

Meditation, Divination and Dream Interpretation: Chan/Zen Buddhism, the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*), and Other Chinese Devices for Jungian Self-Realization

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Summary

As is well known, a distinctive feature of Carl G. Jung's approach to psychology is his "dialogue" or "interaction" with various Asian philosophies and texts, including those associated with the thought systems known generally as "Buddhism" and "Taoism" [aka Daoism]). Jung was, in the words of Stanislav Grof, willing "to enter the realm of the paradoxical, mysterious, and ineffable [which] included . . . an open-minded attitude towards the great Eastern spiritual philosophies [and works such as] the *I Ching*." (Grof 1985, 190) Of course, as J. J. Clarke has discussed at length in *Jung and Eastern Thought* (1994), Jung has often been accused of using unreliable translations and thus of misunderstanding Asian thought, causing a number of Western critics to accuse him of "defending all kinds of superstitions and dubious metaphysical beliefs." But are such criticisms justified or even relevant?

This paper argues that whatever the limitations of Jung's sources (and some of the translations he used were indeed flawed), his fundamental insight that "Eastern" ways of knowing have much to offer "Western" psychology in terms of both theory and practice, has an importance that goes well beyond the rather obvious need for a greater acceptance of philosophical diversity. Indeed, what an ever closer engagement with Asian philosophy reveals are a number of tools of understanding that enable a more substantial appreciation of the common ground of humanity, whether we call it the "collective unconscious" or simply "human nature." At the same time, this sort of engagement highlights important cultural differences. Clearly, in order to explore both the similarities and the differences in human experience, cross-cultural cooperation of the sort encouraged by this conference is absolutely essential.

My particular interest is in the way that three seemingly unrelated analytical instruments from the toolkit of traditional Chinese culture—namely, Chan (禪) Buddhist meditation texts, the *I Ching* (aka *Yijing* 易經 or *Zhou Changes* [*Zhouyi* 周易]), and works on dream divination (占夢)--can work together to help expand and perhaps clarify our understanding of certain fundamental human psychological processes, both conscious and unconscious. To be sure, in speaking of "free association," Jung notes that "one can reach the center from any point of the compass, from Cyrillic letters to "meditations upon a crystal ball, a prayer wheel, or a modern painting, or even from casual conversation about some quite trivial event." (Jung 1964, 26-27) But, as Jung himself recognized clearly, there is much to be said in favor of looking at Asian culture for instruments that yield insights into the human psyche.

Despite their differences, the three Chinese practices I have chosen to discuss today share several important characteristics: (1) each is centrally concerned with some form of self-knowledge and/or self-realization; (2) each emphasizes the power and potential of the mind 心 (*xin*); (3) each relies upon on symbolic systems and vocabularies that appear prominently in the form of written texts and operate dialectically between what is universal and what is culturally particular in human experience; (4) each emphasizes simplicity and directness, yet each also relies heavily on complexity and indirection or ambiguity (as well as paradox and/or outright contradiction) for its explanatory power; (5) each draws upon but also fundamentally challenges our “common sense”—that is the “givenness” of our world; and (6) in application, each often represents an amalgamation of elite and “folk” beliefs. As we look briefly at these time-honored techniques, we should keep in mind that well before psychology became a “science” anywhere, it was regularly practiced by clerics and diviners—and often practiced quite ably. We do a disservice to Chinese mantic practices if we simply label them “superstitions” (迷信), and fail to recognize their potential psychological and spiritual value.

I approach these three epistemological devices from the perspective of my past research on Chinese divination (*Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, 1991, and *Chinese Almanacs*, 1993), a more general book on Chinese culture (*China's Cultural Heritage*, 1994), and my present work on a two-volume study that focuses on the evolution and eventual “globalization” of the *Yijing* (forthcoming, University of Virginia Press). Because I am an historian of China, and have no training as an analytical psychologist, my goal at this conference is to learn more about how my textual material might be integrated into actual practice (or, at the very least, why it may not), for theory obviously invites completion through creative application. In short, as the Chinese would say, I am “casting out a brick [in the hope of] attracting jade” (*pao zhuan yin yu* 拋磚引玉).

## I.

I shall not spend much time on Chan/Zen Buddhism, since I see from the conference program that it is due to receive quite a bit of attention from other speakers. I would like simply to suggest a few ways that Chan practices might be used to achieve non-Chan goals,<sup>1</sup> and to call attention to some recent scholarship on Chan that I have found quite stimulating (esp., Faure 2004, Hershock 2005, Zong Desheng 2005, Jia Jinhua 2006, Looi, ed. 2006). In particular, I would like to focus on two Chan phrase books (*juji* 句集) that were compiled in the 20th century by Japanese scholars and that have recently been translated in a beautiful bilingual volume by Victor Sogen Hori, who has spent well over a decade in Chan monasteries in Japan. (Hori 2003) These works are collections of what Hori calls “capping phrases” (著語; Chinese: *zhuyu*; Japanese *jakugo*

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<sup>1</sup> By this I mean only that the insights to be gained from the Chan impulse to jar the mind loose from its conventional moorings need not be directed toward Buddhist “enlightenment” in order to have genuine spiritual/psychological value.

or 下語; ‘Chinese: *xiayu*; Japanese: *agyo*; also known in some circles as “expressions of praise” [Chinese: *song*; Japanese: *ju* 頌]).

