



### Chapter 3: Dancing spirits: the Nietzschean *Übermensch* and the Chinese sages

O life: ...

I dance after you, I follow wherever your traces linger. Where are you?

Give me your hand! Or only one finger! ...

That is a dance up high and down low: I am the hunter; would you be my dog or my doe? ...

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

The *I Ching* reveals to its reader eternal patterns of cosmic change that may assist those who wish to fulfil their innate potential for good. To accept and to follow the Decree of Heaven appears to be the core of the *I Ching*. The diversity of nature is represented in the *I Ching* by means of the hexagrams that provide clues to the reader of the appropriate action to be taken under various circumstances of this changing physical world. Constant change in nature seems evitable and serves as an inspiration to the authors of the *I Ching*.

Confucius (1993:33) recognizes the terrible quality of change in all existence and is inspired by running water. Standing by a stream, the Master muses: ‘Things that go past are like this, aren’t they? For they do not set aside day or night.’ Chuang Tzu (1968:240) is also aware of the fragility and transience of human life, stating that ‘man’s life between heaven and earth is like the passing of a white colt glimpsed through a crack in the wall — whoosh! — and that’s the end.’ In Chapter 13 of the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu (1963:69), too, realizes the inevitable horror of bodily existence: ‘The reason I have great trouble is that I have a body. When I no longer have a body, what trouble have I?’

Like the oriental sages, Nietzsche, too, acknowledges the suffering and horror of human transient existence, stating that ‘as deeply as man sees into life, he also sees into suffering’ (*Z III On the Vision and the Riddle 1*). He expresses his awareness in the wisdom of Silenus. When King Midas asks ‘what is the best and most excellent thing for human beings,’ Silenus’s reply is the very best thing is ‘not to have been born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*’ and the second best thing is ‘to die soon’ (*BT 3*). Even though this is Nietzsche’s awareness of human existence, his vision is to make the best out of it. Nietzsche’s point is that we are all doomed to die, yet ‘spirit and virtue



should still glow like a sunset around the earth' (Z I On Free Death). Thus, Zarathustra, Nietzsche's mouthpiece, considers that 'to die thus is best; second to this, however, is to die fighting and to squander a great soul' (Z I On Free Death). Nietzsche champions a fighting, artistic, creative soul in the process of self-overcoming, while the authors of the *I Ching* appreciate self-cultivation in looking for harmony and order so as to 'bridge' the chaos and diversities of all earthly things.

Although Nietzsche also affirms change, or *becoming*, as the essence of the world and life, he emphasizes human creativity in finding one's own way. As Zarathustra asserts: 'To my goal I will go — on my own way' (Z P 9). So the dancing spirit would not be torn by the currents, the morality of the mores. Nietzsche's awareness of the essence of life shows affinity with that of the holy sages of the *I Ching*, yet his strategy of living appears to be quite different from theirs. There are affinities as well as divergences between the philosophy of Nietzsche and that of the *I Ching* with regard to the dancing spirit, or more precisely, the 'Übermensch' that I would like to discuss in this chapter.

### 3.1. The Chinese sages

The sage looks at the beauties of Heaven and Earth and  
comprehends the principle behind all life.  
So the perfect man does without doing  
and the great sage initiates nothing,  
for, as we say, they have glimpsed Heaven and Earth. (1996:189)

According to the *I Ching*, the superior man, or the sage, is the one who is capable of following the Tao of heaven and the Tao of earth. His unique characteristics are expressed explicitly in the notes on the first and the second hexagrams. In the 'Image' of the first hexagram *Ch'ien/The Creative*, it is said:

The movement of heaven is full of power.  
Thus the superior man makes himself strong and untiring.  
(1950:6 & 373)

And of the second hexagram *K'un/The Receptive* is said:

The earth's condition is receptive devotion.  
Thus the superior man who has breadth of character  
Carries the outer world. (1950:12 & 389)



