

Chapter 1: The dance of the universe

The essence of nature is bent on expressing itself; a new world of symbols is required, firstly the symbolism of the entire body, not just of the mouth, the face, the word, but the full gesture of dance with its rhythmical movement of every limb.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

At first glance, the *I Ching* (*The Book of Changes*) and Nietzsche's philosophy, may seem to have little in common. The former is a crystallization of wisdom by the 'holy sages' of ancient times in China, while the latter is a manifestation of the inquiring mind of a nineteenth century German philosopher. Both, however, recognize that the natural world exists in a state of moving, changing or becoming. I would like to use Nietzsche's term 'dance' to describe this movement.¹ Zarathustra, Nietzsche's mouthpiece, describes this movement as follows: 'Where all becoming seemed to me the dance of gods and the prankishness of gods, and the world seemed free and frolicsome and as if fleeing back to itself — as an eternal fleeing and seeking each other again of many gods' (*Z III On Old and New Tablets* 2). The *I Ching* expresses the dance of the universe in terms of the union and separation of yin lines with regard to yang lines, or yang lines to yin lines, in the sixty-four hexagrams.

The *I Ching* refers to change as 'begetter of all begetting' (1950:299), since change seems to be the only constant in the world. Nietzsche agrees with this standpoint, stating that the world is "'in flux"; as something becoming' (*WLN* 2[108]). He suggests that 'reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms' (*TI Morality as Anti-nature* 6). Both philosophies assert that we have always lived in a constantly changing world. The truth of their assertion can be observed in our physical reality, and especially over the last decades change has become more pronounced than ever. For example, the advance of information technology, changing social contexts and political turmoil have influenced and will continue to influence the way in which we lead our lives. The

¹ I am indebted to Gary Zukav's book, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*, which reveals affinities between Buddhism and New Physics, which I will discuss briefly in the concluding chapter. I employ the term 'dance' to emphasize a new way of looking at nature, and life too, which is always in a state of flux. We, as dancers, have to perceive, to see and to learn from this constant changing nature of all phenomena in our physical reality in order to lead a better life.



becoming or changing natural world may daunt many of us because it creates uncertainty, insecurity and fear. But although we may fear chaos, Zarathustra welcomes this distinct quality of the universe, saying that ‘I feel only my will’s joy in begetting and becoming’ (Z II Upon the Blessed Isles). Few are capable of dealing with constant change. The main question seems to be how one might be able to achieve ‘the greatest possible suppleness and strength that a good dancer desires from his nourishment’ (GS 381). How can one, as a good dancer, overcome one’s fear of change in a rapidly changing world? How can one live one’s life to the fullest? Is this a mere individual problem, or a socio-economic problem, or a moral problem?

In this chapter I will first explore the inevitably changing phenomena of life and death as represented in the *I Ching* and in Nietzsche’s philosophy, then I will examine the underlying cosmic principle of the Tao in the *I Ching* and the Chinese philosophical tradition. Finally I will indicate differences and similarities between this principle and Nietzsche’s notion of the Will to Power. I will compare Nietzsche’s Dionysian world of the chaotic play of forces to the orderly manifestation of forces in the *I Ching*. Some findings of new physics which relate to the Chinese sensibility and to Nietzsche’s philosophy will also be discussed in this chapter.

1.1. The rhythm of life and nature

O life: I saw gold blinking in your night-eye; my heart stopped in delight: a golden boat I saw blinking on nocturnal waters, a golden rocking-boat, sinking, drinking, and winking again. At my foot, frantic to dance, you cast a glance, a laughing, questioning, melting rocking-glance: twice only you stirred your rattle with your small hands, and my foot was already rocking with dancing frenzy. (Z III The other Dancing Song 1)

The yin/yang relationship does not only play a crucial role in the *I Ching*, but is also reflected on Nietzsche’s masterpiece, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The metaphor of life in Zarathustra’s monologue — ‘a golden boat’ — manifests this yin/yang relationship. Zarathustra describes his impression of life by using the phrase ‘gold blinking in your night-eye’ and ‘a golden boat ... on nocturnal waters.’ The opposite pairs of ‘gold’ and ‘night’, ‘golden’ and ‘nocturnal’, symbolizing light and dark forces, can be associated with the yin/yang relationship emphasized in the *I Ching*. The other



descriptions of life involve ‘rocking’, ‘sinking, drinking and winking’. It seems that ‘the boat’ is doomed to disappear in the ‘nocturnal waters’. This involves a process which is changing, dangerous, and pressing. Although this situation is critical, Zarathustra’s attitude is one of ‘delight’, which is expressed in his dance, his foot ‘rocking with dancing frenzy.’ Zarathustra enjoys life, especially its dangerous and changing nature. His way of living differs from that of the moralists. Zarathustra does not measure the worth of life in terms of moral values as moralists do. Nietzsche provides a completely different picture of life. ‘Concerning life,’ Nietzsche says, ‘the wisest men of all ages have judged alike: *it is no good*. Always and everywhere one has heard the same sound from their mouths — a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of weariness of life, full of resistance to life’ (*TI The Problem of Socrates* 1).

In contrast to the prevailing western perspective of life, which degrades it as less than satisfactory, Nietzsche criticizes the moralists or ‘unconditional people’, who ‘look sourly at this life, [who] have the evil eye for this earth,’ and who ‘have heavy feet and sultry hearts: they do not know how to dance. How should the earth be light for them?’ (*Z IV On the Higher Man* 16) According to Nietzsche, morality has hitherto only been able to tame humanity to be ‘a poor sick sort, a sort of mob’ (*Z IV On the Higher Man* 16). Nietzsche’s writings seem to urge us to shift our frame of reference from one of doubt, melancholy and weariness to one that sees life as ‘a golden boat’. We have to make up our mind for the maximum use of this life. That is, to become what we are. This notion is crystallized in the subtitle of his work *Ecce Homo: How one becomes what one is*. Zarathustra calls those who aim at this goal dancers. He claims that ‘whoever approaches his goal dances’ (*Z IV On the Higher Man* 17). ‘Lift up your hearts, my brothers,’ he says, ‘high, higher! And do not forget your legs either. Lift up your legs too, you good dancers’ (*Z IV On the Higher Man* 17 & 19).

In his writings Nietzsche attempts to cast doubt upon our prevailing ideas regarding the status of man and morality, because what has been believed hitherto is mere error. He exclaims: ‘Alas, the faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man, in his irreplaceability in the great chain of being, is a thing of the past’ (*GM III* 25). He disagrees with the Christian moral interpretation of man’s uniqueness in the universe as the crown of creation, because ‘the drop of *life* in the universe is without

significance for the total character of the tremendous ocean of becoming and passing away' (WS 14). He advocates 'an ascending, Yes-saying life [in which] negating *and destroying* are conditions of saying Yes' (EH Destiny 4). As Nietzsche believes that we must be hard in order to destroy, he regards the imperative 'become hard!' as 'the distinctive mark of a Dionysian nature.' He insists that 'among the conditions for a *Dionysian* task are, in a decisive way, the hardness of the hammer, the *joy even in destroying*' (EH Z 8). By promoting the Dionysian task of a creating an ascending, Yes-saying life with his idea of the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche attacks Christian morality, stating that '*all* the means by which one has so far attempted to make mankind moral were through and through *immoral*' (TI The 'Improvers' of Mankind 5). He employs the term *immoralist* to negate 'a type of man that has so far been considered supreme: the good, the benevolent, the beneficent,' as well as Christian morality 'that has become prevalent and predominant as morality itself' (EH Destiny 4). Thus in contrast to those moralists, Nietzsche, calling himself 'the first immoralist' (EH Destiny 2), propagates a counter-movement in the metaphor of the *Übermensch* (overman or superman).

What Nietzsche suggests here is 'a *higher type*, which is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of overman' (A 4). His mouthpiece, 'Zarathustra, the advocate of life' (Z III The Convalescent 1) says: 'I have the overman at heart, *that* is my first and only concern — and *not* man: not the neighbor, not the poorest, not the most ailing, not the best' (Z IV On the Higher Man 3). His concern is about the possibility of the emergence of a higher type of man, the *Übermensch*, who will emerge in the future. Nietzsche labels that which seeks to please and gratify everybody 'cowardice', in contrast to his ideal, the *Übermensch* who is 'the annihilator of morality' (EH Books 1). Zarathustra calls them: 'These small people,' and says that 'virtue to them is that which makes modest and tame: with that they have turned the wolf into a dog and man himself into man's best domestic animal' (Z III On Virtue That Makes Small 2).

Nietzsche envisions a '*higher form of being*' (WP 866), the possibility to live life to its fullest. Robert C. Solomon (2003:4) asserts that Nietzsche writes 'in order to learn how to live a better life.' However, Nietzsche's attitude of disregarding and even attacking morality, especially Christian morality, may shock many people. It may seem unpalatable when he calls himself 'the first *immoralist*' in his 'campaign



against morality' (*EH D 1*). He regards morality as 'a specific error', because 'it condemns for its own sake, and *not* out of regard for the concerns, considerations, and contrivances of life' (*TI Morality as Anti-nature 6*). The value of life, for Nietzsche, is a supreme value rather than a moral value. Nietzsche urges those 'immoralists', 'we born guessers of riddles' (*GS 343*), to investigate the riddle of life by cultivating the 'capacity for constant *change*' (*GS 24*) instead of simply enjoying a stultified and static existence, which he interprets Chinese culture to be.

Nietzsche criticizes Chinese stability and what he calls 'a Chinese "happiness"', stating that 'China ... is a country in which large-scale dissatisfaction and the capacity for *change* have become extinct centuries ago' (*GS 24*). Consequently, there has arisen 'adaptation, leveling, higher Chinadom, modesty in the instincts, satisfaction in the dwarfing of mankind — a kind of *stationary level of mankind*' (*WP 866*). However, Nietzsche's accusation of Chinese inability to change stands in contrast to the central idea of the *I Ching*, which is change itself. The *I Ching* sees human life as a microcosm of the constant changing universe in which everything is the result of the interaction between *yin* and *yang*. Heaven and man, macrocosm and microcosm are only distant parts of one unified energy centre — *Tao*. The *I Ching* illustrates this changing process of the natural world in terms of the union and separation of the *yang* and *yin* lines in the sixty-four hexagrams. Thus, the hexagrams are 'representations of actual conditions in the world, and of the combinations of the light-giving, heavenly power and the dark, earthly power that occur in these situations' (1950:263). The hexagrams manifest the principles of dark and light, or of *yin* and *yang*, so they represent conditions and relationships which exist in the universe.

The authors of the *I Ching* believe that the underlying principles of the universe and the natural world may lay down the moral order or set of moral rules to guide each person to take appropriate action in order to lead a harmonious life. Aware of the situation in which he finds himself, and of the results that may grow out of it, man is able to guide his life rather than merely drift along with its current. Thus, the Chinese consult the oracle of the *I Ching* in order to attain guidelines for taking appropriate action in dealing with the unknown. In doing so, they expect to be able to act in harmony with these basic principles, in order to avoid misfortune and attain good fortune. Thus it is said in the *I Ching* that



man comes to resemble heaven and earth, he is not in conflict with them. His wisdom embraces all things, and his tao brings order into the whole world; therefore he does not err. He is active everywhere but does not let himself be carried away. He rejoices in heaven and has knowledge of fate, therefore he is free of care. He is content with his circumstances and genuine in his kindness, therefore he can practice love. (1950:295)

However, does 'knowledge of fate' nurture a small and superstitious people? Does the effort to 'resemble heaven and earth' lead to a static mind or 'bring order into the world'? For a tree to become '*great*, it must strike hard roots around hard rocks' (Z III On Virtue That Makes Small 3), according to Zarathustra, and similarly one has to overcome obstacles and hardships instead of avoiding danger in self-development and self-creation. The idea of the *I Ching* to urge man to follow the Tao and to be 'content with his circumstances and genuine in his kindness' might bring forth, as Nietzsche thinks, 'a kind of *stationary level of mankind*' (WP 866). Can Nietzsche's vision of the *Übermensch* help to uplift a dwarfed and adapting spirit, or does it bring forth a moral monster?

