FROM THE YIJING TO JESUS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE APHORISMS IN THE YIJING HEXAGRAMS AND THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

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From the *Yijing* to Jesus: A Comparative Study of the Aphorisms in the *Yijing*
Hexagrams and the Sayings of Jesus

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

From the *Yijing* to Jesus: A Comparative Study in the *Yijing* Hexagrams and the Sayings of Jesus
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This paper is a comparative examination of the aphorisms found within the Sayings of Jesus and the Hexagrams of the *Yijing*. The history of the aphorism and its evolution through time is studied through the themes of aphorisms worldwide. The various stages of development are examined in order to provide an understanding of the aphorism and its place in literature today.

The literary format of the aphoristic saying is considered through its history and literary example. It is explored through the maxim, proverb, apothegm, epigram, priamel, and gnome. The aphorism is used through verbal folklore, the study of ancient writings, phraseology, and linguistics. It reflects the cultural history of its source, yet shares the common truths found in all societies throughout time. This study views the aphorism through such writings as *The Analects* of Confucius, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, the *Collection of Adages* of Desiderius Erasmus, and the *Maxims* of Francois de La Rochefoucauld.

The aphorism is an integral part of almost all religious writing. Proverbs and wisdom texts contain the advice and guidance that people need to live a good life. This thesis analyzes and compares five examples of Jesus’ Sayings and five Hexagrams from the *Yijing*. The themes of wisdom, humility, self-cultivation, and the knowledge found in nature are examples of the similar teachings explored in this study. Both books provide the instructions for finding happiness and success.

The Jesus’ Sayings are taken from the logia found within the Synoptic Gospels, the sayings source of Q, and the Gospel of Thomas. Parallel sayings are compared, thus allowing a better understanding of Jesus’ messages. Aphorisms are the heart of Jesus’ parabolic teachings, and are the oldest source of his original ministry.

A brief traditional and modernist history of the *Yijing* is then provided. The aphorism is the core of the *Yijing*’s wisdom, and its role in the hexagram is examined. The sayings in the Hexagrams are examples of early Chinese philosophy. They teach inner truth, contentment, and are a guide for proper behavior in the world.

Aphorisms contain the collected wisdom found in the observation and experience of life. The Sayings of Jesus and the *Yijing* share these aphoristic teachings and prescribe the life lessons. This study of aphorisms advises the argument that the Jesus’ sayings and the aphorisms of the *Yijing* share similar teachings and literary devices. They both contain the inherent wisdom found within human nature. These aphorisms hold the answers for those searching for life’s blessings, wisdom, and the path to the good life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT ................................................................. iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION .............................................................. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 THE HELPFUL APHORISM .............................................. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Themes in the Ancient World ......................... 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aphorisms in the European Middle Ages and Renaissance  19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aphorisms in the Modern World ............................... 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Staying Power of Aphorisms .......................... 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 THE SAYINGS OF JESUS .............................................. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Aphoristic Cluster: The Demands of Jesus .... 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Aphoristic Cluster: No Anxieties .............. 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Third Aphoristic Cluster: Salt and Light ............ 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourth Aphoristic Cluster: Turn the Other Cheek ... 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fifth Aphoristic Cluster: Knowing the Times ....... 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE YIJING OR BOOK OF CHANGES ... 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myths of Origins ......................................................... 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier Renditions of the Yijing ............................ 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Theories on Origins ................................. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Dating the Yijing .......................... 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual Traditions ................................................. 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Interpreters and Translators .................. 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aphorisms ................................................................. 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 THE SAYINGS OF THE YIJING ....................................... 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Aphoristic Cluster: Modesty ...................... 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Aphoristic Cluster: Treading (Conduct) ...... 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Third Aphoristic Cluster: The Gentle (The Penetrating, Wind) .... 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourth Aphoristic Cluster: Innocence (The Unexpected) ...... 88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Fifth Aphoristic Cluster: Inner Truth..............................................................91
CONCLUSION........................................................................................................................95
BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................................97
INTRODUCTION

Aphorisms are brief sayings that contain truthful observations about life. They are able to stand alone or in a cluster to convey a teaching or provide information about life experience. These sayings have been a part of the human experience since the time of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, India, and China. They were found in such writings as oracle records, instruction texts, epic poetry, sūtras, kōans, and collections of proverbs. They have been used to express opinions about our vices and virtues, and are quite often humorous quips about life. Each in its own culture speaks of truth, since the aphorisms reflect the social and political standards of their time.

The wisdom of aphorisms is found in common themes throughout the world. An example is the Golden Rule, which is a part of the sayings in all cultures. This maxim dates back to ancient Babylon, expressing a natural law that teaches correct social behavior, while expounding civil liberties. Jesus says, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31).¹ Some other examples are found in writings like the Sikh script Adi Granth (1603-1604 CE) which says, “Treat others as thou wouldst be treated thyself;” the Hebrew Talmud teaches, “What is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man;” and the Tibetan Buddhist Udana (ca. 500 CE) says “Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.”²

The deepest hopes and desires of humanity are the heart of these sayings. They contain the inspiration for living a good life, the secret of happiness, so to speak. Aphorisms are used to communicate the facts and experiences that express the “principle of consciousness in all beings, and the source of life in all.”³ They are often compared to a mirror that is an honest reflection of ourselves. Aphorisms include topics from everyday life such as suffering, love and hate, the family, politics, business, education, and philosophy.

Quite often they were used for polemical discussion to prove a point, so having a collection of aphorisms in mind has provided many a debater with a legal or moral argument.

Like other collections of aphorisms from around the world, the *Yijing* of China and the Synoptic Gospels of the New Testament contain many sayings that provide instruction and insightful wisdom. Ideas such as proper social conduct, self-cultivation, and the true pathway of life are found in this literature. Jesus used aphorisms in sayings and parables, while the oracles and Confucian scholars used aphorisms to convey wisdom in the *Yijing*. These texts emphasize sacred truth, character development, and the themes found in other ancient sacred texts.

I argue in this thesis that the sayings of Jesus and those within the hexagrams of the *Yijing* share similar themes, such as the search for the good life, and the true meaning of things. Like aphorisms in general, both of these texts teach the fundamental truths that awaken the human nature to a better level of understanding life. They contain the observations and experiences that are a timeless insight of the pure and true nature of reality.

Aphorisms are the essence of the *Yijing’s* wisdom. Each hexagram contains not only an oracle record, but a lesson in wisdom as well. The aphorisms are a part of this knowledge, providing reflection when used for meditation, allowing the readers’ subconscious to ponder and then awaken to the answer to the question. The sayings deal with the belief that all things change, as this is the only thing that stays the same. The hexagrams contain judgments, images, and six line statements that reflect their own unique perspective on change, as expressed in the aphorism, “Alteration, movement without rest, flowing through the six empty places; rising and sinking without fixed law, firm and yielding transform each other.”

4 The hexagrams present lessons that allow readers to see what they can do to achieve success. The *Yijing* embodies the root or source of all things, and if used properly, provides the reader with the instructions on how to live a good life.5 The hexagrams 10 Lu/Conduct, 15 Qian/Modesty, 25 Wuwang/Innocence, 57 Sun/The Gentle, and 61 Zhongfu/Inner Truth will be addressed, providing aphoristic examples that are comparable to the sayings of Jesus.

Like the *Yijing*, the Synoptic Gospels use aphorisms to convey a similar wisdom. Jesus used aphorisms in his parables; some could stand by themselves, and others were part of a cluster. The Sermon on the Mount, for example, contains many aphoristic clusters. Using the Beatitudes as an example, each line could be a solitary aphorism: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God (Matt. 5:8).” Jesus’ aphorisms teach the way to the Kingdom of God, which is similar to the way of the *Yijing*, that is to live in harmony and right relationships. All of his sayings reflect or reveal his personal relationship with the divine, and signify an inner truth that guides the spirit to a place of self-realization. His sayings are collected in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which contain parallels that have a historical relationship to the Book of Q and The Gospel of Thomas. Jesus’ sayings will be explored in the thesis by examining five aphoristic clusters taken from the Synoptic Gospels. These aphorisms contain the heart of his teachings. The clusters that will be examined are: *Demands of Jesus, No Anxieties, Salt and Light, Turn the Other Cheek,* and *Knowing the Times*.

The aphoristic wisdom that is contained within Jesus’ sayings and the *Yijing* reflects the search for the truth and the secret to life. The Synoptic Gospels hold the fundamental nature of the love that is found in Jesus’ message. The *Yijing* does not concentrate on the idea of a loving nature, but on the benevolence found within the cultivated life. Jesus dedicated his aphoristic teachings to God and the Kingdom of Heaven. The *Yijing* contains the divine as well, the idea of *Shangdi*, the God on High of the Shang Dynasty, and *Tian*, the God or Heaven of the Zhou Dynasty, portrays this importance. The book was originally used by the emperor and the priests, who like Jesus, claimed to be the representatives of the higher forces. They also taught the Law of Change. The first *Hexagram 1/Qian* represents the Creative or Heaven, confirming the idea that God is the essence and life force within the *Yijing*. Jesus’ sayings taught to honor and love God above all things, and to love one’s neighbor as much as one would love one’s self. His aphorisms instruct the reader to rely on the providence of God, and keep one’s thoughts and actions in God’s care. The *Yijing* says

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to be selfless and nonjudgmental, while caring for all living creatures. Its idea of self-cultivation and the mastering of the proper code of conduct is comparable to the sayings in the Synoptic Gospels. Both aphoristic sources stress humility and inner truth. The *Yijing* mentions the thought, “Those who composed the Changes had great care and sorrow,” more than once, making it a reflective comparison to the Synoptic collection, in that they were composed during stressful times. Both sayings collections try to help, console, and guide the reader to finding the highest, and most successful understanding of life possible. They are both instructive and purveyors of a pure and dependable faith.

This thesis develops its argument in the following way. The first chapter examines aphorisms through a study of their literary format, history, and common themes. The second chapter provides a brief history on the background of Jesus’ aphorisms, with an analysis of selected aphorisms from the Synoptic Gospels. The third chapter contains a history of the *Yijing*. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of some aphorisms from the *Yijing*. This is followed by a concluding summary that demonstrates that the aphorisms in Jesus’ sayings and those in the *Yijing* share the same function in that they provide the answers needed to better understand life, and achieve success in the world.

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CHAPTER 1

THE HELPFUL APHORISM

Aphorisms are wisdom sayings that truthfully provide a brief but concise lesson that leads to self-reflection. What is wisdom or insight, but the ability to understand and see more clearly the ways of the world and the doings of the heart? It is knowledge itself. These brief sayings often sneak the lesson into the subconscious mind without the hearer even knowing it. In their need to understand their worldview or reality, people gathered their observations and experiences to produce inspirational instructions that guided them in their daily lives. This provided a path way for solving their inner questions, strengthening their relationship with the divine, and learning how to live the good life. Books like the Bible and the Yijing, as well as other spiritual writings of the world, contain these instructive sayings that provide the reader with a guide to a better life.

This chapter begins by considering the literary format of aphorisms. It then provides a brief history of aphorisms around the world, and notes the common themes found within them. A major theme found in aphorisms is the way in which we should learn from nature. It discusses aphorisms from the ancient world as well as the Renaissance and the Modern periods, and concludes that aphorisms are a global phenomenon that transcend time and space. Aphorisms come in a variety of forms. Modern interpreters are turning to a number of different disciplines to study aphorisms, such as anthropology, folklore, literary, and linguistic studies.

An aphorism in its aphoristic form can be defined as “the finest thoughts in the fewest words”8 The Webster dictionary defines it as “a short, pithy sentence; to mark off by boundaries, set aside, cast out, and define; a terse and often ingenious formulation of a truth or sentiment usually in a single sentence; adage, maxim.”9 An example of an aphorism is,

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“Men’s maxims reveal their characters.”\textsuperscript{10} An adage is an older aphorism that has been long used because it contains a truthful observation, such as “don’t burn your bridges behind you.” The maxim presents helpful instruction. An example of a maxim is, “Aphorisms are portable wisoms, the quintessential extracts of thought and feeling.”\textsuperscript{11} Since the beginning of human society the aphorism has been used as a vehicle to express truth, and the author’s observations of life. These may be thoughts of a spiritual nature, or common experience. The aphorism stays in use if it is truthful, and speaks to the reality of the human condition. Codes of conduct, the emotions of life, and human strengths and weaknesses are gathered within the insights of the aphorism. In a glance the reader will know if it’s the truth and can learn something about life.

The term aphorism was first used in a collection of medical sayings in the \textit{Aphorisms of Hippocrates}, which contains the saying “Art is long; life is short.”\textsuperscript{12} The one-line aphorism can stand by itself, but is often found in two sentences in order to enhance the saying. These can be joined with other aphorisms in a cluster form to make a larger message, such as a parable. The phrasing should be resilient and of a perceptive nature, with an agreeable rhythm of interesting words. The aphorism is a proverb “coined in a private mint.”\textsuperscript{13}

The proverb is brief and to the point, and contains a universal truth. One example is, “A proverb is the wit of one, and the wisdom of many.”\textsuperscript{14} They are “a saying current among the folk.”\textsuperscript{15} Like the aphorism, they are sayings that teach ethics, morality and tradition through common experience and observation. A proverb is different from the aphorism in that it is not as instructive, but contains amusing observations, and does not have a known


Simple to remember, they have been used both orally and in writing throughout time. The proverb reflects the context of its origin, and will stay in use if it remains pertinent to the times, as with the old Greek saying “A rolling stone gathers no moss.” If its language and subject have become obsolete, people cannot relate, and it is forgotten, becoming a part of folk knowledge and history. New sayings are being created all the time, such as “The camera doesn’t lie,” and “Been there, done that.” Through repetition, they may officially be listed as proverbs.

The apothegm contains a moral, like “A place for everything and everything in its place.” Apothegms are synonymous with the aphorism, maxim, and proverb. They are classically portrayed in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* which is a collection of sayings of the Desert Fathers who were Egyptian Christian monks in the fourth and fifth century CE. This collection is a study of the monastic life, dealing with such topics as the affiliation of the teacher and disciple, and the use of solitude or silence for furthering one’s relationship with God. The apothegm is also a form of epigram.

The epigram deals with human nature, but unlike the apothegm, it is not known for truth. It is a brief poem that can be satirical, humorous, and admiring. The poems have two lines that rhyme in couplet form, such as “We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow; Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.” The couplets may be combined to create a larger volume of writing. The key element of an epigram is the fact that it is an inscription, and the early epigrams were inscribed on tombs, buildings, coins, and votive objects in about

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17 Mieder, xi.
19 Archer Taylor, 6; Mieder, xi.
20 Mieder, 5.
21 Archer Taylor, 8.
24 Preminger, 247.
seventh century BCE Greece.\textsuperscript{25} Papyrus collections were published in the fifth century and the epigram became very popular.\textsuperscript{26} In the third century there were two epigrammatist schools, the Peloponnesian School which centered on rural life, and the Ionian School which used the epigram for more worldly pastimes.\textsuperscript{27} They were painted into frescos depicting such scenes as fishermen dedicating their work to a god. They were used for the symposia, and later comprised a literary form covering all matters of human life.\textsuperscript{28} The epigram was the origin of the priamel.

The priamel is associated with the medieval German poetry that flourished in the twelfth century to the sixteenth century, but was a popular method of writing in ancient times. It was an extension of the epigram.\textsuperscript{29} The priamel is found in the poetry of Sappho and the Book of Proverbs, and is common in Greek and Latin poetry.\textsuperscript{30} It is said to be “a series of detached statements illustrating either by analogy or by contrast a rule of wisdom in which the passage culminates.”\textsuperscript{31} They may have four lines, with the last line being an epigram. An example from a Sanskrit priamel is, “Praise food when it is digested; the wife, when her youth is past; the hero, when he has returned from battle; the grain, when it is harvested.”\textsuperscript{32} Archer Taylor says they are proverbial and very similar to ancient aphoristic texts. The priamel’s last line may also be a gnome, and could be compared to the \textit{Havamal}, an Old Norse gnomic poem.\textsuperscript{33}

The gnomic poem \textit{Havamal} is part of the \textit{Poetic Edda}, and contains the maxims of Odin which teach wisdom and rules of conduct.\textsuperscript{34} Gnomic literature is made up of gnomes

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Peter Jay, \textit{The Greek Anthology and Other Ancient Greek Epigrams} (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973), 10; Fowler, 161.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Kathryn J. Gutzailler, \textit{Poetic Garlands Hellenistic Epigrams in Context} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 20.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Jay, 13.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Gutzailler, 4, 7.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Preminger, 663.
\item \textsuperscript{30} William H. Race, \textit{The Classical Priamel from Homer to Boethius} (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 1, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Race, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Archer Taylor, 180.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Archer Taylor, 179, 180.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Blanche Colton Williams, \textit{Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon} (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 9,
\end{itemize}
which are a “short pithy statement of a general truth; a proverb, maxim, aphorism, or
apothegm.” The moral precept or general truth is the basis of the saying. The word
originated in Greece with the Gnomic movement, a group of philosophers who wrote
gnomes, elegies, riddles, and maxims. This was also the source of the famous Seven Wise
Men who were known for such observations as “Nothing in Excess.” The sixth century BCE
writer Theognis of Megara was well known for his gnomic maxims. To the Greeks, the
word gnome meant “good judgment, awareness, and knowledge.” Aristotle studied gnomic
sayings, as well as proverbs and maxims. Other gnomic writings are the Sanskrit
Hītopadēsa, the Chinese Shi jing and Shujing, the Egyptian Teachings of Amenemhet, the Old
English Cotton and Exeter gnomes, and Germanic writings like the epic Beowulf. The
gnome is a part of ancient writing, and as it is synonymous with the proverb and aphorism,
portrays the saying as an important part of human heritage. It is found in all cultures to
guide, direct, enlighten, and entertain.

Literary criticism is opening up the study of aphorisms, in particular phraseology and
paremiology are new fields in the study of the aphorism and proverb. Phraseology is the
study of phrases, which are broken down into phraseological groups called phraseologisms.
Phrases and clauses are examined in textual studies, with comparisons of other renditions and
translations. An example is found in the following proverbs that deal with the idea that
one’s actions shape the self, the Jain adage, “By one’s actions one becomes,” and the Sufi
saying, “Look to what you do, for that is what you are worth.” The study of phrases is a
part of paleography, which is the study of ancient writings. The proverb, on the other hand,
is studied in its own genre as paremiology. Aristotle was one of the earliest paremiologists.

19, 20.

35 Preminger, 324.
36 Gilbert Murray, A History of Ancient Greek Literature (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.,
1966), 83, 84, 85.
37 Thomas J. Figueira, and Gregory Nagy, ed., Theognis of Megara – Poetry and the Polis (Baltimore:
The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 305.
38 Williams, 6, 9, 10, 29.
39 Mieder, xii, xiii.
40 Griffin, 1. Taken from the Jain Uttara-Dhyayana Sutra 25:33, and the Sufi The Song of the Dervish.
Contemporary scholars are studying the “definition, form, structure, style, content, function, meaning, and value of proverbs.” This also includes verbal folklore, which is a component of philology or linguistics, and literary study.  

Verbal folklore is included in the studies of anthropology, history, literature, religion, sociology, and psychology. Folklore is defined as “the study of traditions, beliefs and customs of the common people.” The saying, which includes maxims, proverbs, and aphorisms, is a genre of folklore study. Folklorists study the source of a saying, its meaning, history, distribution, and its other renditions. The saying reflects the culture and attitude of the time, and is an extension of that period’s worldview. It may refer to outdated customs, jobs, tools, weapons, clothes, or pastimes. Sometimes the words are no longer understood, and folklorists study the different sayings comparatively, in order to understand them. By doing so, they shed light onto the past.

Another way by which aphorisms are currently being studied is through the examination of literary devices, which are a part of paremiology, the study of proverbs. These devices add strength and emphasize the message in the saying. Two examples of literary devices are rhyme and alliteration. For example “There’s many a slip ‘twixt cup and lip,” and “Many men, many minds.” These useful rhetorical devices have helped the saying to capture the imagination and convey a more powerful message.

The message of an aphorism or proverb must always be interpreted. The literal meaning is grasped through the mechanical structure of the sentence, allowing the reader to ponder its figurative truth. The understanding of this truth, ethical lesson, or entertaining idea is the lexical key of the saying. The inspiration that results is a part of the saying’s

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41 Mieder, xii, xiii.
42 Mieder, xiii.
44 Mieder, 135, 136, 137.
45 Archer Taylor, 42, 137.
wisdom. The aphorism embodies the study of humanity, and is a comforting guide for understanding life.

**COMMON THEMES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD**

Aphorisms teach us how to live life well and harmoniously. They share a number of common themes. These include advice about proper social behavior; the necessity for cultivating inner virtues; the connection between the development of moral character and social well-being; virtue; happiness; self-knowledge; and courage.

Proper social behavior is a necessary aspect of the successful social structure. Ever since the first civilizations, individuals learned to cooperate with the community in order to be accepted, and achieve a prosperous state or country. Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 535-475 BCE) wrote poetic maxims. He felt men should share their opinions in a common assembly, as well as live in a city under the same rules that were divinely created to suit the human purpose.\(^\text{47}\) Diogenes of Sinope (ca. 412-323 BCE) emphasized community rules and regulations. He said, “There is no society without law, no civilization without a city.”\(^\text{48}\) The poet Hesiod (ca. 700 BCE)\(^\text{49}\) wrote, “Help your neighbor, and he will help you,” and, “A neighbor matters more than a kinsman.”\(^\text{50}\) The Greeks believed social behavior was guided by the law.

