

## Yin-Yang Theory and Globalization

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### Abstract

Based on the discourse of Yin-Yang theory, the paper is to study the relationship between globalization and anti-globalization, attempting to develop an interdisciplinary analytical method via the oriental philosophy. The paper attempts to constitute the following codes for reference in the analysis of international relations: (1) as an analytical model to deconstruct the diverse international phenomena via the oriental traditional philosophy (2) as a mirror or medium to learn international conflicts, helps to communicate ideas, and achieves the moral or ethical consensus; and (3) as a theoretical tool attempting to constitute a new discourse in IR study.

**Key words:** Yin-Yang; Theory; Globalization; International Relations; *I Ching*; Discourse

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The paper is based on the discourse of the *I Ching*, or *the Book of Changes*, to think about international relations from the oriental perspective. It's both a Chinese divination system as well as a classical philosophy based on the *yin-yang* (negative-positive) theory, the concept of *Chi* and *five elements*, which have been influencing Chinese and other South-Eastern Asian cultures for more than 2000 years, such as Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Its social and cultural impacts in Asia might be comparable to that of the Judeo-Christian Bible in the West. In this paper, the *yin-yang* theory would be employed as an interdisciplinary method to illustrate international issues and suggest what would be an idealistic spatial structure or formation for international development. And then, the paper is attempting to constitute the following codes for reference in the analysis of international relations: (1) as an analytical model to deconstruct the diverse international phenomena via the oriental traditional philosophy (2) as a mirror or medium to observe international conflicts, helps to communicate ideas, and achieves the moral or ethical consensus; and (3) as a theoretical tool to constitute a new discourse in IR study.

### YIN YANG THEORY: THE DERIVATION OF THE *I CHING*<sup>3</sup>

*I Ching*, also known as *Yi Jing*, or *the Book of Changes*, is one of the Five Classics, the fundamental books of Confucianism, both for education as well as divination. It

<sup>3</sup>The English translation, introduction, illustration and diagrams about *I Ching* in this paper mainly draws on Mondo Selter's paper, THE *YIN-YANG SYSTEM OF ANCIENT CHINA: THE YIJING-BOOK OF CHANGES AS A PRAGMATIC METAPHOR FOR CHANGE THEORY*, published in *Paideusis - Journal for Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Studies*: Volume 1 / 1998, and The Eranos translation of the Book of Changes by Introduction for the complete text, see Rudolf Ritsema and Shantena Augusto Sabbadini *The Original I Ching Oracle*, Watkins, London 2005, and the following websites: [http://www.iching123.com/brief\\_a\\_text.htm](http://www.iching123.com/brief_a_text.htm), and <http://www.friesian.com/yinyang.htm>, and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I\\_Ching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Ching), and Wilhelm (trans.), Richard; Cary Baynes (trans.). "The I Ching or Book of Changes". <http://deoxy.org/iching/1>, and James Legge, "The I Ching". <http://www.sacred-texts.com/ich/>, and <http://www.asiarecipe.com/yinyang.htm>, and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin\\_Yang/Taiji/Bagua/wuxing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_Yang/Taiji/Bagua/wuxing).

has a history over 3000 years old (the symbols originally engraved in the tortoise shells or other animal bones used for oracle are said to be over 5000 years old), making it both one of the oldest surviving scriptures in the world, and one of the oldest forms of divination. Meanwhile, it is also a book for deriving personal strategy and insights based on oracle or intuitive wisdom - as concerning with the human affairs that logic alone cannot handle. During the past millennia in China, people would like to resort to it for instruction when confronted with troubles, no matter for emperors to administer their state, making military strategies in the warring times, or an ordinary's concerns for dealing with their business or household affairs. It would be beneficial for ancient Chinese people to dismiss doubts, enlighten their wisdom, and guide for correct decision-makings.

The *I Ching* is an earliest known intuitive decision-making system in China. It is based on the binary logic system of *Yin* and *Yang* (figure 1), which is the fundamental concept both to Taoism and Confucianism. In the ancient Chinese philosophy, Yin and Yang is thought to be the origin of Universe. The interplay of yin and yang gives birth to the "myriad beings," therefore, the interaction between Yin and Yang also means production and reproduction of the endless variety of life and the world. And this dance is encoded in sixty-four hexagrams, figures composed of six broken or solid horizontal lines, diagrams of different combinations of the yin and yang principles (Rudolf Ritsema and Shantena Augusto Sabbadini 2005, p. 4). Meanwhile, the concept is also used to describe how the polar or seemingly contradictory forces are intertwined and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other in turn. Opposites thus only exist in relation to each other. Many natural and social dualities—e.g. dark and light, female and male, below and above, cold and hot, earth and heaven, grassroots and elites—are thought of as manifestations of yin and yang (respectively).

Originally, Yin and Yang are not ethically-based. Yin refers to the shaded, north side of a mountain or the shaded, south bank of a river, while Yang is opposite to Yin--so it is the bright, south side of a mountain or the lit, north bank of a river. Literally, Yin means "shady, secret, dark, mysterious, and cold", while Yang in turn refers to "clear, bright, sunny, and hot" Rhetorically, Yin represents everything in the world that is **bad, below, dark, heavy, hidden, vicious, negative, passive, pessimistic, receptive, submissive, yielding, cool, still, soft, static and feminine**, while Yang represents everything that is **good, dynamic, creative, illuminating, evident, active, aggressive, controlling, high, hot, hard, light, optimistic, positive, initiative and masculine**. Later, although Taoist philosophy generally discounts any good/bad distinction and other dichotomous moral judgments, in preference to the idea of balance, some Confucians and neo-Confucians (most notably the philosopher Dong Zhongshu of the Han

Dynasty in the 2nd century BC) still endowed the concept of yin and yang with a moral dimension. It also echoes with the perception (especially in the West) that yin and yang correspond to the evil and good.