Different 'paradigms' or different ways of living may imply different answers to the riddle of life.² An example is Mencius's famous interview with King Hui Liang, who said 'You have counted a thousand miles as not too far to come here. Surely you have some way of profiting my country.' Mencius replied, 'Sir, why must you say profiting? There is human-heartedness and righteousness, nothing more' (Fung 1947:15). The king's question is still valid today in that ordinary men tend to seek their own self-interest or profit in every deed and action. But Chinese ethics, as Mencius's reply suggests, holds that to seek private profit is wrong, that the superior man should seek 'human-heartedness' and 'righteousness'. Fung (1947:15) interprets actions as moral if the profit which is sought is 'the public profit of society or of others, then these actions are not profit-seeking but righteous.' For Nietzsche, however, the argument of the intention of performing moral actions is simply a

² Fung Yu-Lan (1947:xiii), in his book *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*, distinguishes four different ways of living: (1) the unselfconscious, natural way: this type of man is unreflective, only following his natural tendencies, or his personal habits, or the customs of the society in which he lives; (2) the utilitarian way: this sphere of human life is that of egoistic 'profit'; (3) the moral way: the moral man is aware of the society above himself, that the society is a whole of which he is a part. He devotes himself entirely to his society; (4) the transcendent way: this sphere of human life is aware of the universe above society, realizing that society is a whole, within the universe as the Great Whole.



narrow interpretation of morality. According to Nietzsche, this type of morality may be called ‘morality in the traditional sense, the morality of intentions’ (*BGE* 32). Nietzsche claims that we stand at the threshold of an *extra-moral* period, having reached the necessity of ‘resolving on a reversal and fundamental shift in values’:

we immoralist have the suspicion that the decisive value of an action lies precisely in what is unintentional in it, while everything about it that is intentional, everything about it that can be seen, known, ‘conscious,’ still belongs to its surface and skin which, like every skin, betrays something but *conceals* even more. (*BGE* 32)

Regarding the morality of intentions as ‘a prejudice’, Nietzsche calls for overcoming morality in this traditional sense. This is what he labels the ‘self-overcoming of morality’ (*BGE* 32). He attacks morality, or more precisely Christian morality, because ‘morality negates life’ (*CW P*). Nietzsche advocates life to be a growth of power, ‘the transformation of energy into life and life in its highest potency’ (*WLN* 10[138]). Thus he champions ‘master morality’ which is an expression ‘of *ascending* life, of the will to power as the principle of life’ (*CW Epilogue*). For Nietzsche, the living body is ‘an incarnate will to power,’ striving for growth ‘not from any morality or immorality’, but ‘because life simply *is* will to power’ (*BGE* 259). Thus he deliberately calls himself ‘the first immoralist’ to express his superabundant strength which is capable of transcending the dualism of morality/immorality and of giving out of its own abundance. Nietzsche’s master morality, or ‘*noble* morality,’ is ‘rooted in a triumphant Yes said to *oneself* — it is self-affirmation, self-glorification of life’ (*CW Epilogue*). He states that ‘the noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values, it does not need approval; ... it is *value-creating*’ (*BGE* 260). In contrast to master morality, Nietzsche argues that what we call morality is ‘slave morality’, which is based on, and an expression of, weak character, representing a declining life. He proclaims that ‘the greater, more manifold, more comprehensive life transcends and *lives beyond* the old morality’ (*BGE* 262). According to Nietzsche, leading an ascending life is an expression of a kind of higher morality in contrast to leading a moral life by means of performing moral actions.

Chinese ethics promotes a superior type of man who is able to lead a moral life, sees little usefulness in wealth that does not bring its owner satisfaction, and enjoys a sense of security in the esteem of his compatriots. The moral sphere of life,



embodied in the superior man, is highly regarded in the *I Ching*. In ‘Wên Yen’, the hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative* is interpreted as follows:

Because the superior man embodies humaneness, he is able to govern men. Because he brings about the harmonious working together of all that is beautiful, he is able to unite them through the mores. Because he furthers all beings, he is able to bring them into harmony through justice. Because he is persevering and firm, he is able to carry out all actions. (1950:376)

The superior man possesses a deeper understanding of man’s life and of making a contribution to all beings. With this knowledge he is able to bring others ‘into harmony through justice’ in society, rather than to tolerate discord in the pursuit of self-interest. The possession of this knowledge is what distinguishes man from other animals, a quality asserted by the word ‘humaneness’. The *I Ching* asserts moral values which can be used to assess human actions and worth, whereas Zarathustra denies moral values and exclaims: ‘*Break, break the good and the just*’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 27). He even considers moral values, such as good and evil, as an illusion and prophesies another possibility, explaining that

there is an old illusion, which is called good and evil. So far the wheel of this illusion has revolved around soothsayers and stargazers. Once man believed in soothsayers and stargazers, and therefore believed: ‘All is destiny: you ought to, for you must.’

Then man again mistrusted all soothsayers and stargazers, and therefore believed: ‘All is freedom: you can, for you will.’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 9)

Although both recognize *change*, this passage suggests that what Zarathustra says differs from the idea conveyed in the *I Ching*. Man is free to execute his actions according to his own will, rather than just to follow his fate foretold by the oracle. Zarathustra’s point of departure is the recognition of change, or that ‘everything is in flux’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 8) in the course of our transient existence, which is emphasized by his metaphor of life as ‘the river of becoming’ (Z II On Self-overcoming). In this context the attempt to grasp something ‘firm,’ the moral order, is questionable. Zarathustra calls into question the conviction that ‘whatever is *over* the river is firm; all the values of things, the bridges, the concepts, all ‘good’ and ‘evil’ — all that is *firm*’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 8). But what is firm or certain in our transient existence? According to Nietzsche, it is not a conviction of moral order,



values or concepts, because he emphasizes that one is unable ‘to dance with one’s feet, with concepts, with words’ (*TI What the Germans Lack* 7), but only in the certainty of death.

Nietzsche points out that ‘death and deathly silence alone are certain and common to all in this future. How strange it is that this sole certainty and common element makes almost no impression on people’ (*GS* 278). Nietzsche attempts to break this ‘deathly silence’ with his description of the death of the tightrope dancer in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This book begins with Zarathustra’s departure from his cave and his arrival at the market place. He witnesses the jester’s verbal abuse and his jump over the dancer, causing the tightrope dancer to lose his concentration and fall. The accident of the tightrope dancer represents the fragile nature of human existence, as ‘a jester can become man’s fatality’ (*Z P* 7). Although death is most men’s biggest fear, in the confrontation of death Zarathustra does not show any fear; he even dares to carry the corpse of the dancer along with him on his way. He regards it as his ‘cold, stiff companion’ (*Z P* 7) and finally buries the dead man in a hollow tree. Stanley Rosen (1995:74) indicates that ‘the tree stands for enduring nature as modified by burial, or the human interpretation of death.’ The burial in the tree reminds us to interpret death as a return to nature. Life and death are simply the natural rhythms of transformation. They do not oppose each other. Nietzsche claims: ‘Let us beware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is merely a type of what is dead, and a very rare type’ (*GS* 109). His recognition of death seems to show affinity with the Taoist tradition that life and death are merely two aspects of the same reality — consecutive states such as the alteration of the seasons or the change from day to night.

Chuang Tzu (1968:80), ‘the Tao-saturated man’ (1906:12), states that ‘life and death are fated — constant as the succession of dark and dawn, a matter of Heaven. There are some things which man can do nothing about — all are a matter of the nature of creatures.’ Eastern wisdom suggests that man has to follow the rhythm of nature rather than attempt to control nature as seems prevalent in the modern Western tradition. The rhythm of nature is the rhythm of life that man should not fear. ‘Life is the companion of death, death is the beginning of life’, says Chuang Tzu (1968:235). He continues that ‘man’s life is a coming-together of breath. If it comes together, there is life; if it scatters, there is death.’ Chuang Tzu illustrates this theme vividly in



the famous passage concerning his attitude towards the death of his wife. After the death of Chuang Tzu's wife, Hui Tzu went to console him. He found the widower sitting on the ground, singing and beating time on a bowl. In reply to Hui Tzu's censure, Chuang Tzu explains the natural process of transformation in Nature. Death implies merely a change of form. As humans are part of the universe, Chuang Tzu considers the death of his wife as part of a natural process of transformation. Thus, he simply accepts and appreciates the rhythm of Nature. He explains his attitude in this way:

When she first died, do you think I didn't grieve like anyone else! But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there's been another change and she's dead. It is just like the progression of the four seasons spring, summer, fall, winter.

'Now she's going to lie down peacefully in a vast room. If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don't understand anything about fate. So I stopped. (1968:192)

The consecutive states of life and death, or the sequence of the four seasons is an expression of the principles of dark and light, or of yin and yang, which is the basic principle that the *I Ching* is based on.

The hexagrams of the *I Ching* are developed from these elements of transformation. 'The individual lines are either at rest or in motion. When at rest — that is, when represented by the number seven (firm) or eight (yielding) — they build up the hexagram. When in motion — that is, when represented by the number nine (firm) or six (yielding) — they break down the hexagram again and transform it into a new hexagram' (1950:294). The phenomena of motion and rest, birth and death, bring about change and thus everything is rejuvenated and created in change or transformation. This is the rhythm of nature and life which the holy sages try to reveal in the *I Ching* of which it is said that

looking upward, we contemplate with its help the signs in the heavens; looking down, we examine the lines of the earth. Thus we come to know the circumstances of the dark and the light. Going back to the beginnings of things and pursuing them to the end, we come to know the lessons of birth and death. (1950:294)



It is from this rhythmic change or transformation, from movement to rest, or vice versa, shown in the yin and yang lines of the hexagrams that we learn to know the circumstances concerning the dark and the light. Knowing the principles of yin and yang, the holy sages understand the transformation of birth and death, which appears as the changing of the seasons in the natural cosmic process of change. 'Birth is the coming forth into the world of the visible; death is the return into the regions of the invisible' (1950:294). The wise man of the East is able to understand this rhythm of nature and life, and to accept death in a delightful manner. For one 'who knows that being and nonbeing, life and death are a single way', all are friends together, says Chuang Tzu (1968:257). However, to avoid the thought of death is common among ordinary people, because to ordinary men death is a big unknown and thus may rouse a feeling of fear. Nietzsche agrees that 'with the unknown, one is confronted with danger, discomfort, and care' (*TI The Four Great Errors* 5). As a result of the fear of death, man tends to seek comfort in morality or religion, 'for fear is the original and basic feeling of man; from fear everything is explicable, original sin and original virtue' (*Z VI On Science*). Nietzsche attempts to make us become aware of this fact, because he still hopes mankind will arrive at a higher mode of existence. This hope is asserted by Zarathustra's guests who become aware of how they have changed and convalesced. Even the ugliest man is for the first time satisfied that he has lived his whole life and he addresses all the guests: 'My friends, what do you think? Do you not want to say to death as I do: Was *that* life? For Zarathustra's sake! Well then! Once more!' (*Z VI The Drunken Song* 1)

According to Nietzsche, one should not be immersed in fear as a result of the awareness of death, but rather take notice of how one has to lead one's life. 'Fear nothing further' (*Z P 6*), Zarathustra consoles the dying man. The tightrope dancer knows: 'I lose nothing when I lose my life' (*Z P 6*). This confrontation implies that in the course of his transient existence man should make an effort in this world to lead an ascending life rather than simply holding onto a belief in an afterlife or another world. Many people seek comfort and security in the belief in an afterlife, a transcendental or moral world posited as a result of the fear of death. Confucius (1993:40) justly asks: 'If one does not yet understand life, how does one understand death?' Like Nietzsche, Confucius arrives at an understanding of the importance of a down-to-earth approach to our ephemeral life. W. C. Liu (1955:142) notes that 'by turning the human mind away from all speculative, celestial concerns, and by



discouraging men from a vain search for that dark, unfathomable domain known as death and the even more mysterious region of life-after-death, Master K'ung [Confucius], the supreme humanist, taught his followers to take a more realistic interest in this present life.' Both Nietzsche and the Chinese philosophical tradition remind us to recognize death as merely part of the rhythm of nature, accepting death but simultaneously focusing on how to lead this present life in the cosmic process of change, or becoming.

The central idea of the *I Ching* is *change*, but its approach or attitude towards the constantly changing world is totally different from that of Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche's Dionysian task is to become hard in order to destroy and to create new values, whereas the *I Ching* emphasizes the natural order of the physical universe that man has to follow:

The Book of Changes contains the measure of heaven and earth; therefore it enables us to comprehend the tao of heaven and earth and its order.
(1950:293)

The *I Ching* is based on the two basic principles of light and dark. The measure of heaven works according to the principle of light, yang, and the standard of earth according to the principle of dark, yin. Heaven, the upper world of light, is spiritual and it regulates and determines everything that takes place on earth. Earth, the lower world of dark, is material and it depends in its movements on the order of heaven. The invisible energy of heaven manifests in the matter of earth, in 'the myriad creatures' (Lao Tzu 1963:57) or 'the ten thousand things' (Lao Tzu 1972:25) of the visible physical world. It is the Tao that is active both in heaven and on earth. In this way the *I Ching* embraces the underlying principles of the universe, which lay down the natural order in which man is not free, but has to follow his fate in order to attain good fortune and to avoid misfortune. The *I Ching* 'is in harmony with tao and its power (natural law and moral law). Therefore it can lay down the rules of what is right for each person' (1950:263). This is the purpose of the authors of the *I Ching* in creating this book of divination — 'to follow the order of their nature and of fate' (1950:264). As the natural laws of heaven and earth are reproduced in the *I Ching*, man is provided with the means to follow his own nature and fate, and thus his inborn potentialities for good can be brought to fruition. In *Chuang Tzu*, the man who follows Tao, or the Way, is described as follows:



He who follows ... [the Way] will be strong in his four limbs, keen and penetrating in intellect, sharp-eared, bright-eyed, wielding his mind without wearying it, responding to things without prejudice. Heaven cannot help but be high, earth cannot help but be broad, the sun and moon cannot help but revolve, the ten thousand things cannot help but flourish. Is this not the Way? (1968:239)

In the *I Ching*, it is said that ‘if you are not the right man, the meaning will not manifest itself to you’ (1950:349). It warns those who consult the oracle but are unable to contact the Tao; they would not receive a lucid answer and their effort would be in vain. The emphasis on ‘Tao’ does not play a crucial role in the *I Ching* only, but it has also had a great impact on the Chinese philosophical tradition as a whole. The primacy of Tao has not only been noted in the writings of the Taoist school, but can also be seen in those of the Confucian school. In *Analects* Book 4, the master says: ‘If one has heard the Way in the morning, it is all right to die in the evening’ (1993:14). Paying homage to the Way (Tao) in transient human existence plays an important role in Chinese thought.