In contrast, Confucius (ca. 551-497 BCE) felt proper social behavior was found through cultivating the inner virtues, practicing the arts, and acting with kindness and generosity to all. It was a part of following the Way. After his death, Confucius’ sayings were collected in the *Analects*. He said a good man “remembers what is right at the sight of profit...and is ready to lay down his life in the face of danger.”\(^\text{51}\) The Dao, on the other hand, says that proper social behavior starts with the nurturing of humility, as all will be satisfied.\(^\text{52}\)

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\(^\text{48}\) Davenport, 58.

\(^\text{49}\) Jay, 406.

\(^\text{50}\) Murray, 56.


Lao Tzu wrote the *Dao De Jing* in the late sixth century BCE. The Dao is the Way, an ethical code of conduct, and when followed, one’s life can be likened to a pearl or a piece of jade.

In Hindu tradition we find that the *Bhagavad Gita*, written around 500 BCE, teaches correct social behavior through the dedication of all actions to God; properly devoted persons keep their mind fixed on the Atman and try to act in accordance with God’s laws. This leads to a successful lifestyle. The *Dhammapada*, or sayings of the Buddha, argues that compassion is what trains people in proper social behavior. Written down around 300 BCE, it contains the famous saying, “She abused me, he beat me, she defeated me, he robbed me,” which teaches people to stop dwelling on the negative actions of others, and concentrate on forgiveness which will lead to a loving attitude and positive actions. We thus find that aphorisms have been used to teach proper social conduct in a number of different civilizations. They were all related to the cultivation of moral character.

The theme of cultivation of moral character helps people to advance in society as well as be more developed on their own. Diogenes explored character development through humor. This is evident in his statement, “You can no more improve yourself by sacrificing at the altar than you can correct your grammar,” and, “Even with a lamp in broad daylight I cannot find an honest man.” Heraclitus felt “Man’s character is his fate;” that is to say, it is controlled by the actions of one’s life. Confucius thought that benevolence was the most important part of a man’s character, and should constantly be observed. He said, “He cultivates himself and thereby brings peace and security to his fellow men.” Confucius said a man will be revered through self-cultivation.

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58 Davenport, 50.
60 Confucius, 131. Chapter 14:42.
The *Dao De Jing* also shows character development “through the unfolding of life man reaches perfection.” The Dao teaches one’s true nature. The *Gita* says that humility, never doing injury, keeping the thoughts and body unsoiled, and practicing patience are necessary cultivation, along with following a teacher. The *Dhammapada*’s very name gives the instructions for self-cultivation; it means the path to “law, justice, righteousness, discipline, and truth.”

Virtue is a result of character development, and we can also find this theme throughout the ancient literature. Virtue when cultivated will lead to happiness. Hesiod found virtue to be humble, telling the truth, giving more than is necessary in all things. He advised people to never feel envy, and asserted that idleness leads to humiliation, diligence leads to honor. Parmenides (ca. 400 BCE) said to never let common behavior determine the path, but instead to concentrate on Being. Confucius said that virtue was a gift of divine intercession, but also had to be practiced through discipline. He developed five constant virtues: kindness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity. The idea of duty or doing what is right, instead of what one would like to do is an act of benevolence. The *Dao De Jing* says that a virtuous person does not look for mistakes, never causes harm, and receives through giving. The *Bhagavad Gita* says virtue is blocked by anger and lust, like a “dusty mirror,” it hinders the reflection. Self control is an important part of virtue. The *Dhammapada* compares virtue to fragrant flowers; the ones that practice virtue find pleasure in their actions. It says to keep the thoughts clean, always be honest, and practice

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63 Brom, xvii.

64 Murray, 56.


69 Prabhavananda, 49. Chapter 3:37, 38.
self-control.\textsuperscript{70} Virtue seems to be the most important part of the aphorisms of the past. The virtuous teachings are a guide to the paths of happiness.

Happiness results from successfully living in society, realizing self-cultivation, and understanding that virtue develops a sense of well-being or contentment. Hesiod said happiness is observed through the rural environment and used the peasants’ contented lives to teach the pleasures of a humble lifestyle.\textsuperscript{71} Following the Way taught Confucius happiness. He said to find the way to happiness is to be content with the simple things of life, “In the eating of coarse rice and the drinking of water, the using of one’s elbow for a pillow, joy is to be found.”\textsuperscript{72} The \textit{Dao De Jing} also says this to find contentment in one’s food, clothing, home, and joy in the way one lives. It also says to “hold fast to the Great Form within and let the world pass as it may – then the changes of life will not bring pain but contentment, joy, and well-being.”\textsuperscript{73} The \textit{Bhagavad Gita} teaches that well-being can be found through the knowledge of Karma Yoga, which can enable people to free themselves from desire, eventually liberating them from their past actions.\textsuperscript{74} The \textit{Dhammapada} often mentions happiness. It says to be mindful about happiness, and to find it in important things like being healthy.\textsuperscript{75} Happiness is found in one’s daily life, the precious time itself. Learning to see contentment in one’s day is a part of self-realization.

The theme of self knowledge is one of the oldest topics of aphorisms. The maxim “Know Thyself” was accredited to the seven sages, or first philosophers of Greece, which included such teachers as Thales, Chilon, and Solon. It was found on the temple of Apollo at Delphi, and originally thought to be Apollo’s words to the priestess Phanothea.\textsuperscript{76} This theme of introspection was further studied by Plato (ca. 428-348 BCE), when he said Socrates taught the paradox that man’s “wisdom lies solely in the knowledge of his own ignorance.”\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{70} Muller, 5, 19. Chapter 1:10, 4:9 (52).
\textsuperscript{71} Murray, 56.
\textsuperscript{72} Confúcius, 54, 88. Chapter 7:16.
\textsuperscript{73} Lao Tzu, \textit{Tao Te Ching}, 48, 93; \textit{Taoteching}, 70, 160. Verse 35, 80.
\textsuperscript{74} Prabhavananda, 39. Chapter 2:39, 40.
\textsuperscript{75} Muller, 63. Chapter 15:8 (204).
\textsuperscript{76} Archer Taylor, 38.
\textsuperscript{77} Plato, \textit{The Trial and Death of Socrates}, trans. Benjamin Jowett. (New York: Dover Publications,
A Confucian would study himself in order to see if he was mastering his levels of sincerity, benevolence, and the cultivation of following the prescribed path of the Way. The *Dao De Jing* uses the sage’s path on self knowledge. It says, “The sage knows himself but doesn’t reveal himself, he loves himself, but doesn’t exalt himself, thus he picks this over that.”

Arthur Waley says “this over that” means the sage picks the “powers within over the outside world.” The *Bhagavad Gita* says the true inner self is the Supreme Brahman or Witness; it is what enables all actions. It is both “within and without”, it is “knowledge, the one real thing we may study or know, the heart’s dweller.”

The *Dhammapada* teaches the self is a false idea of separateness, which confuses the true idea of being. To really know the self you have to not remember it, which leads to enlightenment. It says, “Your own self is your master. Who else could it be? With self well subdued, you gain a master hard to find.” Knowing one’s true self usually means knowing God or the divine, which is the key to wisdom.

Wisdom is found in the understanding of one’s inner self, in knowing how to live in the world, and in knowledge itself. Heraclitus discusses both human and divine wisdom in the saying, “The wise is one, knowing the plan by which it steers all things through all.” Wisdom is a cosmic god steering the universe, the order of which “is understood as a work of cognition and intention.” Confucius believed some people are born wise. These sage ones teach others who have to search for wisdom, and some people are awakened to wisdom through unpleasant life experiences. The *Dao De Jing* says it is wise to “see with original purity, embrace with original simplicity, reduce what you have, decrease what you want.”

The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches that the wisdom of yoga is found in the knowledge that God is

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80 Prabhavananda, 103. Chapter 13:16, 18, 23.
82 Kahn, 170.
83 Kahn, 171.
84 Confucius, 23, 140. Chapter 16:9.
perfection and found in all places, the light that is found within. The goal of practicing yoga is to be free of desire and attaining purification through union with God.\textsuperscript{86} The \textit{Dhammapada} says wisdom is found in control of desires, practicing non-attachment, never clinging, and understanding of the “seven fields of knowledge which are mindfulness, vigor, joy, serenity, concentration, equanimity, and absorption of the law.”\textsuperscript{87} The theme of wisdom involves self-control and diminishing desires.

Courage prevents one from feeling fear, which inhibits the development of wisdom. The aphoristic sayings often include advice on courage. Heraclitus said, “How can you hide from what never goes away?”\textsuperscript{88} He used this as a metaphor for the sun or the eye of the divine which was always watching, and as there was nowhere to hide, why be afraid?\textsuperscript{89} Confucius said it was one of the virtues, and believed it to be a “double edged sword,” in certain hands a weapon for good, enabling them to practice benevolence, while in the hands of others, an instrument of injustice.\textsuperscript{90} The \textit{Dao De Jing’s} commentary by Wang P’ang says, “To be remorseful is to be compassionate. He who is compassionate is able to be courageous. Thus he triumphs.”\textsuperscript{91} The \textit{Bhagavad Gita} mentions Arjuna’s reluctance to enter the battle for spiritual reasons as an act of cowardice. Krishna gives him the insight to see his foe’s life, or Atman, as a never dying, always existing reality and as it was their karma, their spirit would benefit from death in the holy war.\textsuperscript{92} This is also a religious level of warfare. The \textit{Dhammapada} says to stay on the path of the law or dhamma, and overcome the world and its illusions; to do this unfailingly is courageous. The mind is to be kept like a citadel against the attacks of iniquity.\textsuperscript{93} The Buddha nature uses mindfulness and compassion to battle illusion.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} Prabhavananda, 59, 66. Chapter 5:15, 16; 6:18.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Muller, 28 n. 7, 29. Chapter 6:14 (89).
\item \textsuperscript{88} Davenport, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Kahn, 274.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Confucius, 24. \textit{The Mean}, 52:19a.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Lao Tzu, \textit{Taoteching}, 139. Verse 69. Dealing with warfare.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Prabhavananda, 35, 36. Chapter 2:2, 12, 13.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Muller, 13, 17. Chapter 3: 8 (40), 4:2 (45).
\end{itemize}
The order of nature is an important theme that stands out, especially when discussing human involvement in nature. It deals not only with the physical world, but with human nature as well. Nature has been used metaphorically to enhance sayings from the beginning of mankind. Heraclitus is famous for his maxim, “One cannot step twice into the same river.” It compares human nature to the ever-changing currents of the river. Change is the only thing that stays the same is another of Heraclitus’ aphorisms, “everything flows; nothing remains.” This perception of the human struggle to maintain the good is based on observations of nature. Parmenides used the “nature of the heavens” to study human truth. Confucius believed that by following his own nature, he was led to the path of a moral life. He was also inspired by a river and said, “What passes away is, perhaps like this. Day and night it never lets up.” The *Dao De Jing* expresses nature as the way. It uses water as an example. It is supposedly the weakest substance, but it can wear away rock. It will not burn, but will destroy fire. It has a nature that changes to the shape of its environment. It teaches to be yielding, which triumphs over the firm. Be like the water, and survive all things. The *Bhagavad Gita* indicates that true human nature is the Atman. It says heat and cold, pleasure and pain are of the same nature, or “that which is non-existent can never come into being, and that which is can never cease to be. Those who have known the inmost Reality know also the nature of is and is not.” This changeless Reality and union of reversals permeates the natural world. The yoga nature is divine nature. The theme of nature in the *Dhammapada* is found in the Buddha’s light which is likened to the moon after the clouds have passed by. Buddhist teachings are compared to the peaceful nature found in “tall trees and spacious roots.” As a bee does not harm a flower, so should a person act in the world. The roughness of nature is in the elephant pulling his feet free from the mud like a person

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94 Kahn, 53; Davenport, 30. “It forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs,” Kahn, 53.
95 Davenport, 14.
96 Geldard, 28.
99 Prabhavananda, 36, 39. Chapter 2:14, 15, 16, 38; “The way up and down is one and the same.” Kahn, 75, It is both the physical nature and the spiritual nature. The harmony of opposite natures.
100 Muller, xvi, xvii, 115. Chapter 25:23 (382).
pulling their thoughts free from the darkness.\textsuperscript{101} Nature is in all things, both within and without. It is the way of things.

The Way is a guide or prescribed pathway that shows the correct way to live and learn in life. It describes the best way to live in accord with the order of nature. Throughout history, various cultures used aphorisms to describe it. The Greeks used “the way” in their terminology. Parmenides felt it was a pathway to the truth, and a complete form of Being that lasts forever.\textsuperscript{102} Plato felt it was the way of things to need to be replenished. He used the idea of study for a metaphor saying, “What is called studying exists because knowledge goes from us. Forgetting is the departure of knowledge, while study puts back new information in our memory to replace what is lost, and so maintains knowledge so that it seems to be the same.”\textsuperscript{103} The way is logical. Confucius lived for the Way, and like the Greeks, it was the pathway to truth for him. It is the Universe and the life of man. The Way was the idea of self-cultivation, of doing one’s best.\textsuperscript{104} The \textit{Dao De Jing} says it is the Way (Dao) of Heaven. It “wins easily without a fight, answers wisely without a word…plans ingeniously without a thought…is all-embracing…shortening the long, lengthening the short…favors no one, but always helps the good…to help without harming…to act without struggling.”\textsuperscript{105} The Middle Way is the path and road to life. The \textit{Bhagavad Gita} taught yoga and union with God as being the way. It teaches to do all things for God without attachment, as this will be a pathway to Reality.\textsuperscript{106} The \textit{Dhammapada} shows the way through the practice of compassion and forgiveness. The Way is the teachings of the Buddha, which lead to the end of suffering and nirvana. The theme of the Way is logical and an eternal knowing of the truth. It is the pathway to a good life.

\textsuperscript{101} Muller 17, 99. Chapter 4:6 (49), 23:8 (327).
\textsuperscript{102} Geldard, 23, 25.
\textsuperscript{104} Confucius, 11.
\textsuperscript{105} Lao Tzu, \textit{Taoteching}, 146, 154, 158, 162. Verse: 73, 77, 79, 81.
\textsuperscript{106} Prabhavananda, 39, 139. Chapter 2:39.
APHORISMS IN THE EUROPEAN MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE

The recurrent themes described above were common subjects in the aphorisms found within ancient writings. They seem to be interconnected, such as the idea that the cultivation of virtue will lead to introspection and happiness, and will provide instruction for a prosperous life. These aphoristic themes are also found in the writings of the European Renaissance, which embraced and broadened the classical aphorism, turning it into the literary form that is used in the present day. European Medieval aphorisms helped to develop this modern structure, dealing primarily with religious subjects, and instructive maxims. This included such writings as the above mentioned Sayings of the Desert Fathers of the fifth century, the philosophical sayings of Isidore, Defensor (seventh century), the Proverbia Senecae (ninth century), the sayings collections of Marcolf (tenth century), and the twelfth century writings of Petrus Alphonsi and Peter Abelard.107

After the Middle Ages, the aphorism found new life in a rise in literacy due to the invention of the printing press. Renaissance writers studied the ancient classical aphorisms and proverbs, slowly developing a new style that became the aphorism of today. Scholars like Erasmus of Rotterdam, Francis Bacon, and Francois de La Rochefoucauld kept the ancient aphorism as a literary means to express their new ideas and philosophies. The aphorism was enhanced and left a lasting reflection of the worldview of its authors, who used the sayings to express different levels of the human experience.

The first major anthology of aphorisms and proverbs grew from a personal collection of Greek and Latin phrases gathered by Erasmus, called the Collection of Adages. It was originally published via the printing press in 1500, and became a great success. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536 CE) was in his thirties when he published the book as a gift to his patron Lord Mountjoy.108 The first edition contained 818 proverbs, and included the sayings of writers such as Virgil, Cicero, and Augustine.109 Different editions were published,

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109 Erasmus, xii.
containing commentary, Greek and Latin translation, two indexes, and the available history of the sayings, and their relationships to various writers.\textsuperscript{110} Erasmus eventually collected 4151 adages or phrases, which are still appreciated today.\textsuperscript{111}

The proverbs in Erasmus’ day were used to make a logical point in an argument, and became a form of rhetorical composition. Books of phrases became widely popular and were used as an educational tool. The sayings were categorized under subject, and writers would use them to inspire a more sophisticated composition. Erasmus likens this writing method to bees taking pollen and transforming it into honey.\textsuperscript{112} He respected the ancient classics and used them as a foundation for his writing method, and his work was an important part of sixteenth century education.\textsuperscript{113} An example of this method is an epigram-like poem of Erasmus in the style of the first century CE Latin poet Martial: “To write out proverbs is easy, they say, and it’s true. But to write them in thousands a grind! If you don’t believe me, try it yourself. Of my efforts you’ll soon grow more kind.”\textsuperscript{114} This study of proverbs included human philosophy, values and customs, and the worldview of the classics as seen through this period in history. The collections of Erasmus were from the Renaissance humanist school, which brought the proverbs to the English readers of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{115}

Francis Bacon (1561-1626 CE) is known as one of the first English aphorists. He wrote in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Bacon collected apothegms of other writers, and included Latin maxims in his own writings; an example is his \textit{de Auxiliis}.\textsuperscript{116} His aphorisms are said to be connected to political matters, and deal with material success, rather than interior contemplation. He helped to establish the English aphorism with “kind of a practical and prosaic wordliness.”\textsuperscript{117} Bacon wrote \textit{The New

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Erasmus, ix, xii, xxxi, xxxiv.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Erasmus, xl.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Erasmus, xxxiii.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Erasmus, xxxv.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} Erasmus, xx.
  \item \textsuperscript{115} Erasmus, xxxvi.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} L. P. Smith, 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{117} L. P. Smith, 17.
\end{itemize}
Organon (Novum Organum) in 1620, and divided it into two books of aphorisms. He believed an author’s ability to write in aphorisms portrayed his or her aptitude and skill.\textsuperscript{118} He said, “Aphorisms, not to be ridiculous, must be made out of the pith and heart of sciences.”\textsuperscript{119} Bacon’s aphorisms were also used to share scientific research.

The title Novum Organum came from Aristotle’s Organon, also known as Instrument for Rational Thinking. Bacon developed a new method of scientific study that differed from Aristotle’s logical method of using comparative study to assert a hypothesis that eventually proposed a certain conclusion. Bacon’s method used investigation of the hypothesis, resulting from collected data found in the natural world. He used Aristotle’s classical scientific theory as the basis for developing a new Renaissance method of the scientific observation of nature.\textsuperscript{120} Bacon wrote his aphorisms in the New Organon on natural histories. The aphorisms discuss collected data from such experiments as the development of diving bells.\textsuperscript{121}

Bacon’s scientific aphorisms such as, “All man can do to achieve results is to bring natural bodies together and take them apart; nature does the rest internally,”\textsuperscript{122} reflect his new philosophy of inductive theory, which was a part of the foundation of English empiricism.\textsuperscript{123} The New Organon is an example of the advanced Renaissance aphorism. Like Erasmus, Bacon used the classics of Aristotle to enhance his own style, and brought the aphoristic writing genre back into popular use in England.

According to Logan Pearsall Smith, the writer of the perfect aphorism is Francois de La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680 CE).\textsuperscript{124} La Rochefoucauld was a soldier and a courtier. His Maxims was published in 1665, and polished throughout its five editions, when in 1678 it

\textsuperscript{119} Bacon, xviii.
\textsuperscript{120} Bacon, xii, xiii.
\textsuperscript{121} Bacon, xvii.
\textsuperscript{122} Bacon, 33. Book 1: Aphorism 4.
\textsuperscript{123} Bacon, xxv.
\textsuperscript{124} L. P. Smith, 17.
was finished. He wrote a great deal about fortune, which is the topic of more than twenty maxims; he did not mention God in any of the maxims, although moral reflections were his theme. He wrote several long maxims, but generally wrote brief one-liners, which he sometimes gathered in clusters to convey a particular topic, such as praise. The maxims allow the reader to experience human nature through others, as in a mirror, reflecting the reader’s self back. La Rochefoucauld’s aphorisms were based on his observations, and lent the idea of introspection subliminally, using humor and a variety of predicaments to make people laugh at themselves.

He believed people were misinformed about goodness, and said, “The love of justice for most involves the fear of suffering injustice.” People are not really being just, but are acting out of fear for themselves. “The constancy of the wise is only the art of containing their agitation in their hearts,” embodies La Rochefoucauld’s philosophy that virtue consists, in part, of appearance rather than reality. The maxims are images of human imperfections, containing a kind and humorous wisdom. They say to be aware of one’s own faults, and confess them gladly. These adages are not so very different from the ancient Greek maxim “Know thyself.”

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662 CE), a French mathematician and scientist, was famous for his Pensées, a book of religious sayings written shortly before he died. Pascal’s aphorisms were known for their perceptive intuition of human nature. He was involved with Jansenism, a religious movement in the seventeenth century that was opposed to the Jesuits, and this greatly affected Pascal’s religious beliefs, but the Pensées also present his own

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126 La Rochefoucauld, xii.
127 La Rochefoucauld, viii.
128 La Rochefoucauld, ix, x. Looking-glass aphorisms called “reflexions.”
129 La Rochefoucauld, x.
130 La Rochefoucauld, 7.
132 L. P. Smith, 13.
original philosophy. He used the Bible and the writings of Saint Augustine to collect his thoughts or pensées, and wrote the sayings while sick. The Pensées was written as an apologia for Christianity as a remedy for the confusion created by the free thinkers who were popular in France. The aphorisms are written in two parts about man: the first is without God; and the second part is with God. Pascal says that moralists have tried to teach man to know himself, but this should be done through nature itself, as well as man’s own human nature. His answer is to learn to love God, and discover the true Good.