Philosophically, in ancient Chinese metaphysics, Yin and Yang refers to two cosmological forces, called *Chi*, which is rhetorically a kind of cosmic breath, circulating in universe. If well-balanced or harmonized, it could be a **living Chi** (Yang), refreshing, energetic and creative, symbolizing vigor, production and fertility. Or else, it would turn into **dead Chi** (Yin) it is dull, sterile, inert and infertile symbolizing the stagnation, turmoil and death. Therefore, the concept of *Chi* also resonates with the interaction between the Yin and Yang—production and reproduction.



Figure 1

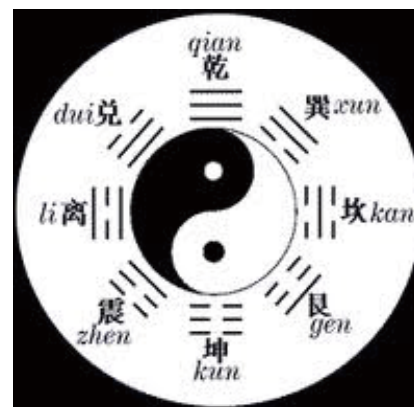


Figure 2

Based on these basic concepts, a complete system of opposites was dialectically elaborated. Everything in the world can be identified with either yin or yang aspect. Earth is the ultimate yin object. Heaven is the ultimate yang object. Of the two traditional Chinese philosophies, Confucianism is identified as Yang, while Taoism, Yin. The former claims that man should be voluntarily

obedient and loyal to his superiors and actively engage himself into world affairs, while the latter passively proposes that man should get out of the world and lead a reclusive life. And politically, Confucianism claims that a state or a family should be to build a hierarchical Order under the rule of yang subjugating the yin to it, such as women to men, children to parents, citizens to officials, grass-root to elite, people to emperor, etc. On the contrary, Taoism stresses on the supremacy of "yin" over "yang". Therefore, in the present era of democracy and human rights, compared with the Confucian ethics, which aims to build a top-down social matrix where yang rules over yin, the Taoist epistemology seems much more acceptable and fashionable in that it is built on a bottom-up context (yin over yang). The Taoist conception partly resonates with the up-surging subversive discourse of feminism or post-modernism. However matriarchy subverts patriarchy or the grass-root prevails over the elite, it also reminds us of the existing injustice and inequality in social pyramids, and to some degree, might be more comprehensive and persuasive than the two Western epistemologies.

Indeed, the yin and yang aspects are not identified in isolation but really a mixture of the two. In the *I Ching*, there is a classical principle that **neither Yin nor Yang alone could nurture itself, but do it with mutual generation and promotion**. That is, the both oppose each other as well as mutually include each other. The both doesn't follow the "either-or" but the "both-and" principle. Yin & Yang are interconnected as different, but inseparable sides of the cosmos (Cigdem Solas Sinan Ayhan, 2007). These two opposing forces may transform into each other over time, when one polarity goes to the extreme. That is, Yin will eventually become Yang, Yang will eventually become Yin; the system provides a balance concept (Gao and Schachler, 2004, p.47) between the gaming of powers, which could maintain the balance of the universe. If not, it would lead to turmoil, disaster, and even death. Ontologically, any philosophy that asserts two elements such as the yin-yang of Chinese philosophy will also look for a term to reconcile the two, in order to ensure that both belong to the same sphere of discourse, so the term 'supreme ultimate' (*Tai Chi*) performs this role in the philosophy of the *Book of Changes*. (Zhang Dainian and Edmund Ryden, 2002, p.179). Therefore Yin and Yang, the two terms are complementary opposites that interact within the universe, consisting of a dynamic system. Everything has both yin and yang aspects, but either of these aspects may manifest more strongly in particular objects, and may ebb or flow over time.

## THE WISDOM OF THE *I CHING*: A DYNAMIC BUT NEUTRAL SCHEMING SYSTEM

When thinking about "what is the fundamental principle

of the universe", the answer could be found in the discourse of the *I Ching*, which constitutes a dynamic system based on the principle that **the world goes in constant transformation between Yin and Yang, whose prospect is also filled with ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty**. The successive alternations between Yin and Yang symbolize **Change**. That is, the world forever changes. It is thought as a fundamental principle of the universe which forms ontological assumptions of the Chinese philosophy and has been further developed into a set of guidelines for Chinese beliefs and behaviors, thus the **change discourse** naturally becomes the central focus in Chinese discursive practices (Guo-Ming Chen, 2008).

Indeed, the **change discourse** could be perceived everywhere in the *I Ching*. First, the character **I** (易) itself in Chinese culture is literally endowed with diverse meanings such as being easy, simple, changeable and variable. Originally, the form of Chinese character **I** (易), its image in ancient Chinese characters looks like a **lizard** -- the top side being likened to the round head of a lizard, and the bottom part similar to a lizard's legs. In addition, both **I** and **lizard** in Chinese have the same pronunciation. And then, to represent the word **change** by **lizard** is due to its mobility and changeable nature. It could change its skin color several times a day or in different environments for self-protection, especially chameleon.

Structurally, the character **I** (易) comprised of two Chinese characters, **sun** (日) and **moon** (月). The sun represents **yang**, and the moon, **yin**. Together, the alternation of sun and moon symbolizes the interaction between **yin** and **yang**. Finally, in Chinese ancient oracle-bones, some the phrases such as "**I ru**" (alternating sun) and "**bu I ru**" (no alternating sun) were found often, so the "**I**" in the phrases means alternation or transformation, which is suitable for being used to explain the changeable nature of trigrams and hexagrams in the *I Ching* ((Guo-Ming Chen, 2008).

And through the images, it constitutes the **change discourse** by framing conditions as archetypal patterns called hexagrams. Every hexagram comprises of six horizontal lines, each of which symbolizes a particular kind of human characteristic or situation. They compose of a profound system that could track some 322, 560 possible permutations. The brief texts that accompany each hexagram symbol are cryptic aphorisms that serve as metaphors for contextualizing and negotiating situations by providing a vocabulary for sorting out the relationships among things as they come together and constitute themselves in unique compositions (Fung, 1952, p.261). And according to the philosopher François Jullien (1989, 2004, 2007, 2008), he thinks that the *I Ching*'s aim is to clarify the way events unfold. Thus, the hexagram operates not as a predetermined, abstract, and codified intellectual representation or construct, but as a pure transformational structure to be used as a perceptual diagram. And the hexagrammatic structure is the only one

that is capable of expressing the ongoing mutations of the universe, which he calls “process,” through a concrete system of representation, or “concrete figuration.”