1.2. The Tao

There is a thing confusedly formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
Silence and void
It stands alone and does not change,
Goes round and does not weary.
It is capable of being the mother of the world.
I know not its name
So I style it ‘the way’.
(Lao Tzu 1963:82)

Tao means “way”, “course”, which is also nothing in itself, yet serves to regulate all movements’ (1950:298). Thus Lao Tzu (1963:101) considers Tao as a thing mysteriously formed: ‘The myriad creatures in the world are born from Something, and Something from Nothing.’ Although we are in the habit of looking to see ‘something’, Tao is nothing in itself, and thus it cannot be pictured as any object, but rather it is that which eternally sets in motion and maintains the interplay of the two primary forces of the universe, the yin and the yang. Tao is ‘something’, but this



something is not material; it is invisible; this something involves direction, and although it cannot be seen, it brings all things into being, as in Lao Tzu's image of 'the mother of the world'. Tao is the source of life, manifesting itself in everything. In *Lao Tzu and Taoism*, Max Kaltenmark (1969:40) explains that 'the Tao is a source of life, the various stages in the formation of the universe are stages in the development of life, and from the central principle a current of life spreads by degrees throughout "creation". This is why the Tao is called the Ancestor or the Mother.' Tao can be known because all things are simply its manifestation and creation. 'Tao is called the essence, that with which things are endowed at their origin' (1950:298). In Chapter 35 of the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu (1963:94) indicates that Tao

... cannot be seen,
It cannot be heard,
Yet it cannot be exhausted by use.

In chapter 41 he says that 'the way conceals itself in being nameless. It is the way alone that excels in bestowing and in accomplishing' (Lao Tzu 1963:102). Kaltenmark (1969:86) states that 'Tao cannot be affirmed to exist or not to exist. The name Tao is merely an artifice for practical purposes.' Tao is only a name for whatever takes place. Nevertheless, the origin of Tao remains a mystery. Lao Tzu (1963:57) describes the mystery of Tao in this way:

The way that can be spoken of
Is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
Is not the constant name.
The nameless was the beginning of heaven and earth;
The named was the mother of the myriad creatures.

Tao appears as a mystery to us. The distinction between the 'nameless' and the 'named', 'nothing' and 'something', seems enigmatic. J. Y. Lee (1975:128) points out that Tao 'is indescribable and incomprehensible. It is beyond the understanding of human wisdom.'

Significantly, Tao seems to hold knowledge of what G. Zukav (1979:193-4) reveals in his book *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* with regard to the subatomic realm:

According to particle physics, the world is fundamentally dancing energy; energy that is everywhere and incessantly assuming first this form and then that. What we have been calling matter (particles) constantly is being created, annihilated and created again. This happens as particles interact and it also happens, literally, out of nowhere.

Where there was ‘nothing’ there suddenly is ‘something,’ and then the something is gone again, often changing into something else before vanishing.

A. Watts (1975:40) asserts that ‘the Tao is most certainly the ultimate reality and energy of the universe, the Ground of being and nonbeing.’ In this sense the ‘dancing energy’, may be used to depict the wonder of Tao. All things are the manifestation of this dancing energy. The wonder of the Tao is described in *I Ching* in this way:

The Changes is a book
From which one may not hold aloof.
Its tao is forever changing —
Alteration, movement without rest,
Flowing through the six empty places;
Rising and sinking without fixed law,
Firm and yielding transform each other.
They cannot be confined within a rule;
It is only change that is at work here. (1950:348)

Tao is manifested by the interplay of light and dark, or yin and yang, the two primal powers of the universe represented by the separation and union of firm yang lines and yielding yin lines in the *I Ching*. ‘That which lets now the dark, now the light appear is tao’ (1950:297),³ says the *I Ching*. All phenomena in the universe, which are interchangeable and intermingled, are brought into being in terms of the interaction of the two basic powers of yin and yang, such as day and night or brightness and darkness. The two cardinal powers complement each other in that the changes or transformation resulting from separation and union is only their interaction. This is Tao, which is crystallized in the famous symbol *t'ai chi t'u*, the circular form of Great Primal Beginning.⁴ As the Tao always sets in motion,

³ There is another translation of this statement: ‘One *Yang* and one *Yin*: this is called the *Tao*.’ (Fung 1948:169)

⁴ See Appendix 2 for the diagram. The *t'ai chi t'u* is also known as ‘the Yin-Yang diagram.’ M. Page (1989:12) indicates that it is ‘a symbol of the two great balancing forces that keep the universe in being. The dynamic tension between them is apparent in the seed of change contained in each.’



there is in the Changes the Great Primal Beginning. This generates the two primary forces. The two primary forces generate the four images. The four images generate the eight trigrams. (1950:318)

In this way the *I Ching* considers the eternal cosmic changing process. The two primary forces — the yin and yang, dark and bright, or negative and positive forces, are illustrated by the yielding yin and firm yang lines. When these lines are doubled they bring about the four images — the old or great yang, the young or little yang, the old or great yin and the young or little yin. The ‘Ta Chuan/The Great Treatise’ mentions that the images of the *I Ching* are constructed out of the heavenly images hidden in the phenomenal world:

The holy sages were able to survey all the confused diversities under heaven. They observed forms and phenomena, and made representations of things and their attributes. These were called the Images. (1950:304)

When a third line is added to each of the sets of double lines the four images become the eight trigrams. Through change and transformation everything comes into being. In this sense opposite forces do not lead to contradiction or conflict, but rather complement each other in creation. When yang or yin are at the peak of their powers they overcome themselves and transform into their own opposite. The interplay of light and dark, yang and yin forces is a ceaseless cosmic process, in which all things are interrelated and interdependent — forever changing and renewing themselves. Due to such an assumption of eternal cosmic movement, following Tao and fate remains a mainstream idea in Chinese thought. By following the Tao, man becomes one with nature. This oneness is the greatest virtue attainable. Thus Lao Tzu (1963:78) states that ‘in his every movement a man of great virtue follows the way and the way only.’ Also,

He who follows the Tao
Is at one with the Tao.
He who is virtuous
Experiences Virtue. (1972:23)

This implies that ‘a man of the way conforms to the way; a man of virtue conforms to virtue’ (Lao Tzu 1963:80).

There are different interpretations of the meaning of the word ‘Tao’ according to different frames of reference. For example, Kaltenmark (1969:28) represents the



'normal meanings' of Tao as 'Natural Law (Tao of Heaven), doctrine, ideal of behavior'. Tao means 'doctrine', which involves rules or a set of rules of right conduct, moral action, or the principles underlying this. Tao is the way to virtue and inner peace. When Tao is used as a verb, it means 'to direct', 'to guide', or 'to form communication'. As when one directs another person by telling them the way they have to follow, Tao also means 'to say', or 'to tell' (Kaltenmark 1969:22). L. Giles (1906:15) notes that 'Tao as conceived by Chuang Tzu is not quite the same thing as the Tao of which Lao Tzu spoke with such wondering awe.' The difference can be seen in the gradual development of the meaning of the word 'Tao'. Originally '*Tao*' means 'way', 'road', or 'path'. In ancient times it was employed as 'a figure of speech for the "way" or method of doing a thing. Thus it came to denote a rule of right conduct, moral action, or the principle underlying it' (1906:15). It is the 'path' or the 'way' to virtue, so it becomes, in common speech, a natural antithesis between the Way of Heaven and the Way of man. The Tao of Heaven signifies the highest standard of wisdom and moral excellence. At a later stage, Tao stands 'for the great unseen principle of Good dominating and permeating the Universe' (1906:15). Tao is in this context a cosmic principal. Giles (1906:15) states that this transition is visible in Lao Tzu who is probably the first to use the term in its transcendental sense, but who also retains the older meaning, the Way of Heaven. Tao can be considered the Principle of Order, which reveals itself in different spheres of the real. The invisible, 'unchanging' order expresses itself in all visible and rapidly changing things in our physical reality. Lao Tzu (1972:40) describes this eternal cosmic process: 'Returning is the motion of the Tao. Yielding is the way of the Tao.' For Lao Tzu, the Tao is 'born before heaven and earth.' As for Chuang Tzu, he seems to regard the Tao as the "'Virtue" or manifestation of the divine First Principle' (1906:16).

Y. L. Fung (1948:167) suggests that the idea of The Tao of the Taoists differs from that of the authors of the Appendices.⁵ In the *I Ching*, the latter is the specific multiple Tao of all categories of things, while the former is a general unitary Tao which governs the production and transformation of all things. Fung (1948:167) indicates that the idea of Tao of the Taoists 'is the unitary "that" from which springs the production and change of all things in the universe,' whereas the Tao of the authors of the Appendices is multiple and denotes 'the principles which govern each

⁵ The Appendices are also known as *Shih I*, or Ten Wings.



separate category of things in the universe.’ There are many such principles, such as the Tao ‘of sovereignty and of ministership, or of fatherhood and sonhood. They are what a sovereign, a minister, a father, and a son *ought* to be. Each of them is represented by a name, and an individual should ideally act according to these various names’ (Fung 1948:167). The authors of the Appendices regard the comments on the trigrams, the hexagrams and the individual lines of these hexagrams as representing one or more Tao. For example, different additional symbols are attached to the trigrams ‘Creative’ and ‘Receptive’. ‘The Creative is heaven. It is round, it is the prince, the father, jade, metal, cold, ice; it is deep red, a good horse, an old horse, a lean horse, a wild horse, tree fruit’ (1950:275). The characteristics of the Creative are symbolised by different categories. Jade and metal are the symbols of purity and firmness; deep red is the heightened colour of the light or yang principle; the different horses symbolize power, endurance, firmness and strength; fruit appears as a symbol of duration in change. The Receptive is characterized as ‘the mother, the earth’ (1950:275) that nourishes a multitude of life forms. ‘It is cloth, a kettle, frugality, it is level, it is a cow with a calf, a large wagon, form, the multitude, a shaft. Among the various kinds of soil, it is the black’ (1950:275-276). The earth is covered with life as with a cloth; things are cooked until they are ready in the kettle, and this reminds of the earth which is the great melting pot of life. Nature is characteristically frugal. That the Receptive is also ‘level’ means that the earth knows no partiality. A cow with a calf symbolize fertility and the large wagon is a symbol of the earth carrying all living things. The ‘shaft’ refers to the body of a tree, enabling branches to spring out, just as all life germinates from the earth. Black is the heightened color of the earth.

Purity, firmness and strength is the Tao of the Creative, while fertility, frugality and receptivity is the Tao of the Receptive. In this way, the comments on the sixty-four hexagrams and on individual lines represent all the Tao in the universe or, in other words, the governing principles of the universe. This book of wisdom, the *I Ching*, is an attempt to reveal the natural order which guides human conduct. ‘The movements of the six lines contain the ways of the three primal powers’ (1950:289). Heaven, earth and man are the three primal powers of the universal. Lao Tzu (1963:82) also asserts this idea in Chapter 25 of the *Tao Te Ching*:

Man models himself on earth.
Earth on heaven,
Heaven on the way,
And the way on that which is naturally so.

This trinity of world principles — heaven (content), earth (object having form) and man (subject) — are the basic powers of the universal, crucial in the *I Ching*. It is expressed in the eight trigrams and in the sixty-four hexagrams as a whole and in its parts. In a trigram the lowest position belongs to the earth, the middle to man and the top to heaven. The same idea is also applied to the hexagrams. Since a hexagram consists of six lines, the two lowest places are for the earth, the middle, that is the third and the fourth places for man, and the two at the top for heaven (1950:264). In this way the *I Ching* reveals the relationship between heaven, earth and man in the eternal changing cosmic process. It stands in harmony with the Tao and its power, which refers to the natural law in the universe and moral law in man. On the macro level the Tao works in the universe and on the micro level it applies to man.

In ‘Shuo Kua/ Discussion of the Trigrams’ it is described how the holy sages of ancient times

determined the tao of heaven and called it the dark and the light. They determined the tao of the earth and called it the yielding and the firm. They determined the tao of man and called it love and rectitude. They combined these three fundamental powers and doubled them; therefore in the book of Changes a sign is always formed by six lines. (1950:264)

This passage describes the essential factors, the six yielding and firm lines, also as forming two trigrams, of each individual hexagram and their significance in the cosmic process. The authors of the *I Ching* recognize that ‘there are no greater primal images than heaven and earth’ (1950:319). The primordial principle of the world involves ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’, corresponding to spirit and matter. It is Tao with its law of change that enables things to manifest on the earth when invisible spirit becomes visible matter. The yang and yin forces manifest in all matter in the eternal cosmic changing process. This is because there is constantly a state of tension between these two primary forces. The power of Tao to maintain the world by eternal renewal of this state of tension between the dark and light is regarded by the authors of the *I Ching* as supreme kindness. ‘In correspondence with these two basic powers in heaven and on earth, there exist in man the polarities of love and rectitude — love being related to the light principle and rectitude to the dark’ (1950:264).⁶ The characteristics of ‘love’

⁶ In Richard Wilhelm’s translation of the *I Ching* the Chinese characters, *jen* and *yi*, are translated as ‘love’ and ‘rectitude’. In Max Kaltenmark’s book, *Lao Tzu and Taoism*, these two cardinal virtues are



or ‘human-heartedness’, and ‘rectitude’ or ‘righteousness’, corresponding to the principle of dark and light, are considered as the supreme value of man. Human-heartedness and righteousness are the distinct qualities of the man of Tao.

The authors of the *I Ching* recognize that the Tao’s life-giving quality is something purely spontaneous. ‘Heaven and earth change and transform; the holy sage imitates them. In the heaven hang images that reveal good fortune and misfortune; the holy sage reproduces these’ (1950:320). In the *I Ching* the holy sages reproduce the heavenly character of changes in the lines, which ‘are imitations of movements on earth’ (1950:336); and they interpret these lines in the appended judgments for their followers to take appropriate action. ‘Good fortune and misfortune create the great field of action’ (1950:319). The holy sages determine the Tao of man or, more precisely, the moral order whereby people should perform their daily activities in order to attain good fortune and to avoid misfortune. ‘For comprehending the chaotic diversity of things and exploring what is hidden, for penetrating the depths and extending influence afar, thereby determining good fortune and misfortune on earth and consummating all efforts on earth, there is nothing greater than the oracle’ (1950:319-320).