Both the movement of heaven and the stillness of earth are characteristics of the superior man. While heaven is active in movement, the earth is entirely devoted to rest. The former demonstrates the way the superior man would foster his character to attain inner strength, while the latter shows that he is capable of enduring the outer world without being swayed by it. Thus the images of the two hexagrams, movement and rest, creativity and receptivity, which are also the manifestation of the principles of yin and yang, represent the way the superior man attains peace inwardly in spiritual cultivation and outwardly harmonizes himself in society without forfeiting his true, inner nature. This is the highest life that man should strive to attain. If a person is capable of accomplishing spiritual cultivation within and shining forth in society without, then such a person would lead the highest life and would be regarded as a sage.

Fung (1947:3) indicates that the Chinese philosophical tradition advocates a particular way of life. ‘What Chinese philosophy aims at is the highest of realms, one which transcends the daily functioning of human relations, although it also comes within the scope of this daily functioning.’ An individual who cultivates himself and who achieves the highest of which man is capable reaches the stature of being a sage. According to Confucian thought, a sage is regarded as a morally perfect man in society. As Mencius (1970:118) indicates, ‘the sage is the culmination of humanity’. Chuang Tzu (1968:282), however, claims that the sage ‘has never begun to think of man.’ In *Chuang Tzu* Lao Tan speaks about self-cultivation as a natural event:

The murmuring of the water is its natural talent, not something that it does deliberately. The Perfect Man stands in the same relationship in Virtue. Without cultivating it, he possesses it to such an extent that things cannot draw away from him. It is as natural as the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, the brightness of sun and moon. What is there to be cultivated? (1968:226)

The sage is defined by the Taoist mind in the last chapter of *Chuang Tzu* in this way: ‘To make Heaven his source, Virtue his root, and the Way his gate, revealing himself through change and transformation — one who does this is called a Sage’ (1968:362).

In his article ‘The Philosophy of Life in Oriental Philosophy and Thomas Aquinas: Immanence and Transcendence’, Eui-chai Tjeng (in Ting, Gao & Li 2002:212-213) states that ‘the Taoist is interested in natural life while the Confucianist attaches great importance to moral life.’ Both schools of thought



advance certain spheres of life which are the product of the cultivation of man's spirit. The Confucian school advocates a moral conception of life according to which one is aware of the society over and above oneself. One devotes oneself to one's society, rejoicing in society's joy and sorrowing over its sorrow. This is moral behaviour. The Taoist school, however, favours a transcendental life in which one is aware of the universe above society. 'The action of such an individual will be exclusively for the sake of the universe, he will devote himself to the Great Whole, rejoicing in its joy, but not sorrowing over its sorrow because the Great Whole has nothing over which it can sorrow' (Fung 1947:xiii). Although the Taoist and Confucian schools of thought seem to emphasize different spheres of life, for both the Tao is crucial in self-cultivation. Thus Lao Tan advises Confucius in *Chuang Tzu*:

In this world, the ten thousand things come together in One, and if you can find that One and become identical with it, then your four limbs and hundred joints will become dust and sweepings; life and death, beginning and end will be mere day and night, and nothing whatever can confound you — certainly not the trifles of gain or loss, good or bad fortune!

... Worth lies within yourselves and no external shift will cause it to be lost. And since the ten thousand transformations continue without even the beginning of an end, how could they be enough to bring anxiety to your mind? He who practices the Way understands all this. (1968:226)

For the Taoist sages, the elevation of spiritual life is a way of returning to the One, to the Tao. The Tao works to produce all forms of life and lets them converge back to the Tao. Confucius (1993:15) accentuates the importance of human relationships in self-cultivation, stating that 'virtue is not solitary. It is bound to have neighbours.' The Confucians are concerned with the fulfillment of the self, which always presumes the unmitigated presence and existence of the Other, that is 'the *Other* to whom one must relate in a vast field of entangling human relations; to whom one is socially obligated; and for whom one is morally responsible' (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:115). This is the conviction of the Confucian scholar-officials, whose hearts strive to manifest the Principle of Heaven. In his article 'Confucianism and Christianity: a Way of Wisdom', Robert Cummings Neville (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:7) refers to 'the importance of the model of the scholar-official. To be a sage is to be engaged in public life in large or small ways. To be an official is most of all to be ministering to, or protecting and enhancing, the institutions that give the ritual substance of human