In daily life, the use of the *I Ching* is context-sensitive. According to different contexts, the proper use of the *I Ching* is beneficial for shedding light on the problems or issues that logic by itself simply can't deal with (most of the important ones in life) - relationships, negotiations, work dynamics, office politics, family matters, and spiritual well-being. The *I Ching* can be called a tool, a system, a process, an experience, or even a game - and each of these terms is accurate - depending upon how you choose to use it. When used with sincerity, it is a powerful tool for widening perspective, improving clarity, emotional detachment and stimulating intuition. On the other hand, if one uses it casually, it could serve as an enjoyable, relaxing, even an educational experience (Mondo Seter, 1998).

Thus, rather than the Western thought noted for its strengths in categorization and analysis, the Chinese thought, is characteristic with its integrative and encompassing nature. Throughout the *I Ching*, though it often claims that the universe is pregnant with unpredictable changes, it also asserts on condition that there were the harmony and unity between Yin and Yang, any difficulty would be overcome. That is, the harmony between Yin and Yang is the most idealistic state of the universe. If not, the things would be off the track, chaos would erupt into life and the usual bearings no longer suffice for orientation. It resonates with the western chaos theory which pays particular attention to these murky transitions, by which forms transmute into each other.

Life itself arises at the boundary between order and chaos: it requires the both; it is a daughter of both. On the side of perfect order there is only dead stability, inertia, symmetry, thermodynamic equilibrium. Nothing very interesting can happen there: everything is too predictable; it resembles death more than life. But the side of total disorder is not very interesting either: forms appear and disappear too quickly, there is a total lack of symmetry, and everything is too unpredictable. It is on the edge between order and chaos that the subtle dance of life takes place: here the real complexity arises, here forms bend and loop and transmute and evolve (Rudolf Ritsema and Shantena Augusto Sabbadini 2005, p.3).

In the *I Ching*, the theme of harmony, balance and equilibrium between Yin and Yang is fully enthused, constituting a dynamic neutral system for understanding events, which has been influencing Chinese people's mindset both consciously as well as subconsciously for more than 2000 years. Peng and Nisbett (1999), in their study of divergent cultural approaches to contradiction, empirically showed that Western participants may polarize their views when two apparently contradictory propositions are presented, while Chinese participants would be more likely to accept both propositions. It suggests that Chinese could apply the concept of interdependent opposites in a both/and framework to

foster reconciliation of the apparent polarities of such dichotomies as competition and cooperation (MING-JER CHEN, 2002). We call it the “*Middle Way*” or “*Keeping the Happy Means*”, which is one of the golden rules, cherished by Taoism, Confucianism as well as the rulers both in the ancient and modern times. It's an active “harmonious integration” of opposites, rather than a reactive compromise. In the course of Chinese communication, it helps to shape Chinese collective and holistic thinking method. That is, how to find a compromising method to establish the balance between Yin and Yang is the core notion in the problem-solving, which is presented as a kind of neutral, but encompassing frame for understanding events.

In short, the Yin--Yang principle suggests the following philosophical underpinnings: (1) Yin and Yang coexist in everything, and everything is dialectically endowed with Yin and Yang aspects; (2) Yin and Yang give rise to, complement, reinforce and transform into each other; (3) Yin and Yang exist within each other in a symbiotic relationship and interact with each other to form a holistic, dynamic and cyclical unity, that is, ***neither Yin nor Yang alone could nurture itself, but do it with mutual generation and promotion***. For more than 2000 years, the ancient system of cosmology and philosophy has been at the heart of Chinese cultural beliefs, and valued by dominant ideologies, no matter for the ancient rulers even during the period of intense conflict, or the government of the PRC in recent years. The philosophy centers on the ideas of the dynamic balance of opposites, the evolution of events as a process, and acceptance of the inevitability of change. Robert Paul Weller (2006) has enshrined it as an intricate combination of nearly every system of cosmic correlation ever devised in China, reinforcing the ideas of balanced interaction and harmony within a broad order of heaven and nature and harnessing the energy of universe for human benefits.

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## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE DEMOGRAPHY OF *I CHING*

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Traditionally, it was believed that the *I Ching* was invented by one of the Chinese ancestors, the mythical cultural hero Fu Xi (or *Fu Hsi*, *Bo Xi*). He was one of the earliest legendary rulers of China (traditional dates 2800BC-2737BC), credited with introducing farming, fishing and husbandry. Based on the yin-yang theory, he was renowned for deducing the 8 trigrams (figure 2, 3). The solid line is Yang, while the broken one is Yin. The formations represent a range of interrelated concepts and the diverse relations between phenomena, thus in this paper, I called it *tripartite correlated pattern, or trigrams' combination and permutation (TCP)*. Separately they each represent different things of similar nature in the world. And the things could be categorized into the *generation*

and *overcoming circles* of **Five Elements** (figure 4, 5),<sup>4</sup> of which the world is composed—metal, wood, water, fire and earth, comparable to earth, water, fire and wind in the ancient western philosophy. The concept of Five Elements has chiefly become an ancient mnemonic device, widely used in many traditional Chinese fields for describing interactions and relationships between phenomena. It was employed as a device in many fields of early Chinese thoughts, including seemingly disparate fields such as *Feng-shui* (Chinese Geomancy), astrology, traditional Chinese medicine, music, military strategy and martial arts. Indeed, they are abstract terms rhetorically representing the things in Universe, when the vocabulary of mankind was not as large as now in ancient times.

By the time of the legendary ruler King Yu (2194BC – 2149BC), who was well-known for managing the flood in ancient China, the trigrams had supposedly been developed into 64 hexagrams (figure 6).<sup>5</sup> They were recorded in the scripture *Lian Shan* (as an apocalypse for future, one of the three offshoots of the *I Ching*, out of print now). *Lian Shan* means "continuous mountains" in Chinese because, at that time in China, most people lived on hunting in the mountainous regions. Therefore, in order to show respect to mountain, it begins with the hexagram Bound (52), which depicts a *mountain* (☶☶) mounting on another and is believed to be the origin of the scripture's name.

