AIRY PATHS

We know that changing lines are the ones we consult in divination, and these lines point toward new hexagrams. When divinations were described in old historical chronicles, lines were named after the new hexagram they led diviners to---for instance, the first line of Hexagram #1 was called "the Encounter of the Creative," since that line leads us to #44 (Encounter). In interpreting hexagrams, we naturally wonder why a particular phase or line in situation X can land us in situation Y. The answer to this "why" is found along the airy paths of association between hexagrams, above the floor plan of the line statements themselves.

Commentators often consider where a line is going when interpreting its meaning. For example, Jiao Hong says that Third Yang of #3 shows strong discernment by not plunging unguided into the forest, and these discerning qualities are borne out by the curious fact that when Third Yang changes, the lower *zhen* trigram becomes *li*, and *li* is a trigram of brightness and visual discernment. We can find other line statements that fit with the relevant trigram changes. Another example is Second Yang of #1, where the dragon is seen or "appears" in the fields. This changing line also changes the bottom trigram to *li*, and *li* is the trigram "whereby things become apparent to each other." [Treatise on Trigrams] Not all trigram changes have this kind of obvious relevance, but they are one ingredient we can draw on when sculpting an interpretation.

More important is the path from one hexagram to another, as pointed out by a particular changing line. How this path relates to the changing situation is a question rich with implication. Often we can see an overall link between the two hexagrams, but the line in question does not seem particularly relevant to the new hexagram. To pass through this line to the new hexagram may strike one as a random, caromming movement. If the connection seems forced, we should not weave it into our reading. Yet the changing line often gives an intriguing angle on the target hexagram, and it is always rooted in the source hexagram's overall meaning. It is important that we flesh out the source hexagram with reference to a real-life situation: otherwise it is hard to see why such-and-such a line statement would carom off toward the new hexagram. Yet even random paths of movement are a field where meaning can be planted.

Of all the line-paths between hexagrams, the most important radiate out from the first two hexagrams. These two hexagrams are a special case, yet they are not given privileged status. They are perfect categories, yet they must take their place in the 64-hexagram lineup. Since they are pure yang and pure yin, their line positions are treated as templates for yang lines and yin lines in other hexagrams. For instance, commentators will often

say something like "the First Yang in #24 is the First Yang in #1." Such a linkage conveys the power and possibility one taps into at the moment of Renewal. Similarly, Third Yang is a problematic line in many hexagrams (see #28 Great Excess), and it is no great leap to say that Third Yang in #28 needs to employ the same sort of vigilance shown by Third Yang in hexagram #1. Such associations grow in the mind of a reader who uses the *I Ching* over time.

The tension between hexagrams #1 and #2 is an archetypal relation which is embodied, in various relative states, throughout the other hexagrams. For this reason, by tracing destinations of changing lines from the first two hexagrams, we can appreciate the how the abstract, seminal meaning of each line---First Yang, First Yin, Second Yang, Second Yin...up to Sixth Yang and Sixth Yin---can be carried into particular situations. Thus we can better understand what archetypal First Yang, First Yin, and so on are expressing in other hexagram-situations. In the following essay I will march methodically from First Yang of The Creative all the way to Sixth Yin of The Receptive, describing implications of movement for each line. My treatment attempts to be suggestive but not exhaustive.

#1 The Creative

First Yang: "Hidden dragon does not act. Good fortune."

What does a dragon do when it hides and does not act? I contracts like an inchworm so it can take the next step. The Great Treatise uses the inchworm as a metaphor for formulating ideas. So the contraction of yang is a phase of reflective thought, and out of it will come a seminal idea. Or this line may represent a dragon in the natural world, staying deep in a pool and preparing conditions for rain. This line is in hiding. Usually we think of yin as hiding, so if this yang line is hiding it is close to the secret interfusing of yin and yang---the chaos-realm where both of them spring from. This is the foundational realm of pure yang, and the other lines in Hexagram #1 represent its unfolding in time. This is also the foundational line of Renewal #24, in which the other lines represent contingencies of renewal.

