin. If they are opposites, always in conflict, how can they live happily together?

Yin and Yang are Natural Complements

Yin may be used to represent the background of a sheet of paper while yang represents the black characters on that sheet, together they make the display of a text possible. When you take a shower, the hot water is yang, and the cold water is yin. You adjust the two taps to ensure that the water is a comfortable temperature for you. In a classroom, the teacher is yang, and the students are yin: a complementary give-and-take between teacher and students makes learning possible.

You may have heard that yang is positive, and yin is negative, but this is an oversimplification. Modesty, kindness, grace, and flexibility are positive traits, and they are instances of yin. And we think of arrogance, roughness, brutality, and stubbornness as negative characteristics, but they are representations of yang.

Most people reveal themselves as combinations of yin and yang personality traits that can be positive or negative. If you are hiring a new employee, you have to choose among the applicants. Let's say the first has little experience but is modest and willing to learn. The inexperience is a negative value and can be represented by yin; the modesty is a positive virtue and can also be considered yin. The second candidate is well-qualified but arrogant — the excellence in job performance, a positive quality, is yang, while the arrogance, a negative, is also yang. In this case, the better choice-yin or yang-depends upon the particulars of that job.

A very common misunderstanding is the assumption that yin is female and yang is male. This is only partially correct. A woman may be associated with yin when she gives birth and nurtures a child; but when a male drunk driver is caught by a female police officer, you cannot say that the male driver is yang and the female officer yin. In that scenario, the reverse is true: The female officer is yang because she is in a position of power, and the male drunk driver is yin because he has to yield to the commands of the female officer.

3 Definition of Yin and Yang

Of all the philosophies we humans have devised to grasp our existence, only Yi uses yin and yang by expressing them with trigrams. The Bible begins with heaven and earth, demonstrating that the ancient Western people also recognized these as two fundamental elements of their changing world.

Later Western thinkers, from Plato to Hegel, spoke in terms of opposites and developed dialectics to describe the states of “being” and “nonbeing.” They also mentioned “becoming” — the middle state between “being” and “nonbeing” — but very vaguely. Yi and only Yi elaborates and describes this middle plane of existence where most of us conduct our life.

The ancients noticed that between summer and winter, between night and day, interesting and important stages, such as autumn or sunrise, occurred. Looking for ways to combine the symbols for yin and yang that would also describe these vital in-between stages, they devised the trigrams and hexagrams of Yi.

The broken line (⚋) is a symbol of yin. The solid line (⚊) is a symbol of yang.

Yin is defined by Trigram 0 (☷), which defines yin as the nature of earth. (0 means there is no yang line in this trigram.) This trigram is a symbol of pure yin, consisting of three yin lines. The name of this trigram is Earth, or “Kun” in Chinese. We can understand that yin is a general abstract concept, representing the nature of earth. Since a mother nurses a baby, just as the earth nurtures all living things, the female nature is yin.

Hexagram 0:0 (䷁) — built by combining two Trigram 0s — is also titled “Kun.” The Yi text for this hexagram says: “It is better to stay on the current course like a docile mare.” This image of the gentle mare is useful to keep in mind while envisioning the nature of pure yin: like the earth nurturing living things, like a mother kindly and gently caring for a child.

Yang is defined by Trigram 7 (☰), consisting of three yang lines. (Seven means the highest possible amount of yang.) The name of this trigram is “Heaven” — in Chinese, “Qian” — which is also the name of Hexagram 7:7 (䷀), built by combining two trigrams of pure yang.

The character “Qian” appears in the Yi text twice for Hexagram 7:7, where it says, “The gentleman is qian qian all day,” suggesting that the gentlemen struggles all day, in the way heaven moves around the earth, ceaselessly and persistently. The text also repeatedly uses the image of a dragon to describe the nature of yang, beginning with “a hiding dragon” and “a dragon appearing in a field,” then “a dragon jumping out of an abyss,” and finally “a dragon flying in the sky.” When

you think of pure yang as the nature of heaven, envision a dragon expressing power, strength and mobility.

4 The nature of Yin and Yang

You probably realize now that the complementary concepts of yin and yang represent a natural balance — what the ancients saw as the eternal interaction between heaven and earth. This vital force, sometimes creating and sometimes destroying, was so crucial to their survival, that they used yang and yin to describe the elements necessary to achieve harmony, resolution, and peace. Even today the clearest way to experience the true nature of yin and yang is to regard them in terms of earth and heaven.