The Pensées teach moral precepts, history, human justice, and reason. Pascal includes a literal and figurative study of scripture, and uses a theory called the Three Orders of things which is associated with Aristotle, and was popular in Pascal’s time. The aphorisms deal with advice on topics such as moderation, an example being “Feed the body little by little. Too much food produces little substance.” An example on the topic of instinct and reason is, “Our inability to prove quite forbids dogmatism. Our instinct for truth quite forbids skepticism.” Pascal’s aphorisms are deep and weighty, and magnify religious ideals. The political and religious struggles of his time are included, and the book provides an excellent example of the diversity of the Renaissance aphorism.

These aphorists provide a wide variety of styles that became popular during the Renaissance. The work of Humanism helped to establish the writings of those like Erasmus. These studies of mankind developed into the humanities, and the use of the ancient classics became the foundation of the new sciences, literature, and philosophy. The Renaissance aphorisms and parables were an extension of classical and wisdom writings that developed into their own literary genre that is in use today.

133 Pascal, xv, xvi, xix.
134 Pascal, x, xiii.
135 Pascal, ix.
136 Pascal, x, xi.
137 Pascal, xi, xii, xv.
138 Pascal, 29.
139 Pascal, 87.
APHORISMS IN THE MODERN WORLD

The aphorism with its long history, was continued in the nineteenth century by writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882 CE), and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900 CE). Both philosophers wrote sayings that could be compared to the masters of old. Their aphorisms provide access to the “mysterious depths of experience.” 140 Emerson said, “Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton, is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men [did] but what they thought.” 141 The nineteenth century aphorists created their own sayings, their wisdom was original. In Human, All Too Human, Nietzsche said, “Truth will have no Gods before It. The belief in truth begins with the doubt of all truths in which one has previously believed.” 142 Nietzsche also said, “La Rochefoucauld and those other French masters in examining the soul…resemble skillful marksmen who hit the bull’s eye again and again – the bull’s eye of human nature.” 143 For Nietzsche and Emerson, the aphorism is the study of nature and experience. They enable us to know ourselves and through this acquire some sense of wisdom.

Modern aphorisms are concerned with the same ideas and questions that have been puzzling humanity from the beginning of time. The desires and longings of the heart, our sense of identity, the nature of good and evil, time, religion, and the afterlife are common themes found in today’s aphorism. 144 They are used to express the need to find spiritual fulfillment and understanding of the cultural experience of the twentieth century.

In The Way of the White Clouds, Lama Anagarika Govinda (1898-1985) described a 1960’s pilgrimage to Tibet, before China attempted to absorb that nation’s culture. His writings brought Buddhist teachings to the West. He wrote, “Alone I wander a thousand

140 Gross, ix.
143 La Rochefoucauld, vii.
144 Gross, v, vi.
miles…and I ask my way from the white clouds.”  

In *The Book – On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are*, Alan Watts (1915-1973) explores the modern experience of self-realization. His aphoristic observations portray ancient wisdoms in a 1960’s historical context. An example of this is, “In Genesis the primordial stuff ‘without form, and void’ is symbolized as water, and, as water does not wave without wind, nothing can happen until the Spirit of God moves upon its face.” He continues with a discussion of God’s order, and the idea of the problem of evil. Another twentieth century figure, Elie Wiesel (b. 1928) wrote about his personal experience with the Holocaust of World War II. He mentioned a proverb found on a door at Auschwitz, “Work is liberty.”  

Aphorisms reflect the observations of their author, in this case, Wiesel’s first days in a Nazi death camp.

Religious wisdom and its teachings are found in the recesses of all aphorisms. The search for a better life and knowledge of the divine was the power behind the aphorism. In regards to its design and chance, Herman Hesse (1877-1962) said, “Everything is worthy of notice, for everything can be interpreted.” All things that we have experienced culminated in the belief of a divine power. This is carried over into the present; we study and observe humanity, trying to find the truth or the answers that have been haunting society since the beginning of time. Carl Jung wrote in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, “The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it.”

The twentieth century philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952) discussed the need for religious guidance in *The Life of Reason*. He said, “That fear first created the gods is

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149 Gross, 48.
perhaps as true as anything so brief could be on so great a subject.” The fear of not attaining a safe and prosperous life, along with a divine blessing. G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936), a modern theologian said, “It is not enough for a religion to include everything and something as well. It must answer that deep and mysterious human demand for something as distinct from the demand for everything.” The Jewish theologian Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) wrote, “Every miracle can be explained, after the event. Not because the miracle is no miracle, but because explanation is explanation.” He believed people fulfilled an inner need by finding a rational scientific reason after the miraculous experience occurred. The French poet Paul Valéry (1871-1945) wrote in *Mauvaises Pensées et Autres* in 1942, “God made everything out of nothing. But the nothingness shows through.” The aphorism has thus been a part of the human search for the enlightened path which is as important today as it was when the Chinese kings used the *Yijing* to make state decisions, and when Jesus taught people how to find eternal life.

**The Staying Power of Aphorisms**

It is clear that aphorisms have a very long life. Jesus’ sayings, such as “Go the extra mile,” or “the good Samaritan,” are more than two thousand years old, and are still in use today. The Gospel of Matthew 5:41 says, “If anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.” This is used to express the idea of doing more than what is needed, or suggesting that someone should try harder. It may stem from an old Persian law that the Romans used which legally forced people to carry their equipment for only one mile. It may also be a form of passive resistance, as Jesus taught, to relinquish your legal rights and help others, while maintaining a higher place in God’s care. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King both applied this non-violent method to their philosophies.
Aphorisms are the reflection of humanity’s observations and experiences of life. They provide guidance through truthful and ethical lessons, teaching enlightenment and the pathway to happiness. They have been used in this way since the first people shared their knowledge in ancient Mesopotamia. In the next chapter Jesus’ sayings will be examined in their aphoristic form, providing a better understanding of how the aphorism, maxim, and proverb may provide wisdom. Jesus used the aphorism in his parables to share his personal religious experience. His metaphorical stories would capture the listeners’ attention, bringing them into his teaching. The audience would unconsciously use their personal worldview to examine the story’s hidden meaning, thus deciding on its true value, and how they could apply the lessons in their own lives.

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CHAPTER 2

THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

The aphoristic sayings of Jesus are the core of his parabolic teachings. Known as the logia, they are predominantly found in the gospels of Mark (written ca. 70 CE), Matthew (ca. 85 CE), and Luke (ca. 90 CE). Through the use of such literary devices as simile and metaphor, Jesus used the aphorism, maxim, and proverb to bring experiences from everyday life to express his philosophy to the people. He used the aphorism to explain such themes as the Kingdom of Heaven, forgiveness, and love. Although Jesus’ teachings were preserved by followers, some that appear in the New Testament contain additions that are not from the original sayings. The aphorisms, however, may have preserved the original message.

This chapter explores five clusters of the Jesus’ sayings that contain aphorisms conveying his teachings. These clusters may include as few as two, or as many as five different aphorisms, yet the cluster as a whole presents a unified message. This chapter also provides a comparative examination of other aphorisms that demonstrate both similarities and differences in aphorisms that pre-date the Jesus’ sayings. These sayings from Jesus illustrate the fact that aphorisms provide wisdom, humility, promote self-cultivation, use the knowledge found in nature to demonstrate their message, and present the teachings for living a more harmonious life.

The logia are in the Synoptic Gospels; synoptic meaning ‘view together,’ because these three gospels include close parallels containing similar sequence and wording in stories, parables and sayings. Portions of Mark’s gospel are found in Matthew and Luke, as well as material unique to Matthew and Luke.156 Pieces of another sayings source called ‘Q,’ or Quelle (50-70 CE), a lost writing which may have originated from an early Christian church collection, have been found within the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Q

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does not contain a narrative on the life of Jesus, but is a collection of his sayings. These aphoristic sayings cover discipleship, Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount, Luke’s Sermon on the Plain, and missionary discourse. There are also some parallels in the Gospel of Thomas (ca. 50-70 CE), another sayings collection, which was found at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945. A second Greek source containing parts of the Thomas Gospel was found in the Oxyrhynchus Fragments, first published in 1897. Like Q, The Coptic Gospel of Thomas is not a narrative, but an early Christian sayings collection. Both are thought to be a source of parts of the synoptic collection.

THE FIRST APHORISTIC CLUSTER: THE DEMANDS OF JESUS

The “demands of following Jesus” is a cluster of aphorisms in parallel form found in both Matthew and Luke, with Luke containing an extra saying. The teaching concerns discipleship, and the difficulty it involves. John Dominic Crossan says the cluster means “wisdom comes, calls, fails, and in retribution, departs, and abandons the refusers to their fate.” This may be a reasonable interpretation, as Jesus tries to take them as disciples, but they do not have unconditional faith in his method, and consequently are left behind.

Matthew’s version begins with Jesus preparing to leave the crowds, and go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, meaning the eastern shore, a possible metaphor for reaching a new level in his ministry (Matt. 8:18). Luke starts with Jesus and his disciples being on the road. Both renditions continue with a parallel, which is a similar saying or story from another gospel. Matthew uses a scribe who calls Jesus “teacher,” which indicates a Torah student asking to study with his rabbi. The individual is referred to as “someone” in Luke 9:57. This prospective disciple offers to follow Jesus wherever he goes, and Jesus says:

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. (Matthew 8:20)

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158 Kloppenborg , 84.
159 Keck, 229, Vol. 8.
161 Keck, Vol. 8, 229.
Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. (Luke 9:58)

The saying has its source in Sayings Gospel Q and Thomas 86, possibly originating as an independent oral saying.\(^{162}\) It contains an antithetical parallelism, or two aphorisms of an opposing context, that are synonymous halves. Another example of a synonymous imperative in a Jesus aphorism is, “Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.”\(^{163}\) The reversal of meaning in the opposing halves is a rhetorical device that uses striking and surprising effects to capture the attention of the listener in order to persuade them to think about the lesson and to enable them to more easily remember the aphorism.

These aphorisms provide a good example of Jesus’ utilization of nature to communicate his message. Jesus’ use of nature symbolism is effective in producing a clear and visual understanding. He drew upon familiar patterns in nature to illustrate an idea or lesson found in similar patterns of human behavior.\(^{164}\) Here he used the analogy of foxes and birds to draw the hearers’ attention, and help them better understand the moral of the saying.

The laws of nature have been used metaphorically to help convey the understanding in the aphorisms of all cultures. They were used in Egyptian wisdom sayings and the Hebrew Bible, as well as the Dao De Jing and Buddhist proverbs. For example, there are a number of classical allusions to foxes. Rudolf Bultmann asserts that this Jesus aphorism originated from folklore, and he compares the saying to Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus 9*.\(^{165}\) John Nolland compares it to Homer’s *Odyssey 18*.\(^{166}\) Writings such as Pliny’s studies of animals in natural history, and the animal lore taken from ancient fables, were used to create moralistic sayings.

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\(^{165}\) Bultmann, 28, 98 n. 1.

*The Adages of Erasmus* contains an analysis of ancient animal lore, using the same technique Jesus did with the foxes and birds, in the proverb, “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog one big thing.” The saying compares the hedgehog’s single talent of rolling into a protective ball, to the multiple ones of a fox; with the moral being some people do more with less, than those with greater ability. Parts of the fox and the hedgehog proverb are attributed to Zenodotus who quoted both Archilochus and Ion of Chios. Athenaeus used the hedgehog proverb in his *Phoenicia*, and Plutarch in his essay, “Whether Land or Sea Animals are Cleverer.” This proverb evolved into slightly different fables, with new additions, each containing a moral of its own.

The idea of animals having all their needs provided creates a dramatic contrast to the homeless state in the life of Jesus and his disciples. The homelessness logion here has been compared to the story of Sophia or the goddess of wisdom who tries to find a home, and does so in Sirach 24:8 in the tents of Jacob. Again it can be found in 1 Enoch 42:1-2, where Sophia has nowhere to lay her head in the world of humans, and is forced to return to heaven. Ronald Piper feels this has a connection to the saying about the Son of Man’s homeless plight, and is a precursor to Jesus’ persecution.

A second example from the cluster addressing demands of Jesus is when a would-be disciple says he will gladly follow Jesus, but he must first attend to his father’s funeral. Jesus answers him in the following aphorism:

> Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead. (Matthew 8:22)

> Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:60)

This aphorism has its source in Q, but does not have a parallel in Thomas. In Luke Jesus then instructs the disciple to go and tell people about the Kingdom of God, but in both versions the man is told to abandon his dead father. The aphoristic theme of proper social

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167 Erasmus, 87.
168 Erasmus, 87-89.
171 Funk, 160.
behavior which includes filial duty is a part of this saying although it challenges society’s norms. In Israel, it was an important tradition for the son to take responsibility for the burial of the parents. A son would suffer public disgrace if he allowed someone else to bury his father.172 Jesus believed it to be more important for the man to join him, and help to establish his new philosophy.173 Edward Hoskyns argues that this aphorism indicates that, “It is upon those who have left all and followed him that the whole weight of the law of God falls, with the confident hope that they can bear it and undertake a greater purification.”174

The aphorism has also been interpreted as the spiritually dead are left to bury the physically dead, while the spiritually alive can be like the disciple, and preach about the Kingdom of God.175 It may be a disputed translation, or someone translating Jesus from Aramaic to Greek, originally having said something like “that business can take care of itself,”176 or leave the undertaker to tend to the dead, as in Egyptian folklore, where the dead really do tend to the dead.177 The Hellenistic belief in the underworld could also help illuminate this aphorism, and is found in Euripides, Andromache 849, where it says the dead are taken care of by the dead, and the living are in the charge of the world of the living.178

A third aphorism is included in the Luke parallel, when another disciple says he will follow, but must say goodbye to his family. Jesus answers him:

No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)

The aphorism is solely found in Luke, and not in Q, Matthew, or Thomas. This is in the form of a pious warning, and invites the idea of introspection.179 The disciples left all things behind to put themselves in the care of their teacher, and tried to emulate the teacher’s

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172 Funk, 161; Hagner, Vol. 33a, 217; Keck, Vol. 9, 217.
175 Keck, Vol. 9, 217.
176 Hagner, Vol. 33a, 218.
177 Bultmann, 29 n. 1. Bultmann says it is “improbable that it was an independent saying: it seems a matter of course that it refers to some specific occasion.” He lists it as “imaginary,” 28.
178 Nolland, Vol. 35B, 543.
179 Bultmann, 81, 105, 119; Funk, 316.
social behavior as well as his philosophy. In this case the followers had to faithfully and completely place themselves in Jesus’ keeping, thus not fulfilling any other social responsibilities. Jesus said one’s true family was found in the people who follow the will of God. Although this goes against the idea in other aphorisms of fulfilling one’s duty, this is a crucial part in the meaning of discipleship, and the removal of old affiliations is a part of the role.

The saying about the plow has a parallel in the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:19-21 when he found his disciple Elisha at the plow, and asked him to follow. Elisha said he would gladly, but must say goodbye to his family. The parallel compares the prophecy of Jesus to Elijah. It is also a metaphor in that if one looks back, and does not look where they are plowing, “the furrow will be crooked.”

Other writings have been compared to this aphorism. The Greek aphorist Hesiod wrote in *Works and Days*, “One who will attend to his work and drive a straight furrow and is past the age for gaping after his fellows, but will keep his mind on his work.” Another example is an Akkadian Proverb dated 1800-1600 BCE, which says, “May a crooked furrow not produce a stalk! May it not yield seed.” The furrow was a familiar part of everyday life, and probably was used metaphorically for many things. The plow may represent the tool or method used to produce the harvest, or the teachings found in Jesus’ philosophy. But this is a good example of the rhetorical common ground found in aphorisms.

This cluster of aphorisms explains the rules of discipleship, which is a part of the theme of proper social behavior. The student must act in accordance with his accepted school. The idea that one must take up his cross and follow includes the need to participate in the humiliation and persecution that Jesus experienced. The follower must give up the old traditions in order to find the new one, and the old spiritual laws must be put aside to understand the new teachings of Jesus’ ministry. The followers to whom the aphorisms were

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180 Bultmann, 28 n. 1, 29. Mark 3:35.
181 Keck, Vol. 9, 217.
182 Nolland, Vol. 35B, 543.
184 Hoskyns, 143.
directed did not relinquish their personal needs, however, and thus were proven not worthy of Jesus’ difficult path of discipleship.

The themes of self-cultivation, courage, and virtue could be used in reference to the demands of discipleship. The three prospective followers did not possess these traits, in that they could not release their fear of leaving the established social order, and trust in Jesus’ radical philosophy. The theme of nature was expressed through the adage about the foxes and birds having a better life than his disciples, but this was a material life, and Jesus was teaching the spiritual path. The aphoristic idea of the Way or the true path to life can be firmly realized through Jesus’ sayings. Jesus said to not look back at the old ways, but to follow him whole heartedly in order to find a new spiritual life.

**THE SECOND APHORISTIC CLUSTER: NO ANXIETIES**

The second aphoristic cluster is called “No Anxieties,” or “Do Not Worry.” It is included in the disciple sayings, and teaches the universal theme of experiential wisdom, in this case the pointlessness of having anxieties over the necessities of life. The first aphorism contains an opening admonition:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. (Matthew 6:25a)

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. (Luke 12:22)

The source of these parallel admonitions is Q and Thomas 36. There are also verses matching Thomas 36 in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 655:36. The phrase ‘therefore I tell you’ is an opening exhortation that Jesus uses to strengthen his point. The aphorism is an independent saying that possibly was an older adage once used on its own. Put together in this cluster of other older aphorisms, it is considered to be one of the longest dialogues of Jesus’ original sayings. This wisdom admonition introduces the lesson of the collection

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185 Piper, 25.
187 Bultmann, 82.
188 Funk, 152, 340.
which will be fully explained by the final aphorism. It gives the instructions not to worry about life, or wonder whether one’s physical needs will be met, as it is a basis of Jesus’ experience that all things come through the providence of God. Worry will only lead to anxiety which is a condition that includes both the rich and the poor, and is based on a rational observation of life.\(^{189}\) It is wise to be aware that anxiety is harmful, and a waste of time.\(^{190}\)

The next verse asserts the value of life:

\[
\text{Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?} \quad (\text{Matthew 6:25b})
\]

\[
\text{For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.} \quad (\text{Luke 12:23})
\]

Matthew uses a rhetorical question, while Luke presents a supporting parallel aphorism, strengthening the argument of the opening admonition.\(^{191}\) A practical and everyday experience that all people must contend with is being used to make people question the meaning of life. These words are meant to release people from their worries and fear, leading them to more lofty thoughts like self-cultivation which may direct them to an awareness of a higher power.\(^{192}\) Jesus is asking the hearers to look beyond their physical world, and focus on God.

The next four aphorisms in this cluster contain a form of rhetorical questions that use nature to help prove the meaning of the cluster.\(^{193}\)

\[
\text{Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?} \quad (\text{Matthew 6:26})
\]

\[
\text{Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither store house nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!} \quad (\text{Luke 12:24})
\]

This statement may have been an independent saying which was added to enhance Jesus’ lesson.\(^{194}\) It also uses nature as a metaphor to clarify the moral while entertaining the

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\(^{190}\) Hagner, Vol. 33a, 163. Sirach 30:24 “Jealousy and anger shorten life, and anxiety brings on old age to soon.”

\(^{191}\) Piper, 26.

\(^{192}\) Keck, Vol. 9, 259.

