On the Origin of "Shendu"

LAI Guolong
School of Art and Art History, University of Florida

This article is a reinterpretation of the concept of "shendu" in pre-Qin philosophical texts, using excavated texts from Early China discovered in the second half of the twentieth century. It argues that the concept of "shendu" in the School of Zi Si (i.e. Kong Ji, 483–402 BCE) and Mencius (i.e. Meng Ke, 372–289 BCE) of the Warring States period should not be interpreted moralistically, as the Eastern Han scholar Zheng Xuan did, meaning "be cautious about one's behavior while alone," with an emphasis on external surveillance. Instead, it was a method of inner self-cultivation with close link to the meditative practices and other occult arts of Early China. Zheng Xuan and others were misled by Xunzi (i.e. Xun Kuang, ca. 313–ca. 238 BCE), who in order to ridicule Zi Si, Mencius, and their followers painted a negative picture of them amid a heated philosophical debate.

The present article also discusses the methodology of textual interpretation, pointing out that, on the level of individual words or characters, we should not rely too much on the so-called "original meaning" of the characters, but instead we should look for the specific meanings of the words among their synchronic usages. On the level of textual interpretation, we should critically read the text against of its historical, philosophical, and intellectual contexts.

Keywords: the concept of "shendu," meditative self-cultivation, occult arts, textual interpretation, textual criticism

饒宗頤國學院院刊　第五期
2018 年 5 月
頁 47–85

Between Numbers and Images: the Many Meanings of Trigram *Li* 離 in the Early *Yijing*

Adam C. SCHWARTZ
Department of Chinese and the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology, Hong Kong Baptist University

This paper examines the images of trigram *Li* 離 in the *Yijing* 易經 , with a focus on images in the *Shuogua* 說卦 commentary. The *Shuogua* presents images either found in or to be extrapolated from the base text within a structured and highly interpretive system that forms "image programs" for each of the eight trigrams. I argue the *Shuogua*'s image programs have a defined architecture, and its images are not random lists of words collected without an agenda and devoid of relationships and mutual interaction with others. My main thesis is a high percentage of images in the *Changes* developed through a simple and direct pictographic method, like the one used in a recently discovered Warring States period divination guidebook called **Shifa* 筮法 (Method of milfoil divination), that was done by matching the graphic shapes of individual numbers and the overall shapes of numbers in three-line combination to shapes of real objects and logographs. If a diviner could see so many pictographic images in single numbers and sequences of numbers in combination, like what we now see in operation in the *Shifa*, then we ought to assume that a deeper repository of subjective and innovative images could be observed in number combinations at the multiline, trigram, and hexagram levels. Stated directly, trigram and hexagram diagrams were not pictorially meaningless; numbers produced images, and images produced the words and judgments that formed early layers of text. Professional diviners had an expert knowledge of the tradition and Warring States use of the *Changes* continued to develop and explain image programs for the eight trigrams along these guidelines.

Keywords: Warring States divination, expert knowledge, *Shifa*, *Yijing*, Trigram *Li*

1. Introduction

New discoveries related to the practice of divination by numerical manipulation have fundamentally altered our view on the composition of divination manuals generally referred to as *Changes* (*Yi* 易).[1] Sortilege and casting divination by plant stalks, stones, corn kernels and related materials produced numerical outcomes (1, 4–9) that were recorded as "lines" and stacked in a vertical orientation to form trigrams, tetragrams (rare), and hexagrams, the latter by the Late Shang period (ca. 1300–1046 BCE) seems to have become normative.[2] Numerical hexagrams first appear in Late Shang and Western Zhou (1045–771 BCE) material culture inscribed on divination materials and commemorative objects both individually, and in inverted pairs and cluster sequences that match traditional orderings of the *Zhou Yi*'s sixty-four hexagram pictures. New evidence discussed in this paper implies that at the end of the Western Zhou numerical hexagrams were already being converted out of actual divination-result sequences into a formulaic system that only utilized two of the possible numeric values, either 1 or 7 and either 6 or 8, because they occurred with the highest frequency.[3] In this simplified