And then, after the traditionally recorded Xia Dynasty (2070 BC—1600 BC) was overthrown by the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC—1046 BC), the hexagrams are said to have been re-deduced into another format called **Gui Cang**, (how to bury the dead is beneficial for the descendents), and the hexagram responding (*earth* 02☷☷) became the first hexagram. *Gui Cang* may be literally translated into "return and to be buried or contained", which refers to *earth* as the first hexagram itself indicates. In ancient China, Heaven (qian) symbolized Yang, the

king, the father, and the patriarchy, while the earth, Yin, the queen, the mother, and the matriarchy. The *earth* (kun) was employed as the first hexagram owing to its matriarchal ideology prevailing over the social system during that historical period.

And at the same time, there is another historical figure called Wen, or King Wen of Zhou Dynasty. When imprisoned by a tyranny, who was the last king of Shang Dynasty, King Wen was said to deduce the hexagrams in a new way and discovered that if the hexagrams began with **force** (heaven) (01☰☰), it could reveal the rise of a new Dynasty called the *Zhou*—he and his descendents may rein over the land. He then gave each hexagram a description regarding its own nature, thus the text of "Explanation of Hexagrams" was born. The shift of the first hexagrams from the earth to heaven symbolized the transition of social system from matriarchy to patriarchy in ancient China.

When King Wu, son of King Wen, dethroned the Shang Dynasty, his brother Zhou Gong Dan gave a further explanation to every **Horizontal Line** in the *hexagrams*. It clarified the significance of each horizontal line in each hexagram. It was not until then that the whole context of the *I Ching* was illustrated. Its philosophy heavily influenced the literature, government administration and common life of the Zhou Dynasty (1122BC-256BC). Since then, people would like to understand the *I Ching* associated with the social environment by the connotative meanings behind the lines, rather than merely by the images composed by those horizontal lines in the hexagrams.

Later, during the time of the Spring and Autumn (722BC-481BC), Confucius engaged himself in its exposition and argumentation, writing a group of commentaries on the *I Ching*, called "*Ten Wings*". It provides the guidance for the later people in studying and using the *I Ching*.

<sup>4</sup>The concept is also known as Five Movements, Five Phases or Five Steps/Stages. Based on it, there contains the **Generation Circle** and **Overcoming (or Enemy, or Destruction) Circle**, as follows:

**Generation Circle:** Wood generates Fire; Fire makes Earth (ash); Earth bears Metal; Metal carries or could be transformed into Water (as in a bucket or tap, or the melted metal in liquid state); Water nourishes Wood. **Overcoming Circle:** Wood holds Earth; Earth absorbs Water; Water quenches Fire; Fire melts Metal; Metal chops Wood. Also: Wood absorbs Water; Water rusts Metal; Metal breaks up Earth; Earth smothers Fire; Fire burns Wood.

The two circles interact with each other systematically, but not follow the above principles mechanically and absolutely. Quite so often, the generated is attrition to the generator. For instance, water could quench fire, but electricity is a kind of fire which could not be quenched by it, quite on the contrary, it could be carried or conducted by water. Earth bears Metal, so that we can find various mines. However, in Chinese, the word metal, not merely referring to the whole category of metal, but also referring to other minerals or gold, the wealth, so we can get wealth from the earth, such as cash crop, mines. However, most farmers in the countryside of China are still poor so that they have to leave their homeland for a living in city. At the time that the cities are becoming richer, the rural regions are going to its opposite side.

<sup>5</sup>It is developed by the permutations and combinations of the 8 trigrams, and there are 64 hexagrams in the *I Ching*. The text of the *I Ching* describes each of the 64 hexagrams, and later scholars added commentaries and analyses of each one; these have been subsumed into the text comprising the *I Ching*. In the table below, each hexagram's translation is accompanied by a form of R. Wilhelm translation, followed by a retranslation. Here for the length of paper, I just pick out some of them for exemplification.

Name	Nature/element	Season	Personality	Direction	Symbols
Li	Fire/fire	Summer	Clinging	South	Rapid movement, radiance, Electricity lightening the sun
Kun	Earth/earth	Summer	Receptive	South-west	Receptive, yielding, passive femininity Grass-root below inferior, matriarchy
Dui	Marsh or mineral resource /metal	Autumn	Joyous	West	Joy, wealth, satisfaction, stagnation, conflict, snobbery, war..
Qian	Heaven/metal	Autumn	Creative	Northwest	Strength, above, government, radicalism, sky, elite, the way to wealth, patriarchy
Kan	Water/water	Winter	Abysmal	North	Danger, rapid rivers, the abyss, moon.
Gen	Mountain/earth	Winter	Still	North-east	Stillness, immovability.
Zhen	Thunder/wood	Spring	Arousing	East	Excitation, revolution, division.
Xun	Wind/wood	Spring	Gentle	South-east	Gentle penetration, flexibility.

**Figure 3**

Politically, it gives the illumination to those feudal rulers in ancient China with some advisory counsel and caution as follows:

- a) He (in a high position such as king) who is conscious of danger could create peace for himself; or else, if he who takes things lightly, it would lead to his own downfall (translated by Wilhelm, 1950, p.353.);
- b) Movement and stillness have their definite laws, and Events follow the definite trends (ibid., p. 280);
- c) by means of the easy and simple, we could grasp the whole (ibid., p.287);
- d) the usefulness of the I Ching needs one with a sober and impartial mind (ibid., p.317).