The authors of the *I Ching* encourage people to consult the oracle for their destiny and they appreciate superior men who are mindful of moral order amidst ‘the chaotic diversity of things’ in their everyday life. These men attain good fortune and avoid misfortune. In ‘Ta Chuan/The Great Treatise’ it is indicated that ‘it is the order of the Changes that the superior man devotes himself to and that he attains tranquillity by. It is the judgments on the individual lines that the superior man takes pleasure in and that he ponders on’ (1950:289). While the Chinese assert the Tao and its power as a natural and moral order in the physical world that man has to obey, Nietzsche posits a chaotic world in his notion of the Will to Power. Here the natural world is ‘a

translated as ‘human-heartedness’ (*jen*) and ‘righteousness’ (*i*). Liu Wu-Chi (1955:149) states that the word *jen* ‘has been variously translated as love, charity, benevolence, sympathy, humaneness, humanity, true manhood, and the like. Not satisfying wholly any of these restricted meanings, *jen* is probably any one or all of them.’ The Confucian scholars consider *jen* as the supreme virtue of a person. The word *yi* is generally translated as ‘righteousness’. Fung Yu-Lan (1948:42) indicates that ‘righteousness (*yi*) means the “oughtness” of a situation.’ He explains that ‘every one in society has certain things which he ought to do, and which must be done for their own sake, because they are the morally right things to do.’

monster of force', involving 'a play of forces and forces-waves' (WLN 38[12]). In Nietzsche's context it is impossible to assume a world of moral order. Thus, with reference to his idea of the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche advocates a 'higher morality', which involves that the *sovereign individual* is 'liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral' (GM II 2). L. P. Thiele (1990:41) explains about the dictates of the higher morality that 'one seeks to develop virtues because they are one's own virtues, a sign of one's power and freedom. The "supr morality" of the higher man ... is a concentration of energy in the pursuit of an austere higher morality.' While the Chinese assert the way of the sage who is able to devote himself to the Tao, Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Übermensch* holds that the free spirit seeks his life's task in working out his creative self in the context of the Will to Power.

1.3. The dancing rhythm of the *I Ching* and of Nietzsche's Will to Power

This world: a monster of force, without beginning, without end, a fixed, iron quantity of force which grows neither larger nor smaller, which doesn't exhaust but only transforms itself, as a whole unchanging in size, an economy without expenditure and losses, but equally without increase, without income, enclosed by 'nothingness' as by a boundary, ... a determinate force set into a determinate space, and not into a space that is anywhere 'empty' but as force everywhere, as a play of forces and force-waves simultaneously one and 'many', accumulating here while diminishing there, an ocean of forces storming and flooding within themselves, eternally changing, eternally rushing back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and flood of its forms, shooting out from the simplest into the most multifarious, from the stillest, coldest, most rigid into the most fiery, wild, self-contradictory, and then coming home from abundance to simplicity, from the play of contradiction back to the pleasure of harmony, affirming itself even in this sameness of its courses and years; blessing itself as what must eternally return, as a becoming that knows not satiety, no surfeit, no fatigue – this, my *Dionysian* world of eternal self-creating, of eternal self-destroying, this mystery world of dual delights, this my beyond good and evil, without goal, unless there is a goal in the happiness of the circle, without will, unless a ring feels good will towards itself – do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* of all its riddles? A *light* for you too, for you, the most secret, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly? – *This world is the will to power – and nothing besides!* And you yourselves too are this will to power – and nothing besides! (WLN 38[12])

In the passage quoted above Nietzsche provides a description of our external world as well as of our inner world as 'a monster of force', that is '*eternally changing*' like a



stormy sea. Of the concept ‘force’ or ‘energy’ Nietzsche says that ‘it must be ascribed an inner world which I call “will to power”’ (*WLN* 36[31]). This *will* strives to increase power, to grow. The Will to Power, according to Nietzsche, is a living organism. The very notion, ‘living organism’ (*WP* 702), implies that there must be growth — ‘that it must extend its power and consequently incorporate alien forces’ (*WP* 728). Nietzsche’s organic view of life and of the world implies that we are a part of this eternal cosmic process of change or transformation.

Nietzsche criticizes, on the one hand, our prevailing belief in ‘the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an *atomon*: this belief ought to be expelled from science!’ (*BGE* 12) On the other hand, he asserts that ‘our body is but a social structure composed of many souls,’ the ““under-wills” or under-souls’ (*BGE* 19). He prophesies that ‘the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis’ (*BGE* 12). He makes the proposition that ‘finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will — namely, of the will to power’ (*BGE* 36). For Nietzsche, the innermost essence of all things is itself the Will to Power. Arthur C. Danto (1965:215) accounts for Nietzsche’s notion by explaining that the Will To Power is ‘something we *are*. Not only are *we* Will to Power, but so is everything, human and animal, animate and material. The entire world is Will to Power.’

Roger T. Ames (1984:127) comments on Nietzsche’s conception of the world as Will to Power that ‘the description of the organismic, cyclical, self-creating and fluid nature of existence is reminiscent of the process/event ontology underlying Taoist thought.’ Nietzsche’s Will to Power shares some mysterious characteristics with the Tao, that which is ‘abstruse and difficult to describe’ (1968:238). Ames’s comment is valid not only with regard to Taoist thought, but also with regard to the *I Ching*. The major affinity between Nietzsche and the *I Ching* is the acceptance of the fluid nature of existence characterized by *change*. Change is inevitable and seems to be an eternal cosmic dance, the ‘play of forces and force-waves’ in Nietzsche’s eternally changing ocean. Change is emphasized in the title of the *I Ching*, the *Book of Changes*, as change represents the fluid nature of all existence. The *I Ching* describes unchangeable principles according to which changes happen. It aims at demonstrating these principles in terms of changes in individual lines of the hexagrams:



The Way has changes and movements. Therefore the lines are called changing lines. The lines have gradations, therefore they represent things. Things are diverse; this gives rise to line characteristics. The line characteristics do not always correspond. From this arise good fortune and misfortune. (1950:352)

Whereas this book of divination offers its readers the possibility to attain ‘good fortune’ and to avoid ‘misfortune’ by following the oracle, Nietzsche’s Dionysian world is ‘beyond good and evil’. However, both Nietzsche and the authors of the *I Ching* affirm the cyclic nature of change, which is a rotation of phenomena, each following the other until the starting point is reached once more. Cyclic change is symbolized by the two dots in the Primal Beginning diagram, *t’ai chi t’u*. When the old comes to an end, the new begins; when the dark yin force comes to an end, the light yang force begins. Thus things are renewed and regenerated and all things in the universe come into being through this eternal process of change. The life cycle of all beings is similar to the cyclic movement of the day and the year. This cyclic change is embraced in the *I Ching* and is also described by Nietzsche as the regular patterns of an ocean, rolling ‘with an ebb and flood of its forms’. The regular pattern of change implies an invariable order of the changing process. For the Taoist, the Tao is the invisible force underlying the changing visible natural world.

Taoism and Nietzsche’s notion of the Will to Power, his ‘*Dionysian* world of eternal self-creating, of eternal self-destroying, ... of dual delights’, may seem an enigma to many of us. However, Zukav (1979:155) makes scientific sense of the Eastern mystery of matter and energy:

The world of matter is a relative world, and an illusory one: illusory not in the sense that it does not exist, but illusory in the sense that we do not see it as it really is. The way it really is cannot be communicated verbally, but in the attempt to talk around it, eastern literature speaks repeatedly of dancing energy and transient, impermanent forms. This is strikingly similar to the picture of physical reality emerging from high-energy particle physics. Buddhist literature does not speak of learning new things about reality, but about removing veils of ignorance that stand between us and what we already *are*.

Zukav’s (1979:194) description of the world of particles may perhaps give us an impression about what happens in Nietzsche’s world of the Will to Power: ‘The world of particle physics is a world of sparkling energy forever dancing with itself in the form of its particles as they twinkle in and out of existence, collide, transmute and disappear again’ (Zukav 1979:194). The creation and annihilation of particles are the



result of the interaction of constantly dancing energy or force, as in Nietzsche's description of the universe 'as force everywhere, as a play of forces and force-waves simultaneously one and 'many', accumulating here while diminishing there, an ocean of forces storming and flooding within themselves, eternally changing.' Nietzsche's description of the Will to Power seems a mystery beyond understanding. Zukav says about the world of matter that 'we do not see it as it really is.'

If, like a physicist, we could look at the world from a perspective other than our usual perspective that sees solidity, we may arrive at a deeper understanding of our everyday world. The subatomic world where invisible particles interact with each other is quite different from visible reality. 'The subatomic realm is beyond the limits of sensory perception' (Zukav 1979:87). Nietzsche also points to the specific nature of our sensory perception in disparaging our error of enclosing our senses as if behind prison walls:

If our eyes were a hundredfold sharper, man would appear to us tremendously tall; it is possible, indeed, to imagine organs by virtue of which he would be felt as immeasurable. On the other hand, organs could be so constituted that whole solar systems were viewed contracted and packed together like a single cell: and to beings of an opposite constitution a cell of the human body could present itself, in motion, construction and harmony, as a solar system. (*D* 117)

In this passage Nietzsche attempts to make us aware of the significance of interpretation according to a specific paradigm. Zukav (1979:193) provides an analysis of wood as an example of how things look different under high magnification, i.e. moving from the physical reality to the subatomic realm. Wood is made of fibres. Wood fibres are actually patterns of cells; cells are patterns of molecules; molecules are patterns of atoms; atoms are patterns of subatomic particles. In this analysis, wood can finally be regarded as only subatomic particles. In the subatomic realm, particle interactions are interactions of energy with energy. As subatomic particles interact with each other each and every moment everywhere, the world is changing and transforming itself eternally, beyond the common sense of our understanding of physical reality.⁷ Scientists assume that in the last analysis the stuff of the universe is pure energy, that subatomic particles are energy. They routinely measure the mass of particles in energy units. Mass is a form of energy and energy

⁷ The speed of subatomic movement is extremely fast and is beyond our ability to observe. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second.

has mass, as Einstein demonstrates: ‘Energy has mass and mass represents energy’ (Zukav 1979:154). His famous formula $E = mc^2$ expresses the relationship of mass to energy. The physicists’ understanding of the dance of energy, the interactions of energy, may perhaps provide an alternative to our commonsense view of our everyday material world, to understand the co-existence of the invisible forces working in the natural world, also in terms of Nietzsche’s Will to Power and of the Tao.

1.3.1. The characteristics of the ‘play of forces’

The ‘ocean of forces’, for Nietzsche, is eternally changing or self-transforming, corresponding to the changeable and fluid quality of the Tao as described in Chapter 32 of the *Tao Te Ching*: ‘The way is to the world as the River and the Sea are to rivulets and streams’ (1963:91). An ‘eternally changing’ sea is often used as an image of the Tao by the Taoists. Water often appears in the Taoist writings as an image of the fluid nature of human existence. Its fluid nature allows water to permeate everything. It nourishes plants and living things, yet running water erodes soil, rocks and even mountains. For Nietzsche, the nature of the sea is always to be ‘storming and flooding’ within itself, whereas for the Taoist, the nature of flowing water is to nourish all things without any discrimination or effort, as the Tao does. This nourishing quality is regarded as the highest good by the Taoist, as suggested in Chapter 8 of the *Tao Te Ching*:

Highest good is like water. Because water excels in benefiting the myriad creatures without contending with them and settles where none would like to be, it comes close to the way. (Lao Tzu 1963:64)

Lao Tan, in *Chuang Tzu*, also comments on this quality of the Tao:

That which can be increased without showing any sign of increase; that which can be diminished without suffering any diminution — that is what the sage holds fast to. Deep, unfathomable, it is like the sea; ... it ends only to begin again, transporting and weighing the ten thousand things without ever failing them. ... what the ten thousand things all look to for sustenance, what never fails them — is this not the real Way? (1968:239)

Nietzsche also indicates that the ocean is ‘a fixed, iron quantity of force which grows neither larger nor smaller’. The changing ocean dances eternally according to an invariable natural order ‘with an ebb and flood of its forms’. Both Nietzsche and Lao Tan employ an ocean metaphor to describe the fluid and changeable nature of existence. Nietzsche pictures the world of the Will to Power as ‘an ocean of forces

storming and flooding within themselves, eternally changing’ and Lao Tan describes the Tao as ‘deep, unfathomable’ like the sea. Chuang Tzu (1996:205) also remarks on this mysterious eternal cosmic process of change:

There is something which exists, though it emerges from no roots, it returns through opening. ... It is real but it has no permanent place: this tells us it is a dimension of space. It survives, but has no beginning nor end: this tells us it has dimensions of time. It is born, it dies, it emerges, it returns, though in its emergence and return there is no form to be seen.