\(^{193}\) Piper, 26.
hearer. The “foxes have holes” aphorism also used the term birds of the air. The ravens do not have to worry about their lives, as they are taken care of by God. The point of the argument in the first rhetorical question is that humanity’s value to God is greater than the creatures, whose physical needs are provided for. People must continue to work, but should remember God’s providence, and realize that they are cared for. Jesus does not tell people to stop farming, but rather to be aware of a higher reality or God’s kingdom. Bultmann thought there was a special comparison between this aphorism and this Hebrew proverb, although it says exactly the opposite: “Go to the ant, you lazy bones; consider its ways, and be wise. Without having any chief or officer or ruler, it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest” (Prov. 6:6-8). This is an old saying that uses a similar style as Jesus used, and is thought to be “an enlargement of an original mashal (proverb), where some Wisdom poet has given spiritual amplification to some popular proverb.” It was common practice for Gospel writers to combine old sayings to create a new parable. The second argumentative aphorism continues the lesson on anxiety:

And can any of you by worrying, add a single hour to your span of life? (Matthew 6:27)

And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? (Luke 12:25-26)

The rhetorical question of this saying leads to the lesson that it is useless to worry because it will not change anything. It will certainly not increase one’s lifespan, let alone how they will make a living. It would be better to preoccupy one’s mind with more logical and positive thought. This saying is believed to be an “intrusive insertion,” and was later added to increase the effectiveness of the lesson. It is different because it does not use food, clothing, and an animal metaphor to make its point. The lifespan is a form of nature, and the universal theme of wisdom is used to enlighten the reader to what is ultimately

194 Bultmann, 88.
196 Bultmann, 82.
198 Bultmann, 81.
important in this possibly independent aphorism. John Nolland compares the saying to the writings on “a small amount” meaning the length or measure of one’s life in Diogenes Laertius, Plato 3.11; and Psalms 39:5.\textsuperscript{199} The third argumentative aphorism in this sub-cluster asks:

And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. (Matthew 6:28, 29)

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. (Luke 12:27)

The rhetorical question asks why people worry about their clothes and points out that the beauty of nature is far more wondrous than the most impressive work of mankind.\textsuperscript{200} The lily metaphor for clothing is a parallel to the ravens and food. This is nature allegorically used in a feminine sense, as women’s work entails spinning and toiling, and the making of clothing. The parallel food aphorism included the men’s work, using sowing, reaping, and gathering of food to illustrate the everyday life experience of the hearer.\textsuperscript{201} The use of nature reflects the inner being of God that created the flowers that were of greater value than all the wealth of Solomon. The phrase “yet I tell you” again is used to emphasize the comparison of the lilies to Solomon, who rarely appears in the New Testament, and may suggest the idea of an older aphorism, taken from a writer’s collection of popular sayings.\textsuperscript{202} But Solomon is traditionally used to imply wisdom and wealth, and is a metaphor for the greater power of God in providing life’s necessities.\textsuperscript{203} The fourth argumentative aphorism says:

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith? (Matthew 6:30)

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith! (Luke 12:28)

\textsuperscript{199} Nolland, Vol. 35B, 692.
\textsuperscript{200} Nolland, Vol. 35B, 693.
\textsuperscript{201} Hagner, Vol. 33A, 165.
\textsuperscript{202} Bultmann, 88; Hagner, Vol. 33A, 165; Nolland, Vol. 35B, 693; Piper, 27.
\textsuperscript{203} Piper, 27.
The rhetorical question asks how much more God cares about people than he cares about the grass, and all that people have to do is have faith. The clothing of the insignificant grass and the brief time frame of today and tomorrow illustrates the divine providence of God. The disciples need to believe in God’s providence, and that God will supply their needs. This is another way of acquiring wisdom. Through this wisdom the disciple will have a better ability in cultivating a more disciplined and courageous faith. This awareness of God’s providence enables the disciple to find the truth and the path to the good life. The last four aphorisms support the idea of not worrying about life’s earthly necessities, and to be aware of more important matters. Through the use of nature and rhetorical questioning, the aphoristic lesson leads up to the final argument and key to Jesus’ instruction.

The concluding aphorisms in this cluster deal with the message of God’s promise of the Kingdom. The disciples have been instructed to not concentrate on material things, but to look towards honoring God and the Kingdom, since through this, all things will be provided. Jesus tells the hearer not to worry about anything, as the ‘heavenly Father’ knows what is needed and it is his “pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32b). The last aphorisms of “No Anxieties” recapitulate the meaning of the entire lesson:

Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:31, 33, 34)

And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. (Luke 12:29, 31)

Jesus’ moral and the key to the cluster is to concentrate on the kingdom of God, and one’s material needs will be provided for. Do not spend any time worrying, as this is an empty pursuit. Instead concentrate on faith in God’s love and grace, and one’s actions will be guided to find all the things that are needed in this world. The disciple should not fret about the past or the future, but live in the present. Confucius may call this perfecting

\[\text{\textsuperscript{204} Hagner, Vol. 33A, 165.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{205} Piper, 19. The key of the cluster is found in the last sayings.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{206} Hagner, Vol. 33A, 166, 167.}\]
one’s character; he said, “The gentleman is easy of mind, while the small man is always full of anxiety.” In the cluster of aphorisms about anxiety, Jesus uses nature to illustrate the providential nature of God.

**THE THIRD APHORISTIC CLUSTER: SALT AND LIGHT**

It is a popular adage to call a good-hearted person the salt of the earth. This saying includes parallels from all the Synoptic Gospels. It is a teaching for the disciples; telling them they are “what they are,” not because of their own actions, but through the teachings of Jesus.

For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another. (Mark 9:49, 50)

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. (Matthew 5:13)

Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they throw it away. Let anyone with ears to hear listen! (Luke 14:34, 35)

These sayings have their origins in Q and Mark. Matthew contributed the famous opening adage “You are the salt of the earth.” The other salt aphorism is attributed to a Jesus’ saying. Jesus is referring to the disciples as the salt. The rhetorical question about restoring the saltiness of tasteless salt may be a metaphor for the disciples regressing or falling back from their mission, and their need to purify themselves. Salt does not become impure by itself, but through being mixed with other ingredients. Lack of salt may be translated as foolish instead of tasteless, again being a reminder to the disciples not to backslide or regress in their practice. It is also used as a testing of one’s salt or character,

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207 Confucius, 91.
208 Keck, Vol. 8, 183.
209 Funk, 139.
210 Keck, Vol. 8, 181.
211 Piper, 131.
where a person is put through a trial of their integrity and faith. 212 Jesus’ disciples were put through many trials in his name.

Salt with fire could be a metaphor for food preservation. 213 It was used for sacrifice in Leviticus 2:13, “You shall not omit from your grain offerings the salt of the covenant with your God; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.” Salt was used as purification in ritual, cooking, and medicine. In Genesis 19:26 Lot’s wife turned into a pillar of salt as a consequence of looking back. The Dead Sea may be the source of the tasteless salt. In Judges 9:45 Abimelech destroyed a city’s lands by sowing them with salt, a common method of warfare. 214

The point of the aphorism is the relationship of the disciples and Jesus. If they regress or lose their saltiness, they are losing their connection with Jesus, and have to find a way to restore their faith. 215 The idea of having salt and being at peace may indicate the covenant with God in Leviticus 2:13, but also the disciple or Christian is the salt, and as it says in Ezekiel 43:24, “You shall present them before the Lord, and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the Lord.” Jesus, through his words, made his disciples the salt of the earth, and like him were to become sacrifices for his ministry.

The next aphorism contains metaphors on light, and a parallel to the salt of the earth proverb that includes a Q saying:

Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lamp stand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. (Mark 4:21, 22)

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

212 Keck, Vol. 8, 640.
213 Keck, Vol. 8, 640.
215 Keck, Vol. 9, 293.
No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar, but on the lamp stand so that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. (Luke 11:33, 34)

There are two more parallels, in Matthew 6:22 which is the “eye and light” saying; and in Luke 8:16 which says the same thing as Luke 11:33, but with the “hidden brought to light” saying that is in Mark 4:22. The source of the “hill city” is Matthew and Thomas 32. The “lamp and bushel” is found in Q, Mark, and Thomas 33. The source of “hidden brought to light” is Mark, Q, and Thomas 5, 6. The “eye and light” originated with Q. The “light of the world,” and “let your light shine” came from Matthew.²¹⁶ The interconnection of these aphorisms illustrates the different sources of Jesus’ sayings within the Synoptic Gospels.

Matthew wrote “You are the light of the world,” which is another metaphor for the disciples, who are both the salt and light of the world. Like the “salt” aphorism, this parallel saying also teaches the lesson of not regressing in one’s faith, and becoming foolish. The adage inspires introspection and fortitude, helping the disciples not to waver or compromise. It is used to symbolically measure one’s “reception of the light,” and the “eye’s soundness.”²¹⁷

The light sayings come in several categories: the light of the world; lighting a lamp, and placing it on a stand to light the entire room; using the eye as the lamp of the body, to see if it is full of light or darkness; and the idea that nothing is hidden that will not be brought to light. The hilltop city that cannot be hidden is thought to be a metaphor for the disciples’ self-evaluation of their place in the world.²¹⁸ The disciples’ mission or light is used to illuminate the world, like bringing a lamp into a dark room, and placing it on a table in order to light up the entire room. Their light, like the hilltop city, is physically visible, and would be difficult to hide.²¹⁹ The similitude applied to the correct use of the lamp is used to

²¹⁶ Funk, 56, 139, 332.
²¹⁷ Piper, 130, 131.
²¹⁸ Funk, 139, 140.
represent the proper place of the gospel or message of the disciples, which means it should be shared with the world.  

The idea of a lamp being placed under a bushel, jar, or bed is another metaphor. Hoskyns says it may represent the historical realization that Jesus and the disciples would bring about the light of Christianity. The metaphor of the lamp represents Jesus or the kingdom. The purpose of the Word or Light is to transform things, not to hide them away so that things can stay the same. The “hidden brought to light” aphorism is a warning telling people not to hide things, good or bad. The teaching says there are no secrets, and could be interpreted as arguing that Jesus did not use esoteric instruction. His private teachings to the disciples later became manifest in the light through their spreading of the gospel. In a small village it is difficult to keep secrets. It is human nature to be secretive, as well as to be curious about other people’s hidden experiences. So as in everyday life, metaphorically spirit can be likened to a secret, hidden like a seed in the soil, eventually sprouting into the light.

The “eye and light” aphorism is a Q saying which stems from the ancient belief that light was brought into the body through the eyes. They also believed that light was emitted from the eye to direct them in their activities. The ancients believed sight was created through the light within meeting with the light from without. Job 18:4 says his eyes were lamps that provided him with the ability to see. The people in Jesus’ day thought light was good, and attributed it to such things as life, morality, and happiness, while darkness was considered evil and the power behind death, ignorance, and unhappiness. Light

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220 Hoskyns, 129.
221 Hoskyns, 130.
222 Keck, Vol. 8, 575.
223 Keck, Vol. 9, 180.
224 Keck, Vol. 8, 575.
225 Keck, Vol. 9, 181.
226 Funk, 151.
228 Keck, Vol. 9, 244.
was a symbol for God, and candles and lamps were used in religious ceremonies to honor
God. It was a popular subject of proverbial lore, and the “eye and light” saying was a good
example. Parmenides believed, “Light…is as little related to darkness as being is related to
nonbeing.”229 The eye is the light of the disciple, and if the disciple is occupied with pure
and Godly thought, they will measure as a good person who is full of light.230 If the disciple
cannot honestly admit to being pure, and through self-evaluation, realizes they are tainted
with even a little darkness, they are impure, and not full of light. The saying is a metaphor
for testing one’s merit of discipleship.

The last aphorism’s only source is Matthew, and it instructs the disciples to let their
light shine. Donald Hagner says the idea of venerating God through teaching about the
kingdom is the purpose of the disciples light. They are the light of the world, and will use
this to help illumine others by teaching Jesus’ way of life. The ability to let their light shine
gives them the power to “manifest the presence of the kingdom.”231

THE FOURTH APHORISTIC CLUSTER: TURN THE OTHER
CHEEK

These aphorisms come from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and the Sermon on
the Plain in Luke. They center on nonviolence and loving one’s enemies:

Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn
the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak
as well. (Matthew 5:39, 40)

Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes
you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat
do not withhold even your shirt. (Luke 6:28, 29)

This saying originated in Q, and is shared in these parallel aphorisms of Matthew and
Luke. The sayings are meant to create a moment of understanding, and are designed to make
people look at aggressive behavior from a spiritual point of view. It is human nature to want
to retaliate when someone harms us, but Jesus is teaching a spiritual approach instead of an

230 Keck, Vol. 9, 244.
231 Hagner, Vol. 33A, 100.
emotional one.\textsuperscript{232} It may be more effective not to retaliate. When taken spiritually, it can help to prevent anger.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew places this cluster in his instructions on the Law segment. Mosaic Law and the Ten Commandments are examined through Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 5:17-48.\textsuperscript{233} This verse deals with nonviolence. Jesus says not to resist when dealing with evil. Ancient tradition used retributive justice, but Jesus wanted to eliminate retaliation. He believed the forces of evil were responsible for aggression. Violence, stealing, or any form of negative or unjust activity could be seen as evil.

Physically striking someone or suing them in court would generate danger and unhappiness, thus creating evil in God’s kingdom.\textsuperscript{234} Pacifism, on the other hand, could only help in eradicating the danger or unhappiness, and thus serves to remove evil from the world. Giving the aggressor one’s shirt as well as one’s coat creates an unusual, but positive effect, which promotes God’s kingdom on earth. Actions create reactions; goodness brings about more goodness, so it is logical not to resist evil with evil, but to turn evil away with goodness, not with more evil. The lesson teaches people how to better understand and prevent trouble through non-retaliation. Deuteronomy 32:35 says that revenge is in God’s domain, so it is better to let God deal with evil.\textsuperscript{235} Bultmann says “resisting evil” is a saying that requires a new “disposition of mind,” because it contains the distinctiveness of Jesus, which goes “beyond popular wisdom and piety.”\textsuperscript{236}

Luke used these sayings in his rendition of Sermon on the Plain after the “love your enemies” admonition. This is his interpretation of the Q version of “resist not evil.” He has Jesus instructing people to bless and pray for those who harm them. This is not the same as resistance to evil. It merely tells people to create a positive reaction within their own experience. It is the way of forgiveness, and demonstrates Jesus’ compassion and use of wisdom. Jesus says, “Forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing,” when he was

\begin{footnotes}
\item Funk, 143, 144, 145.
\item Perkins, 14 New Testament.
\item Keck, Vol. 8, 193, 194.
\item Hagner, Vol. 33A, 131.
\item Bultmann, 105.
\end{footnotes}
on the cross, indicating that people are not aware of their transgressions (Luke 23:34). It is more effective to forgive and be happy, instead of retaining anger and resentment. The rest of the cluster deals with the turning of one’s cheek, and giving one’s clothing away willingly, but instead of a cloak, it is the shirt off one’s back. This proverbial saying is popular today. People say “I gave the shirt off my back” in metaphorical jest; they are not using resistance, but it may indicate a loss, or giving one’s all, and a form of sacrifice.

Historically, these sayings were used in a time when people had to deal with the Roman occupation of Israel, and were greatly oppressed. The followers of Jesus were persecuted so they were used to negative treatment. Striking a person’s cheek was an offense, and a form of a curse. An example of this is the use of a glove to strike the opponent’s cheek as a challenge to a duel. The willingness to offer the other cheek was just as effective, and warded off retaliation. The loss of the coat logically is dealing with some form of theft, or a metaphor for a lawsuit.\(^{237}\) This is not an unknown idea. *Councils of Wisdom*, a Babylonian Wisdom text, says, “Do not return evil to the man who disputes with you; requite with kindness your evil-doer.”\(^{238}\) A more ironic rendition by Epictetus offers, “For this too is a very pleasant strand woven into the Cynic’s pattern of life; he must needs be flogged like an ass, and while he is being flogged he must love the men who flog him, as though he were the father and brother of them all.”\(^{239}\)

The Turn the Other Cheek cluster provides a genuine example of a Jesus’ saying. His method of passive resistance taught courage, humility, and proper social behavior, which are qualities found in aphorisms from all parts of the world.

**THE FIFTH APHORISTIC CLUSTER: KNOWING THE TIMES**

This saying follows the Loaves and Fishes miracle in Matthew’s gospel, and is said to represent the foretelling of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

\(^{237}\) Keck, Vol. 9, 147.


\(^{239}\) Nolland, Vol. 35A, 295.
When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. (Matthew 16:2, 3)

When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain;’ and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat;’ and it happens. You Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? (Luke 12:54-56)

This aphoristic cluster has Mark, Q, and Thomas 91:1, 2 for the sources. There is a parallel cluster called “No sign for this generation,” found in Mark 8:11-12; Matthew 12:38-40; Matthew 16:1, 4; and Luke 11:29-30, which have a source in Mark and Q. These sayings deal with the Pharisees asking Jesus for a sign in the sky as a temptation. He says there is no sign for this generation, but provides a metaphorical sign of Jonah and the Son of Man.240  In this cluster, “Knowing the Times,” he answered them cryptically by saying they could read the sky, but not the times. Jesus talked about signs of hardship that people do not see.241 He had been healing people, and providing the loaves and fishes to feed the crowds, which could be seen as a sign (Matthew 15:29-31). These signs could be Jesus’ death and resurrection, or the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.242

The ancient poetic proverb “Red sky at night, shepherds delight; red sky at morning, shepherds take warning” is still used today. It appeared possibly for the first time in this Jesus’ saying. It is quite accurate in predicting the weather. There were westerly winds that came in from the Mediterranean Sea, which forecast rain, and the southerly winds came in from the desert, enabling people to know if it would be scorching hot.243 Archer Taylor said weather proverbs come from superstition and tradition. Some are accurate, while others are inaccurate. The groundhog and his shadow predicting the winter forecast is an example, as is the saying “March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb.” The weather is also monitored through the observation of patterns in nature. Bird migration arrival or departure

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240 Funk, 72, 73.
times predict weather, as does plant growth, and the width of the black stripes on a furry
caterpillar. Weather proverbs usually use signs, are a way to transmit facts, and are
frequently entertaining.\textsuperscript{244}

Jesus acts with non-retaliation to the Pharisees, but refuses to give them the sign they
are looking for, as it is only a matter of time before he has to deal with them in Jerusalem and
his mission is complete. They were not able to read the times or understand what Jesus was
saying because their “hearts were hardened” and they could not hear.\textsuperscript{245} The signs of the
times included the coming of Jesus’ ministry, and the beginning of Christianity.\textsuperscript{246}

A sign is “something that stands for something else.”\textsuperscript{247} To be able to interpret a
sign, it has to be seen and acknowledged for what it is. You know it may rain if you hear
thunder, but it is not certain. Using intuition, it is possible to be sensitive to nature or aware
of life’s patterns around us. In Homer’s \textit{Iliad}, an eagle flying over a battlefield was thought
to be an omen, and the battle plans would be affected. Symbols, words, and sounds are
conveyors of signs.\textsuperscript{248} Jesus understood nature, and through metaphor, used it to create his
aphorisms. In this cluster, he used nature as an illustration of the things to come.

The Jesus’ sayings contain wisdom instruction on discipleship, and provide a pathway
to an enlightened and satisfying life through the realization of the providence of God. These
aphorisms help the disciple attain a level of cultivation that includes courage, faith, wisdom,
and the ability to discern the truth. Nature is a vital part of Jesus’ proverbs, and it is
employed to help the reader find a better understanding of the world. Love and forgiveness
are the heart of his original aphorisms.

The next chapter will deal with the history of the \textit{Yijing}, which is another religious
text that is quite different from the Synoptic Gospels, but contains the similar teachings of
humility, self-cultivation, and an understanding of nature. The last Jesus aphorism cluster

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{244} Archer Taylor, 109-113.  
\textsuperscript{245} Keck, Vol. 8, 341.  
\textsuperscript{247} Erwin Fahlbusch, ed., \textit{The Encyclopedia of Christianity}, Vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans
\textsuperscript{248} Fahlbusch, 3. \end{footnotes}
contains the parable of the signs, and has been used to describe the workings of the *Yijing*. Arthur Waley uses Jesus’ red sky proverb as an example of the rhyming sayings that are found in the omen text.249 He provides the outline:

A red sky at morning, unlucky. Unfavorable for seeing one’s superiors. A red sky at night, auspicious. Favorable for going to war.250

The *Yijing* uses the observations of nature and the familiar world found in the daily life of the community to bring the maxims to life, much like the sayings of Jesus. These aphorisms provide guidance and help the reader understand life.

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250 Waley, 122.
CHAPTER 3

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE YIJING OR BOOK OF CHANGES

The Book of Changes is a Chinese divination manual originally known as the Zhouyi, which in time acquired commentaries called the Ten Wings that formed the book of wisdom called the Yijing (or I Ching). Diviners would use the Yijing to foretell the future and help their patrons see more clearly into their affairs.\(^\text{251}\) It is both a philosophy and history book, considered to be one of the oldest sacred texts ever written. The Book of Changes contains certain laws of nature, and through the understanding and application of these laws, it is said one can live in harmony with the universe. In addition, the Yijing is considered to be the foundation of Daoism and Confucianism, and one of China’s Five Classics.\(^\text{252}\) It uses symbolism as a “system of notation, a tool for grouping associations and defining relations…a language of logic for describing the courses of actions and events.”\(^\text{253}\) These symbols are seen in the collection of sixty-four gua (hexagrams) that are derived from six yao (yin or yang lines), which are chosen through divination from the eight bagua (trigrams). A trigram contains three yao lines. There also are the guaci (hexagram statements), yaoci (line statements), and the Shiyi (Ten Wings).\(^\text{254}\) The Yijing presents the inner realms of Chinese consciousness and represents the spirit of Chinese civilization. It is a method of prediction and a study of cosmology.\(^\text{255}\) Being a powerful and effective stimulus on the Chinese culture for three thousand years, the


\(^{252}\) Wujing (Five Classics) – Yijing (Classic of Changes), Shijing (Classic of Poetry), Li Ji (Classic of Rites), Shujing (Classic of History), and the Linjing (Spring and Autumn Annals). Yuejing (Classic of Music). They are Confucian texts that were compiled in the Zhou dynasty (1045-256 BCE), and later established as a part of China’s educational policy in the early Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE).

\(^{253}\) Thomas Cleary, trans., I Ching – The Book of Changes (Boston: Shambhala, 1992), x.


Yijing grew from a sacred text originally used by the aristocracy, to a popular book employed by people in all levels of society. It extended throughout Asia and in time to the West where it is used today. In the present it is associated with binary mathematics, computer programming, the sixty-four codons of RNA and DNA in the genetic code, and has even been used to calculate prices on the stock-market.

The Yijing is a “cultural product, nurtured in identifiably ‘Chinese’ soil over an extraordinarily long period. It has been both a reflection of and an influence on Chinese political, social, artistic, and intellectual life.” It embodies the variety and oneness of the Chinese people, and is mirrored in the ways it was applied and interpreted by the different intellectuals, professionals, and individuals who put it into practice. The Book of Changes is the summation of the philosophy and teachings of the ancient Chinese sages. It supposedly contains historical and political activities that occurred in the lives of the earliest leaders or nobility. These leaders developed a state-approved standard version of the Yijing, protecting it from the unorthodox practices of the people.