The ancient people of China sought explanations for the way their world changed. With sundials they observed the shortening and lengthening of days, and they noticed cycles in months and years. By studying this constant interplay between heaven and earth, they concluded that yang symbolized the characteristics of heaven, and yin symbolized aspects of earth. Heaven, they decided, is the donor of energy and strength, moving and active. Earth is the receptor of energy, nurturing living things, gentle, passive, and still.

These concepts of yin and yang may apply to all things, from nature to the human condition. For example, the day is yang because heaven is bright, and the night is yin because the earth does not generate light. Wealth is yang and poverty is yin because heaven is rich in energy and earth can get energy only from heaven. Arrogance is yang, and humility is yin because from the ancient people's perspective, heaven was in the top position and earth was below.

Heaven was important to these people for obvious reasons: it gave sunlight, water, and air. Earth was equally important, as the source of nourishment. Heaven and earth were the two supreme conditions of their survival. Through observation and experience, the ancients found parallels between the cycles of heaven and earth and the changes in their own life.

Watching the rising and setting of sun and stars, they saw heaven as moving around the earth. Based on this relationship, they concluded that heaven is dynamic and earth is static. Because heaven gives sunlight and earth receives it, yang gives and yin takes. Yang is active, and yin is passive.

Can you see this contrast between active yang and passive yin in everyday life? Of course. Trying to initiate or improve a friendship is yang; trying to withdraw from a relationship or alienate a friend is yin. Active communication is yang; isolation is yin. A creative attitude is yang, and a conservative attitude is yin.

Adventure is yang, caution is yin; revolution is yang, preservation is yin. Asking, inquiring, and researching are yang; answering, waiting, and pondering are yin.

Another defining difference between yin and yang has to do with position. Looking at heaven, a human being will suppose that heaven is higher than earth. So in society, a high position is yang, and a lower rank is yin. The boss is yang; a subordinate is yin. A high value or number is yang; a low one is yin. Arrogance is yang; humility is yin. Strength and domination are yang; flexibility and yielding are yin. The head is yang; the feet are yin.

One more basic difference between heaven and earth will help you categorize elements in your life as yin or yang. The heavens were a mystery to prehistoric people. Sunlight, clouds, vast spaces, the Sun, the Moon, and the stars were all so far away, no one could touch or measure them. Earth was more tangible to them. Mountains, lakes, fields, rivers, woods, animals, and all earthly things could be directly felt and measured. As a result, yang describes abstract aspects of life, and yin applies to the concrete. Emotions, thoughts, and dreams are yang; sensations, conversations, and experiences are yin. Watching a bird fly across the sky is yang; having a bird perch on your finger is yin.

The Rule of Harmony

So far you have learned how to define the concepts of yin and yang. But how do you recognize these forces at work in real-life situations? This is the key to everything you will learn in the rest of this book. Once you know how to conceptualize situations in terms of yin and yang, you will be able to use Yi to achieve harmony. Here are some examples:

When bananas were on sale, Bob bought three pounds. Now that bananas cost 68 cents per pound, he only buys a half a pound. Decreasing prices are yin, and increasing prices are yang. Bob benefited by purchasing more (yang) when prices were low, and buying less (yin) when the price of bananas rose. He answered yin with yang, and then yang with yin, harmonizing with the changes in his situation.

When the audience was sitting quietly (yin), Phyllis made a speech to explain her opinion. When someone raised his hand (yang), she stopped talking and listened carefully to the question. This balancing of yin with yang achieved harmony between the speaker and the audience.

Yin and yang have long been considered so powerful and mysterious, incorrectly depicted in legend as two epic polar forces or spirits, or two primal cosmic principles that determine destinies or fate. Yin and yang certainly play their part in great myths, but are also at work daily in the smallest details of life. Their



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THE POWER OF Yi

Yi was created 6,500 years ago. Around 500 B.C., Confucius and his disciples compiled ten commentaries on Zhou Yi, one of the branches of Yi.

In 200 A.D., Zhou Yi and the commentaries were combined into what is known today as “Yi Jing.” In 1924, Richard Wilhelm translated Yi Jing for the western audience, entitling it “I Ching” or *The Book of Changes*, which provides instruction on how to handle fifty narrow sticks for the purpose of divination.

In contrast to the common view of Yi being only a tool for divination, based on fifty years of research in science and Chinese classics, and through real-life situations, the author of *The Power of Yi* reveals how the philosophical values of Yi can be applied for living in harmony with yourself and others.



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