Nietzsche says that the ‘play of forces’ is ‘without beginning, without end’ and Chuang Tzu (1968:239) agrees that the Way ‘ends only to begin again’. ‘Stand before it’, says Lao Tzu (1972:14) of the Tao, ‘and there is no beginning. Follow it and there is no end.’ These ideas may be difficult to understand within a linear frame of reference. We are accustomed to thinking of the natural world and life as being composed of constituent parts which can be analysed as pieces and be added up in order to understand their riddles, but Nietzsche criticizes this attitude: ‘all knowledge comes about by means of separation, delimitation, restriction; no absolute knowledge of a whole!’ (*U* 19 [141]) What Nietzsche disparages is ‘how limited the thought and imagination of human beings are, they never perceive life as a totality’ (*U* 29 [210]). As for the Taoists, for Nietzsche the world is organic and cannot be divided into constituent parts. He asserts that the best of all ‘wookers of reality’ are those who view ‘the way of the world as a whole’ (*HAAH* II 3). But if we accept a non-linear paradigm, one that sees the whole, the world may become clear within a different interpretation. For example, if we draw a time line for an event, we can see that there is a beginning and an end of that event as follows:



This line is made of a series of points that we are unaware of. Each individual point is, in fact, discontinuous, but we simply see a line, a continuum, without being aware of the discontinuous points. In the same way we may regard an event, as a continuum in terms of our commonsense view of our everyday world. The reality on the subatomic level, however, is different from our commonsense perspective. For example, the strong force in subatomic particle interactions, is so short-range and powerful that

strong-force interactions take place very, very speedily beyond our commonsense framework, in about .000000000000000000000001 (10^{-23}) seconds (Zukav 1979:234).⁸ In our commonsense view there is only objective time and three-dimensional space. Nevertheless, R. C. Pine (1989:208) points out that ‘we must also believe in strange places such as that of a “singularity”, a place with no spatial dimension from which space and time can both emerge (as in the case of the Big Bang) and disappear (as in the case of black holes).’ Suppose one can shift one’s perspective *onto* the black point (now), situated in the middle of this line: In this frozen moment one’s usual spatial-temporal perspective would be dissolved, such as in the ‘singularity’ from which space and time emerge.

Human conceptions of time and space are merely human fabrications to make sense of our everyday life and thus work for humans only. Nietzsche says that ‘time in itself is nonsense: time exists only for a sensate creature. The same is true for space’ (*U* 19 [140]). We can only observe the beginning and the end of an event, but if we try to form a mental picture from within each and every moment (within the point), each moment is only the end of the previous moment and the beginning of the next moment. This moment itself is with beginning and with end, or without beginning and without end. The concepts of ‘here’ and ‘there’, ‘past’, ‘present’ and ‘future’ are dissolved in the ‘point’ or moment. Perhaps, if one is aware of each moment, which is like each point in the line, one can say with Zarathustra:

O my soul, I taught you to say ‘today’ and ‘one day’ and ‘formerly’ and to dance away over all Here and There and Yonder. (*Z* III On the Great Longing)

⁸ Physicists have discovered that the universe is held together by four basic types of ‘glue’, categorised according to the order of their strength: strong (nuclear) force, electromagnetic force, weak force and gravity. The strong force is the force that, as a fundamental glue, holds atomic nuclei together. Zukav (1979:231) indicates that the strong force is ‘the multiple exchange of virtual pions between nucleons. The number of the exchanges (the strength of the force) increases at close range and decreases at a distance.’ The strong force is one hundred times stronger than the electromagnetic force. The former holds the nucleus itself together, while the latter ‘holds atoms together externally (with each other to form molecules) and internally (it binds electrons to their orbits around atomic nuclei)’ (Zukav 1979:227). According to physicists, ‘gravity is the long-range force which holds together solar systems, galaxies, and universes’ (Zukav 1979:234). Physicists have discovered that a certain type of particle interaction ‘required a much longer time about .0000000001 (10^{-10})’ (Zukav 1979:234), so it is called the weak force.



Nietzsche's emphasis on that which is 'without beginning, without end' is an attempt to remind us of the multiplicity of physical reality, which may imply that our prevailing assumptions about the world may not be sufficient. They are unable to describe a *deeper* world of which we have hitherto been unaware. Another reality, the subatomic realm, exists within our physical visible reality. Zarathustra reminds us at midnight that 'the world is deep, *deeper than day had been aware*' (Z IV The Drunken Song 6). We are accustomed to valuing the visible world, but the invisible also plays an important role which we have ignored hitherto.

We may be mostly unaware of the *four-dimensional* space-time continuum proposed by Albert Einstein, in which each moment of an event can be thought of as 'a *static*, non-moving picture of space and time' (Zukav 1979:150). According to Einstein's special theory of relativity, in the space-time continuum 'events do not develop, they just are' (Zukav 1979:150). According to Einstein, time and space are not separate. 'Space-time is a continuum. A continuum is something whose parts are so close together, so "arbitrarily small", that the continuum really cannot be broken down into them. There are no breaks in a continuum. It is called a continuum because it flows continuously' (Zukav 1979:149). We may be unaware that space-time as a continuum is only similar to Newtonian absolute time and space due to the fact that we normally do not move at great speeds relative to the speed of light. Einstein's special theory of relativity tells us that 'space and time are not two separate things, but that together they form space-time, and that energy and mass are actually different forms of the same thing, mass-energy' (Zukav 1979:121).

Thus, perhaps, the mystery of Chuang Tzu's completeness of Tao and Nietzsche's 'determinate force set into a determinate space' can be illuminated in terms of particle physics. 'The law of the conservation of mass-energy says that the total amount of mass-energy in the universe always has been and always will be the same. Mass may be converted into energy and energy may be converted into mass, but the total amount of mass-energy in the universe does not change' (Zukav 1979:157). In this sense the universe is 'a fixed, iron quantity of force', which dances eternally, changing and transforming itself eternally, and in this way producing the most complicated things out of the most simple structures (WLN 38[12]). Similarly the wonder of the Tao is that 'the Tao is in all things, in their divisions and their fullness' (1996:205). What is said about the Tao also applies to the *I Ching*:



The Book of Changes is vast and great. When one speaks of what is far, it knows no limits. When one speaks of what is near, it is still and right. When one speaks of the space between heaven and earth, it embraces everything. (1950:301)

The scope of the domain of the *I Ching* is vast, because its laws are not only valid to the farthest distance, that is the whole universe, but also to the nearest, that is one's inner world. 'The space between heaven and earth' implies that the fates of men come down to them from heaven. Thus the manifestation of the Tao can be seen in all things in the natural world, as suggested in the 'Commentary on the Decision' of the hexagram *Yü / Enthusiasm*:

Because ENTHUSIASM shows devotion to movement, heaven and earth are at its side. How much the more then is it possible to install helpers and set armies marching!

Heaven and earth move with devotion; therefore sun and moon do not swerve from their courses, and the four seasons do not err.

The holy man moves with devotion; ... and the people obey. (1950:467)

The unchangeable laws of nature are not only revealed by heaven and earth, but in man as well. The *I Ching* emphasizes the natural and moral order that 'people obey'. The key to natural and human laws is movement, which meets with devotion. The holy sage is at ease with the laws of nature and thus 'moves with devotion.' Such movement is suggested by the word '*I*' in the *I Ching*.

Nietzsche's picture of the world as the Will to Power can be associated with the three meanings of '*I*':

(1) easiness and simpleness, (2) transformation and change, and (3) invariability.

Transformation and change refers to the individual things of the universe.

Simpleness and invariability refers to their *tao* or underlying principles. Things ever change, but *tao* are invariable. Things are complex, but *tao* are easy and simple.

(Fung 1948:169)

The first meaning of '*I*' is 'easy and simple'. This characteristic of '*I*' is symbolized by the slight changes in the individual lines of the hexagrams. Easy movement unites the separated ends of the yielding lines into firm lines and causes the simple division of firm lines into yielding lines. The individual lines change and regroup themselves, a simple division and easy movement of lines, to form the sixty-four hexagrams which symbolize world situations constantly changing and reconstituting themselves. The *I Ching* states that

The Creative knows through the easy.

The Receptive can do things through the simple. (1950:286)



According to the *I Ching*, if everything works according to the law of its nature, then it is easy and simple. The characteristic of the Creative, Heaven, is movement, as the celestial bodies move in heaven. The Creative unites with ease what is separated through movement or change. It remains effortless, because it directs microscopic movements, where things are smallest, so that they grow effortlessly of themselves in accordance with the laws of their nature. The nature of the Receptive, Earth, is repose. This characteristic is as simple as the earth nourishing everything in a pure, receptive fashion. Thus the hexagram *Ch'ien/The Creative*, and the hexagram *K'un/The Receptive*, Heaven and Earth, take the first and the second positions in the sixty-four hexagrams, as the foundations of all that exists:

As that which completes the primal images, it is called the Creative; as that which imitates them, it is called the Receptive. (1950:300)

The tao of heaven is the Creative and the imitations of the tao of heaven, which imitations make up the real things in the material world, are the tao of earth, the Receptive. It is the tao — the principles of yin and yang, dark and light, Creative and Receptive — that is at work in the eternal cosmic changing process and gives rise to all things in the universe. ‘Things are complex, but tao are easy and simple.’

When the Creative and the Receptive, Heaven and Earth, enter as principles into the phenomena of life, the easy and simple take effect. The Creative rules the inner movement within a person, which is in harmony with the environment, and the Receptive is the simple which allows things to grow naturally into multifariousness. The authors of the *I Ching* claim: ‘What is easy, is easy to know; what is simple, is easy to follow’ (1950:286). If one were able to understand the laws of nature, one would probably win the allegiance of people, then one would be free from disharmony and conflict with others. In this way one’s inner world would move harmoniously with the outer environment and eventually attain perfection. In this way one would become one with nature. This is the highest virtue of existence according to the *I Ching*. Thus, ‘Ta Chuan/The Great Treatise’ notes:

By means of the easy and the simple we grasp the laws of the whole world. When the laws of the whole world are grasped, therein lies perfection. (1950:287)

This quality of ‘easiness and simpleness’ is appreciated not only by the authors of the *I Ching*, but also by Nietzsche. The ‘easy and simple’ eternally

changing cosmic process is described by Nietzsche as ‘a play of forces’. He asserts energy or ‘force everywhere’, flowing ceaselessly as the essence of the eternal cosmic changing process. In this regard Nietzsche exclaims: ‘*O Sancta simplicitas!*’⁹ In what strange simplification and falsification man lives! One can never cease wondering once one has acquired eyes for this marvel. How we have made everything around us clear and free and easy and simple!’ (BGE 24) He champions a simple and an easy way of life — ‘to enjoy life’ (BGE 24) — which is not based on the will to knowledge as of the scholars, but rather on ‘a far more powerful will: the will to ignorance, to the uncertain, to the untrue! Not as its opposite, but — as its refinement!’ (BGE 24) What Nietzsche champions is a holistic or non-linear perspective of life, like the yin/yang relationship described in the *I Ching*. In such a perspective both true and untrue, certain and uncertain, are required as a basis for growth in an organic world. This idea is expressed by Zarathustra when he disagrees with the scholars, asking: ‘Why would my simplicity want to be near their multiplicity?’ (Z II On Scholars) However, it must be admitted that although Nietzsche favours simplicity in life, he fails to offer us a way to arrive at such a state of existence. Zarathustra speaks of ‘*the way* — that does not exist’ (Z III On the Spirit of Gravity 2). According to Nietzsche, each individual should find out his or her own way. Therefore Zarathustra asks: ‘This is *my way*; where is yours?’ (Z III On the Spirit of Gravity 2)

Contrarily, the authors of the *I Ching* describe the laws of the world which man is able to know and grasp and which allow him to attain perfection. The Tao is considered as ‘easy and simple’ in the *I Ching*. It refers to the underlying principles of the universe that provide the measure for human conduct.

The second meaning of the word ‘*T*’ is ‘transformation and change’. Change is the primary cause and the basis of the world. Changes are regarded as natural processes, operating in terms of the principles of yin and yang, dark and light, or Creative and Receptive:

The Creative and the Receptive are the real secret of the Changes. Inasmuch as the Creative and the Receptive present themselves as complete, the changes between them are also posited. If the Creative and the Receptive were destroyed, there would be nothing by which the changes could be perceived. If there were no more changes to be seen, the effects of the Creative and the Receptive would also gradually cease.
(1950:322-3)

⁹ Holy simplicity!



This passage indicates that all life represents the manifestation or effects of the yin/yang relationship and that the contradictions between activity and receptivity, or Creative and Receptive, are thus the key to the changes that bring forth everything in the universe. Contradictions create tension which causes change. A state of tension is necessary for life to express itself. Tension is continuously being engendered by the contradictions inherent in the natural world. According to the *I Ching*, if these contradictions ceased to work then everything would cease. Nothing is considered as being absolutely at rest within this changing context; rest is only an intermediate state of movement, a state of latent movement. Any invisible movement would reach a point where it becomes visible. Visible and invisible movements correlate with the firm yang and yielding yin lines in the hexagrams of the *I Ching*. ‘Ta Chuan/The Great Treatise’ states that

in a state of rest the Creative is one, and in a state of motion it is straight; therefore it creates that which is great. The Receptive is closed in a state of rest, and in a state of motion it opens; therefore it creates that which is vast. (1950:301)

In this vastness and greatness of the Tao the principles of yin and yang work ceaselessly, opening and closing, in motion and in rest, in the eternal changing process. Their domain is vast, from the outer world of heaven and earth to the inner world of the human mind.

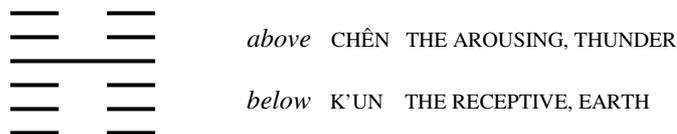
The world is organic and is always reproducing and self-transforming, because change is the latent force in all existence. In the eternal process of change, things are transformed and recreated in separation and union. This is Nietzsche’s ‘*Dionysian* world of eternal self-creating, of eternal self-destroying’ (WLN 38[12]). The eternal changing process as depicted in the *I Ching* is a process corresponding to Nietzsche’s description of the eternal cosmic ‘play of forces’, derived ‘from the play of contradiction back to the pleasure of harmony’ (WLN 38[12]). Nietzsche envisions that ‘what man wants, what every smallest part of a living organism wants, is an increase of power’ (WP 702). In striving for this power, the living organism seeks opposition and if it is capable of overcoming obstacles and absorbing the contradictions and problems of existence, then it attains an impression of power. Phenomena are simply outcomes of the ‘play of contradictions’, because in the eternal changing process new things are being created. Zarathustra expresses this idea in the metaphor of the children who ‘played by the sea, and a wave came and carried off

their toy to the depths.’ He states that ‘the same wave shall bring them new toys and shower new colorful shells before them’ (Z II On the Virtuous).