The Yijing expounds on the “eternal truths which transcend the limitations of time and space, and which, therefore, are perennially new despite the incessant progress of the ages. In this sense its teachings pertain to the immutable principles of the universe.” It also works with human experience and shows how it can be used in unison with cosmic laws, as it instructs the proper way to react in any given circumstance. The Book of Changes can guide a person in adjusting to the changes of living that are controlled by cosmic rules. The teachings of the Yijing are believed to help to create an easier and more simplified method of living.

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261 Wei Tat, xiii.
The word Yi or I means ease and simplicity, change or transformation, as well as changelessness.\textsuperscript{262} Besides the image of change, the word Yi also has further meaning through its original characters. The ancient and modern character Yi (易), in addition to signifying permutation, represents a lizard, as in the shade-changing chameleon or its swift changes in movement. The character originally was a pictograph or hieroglyph that looked like a lizard.\textsuperscript{263} The early Yi had two parts, the upper Ri (日) meaning the sun, and the lower Yue (月) meaning the moon. Jing (經) means classical book. The theory was that the Yijing characterizes the natural changes found within the rising and setting of the sun and the moon, and their changing cycles that were an important part in the lives of the people.\textsuperscript{264} Agriculture was planned around the cosmic calendar, with the changes in the sun and moon mirroring a physical relationship to the people who created the Yijing, so it is logical that they would add this to the name of their Book of Changes. It is said, “What is easy is easy to understand…what is simple is simple to follow…the changes we observe in this world are subjective and are the other side of changelessness.”\textsuperscript{265} The sun may seem to change its position throughout the seasons, but it does not. The waxing and waning moon appears to change as well, but it really stays the same. The Book of Changes teaches that what gives the impression of change has in reality stayed the same, thus the meaning of changelessness.\textsuperscript{266}

Joseph Needham, a leading western scholar of the Yijing, says the Yijing is associated with resonance, for the reason that “different kinds of things in the universe resonate with one another.”\textsuperscript{267} He said the Book of Changes is “a collection of peasant omen texts, and accumulating a mass of material used in the practices of divination, it ended up as an elaborate system of symbols and their explanations.”\textsuperscript{268} The symbols reflect everything in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Wei Tat, xiv; Chung Wu, trans., The Essentials of the Yi Jing (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2003), xviii.
\item Wu, xvii, 546.
\item Wu, xviii.
\item Wu, xviii. (See Hexagram 15, Wilhelm edition).
\item Needham, Vol. 2, 304.
\item Needham, Vol. 2, 304.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the natural world. Nature and humans are joined together through the *Yijing*, and it has been modified to work with any experience in daily life.\(^{269}\) Richard Wilhelm, who provided one of the most popular translations of the book, gave an example of a law of nature as, “Evil is not destructive to the good alone, but inevitably destroys itself as well. For evil, which lives solely by negation, cannot continue to exist on its own strength alone.”\(^{270}\) His son, Hellmut Wilhelm, said the *Yijing* was, “Originally a book of oracles that answered yes or no to certain questions.”\(^{271}\) It evolved into a means of understanding life, and an appreciation of the embodiment of change.

This chapter does the following; it is a brief summary of the traditional and modernist history of the *Yijing*. The arguments of origin and dating are included, through the use of ancient texts, linguistics, and archaeology. The aphorism is a part of the *Yijing*’s history, and its role in the hexagram is examined. In the same genre as the original Synoptic Gospels, the aphorism was the medium through which the oral divination manual was transferred into the written *Yijing*.

**MYTHS OF ORIGINS**

The origins of the *Yijing* can be credited to either a traditional mythological history or a modern scholarly theory based on archaeological data, bronze inscriptions, and philological or linguistic analysis and comparison of ancient texts. Modern study has raised doubts about the mythology, but the original traditions are still accepted by many today. There is a Fuxi Temple in Qincheng, China that practices present-day festivals for China’s ancestor and mythological creator of the *Yijing*. The legendary ruler Fuxi was believed to have developed hunting and animal husbandry in Neolithic China. Historical pictures portray him with a snake or dragon-like body. Fuxi is believed to have lived around 2850 BCE.\(^{272}\) There are archeological studies of settlements along the Yellow River that could have been the home of Fuxi. The Longshan culture (ca. 3000-2000 BCE) practiced deer bone scapulimancy leaving

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\(^{272}\) Wu, xxvi; Wilhelm, *The I Ching, lvi*, 329.
burned and cracked ritual records (remnants) much like the oracle bones of the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BCE) and Zhou Dynasty (1045-256 BCE). They also left refined egg-shell thin black pottery with characters or glyphs. The Longshan left graves with ritual objects like jades and musical instruments possibly used by the shamans.\textsuperscript{273} Fuxi is found in the Wu Liang tomb shrine in bas-relief along with his sister-consort Nuwa with their T-square and compass.\textsuperscript{274} Han rulers were able to claim lineage from him, but ancient historians like Sima Qian (145-86 BCE) and Sima Tan (165-110 BCE) would not include divine heritage in their records.\textsuperscript{275}

In the \textit{Xici} or “Great Treatise” of the \textit{Yijing}, Fuxi is credited with the creation of the foundation of the \textit{Book of Changes}. A passage explains Fuxi’s meditation on the sky and the earth, the markings on the animals and birds, and how they lived in their surroundings. He studied the ways of nature, how things worked and how they effected change. From the countless things of nature, Fuxi is thought to have discovered the mystical laws of existence and believed these laws could provide clarity and direction. Through introspection and observing the order and activities in nature, Fuxi created the eight trigrams which emulated the laws of the universe.\textsuperscript{276} It is said that Fuxi witnessed a dragon-horse come out of the Yellow River. He saw certain markings on the beast’s back that may have inspired the trigrams, and the creation of the \textit{He} or \textit{Yellow River Map}. The creature may have been a tortoise or the wild Mongolian horse (\textit{Equus przewalskii}), which has stripe-like markings on its back.\textsuperscript{277} The stories of dragon-horses emerging from rivers were common in the second century BCE.\textsuperscript{278} The story of Fuxi may be about a fictitious ruler who lived along the Yellow River, but he may have been an actual holy man and leader of a clan. Society was advanced enough to provide the lifestyle that the myths describe in the Fuxi stories. Because

\textsuperscript{273} Loewe, 59, 60.
\textsuperscript{274} Needham, Vol. 1, 87, 164.
\textsuperscript{275} Loewe, 70, 974, 977.
\textsuperscript{276} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 328, 329.
\textsuperscript{278} Rutt, 164.
the trigrams predate historical records, they are believed to be ancient; and as their names are not found in the Chinese vocabulary, they may have originated in another culture.\textsuperscript{279}

The eight trigrams became a microcosmic reflection of a macrocosmic universe; they were a reflection of universal form. These trigrams were combined to form the sixty-four hexagrams. Scholars Wang Bi (226-249 CE) and Zhu Xi (1130-1200 CE) credited their invention to Fuxi.\textsuperscript{280} The Han scholar Zheng Xuan (127-200 CE) said the hexagrams were created by another ancient ruler, Shennong (ca. 2800 BCE), who came into power a century after Fuxi.\textsuperscript{281} He was the creator of pharmacology (medicinal plants) and agriculture and was called the divine husbandman. He supposedly invented the plow through the inspiration of the Hexagram 42 \textit{Yi/Increase}, which used the metaphors of earth and wood. The plow was a bent rod connected to a sharp stick that hoed the earth, and saved time and increased production. Shennong applied the ways of nature through the instruction found within the hexagrams.\textsuperscript{282} Like Fuxi, Shennong may have been a real leader or the name of a clan. There was a cult built around him consisting of educated sages who lived like hermit farmers.\textsuperscript{283}

While Fuxi and Shennong have been considered creators of the hexagrams, the creator most accepted by Chinese tradition is King Wen, the initiator of the Zhou dynasty (1045-256 BCE). He is an historical personage who lived around 1152 to 1056 BCE, and was known for his virtue and fair nature.\textsuperscript{284} The grand historian Sima Qian (145-86 BCE) credited him with the origin of the hexagrams in the \textit{Shiji} (Records of the Grand Historian).\textsuperscript{285} He said King Wen created the \textit{gua} (sixty-four hexagrams), while imprisoned in Youli, by the tyrant Shang Emperor Di Xin (r. 1086-1045 BCE), who was soon to be defeated by the Zhou.\textsuperscript{286} King Wen spent this time studying the trigrams and arranging the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{279} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, lviii.
\item \textsuperscript{280} Wu, xxvii; Rutt, 28.
\item \textsuperscript{281} Wu, xxvii; R. J. Smith, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{282} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 330.
\item \textsuperscript{283} Needham, Vol. 2, 120.
\item \textsuperscript{284} R. J. Smith, 8, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Rutt, 28; Wu, xxvii.
\item \textsuperscript{286} Wu, xxvi, xxvii; Rutt, 28.
\end{itemize}
hexagrams that were already an ancient divination system, consisting of oracle images that revealed situations that could happen given specific conditions. King Wen’s writings created a form of counsel that could determine whether a situation was auspicious or dangerous. His inspired thoughts and writings became the *Zhouyi* divination manual.

Ma Rong (79-166 CE) of the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), was a teacher, author, and *Yijing* master. He believed that King Wen did not create the hexagrams themselves, but instead wrote the *guaci* (hexagram statements). In addition, Ma Rong said that King Wen’s son, the Duke of Zhou (r. 1042-1036 BCE), wrote the *yaoci* (line statements). This became the acknowledged teaching that was later accepted by the scholars Kong Yingda (574-648 CE), the author of the *Zhouyi zhengyi* (Correct Meaning of the Zhou Changes), which was the “official version” of the *Yijing* throughout the Tang and Song dynasties (618-1279 CE), and the volume used for examination research; and Zhu Xi (1130-1200 CE) who wrote the *Zhouyi benyi* (Original Meaning of the Zhou Changes). These officially accepted editions of the Book of Changes are important study tools, and valued to this day by those who use the *Yijing* to practice divination.

The legendary King Fuxi, the historical King Wen, and his son Zhou Gong Dan, the Duke of Zhou, eventually were considered the traditional authors of the divination manual called the *Zhouyi* or the *Zhou Changes*. The divination text may have taken form during the transitional years between the Shang dynasty and Zhou dynasty, but scholarly evidence can only provide a date somewhere in the Western Zhou period (ca.1045-771 BCE). The *Zhouyi* was used by royalty in the early Zhou, and as the dynasty progressed, people from other segments of society obtained access to the manual. The last section of the *Book of Changes* was attributed to Confucius (551-479 BCE) and appeared in the form of commentaries called the *Shiyi* (Ten Wings). These commentaries or *zhuan* were ten treatises that clarified many aspects of the *Yijing*, including the hexagrams, their meanings, and the

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289 R. J. Smith, 103, 112, 133; Rutt, 28.
290 Pregadio, 1162.
Confucius was said to have spent a great deal of time studying the *Yijing* during his later years.

He is often quoted from *Analects* vii.16 as saying, “Were I to be given a few more years, I would give fifty to the study of the *Yi*; only then might I be free from grave faults.”

This gave an historical written account making reference to the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes*, but different translations of *Analects* vii.16 differ in meaning. The character *Yi* in one translation is said to mean *change*, but in another translation *Yi* is translated as *more*, which would change the quote from the *Analects* to “Grant me a few more years so that I may study at the age of fifty and I shall be free from major errors.”

The quotation that said Confucius read the *Yi* strengthened the long-held belief that he wrote the *Shiyi*, but in modern study, it is thought to be unlikely. It is said that Confucius used hexagrams to enhance his discussions on topics such as virtue; an example would be the idea of duration or constancy which is found in *Hexagram 32/Duration*. This indicates that Confucius used the divination manual for philosophical discussion instead of fortune-telling.

The view adopted in Richard Wilhelm’s translation of the *Book of Changes* is that it came from the Qing dynasty (1644-1912 CE) as an imperial text called the *Zhouyi Zeshong* (A Balanced Compendium on the Zhou Changes). It was introduced to Wilhelm by his teacher Lao Naixuan who was said to be a descendent of Confucius. Wilhelm believed Confucius may have written the *Tuanzhuan* (Commentary to the Judgments). The *Xiangzhuan* (Commentary to the Images) had some connection to the sage, while the *Wenyan zhuan* (Commentary on the Words of the Text) and parts of the *Dazhuan* (Appended Statements) are attributed to some of his students or to their pupils. The *Zuozhuan*, a fourth century BCE Chinese history of the years 722 to 468 BCE, mentioned the *Xiangzhuan*

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291 R. J. Smith, 9; Pregadio, 1161, 1162; Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, lix, lx.
293 Chai, 44.
294 Confucius, 88.
295 Fung Yu-Lan, 381.
296 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 345-347; Fung Yu-Lan, 381.
involving an event that chronologically happened when Confucius was a child. This would date the *Images* to a source older than Confucius. There is also a passage from the *Zuozhuan* that contains a divination story that dates to 564 BCE, before the birth of Confucius. It includes almost the same passage found in the *Wenyan*, signifying that older writings were later added to the *Yijing* commentaries. Sima Qian mentions an anecdote about Confucius’ copy of the *Zhouyi* being well-worn from frequent study, and also records an account of Confucius being familiar with nine of the wings in the *Shiji*. This is an example of the legends attached to Confucius and the *Book of Changes* after it became one of the Chinese classics. The Song dynasty historian Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072 CE) wrote in the *Yi tongzi wen* (Questions from a Youth about the Changes), that Confucius possibly created the *Tuanzhuan* (Commentary on the Judgments) and *Xiangzhuan* (Commentary on the Images) wings to clarify the work of King Wen. He believed the rest of the *Shiyi* originated from an array of authors, as the writing was of a poorer quality. The proof of their multiplicity lay in contradiction, and some contain the phrase *the master said*, as if they were written by students of Confucius.

Hellmut Wilhelm recounted Lao Naixuan’s orthodox teachings, saying that the *Wenyan zhuan* and parts of the *Shuoqua* (Discussion of the Trigrams) were written before Confucius. He believed the rest of the *Shiyi* to have been written after Confucius. He thought that Confucius was familiar with the *Yijing*, as the writings reflect an element of Confucian wisdom. Hellmut Wilhelm also said that the study of linguistics, cultural history, and the comparative analysis of different editions of the *Yijing* had opened up the field of authorship and dating. Tradition still says the authorship of the *Shiyi* is associated with Confucius, but, logically, represented the writings of a variety of people who used their own knowledge to create an integrated philosophical teaching.  

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298 Wu, xxvii, xxviii.
299 Rutt, 34, 364.
300 R. J. Smith, 113, 114; Rutt, 41; Wu, xxviii.
302 Fung Yu-Lan, 381.
One modern opinion says the hexagrams and statements were created around the later part of the Western Zhou dynasty (1045-771 BCE), while the entire *Zhouyi*, including the commentaries, was first incorporated in the second century BCE, with the exception of the *Xugua* (Hexagrams in Sequence) or Ninth Wing, which is said to have been found in the late Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). This marks the transformation of the divination manual called the *Zhouyi* into the *Yijing* that we know today.

**EARLIER RENDITIONS OF THE YIJING**

There are two other ancient divination manuals which also used the hexagrams, the *Lianshan Yi* (Linked Mountains) and the *Guicang Yi* (Return to the Hidden). The Han dynasty *Zhouli* (Record of Rites of the Zhou) contains a line that says “the Grand Auger was supposed to be in charge of the ‘Three I’: first, the *Lien Shan* (Manifestation of Change in the Mountains); secondly, the *Kuei Tsang* (Flow and Return to Womb and Tomb); and thirdly, the *Chou I* (Book of Changes of the Chou Dynasty).” All three books were thought to have been in existence long before the Han, and were associated with hexagrams that coincide with later editions of the *Zhouyi*. Milfoil stalks were used for divination in all three manuals. The *Lianshan* is said to have begun with the Hexagram 52 *Gen/Mountain, Keeping Still*, which is the doubled trigram Mountain, and also accounts for the title *Linked Mountains*. It is said the *Guicang* (Return and Keep) began with the Hexagram 2 *Kun/Earth*, which also has the doubled trigram Earth, and coincides with the title of *Return to the Hidden* with the idea that all things come from the earth, and in time will go back to the earth. Kong Yingda (574-648 CE) was the author of the *Zhouyi zhengyi* (Correct Meaning of the *Zhou* Changes) and included the writings of Han scholar Zheng Xuan (127-200 CE) who said that the *Lianshan* was the *Yi* of the Xia dynasty, the *Guicang* was the *Yi* of the Shang dynasty, and the *Zhouyi* was the *Yi* of the Zhou dynasty. The *Lianshan* is said to be the work of Fuxi and the historically questionable Xia dynasty. The *Guicang* is linked with

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303 Pregadio, 1162.
305 Wu, xxv; R. J. Smith, 18; Rutt, 26, 27; Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, Iviii.
306 Rutt, 26, 27, 462 n. 1.
traditional stories of both Shennong and The Yellow Emperor, Haung Di, and was related with the Shang dynasty.  

Recent archaeological discoveries have included copies of the Yi or Changes that coincide with the writings derived from these two divination manuals.

The Lianshan and the Guicang texts have not been found in their entirety from pre-Han times, but pieces still remain in other books. Two examples are found in the work of Qing dynasty (1644-1912) scholars Ma Guohan who included both texts in his writings, and Hong Yixuan (1765-1837) who wrote about the Guicang.  

Ma Guohan gathered fifteen fragments of the Lianshan in records dating from about the fourth century BCE. Fragment twelve is identical to a passage in the Shuogua (Explanation of the Trigrams) commentary in the Zhouyi. According to Stephen Field, the fragment may be an ancient Bronze Age religious ritual from the Xia time period recorded in the Lianshan.  

The Han dynasty writers Huan Tan and Zheng Xuan are reputed to have seen a copy of the Guicang, and or the Lianshan.  

In 1993 a tomb at Wangjiatai was discovered, dating from the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE). It contained a pre-Han copy of the Guicang. Oracle records were found on bamboo strips that were nearly identical to parts of the Guicang found in the writings of Ma Guohan, and possibly a copy of the Yiyao Yinyang Gua (Yinyang Hexagrams of the Lines of the Changes) found in 279 CE.  

The partial text found at Wangjiatai included more than fifty hexagrams. The hexagram names are almost the same as the received Yijing (in distribution previously to 300 BCE, imperially-approved in 136 BCE), and the ones that are not the same match hexagram names from another Zhouyi (ca. 190 BCE) silk manuscript found in 1973 at Mawangdui.  

The three divination manuals containing the hexagrams help in the understanding of the origins and dating of the Zhouyi, as well as helping to clarify the Yijing’s original text.

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308 R. J. Smith, 48, 276 n. 64.


310 R. J. Smith, 48, 276 n. 65.

311 R. J. Smith, 48, 276 n. 66.

312 R. J. Smith, 37, 48-51.
NEW THEORIES ON ORIGINS

The received traditional history of Fuxi creating the eight trigrams, King Wen’s development of the sixty-four hexagrams, the Duke of Zhou’s line statements, and Confucius’ ten commentaries is recorded in all contemporary *Yijing* texts. There were differences in opinion in the evolution of this tradition, however, even in the *Yijing* itself. It lists Fuxi as the founder of the trigrams in his studies of nature. The *Xicizhuan* (Great Treatise) says he invented the hexagrams when he saw the lines on the back of the dragon-horse, but in the *Shuogua* (Explanations of the Trigrams) it says the hexagrams derived from divination.313 A modern professor, Dr. Chung-Ying Cheng, a scholar of the *Yijing* and Chinese philosophy, included the persons of Fuxi, King Wen, and Confucius as a necessary part of the modern presentation of the text. He believed Fuxi may have been the name of a tribe instead of a ruler, and mentioned King Wen in the light of Sima Qian, saying that his development of the hexagrams combined the change and judgments taken from divination records of the Shang and Xia dynasties.314

Early in the twentieth century, scholars started to study the *Yijing* in a new light because of the discovery of oracle bones. Modern historians now depend on the oracle bones as an important historical source.315 Originally known as dragon bones, they were ground up and used as medicine. In 1899 two Chinese scholars, Wang Yirong and Liu E, noticed an ancient inscription on a piece of bone used for malaria treatment that was not thoroughly milled. They followed their source of the medicinal dragon bones, and found that farmers had been digging them up in their fields to sell to physicians.316 This led to a major archaeological discovery at Anyang, which was a capital city of the Shang dynasty. The Shang used “plastromancy, scapulimancy, and pyromancy” for divination purposes.317

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313 Rutt, 28, 445.
317 R. J. Smith, 9.
These were old divination rites that were practiced in Neolithic times in China. Comparable divination practices were used throughout the world: in Asia, among the Druids in Great Britain, and the Algonquian American Indians. Vegetation like grasses, seeds, nuts, herbs, and bamboo were used in some rituals, instead of animal parts. The plants were numerologically divided into groups for divination purposes. The Chinese used the shoulder bone or scapula of a cow, horse, sheep, or pig as it provided a flat surface for burning and cracking. The turtle plastron or lower shell also provided a large flat surface. The bone or shell was polished and smoothed with rows of two matching indentations for the branding rod. A question would be presented as a charge in two parts, e.g., we will have a successful harvest, or we will not have a successful harvest. The questions would be placed to ancestors or spirits. The shaman or diviner would place the bone in the fire and apply a metal rod to make it crack. The crack’s shape and direction would determine the prognosis. The diviner would then read the divination, which was recorded along with the date, the question, and the final outcome and date on the bone or shell. The Shang believed the divination would help to produce a good harvest. Questions about the weather, health, dreams, marriages, births, hunting expeditions, politics, tribute payment, military campaigns, and divine advice were common. In the later Shang period, divination seemed to become less important, fewer divinations were made, and a more limited number of questions appears in evidence. The final years of the dynasty left oracle bone records primarily about sacrifice, hunting, and the ten-day week forecast from the sixty-day calendar.