Capping phrases, which vary in length from four to about twenty characters, are short commentaries written in classical Chinese and appended to a critical segment of writing (話頭) derived from a longer *koan* 公案 (lit., “public case;” pronounced as *gong’an* in Chinese, but best known in the West by its Japanese pronunciation, *koan*) or some other Chan text. Capping phrases are drawn from every branch of traditional Chinese literature, from the Confucian and Daoist canon to various kinds of poetry, and they employ a vocabulary rich in visual imagery and literary allusions. (See, for example, Zhang Bowei 1996 on Chan Buddhism and Chinese poetics) Yet they can also be vulgar, irreverent and seemingly unlearned. Their most important feature for our purposes is that, instead of reflecting the third-person stance of a detached commentator, they assume “the first-person stance of an involved participant in the koan.” (Hori 2003, 43-45) They are thus performative utterances, designed to allow the “commentator” to become, quite literally, part of the koan “conversation.” (For an excellent example, too long to cite in this paper, see Hori 2003, 36). The goal, then, is similar to the Chan practice of meditating on a critical phrase in order to trace it back to its source, thus enabling the practitioner to “see with the same eye and hear with the same ear” (同一眼見同一耳聞) as the patriarchs of old. (Ibid., 60)

According to a well-known Japanese Chan dictionary (the *Zengaku daijiten* 禪學大辭典), Chinese capping phrases were originally designed as an assignment for monks—a means by which those in the more advanced stages of their training, after meditating on a *koan*, could employ their “eye-for the-essential” (the so-called “awakened eye”) in order to “assess and praise the words and actions of the ancients,” or to substitute their own rendering of the core meaning, “freely manipulating the dynamic of life and death.” (cited in Hori 2003, 30) From the standpoint of the Chan master, the choice of a capping phrase provided a means by which to confirm a monk’s insight into a given *koan*. But the phrase might also lead to a new insight, thus illuminating or amplifying in important ways the original *koan*. In this sense, the capping phrase itself can serve the same function as a *koan*.

This function, as Hori reminds us, is not to grasp the meaning of the koan “intellectually,” but to experience it “as the seeking mind itself.” This entails “realization” in two senses of the term:

By making real, i.e., by actually *becoming* an example of, the nonduality of subject and object, the practitioner also realizes, i.e., *cognitively understands*, the koan. The realization of understanding depends on the realization of making actual. This realizational account of the koan solves several problems. On the one hand, it helps explain how the solution to a koan requires the personal experience of “the sound of one hand [clapping]” or of “one’s original face [before the father and mother were born].” On the other, it allows us to see the koan not merely as a blunt and meaningless instrument, useful only as a means to some further end, but

as possessed of a meaningful content of its own which can be apprehended intellectually. (Hori 2003, 8-9)

Hori wants to have it both ways, and I think he can. For although Chan Buddhism is famous for “not being founded on words and letters,” and on the idea of “mind to mind transmission” (以心傳心), in practice, language has long been a meaningful—if not an essential—vehicle for communication in Chan Buddhist communities, at least for advanced students. As Donald Lopez points out, the common view that “the enlightenment experience and the ultimate truth grasped by that experience may be beyond the reach of words” is true only when words are used “in the most trite and vulgar manner—that is, when words are employed as if they were labels attached to already existing objects outside language.” (Lopez ed., 2003, 297)

Zong Desheng’s 2005 article, titled “Three Language-Related Methods in Early Chinese Chan Buddhism,” examines some of the ways that “words and letters” have been used by Chan practitioners in the past. He characterizes these methods as: (1) the “Bodhidharma” approach, (2) the “Four Ways of Using Sentences [ju, 句] and Creating Understandings [yi, 意]” approach, and (3) “The Naming Game.”

The first involves a student asking about the nature or characteristics of a certain object and having the master ask the student to bring or show him that object, which the student cannot do. Take, for instance, the following well-known exchange:

Huike: My mind is not at peace. I beg the master to pacify it for me.

Bodhidharma: Bring me your mind and I will pacify it for you.

Huike: I tried but was unable to find it

Bodhidharma: I’m done pacifying your mind for you (Zong, 2005, 584)

Here, the emphasis is on reconceptualization or deconceptualization—a reminder “not to mistake the finger for the moon” (以指指月指非月)

The second approach focuses on writing, but it has a similar purpose. In the biography of Yexian Guisheng (665-713), we read that the Chan master told his students:

There are four [learning] situations you need to know about: There is the case of *ju* arriving but *yi* failing to show up. This refers to a situation where imagined things are taken to be real and false distinctions are made on that very ground. There is the case where *yi* is there but *ju* fails to arrive. This refers to a situation where what is talked about is not unreal, but different people are focusing on different aspects of the thing [so they end up talking past each other]. There is the case where both *ju* and *yi* arrive. When this happens, great illumination is produced, breaking the vast empty space. Finally there is the case where both *ju* and *yi* fail to arrive. We may liken this to the case of a blind man striding haphazardly ahead and falling in a deep pit. (Zong, 2005, 591-596)

Here, the important goal, reflected in the third case, is to harmonize utterances and understandings, so that what one believes reflects how one *should* believe—so that

descriptions that point to “awakening” are not confused with the experience of awakening itself. (Cf. Hori 2003, 3)

The third approach focuses on the relationship between a name and the thing that is named. In a famous example adduced by Zong, a Chan master folds his finger and declares: “I call this a fist.” He then asks his students what they would call it, but before they can answer, he holds up his hands in the way that a Buddhist monk does when he departs, and takes his leave. (Zong, 2005, 596-598) The point here is that without a fixed context, there can be no fixed answer. It should be called a fist because it is a fist, but it should not be called a fist because it can be something else as well (a hand with fingers folded, the representation of the head of an animal, etc.). This reveals the Chan idea that “everything that has a name is subject to limitations” (若有名字皆屬限量). Hence, such divergent formulations as: “Your own mind—this is Buddha” (自心是佛); “Seeing your own nature is becoming Buddha” (見性成佛); and “This is not mind, this is not Buddha, this is not a thing” (不是心不是佛不是物). (Dumoulin, 55)