life,' so 'the inner rectification of heart, mind and will needs to manifest itself in explicit overt work to improve the world' and 'in caring for ritual, that is, institutional, life.' The Confucians long for a sage to guide people in matters of state and family. A holy man, or a sage, does not only aim to cope with but also to transcend the daily functioning of human relations. Fung (1948:22) states that 'Confucianism is philosophy of social organization, and so is also the philosophy of daily life. Confucianism emphasizes the social responsibilities of man, while Taoism emphasizes what is natural and spontaneous in him.' Copleston (1980:46-47) also makes this remark:

In Confucianism we are presented with a theory of human nature, an ethical humanism, while in Taoism we find a theory of ultimate reality. In both cases there is the idea of living in harmony with Heaven or with the universe, though in Confucianism the emphasis is on man as social being, while in Taoism the emphasis is more on the free development of the individual, the microcosm, so to speak, of the macrocosm, the universe considered as one.

When a philosophy centres on what is this-worldly, it means that it is 'primarily humanistic, centring round man, man in his moral life and in his social relations' (Copleston 1980:39). In this sense Confucianism appears more this-worldly than Taoism, and Taoism appears more other-worldly than Confucianism. 'These two trends of thought rivaled one another, but also complemented each other. They exercised a sort of balance of power. This gave to the Chinese people a better sense of balance in regard to this-worldliness and other-worldliness' (Fung 1948:22). Chinese philosophy, in fact, includes both this-worldliness and other-worldliness. Ideally, a sage is the one who is capable of unifying the this-worldliness/other-worldliness dichotomy and who seeks the transcendent through perseverance in the toil of diurnal human living and in self-cultivation.

Eui-chai Tjeng (in Ting, Gao & Li 2002:224-225) indicates that 'the *Tao* in Taoism is the first principle of the existence of all things, including human life. All things come into existence from the *Tao* and return to the *Tao* which pervades all things in the universe', and 'in Confucianism, the origin of all things is explained by the eight elements, that is, heaven, earth, mountain, pond, thunder, wind, water, and fire. The movement of the universe and the natural phenomena are explained by Shade and Light, the Five Functions, the *Tao*, ... etc.' These eight elements, or



images, are expressed by the eight trigrams in the *I Ching*. In the 'Image' of the hexagram *Li/The Clinging, Fire*, it is said:

That which is bright rises twice:  
The image of FIRE.  
Thus the great man, by perpetuating this brightness,  
Illumines the four quarters of the world.  
(1950:119 & 537)

The hexagram is a double sign of the trigram *Li*, 'The clinging', indicated by the word 'twice', and its image is fire. Fire clings to the burning object and is bright, flaming upward without definite form. The forces of light and of life find expression in themselves. The invisible light principle becomes visible only when it clings to earthly things, so the great man illumines his greatness by continuing the work of nature in the human world. Brightness, doubled clarity with regard to the spiritual domain, implies the inner light-imbued potentialities of man, which illumine the world by means of their consistency. The double trigram *Li* represents the repeated movement of the sun during the course of the day, standing for nature in its radiance. They signify the great man who causes the light to spread everywhere and to penetrate human nature ever more deeply in terms of clarity. Thus, the *I Ching* presents an ideal for the superior man, or the sage, to fulfil his mission, that is, to be imbued with Heaven and Earth, and to nourish well all creatures and to harmonize the society of man. Julia Ching (2000:229) thus describes this ideal: 'people live in peace and harmony with no complaints and ... the myriad things of universe are respected, as fellow travellers in this life, and as beloved brothers and sisters in our large cosmic family, under the guidance of the great parental symbols of *Ch'ien* and *K'un*'.