The third meaning of ‘I’ is ‘invariability’, which is yet another aspect of change: Tao ‘stands alone and does not change’ (Lao Tzu 1963:82), ‘ever present and in motion’ (Lao Tzu 1972:25), as noted in the *Tao Te ching*. Chuang Tzu (1996:110) also regards the Tao as being omnipresent, as the source which moves things to be manifested in an invariable pattern:

Heaven is elevated, Earth lowly, and this reflects their spiritual illumination. Spring and summer precede and autumn and winter follow: this is the pattern of the four seasons. In the growth of all life, their roots and buds have their appointed place and distinct shape, and from this comes maturation and then decay, the constant stream of transformation and change.

The authors of the *I Ching* assert that the changeless nature of change manifests itself in the uniformity and invariable order of the changing process, just like the unchangeable changing pattern of the four seasons, the cyclic life pattern of growth and decay, and the regular rising and setting pattern of the sun and moon. This idea is apparent in the hexagram *Yü / Enthusiasm*:



This hexagram consists of the upper trigram *Chên*, ‘The Arousing’, and the lower trigram *K'un*, ‘The Receptive’, whose attributes are obedience and devotion. This begins the movement that meets with devotion and thus inspires enthusiasm. The ruler of the hexagram is the fourth line, which is the only firm line in the hexagram, maintaining devotion and enthusiasm in the whole hexagram. This implies that the importance of all natural and human law is movement that meets with devotion. The ‘Commentary on the Decision of this hexagram notes:

Heaven and earth move with devotion; therefore sun and moon do not swerve from their courses, and the four seasons do not err. (1950:467)

The unchangeable laws of nature are manifest in the eternal cosmic changing process. Nietzsche’s metaphor of the ocean also illustrates the changeless nature of change. It describes the unchangeable pattern of change as ‘an ocean of forces’,



‘simultaneously one and “many”, accumulating here while diminishing there, ... with an ebb and flood of its forms’ (WLN 38[12]). The different rhythms of sea water create different forms, such as bubbles, ripples, swells, currents, breakers, billows and even tsunamis. Moreover, water, normally liquid, can have different forms, cold solid ice and hot gaseous steam. Snow, rain, dew, mist and clouds are also different forms of water. However, all these different things reveal to us one nature — wetness. ‘Wetness’ is the Tao of water. The ocean is in a constant state of change and absorbs thousands of rivers, yet we are unable to measure its volume, whether it is increasing or diminishing. This eternal cosmic process of change seems in itself to be changeless. Nietzsche regards all ‘processes as “being”’ (WLN 36[21]). This presents a paradox: Change, as the source of all things, is out of changelessness. This paradox connects to the idea embraced in the *I Ching*: ‘Things ever change, but tao are invariable’.

Nietzsche and the authors of the *I Ching* realize that everything is interrelated and interdependent. Such a realization appears not only in the ancient book *I Ching* and the writings of Nietzsche, but also in quantum mechanics. In quantum physics experiments, scientists have discovered that subatomic phenomena, such as photons and electrons, become definite ‘objects’ only after measurements are made with experimental apparatus. ‘Photons do not exist by themselves. All that exists by itself is an unbroken wholeness that presents itself to us as webs (more patterns) of relations’ (Zukav 1979:72). The physical world is a web of relationships between elements and subatomic particles can be called into being by the act of measurement. Zukav (1979:48) states that the ‘philosophical implication of quantum mechanics is that all of the things in our universe (including us) that appear to exist independently are actually parts of one all-encompassing organic pattern, and that no parts of that pattern are ever really separate from it or from each other.’ Subatomic particles are organic in the sense that they can respond to processed information and act accordingly. They constantly appear to be making decisions and ‘seem to know *instantaneously* what decisions are made elsewhere, and elsewhere can be as far away as another galaxy!’ (Zukav 1979:47). All experiments in the subatomic realm indicate wave-particle duality, and physicists have proven that light is both a particle and a wave, depending on how one looks at it. Subatomic particles act, or more precisely, respond according to the designed experiment. ‘Einstein, using the photoelectric

effect, “proved” that light is particle-like and [Thomas] Young, using the phenomenon of interference, “proved” that light is wave-like’ (Zukav 1979:62).¹⁰ The presence of particle-like or wave-like aspects of light depends on the experimental devices employed by scientists. It follows that those subatomic ‘objects’ respond according to the intention and preparation of the particle scientists. The interchange between particle and wave in subatomic phenomena seems to convey the information that our frames of reference have hitherto been insufficient to understand a reality that we have consequently ignored.

Although Nietzsche and the *I Ching* are in agreement about some aspects of the eternal process of change, they differ about others. Nietzsche depicts an eternal cosmic changing process in which everything grows. He states that ‘the only reality is the will to grow stronger of every center of force — not self-preservation, but the will to appropriate, dominate, increase, grow stronger’ (WP 689), without any ‘order’ or ‘laws’ which the will has to follow. He indicates that ‘if something happens thus and not otherwise, that does not imply a “principle,” “law,” “order,” [but the operation of] quanta of force the essence of which consists in exercising power against other quanta of force’ (WP 689). The authors of the *I Ching*, on the other hand, attempt to reveal the laws involved in the process of eternal change. These laws provide for preservation, not growth in Nietzsche’s sense. They enable people to take appropriate action in all situations and to settle doubts even though changes occur constantly and inevitably.

The Master said: The Changes, what do they do? The Changes disclose things, complete affairs, and encompass all ways on earth — this and nothing else. For this reason the holy sages used them to penetrate all wills on earth and to determine all fields of action on earth, and to settle all doubts on earth. (1950:316)

It seems clear that the phenomena of change in the universe are recognized as inevitable and eternal in both the *I Ching* and in Nietzsche’s notion of the Will to Power. Nietzsche considers constant change or transformation in the world as chaotic and violent, like a ‘storming and flooding’ ocean, while the authors of the *I Ching* organize change in a systematic and structural fashion. The eternal cosmic changing process seems to be dancing to different tempos for these different philosophers.

¹⁰ A particle is a piece of matter that at any given time has a definite size, speed, and location, while a wave can be understood as an event or phenomenon.



1.3.2. The different tempos of the dance: chaos and order

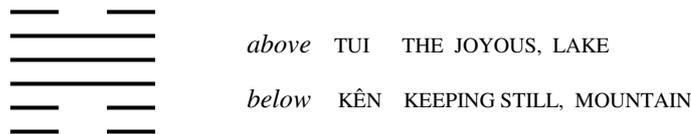
Despite their affinity in affirming change, there is a major divergence between Nietzsche's notion of the Will to Power and the Tao of the *I Ching*. This is the divergence between chaos and order. The authors of the *I Ching* assert that there is order and so create this book of divination that enables man to discover his fate. This belief in order has had a great impact on Chinese thought. For example, in the Confucian text, *The Great Learning*, it is said: 'Things have their roots and branches, human affairs their endings as well as beginnings. So to know what comes first and what comes afterwards leads one near to the Way' (1942:146). Nietzsche's idea of the Will to Power, however, is connected to 'primal chaos' (Ames 1984:129). Chaos and order, these two contradictory expressions of process in the universe, seem to be the major divergence between Nietzsche's philosophy and the *I Ching*.

Change in the *I Ching* is orderly and predictable rather than chaotic. The *I Ching* affirms Tao and its power, involving natural laws and moral laws. The holy sages believe that the universe is not a thing of chaos, but rather that it reveals order within chaotic diversity. This order enables man to follow the Way and to become a man of Tao. The *I Ching* conveys the belief that 'in the last analysis the world is a system of homogeneous relationships — that it is a cosmos, not a chaos. This belief is the foundation of Chinese philosophy' (1950:281). The Chinese philosophical tradition teaches that opposite forces do not bring about conflict, but are able to complement each other and thus enable all things to arrive at a state of harmony. The idea of harmony among forces is illustrated in Chapter 42 of the *Tao Te Ching*: 'The myriad creatures carry on their backs the *yin* and embrace in their arms the *yang* and are the blending of the generative forces of the two' (1963:103). The myriad creatures achieve harmony by combining these forces. To the Chinese mind a state of harmony among all things can be achieved within the dance of opposite forces in the natural world. Order and chaos, like opening and shutting, appear to contradict each other, yet they are One in unity. This is the awareness Taoists have about the make-up of the world and life. In *Chuang Tzu* this awareness is apparent in a description of the movement of a bird's beak:

Being of the One is to be ultimately formless, and this formlessness is vast.
This is like the opening and shutting of a bird's beak,
where the opening and shutting is like Heaven and Earth united.
This unity is chaotic and disorderly (1996:97).

The opposites, chaos and unity, are One, just like the opening and shutting of the bird's beak are simply different aspects of one reality and are inseparable. The disappearance of either one of these aspects would be the disappearance of the function of the bird's beak.

The fact that opposite forces stimulate each other is also apparent in the hexagram *Hsien /Influence (Wooing)* in the *I Ching*:



The name of the hexagram *Hsien /Influence (Wooing)* means “universal”, “general”, and in a figurative sense “to influence”, “to stimulate” (1950:122). This hexagram is made of the lower trigram *Kên*, ‘Keeping Still’ and the upper trigram *Tui*, ‘The Joyous’. The former symbolizes the youngest son as the strong trigram, while the latter symbolizes the youngest daughter as the weak trigram. In this hexagram ‘the universal mutual attraction between the sexes is represented’ (1950:122). Although the hexagram is made up of the opposite forces of the weak, female, above and the strong, male, below, their powers attract each other. As a result they unite and bring forth success, because all success depends on the effect of mutual attraction, as indicated by the ‘Judgement’: ‘Influence. Success’ (1950:122). Furthermore, the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of this hexagram notes that it is the ‘universal’ or ‘general’ law of nature that heaven and earth attract and stimulate each other and thus make things come into being. In this way the forces of the strong and the weak unite:

INFLUENCE means stimulation. The weak is above, the strong below. The forces of the two stimulate and respond to each other, so that they unite. ...

Heaven and earth stimulate each other, and all things take shape and come into being. ... If we contemplate the outgoing stimulating influences, we can know the nature of heaven and earth and all beings. (1950:541)

This hexagram indicates that through this process of stimulation and response, ‘all things take shape and come into being,’ as depicted by Nietzsche in his description of the ‘play of forces and force-waves, simultaneously one and “many.”’ Form and formlessness, dark and light, heaven and earth are united in the eternal cosmic process of change, just like the example of the ‘opening and shutting of a bird's beak,’ so that the disappearance of either one of them would be the disappearance of the system.

The *I Ching* regards the distinction between dark and light, yin and yang, as the foundation of the system of relationships in the order of the universe and all existence. This is apparent in the two basic hexagrams of the *I Ching*, the hexagram *Ch'ien/The Creative*, consisting only of yang lines and *K'un/The Receptive*, consisting only of yin lines. 'The two principles are united by a relation based on homogeneity' (1950:281); the emphasis on unity suggests that they do not combat but complement each other. H. G. Creel (1953:173) states that 'yin and yang complement each other to maintain the cosmic harmony, and might transform into each other; thus winter, which is yin, changes into summer, which is yang.' The visible seasonal alternation is simply the manifestation of the invisible yin and yang relationship. In the eternal changing process, the invisible becomes visible; movement as a living expression of forces becomes possible. The generation of new things occurs on the basis of the coexistence and interaction of the two polarities: the positive and the negative, the yang and the yin. In this process of interaction things take their course of existence and may fulfil their potentialities. Thus the authors of the *I Ching* indicate that reality consists of change and the constant and ceaseless regeneration of things. The sixty-four hexagrams in the *I Ching* are generated from the combination of eight trigrams. This process of generation is remarkable in establishing a cosmographical picture of the rise and development of reality as a world of things, and in providing a cosmographical way of thinking, symbolized in the systemic structures of trigrams and hexagrams. So this book of wisdom contains symbols, embodying magical qualities of predicting the future as an expression of the changing pattern of existence.

The yin/yang relationship is also illustrated by the diagram *Ho T'u*, the 'Yellow River Map,'¹¹ which shows the development of the 'five force' out of even and odd numbers.¹² This diagram expresses the two cardinal principles of creation and destruction. H. G. Creel (1953:173) explains the sequences of the five forces:

Wood produces (that is, can support) fire; fire produces earth (that is, ashes); earth produces metal; metal produces water (dew deposited on a metal mirror); water produces (that is, makes possible the growth of) wood. The order of their destruction is: water extinguishes fire; fire melts metal; metal cuts wood; wood penetrates earth (either by the roots of trees or by the wooden plow); and earth soaks up or dams the course of water; thus the cycle is again complete.

¹¹ See Appendix 3.

¹² The five forces, *wu hsing*, are also called 'five elements'. They are: wood, fire, earth, metal and water, which correlate with the five directions, the centre and the four cardinal points.

Both destruction and creation are aspects of the forces. Order of creation and order of destruction as cyclic change are both present in the *I Ching*. The Yellow River Map implies that destruction and creation are only constituent parts of the whole, and order can be found in seemingly chaotic forces. An individual can only be understood as acting within the unbroken whole of the system, within the context of a field or web of forces, where the individual part is able to make a creative impact and to make a contribution to the formation and transformation of the world as a whole.