Movement	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Planet	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Mental Quality	Sensitivity	Creativity	Clarity	Intuition	Spontaneity fluidity
Emotion	Anger	Happiness	Love	Grief	Fear
Color	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Shape	Rectangular	Triangle	Square	Round	Curve
Material	Wood, Plants,	Fire, Light	Clay, Stone	Gold, Silver	Water, Mirror
Direction	east	south	Center	west	north
Energy	Generative	Expansive	Stabilizing	Contracting	Conservative
Season	Spring	Summer	Change of seasons (Every quarter)	Autumn	Winter
Climate	Windy	Hot	Damp	Dry	Cold
Development	Sprouting	Blooming	Ripening	Withering	Dormant
Livestock	sheep	chicken	Cattle	dog	pig
Grain	wheat	beans	rice	hemp	millet

**Figure 4**

Philosophically, it is a synthesis of Confucianism and Taoism, and even Buddhism. It is correlated with the philosophy of the unity of man and nature which conforms to conflicting philosophical currents, such as the Confucian moral values, and the Taoist “*way*”, the numerologist willful heaven, and astrological order (Gao and Schachler, 2004, p.46). And when considering the various influences upon the quality of daily life, most of the Chinese may believe in such a well-worn maxim: “First destiny, second luck, third ‘*Feng Shui*’<sup>6</sup>, fourth philanthropy, fifth education.” The first three, or even all the Chinese metaphysics, are closely related to the principles or instructions of the *I Ching*.

From then on, the *I Ching* has been cherished, commented and illustrated by Chinese emperors and intellectuals (both Taoists and Confucians) throughout the history, becoming both a prophetic and philosophical book for life, such as fortune-telling, a conduct code for self-cultivation, instruction for making decisions, structuring problems, planning strategic choices, and implementing actions.

Meanwhile, its cosmological and metaphysical discourses are also pervasive and impose on other eastern Asian cultures such as Japan, South Korea and Vietnam. The *book* resides at the heart of Chinese philosophy and culture and has come to symbolize East Asian thought (Chan, 1963, p.262). And it has become the centerpiece of their thought and the dominant cultural “gestalt” (Mondo Sector 1998). The national flags of South Korea and Vietnam are good illustrations. The flag of South

<sup>6</sup>It is an ancient Chinese metaphysical system believed to use the laws of both Heaven (astronomy) and Earth (geography) to help one improve life and accumulate wealth. Historically, it was widely applied to orient buildings—often spiritually significant structures such as tombs, but also dwellings and other structures—in an auspicious manner.

Korea (figure 7) with *Tai Chi* in the centre with four trigrams represents Heaven, Water, Earth, and Fire. The Vietnam's national flag (figure 8) makes use of the trigram *Li*, representing *South, Cling, fire* and *summer*. *South* refers to its geographical location to China, and *Cling* symbolizes its political status as an affiliate to China in ancient times. And concerning with its influences on Japan, Wai-ming Ng asserts that being within the orbit of the Chinese cultural sphere, traditional Japan was indebted to the *I Ching* for the development of aspects of its culture.



Figure 7



Figure 8

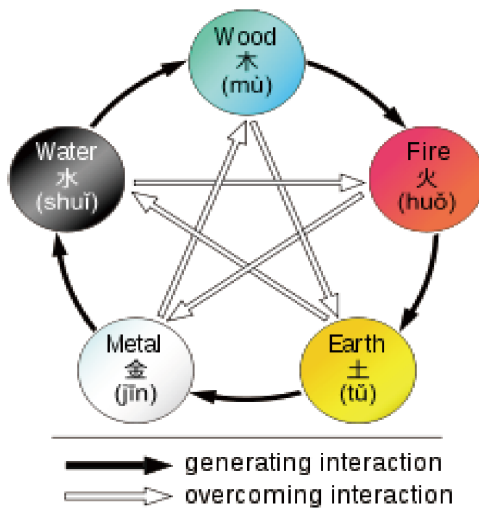


Figure 5

The text arrived in Japan no later than the sixth century and was little studied in ancient Japan (539-1186). Its readership expanded to major literate groups such as Zen Buddhist monks, courtiers, and high-ranking warriors in the medieval period (1186-1603). The *I Ching* scholarship reached its apex during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) when the *I Ching* became one of the most popular and influential Chinese texts. The application of the *I Ching* has important implications for understanding the role of Confucianism in the modernization of Japan. (Wai-ming Ng 2000, p.24, 47).

Hexagram	R. Wilhelm	Modern Interpretation
01. ☰ Force	The Creative	Possessing Creative Power & Skill
02. ☷ Earth	The Receptive	Needing Knowledge & Skill; Do not force matters and go with the flow
03. ☳ Sprouting	Difficulty at the Beginning	Sprouting
05. ☱ Attending	Waiting	Uninvolvement (Wait for chance), Nourishment
06. ☱ Arguing	Conflict	Engagement in Conflict
07. ☳ Leading	The Army	Bringing Together, Teamwork
52. ☶ Bound	The Keeping Still	Immobility
56. ☱ Sojourning	The Wanderer	Travel

Figure 6

Now, its discourse has not been merely confined to the traditional cultural domains but extended into modern science, where some correlations could also be perceived by scholars. According to Fung (1952), the *I Ching* is one of the few books in the Orient that has no counterpart in the West. People now would like to regard the hexagrams as a cryptic but metaphorical matrix, extending its discourse from oracle to other realms, such as politics, economics, management, and even in mathematics. And even a few books are related to science (DNA, new physics, and complexity theory). Among those modern scholars, the idea is to tap unseen aspects of reality, its substances and its processes, much as modern scientists do with experimental methods in subatomic and medicine, and though sometimes not making sense to those raised with modern science methods, yet it was considered useful in the hands of a creative and wise sage who could read the sign and offer advice by consulting the reality at all levels (Lester R Kurtz, 2007, p.73).

For instance, the Yin-Yang theory could be thought as a binary system corresponding to the binary numeral system in mathematics. Yin, is represented with a broken line (— —) corresponding to 0, and yang, as a solid line (—) corresponds to 1. The sixty-four hexagrams are each equivalent to the six-digit binary numbers described as a vertical sequence ranging from 000000 to 111111 (0 to 63). It was discovered by Gottfried Leibniz in his article *Explication de l'Arithmétique Binaire* (1703), who took the layout of the hexagrams to represent the binary sequences, such as ☰ 000000, ☷ 000001, ☳ 111111, and so forth. Richard S. Cook (2006) also asserts that the *I Ching* could demonstrate a relation between the golden ratio (aka the division in extreme and mean ratio) and

"linear recurrence sequences" (the Fibonacci numbers are examples of "linear recurrence sequences"):

...the hexagram sequence, showing that its classification of binary sequences demonstrates knowledge of the convergence of certain linear recurrence sequences ... to division in extreme and mean ratio... that the complex hexagram sequence encapsulates a careful and ingenious demonstration of the LRS (linear recurrence sequences)/DEM (division in the extreme mean ratio relation), that this knowledge results from general combinatorial analysis, and is reflected in elements emphasized in ancient Chinese and Western mathematical traditions.