For the authors of the *I Ching*, the harmonization of self and other in both nature and society provides a sustainable environment for human well-being, but for Nietzsche, man is a 'yearning and desperate prisoner' who is 'enclosed within the walls of society and of peace' (*GM* II 16). Out of Nietzsche's awareness of 'man's suffering of man, of himself' (*GM* II 16), he prophesies the emergence of the *Übermensch*, the way Zarathustra envisions the dancing spirit, personifying *Chuang Tzu*'s recognition cited earlier that 'in this world, the ten thousand things come together in One' (1968:226). 'In laughter all that is evil comes together' (*Z* III The Seven Seals 6), asserts Zarathustra. This spirit admits the principles of both yin and yang, so that 'all that is heavy and grave should become light' (*Z* III The Seven Seals



6). The dancing spirit that aims to unify other-worldliness and this-worldliness within itself leads a transcendent life, as the Taoist does, a creative life rather than a moral one.

### 3.2. The Nietzschean *Übermensch*

If my virtue is a dancer's virtue and I have often jumped with both feet into golden-emerald delight; if my sarcasm is a laughing sarcasm, at home under rose slopes and hedges of lilies — for in laughter all that is evil comes together, but is pronounced holy and absolved by its own bliss; and if this is my alpha and omega, that all that is heavy and grave should become light; all that is body, dancer; all that is spirit, bird (Z III The Seven Seals 6).

Nietzsche's philosophy can be considered a philosophy of life. Paul van Tongeren (1999:9) indicates that 'in Nietzsche's philosophy, life is either flourishing or degrading in its development and expression of ideas about itself.' In his writings Nietzsche encourages us to follow an ascending line of life even in confronting the horror and absurdity of existence, stating that 'the *measure* of a man is how much of the *truth* he can endure without *degenerating*. Likewise, how much *happiness* — likewise, how much *freedom* and *power*!' (WLN 35 [69]). His main concern is explicitly expressed by Zarathustra: 'I, Zarathustra, the advocate of life' (Z III The Convalescent 1). This exceptional creative human being is thus envisioned:

Consider how every individual is affected by an overall philosophical justification of his way of living and thinking: he experiences it as a sun that shines especially for him and bestows warmth, blessings, and fertility on him; it makes him independent of praise and blame, self-sufficient, rich, liberal with happiness and good will; incessantly it refashions evil into good, lead all energies to bloom and ripen, and does not permit the petty weeds of grief and chagrin to come up at all. In the end one exclaims: How I wish that many such new suns were yet to be created! (GS 289).

Nietzsche's creation of many 'new suns' is an expression of the invisible energy, the Will to Power which manifests itself in visible physical reality. He interprets his radical acceptance of life and the essence of life as the Will to Power. 'Life itself,' Nietzsche says, is 'the instinct for growth, for durability, for an



accumulation of forces, for *power*' (A 6). He insists that 'life simply *is* will to power' (BGE 259). Zarathustra describes life in this way:

Life wants to build itself up into the heights with pillars and steps; it wants to look into vast distances and out toward stirring beauties: therefore it requires height. And because it requires height, it requires steps and contradiction among steps and the climbers. Life wants to climb and to overcome itself climbing. (Z II On the Tarantulas)

The idea that life is to strive for 'height', or growth, or for power shows that Nietzsche is interested in how man could make the most out of his transient life. He criticizes Christian morality because it brings forth the 'degeneration and diminution of man into the perfect herd animal' (BGE 203). He believes that man degenerates because of the impact of morality. Nietzsche attacks Christian morality because of its negation of the natural world and its condemnation of life.