From a Chan standpoint, then, verbal and/or textual communication has genuine value, but only when used by people who have shared its experience—those who “know the music” (知音), to use the common Chinese idiom. Viewed in this light, collections of capping phrases are essentially expressions of Chan awakening in language. Although it is true that “awakening” can only be realized personally, it is also true that in order to convey that process of awakening to others, language must be used. (See the discussion in Hori 2003, 9-15)

One of the many virtues of capping phrases as a means of encouraging or facilitating insight and awakening is their striking metaphorical language. Clearly the expression “One sword [cuts an object into] one piece” (一刀一段), like the expression “dividing nothing into two,” expresses the notion of non-dualistic discrimination much more powerfully than a dry technical discussion of non-duality possibly could. Likewise, a literary way of saying that in the no-self (無自我) of Chan, “the vicissitudes of everyday life are lived through effortlessly” might be:

“Putting on his boots, the stone man [puppet] went away at midnight, Wearing her bonnet, the stone woman [barren wife] returned at dawn.” 木人夜半穿靴去石女天明戴帽歸 (Hori 2003, 46, slightly modified)

Below, are just a few of the more than 3,000 capping phrases translated (and sometimes discussed at length) by Hori. I have limited myself to four-character expressions in the interest of time and space alone.

A mute is savoring honey (啞子喫蜜)  
 On a dark night listening to the frost (暗夜聞霜)  
 With one verdict, he declares everyone guilty (一狀領過)  
 One word says it all (一句道著)  
 Riding an ox in search of an ox (騎牛求牛)

The oyster [lit. sea clam] swallows the moonlight (海蠔含月)  
 Use shrimps as eyes (以蝦為目)  
 Slash the eyeballs (刺破眼睛)  
 Push open emptiness and listen to the sound (推空聽響)  
 The more the medicine the worse the sickness (藥多病甚)  
 He's lost his head, he believes in reflections (迷頭認影)  
 Chew emptiness to pieces (咬破虛空)  
 To think of it—is it (思之在之)

## II.

The challenge of Chan, both to intellect and intuition, is also a prominent feature of *Yijing* (*I Ching*) consultation. For just as a Chan master “assigns” a given *koan* to his students, so the selection of a hexagram—whether by divination or by some other means—presents the person consulting the work with a “problem” for which the solution is never immediately apparent. Often, as in Chan, the task revolves around the “resolution of doubts” (決疑).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as with Chan monks in their contemplation of *koans*, students confronting the three-thousand year old “basic text” (本文 or 本經) of the *Changes* find it necessary to rely not only on their own mental resources and personal experiences, but also on various other types of guidance and/or inspiration, often in the form of written commentaries. In each case, the cryptic basic text opens up a broad range of philosophical and psychological possibilities, reflected in the “images” (*xiang* 象) that are generated in the process of consultation.<sup>3</sup>

The metaphysical assumptions of the *Yijing* can be briefly stated: (1) The book duplicates relationships and processes at work in the realm of Heaven-and-Earth; (2) these relationships and processes are knowable, since the mind of Heaven and the mind of Man are considered one (天人合一); and (3) as a reflection of the cosmic Way (*Dao*), the *Yijing* provides guidance for proper conduct in the present and for the future. But one need not accept the *Yijing*'s metaphysics to find spiritual and/or psychological

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<sup>2</sup> The Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) monk Zhiche 智徹 wrote a work titled *A Collection on Resolving Doubt in the Chan Lineage* (*Chanjong jueyi ji* 禪宗決疑集), in which he stressed the importance of doubt as a unique Chan approach to meditation and enlightenment. For a brief discussion of "doubt" as a motivating force in Chan-style "self-effort, self-investigation and self-realization," see Hsieh 2005.

<sup>3</sup> The term "image" (also rendered "figure" or "emblem") in the *Yijing* refers to both "representations" and "concepts"--that is, not only likenesses of things that are embodied in nature (physical objects, like mountains, bodies of water, the sun, the moon, and the stars), but also ideas that can be grasped, positions that can be determined, situations that can be identified, and processes that can be discerned.

value in the document.<sup>4</sup>

The basic text of the *Changes*, which underwent considerable evolution in the pre-imperial era (up to 221 B.C.), consists of a series of sixty-four six-line symbols known as hexagrams 卦 (*gua*), each comprised of two three-line trigrams (also 卦). Every hexagram has a name 卦名 (*guaming*) that refers to a physical object, an activity, a state, a situation, a quality, an emotion, or a relationship; thus: Ding 鼎 (“Cauldron”), Dun 遯 (“Retreat”), Meng 蒙 (“Youthful Ignorance”), Yu 豫 (“Enthusiasm”), Song 訟 (“Conflict”), Tongren 同人 (“Human Fellowship”) and so forth. In addition, each hexagram possesses a short, cryptic description of several words, called a “judgment” (*tuan* 彖爻 or *guaci* 卦辭), and a brief written interpretation for each line of each hexagram 爻辭 (*yaoci*), usually viewed developmentally, from the bottom up. These descriptions and interpretations have been drawn from a wide variety of sources: peasant omens, rhymed proverbs, riddles and paradoxes, and fragments of story and song drawn from popular lore (oral history) as well as elite literary traditions.

For an example of the way a single hexagram might be employed and interpreted, either in the course of divination or in the process of self-study, let us discuss briefly, and from the standpoint of its historical “evolution,” Gen 艮 (#52 in the received order; #9 in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 sequence)--variously translated as Mountain, Restraint, Keeping Still, Bound, Stabilizing, Limited, Immobile, Steadiness, etc. (See the appendix titled “Hexagram Names” at <http://www.aasianst.org/ea/smith.htm>) I have chosen this hexagram in part because a considerable number of Chinese scholars in the past have considered it to capture the essence of the *Yijing*, and also because it seems to have had such wide appeal—not only to Confucians, but to Buddhists and Daoists as well.