And in the area of international relations, the wisdom of the Yin-Yang theory could also be easily identified. For instance, the military theory of attack (Yang, active and aggressive) and defense (Yin, passive and receptive), in fact is a combination between Yin and Yang, while the cult of offense is Yang in extremity, which would lead to the breakout of war naturally. So it is with the policy of carrot (Yin) and stick (Yang). The developed world is Yang (high), while the less developed (below), Yin. Their cooperation and communication also reflects the interaction between Yin and Yang. And then, Peace talk is Yin, while War is Yang. Once peace talk doesn't work, some powers would naturally resort to war. The process reveals the transformation from Yin to Yang (from cooperation to confrontation). What else, in international relations, when we mention the phrase *strategic partnership*, it could be observed as another representation of Yin-Yang's interaction. What it reveals is the relationship, though at the same time bound with common goals, still goes with care and caution, amenity with animosity. The cooperation merely exists in competition, while the coalition arises from potential confrontation.

Though in modern science, the group of scholars might be always a minority in a large area of world academia, yet the multi-faceted and open-ended interpretations still explained and predicted the corresponding changes in the social, political and bodily realms (B A Elman, 2009, p.12). At present, indeed, as an increasingly significant descriptive and theoretical tool, it has been widely used in a wide range of social science, such as international relations, sociology and economics (YiJun Tian, 2008).

It sounds a little rollicking and might be criticized as being arbitrary, subjective, superstitious and less scientific, however, it doesn't disturb us with ancient "philosophical sorcerers and magical formulae" to establish the humanitarianism and dispel devils (Duncan Bel, 2008). Since it has provided a time-tested system for addressing change as a distinctly Oriental methodology, now it might be a timely opportunity to fit it into the global context and consider it as a valuable complement or an alternative system for contextualizing and symbolizing change, to Western decision models that are currently in vogue

(Mondo Seter, 1998).

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to continue this line of discourse by attempting to explore the international relations based on the above principles: *the Yin-Yang theory, the five elements and the flow of the Chi*. By drawing on those ideas, the paper tries to associate some global issues with the hexagrams to observe international relations via a case study of *globalization*. However, it is not a kind of ancient divine prophecy as its original use, but is to enlighten our mind by way of the traditional Chinese philosophy. If finding some defects in the previous situation, the decision-makers should find ways to reform and improve, transforming the defective into a new better one. After all, it is a kind of wisdom in human nascent state. Meanwhile, it is not a challenge to the dominant ideologies in IR study, but an attempt to open up a new avenue and establish a new discourse.

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## GLOBALIZATION AND ANTI-GLOBALIZATION: THE GAME BETWEEN YIN AND YANG

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Though globalization has become a basic concept in IR discourse, yet till now, it's still ambiguous and hard to define. It is an abstract philosophical term which doesn't refer to any concrete object, but an interpretation of some social process, causing more prolific as well as diverse discussion. It is commonly conceived as a process or set of processes which embody a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and power (Paul Ghils).<sup>7</sup>

Yet its general drifts still could be grasped by some scholars' brief descriptions, such as Anthony Giddens, who defines the term as the intensification of worldwide social relations linking distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away vice versa, as is Roland Robertson's observation, that (globalization) means the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole, or as the definition-like presentation by David Held that it is a process or a set of processes embodying the transformation in their spatial organization of social relations and transactions -assessed in terms of extensity, intensity, velocity and impact -generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and exercise of power, which in fact has been well illustrated by Martin Albow's exemplification:

(a) by active dissemination of practices, values, technology, or other human products on the globe, or global practices exercises an increasing influence on

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<sup>7</sup>Paul Ghils, Globalization as a Metonymy for the Universal, retrieved at scholar.google.com.



people's lives, or globe serves a focus on or a premise on shaping human lives, or incremental changes occasioned by such instances.

(b) Seen as generality of such instances.

(c) Such instances being viewed abstractly.

Seen from the above, we can easily assume that globalization contains diverse political, economic and social cultural changes. Usually it refers to the consequences what they carries, according to Ruud Lubbers and Jolanda Koorevaa (OECD, 2000), the term means that it is a process in which geographic distance becomes a factor of diminishing importance in the establishment and maintenance of cross border economic, political, and social cultural relations. "global events can -- via telecommunication, digital computers, audiovisual media, rocketry and the like -- occur almost simultaneously anywhere and everywhere in the world" (Scholte 1996, p.45). It increases possibilities for action between and among people in situations where latitudinal and longitudinal location, which seems immaterial to the social activity at hand.<sup>8</sup>

However, at the same time it brings out to us various opportunities, it also causes and encounters fears, resistance, actions as well as reactions. It's no wonder to observe that on today's tidal waves of globalization, there are always many groups opposing it, or called anti-globalization movement. In most common sense, as in *wikipedia*, anti-globalization means that the participants stand in opposition to the unregulated political power of large, multi-national corporations, and the powers exercised through trade agreements. Specifically, corporations are accused of seeking to maximize profit at the expense of sabotaging work safety conditions and standards, labor hiring and compensation standards, environmental conservation principles, and the integrity of national legislative authority, independence and sovereignty. Recent developments, seen as unprecedented changes in the global economy, have been characterized as "turbo-capitalism" (Edward Luttwak), "market fundamentalism" (George Soros), "casino capitalism" (Susan Strange),<sup>9</sup> "cancer-stage capitalism" (John McMurtry), and as "McWorld" (Benjamin Barber).