The *Yijing* was used with achillomancy or milfoil stalks for divination. Kunst says the *Yijing* was “transmitted orally among the professional diviners who used the yarrow plant to obtain oracles...a manual of ready reference of the consequences of relevant past

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318 Loewe, 59.
divinatory determinations.” The plant used was yarrow of the variety Achillea Millefolium. Yarrow is a perennial that grows worldwide; it is used medically as a coagulant. It is also supposed to have the magical ability to find wisdom. Milfoil is used to divine the chosen hexagram. The Zhou also apparently used the oracle bones method, since a reserve of tortoise shell fragments was found in 1977 in a Zhou citadel in Qishan, Shaanxi. In 1979 more turtle oracle pieces were found in Fufeng, Shaanxi. The Fufeng pieces were buried with pottery fragments and other items that helped to date the Western Zhou site. The Zhouyuan turtle shell writings date during the changeover phase from the Shang to the Zhou dynasties. The records include a prayer at the end of the documented pyromancy such as, “we desire that...” The Zhou turtle shells contained bagua (trigrams), numerical symbols which were also on late Shang oracle bones. These bagua numerical symbols are sets of numbers (three and six) that Edward Shaughnessy says are the possible precursors of the Zhouyi trigrams and hexagrams. They also indicate that oracle bones and the milfoil were both used in the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

According to James Menzies, the six lines on the Shang oracle bones that match the six lines of the Yijing hexagram possibly came from calendrical divinations, and the last day of the ten-day week divination, or gui days. He observed the oracle bone’s six horizontal lines were read from the bottom to the top, like the six lines of the hexagrams in the Yijing. In 1956 Qu Wanli continued this theory of the six divinations and the origin of the hexagram. Qu Wanli said the last day of the ten-day week was the gui day on which a special oracle bone divination was performed to see what was forecast in the next ten days. There was a series of sixty days in the calendar, which made six gui divination days. This cycle of six divinations was usually found on a single turtle shell.

322 Kunst, 4.
323 Kunst, 5, 216 n. 3; Wilhelm, The I Ching, liv n. 9.
325 Shaughnessy, The Composition of the Zhouyi, 59.
Qu Wanli studied the *bagua* (trigram) like signs on the shells which went from the bottom to the top, with six horizontal crack-lines for the proper outcome. These six lines are a possible origin of the hexagram, but they do not provide an answer as to why some of the hexagrams have *yin* (broken) lines.\(^{328}\) Shaughnessy says he has not found any broken horizontal lines on the oracle bones, but he has also only found *yang* (solid) line divinations in the Shang turtle records he studied.\(^{329}\) In 1978 Zhang Zhenglang found that the Qishan oracle bones and Zhou bronze inscriptions contained the numerical groupings of three and six, which were the *bagua* numerical symbols. He thought that the similarities of the lines on the bronze inscriptions and the oracle bones were enough to form the theory of the early model of the hexagram and its relationship to the calendrical pyromancy symbols. Zhang Zhenglang found another eight six-numbered *bagua* numerical symbols in a Qingdun site in 1979, from the Yangtze area; the Shang and Zhou cultures were in the Yellow River area. This opens historical studies to a much larger region and time frame.\(^{330}\)

The milfoil stalks seem to have been used along with oracle bone divination by both the late Shang and early Zhou dynasties. It is the consensus of opinion that milfoil divination was used, together with oracle bone divination, as far back as the reign of the Shang King Wu Ding in about 1189 BCE. Zhang Yachu and Liu Yu have explored another part of oracle bone study in a linguistic analysis. They changed the accepted character or word of *wu* or *shaman* to *shi* for *milfoil divination* on Shang oracle bones, to obtain a more accurate translation. Keightley said the character for *zhu* which means *bamboo* should be translated as bamboo stalks, and means the same thing as milfoil divination. This changes the translated meanings of the oracle bones to include milfoil with the turtle shell. Keightley also argued that milfoil may have been used to decide the correct crack for the divination.\(^{331}\)

The combined use of oracle bones and milfoil divination practices in the Shang and Zhou dynasties is found in historical texts. Shaughnessy says the *Zhouli* or Rites of Zhou


\(^{329}\) Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 109, 110, 111.

\(^{330}\) Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 28, 29, 59, 110, 111, 314 n. 15. Shaughnessy adds on page 111, that the bronze inscriptions are questionable.

\(^{331}\) Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 29, 57, 58, 59, 60, 110.
(ca. third century BCE) contains a portion called the Stalk-Diviner, which says that the milfoil is to be used before pyromancy is applied in important political affairs. This text was central for Zhang Yachu and Liu Yu’s research. This provides tangible proof that both divination methods were used separately and together, and the milfoil was in use around 1189 BCE. Shaughnessy also observes that the Zuozhuan (covering the years 722-468 BCE) contains twenty-four turtle shell oracles, and twelve milfoil oracles. The divinations cover such areas as warfare, dreams, and marriage.\(^{332}\)

Hellmut Wilhelm provided a study on divination records that said the first dual use of the turtle and the yarrow was listed in the Zhun-shi chapter in the Shu (Classic of History), which would have occurred in the time of the fourth Zhou ruler, King Cheng (r. 1042-1006 BCE), the nephew of the Duke of Zhou. H. Wilhelm also mentions a section of the Hung Fan that contains regulations that provide solutions for various disagreements and inconsistencies involving the tortoise and the milfoil. The Hung Fan text says the milfoil is of greater value than the tortoise, even if the turtle alone was used in certain divinations. H. Wilhelm argues there were Han texts that explained the etiquette on how to act when the turtle and milfoil divinations opposed each other. He used this Zuozhuan writing for the source of his belief, “Earlier Duke Hsien of China (traditional dates: 676-651 B.C.) had wanted to make Li-chi his main consort. He consulted the tortoise oracle, which was unfavorable, and the yarrow oracle, which was favorable.”\(^{333}\) The yarrow was chosen over the turtle. The article discusses the dual use of the milfoil and turtle oracles with a contradictory answer. H. Wilhelm uses examples like the Hung Fan text to explain how these discrepancies were decided. It was thought the oracle represented the later ruin of the Duke’s son, Prince Shen-sheng by Lady Li (Li-ji). The turtle oracle warned of the relationship, and the milfoil said it would be auspicious. Lady Li was a notorious villain.\(^{334}\)

The new archaeological and philological studies on the oracle bones have shown that milfoil was used concurrently with oracle bones as far back as 1189 BCE. Historians are

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\(^{332}\) Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 60, 61.


studying writings that help to clarify the oracle bones records. Chu Xiaosun wrote a chapter listed in the *Shiji* as the “Treatise on Turtle and Stalk Divination.” It is similar to Hellmut Wilhelm’s *Hung Fan* in that it provides information about the oracle bones, the shape of the cracks and their meanings are depicted in drawings. The treatise also gives an historical account of divination and its meaning. The book gives the reader the means to perform divination without the aid of a skilled diviner. This made oracle bones available to everybody, according to Shaughnessy.\(^\text{335}\) Coins were another method of Zhouyi divination. Daoist Wang Xu, also known as Guiguzi, is credited with the invention of tossing the coins in the fourth century BCE.\(^\text{336}\)

**METHODS OF DATING THE YIJING**

Modern historians use ancient texts like the *Zuozhuan* and the *Shiji* as valuable dating, linguistic, and historical records. The *Zuozhuan* contains the earliest written information on the *Yijing*, giving a possible date of 770-476 BCE.\(^\text{337}\) There is a general consensus that the *Yijing* was possibly written before 770 BCE. Another method of dating comes from the use of historical names and events within the hexagrams and line statements. In the mid twentieth century, the authors Gu Jiegang (*Zhouyi guayaoci zhong de gushi*), and Qu Wanli (*Zhouyi quayaoci cheng yu Zhou Wu Wang shi kao*) used this theory and claimed the dating was somewhere in the early to middle Western Zhou period (ca. 1040-771 BCE).\(^\text{338}\) They compared the text linguistically to historical studies of the Zhou period. One example is a line statement found in both *Hexagrams 11* and *54* that says, “Di Yi sent his daughter in marriage.”\(^\text{339}\) The Shang King Di Yi (r. 1100-1081 BCE) is said by scholars to have given his daughter in marriage to King Wen, and included as consort Taisi, the mother of King Wu, the Zhou king who conquered the Shang.\(^\text{340}\) The reference provides historical

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\(^{335}\) Shaughnessy, 60, 64, 65.

\(^{336}\) Rutt, 166.

\(^{337}\) Rutt, 34. Spring and Autumn Period ca. 770-476 BCE. *Zuozhuan* compiled ca. 389 BCE.


\(^{339}\) Kunst, 6; Rutt, 29; Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 144.

people with dates and places, much like the history within the Hebrew Bible. Guo Moruo also used a dating method of internal texts that included Chunqui (Spring and Autumn Annals) anecdotes, saying the Yijing may have been written by Ganbi Zigong in the southern state of Chu around 475-350 BCE.\footnote{Kunst, 6, 7; Shaughnessy, The Composition of the Zhouyi, 24.}

Other items have also been used to date the Yijing. The Shang oracle bones became a decisive method of dating the Yijing because they provided a form of physical evidence that could be added to any linguistic or historical research needed in finding the date. Yu Yongliang, compared the hexagram and line statements with the writings on the oracle bones, arguing that the Yijing’s use of milfoil originated with the Zhou dynasty. This included cultural history relating to money, slaves, and feudalism. He believed the composition dates to be somewhere around 1050 to 1000 BCE, or the early Western Zhou period.\footnote{Shaughnessy, The Composition of the Zhouyi, 19, 20; Rutt, 30, 31. Hexagrams 51 and 7.}

The inscriptions on Zhou bronze vessels also became a useful philological aid in the study of the language and historical records found in the ancient texts and oracle bones inscriptions.\footnote{Shaughnessy, The Composition of the Zhouyi, 19, 20, 21.} Comparing the terminology on the bronze vessels to the Zhouyi and other writings of the Western Zhou period has brought the dating to the time of King Xuan who reigned from 827-782 BCE. Shaughnessy believes the written Zhouyi was compiled around 820 BCE, while the earlier oral and collected versions of diviners may go back further than 1300 BCE.\footnote{Shaughnessy, The Composition of the Zhouyi, 24, 49; Rutt, 33.}

Although it became an accepted theory that the Yijing dated from the Western Zhou period (ca. 1040-771 BCE), historians still raised issues with this hypothesis. Lu Kanru wrote a history on Chinese literature, arguing that the syntax in the Eastern Zhou (771 BCE) texts was similar to that in the Shijing (Classic of Poetry), and Zhouyi writings in the Zuozhuan. He said the Yijing was formulated in the Western Zhou, but was written in the Spring and Autumn period (ca. 771-481 BCE).\footnote{Shaughnessy, The Composition of the Zhouyi, 25.} Another author whose research forced him
to question the accepted Western Zhou dating was I. K. Shchutskii. Using the *Zuozhuan*, he wrote a compendium on a western language linguistic analysis of the *Yijing*. Shchutskii used the work of sinologist Bernhard Karlgren, who compared grammar, vocabulary, and dialect. The *Shijing* was used for linguistic comparison, and a poetical similarity was found in the *Yijing*. Shchutskii dated the *Yijing* to about 800-600 BCE as a divination text, which later became a philosophical text around 590-400 BCE. Another modernist, Li Jingchi studied the rhyme scheme of the *Zhouyi* comparatively with the *Shijing*, and Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Using the two chapters, “Guo Feng” and “Zhou Song” from the *Shijing*, his studies concluded the *Zhouyi*’s rhyme belonged to the late Western Zhou. Historians have presently set the date of the *Yijing* to the late Western Zhou dynasty or ca. 820 BCE. The Shang and Zhou oracle bones, bronze vessel inscriptions, and other ancient Chinese texts seem to be the most commonly used research tools. Ancient manuscripts such as the Mawangdui (entombed 168 BCE) copy of the *Zhouyi* are extremely helpful in deciphering the text’s dating through history and linguistics, in conjunction with the *Zuozhuan* and the *Shiji*.

The books of the Old and New Text Schools are accurate records of dating. Leaders in the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE) burned books for political reasons and a book ban was enforced from 213-191 BCE. The *Zhouyi*, however, being a divination text, was considered useful, and along with medical and agricultural texts was not banned and survived the book burnings. The Qin did not consider it to be Confucian. The Han period (206 BCE-220 CE) made the *Zhouyi* into an imperially-approved text in 136 BCE. There also were two versions of the *Book of Changes*. The original texts that survived the book burnings, perhaps being hidden away, became the *guwen* or Old Text. Older people, who had memorized the old texts, set them down in a new writing style set up by the Qin called the *jinwen* or New Text. The Confucians, after having been cast out in the Qin, experienced a revival in the Han dynasty. While the *Yijing* in its divination form stayed basically the same, the New Text

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347 Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 26, 27, 49. Composition ca. 820 BCE.
348 Rutt, 35; Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 74.
349 R. J. Smith, 37.
style glorified Confucius, and added new written materials called the *apocrypha* (*weishu* texts), which were designed to bring about a better understanding between the original classics and the most recent theories on divination. The Old Text School saw Confucius as a teacher, and was skeptical about the new interpretations of the classics and the added *apocrypha*.\(^{350}\) The *Yijing* helped to establish the philosophical teachings of the New Text School and was a foundation of the classics in the *apocrypha*. The Old School was followed by the *Xuanxue* (Arcane Learning School) which associated the *Yijing* with the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi*.\(^{351}\)

**TEXTUAL TRADITIONS**

Versions of the *Yijing* are extremely abundant from the Han dynasty to the present day. The Mawangdui manuscript is said to be the oldest copy at this time. The tomb is dated 168 BCE, so the text dates from the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). The *Zhouyi* and five commentaries are printed on two pieces of silk, and may be in the jinwen or New School style.\(^{352}\) The translators have given the commentary section the name of *The Several Disciples Asked* (incipit or words from first line). It is in a style called Kongzi, that stems from Confucius’ quotations on the *Yijing*, and questions on the subject by his students. The second piece of silk is damaged but contains four or five commentaries; the only one that matches the received *Yijing* is the *Xici* (Appended Statements). The Mawangdui *Zhouyi* may have been written ca. 190 BCE.\(^{353}\)

Thirty-three of the Mawangdui hexagrams have different names than the received text. For example, the trigram *Qian* (Heaven) is *Jian* (Key) in the Mawangdui text, and *Kun* (Earth) is *Chuan* (Flow), which interpreters say may be attributed to symbols for male and female gender. The greatest differentiation between Mawangdui and the received text is the sequence of the hexagrams, and because of this; the hexagrams have different numbers. It is believed the hexagram sequence in the received text is older than the Mawangdui hexagram

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\(^{350}\) R. J. Smith, 58, 59, 77; Rutt, 35, 36.

\(^{351}\) Pregadio, 1162.

\(^{352}\) Rutt, 36.

sequence. This stems from the discovery of another manuscript found in 279 CE, in the burial place of King Xiang of Wei, who was buried in 296 BCE. The King Xiang manuscript was a perfect match with the received Yijing of that time. The received text sequence is also considered to be older because it is in pairs of hexagrams that share two trigrams (the second trigram is the first trigram inverted). Some of the paired hexagrams share words and line statements. The Hexagram 41 Sun/Decrease (number 12 in the Mawangdui text), and Hexagram 42 Yi/Increase (64 in Mawangdui text) are an inverted pair. The fifth line statement of 41 and the second line in 42 are almost identical. It is believed that the separation of the pairs in the Mawangdui text indicates that it is not the original sequence of the Yijing. Nevertheless, the importance of this version of the Yijing is the ability of any reader to see the comparisons and variations between the manuscript and the received text. Scholars are using it for historical study and comparison with oracle bones inscriptions, bronze vessel inscriptions, and other manuscripts like the bamboo copy of the Guicang (Return to the hidden) found in a Qin tomb in Wangjiatai in 1993. Some of the hexagrams in the Wangjiatai text have the same names as the ones in the received text, but the ones that do not, match the names in Mawangdui Yijing. Written more than 200 years after the Mawangdui edition, the oldest version of the received text is taken from the copy by Jing Fang (77-37 BCE), found in the fragments of the Han stone tablets. They date to 175 CE, and were forty-six tablets written in jinwen or the New Script. The version is credited to Liangqiu He, a student of Jing Fang. They are found in collections today as rubbings and fragments.

There were three traditions that expanded the Yijing. The first was represented by Tian He (ca. 202-143 BCE) a student of Confucianism, and the teacher of Meng Xi, Shi Chou, and Liangqiu He. The second tradition involves Meng Xi (ca. 90-40 BCE), and Jiao Yanshou (the teacher of Jing Fang). The third tradition is associated with Fei Zhi (ca. 50 BCE-10 CE). These three traditions incorporated the Book of Changes that developed into

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354 Shaughnessy, I Ching the Classic of Changes, 16-19.
355 R. J. Smith, 48, 49.
356 Rutt, 38, 39; R. J. Smith, 280 n. 33.
the received edition. Fei Zhi and Liu Xiang (79-8 BCE) helped to assemble the received text in *guwen* or Old School style which later became an acceptable style because of Ma Rong (79-166 CE). His student Zheng Xuan (127-200 CE) tried to reunite the new and the old schools, and taught in the time of the stone tablets.

The text of Fei Zhi was transmitted through Zheng Xuan, and Wang Bi (226-249 CE) used it to write his translation of the *Yijing* called the *Zhounyi zhu* (*Commentary on the Changes of the Zhou*). This translation was used by Kong Yingda (574-648 CE) in his *Zhounyi zhengyi* (*Correct Meaning of the Zhou Changes*), which became the authorized version of the *Yijing* in the Tang, Song, and the early Yuan dynasties (ca. 618-1279 CE).

This text leads to the Song dynasty scholar Cheng Yi’s (1033-1107) version called *Yichuan Yizhuan* (*Yichaun’s commentary on the Zhouyi*). Another version of the *Book of Changes* continued through Zhu Xi (1130-1200) who wrote the *Zhounyi benyi* (*Original Meaning of the Zhou Changes*) and the *Yixue qimeng* (*Introduction to the Study of the Changes*). Zhu Xi’s writings on the *Yijing* were considered to be almost as important as those of Confucius; he included teachings on the *Taiji* (*Supreme Ultimate*), *yin* and *yang*, *wuxing* (five phases), *li* (*propriety*), and *qi* (*spirit or material force*). The Song dynasty (960-1279) offered the first extant printings of the *Yijing*.

The Ming dynasty provided the Hu Guang version (1370-1418), called the imperial *Zhounyi zhuanyi daquan* (*Zhouyi with complete commentaries*), and the Qing dynasty compiled the text used by Richard Wilhelm called the *Yuzuan Zhounyi zhezhong* (*Imperially-sponsored balanced commentaries on Zhouyi*), which was compiled in 1715 by Li Guangdi (1642-1718). This version of the *Yijing* was a part of the *Shisanjing zhushu* (*Collected Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics*), printed in 1816. Ruan Yuan (1764-1849) edited the

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357 R. J. Smith, 59.
358 Rutt, 39, 40; R. J. Smith, 59. Ma Rong wrote about King Wen’s hexagram statements and the Duke of Zhou’s line statements.
359 R. J. Smith, 91, 103; Rutt, 40. Wang Bi was aided by Han Kangbo in his *Zhouyi*.
361 Rutt, 40; R. J. Smith, 133, 134.
362 R. J. Smith, 133.
363 Rutt, 40.
text, using the work of Kong Yingda as a guide.\textsuperscript{364} This volume was incorporated into the *Zhouyi yinde* that was made available through the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1935, and is the favored book in the west for Yijing study, according to Rutt.\textsuperscript{365}

**MODERN INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS**

James Legge (1815-1897) wrote an English translation of the *Yijing* (The *I Ching*) around 1882.\textsuperscript{366} Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) translated *The I Ching or Book of Changes* into German, around 1910 to 1920, guided by the Confucian scholar Lao Naixuan (1843-1921), who claimed he was related to Confucius.\textsuperscript{367} Arthur Waley (1889-1966) wrote an in-depth essay in 1933 that has been a foundation for modern translations of the *Yijing*.\textsuperscript{368} In China, Gao Heng (b. 1900) wrote two volumes on the *Yijing*, the *Zhouyi gujing jinzhu* (Modern Annotations to the Ancient Classic *Zhouyi*) in 1947, and the *Zhouyi gujing tongshuo* (General Account of the Ancient Issues about the Structure of *Zhouyi* and Methods of Divination) in 1958.\textsuperscript{369}

The translations of the twentieth century reflect the scientific school, and there are many present-day Yijing scholars, such as Bent Nielsen and Wang Mingxiong who have published their own studies. Authors like Kidder Smith and Tze-ki Hon use the book in education.\textsuperscript{370} Today, there are countless new translations of the *Yijing*, not only as an historical text, but as a divination manual and a book on religious philosophy. Interpreters today try to find the original *Yijing*, but as Whincup said, “The *Changes*’ symbol system is so powerful and versatile that any number of versions of the *Changes* could be written, but as long as we translate the one that was written we must understand it on its own terms.”\textsuperscript{371}

\textsuperscript{364} Rutt, 40, 41.
\textsuperscript{365} Rutt, 40, 41; R. J. Smith, 211.
\textsuperscript{367} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, xlv.
\textsuperscript{368} Rutt, 41.
\textsuperscript{369} Rutt, 42; Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 10.
\textsuperscript{370} R. J. Smith, 251, 252.
\textsuperscript{371} Whincup, 19.
Translations are in themselves difficult because all translation is a type of interpretation. The translation may reflect the author’s subconscious personal feelings rather than the actual meaning of the text. Modern sinologists deconstruct the words and compare the different translations in order to find the original meaning. Translators must also try to recreate the rhymes that appear in the *Yijing*. Rhyme is an important part of the work; it increases the power of words. Linguistic tools like puns and rhymes were used to create an effect. They may be a foretelling, like an oracle, or a type of enchantment. The line statements would use rhyme to create magic by linking memorable sayings with intuitive meaning.\(^\text{372}\) Omens were connected to the line statements’ poetry, proverbs, and parables. It is believed that the rhymes developed in the same way as the *Shijing*. The poems have a use, because, like some proverbs, they relate a message through a folkloric couplet. In *Hexagram 54*, line 6 says: “The Lady holds the basket: no fruit; the man stabs the sheep: no blood.” This tells the story of a barren marriage in just a few characters. Another example is found in *Hexagram 28*, line 5: “The withered poplar bears flowers; the old lady gets her husband.” This is a story about overcoming barrenness. The couplet tells the story of the entire hexagram in two lines. The meaning, however, could vary, depending on the questions asked.\(^\text{373}\) Kunst has developed a study on the rhyme in the *Yijing*, arguing that rhyme strengthens paired opposites, word groups, and related words. It makes words connect. It is an “important part of a rich texture of sound symbolism, onomatopoeia, graphic associations, punning and word play indeed, word magic in the *Yi*.”\(^\text{374}\) The writers may have included rhymes to assist in the process of memorization, perhaps to add a form of synchronization and accord, or simply to make the reading more enjoyable.\(^\text{375}\)

**APHORISMS**

Aphorisms are a part of the *Yijing*, and they played a role in Chinese history and culture. The study of aphorisms and proverbs in the *Yijing* is an important research topic.