Here is what one early Zhou dynasty (c. 800 B.C.E.) understanding of the Judgment and the individual line statements (reading from the bottom up) of Gen might have been:

Judgment: If one cleaves [here *gen* apparently serves as a loan word for *ken* 墾 “to open up”] the back [of a sacrificial victim] he will not get hold of the womb

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<sup>4</sup> Serious study of the *Yijing* is no longer the monopoly of China specialists. Thanks to a spate of recent translations of the *Changes* by scholarly associations such as the Groupe de travail du Centre Djohi (1994), and individuals such as Richard Kunst (1985), Richard John Lynn (1994), Wang Dongliang (1995), Richard Rutt (1996), Edward Shaughnessy (1998), and others, as well as to the ongoing efforts of dedicated and talented researchers both East and West, we now have enough high-quality *Yi*-related books and articles in Western languages to enable non-specialist scholars and students to do interesting, broad-ranging and solid work on the *Changes* without having to read Chinese or Japanese. Of particular value for research is a broad-ranging reference work by Professor Bent Nielsen, titled *Companion to Yi jing Numerology and Cosmology* (2003), which is far more intellectually sophisticated and stimulating than its title might suggest.

[lit. person]; if one goes into the courtyard he will not see the person. There will be no misfortune. (艮其背不獲其身行其庭不見人无咎)

Line 1: Cleave the feet. There will be no misfortune. Favorable in a long-range determination. (艮其趾无咎利永貞)

Line 2: Cleave the lower legs, but don't remove the bone marrow. His heart is not pleased. (艮其腓不拯其隨其心不快)

Line 3: Cleave the waist, rend the spinal meat. It is threatening. Smoke the heart. (艮其限列其夤厲薰心)

Line 4: Cleave the torso [lit. body; the Mawangdui manuscript has the character *gong* (身 plus 宮) instead of *shen*, which is a better reading]. There will be no misfortune. (艮其身无咎)

Line 5: Cleave the jaw. Talk will be orderly. Troubles will go away. (艮其輔言有序悔亡)

Line 6: Cleave thickly. Auspicious. (敦艮吉) (Cf. Kunst 1985, 342-343)

Another possible meaning of *gen* in this particular hexagram is “to glare at,” which would, of course, fundamentally change the meaning of each line. (See Shaughnessy 1983, 121-122) In either case, the interpretive possibilities of even this rudimentary text are quite rich.

By the early Han dynasty (2nd century B.C.E.), if not well before, two other quite different meanings of *Gen* had emerged, both of which continued to be associated with *Yijing* exegesis for the next two thousand years or so. One was “to make still.” (See, for example, Shaughnessy 1996, 54-55) The other was “to restrain.” (Lynn 1994, 466-470) Here is one prominent (and enduring) Han dynasty understanding of the text, amplified by the *Commentary on the Judgments* (彖傳), one of ten so-called “wings” (十翼) that together were officially added to the *Yijing* in 136 B.C.E.:

Judgment: Restraint [or Stilling] takes place with the back, so one does not obtain the other person. He goes into that one's courtyard but does not see him there. There is no blame. (As above: 艮其背不獲其身行其庭不見人无咎)

Commentary on the Judgments: *Gen* means “stop.” When it is time to stop, one should stop; when it is time to act, one should act. If in one's activity and repose he is not out of step with the times, his *Dao* should be glorious and bright. Let Restraint [or Stilling] operate where restraint [or stilling] should take place, that is, let the restraining [or stilling] be done in its proper place. Those above and those below stand in reciprocal opposition to each other and so they do not get along. This is the reason why, although “one does not obtain the other person,” and “one goes into one's courtyard but does not see him there,” “there is no blame.” (艮止也時止則止時行則行動靜不失其時其道光明艮其止止其所也上下敵應不相與也是以不獲其身行其庭不見其人无咎也) (Cf. Lynn 1994, 467)

Another one of the Ten Wings, a commentary known as *Explaining the Trigrams* (*Shuogua* 說卦), not only provided a means by which all sixty-four hexagrams could be



understood in terms of the relationship between their two constituent trigrams, but it also amplified the symbolic repertoire of each of the eight hexagrams that were formed by doubling the same trigram. Hence both the trigram Gen and the hexagram Gen could be understood in terms of the following qualities, characteristics and phenomena:

1. It is by Gen [that things] are made to stop. (艮以止之)
2. “[The Lord on High, Di or Shangdi causes things to] reach final maturity in Gen.” ([帝] 成言乎艮)
4. “Gen is the trigram of the northeast. It is here that the myriad things reach the end of their development, but it is also the beginning of that development.” (艮東北之卦也萬物之所成終而所成始也)
5. “[From the standpoint of providing] the myriad things with ends and beginnings, none is more resourceful than Gen. . . . This is why Mountain [Gen] and Lake [Dui] reciprocally circulate. Only in consequence of this can change and transformation take place, thus allowing the myriad things to be all that they can be.” (終萬物始萬物者莫盛乎艮. . . . 山澤通氣然后能變化既成萬物也)
6. “Gen means cessation 艮止也, . . . It is [i.e. has the nature of] a dog 艮為狗, . . . [and] is [works like] the hand 艮為手. . . . [It] is the mountain, the footpath, the small stone, the gate tower, the tree fruit and vine fruit, the gate keeper and the palace guard, the fingers, the dog, the rat, the black maw of species [of birds and beasts of prey], and with respect to trees, it is the kind that is sturdy and much gnarled 艮為山為徑路為小石為門闕為果\_\_為閹寺為指為狗為鼠為黔喙之屬其於木也為堅多節.”
7. [Gen] is the “Youngest Son” 少男 (Cf. Lynn 1994, 120-124)