Anyway, it is a term containing a number of interrelated ideas now becoming one of the most fashionable buzzwords in contemporary political and academic debates. From the above statements, we could observe: A. Globalization is dynamic multi-pronged process imposing on many (political, economic and cultural) social arenas; B. De-territorialization and interconnectedness are two of its distinctive features, because the process disseminates diverse new knowledge, values and practices conceptually

diminishing the geographical distance and bringing the world much closer than ever mainly via the up-to-date means of communication; C. No matter how positive and creative the manifestation of globalization is, it would also generate disagreements and oppositions, that is, anti-globalization. Indeed, globalization is a process from the above, driven by the well-organized "ruling elites" including those institutions, states, and multinational corporations of the combinations in Bretton Woods, while the anti-globalization movement is mainly a process from the below, in reaction to those "ruling elites" who have been seeking to harness the expansion of world markets for their own interests (Korzeniewicz, Roberto Patricio & Smith, William C., 2001).

Then if tracking the traits of globalization/anti-globalization to the *I Ching*, we may empirically employ some hexagrams to illustrate the above phenomena. According to the Yin-Yang theory, *Chi* and five elements, globalization is a creative and vigorous dynamic power (Yang), which could be regarded as the *living Chi*. Meanwhile, it is also a process driven from the above – the institutions owning the discourse in political and economic life, represented by the trigram "qian (☰)" for its masculinity and patriarchy; on the contrary, anti-globalization is from the below, Yin, represented by the trigram "kun (☷)". And according to the five elements, qian (globalization) belong to metal, which generates water, therefore, we are accustomed to calling its sweeping power *the tidal waves of globalization*, the dynamic process of globalization could be compared to a rapid river—the trigram "kan (☵), water". And next, some hexagrams would be constituted based on the following presumptions.

First, considering the prevailing power to the world which Globalization has brought, the hexagram would be the first one ☰; the tidal waves of globalization should be 5<sup>th</sup> ☵; or the 6<sup>th</sup> ☷. And then, if the proponents of globalization neglected, or even suffocated the voice of anti-globalization, the hexagram would be the 12<sup>th</sup> one, ☷.

In reverse, in the process of globalization, if enough attention were paid, the hexagram would be the 11<sup>th</sup> ☱.

In the *I Ching*, the first hexagram represents *the sky, elite, benefit, creativity, origination, strength, vigor, progress, perseverance prosperity and masculinity. Together with the second hexagram, Earth, Yin (submission, receptivity and femininity), all the other 62 hexagrams are born in sequence, accordingly. It arouses all life, smoothly makes them prosperous and boosts them to mature. However, the harmony and prosperity would come into being only if there is a saint to be the leader, or else, the benefits that only belong to*

<sup>8</sup><http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/globalization/>

<sup>9</sup>Strange, Susan: *Casino Capitalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

*the superior, ruling elites or the high class.* And together with the principle that *neither Yin nor Yang alone could nurture itself, but do it with mutual generation and promotion*, if not well balanced, or Yang went to the extreme, it would finally lead to turmoil, conflict, wars and even the deterioration of ecology.

The explanation could resonate with the anxiety that globalization might be a mixed blessing or a double-edged sword. When it's bringing the development and prosperity, making the world seemingly more cosmopolitan, globalization is also displaying a growing discourse from the above, that is, the growing dominance of western (or even American) forms of political, economic, and cultural life ("westernization" or "Americanization"), That is, when Yang prevails over Yin, the result is the domination and submission.

The hexagram could also be used to echo the skepticism whether or not it is a win-win game with real justice and democracy in the globalizing world. In the conventional "Realist" view of international politics, justice and democracy at global level are necessarily incomplete and probably unattainable and core features of the modern system of sovereign states relegate the pursuit of western political thought's most noble normative goals primarily to the domestic arena (Mearsheimer, 2003). For instance, the material existence of those fortunate enough to live in the rich countries is inextricably tied to the material status of the vast majority of humanity residing in poor and underdeveloped regions. Growing material inequality spawned by economic globalization is linked to growing domestic material inequality in the rich democracies (Falk, 1999). In other word, the interest groups would collaborate together, which is detrimental to the lower class.

This case would be further illustrated by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> hexagrams. From the image, the 5<sup>th</sup> one is composed of *Kan above Qian*. Literally it symbolizes *there is a need to providing food for freeing people from hunger*. Metaphorically, in reality, it could resonate with the benefits to the less developed regions which globalization brings, such as to get rid of hunger, to lift them out of poverty and so on. However, Kan in the *I Ching*, also means *abyss or danger*. Originally, it is explained that *people should stop and wait for opportunity to advance in order not to encounter a heavy rain. Metaphorically, it reveals that when strength, creativity or vigor (Qian) is confronted with peril (Kan), it's wiser to await an opportunity with sincerity, faith and perseverance. Advancing too boldly or struggling with peril at once is not an advisable method*. Or else, the hexagram would be reversed into the 6<sup>th</sup> one, literally referring to the *conflict, contention and lawsuit that the cooperative parties would meet with opposition and obstruction from within. It is advisable and auspicious to be vigilant and cautious with moderation; on the contrary, it is ominous to go through with litigation. One should contemplate his plan*

*before taking action.*

The hexagrams could be apocalyptic, illustrating why globalization would inevitably lead to disputes, conflicts, and even wars due to the innate force of opposition and obstruction from within. However politically, economically or culturally, most of them would be contributive to not the mutual development but the inter-regional unevenness and imbalance, or the enlarged regional difference. In such a global context, it's easily to perceive numerous detrimental factors to the lower classes in the global labor division which eventually results in unevenness and imbalance. It can trigger cumulative causation processes and cause uneven development to occur at a variety of spatial levels —urban, regional, and international (Michael D. Bordo, Alan M. Taylor, Jeffrey G. Williamson, 2005). What globalization brings is not only the co-existence, renovation or improvement of the traditional and the new organizational space, but also a new round of cultural disequilibrium, unevenness, or even technological imperialism at the sacrifice of others' energy and vitality, because the process has a distinctive uneven spatial pattern in the changes of global communication where some powers in collusion or collaboration with each other draw their profits by way of draining other's resource, spoiling other's environment, monopolizing other's market, or colonizing other's culture. When some remains the central metropolitans in global development, others are becoming intermediate or even more and more peripheral.