The principles of yin and yang are recognized not only in the *I Ching*, but are also apparent in science. Regarding the laws of symmetry¹³, Zukav (1979:158) points out that the Chinese have a similar, or perhaps the same, concept as exists in science:

One side of a circle is called 'yin' and other side is called 'yang'. Where there is yin, there is yang. Where there is high, there also is low. Where there is day, there also is night. Where there is death, there also is birth. The concept of yin-yang, which is really a very old law of symmetry, is yet another way of saying that the physical universe is a whole which seeks balance within itself.

The attempt to find balance and to maintain a state of equilibrium is crucial and has always been embraced in Chinese thought. Chinese thinkers regard balance between man and the universe, the unity of man and heaven, as the highest achievement in life. 'The sage,' according to *Chuang Tzu*, 'merges himself with things' (1968:47). It is because 'he brings all things together in harmony,' and 'to him all life is one and united' (1996:19). Nietzsche, however, argues that since a state of equilibrium has never been reached it has been proved impossible (*WP* 1064). Whereas the Chinese emphasize order so as to arrive at a state of harmony, for Nietzsche, that 'the world does *not* aim for a state of permanence is the only thing *which has been demonstrated*. Consequently one *must* think of its highest point in such a way that it is not a state of equilibrium' (*WLN* 10[138]). Although Nietzsche admits that all things in the universe are probably the result of the interplay of contradictions (*WLN* 38[12]), an idea of 'harmony' is not appreciated in his philosophy.

Nietzsche asserts the qualities of the natural world as 'change, becoming, multiplicity, opposition, contradiction, war' (*WP* 584). He welcomes obstacles and

¹³ According to the laws of symmetry, 'something is symmetrical if certain aspects of it remain the same under varying conditions' (Zukav 1979:157). For example, the right half of a circle mirrors the left half, no matter how we cut it and how we turn it.



contradictions, because he assumes ‘an excitation of the feeling of power by an obstacle’ (*WP* 658), pointing out that ‘the will to power can manifest itself only against resistances’ (*WP* 656). His point is that after overcoming obstacles, one will attain a feeling of pleasure. ‘Pleasure and pain,’ Nietzsche says, are ‘not opposites’, but rather relate to ‘the feeling of power’ (*WP* 660). He points out that ‘if the pleasure is to be very great, the pains must be very protracted and the tension of the bow tremendous. (*WP* 658). The strong will is capable of enduring the pain and has the ability to absorb and to assimilate other forces in order to grow in the eternal changing process, while the weak will fails to do so. Nietzsche writes:

Appropriation and assimilation are above all a desire to overwhelm, a forming, shaping and reshaping, until at length that which has been overwhelmed has entirely gone over into the power domain of the aggressor and has increased the same. — If this incorporation is not successful, then the form probably falls to pieces; and the duality appears as a consequence of the will to power (*WP* 656).

This passage shows how the Will to Power acts in the eternal process of the forming, regrouping and regenerating of chaotic forces in order to grow. Nietzsche emphasizes that ‘the great and small struggle always revolves around superiority, around growth and expansion, around power — in accordance with the will to power which is the will of life’ (*GS* 349). In this way the quality of the fundamental will, the will to power, is manifested in life. ‘The will to power in every combination of forces, — *resisting what’s stronger, attacking what’s weaker, is more correct*’ (*WLN* 36[21]) than the will to truth. Nietzsche rejects Christian truthfulness ‘to view nature as if it were a proof of the goodness and providence of a God’ (*GM* III 27). ‘The body’, Nietzsche says, ‘will have to be an incarnate will to power, it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant — not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply *is* will to power’ (*BGE* 259). Assuming that ‘Christianity *as morality* must now perish’ (*GM* III 27), Nietzsche not only requires that ‘the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*’ (*GM* III 24), but also insists that as ‘we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called in question*’ (*GM* P 6). In short, Nietzsche’s emphasis on struggle and growth stands in contrast to the balance and harmony taught by the *I Ching*. His attack of Christian morality is also at variance with the moral implications of the *I Ching*.



1.3.3. The moral implications of different tempos

With his notion of the Will to Power Nietzsche depicts the universe as ‘a monster of force’ (*WLN* 38[12]) and a thing of ‘chaos’. He indicates that ‘the total character of the world ... is in all eternity chaos — in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms’ (*GS* 109). What does Nietzsche mean by describing our natural world as a thing of chaos? R. Schacht (1983:196) explains that according to Nietzsche the world ‘neither constitutes nor manifests any of the sorts of order we are accustomed to think it has or are disposed to desire it to have.’ Nietzsche emphasizes this aspect of the dance of the universe by employing the term ‘monster of force’, indicating that no fixed set of moral valuations can be attained. Therefore moral values cannot be regarded as the highest value. Nietzsche insists that ‘we cannot reject the possibility that [the world] *may include infinite interpretations*’ (*GS* 374). He rejects a fixed moral interpretation and judgement of the natural world and human life. He claims ‘that *there are altogether no moral facts*,’ arguing that ‘morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena — more precisely, a misinterpretation’ (*TI* The ‘Improvers’ of Mankind 1). This idea is crystallized in his notion of the ‘*Dionysian* world’, which is ‘beyond good and evil’ and described in terms of an ‘eternally changing’ ocean, requiring infinite interpretations. He indicates that the Dionysian artist ‘is precisely the one who says Yes to everything questionable, even to the terrible — he is *Dionysian*’ (*TI* ‘Reason’ in Philosophy 6). Nietzsche’s sea metaphor implies that any moral values and judgements are inappropriate in the world of the Will to Power, which is eternally changing.

According to Nietzsche, all our doing and knowing is in reality ‘a continuous flux’ (*WS* 11). He rejects any false assumption of self-knowledge and states:

I know what I want, what I have done, I am free and responsible for it, I hold others responsible, I can call by its name every moral possibility and every inner motion which precedes action; you may act as you will – in this matter I understand myself and understand you all! (*D* 116)

Nietzsche believes that man has an incomplete ‘image of the totality of *drives* which constitute his being’, because ‘their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another, and above all the laws of their *nutriment* remain wholly unknown to him’ (*D* 119). So Nietzsche reminds us that ‘moral actions



are in reality “something other than that” – more we cannot say: and all actions are essentially unknown’ (*D* 116). With his notion of the Will to Power Nietzsche prompts us to keep in mind our narrow human horizon in our attempt to understand nature, our outer environment, and life, our inner self.

The eternal changing process of our external and internal worlds, according to Nietzsche, is supra-moral. He does not provide any moral order or standard for us to make valuations. Nietzsche calls himself ‘the first immoralist’ (*EH* *Destiny* 2) and an ‘old immoralist’, ‘speaking unmorally, extra-morally, “beyond good and evil”’, asserting that ‘life is, after all, not a product of morality: it *wants* deception, it *lives* on deception’ (*HAH* I P 1). Nietzsche’s point is that we have to see the natural world and life from an open-minded and manifold perspective, so that we may break our sensory prison walls. In this context Nietzsche identifies our error so far: ‘According to the average quantity of experiences and excitations possible to us at any particular point of time one measures one’s life as being short or long, poor or rich, full or empty: and according to the average human life one measures that of all other creatures’ (*D* 117). Nietzsche reminds us that our human moral value judgments are insufficient to measure the abundance of life in the natural world. He is moreover against ‘the innocuous Christian-moral interpretation of our most intimate personal experiences “for the glory of God” and “for the salvation of the soul”’ (*BGE* 188). This interpretation, according to Nietzsche, advances ‘the *narrowing of our perspective* ... as a condition of life and growth’ (*BGE* 188). Nietzsche feels that we have misinterpreted the world ‘far too long in a false and mendacious way’, believing that ‘the world is worth *less*’ and having invented moral values that are supposed ‘to *excel* the value of the actual world’ (*GS* 346). Rather, Nietzsche insists, ‘the world in which we live is ungodly, immoral, “inhuman”’ (*GS* 346). In order to turn our attention to this striking awareness, Nietzsche follows an exaggerated approach by calling himself and his followers, ‘godless, or unbelievers, or perhaps immoralists’ who ‘have become cold, hard, and tough in the realization that the way of this world is anything but divine; even by human standards it is not rational, merciful, or just’ (*GS* 346). In this sense the actual world cannot be justified in terms of human moral valuations. Morality, for Nietzsche, is only the misinterpretation of certain phenomena. He envisions an ‘*awakening from a dream*’, foreseeing that although ‘wise and noble men still believe in the “moral significance of existence”, ... one day this music of the spheres too will no longer be audible to them! They will awaken and perceive that



their ears had been dreaming' (*D* 100). Nietzsche urges us to broaden our horizon by looking at nature and life as a whole, claiming that a philosopher needs a 'height for a comprehensive look, for looking around, for looking *down*' (*BGE* 205). This means that both positive and negative aspects are inseparable elements of the living organism and thus of any valuation of life.

Nietzsche employs the image of a 'monster', 'storming and flooding', to describe life and the natural world as chaotic, uncontrollable and unpredictable. He rejects the idea that man can arrive at a state of equilibrium and harmony. Nietzsche indicates that by emphasizing the notion of equilibrium, a community is able to 'become strong enough to *destroy* the threatening power once and for all'. He states that 'the community is originally the organization of the weak for the production of an *equilibrium* with powers that threaten it with danger' (*WS* 22). In Nietzsche's conception of the world as the Will to Power, a state of harmony seems impossible to reach. Thus, he employs the words 'monster', 'storming', 'flooding' to describe the uncontrollable and unpredictable nature of a universe of seemingly chaotic forces. The authors of the *I Ching*, however, regard the action of natural forces, not as chaos, but as order:

Of all the forces that move things, there is none swifter than thunder. Of all the forces that bend things, there is none swifter than wind. Of all the forces that warm things, there is none more drying than fire. Of all the forces that give joy to things, there is none more gladdening than the lake. Of all the forces that moisten things, there is none more moist than water. Of all the forces that end and begin things, there is none more glorious than keeping still.

Therefore: Water and fire complement each other, thunder and wind do not interfere with each other, and the forces of mountain and lake are united in their action. Thus only are change and transformation possible, and thus only can all things come to perfection.
(1950:272)

Natural forces manifest their existence in terms of the different effects of thunder, wind, fire, lake, water and mountain. This order is represented by the trigrams Chên, Sun, Li, Tui, K'an and Kên, together with the two major trigrams, Ch'ien and K'un as Heaven and Earth, the eight trigrams that form the basis of the sixty-four hexagrams. In this way the invisible forces become visible, as expressed in all the hexagrams of the *I Ching*.

In the Sequence of Earlier Heaven or Primal Arrangement, the forces act as pairs of opposites, 'water and fire', 'thunder and wind', 'mountain and lake', 'heaven

and earth'.¹⁴ The action of forces brings about cyclic movement, as shown in the Sequence of Earlier Heaven and the Sequence of Later Heaven.¹⁵ When the trigrams are in motion a double movement is observable: the clockwise movement determines the events that are passing, while the seeds of the future take form in the backward movement. To read the movement means to know the future. 'In figurative terms, if we understand how a tree is contracted into a seed, we understand the future unfolding of the seed into a tree' (1950:267). The sequence of the eight trigrams is reorganized according to King Wên's arrangement, which is called the Sequence of Later Heaven, or Inner-World Arrangement, so that the major points and the seasons are correlated: 'The trigrams are taken out of their grouping in pairs of opposites and shown in the temporal progression in which they manifest themselves in the phenomenal world in the cycle of the year' (1950:268). The movement of the year and that of the day are harmonized in King Wên's arrangement. The order that appears in nature is interpreted in the 'Shuo Kua/Discussion of the Trigrams' as follows:

All living things come forth in the sign of the Arousing. The Arousing stands in the east.

They come to completion in the sign of the Gentle. The Gentle stands in the southeast. Completion means that all creatures become pure and perfect.

The Clinging is the brightness in which all creatures perceive one another. It is the trigram of the south. That the holy sages turned their faces to the south while they gave ear to the meaning of the universe means that in ruling they turned toward what is light. This they evidently took from this trigram.

The Receptive means the earth. It takes care that all creatures are nourished. Therefore it is said: 'He causes them to serve one another in the sign of the Receptive.'

The Joyous is midautumn, which rejoices all creatures. Therefore it is said: 'He gives them joy in the sign of the Joyous.'

'He battles in the sign of the Creative.' The Creative is the trigram of the northwest. It means that here the dark and the light arouse each other.

The Abysmal means water. It is the trigram of due north, the trigram of toil, to which all creatures are subject. Therefore it is said: 'He toils in the sign of the Abysmal.'

Keeping Still is the trigram of the northeast, where beginning and end of all creatures are completed. Therefore it is said: 'He brings them to perfection in the sign of Keeping Still.' (1950:268-270)

¹⁴ See appendix 4

¹⁵ See appendix 4



The sequence starts with the Arousing, the trigram *Chên*, thunder and electrical energy spouting from earth, which corresponds with the beginning of day when the sun rises in the east and that of the year which begins with the spring. Then comes the Gentle, the trigram *Sun*, whose image is wind and wood; the gentle wind blows, penetrates and renews the plant world, covering the earth in green. Thereupon follows the trigram *Li*, ‘The Clinging’, light, which corresponds with the highpoint of the year, midsummer. Then comes the trigram *K’un*, ‘The Receptive’, the earth, which bestows ripeness and nourishes all things, so that the season of harvesting can follow. The trigram *Tui*, ‘The Joyous’, corresponds with the mid-autumn, leading the year toward its fruition and joy. From earth to heaven, as day follows night, then comes the trigram *Creative*, Heaven. The dark and light forces arouse each other. Then follows winter, the trigram *K’an*, ‘The Abysmal’. Its image is water, which flows, always seeking the lowest level, so that everything moves to it. Finally, the trigram *Kên*, ‘Keeping Still’, whose symbol is mountain, signifies the seed, the deep-hidden stillness, the end of everything linked to a new beginning. Death and life, decay and growth, represent a continuity by which old and new are joined together, and the cycle is closed. In this way the cardinal points are correlated with the cycle of the year and the course of the day, and connected to the eight trigrams.