During the Han dynasty, a number of enterprising scholars, ending with the extraordinarily inventive Yu Fan 虞翻 (164-233), vastly increased the interpretive possibilities of *Yijing* symbolism by introducing concepts such as “interlaced trigrams” (*hugua* 互卦 or *huti* 互體, designated “nuclear trigrams” in Wilhelm’s translation of the *I Ching*), “ascent and descent” (*shenjiang* 升降), “lateral [hexagram] linkages (*pangtong* 旁通) and especially “lost images” (*yixiang* 逸象). In the hands of Yu and like-minded individuals, *Gen* came to represent a total of seventy-two phenomena, qualities, or activities, from “cave dwellings” 穴居, to “thickness” 厚, to “the grasping of a pestle” (持杵). Many, but not all, of these images appear to have been derived from the associations listed in the *Explaining the Trigrams* commentary. (Li Yixin, ed. 2003, 887-910, passim; see also Nielsen 2003, 6-11, 111-114, 204-208, 308, and Nielsen forthcoming)

In subsequent centuries, ever more additions were made to the symbolic repertoire of the *Yijing*. Confucians, Daoists and Buddhists alike invoked the Gen hexagram in discussing matters related to timing, movement and stillness, and moral cultivation. Among early neo-Confucians, Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077) believed that the Gen hexagram captured the very essence of the *Changes*, and Buddhist thinkers, for their part, saw in it a succinct summary of the overarching importance of controlling one’s mind (See, for example, Wang Zhongyao 2003, 389-391). Syncretists such as Yang Jian 楊簡

(1141-1226) drew heavily upon both the Judgment and the Commentary on the Judgments of Gen to argue for a Chan-like meditative practice—one designed to eliminate distractions by the discovery of a place between repose and activity where “one sees but is not carried away by appearances, and one hears, but is not carried away by sounds” 目雖視而不流於色也耳雖聽而不流於聲也. In *Mr. Yang’s Commentary on the Changes* 楊氏易傳 (*Yangshi Yizhuan*) we are told:

One who is skilled in repose [i.e. “stopping” or “stilling”] acts, and one who is skilled in activity rests. One who knows how to rest but does not act, does not really know how to rest. One who knows how to act but does not know how to rest, does not really know how to act. One who knows the inseparability of rest and action, but is not yet able to attain each at its appropriate time, has not yet become enlightened [lit. “glorious and bright,” as above]. 善止者行善行者止知止而不行者 實不知止知行而不知止者實不知行知行止之非二而未能一一皆當其時猶未為光明

And again:

When a person’s attention [lit. spirit] is completely focused on his face [the surface level of awareness], and not his back [the deeper levels of awareness], on what is in front rather than what is behind, then he is moved by thoughts and he chases after things, losing his own fundamental nature, which is silently motionless. Thus the sage teaches him to “keep still his back,” and cause that which he faces, and that which his ears, eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet are involved in, to become [integrated as] one. 人精神盡在乎面不在乎背盡在乎前不在乎後凡此皆動乎意遂乎物失吾本有寂然不動之性故聖人教之曰良其背使其面之所向耳目鼻口手足之所為一 (Ji Yun et al. 1987, 14: 178-179; cf. Lynn 1994, 471-472 note 4)

In short, the great virtue of the *Yijing* is that it can serve so many purposes and speak to so many interests and concerns. It has, quite literally, something for everyone—at least for all those who are willing to accept its challenges. According to the editors of China’s most important literary compilation, the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries; 1782), interpreting the *Book of Changes* is like playing Chinese chess (圍棋): no two games are alike, and there are thus infinite interpretive possibilities. (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao bianwei hui*, 1999, 30 [4: 25a]). At the same time, however, what the *Yijing* yields can be no greater than what the individual consulting it contributes to the process. For those who take the *Changes* seriously, and approach it with intellectual depth and psychological insight, the text proves to be profoundly stimulating and endlessly provocative. But for those of a shallower intellectual or psychological disposition, the rewards may not be so substantial.

For more than two thousand years the *Yijing* has challenged and absorbed the greatest minds of China (and those of several other East Asian cultures for a somewhat shorter period), providing guidance to rulers and officials, encouraging careful contemplation and insightful scholarship on the part of intellectuals, and inspiring

creativity in virtually every realm of culture, from art, architecture, literature and music, to mathematics, science, medicine and technology. (see Smith 1991, chapter 3; also Smith 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, and forthcoming) Thus, the great Qing dynasty scholar, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695) states simply that “The nine traditions of philosophy and the hundred schools of thought have all drawn upon [the *Yijing*] to promote their [respective] theories. 九流百家借之以行其說 (Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao bianwei hui 1999, *Jingbu* 經部, *Yilei* 易類, 35 [6:10a]) Perhaps it is time for the field of analytical psychology to contribute more substantially to this historical process.

### III.

In my remaining time, I would like to give some attention to traditional-style Chinese dream analysis, which, like Chan Buddhism and the use of the *Yijing*, places great emphasis on words and phrases, and is designed, in a sense, to “resolve doubts.” As with consultation of the *Changes*, dream interpretation in China boasts a long and distinguished pedigree, beginning in the Shang dynasty, more than three thousand years ago. Several works in the Confucian canon are rich in dream accounts, including the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry), the *Liji* 禮記 (Record of Ritual), the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Rituals of Zhou), and the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Commentary of Mr. Zuo). Virtually all of the early Daoist philosophers contributed significantly to the literature on dreams in China, and even scholar-sceptics such as Wang Chong 王充 (27-c. 100 C.E.) and Wang Fu 王符 (90-165 C.E.) had much to say about dream divination (in which, incidentally, both believed). By the Six Dynasties period (220-589), the authors of Religious Daoist and Buddhist texts had begun to include dream stories in them, and by late imperial times a great number of Chinese works on dream interpretation circulated—some of them written by women. (see Chen 1995, Huang 1998, Liu Wenying 1989 and 1996, Smith 1991, chapter 6, Yao 1994, etc.)