\(^\text{372}\) R. J. Smith, 23.

\(^\text{373}\) Shaughnessy, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, 141, 142, 143.

\(^\text{374}\) Kunst, 51.

\(^\text{375}\) Kunst, 51, 52.
The rhymes that originated in folklore helped to create the force that made the divinations in the *Yijing* more powerful and understandable. They are easily linked with aphoristic sayings. The early Chinese diviners shared the *Yijing* through oral transmission, much as the first Christians used the oral tradition to teach the sayings of Jesus.

The Zhou court employed divination scribes who inherited the position from their fathers, who had passed on the collected *Yijing* orally, until it was written down around 820 BCE. They used the aphorism as a literary device to retain the long cultivated manual. Scholars think the scribes put the book in written form possibly because they were afraid their traditions would be lost, along with their lives, in an invasion. They put the aphorisms and proverbs of the *Yijing* into writing in order to retain their lineage.\(^{376}\)

The scribes employed the literary techniques of their time period, the late Western Zhou, and the sayings were “often poetic and always enigmatic.”\(^{377}\) The aphorisms often contained animal metaphors and the common activities of the community. Subjects like wild geese, pigs, goats, the public well, a cauldron, and hunting were used to make the omen sayings comfortable and more familiar to the diviner.\(^{378}\) Over time, the metaphors acquired a variety of symbolic meanings, accrued from the many past divinations.

The *Yijing* aphorisms include proverbs such as, “When ribbon grass is pulled up, the sod comes with it. Each according to his kind.”\(^{379}\) Or maxims like, “There is no flat that does not eventually slope; there is no going away that does not involve a return.”\(^{380}\) The brief sayings are in accord with any level of society or culture. The *Yijing*’s aphorisms are able to guide through inspiration. They enable the reader to practice introspection, often on the subject of harmony and character cultivation. These sayings help people to discover what is already there, “innate within man are the qualities that when developed guide him to a

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personal and social ethic,” or the way to a superior understanding of life.\textsuperscript{381} Hence, they contain the experience of Chinese wisdom.

The \textit{Yijing} continues to have importance and meaning in China today. It is an ancient text that has been studied in the same fashion as the Dead Sea Scrolls, as in the case of the Mawangdui version. Carl Jung said it espouses synchronicity, which he defines as, “a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality…the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance…a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers.”\textsuperscript{382} The hexagrams can be used to gain access to the subconscious. The \textit{Yijing} is applicable to any condition that is offered to it, and the coincidence found in the readings can be comforting. Physicist Chen Ning Yang was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1957 for his research on neutrinos and sub-atomic particles. He consulted the \textit{Yijing} on the day his discovery was accepted by the physics community, and received \textit{Hexagram 53 Progress}, which was taken to represent the slow and successful advancement of science. Yang used the book for guidance, and was greatly rewarded.\textsuperscript{383} Ancient and modern readers use the divinations for the same purpose. The \textit{Yijing} that is popular today has a history of always being on hand when needed, possibly another form of synchronization. Communism in China only strengthened the text. It experienced a revival in China after Tiananmen Square in 1989.\textsuperscript{384} Most sinologists believe it to be the foundation of Chinese philosophy. It is used in relation to Taiji study, martial arts, meditation, Daoism, and, very deeply, with modern Confucianism. The \textit{Yijing} has a long and somewhat mysterious history; but recent research is re-dating the text, and new translations, based on new archaeological finds are bringing the text new life. For these reasons it remains important in China today, and, because of its history as a reliable divination text, it remains of interest to those outside of China.

\textsuperscript{381} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, lix.

\textsuperscript{382} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, xxiv.


\textsuperscript{384} R. J. Smith, 206, 207; Shaughnessy, \textit{The Composition of the Zhouyi}, 9-11.
In the next chapter the aphorism will be more closely examined through the *Yijing*. Five hexagrams will be studied and compared to the Jesus' Sayings in the Aphorism Clusters from chapter two. Through these comparisons, such themes as proper social behavior, introspection, humility, and the use of nature will be studied, thus proving that the *Yijing* and the Jesus' sayings share parallel teachings. They provide the guidance found in aphorisms throughout the world.
CHAPTER 4

THE SAYINGS OF THE YIJING

Just as the heart of Jesus’ teachings can be found in his aphorisms, so also the kernel of the Yijing’s teachings is found in the aphorisms in the hexagrams. Richard Wilhelm said some of Laozi’s more reflective aphorisms were the result of the Yijing. Confucius also used the text for the study of moral development. The book’s sayings were used to present the theme of change, which is the way of things, and the one and the many. Examples of this can be found in the patterns of nature, such as the currents of a river, the phases of the moon, or the changing of the seasons. Through the understanding of change, the future can be foretold, and the past can be better understood. The sages used the hexagrams to provide an idea of communication between the three levels of heaven, earth, and the world of humans. They believed the events on earth were a replica of the events that had already occurred in heaven. Through the use of augury, the diviners acquired the ability to change the outcome of a situation. Using divination to ask what one should do, or how things shall be, the Book of Changes became a text of knowledge and direction.

This chapter will analyze five hexagrams taken from the Richard Wilhelm edition of the Yijing, using a variety of translations and commentaries. The sayings found within these hexagrams exhibit some similarities to the Jesus’ sayings, such as wisdom, humility, and self-cultivation. They are like the Jesus’ aphorisms in that they awaken an inner enlightenment, and apply the wisdom found in nature to illustrate their message. The aphorisms in the Yijing are comparable to the sayings found in other sacred texts, as they supply the guidance needed to obtain a better world.

385 Wilhelm, The I Ching, liv, lv.
386 Wilhelm, The I Ching, lvi, lvii.
387 Wilhelm, The I Ching, liii.
THE FIRST APHORISTIC CLUSTER: MODESTY

Hexagram 15 Qian / Modesty: The Receptive, Earth over Keeping Still, Mountain.

The Judgment: Modesty creates success. The superior man carries things through.

The Image: Within the earth, a mountain: thus the superior man reduces that which is too much, and augments that which is too little. He weighs things and makes them equal.388

This hexagram is said to be the only one of the sixty-four hexagrams to contain entirely positive line statements, and is believed to reflect the importance of the virtue of modesty.389 Modesty represents humble, simple, and unpretentious behavior or character. This is brought forth through the upper trigram Kun, Earth, which suggests such attributes as lowliness, and the mother providing shelter and nourishment for all creatures. It can be likened to the providence of God noted in the Jesus’ aphorism discussing the foxes and birds of the air in Matthew 8:20.390 The earth’s lowliness is set apart by the lower trigram Gen, which is symbolized as the life-sustaining weather that enfolds a mountain peak providing the gifts of heaven. An attribute of the trigram Gen is the seed of a concealed stillness that contains the perfection of rebirth found in the completion of the life and death in all living things.391 The two trigrams placed together create the idea of modesty in the great and powerful, as well as in the meek and common people who can be exalted through the practice of humility.392 The mountain buried under the ground represents “highness in lowness, and hidden wealth.”393 It is proper to respect people of all stations, and humble behavior through time, will bring about a good life.394

388 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 63-64.
389 Huang, I Ching, The Oracle, 38.
390 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 63, 268, 269.
392 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 63.
393 Needham, Vol. 2, 316. See Hellmut Wilhelm and Richard Wilhelm, Understanding the I Ching, 93. “Mountain buried in the earth, that is, hidden wealth which, in its modest way, brings about a reconciliation of the opposites.”
The judgment in the aphorism expresses the way of nature, “It is the law of heaven to make fullness empty and to make full what is modest.”\(^{395}\) The metaphors of the new moon slowly becoming full, and night always following day illustrate how a person’s fate is affected like the law of change found in nature: there are after-effects from both positive and negative experiences. As water will slowly level a mountain, or turn a valley into a lake, fate abhors what is arrogant or too full, and helps what is modest or too empty. People are susceptible to the laws of fate, and through modest behavior, can draw upon the positive forces to control their destiny. A person who practices modesty whether stationed in a powerful or lowly place shines like the proverbial lamp that cannot be hidden under a basket.\(^{396}\) The image says the superior person finds a way to balance what is too empty or too full. The commentary uses the mountains and valleys saying, “The high and the low complement each other, and the result is the plain.”\(^{397}\) This metaphor is illustrated in the restoration of social order, where unjust situations are corrected, and a socially contented community is reestablished. The hexagram says, “Modesty creates success,” and provides a way to ensure one’s position as it guides the way to recognized value.\(^{398}\) “A respectful attitude is the advertisement of modesty, humility its garment.”\(^{399}\)

The six line statements contain aphorisms that provide instructions on the applications of humility. "Qian or Modesty involves taking oneself lightly,”\(^{400}\) meaning one is not to think too highly of one’s self, and think one is greater than one really is, and thus can work comfortably on all levels. A superior person uses their modesty to “shepherd” themselves, for introspection. In this way a person stays humble and can cross the great water or the difficulties encountered in life without being injured.\(^{401}\) This observance of

\(^{395}\) Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 63.

\(^{396}\) Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 63, 64.

\(^{397}\) Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 64.

\(^{398}\) Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 462; Lynn, 230.


\(^{400}\) Lynn, 230.

\(^{401}\) Lynn, 231.
modesty enables all jobs to be accomplished in a better and more efficient manner because of the reduced conflict with others.  

“Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh.” This aphorism is used to express an inner manifestation of humility. When it is reflected in a person’s actions, it appears as something stronger and more enduring, and through perseverance, nothing can obstruct its good fortune. Richard Wilhelm developed the idea of the resonance of modesty from the term “come to expression,” in German *sich aussern*, signifying “the cry of birds…the rooster’s crow…the cry of the cicada, and the bellowing of the stag …it is modesty clothed in its natural sound.” He used these ideas in association with the sounds of modesty in comparison to the familiar sound of a bell. The aphoristic meaning of this line is that the heart’s humility cannot be hidden. To the Chinese, modesty was a priority for self-cultivation, as in the saying, “Great treasures are best secured in the soft wraps of Modesty.”

One paraphrase of the *Yijing* interprets modesty in this way: Do not allow fame to get the better of you, it will lead to arrogance, but work hard and practice humility. This is auspicious as the people will gladly follow a modest individual. It is unwise to over-indulge in modesty, however; it too must be used in moderation. It is also reflected in the way one feels about one’s work. True modesty does not follow the strict measure of the law, as it may lead to a loss in dependability, because many non-practitioners of modesty misuse the laws to obtain jobs and power while not doing the work required. It must be measured fairly by both those above and below.

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404 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 65. Lynn said the sound of modesty was “Ones reputation being heard,” 231.
406 Dhiegh, 178.
408 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 66; Dhiegh, 33.
The use of modesty in legal affairs should be legitimate and not used to escape one’s duty. “Do not mistake modesty for weak and over permissive good nature.”\textsuperscript{409} The virtue of a person in charge of others is the point of this saying. A wise leader takes care to remove whatever is necessary in order to provide and insure a true and harmonious world. Genuine humility involves strength of character.

The last aphorism from the six line statements says, “Genuine modesty sets one to master difficulties by creating order without, and disciplining the ego within. Acts of modesty are jewels strung on the thread of courage.”\textsuperscript{410} This saying is in accord with the aphorisms from all cultures. A virtuous person can work on their inner nature, and use discipline to change their character without causing harm. It is virtuous to not avoid blame, or feel shame, when told one needs to change. A modest and courageous person can not only change their nature, but can also help to correct what needs to be changed in their community.\textsuperscript{411}

The hexagram Qian establishes the cultivation of character because it provides an understanding of virtue. It means one can become honorable by being more respectful to other people. Modesty aids in the development of a good mental viewpoint that contributes to a stronger foundation for the practice of proper social behavior.\textsuperscript{412} The sayings within this hexagram are similar to the aphorisms of Jesus. He taught his followers to humbly follow the will of God, surrendering one’s worries about the material life, in order to concentrate on the more important things, God and one’s neighbor, as in the aphorism cluster No Anxieties. Jesus concentrated on teaching his disciples how to become perfect reflections of the Kingdom of Heaven, which would necessitate a humble and courageous nature.

**THE SECOND APHORISTIC CLUSTER: TREADING (CONDUCT)**

Hexagram 10 Lu / Treading: The Creative, Heaven over The Joyous, Lake.

\textsuperscript{409} Dhiegh, 33.

\textsuperscript{410} Dhiegh, 33.

\textsuperscript{411} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 66, 67.

\textsuperscript{412} Wu, 64, 65. See also Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 345-347. The Great Treatise.
The Judgment: Treading. Treading upon the tail of the tiger. It does not bite the man. Success.

The Image: Heaven above, the lake below: the image of Treading. Thus the superior man discriminates between high and low, and thereby fortifies the thinking of the people.413

This hexagram was originally entitled Li, which is a term the Confucians used to represent ritual and ceremony, but also propriety and the code of proper conduct.414 This has powerful meaning in ancient Chinese philosophy, and is considered a root of virtue or character.415 The word “treading” not only means acting with decorum, which is reflected through the trigram Qian, Heaven; but also indicates a shoe that is an image for walking with care, represented through Dui, Lake.416 The trigram Qian or Heaven has the attribute of the sky. It is spirit, strength and purity, and the fruit of the tree, which symbolizes the continuation of change.417 The trigram Dui or The Joyous contains the attributes of the small and cheerful, the ripeness of fruits, and the inner perseverance and outer weakness of sheep.418 Together the trigrams represent the weak treading upon the strong with light-hearted goodness, not with agitation or malice but in harmony. They are the high and the low, the noble and the humble, whose equanimity reflects the necessity of the rules of good conduct.419

The aphorism, “Pleasant manners succeed even with irritable people,” represents the outcome of the Judgment.420 By conforming to the public rules of decorum, and continuing to act with respect in all relationships, one can avoid danger and misunderstanding.421 The metaphor of a tiger and proper conduct rests in the danger of which a tiger is capable, and by

413 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 44-45
414 Chai, 370; Lynn, 564. It was called Li by James Legge, as well as Joseph Needham.
415 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 345; Wu, 64.
416 Wu, 184. Joseph Needham, “Hazardous success attained by circumspect behavior, treading delicately,” 315. Needham said another idea of the gua was slow advance.
418 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 44, 279. Shuogua (Explanation of the Trigrams).
419 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 44; Lynn, 200, 204 n. 2. Kong Yingda, Heaven is noble and Lake below is humble.
420 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 44.
421 Legge, 80.
extension, the use of self-cultivation to learn how to tread on the tiger’s tail with humble unpretentious behavior. In this way people of all social ranks are fulfilled, and harmony prevails, thus enabling one to complete one’s task. The tiger may represent divine power, and how one acts will affect one’s life’s outcome. The hexagram includes the attributes of the ripened fruits of the tree, and this suggests the proper time for working harmoniously in a dangerous environment. Jesus’ sayings also contain metaphors of nature, such as the grass of the field, to enhance the teachings. The hexagram is instructing one to practice benevolent actions in order to produce a pleasing and successful harvest. The idea of learning how to properly work with Qian, Heaven, which is the tiger, representing divine power, can also be compared to Jesus’ use of the birds of the air, as representing the providence of God over the daily needs of mankind in Matthew 6:26.

The six line statements provide advice for the development of character through the inner and outer workings of proper social conduct. The aphorism, “By keeping one’s conduct simple, no dissatisfactions can arise,” explains the ability to succeed while finding contentment in a humble lifestyle. One can achieve a good life through being happy with what one has, by living quietly, and not requesting any social favors. All cultures provide aphorisms about the secret of happiness being found in simple everyday experiences. This aids in the development of an inner awareness that leads to a deeper understanding of life. If one is unhappy with a humble lifestyle, one is driven to find other ways to acquire success. The concentration on one’s material needs leads to a lack of inner development, and after acquiring one’s outer goals, one is often left with a shallow and haughty character. It is wiser to do one’s work well, while finding contentment in a humble life. In this way, one will find success of greater value. This is a similar lesson to Jesus’ aphorisms about No Anxieties. He taught his disciples to leave their material concerns to the providence of God, and concentrate their thoughts on the Kingdom of Heaven. This helped them to develop a better

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422 Hellmut Wilhelm and Richard Wilhelm, Understanding the I Ching, 97, 225. Wu said the tiger was used to represent the government, 185.

423 Dhiegh, 103. Hexagram 10, line 1.

424 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 45, 46; Lynn, 201; Dhiegh, 103.
understanding of their inner nature, without worrying about the outer concerns of life. The message of heaven is found in the heart instead of the material world.

The saying, “To thine own self be true,” reverberates in the second line statement. It instructs one to remain in solitude, away from the activity of society. It is wise not to desire anything from others, or be fooled by the allure of success. In finding contentment in one’s own self, and being happy with what life has provided, a person can live safely and in peace. It is the lesson of treading on the path or the Way. The aphorism, “Rashness without justification is culpable,” teaches the danger of extending one’s self past one’s place in society. This method of treading on the tail leads to the tiger’s bite. If one acts rashly and foolishly in actions that require more diligence than one is capable of, one is placing one’s self as well as others in danger. This is compared to the metaphor of a one-eyed person or a disabled person trying to live their lives as though nothing was wrong, and finding themselves in circumstances that are beyond their ability. If one knows one’s limitations, one can meet life with more understanding and success. In Matthew 5:39, Jesus said to turn the other cheek, and not retaliate against evil, which can be compared to treading lightly upon the tiger’s tail.

“Caution and circumspection lead ultimately to good fortune,” reflects the inner nature taking care of outer concerns. This refers to being able to cautiously tread on the proverbial tiger’s tail while avoiding aggression. The cultivated inner nature protects the outer one, providing a harmonious outcome with the social relationships involved. Modesty is helpful in learning how to deal with dangerous situations. This is the Li or the propriety found in the laws of inner and outer conduct, learning how to walk on the tail while benefiting all concerned. The proper attitude is essential in working with society. The idea of being cautious within also demands the need to experience sincerity, thus enabling the person to tread upon the tail which guides the way to success.

425 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 46. This is expressed as a pathway towards freedom, modesty, and good fortune.

426 Dhiegh, 103. Hexagram 10, line 3.


428 Lynn, 203.
One’s conduct has to be steadfast. Unwavering discipline in one’s inner character helps one to succeed in society, while being aware of the dangers that could develop with such determination. Be judicious in this wisdom, says the aphorism. Jesus’ disciples were the light of the world, and were always watchful of their character out of fear that their light would dim due to the dangers of the world. It is necessary to persevere in the cultivation of character. “It is only by the consequences of his actions, by the fruit of his labors, that a man can judge what he is to expect.” This aphorism coincides with other cultures, but most assuredly works through the laws of providence. It can be said that we reap what we sow, or what goes round comes round, but successfully treading upon the tail the tiger entails the need to check and correct any signs of danger that may occur, thus enabling harmonious and successful results.

This hexagram teaches proper conduct, gracious behavior, and humility. It reminds one to be ever mindful of danger, while living a simple life. It is the character’s foundation, using harmony to succeed. A code of correct conduct is helpful in self-cultivation. One learns to successfully deal with life’s difficulties through nurturing and disciplining one’s inner and outer nature.

THE THIRD APHORISTIC CLUSTER: THE GENTLE (THE PENETRATING, WIND)


The Judgment: The Gentle. Success through what is small. It furthers one to have somewhere to go. It furthers one to see the great man.