According to the *I Ching*, if one is able to act in harmony with the laws of the universe, one would probably attain one’s desired goal, which is good fortune. But if the trend of one’s actions contrasts with the laws of the universe, it will lead to misfortune. Making the right choice in speech and action one would gain, but failing to do so would mean loss. If one feels sorrow about one’s direction of action and turns back, one will still attain good fortune and avoid misfortune, for such a situation will lead to remorse. If one refuses, however, to make amends, then humiliation will follow. It is said:

‘Good fortune’ and ‘misfortune’ refer to gain and loss, ‘remorse’ and ‘humiliation’ to minor imperfections. ‘No blame’ means that one is in position to correct one’s mistakes in the right way. (1950:291)

The *I Ching* conveys the inspiration that the Tao of all things can be known and that man has to follow it in order to take appropriate action in various situations. Since the *I Ching* presents a complete image of heaven and earth, reproducing all possible relationships, it enables its believers to calculate the movements of every situation to which these reproductions apply in order to attain an ultimate mastery of fate. In this



context the trend of human conduct cannot violate the natural and moral order. In the *I Ching* order is considered as follows:

Heaven is high, the earth is low; thus the Creative and the Receptive are determined. In correspondence with this difference between low and high, inferior and superior places are established.

Movement and rest have their definite laws; according to these, firm and yielding lines are differentiated.

Events follow definite trends, each according to its nature. Things are distinguished from one another in definite classes. In this way good fortune and misfortune come about. In the heavens phenomena take form; on earth shapes take form. In this way change and transformation become manifest. (1950:280)

The ordering of 'high' and 'low', heaven and earth, in the natural world corresponds to the value classifications 'superior' and 'inferior' in the human world. The ordering of superior and inferior in the human world is manifest in five human relationships. The idea of the five relationships has had a great impact on the Chinese tradition and has always been championed by the Confucianists. In *Chung Yung*, also known as *The Mean-in-action*, it is explained that

the relationship between sovereign and subject, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brother, and the equal intercourse of friend and friend, these five relationships concern everybody in the Great Society. (1942:120)

According to the *I Ching*, the natural order is expressed in the relationship between heaven and earth. The order of the human world is manifest in the five relationships, as found in the hexagram *Hsien/Influence (Wooing)*. In the 'Sequence' of this hexagram it is said:

After there are heaven and earth, there are the individual things.

After individual things have come into being, there are the two sexes.

After there are male and female, there is the relationship between husband and wife.

After the relationship between husband and wife exists, there is the relationship between father and son.

After the relationship between father and son exists, there is the relationship between prince and servitor.

After the relationship between prince and servitor exists, there is the difference between superior and inferior.

After the difference between superior and inferior exists, the rules of propriety and of right can operate. (1950:540-541)

The passage indicates that human relationships reveal the differences between superior and inferior. It shows that the ‘male’, ‘husband’, ‘father’ and ‘prince’ are superior, while the ‘female’, ‘wife’, ‘son’ and ‘servitor’ are inferior. Any violation of these relationships is a violation of the moral order. To follow order will mean ‘success’ and ‘good fortune’, as indicated in the ‘Judgement’ of the hexagram *Hsien/Influence (Wooing)*:

Influence. Success.

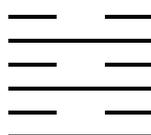
Perseverance furthers.

To take a maiden to wife brings good fortune. (1950:122 & 541)

In the *I Ching* order is also expressed symbolically in terms of the six lines of the hexagram. ‘Each hexagram consists of six places, of which the odd-numbered ones are superior and the even-numbered ones inferior’ (1950:282). Furthermore, the order of the dark yin and light yang principles is also shown in the positions of individual lines in the hexagram, the first, third, and fifth places being light and the second, fourth, and sixth being dark (1950:264). The positions assigned to the two primary forces, the odd positions for the yang forces and the even for the yin, reflect an abstract state of equilibrium, as noted in ‘Ta Chuan/The Great Treatise’:

The firm and the yielding stand firm when they are in their original places. Their changes and continuities should correspond with the time. (1950:326)

When this order is undisturbed, a state of harmony can be arrived at. However, this state of equilibrium cannot exist forever, because when time demands change and reorganization, this ideal state must bring forth change and proper precaution is needed in order to avoid misfortune. The sixty-third hexagram *Chi Chi/After Completion* is the only one out of the sixty-four hexagrams where all individual lines stand in their proper places. This hexagram shows that it is possible to reach a point of equilibrium and that a state of harmony can be achieved. However, this state of harmony will change, so precaution should be taken in advance in order to maintain good fortune. The name of the hexagram *Chi Chi* suggests that a transition from an old to a new episode is achieved. Each individual line of this hexagram stands in its proper place, the yang lines in the odd places and the yin lines in the even places:



above K'AN THE ABYSMAL, WATER

below LI THE CLINGING, FIRE



Although this hexagram exhibits an ideal form, it is also clear that such a state of order, perfect equilibrium, will eventually revert to disorder, so a warning is given in the 'Judgment', reading:

At the beginning good fortune,
At the end disorder. (1950:244 & 710)

The Judgement on the line also warns that 'six at the top means: He gets his head in the water. Danger' (1950:248 & 713). If precaution is taken in advance, danger can be avoided. The structure of the hexagram also implies such a condition. The two structural trigrams of this hexagram is *K'an*, water above and *Li*, fire below. The appearance of this hexagram does not only indicate its symbolic significance, but also warns us to take precaution against misfortune:

Water over fire: the image of the condition
In AFTER COMPLETION.
Thus the superior man
Takes thought of misfortune
And arms himself against it in advance. (1950:245 & 710-711)

The two elements water and fire maintain balance and everything is in the best order at the beginning and thus good fortune is apparent. However, in such times people may become complacent. The superior man, however, recognizes danger ahead and takes precaution to avoid misfortune. This ability to foresee inevitable change and to prepare appropriately distinguishes sages from common men.

As a result of the belief that order is inherent in the eternal cosmic process of change, the ancient Chinese thinkers believe that Tao is intrinsically good and kind. They use the words 'kindness' and 'virtue' to describe the quality of the Tao. The authors of the *I Ching* recognize that Tao 'manifests itself as kindness but conceals its workings. It gives life to all things' (1950:299). Owing to the nature of the Tao being good and kind and nourishing, man's nature is also thought good. This belief has had great influence on the Confucian and Taoist traditions, for example, in Mencius's philosophy.

Mencius (1970:82) believes that 'no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others.' He expresses his idea that human nature is originally good in his child metaphor. If a man sees a child who is about to fall into a well, 'he would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends,



nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child.’ Mencius (1970:83) concludes that ‘the heart of compassion is the germ of benevolence; the heart of shame, of dutifulness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of observance of the rites; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom.’ These qualities are inherent in the human heart. Hsün Tzu (1963:157), on the other hand, believes that man is born with an inherent desire for profit and sensual pleasure, as he states that ‘man’s nature is evil; goodness is the result of conscious activity.’¹⁶ Hsün Tzu (1963:166) agrees with Mencius, however, that it is possible for one to become a sage, if one chooses: ‘Any man in the street has the essential faculties needed to understand benevolence, righteousness, and proper standards, and the potential ability to put them into practice. Therefore it is clear that he can become a Yü’. Thus, ‘whereas Mencius says that any man can become a Yao or Shun, because he is originally good, Hsün Tzu argues that any man can become a Yü, because he is originally intelligent’ (Fung 1948:145).¹⁷

According to the early Chinese thinkers, it is possible for any man to become a sage in terms of constant self-cultivation. Man must have morality, because this quality distinguishes him from animals. By following the Tao, man arrives at the highest virtue, that is, to become one with nature. This belief is held by both Taoists and Confucian scholars as the supreme achievement of man. A Chapter entitled ‘Discussion On Making All Things Equal’ in *Chuang Tzu* describes the sage who ‘leans on the sun and moon, tucks the universe under his arm, merges himself with things’ and who ‘achieves simplicity in oneness. For him, all the ten thousand things are what they are, and thus they enfold each other’ (1968:47). Paradox is inherent in oneness. In the *Tao Te Ching*, it is said that ‘Something and Nothing produce each other; the difficult and the easy complement each other’ (Lao Tzu 1963:58). Chuang Tzu (1968:131-132) also invokes the mystery of ‘the Great Beginning’, which has no name and where the one and many arise:

¹⁶ Hsün Tzu or Xunzi (310?-211? BCE) considers that man’s nature is basically evil. His view directly contradicts that of Mencius that man is naturally inclined to goodness. Although both Hsün Tzu and Mencius regard themselves as true followers of Confucius, the fact that Mencius is accepted as orthodox authority in later centuries leads to ‘an unhappy clouding of Hsün Tzu’s entire system of thought’ (1963:5). Hsün Tzu is eventually eclipsed by Mencius who ‘gained preeminence during and after the Song Dynasty when he came to be regarded as the only orthodox transmitter of the ancient culture after Confucius himself, and was revered as the Second Sage’ (Yao 2000:72). Following this orthodox Confucian trend, the doctrine of Hsün Tzu is mostly ignored in this dissertation.

¹⁷ Yao, Shun and Yü are legendary kings and traditional sages.



In the Great Beginning, there was nonbeing; there was no being, no name. Out of it arose One; there was One, but it had no form. Things got hold of it and came to life, and it was called Virtue. ... Out of the flow and flux, things were born, and as they grew they developed distinctive shapes; these were called forms. The forms and bodies held within them spirits, each with its own characteristics and limitations, and this was called the inborn nature. If the nature is trained, you may return to Virtue, and Virtue at its highest peak is identical with the Beginning.

Supreme virtue, 'identical with the Beginning', is the highest standard of human conduct that the Chinese thinkers have urged man to cultivate. Yet, while the authors of the *I Ching* affirm this moral order — the Tao of heaven, the Tao of earth and the Tao of man, Nietzsche considers the universe to be 'a monster of force' which lacks any moral order. While the Chinese thinkers hold the belief that moral values determine one's worth, Nietzsche asserts the supra-moral perspective that this world, as the Will to Power, is 'beyond good and evil'.

Nietzsche employs the concept 'dance', an action not to be valued according to the moral concepts of 'right' and 'wrong', or 'good' and 'bad', to describe an artistic approach to life as opposed to a moral one. He calls Zarathustra 'the dancer' (Z IV On the Higher Man 18), asserting self-creation in actions. Thus Zarathustra claims: 'Good and evil and joy and pain and I and you — colored smoke this seemed to me before creative eyes' (Z I On the Afterworldly). He urges higher men to learn from his wisdom that 'even the worst thing has two good reverse sides — even the worst thing has good dancing legs' (Z IV On the Higher Man 19). Good and bad, right and wrong, success and failure, seem to be necessary to Zarathustra in that they complement each other in the process of self-creation or self-transformation. This correlates to the yin/yang relationship emphasized in the *I Ching*. Nevertheless, the authors of the *I Ching* aim to make their readers attain good fortune, to perform correct actions and to avoid failure, emphasizing the moral aspect of existence. Nietzsche, on the other hand, asserts self-overcoming. 'Behold,' life says to Zarathustra 'I am *that which must always overcome itself*. Indeed, you call it a will to procreate or a drive to an end, to something higher, farther, more manifold' (Z II On Self-Overcoming). The most important point, for Nietzsche, is to learn from experience in order to grow, regardless of whether this is good or bad, positive or negative. Zarathustra exhorts the 'higher men' in this way:



You higher men, the worst about you is that all of you have not learned to dance as one must dance — dancing away over yourselves! What does it matter that you are failures? How much is still possible! So *learn* to laugh away over yourselves! Lift up your hearts, you good dancers, high, higher! And do not forget good laughter. (Z IV On the Higher Man 20)

Nietzsche preaches the ‘doctrine of life’ (Z II On the Tarantulas), which holds that ‘where there is life is there also will: not will to life, but ... will to power’ (Z II Self-overcoming). Zarathustra urges those who are wisest: ‘That is your whole will, you who are wisest: a will to power — when you speak of good and evil too, and of valuations’ (Z II Self-overcoming). Good and evil imply ‘life and the nature of all the living’ (Z II Self-overcoming). Nietzsche holds a supra-moral view, as opposed to the ascetic ideal which yearns for the will to truth and for moral valuations. He asks, ‘what meaning would *our* whole being possess if it were not this, that in us the will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a *problem*?’ (GM III 27) With his notion of the Will to Power, Nietzsche attempts to make us become aware of the illusory nature of the will to truth, like a ship ‘tired of the long voyages and the uncertain sea’ (Z IV At Noon). For Nietzsche, truth is something one creates rather than something one knows in a world of flux.

Nietzsche criticizes the western metaphysical search for truth, because the Western metaphysicians are concerned with a reality beyond appearance, searching for a standard in accordance with which different things might be measured. Yet, he also recognizes genuine philosophers who ‘*are commanders and legislators*’: ‘Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is — will to power’ (BGE 211). While Nietzsche requires that one should be commander and legislator of one’s will, the Chinese cherish the quality of the ideal man, the sage, to follow and obey the Tao. The authors of the *I Ching* intend this book of divination to allow their readers to understand and to follow the Tao of heaven, the Tao of earth and the Tao of man, to attain good fortune and to avoid bad fortune. Is it effective for one to follow the laws of the universe as explained by the *I Ching* in order to attain ultimate mastery of life? Or does an individual, as a commander and legislator, have to create his or her own truths, as suggested by Nietzsche? These questions will be discussed in the following chapters.