The "regional growth pole" is a good example. It is viewed as an economy stemming from domination and disequilibrium, in other words, uneven development (Parr J B, 1973). The growth theory sole focuses on the internal works of the pole not its external relationships within a wider region (Mark Gottdiener, Leslie Budd, 2005). The changes...involved at local, regional, national, and even super-national level ...lead to a more complex innovation poles...on one hand; some remains the central metropolitans of innovation ...while others are becoming intermediate or even peripheral (Ash Amin, Nigel Thrift, 1994). The geographical unevenness through the continual seesaw of capital is created through the search for a spatial fix, the role of locality in urban, regional and industrial restructuring, whose result is a growing understanding of the position of the classed-based places in a world where we call "globalization" (John Russo, Sherry Lee Linkon, 2005). So in contrast to the claims that globalization generates far more winners than losers, there is compelling evidence that the landscape of globalization is one of "staggeringly high peaks of affluence and deep troughs of deprivation (Dicken, 2004)".<sup>10</sup>

How to solve the problems? The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> hexagrams could give us some illumination.

The 11<sup>th</sup> hexagram is composed of *Yin above Yang, symbolizing masculinity (heaven) and femininity (earth) intersects*. Bases on the *I Ching*, Yin is heavier,

while Yang is lighter. On condition that Yin is above Yang, in this way, the both will merge with each other, and finally roll into one because at the same time the heavy one goes down, the light one would ascend up. The merge and infusion of Yin and Yang symbolizes production and harmony, bringing fortune, progress and success. The advice from the hexagram is that **it would be thriving and prosperous on condition that the upper class tailored the law, and implement it with a view to aiding the lower class sincerely and impartially.**

On the contrary, if the proponents of globalization neglected the problems from below, or attempted to suffocate the voice of anti-globalization, the hexagram would become the 12<sup>th</sup> one, symbolizing **a state of block and stagnation**. From the hexagram, Qian (Yang, sky, high, light, elite, masculine) is above Kun (Yin, earth, below, heavy, grassroots, feminine), **the sky above and the masculine tends to move upward; the earth stays below and the feminine tends to remain still. It symbolizes that there is no intersection or association between masculinity and femininity, so life can not be created; no communion between the above and the low, no country could be possibly maintained in the world. Meanwhile, tenderness is concealed below, while rigidity is exposed externally; the villain (force) is at the core, gentleman on the fringe, the norm of villain is growing, while the latter is fading away.**

## ANALYZE GLOBALIZATION FROM YIN-YANG THEORY: SOME PROPOSITIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

According to the Yin-Yang theory, the equilibrium between Yin and Yang might be the most idealistic state, though in reality, it seems utopia, for the capricious international climate has always dampened the enthusiasm to those who have euphorically observed that peace and development would be the main theme in the process of globalization, yet, it doesn't disturb us to use its discourses to give some propositions for further research in the future:

**Proposition 1.** Globalization/anti-globalization could be identified with the Yin-Yang aspects, so it is with their impacts on the world; therefore, they should not be considered isolated from each other. To learn more about globalization, analyze anti-globalization and vice versa.

**Proposition 2.** In the *I Ching*, the discourses of change and harmony are enthused and intertwined, symbolizing the alternation and interaction between Yin and Yang. Though in the process of globalization, we long for

harmony and stability, yet in reality, there are always some other factors interfering, influencing, enforcing, swaying, strengthening, impeding, or sometimes even destroying the existing equilibrium and generating a new social order. The phenomenon just echoes with the Yin-Yang alternation and interaction.

**Proposition 3.** The criterion of harmony is the balance and intersection between Yin and Yang. ***Neither Yin nor Yang alone could nurture itself, but do it with mutual generation and promotion.*** The intersection between Yin and Yang would produce success and prosperity. It is a great expectation for the optimal social order. Therefore, if the participants shared the universal belief of peace, harmony and development, globalization could be cosmopolitan, mutually beneficial, and bridge the gap between the developed and the less-developed at all levels, but not the deterioration of global eco-system with the intensification of exploitation, colonization and polarization, politically, economically or culturally.

**Proposition 4.** Based on its ***change discourse*** that the world goes in constant transformation, the proponents/opponents, motives, trends, effects and prospects of globalization/anti-globalization are not homogeneous, but heterogeneous, not context-free but context-sensitive, permeating with ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty.

**Proposition 5.** According to the five elements and hexagrams, the tidal-waves are the natural outcome of globalization. It is the vivid metaphor connotative of its sweeping power, symbolizing that it is a dynamic, continuous and unfathomable process; thus, it is wise for participants to be cautious and vigilant. Any static, rigid, or context-free assertion or reckless engagement whether optimistic or pessimistic, is not feasible as well.

**Proposition 6.** Globalization is a dynamic process disseminating practices, values, technology, other human products, and the characteristics is in resonance with the nature of *Chi*. Whether it would bring the *Living* or the *Dead Chi* theoretically depends on the balance/imbalance between Yin and Yang.

**Proposition 7.** Globalization could be a *living Chi*, refreshing, energetic and creative, on condition that the interests between the above and the below were well-balanced or harmonized. In the process of globalization, the best solution is to focus on tackling the problems from below, or the concerns from the minority group, that is, anti-globalization should not be taken as the nuisance in the process of globalization, but as the counterpart, which should be given with sufficient attention on the agenda of decision-makers from above.

**Proposition 8.** Generally, the expectation for the world harmony seems merely lingering at the ethical

<sup>10</sup>it 's quoted from Nicholas R. Fyfe, Judith T. Kenny' book. The urban geography reader, p1844, Edition: illustrated, Routledge, 2005.

plane (Yang), while in reality, the desire for wealth is the primary motivation for hard work and the economic development of a society will be achieved naturally by the accumulation of this kind of effort (Yin). The disequilibrium between Yin and Yang in international communication would result in the uneven developmental landscapes which are finally detrimental, and sometimes even catastrophic to the global progress and integration.

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