One prevalent view of dreams in China was that they arose from what one thought about during the day—particularly things that were the source of anxiety. Naturally enough, then, preoccupation with the examinations, official careers, producing sons, health, and so forth led people to dream about these subjects. The compendium known as the *Qingbai leichao* 清稗類鈔 (Classified Anecdotes from the Qing Period) contains numerous accounts illustrating this sort of connection. (see Xu Ke, 1928: *mixin* [迷信], 75, 79, 80, 84, 86, 87, 95, 96, 106, 119, 120; also also *fangji* [方技]: 21, 48, 80, etc.) The time that a dream occurred was also considered significant. According to some traditional Chinese dreamworks, if a night vision takes place before midnight, the event indicated will be in the distant future; if it takes place after midnight, the event will be in the near future. Most Chinese, following Wang Fu (as well as traditional medical authorities), believed that one’s physical condition, the weather, and seasonal factors all influenced the nature and specific content of dreams.

In imperial China, people often “prayed for dreams” (*qimeng* 祈夢) in religious temples, spending the night in hopes of receiving clues to the future. Qing dynasty (1644-

1912) accounts of dream incubation centers abound. Of the literally dozens of stories of dream divination contained in the *Qingbai leichao*, no less than ten focus on temple dreams obtained by means of prayers. (Xu Ke, 1928: *mixin* [迷信], 75 ff)

The most popular work on dream interpretation in China has long been the *Zhougong jiemeng* 周公解夢 (The Duke of Zhou's Explanation of Dreams), the origins of which date no later than the Tang dynasty (618-907). It consists of a certain number of fixed interpretations of presumably common dreams, each reduced to a pithy seven-character phrase. The central idea of this work is that all one needs to interpret a dream is its main motif; one event, image or set of images constitutes the decisive omen. But the explanations of these interpretations are often far from simple.

Although the origins of the *Zhougong jiemeng* are somewhat uncertain, the work plainly draws upon a wide variety of sources that include not only ancient classics, histories and early dream books but also more recent vernacular writings, including those of the Tang, Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) periods. (For a complete translation of a Tang edition [新集周公解夢書], see Liu 1996, 515-533; cf. the Chinese text in Liu 1989, 344-352). By Ming times (1368-1644) at the latest, the book had already become quite influential; and during the Qing period, several editions circulated—often in popular almanacs 通書 (*tongshu*). (See Smith 1992a; cf. Nongli wang, n.d.)

The most extensive version of this work—the *Zhougong jiemeng quanshu* 周公解夢全書 (The Complete Book of the Duke of Zhou's Explanation of Dreams)—consists of nearly one thousand seven-character dream interpretations. (For an on-line version in Chinese, see <http://hk.geocities.com/lawrence8828/>; I am not aware of an English translation of this work.)

The *Zhougong jiemeng quanshu* divides dreams into a number of overlapping categories. These include: (1) the cosmos 天地日月星辰 (heaven, earth, the sun, moon, stars, planets, etc.; 64 entries); (2) terrestrial phenomena 地理山石樹木 (mountains, rocks, plants and trees; 56 entries); (3) the body 身體面目齒髮 (including face, eyes, teeth and hair; 30 entries); (4) clothing 冠帶衣服鞋襪 (caps, robes, shoes, etc.; 50 entries); (5) 刀劍旌節鐘鼓 (items such as knives, swords, banners, bells and drums; 40 entries); (6) administration 帝王文武呼召 (rulers, civil and military officials, orders, etc.; 28 entries); (7) buildings 富室屋宇倉庫 (palaces, houses, granaries, etc.; 52 entries); (8) domestic structures 門戶井灶廚廁 (gates, doors, stoves, wells, and privies; 52 entries); (9) precious items 金銀珠玉絹帛 (gold, silver, pearls, jade and silk; 28 entries); (10) toiletries 鏡環釵釧梳篦 (including mirrors, bracelets, hairpins and combs; 24 entries); (11) household items 衣帳毯褥匙櫥 (bedding, carpeting, and utensils; 58 entries); (12) 船車遊行物件 (transportation vehicles such as boats and carts; 32 entries); (13) 道路橋梁市集 (roads, bridges and marketplaces; 16 entries); (14) married life 夫妻產孕交權 (husbands, wives, pregnancy, etc.; 24 entries); (15) food and drink 飲食酒肉瓜菜 (meat, wine, fruit, etc.; 40 entries); (16) matters related to burial 塚墓棺槨迎送 (cemeteries, graves, coffins, etc.; 14 entries); (17) 文書筆硯兵器 writing

materials and weaponry; 40 entries); (18) 哀樂病死歌唱 happy and sad occasions (particularly involving music or singing; 30 entries); (19) religion 佛道僧尼鬼神 (Buddhism, Daoism, monks, priests, nuns, ghosts and spirits; 20 entries); (20) harmful activities 被害鬥傷打罵 (killing, fighting, wounding and cursing; 36 entries); (21) criminality 捕禁刑罰獄具 (arrests and punishments; 28 entries); (22) 田園五穀耕種 fields, orchards, gardens and agriculture; 32 entries); (23) 水火盜賊燈燭 water, fire, lamps, bandits and rebels; 36 entries); (24) 垢污沐浴凌辱 filth and cleansing; 16 entries); (25) 龍蛇禽獸等類 dragons, snakes and wild animals; 68 entries); (26) 牛馬豬羊六畜 farm and domestic animals; 32 entries); and (27) 龜鱉魚蝦昆蟲 tortoises, fish, shrimp, and insects; 38 entries).