From our point of view. we cannot know the secret interface-realm where this pure yang has been gathering strength. All we can sense is that it has tapped into a deep vein, and thus will be able to unfold powerfully. What happens when we tap into a deep vein? We are protected from distraction, and people do not lightly approach. "...Weave a circle round him thrice..." There is a bell-jar of concentration which deflects the sounds of

nattering media. In relationships this person will probably not meet people who dissipate his strength in gossip and bickering. He will not be fastened on by people who are conduits for bits and pieces of the media. Oh yes, he will meet people as circumstances require. But associations not relevant to his life-project will not suck at his substance. By being immersed, he is at the same time aimed at a thread of human associations that will carry him into significant experience. By being immersed within, he is also pointed outwardly toward an Encounter. He will cut through the gossip and backbiting and have a truly meaningful encounter. His associations will bring him into activity that is worthy of what has been developed in immersion. Though his associations will happen in the welter of circumstance, they will seem fated. They will carry a mythic tone.

We can think of this change as a borrowing: Qian borrows a First Yin from Kun. At a basic level it borrows Kun's qualities of accomodation and receptivity, while keeping its own ventursomeness. Out of this combination comes a situation of Encounter. R.L.Wing translates the hexagram name as Temptation, and temptation is certainly one aspect of an encounter. Because we have moved into a situation with this change, the self-consistency of pure Qian now splits into a subject-object dynamic between the two trigrams (or a tension between circumstances).

To go from First Yang in the Creative to Encounter is not a trivial caroming. This change does not exclude the destiny of First Yang implied in the line-progression of The Creative. In other words, the movement toward encounter relates to how the hidden dragon unfolds in his own hexagram---appearing in a field of activity; active all day and beset by cares at night; poised over the abyss; soaring in his element; and overreaching in his actions. This does not mean that we cram two hexagrams together. It means that there are interesting connections when we use two hexagrams to view a developing situation (especially when one of them is The Creative or The Receptive).

Second Yang: "The dragon appears in the field. It furthers one to see the great man."

In this line the dragon appears in a field of activity. It learns to show itself and apply its efforts to a project. We can try various frames to see why appearing in a field is a creative act. Perhaps a man needs to survive, to develop strength and win acceptance. This is something that any creative act can build upon. And providing food for others, by doing agricultural work, is a creative act in itself. Even a peasant forced to work in a field sets in motion a master-slave dialectic that bears the bitter fruit of history. All labor is creative in some sense. And there are other creative ways to view a man working in a field. We can apply this line reflexively---that is, a truly creative person appears and

creates a whole new field of endeavor. "Field," "appear," and creative strength are three of the most fertile concepts we have to work with, so this line ends up being foundational, almost in the way First Yang is foundational.

What about the need to see a great man? Commentators do not agree. Some say this line is a great man among the people, the man who will later fly through heaven, so we should pay attention to him. Others say that this line should look to Fifth Yang for guidance. I think is is safe to say that the prodigious labors of this line (dragon in the fields) call for a worthy cause. Fifth Yang has built his greatness on just such labors. He has suffered self-doubt and attacks, has carried through, and so he will have something to tell Second Yang.

Second Yang is at the center of the lower trigram; his work has influence, but it is local. He must make his peace with local conditions. He must cooperate with others who don't identify with him at first. One of the most important things he can create is good fellowship. To advance his enterprise beyond the field he needs a band of brothers. Thus is is natural that changing yang here leads to #13 Fellowship with Men. Fellowship means stepping forth and forming ties in open ground. Open ground is space which is not socially defined. Fellowship may turn to factionalism, but it begins with an ideal: to extend one's loyalites beyond narrow family or neighborhood. If this dragon is ever to appear in an element where it can soar, in its ties with other it must first strive to occupy the open ground of fraternity.

Third Yang: "The superior man is creatively active till day ends. In the evening he is vigilant. Hard going, no blame."

Building upon hard work in the fields, this line is a position fraught with responsibility. To stop now would be a waste of previous effort. Along with initial success comes the need to defend one's achievements. As a collaboration gains momentum, people may want to attack or hijack it, and there is bound to be tension and suspicion.

Thus it is natural here to begin considering standards of human conduct.

Fourth Yang: "Perhaps leaping, being in the abyss. No blame."

/The Qian dragon has thrown itself into the abyss. This is time for its great experiment: It is going to be a wild ride on this cascade of energy. To keep one's balance, one begins to ride in earnest. To ride the dance of energy well, one makes instantaneous adjustments, one learns to contain whatever forces are at one's command. One learns to tame them by

keeping a dynamic balance and running along with them. Thus it is natural that changing yang here would lead us to #10 Lesser Taming./

Fifth Yang: "Flying dragon in the heavens. It furthers one to see the great man."