1 Throughout the paper I use the following terms: *Changes* 易 refers to the *Three Changes* 三易 divination manuals: The *Zhou Yi* 周易 , *Guicang Yi* 歸藏易 , and *Lianshan Yi* 連山易 , and to sortilege divination manuals with hexagram or trigram results. The term *Zhou Yi* refers solely to the 64 hexagram core text of the *Yijing* without any canonical commentary, and the term *Yijing* refers to the *Zhou Yi* plus its attached canonical commentary called the *Ten Wings*. When speaking about the *Zhou Yi* I use the term "hexagram picture" (*gua hua* 卦畫) in reference to the six-line diagrams that precede each of the 64 hexagram names. I refer to prognostications after the hexagram name as "hexagram statement" (*gua ci* 卦辭), and refer to prognostications found in the six individual lines as "line statement" (*yao ci* 爻辭). I refer to line statements by their placement in the hexagram picture, from bottom to top, that is, Initial Line, Line 2, Line 3, Line 4, Line 5, and Top Line, and do not use number (9 and 6) plus line number terms like Nine in the First, Six in the Second, etc. The transcription of numerical trigrams and hexagrams starts with the initial bottom line and moves upwards. Numerical trigrams and hexagrams are also referred to as "numerical trigram pictures" and "numerical hexagram pictures".
Li Dingzuo's 李鼎祚 (8th century) *Zhou Yi jijie* 周易集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016) is the base text. Commentaries outside of the canonical ones attached to the *Zhou Yi* are cited as references. Excavated manuscripts of the *Zhou Yi* and *Guicang* used in this paper are the Shanghai Museum Warring States *Zhou Yi*, the Mawangdui Western Han *Zhou Yi*, and the Wangjiatai Qin *Guicang*; the *Lianshan* is no longer extant: *Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 , vol. 3, eds. Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), 1–70 (magnified photographs), 131–260 (transcription); *Mawangdui Han mu wenwu* 馬王堆漢墓文物 , vol. 1, eds. Fu Juyou 傅舉有 and Chen Songchang 陳松長 (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), 106–17; Wang Mingqin 王明欽 , "Wangjiatai Qin mu zhujian gaishu" 王家台秦墓竹簡概述 , in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu* 新出簡帛研究 , eds. Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan) and Xing Wen 邢文 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), 26–49. Edward Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the* Changes*: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the* Yi Jing (*I Ching*) *and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014) provides an introduction, transcription, and annotated translation of the Shanghai Museum *Zhou Yi*, Wangjiatai *Guicang*, and Fuyang *Zhou Yi*; an earlier work by Edward Shaughnessy, *I CHING: The Classic of Changes* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996) does the same thing for the Mawangdui *Yijing*. Both of Shaughnessy's books include a transcription and translation of the received version of the *Zhou Yi* on opposite pages from the manuscript counterparts, as well as bibliographies. For the numerical trigram and hexagram examples used in this paper, see Pu Maozuo 濮茅左 , *Chu zhushu Zhou Yi yanjiu: jian shu Xian Qin Liang Han chutu yu chuanshi Yi xue wenxian ziliao* 楚竹書《周易》研究：兼述先秦兩漢出土與傳世易學文獻資料 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006); Zhang Jinping 張金平 , *Kaogu faxian yu Yi xue suyuan yanjiu* 考古發現與易學溯源研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2015).

2 To date, the number 4 only appears in Tsinghua University's **Shifa* 筮法 (Method of milfoil divination) manuscript (see footnote 12 for full citation) and is not seen in any actual divination records. "4" seems to have become eligible for use in written divination results as late as the Late Spring and Autumn period, and once its graphic form changed from four deictic horizontal strokes 𝌆 to something more abstract—likely a rebus borrowed from *si* 亖. The numbers 2 and 3 are never used because they never got taken out of their deictic composition of multiple horizontal lines. The multiple horizontal lines in the graphic forms of the numbers 2 to 4 seem to have been left out of hexagram recording because they caused confusion building hexagram pictures and reading the divination outcome. For the discovery of numerical hexagrams, see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 , "Shi shi Zhou chu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua" 試釋周初青銅器銘文中的易卦 , *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 , no. 4 (1980): 403–15; translated, by Horst W. Huber, Robin D.S. Yates *et al*., as "An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Zhou Bronzes," *Early China* 6 (1981): 80–96.

3 This refers to the *Ding hexagram dagger-axe inscription* discussed in part two of this paper. Li Xueqin 李學勤 , *Zhou Yi suyuan* 周易溯源 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2011), 231, proposes and reconstructs two hypothetical systems of milfoil divination for the Western Zhou period that he labels "System-1" ("B" system) and "System-7" ("A" system). System B produces the numerical outcomes 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, but not 7, and System A produces the numerical outcomes 5–9 but not 1. The outstanding issue here is the instances where 1 and 7 occur in the same sequence; see too the Western Han example in footnote 17. Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔 , "Shi lun chutu shuzigua cailiao de yongshu tixi" 試論出土數字卦材料的用數體系 , *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究 , no. 6 (2014): 29–32, tabulates the following distribution for 64 occurrences of "System-1" numerical combinations on 31 Shang-Western Zhou artefacts: 1:49.6%; 6:25.9%; 8:17.6%; 5: 5.2%; 9: 1.7%; 4: 0%. He tabulates the following distribution for 47 occurrences of "System-7" on 30 Shang-Western Zhou artefacts: 7:35.5%; 6:42.2%; 8: 15.1%; 5:6%; 9:1.2%; 4:0%. Jia Lianxiang, "Qinghua jian *Shifa* yu Chu di shuzigua yansuan fangfa de tuiqiu" 清華簡《筮法》與楚地數字卦演算方法的推求 , *Shenzhen daxue xuebao (Renwen shehui kexueban*) 深圳大學學報（人文社會科學版）31, no. 3 (2014): 58, tabulates the numbers seen in the hexagram pictures from Warring States divination records recovered from Tianxingguan 天星觀 , Baoshan 包山 and Xincai Geling 新蔡葛陵 , finding the following distribution: 4: 7, 5: 13, 6: 323, 1: 308, 8: 10, 9: 23. Jia notes that "System-1" shows closer affinities to the *Zhou Yi*. What seems relatively clear is that each of these systems used three even numbers (4, 6, 8) and three odd numbers (1/7, 5, 9).