A few entries from section one will illustrate the style of the work: “When [one dreams that] the gate of Heaven opens, an illustrious person will make recommendations and introductions [on the dreamer’s behalf].” 天門開貴人薦引. “When heavenly light shines, illness will be eradicated.” 天光照主疾病除 “When the skies are clear and rain has dissipated, all worries will disappear.” 天晴雨散百憂去 “When the sky brightens, a woman will bear an illustrious son.” 天明婦人生貴子 “When the gate of Heaven turns red, there will be a great beginning.” 天門赤主有大起 “When one’s face turns upward toward Heaven there will be great wealth and honor.” 仰面向天大富貴 “When one rides a dragon up to Heaven, great honor will follow.” 乘龍上天大主貴 “Ascending to Heaven in search of a wife signifies illustrious sons and daughters.” 上天求妻兒女貴

Not all entries in the *Zhougong jiemeng quanshu* are positive, however. Indeed, about a third of the total number of entries in the massive dreamwork have decidedly negative connotations. For instance, in the section just cited we find: “If Heaven splits open, there will be the sorrow of a divided nation.” 天裂有分國之憂 “If the sun or moon descends from the sky, a parent will die.” 日月落憂沒父母 “If the sun or moon is obscured by a mountain, servants will cheat their master.” 日月啣山奴欺主 “If a star descends from heaven, there will be illness and lawsuits.” 星落有病及官事

It is difficult to find a consistent principle at work in the interpretation of Chinese dreams. In the first place, as the Ming dynasty treatise *Mengzhan yizhi* 夢占逸旨 (An Easy Guide to Dream Interpretation) and other such sources point out, different types of people have different kinds of dreams. In the traditional Chinese view, status differences affected dreams, as did other personal factors, including individual destiny. Thus, when unlucky people have propitious dreams, they do not necessarily turn out well; and by the same token, lucky people who have unlucky dreams may not encounter any misfortune. (Smith 1991, 251)

Word analysis (*chaizi* 拆字; lit., “the dissection of characters;” also known as “fathoming characters,” *cezi* 測字) has long played a significant role in Chinese dream divination, as it has in several other forms of Chinese divination. (On the pervasiveness of the practice, see Yang and Song, 1992) For example, Zhang Ying 張英 (1638-1708), who became a high-ranking official and close associate of the Kangxi 康熙 emperor,

went to the Guandi temple 關帝廟 outside the city gates of Beijing in order to seek dream-inspired information about having sons, since at that time he had none. In this dream, Guandi gave Zhang a bamboo pole (*gan* 竿) that had no leaves or branches on it. Zhang was quite disappointed, since the lack of any offshoots seemed to indicate no progeny. But a dream interpreter explained that the meaning of this episode was in fact quite propitious. The bamboo (*zhu* 竹) represented two sons, he said, for when the character *zhu* was “split” according to the methods of word analysis, it yielded two numeratives of sons (*ge nanzi* 個男子). (Xu Ke 1928, *mixin*, 79.)

Some of the dream interpretations offered in the *Zhougong jiemeng* would seem to be at least plausible in almost any culture. One might assume, for example, that the positive imagery of a rising sun or new vegetation, like the negative connotations of storms and damaged property, would resonate in most societies, past and present. Many cultures could also probably accept as plausible the notion that a dream on the part of an anxious husband, in which a gate opens on its own, might symbolize his wife’s infidelity (門自開妻有私情). But the vast majority of images and interpretations contained in the *Zhougong jiemeng* are quite specific to Chinese tradition, raising the question of how appropriate they might be to the interpretations of dreams in the West. My own view is that at the very least, like Chan koans and the cryptic line statements of the *Yijing*, the sometimes jarring imagery of Chinese dreamworks such as the *Zhougong jiemeng* may prove to be productively unsettling.

In some respects, the analogical logic of the *Zhougong jiemeng* is quite straightforward. Books are equated with high social position, since status is what successful scholars in imperial China could reasonably expect from their literary pursuits. Virtually every reference to books, paper and writing in the *Zhougong jiemeng* is positive. The main hall 堂 (*tang*) in Chinese dream lore often refers to one’s parents, an association derived from domestic imagery as well as common family terminology. The message, however, could be either encouraging or discouraging, depending on the specific situation. Going up into a high hall, for example, indicates the arrival of wealth and status (上高堂大富貴至), but a dream in which the floor of the main hall collapses signifies that the head of the household will meet with misfortune (正堂倒陷家主凶). And even so seemingly positive an image as consulting the hallowed *Yijing* might not auger well. The one reference to it in the *Zhougong jiemeng* associates it unambiguously with illness (就人卜易主疾病).

A distinctive principle of Chinese dream interpretation is that the meaning of a dream can often be diametrically opposed to what one might assume to be its “manifest” content. This explains, for example, why good fortune can arise from a dream about being covered with urine and feces (屎尿污人大吉亨). Although I have examined a large body of Chinese dream literature, including the writings of Wang Fu on “paradoxical dreams” (反夢) in his *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 (Discourses of a Recluse), I have not been able to find a consistent principle for applying this type of oppositional interpretation.