Nietzsche criticizes the religious atmosphere of his time for its belief in a moral God. For his contemporaries moral values represented the supreme value of life. By his notorious slogan: 'God is dead' (Z P 2 & GS 125), Nietzsche makes a bold attempt to shake the very foundations of this morality. Solomon (2003:192) accounts for Nietzsche's shocking strategy, stating that 'his whole mission, his tone, his sense of urgency and indignation, is based on the idea that we should be shocked into self-scrutiny and self-transformation, both individual and collective.' With this announcement of the death of God the horizon opens up for self-creation and self-transformation to the 'free spirits' again. 'At long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an "open sea"' (GS 343). Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality is based on his idea that 'if a temple is to be erected *a temple must be destroyed*' (GM II 24). To Nietzsche, Christian morality appears as an obstacle to the emergence of the *Übermensch*, because it has placed all the basic instincts of the higher type of man under the ban, and it considers 'the supreme values of the spirit as something sinful, as something that leads into error — as temptations' (A 5). Nietzsche insists that 'an attack on the roots of passion means an attack on the roots of life: the practice of the church is *hostile to life*' (TI Morality as Anti-nature 1). He condemns the moralists by saying that 'there have been consistent moralists who wanted man to be different, that is, virtuous — they wanted him remade in their own image, as a prig: to that end, they



*negated* the world!’ (*TI* Morality as Anti-Nature 6) He holds that ‘to invent fables about a world “other” than this one has no meaning at all’, unless ‘we avenge ourselves against life with a phantasmagoria of “another,” a “better” life’ (*TI* ‘Reason’ in Philosophy 6). Thus, Zarathustra warns his readers: ‘*remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes!*’ (*Z P* 3) Zarathustra warns against ‘a faith in eternal verities and a transcendent “true world of being,” to which our minds or souls most truly belong, and to which they may be proper application lead us’ (Schacht 1995:28). To sabotage this faith, advanced by the moralists, Nietzsche hyperbolically speaks as ‘the first immoralist’ (*EH* Destiny 2; *EH* ‘The Untimely Ones’ 2).

Under the banner of ‘immoralism’ Nietzsche attempts to shock us into awareness of the fact that ‘when the herd animal is irradiated by the glory of the purest virtue, the exceptional man must have been devaluated into evil. When mendaciousness at any price monopolizes the word “truth” for its perspective, the really truthful man is bound to be branded with the worst names’ (*EH* Destiny 5). Zarathustra does not conceal the fact that ‘*his* type of man, a relatively superhuman type, is superhuman precisely in its relation to the *good* – that the good and the just would call his overman *devil*’ (*EH* Destiny 5). For Nietzsche terms such as ‘truth’, ‘good’ or ‘just’, when used as value judgements by the moralists are only ‘grave words’ (*Z III* The Spirit of Gravity 2), because they are only human inventions used to make sense of the natural world. He thinks that ‘it would seem laughable to us today if man were to insist on inventing values that were supposed to *excel* the value of the actual world’ (*GS* 346). Thus he prompts us to become aware of possible different strategies or perspectives regarding life, other than that of the moralists. ‘*Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality*’, Nietzsche says, ‘merely *one* type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all *higher* moralities, are or ought to be, possible’ (*BGE* 202). Nietzsche deliberately calls himself ‘the first immoralist’ in contrast to the moralists who negate life and the natural world, stating that ‘we others, we immoralists, have, conversely, made room in our hearts for every kind of understanding, comprehending, and *approving*. We do not easily negate; we make it a point of honor to be *affirmers*’ (*TI* Morality as Anti-Nature 6). An affirmer of life who is ‘independent of praise and blame’ (*GS* 289), morality and immorality, accepts and explores every aspect of the human predicament. Rudolf Steiner (1960:55) asserts that ‘all who have reason to deny the



real life say *Yes* to an *imaginary* one. Nietzsche wants to be an *affirmer* in the face of reality. He [would] explore this world in all directions; he [would] penetrate into the depths of existence; of another life he [would] know nothing. Even suffering itself cannot provoke *him* to say No to life, for suffering also is a means to knowledge.’ Thus Nietzsche invokes all ‘seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians’ to affirm ‘this world *our* world’ (GS 344). In this light Nietzsche employs the term ‘immoralist’ which does not designate those who behave immorally, but rather honour the affirmer of life as opposed to the life-negating moralist.