/The dragon is in its element. From riding it has progressed to mastery, hence it is in a leading position. But to master the raw power around it, this dragon cannot be dogmatic, exclusive, or rigid. Its power derives from all the levels of action above and below. It is a leader only to the extent that it does something creative with the energies feeding into it. Thus it is natural that that the leading line of pure yang points to the non-exclusive enjoyment of #14 Great Possession./

Sixth Yang: "A high-reaching dragon will have cause for regret."

/The high-flying dragon has regrets because it ventures far from the mainstream. This is not necessarily arrogance. True, it is isolated and unsupported. But pressing into such areas is also part of yang's nature. Thus it is natural for this line to point us toward #43 Breakthrough.../

#2 The Receptive

First Yin: "When there is hoarfrost underfoot, solid ice is not far off."

This line begins the coalescence of a nurturant base. Just as the first line of #1 does not act, being close to the hidden yin-yang interfusion, this first line has not ripened its nurturance, being close to that interfusion as well. In the natural world, a nurturant base imposes limits as well as possibilities. Any matrix has its own second-order laws which make it seem like a restrictive regime. Until its living possibilities are realized, it may be frozen or crystal-like. Once Kun unfolds, we see that her beginning point is actually her deepest point.

In my "Invocation to Kun," I spoke of a deep integrative state that weaves the threads of natural laws together. This state requires quiet, so I compare it to samadhi. Kun is a symbol for the perfect quiet of meditation, from which renewal or inspiration can be engendered. And this line is buried deep within that silence. Thus it naturally moves toward the Renewal fostered within that silence.

Second Yin: "Straight, square, great. Not attempting mastery , yet nothing remains unfurthered."

The nurturant base began from a point in Line 1. Only here does it acquire extension. The extension is regular, according to certain laws, like straight lines [*zhi*]. The word *fang* [square] means it is laid out on a plane, like a land mass. But the word *fang* has an added meaning of "squared" or "multiplied by itself." In other words, the nurturant matrix forms through a recursive process: at one level the natural laws are knit together, and at another, they are applied back on themselves. Hence we have the land's greatness [*da*]. In the symbolism of the *Zhouyi*, the land and the people are often thought of together. People based on the land may not set out to conquer others, but their power is one of the "crops" that grows upon that land. Hence it is natural that this line would point us toward #7 The Army.

Third Yin: "Holding [beautiful] forms within, this one can practice constancy. If one is in the service of a king, claim no accomplishment, but bring things to completion."

The beautiful forms within result from Kun's inner processes. There is the geological travail of the earth that produces grain in marble. There is the maturation of fruit that produces the variegated colors of pulp and seed. People embody the outer growth of Kun when they serve others without ulterior aim. It is natural for the non-agressive growth of this line to lead us toward #15 Humility, which is a situation of power held within.

This change borrows Third Yang from #1 The Creative. This Third Yang is beset with care because of all his responsibilities. He takes time in the evening to examine his life and question himself. Thus is is fitting for that he lends his strength to #15.

Fourth Yin: "Enclosing [something] in a pouch. No blame, no praise."

This line is the womb of Kun. It is Kun's way of embarking on a great experiment, like the abyss of Fourth Yang in #1. It is natural that this line points toward the quickening influence of thunder over the land in #16 Arousal. Kun's womb exists to incubate this quickening.

Fifth Yin: "A yellow inner robe. Sublime good fortune."

In this line Kun represents the power of the land. She provides non-invasive leadership (in the Daoist phrase, she "trails her robe and rules."). Her robe is earth-colored, because her power is derived from the land. This line fittingly leads to #8 Holding Together, in which power is distributed across the land in small fiefdoms, and unity is established through a shared sense of place.

Sixth Yin: "A dragon does battle in the open country. Its blood is dark and yellow."

Here Kun's power is pushed to an extreme, so she becomes a yin dragon fighting over the land. Her blood runs dark and yellow, which means that she is intertwined with Qian, not just in external battle, but also in her constitution and the progeny she bears. Kun's protective instincts foster sons who fight aggressively for their land. This was not Kun's intent, but such is the tragedy of her virtue. Since some dragons try to expand their power, like the Top Yang of #1, she must rise and confront them. Once she is forced into this competition, her leadership may lose its pure intent. Hence it is natural that this line leads to #23 Splitting. Splitting portrays a regime that is distanced from its subjects.