Clearly, however, much of traditional Chinese cultural logic revolves around this sort of transformative mentality. I am thinking not only of of *yinyang* (陰陽) alternation, as expressed in philosophy and aesthetics, but also of the use of implicit puns, such as *dao* 倒 (to turn over) for *dao* 到 (to arrive), which explains why in many Chinese households the characters for spring 春 (*chun*) or blessings 福 (*fu*) are pasted upside down. There are also, of course, popular expressions such as *pi ji ze tai* 否極則泰 (when things are as bad as they can get, they begin to improve), which are drawn from two related but opposite hexagrams of the *Yijing*.

Although the *Zhougong jiemeng* does not usually specify the gender of the dreamer, it seems to have been written primarily from a male point of view. Much of the symbolism is dominated by traditionally masculine images. Thus, the dragon 龍 (*long*) appears about four times more often in the text than its female counterpart, the so-called phoenix 鳳凰 (*fenghuang*). In the *Zhougong jiemeng*, as in the rest of traditional Chinese literature, dragons have very positive connotations, whether waking or sleeping, flying or at rest. Riding a dragon into the sky, up a mountain, into a marketplace, or into the water (unless it is a well) indicates good fortune in various forms (e.g. 乘龍入水有貴位). Conversely, the death of a dragon in a dream indicates a loss of high position (龍死亡主失貴位). Likewise, the tiger (虎), king of Chinese land beasts and the symbol of Chinese scholar-officials, is also almost invariably a good omen: “If [one dreams] of a fierce tiger roaring, one will get official rank.” (猛虎大吼主得官) “A person riding a tiger will not suffer any harm.” 騎虎行者無惡事 “If a tiger enters a house, one’s official rank will be high.” 虎入宅中官職重

Snake dreams in the *Zhougong jiemeng* reflect a certain ambivalence toward serpents on the part of the Chinese. On the one hand, snakes were rather like dragons in appearance, and they sometimes served as objects of worship. On the other hand, they could be, of course, extremely dangerous. Generally speaking, snake images in the *Zhougong jiemeng* are positive. When snakes and dragons appear together in a dream, the prophecy is favorable (龍蛇入門主得財, or 龍蛇入灶有官至), unless they kill someone (龍蛇殺人主大凶). To be bitten by a snake in a dream generally indicates great wealth (蛇咬人主得大財), unless the bite is fatal. Some snake symbolism is clearly sexual. A snake following someone indicates a wife who has adulterous intentions (蛇隨人去妻外心). If a snake enters a woman’s bosom or winds around her body, it signifies that an honorable son will be born (蛇入懷中生貴子).

The most common desires expressed in the *Zhougong jiemeng* are for good luck, wealth, health, high position, honorable children (particularly sons) and longevity. The greatest fears are of death, illness, violence, poverty, lawsuits, and the usurpation of authority. Significantly, a number of entries focus on the themes such as family quarrels and the prospect of wives committing adultery. This suggests that these problems were more intractable in Chinese society than members of the elite were normally willing to admit.

It is difficult to know how seriously people in imperial China, particularly members of the elite, took the interpretations of one or another version of the *Zhougong jiemeng*. I cannot recall any references to this particular work in the writings of the Chinese scholars I have seen. However, J. H. Gray, writing of Guangzhou in the 1870's, suggests that the book had wide appeal, at least in south China. "Being earnest believers in dreams," he writes, "the Chinese pay great attention to their interpretation"—adding that the pronouncements of the Duke of Zhou are "now regarded as the greatest authority upon such matters." (Cited in Smith 1991, 256)

#### IV.

Let me end with a few brief remarks on the Chinese present (since I have no clever conclusion to offer on the Chinese past). Judging from the displays of books in bookstores and bookstalls on both Taiwan and the Mainland, there is a considerable contemporary interest in Chan Buddhism, the *Yijing* and dream divination. But it is difficult to know the extent and nature of the influence exerted by books and articles dedicated to such subjects. For instance, how has the *Zhougong jiemeng* shaped the dream interpretations of modern Chinese men and women? My information is somewhat dated, but studies undertaken by Wolfram Eberhard (1971) and others in Taiwan during the 1960s, 70s and 80s indicate that traditional interpretations of dreams (and attitudes toward dreaming itself) were still prevalent during those decades, even among Chinese youths. Puns and traditional symbolic associations continued to play a significant role in the evaluation of dreams, as did oppositional analysis. A large number of Chinese of all ages believed that dreams can come true, and that they can be warnings for the future. Dream incubation centers continue to exist in Taiwan, and according to a fairly recent guidebook for the famous temple outside of Taipei known as Zhinan Gong 指南宮, the facility can still accommodate "several thousands" of dream seekers.

I do not have data on Hong Kong, but would be willing to bet that dream interpretation there conforms quite closely to the *Zhougong jiemeng*—if only because virtually all almanacs in Hong Kong contain an abbreviated version of this work. On the Mainland, comparative research by Joan Walls (1988), Liu Wenying (1989) and others indicates that the influence of the *Zhougong jiemeng* is negligible in interpreting the specific content of dreams, particularly among college-age students, and that most Chinese students consider traditional-style dream analysis to be "superstitious"—and thus to be avoided along with ancestor worship, psychic phenomena, and a belief in God. Nonetheless, certain vestiges of traditional dream interpretation remain. Both tendencies are evident in Walls' statistics. On the one hand, college-age students in China today are more likely than American students of the same age to believe that dreams have no special meaning (42.4% vs. 20.6%), and they are less inclined to believe that dreams can predict the future (16.6% to 27.9%). On the other hand, they are more likely to believe that dreaming something means the opposite thing will happen (23.3% vs. 4.2%), that if a person dies in a dream he or she will actually pass away (24% vs. 9.2%), and that people can communicate in dreams with others who have died (37.7% vs. 10.9%). Chinese students are also significantly more likely to fear having bad dreams than Americans (56.8% vs. 28.4%).



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