The Image: Winds following one upon the other: The image of the Gently Penetrating. Thus the superior man spreads his commands abroad and carries out his undertakings.

The Gentle is one of eight hexagrams that contain a double or twin trigram in the Yijing, meaning it uses the same trigram twice. The hexagram Sun is ruled solely by the

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430 Wu, 188.
attributes of the trigram Sun. It symbolizes the gentle nature of the wind that penetrates all things, and the gentle yet persistent wood that represents the roots of all growing flora. An attribute of the Gentle is that it “makes things flow into their forms, to make them develop and grow into the shape prefigured in the seed.” \(^{434}\) It stands for the way wind changes, which can be seen as both an advance and a retreat. The Gentle represents the characteristics of arrogance, indecision, and the need for achievement. \(^{435}\) The Sun trigram also includes the ideas of weighing and consideration, purity and completeness, and the ethic of perseverance at work. \(^{436}\) A nature metaphor suggests that the wind dissolves the clouds and reveals the sky, and so is likened to the human level of the perceptive and lucid infiltration of judgment, or the persuasion of a powerful leader whose proper discernment discovers and removes the difficulties of society. The dark and unyielding submits itself through gentleness before the penetrating light. \(^{437}\) Sun is both conformity and perceptive authority. This is expressed in the saying, “It is through humbleness that one penetrates through resistance and exerts power.” \(^{438}\)

The worth of the judgment says, “It is because of compliance that prevalence can only be had on a small scale.” \(^{439}\) Be yielding. If the weak are in accord with the strong they do well. This provides them a position in life, and a beneficial relationship with their superiors. \(^{440}\) The great man in ancient China was often the intermediary between the people and their gods. The image provides the attribute of everlasting penetration, which is like the wind changing the shape of the trees, or a ruler’s values affecting the spirit or character of the people through persuasive wisdom. This could also be compared to the idea of introspection, when used with time, the development of character or virtue. \(^{441}\) The great or superior

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\(^{434}\) Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 270. Wind thaws the rigid ice, and shapes the organic wood, it is natural.


\(^{437}\) Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 220.

\(^{438}\) Balkin, 547, 548.

\(^{439}\) Lynn, 501.

\(^{440}\) Cleary, 127, 128.

\(^{441}\) Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 221, 681. Legge: Analects 12. 19 – Wind bending the grass is like the ruler bending the will of the people, 191.
individual needs to be “strong and virtuous,” and uses these attributes to help others. The six line statements provide a guideline for character, and a clear path to fulfillment of purpose. Fear and indecisiveness breed uncertainty, like the ever-changing wind advancing or retreating. Do not be too compliant, admonishes the aphorism. Discipline of the mind creates a strong and transparent ability for making decisions. It promotes the confidence needed to make changes or remove unnecessary problems, promoting a resilient character, hence the saying, “Make a decision, and stick to it.” The saying, “Penetration under the bed,” signifies hidden discordant influences that have to be sorted out through inner reflection. Magicians and shamans were able to penetrate the darkness to find the source of negative forces that affected society, and would bring them out “into the light” to be understood and removed. This is also true of the hidden flaws found within the subconscious, which when studied lose their strength, and are easy to eradicate. The Jesus’ saying, “For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light” (Luke 8:17), seems parallel to this line. When this disorder is rectified, all will be safe and sound.

The aphorism “Repetitious conformity is embarrassing,” expresses the idea that thinking repeatedly about something leads to shame, as it creates uncertainty and hesitation, preventing the ability to make correct decisions. Nothing gets resolved. This also leads to being overly submissive, which is dishonorable because it is unnatural, insincere, and creates a loss of respect and good nature. Another way to understand Sun is to know that regret or sorrow needs to be avoided in order to prevent weakness. Enjoyable activities and successful accomplishments promote a feeling of worth, and dispel unhappiness. Darkness is dispersed

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442 Legge, 192; Balkin, 549.
444 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 221.
445 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 222, 682; Wing, 147.
446 Cleary, 128; Wilhelm, The I Ching, 222, 682.
447 Wu, 451.
by the light, and goodness is brought back into power.448 This Jesus’ saying may have a common theme here, “Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness” (Luke 11:35). The light is the lamp of the mind, one’s thoughts and activities need to be kept positive in order to keep regret and darkness from creating limitations in one’s self as well as in society.

The fifth line statement contains the saying, “No beginning, but an end.” This means in order to make things happen, an ineffective foundation must be forgotten, and replaced by a new pathway that insures a successful conclusion.449 The new changes will create a strong and unwavering state of mind, which brings about a feeling of achievement and again disperses sorrow. The idea of self-cultivation or a social experience can be better understood if one thoroughly observes what was wrong before patiently making improvements. This demonstrates a cultivated mental attitude, leading to a better understanding of life.450 The last aphorism illustrates how Sun, the wind and gentleness, can be used intemperately, “If conformity is more lowly than normal, you lose your resources and tools, so it is unlucky even if you are steadfast.”451 Being overly submissive may lead one to act like one is another person, portraying one’s self in a less honorable light. The lesson of being true to one’s self is a part of the line.452 It also says that introspection can be dangerous for people who are not mentally strong enough to control their own world of inner darkness. They cannot meet themselves without being harmed in the process. The contemplation of the subconscious and the idea of the hidden levels of reality are examined, with the idea that positive actions always deter the darkness.

The hexagram Sun represents flexibility and exercise of character, one guideline of virtue. With it one can stay concealed while evaluating things. Sun teaches that it is changeability, and not inflexibility, that keeps traditional values. It gives the ability to better understand and evaluate situations, and to maintain a steadfast character together with an

448 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 222; Balkin, 551; Wu, 452.
450 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 223. Lynn says it is an insufficiency in humility and conformity, 504.
451 Cleary, 129; Legge, 193.
452 Wu, 453.
intellectual litheness. It applies its privileges at the correct moment, and is designed to provide help while adjusting to change.\textsuperscript{453}

**The Fourth Aphoristic Cluster: Innocence (The Unexpected)**


The Judgment: Innocence. Supreme success. Perseverance furthers. If someone is not as he should be, he has misfortune, and it does not further him to undertake anything.

The Image: Under heaven thunder rolls: All things attain the natural state of innocence. Thus the kings of old, rich in virtue, and in harmony with the time, fostered and nourished all beings.\textsuperscript{454}

When one is in harmony with the laws of heaven, the innocent mind has honest thoughts unstained by a secret agenda. The natural unconscious mind is controlled by spirit, which is the origin of innocent perception. Any level of conscious reflection, however, eliminates the purity. The innocent mind is spontaneous, and acts without expectations.\textsuperscript{455} The trigram Qian heaven, the creative, has the attributes of judgment, and the qualities of jade, the symbol of purity and firmness. When it is placed over the trigram Zhen, thunder, the arousing, with the attributes of decisiveness, and the universal great way, they empower the law of heaven, which is the spiritual source of innocence.\textsuperscript{456}

The judgment says that we all have a nature that is inherently good, which is our guide in life. This instinctive nature when cultivated to follow its divine source brings about the preservation of innocence, and the ability to work on a level where one is not driven by personal benefit, but by a clearer level of comprehension. It creates a more successful life. When one loses these natural instincts provided by the will of heaven, one is drawn to adverse experience.\textsuperscript{457} This leads to the aphorism, “When innocence is gone, where can one

\textsuperscript{453} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 345-348; Wu, 64-66.

\textsuperscript{454} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 100-101

\textsuperscript{455} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 100, 101; Balkin, 295.

\textsuperscript{456} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 100, 271, 275, 276.

\textsuperscript{457} Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 101, 510.
The person has lost the protection of the will of heaven, because they could not retain their innocence. To regain it they may try to nurture all living things, good and bad, without preference. Wu Wang also means the unexpected: just as one must act without anticipating recognition, one must also be ready for anything that may cross one’s path.

The saying, “Original impulses of the heart are always good,” identifies the spontaneous action that creates a positive and successful pathway leading to good fortune. It is the Way, the natural path of life. This is a reflection of one’s own character, and follows the saying about being true to one’s self. A maxim says, “We should do every task for its own sake as time and place demand and not with an eye to the result.” This is recognized in all cultures. An agricultural metaphor illustrates the same thing: the field should be plowed without counting the harvest. The outcome will be shallow if one is doing the work for the wrong reasons. Let the work progress through the way of heaven, and being selflessly motivated, all will be fine.

“In all matters one must bend oneself to the demands of the time. To act differently is to invite undeserved misfortune, even when innocent.” Often innocent people suffer harm from others. A necessary belonging may be stolen, and there is nothing one can do, but act with propriety, and try not to lose their well-earned innocence or fidelity. A person may become entangled with a corrupted psyche if they center their thoughts on a negative experience that they believe they did not deserve. Bending to meet the times will make any experience, no matter how harmful, a possible success. Fighting will only add misfortune. Again, this is similar to the Turning the other Cheek cluster. The next line statement pursues innocence through an unusual truth. It contains an apt aphorism for the removal of anxiety, “We cannot lose what really belongs to us, even if we throw it away. Therefore we need
have no anxiety.”465 Be true to yourself, and stay away from the opinions of others in order to hold on to inner goodness. This allows one to be open and spontaneous while acting responsibly, thus avoiding guilt. Knowing how to hold on to one’s worth is part of self-cultivation. 466 The Jesus’ sayings in the No Anxieties cluster suggest keeping one’s thoughts on higher things, and not wasting time on unnecessary worry, as the goodness of God will provide. The power of innocence is God’s goodness, and if cultivated protects and provides.

The saying, “If it is not from you, it will not stay with you,” presents the idea that affliction from an outside source may occur to good people.467 Unforeseen malevolence can strike an innocent nature from outside. If it is not caused by one’s own character, or has a grip on the heart, one should not use any medicines or take any steps to remove it, as it will heal itself in time. The illness may have been removed from another and absorbed by an innocent who then takes on the symptoms of the illness, possibly healing the original person in the process. No medication will affect an illness of the spirit; only through nature will things heal themselves.468 The last line statement aphorism is, “When the time is not ripe for further progress, the best thing to do is to wait quietly.”469 It is wise to know when not to act, and acting at this time will incur confusion. There are times simply to reflect and rest.

A natural spirit is found inherently in children, as they have not lost their innocence. It is a state of mind, and a level of awareness that can be cultivated through being loyal to one’s true divine self, and the nonjudgmental nurturing of all life. Similarly, the hexagram says, “All beings receive from the creative activity of nature the childlike innocence of their original state.”470 The Wu Wang hexagram advises one to work in harmony with the will of heaven as this provides all beings their correct character. If one is faithful to this divine will, it is easier to retain one’s innocence and stay inwardly protected. Both Wu Wang and Jesus’

466 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 102, 513; Balkin, 299; Lynn, 296; Wu, 280.
467 Dhiegh, 143.
468 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 103, 513; Lynn, 296.
469 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 103; Dhiegh, 143.
No Anxieties Cluster advise being devoted to the kingdom of heaven, in order to be a part of
the divine providence of God. Both are a pathway to a good life.

**THE FIFTH APHORISTIC CLUSTER: INNER TRUTH**


The Judgment: Inner Truth. Pigs and fishes. Good fortune. It furthers one to
cross the great water. Perseverance furthers.

The Image: Wind over lake: the image of Inner Truth. Thus the superior man
discusses criminal cases in order to delay executions. 471

“The wind blows over the lake and stirs the surface of water. Thus visible effects of
the invisible manifest themselves,” meaning that the forces of our inner nature show
themselves in our outer actions. 472 The hexagram also represents an open heart unfettered by
intolerance, containing the power of inner truth, which could also be taken to indicate
sincerity. It means being truthful within the center of your being, and stands for strength of
character, along with a confident nature. The hexagram suggests that one should be loyal
and honest with one’s self, and thus help others as well. 473 The trigram Sun, the Gentle,
wind and wood, has attributes of strategy, work, advance and retreat, and indecision. The
trigram Dui, the Joyous, lake, represents an inwardly willful yet outwardly vulnerable nature.
Together the trigrams work symbiotically through Sun’s ability to act with patience towards
inferiors, and Dui’s naturally submissive nature directed to those of a higher station, hence
creating the basis of trust. 474

The judgment is expressed in the aphorism, “Only when the bond is based on what is
right, on steadfastness, will it remain so firm that it triumphs over everything.” 475 A
relationship will last only as long as there is a common interest, and a positive tie can easily
turn sour. The metaphor of pigs and fishes, who are as sensitive in nature as their superiors,
is used to represent the basest level of society. If one needs to influence others, one must be

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472 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 235; Balkin, 579.
473 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 235; Balkin, 578, 579.
475 Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, 236.
sincere and free of discrimination and arrogance. Personality is a powerful force. One must be open and receptive to those one works with, in order to learn from them as well. This will lead to success.476 The image uses a nature metaphor of the wind penetrating water, representing a superior person reflecting on a lower person’s thoughts with understanding.477 The image of the wind on the water also conveys the idea of trust surrounding all beings, and like the wind, it can penetrate all spaces.478

The first line tells us not to rely on other people, as one only needs to cultivate one’s inner strength, because this will prepare one for the outside world. Others will only reduce one’s self-sufficiency and peace of mind, because this will lead to doubt and worry about remaining reliable.479 The lesson of inner self-reliance leads to a more devout nature. Knowing your inner self is a form of inner truth. This cannot be replaced by other people’s opinions. The second line statement contains a famous aphorism that has found its way into many studies of the Yijing. Like the Jesus’ sayings about the ravens that do not sow or reap, and the foxes without holes, this poetic saying also contains metaphor from nature. The aphorism states, “A crane calling in the shade. Its young answers it. I have a good goblet. I will share it with you.”480 Wilhelm says this is a symbol for a person’s inner unconscious power over people of similar character. The spiritual connection is transferred through the effect of sincerity and truth in thoughts, words, and deeds. Actions from the heart spread out like ripples in the water, connecting with everyone in its pathway. If one’s words or actions are not true they will be recognized as such, destroying the clarity of their intent. But if they have the power of inner truth, they can “move heaven and earth.”481 Thoughts create their own kind of energy, and their power will follow you, so it is wise to fill them with something positive.

476 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 236.
477 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 236.
478 Lynn, 528 n. 4. Kong Yingda. Inner trust enables a noble judge to properly investigate a criminal case.
479 Wilhelm, 237. “When the center is not still outer movement is unpredictable,” Dhiegh, 163.
480 Wilhelm. The I Ching, 237.
481 Wilhelm, The I Ching, 237, 238.
The aphorism, “Peace of mind is as inconstant as a flickering flame when one permits one’s strength to lie in other people and in other things outside one’s self,” represents the truth in allowing one’s heart to make one dependent on another instead of one’s self. It is common for a person to trust someone they love and deeply respect, and later find their whole world is built upon this relationship. Their inner emotions are no longer under their own control, so they fluctuate between happiness and sorrow like a flickering flame. One cannot be certain if this is suffering or the absolute bliss of devotion. Wilhelm compares this to the beating of a drum, then stopping to cry one’s self to death, and then singing to the divine. The fourth line deals with the inferior person essentially having to look for their superior, just as the full moon, which, for a brief second, faces its light source, the sun. In a passing instant the moon starts to wane, and turns away from the superior power. This is a rule of inner truth, and one that implies a level of humility. Like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, the inferior receives illumination from the superior. This is expressed through the aphorism, “Humility and reverence should be shown in the presence of an enlightening source.” The metaphor of a team of horses is added to this, saying each horse should keep its focus on the road ahead, and not to the right or left, or on its partner. This discipline is an aid for making progress, and avoiding dissension with others while focusing on inner truth. The wisdom to keep one’s attention on what is ahead can be compared to the aphorism in Luke 9:62, which tells us to look ahead while plowing a furrow, just as Jesus said anyone who looked back was not ready for the kingdom. The lesson is to look forward, at the superior being, if you want to go forward, thus finding the strength to keep focused on inner truth, which, like the kingdom, is one’s inner freedom.

The saying, “To have truthfulness that is spellbinding is blameless,” reflects how the power of one’s character influences people. When it is strong, sincere, and perceptive,
people will agree and act in accord. If one’s nature is weak and insincere, anything that is suggested or accomplished will be marred through pretense. Inner truth when applied genuinely provides a strong unity in people.\textsuperscript{488} The sixth line uses the nature metaphor of a rooster that flies up to heaven to represent a person who can sometimes influence others, but, like the chicken, cannot really fly, so is unable to maintain legitimate control. Because of this inability to persevere continually, they draw negative results and cause discord.\textsuperscript{489} Their foolishness in acting like something they are not reflects their lack of inner truth. One is wise who knows one’s true qualifications, and can work from this inner source in order to act more harmoniously with others.

The hexagram Zhong Fu means fidelity. It is the nature of the heart, and the strength of inner truth. It is a cultivated character working to be free of intolerance, egotism, and greed, while being able to see one’s faults and limitations. Inner truth means to recognize the freedom of the higher forces within, teaching the power of self-reliance. It is a pathway to finding one’s own light through an honest and reliable relationship with spirit. As Jesus taught his disciples to devote their thoughts and deeds to God’s providence, the person attuned to their inner truth finds guidance and freedom.\textsuperscript{490}

The \textit{Yijing}’s sayings teach benevolence, a proper code of conduct, and instruct one to be mindful, thus avoiding the possible dangers in life. The hexagrams provide the guidance of inner truth, how to find happiness in the simplest of things, or to be courageous in a difficult situation. If applied correctly, the \textit{Yijing} will open the reader’s mind to the wisdom that is found within all people. The aphorisms of the \textit{Yijing} and the sayings of Jesus share the similar themes of wisdom, humility, self-cultivation, and the knowledge found within the observance of nature. They contain many of the aphoristic teachings found in other sacred texts throughout the world, and can inspire a faith-filled abundant life.

\textsuperscript{488} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 239; Dhiegh, 163.
\textsuperscript{489} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 239, 703.
\textsuperscript{490} Wilhelm, \textit{The I Ching}, 698, 699; Dhiegh, 162; Balkin, 583, “Follow your own path.”
CONCLUSION

As we have seen, aphorisms are brief sayings that provide truth and guidance. They have their origin in the collected observations and experiences of life. Aphorisms frequently contain events taken from daily life, such as love, marriage, politics, and education. The sayings may provide a humorous or sarcastic presentation of our worldview, and are a reflection of our goodness and our foibles, as seen through the sayings of others. Aphorisms hold answers for those searching for life’s blessings, wisdom, and the path to a successful life. They illuminate resources for inner guidance, and tell us how to build a more meaningful relationship with the divine. Aphorisms may hold the key to enlightenment and the pathway to happiness. The spiritual writings of the world, including the Bible and the Yijing, contain these instructive sayings that provide the reader with a guide to a better life.

The sayings of Jesus and the aphorisms found within the hexagrams of the Yijing reflect the inherent wisdom found within human nature. They share similar themes, such as the search for truth, and how to better understand life. If followed successfully, the reader can find inner peace and fulfillment. The Synoptic Gospels are the source of Jesus’ sayings, and teach love and forgiveness as the heart of his philosophy. The Yijing counsels self-cultivation, benevolence, and proper social conduct. Jesus’ aphorisms are committed to God and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Yijing’s aphorisms are a pathway to an understanding of the world, and are a foundation of Chinese wisdom. Both teach the seeker how to find the good life.

The gospels tell us to concentrate on the Kingdom of Heaven, and not on material things. The Yijing tells us to find contentment within, to find life’s treasures in the simplest of things. They both warn the reader to avoid negative thinking; worry and fear will only create a lack of faith. They also say it is a natural law to not resist a negative experience with more negativity, but to retreat, or relinquish one’s place with passivity. The teachings say


492 Turn the other Cheek: Matt. 5:39; Luke 6:29. Hexagram 10 Lu/Treading (Conduct); Hexagram 25
to follow the path, the Bible says to rely on the providence of God, and the *Yijing* advises the reader to cultivate humility and self-reliance.

The theme of nature is shared in both texts. Jesus used the sky, birds, animals, and plant life to help the reader understand the Kingdom of Heaven. The *Yijing* used the power of nature in the same way, bringing a clearer understanding to the lesson. The laws of nature are a part of life. This theme, as well as such ideas as wisdom, humility, and self-cultivation, is common to spiritual aphorisms in general. Aphorisms are thought to contain original texts. Historians study the oldest manuscripts, in hope of finding the earliest message of Jesus, and the oldest *Yijing*. Scribes and editors often added sayings of their own, or ones from older collections to try to improve the teachings. The Jesus’ sayings and the aphorisms of the *Yijing* have not lost any power from these redactions, and still prescribe the lesson of goodness and how to live a happy and successful life.

This study of aphorisms provides the theory that the Jesus’ sayings and the aphorisms of the *Yijing* share similar teachings, literary device, and historical study. The Q and Thomas sayings have been important research in the Christian community. The Mawangdui *Yijing* manuscript, discovered in 1974, has been studied much like the Nag Hammadi manuscript of Thomas, which was found in 1945. The sayings in both books hold the directions for finding a better understanding of life. They contain the idea of character development that can be found in aphorisms in general. Aphorisms are an important part of literary and historical study. Future research on the topic of the comparison of aphorisms is a fruitful field. The *Yijing* could be compared to the religious writings of any faith, and the sayings of Jesus are always being compared to the spiritual writings of the world. This thesis provides a template for analyzing the truth and advice that is found in the religious saying, by examining two disparate sources. Much work remains to be done, but this thesis is an effort to make a start.

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*Wu Wang/Innocence.* The idea of non-retaliation is found in most religious texts.
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PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