Nietzsche states that an immoralist’s task ‘is and remains above all not to mistake ourselves for others. We *are* something different from scholars, although it is unavoidable for us to be also, among other things, scholarly. We have different needs, grow differently, and also have a different digestion’ (GS 381). According to Nietzsche, an immoralist has a ‘big heart’, or a larger horizon than a moralist and recognizes ‘that the way of this world is anything but divine’ (GS 346), so he appreciates even suffering, hardship and the differences between the multitudinous appearances around him and he makes the maximal out of life. Thus, Zarathustra claims that ‘we others, however, to whom life gave itself, we always think about what we might best give in return’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 5). Nietzsche rejects ‘talk of virtue’, regarding it as ‘an old and weary matter to man’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 2). He gives the following advice to those who promote morality :

If you wish to deprive the best things and states of all honor and worth, then go on talking about them as you have been doing. Place them at the head of your morality and talk from morning to night of the happiness of virtue, the composure of the soul, of justice and immanent retribution. (GS 292)

R. Schacht (1995:29) indicates that Nietzsche attempts to replace ‘talk about the *discovery of truth* with talk about the *creation of values*, which are “not discovered by reason.”’ According to Nietzsche, we should create our virtues rather than simply follow the moralists’ grave pronouncements of ‘good’ or ‘duty’. ‘A virtue must be *our own* invention, *our* most necessary self-expression and self-defense’ (A 11). Thus Kant is attacked as a moralist to promote “‘Virtue,” “duty,” the “good in itself,” the good which is impersonal and universally valid’ (A 11). Nietzsche believes that the basic laws of self-preservation and growth demand ‘that everyone invent *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative’ (A 11).



Nietzsche champions the *dance* of virtue in self-creation, because the dancer and the dance are unified in performance and, as a result, this process is the morality of the dancing spirit. Thus Zarathustra is described as ‘Zarathustra the dancer’ (Z IV On the Higher Man 18). Dance represents a divine movement or performance, as the ‘light feet are the first attribute of divinity’ (TI The Four Great Errors 2). For Nietzsche, it is important to work out one’s virtue in this process of ‘self-overcoming of morality’ (BGE 32; EH destiny 3; GM III 27). The kind of morality that Nietzsche envisions appears to be a manifestation of the inner creative energies of all the members of the community. This self-creation involves the love and gratitude of everyone, eventually representing a single virtue and style:

The moral qualities are recognized as virtues, accorded value and an honoured name, and recommended for acquisition only from the moment when they have *visibly* determined the fate and fortune of whole societies: for then height of feeling and excitation of the inner creative energies has become so great in *many* that each brings the best he has and bestows it upon this quality: the serious man lays his seriousness at its feet, the dignified man his dignity, the women their gentleness, the young all the hopefulness and future-directedness of their nature; the poet lends it words and names, inserts it in the round-dance of other beings like it, accords it a pedigree and, as is the way with artists, at last worships the creature of his fantasy as a new divinity – he *teaches* worship of it. Thus, because the love and gratitude of everyone has worked on it as on a statue, a virtue at last becomes an *assemblage* of all that is good and worthy of reverence, a kind of temple and at the same divine personage. (WS 190)

Nietzsche’s attack on the two-worlds idea and the supreme value of morality makes us reconsider the value of a Christian-moral interpretation of life. He states that when ‘we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called in question*’ (GM P 6). K. Ansell-Pearson (1997:16) indicates that Nietzsche designs his critique of moral values ‘in positive terms as the development of a new kind of understanding and knowledge concerning the conditions and circumstances under which particular values evolved and changed, and in which morality acts as a symptom and a sickness, but also as a stimulant and poison.’ On the one hand, Nietzsche considers Christian morality as a sickness, ‘as *an illusion of the species*, to incite the individual to sacrifice himself to the future: seeming to accord him an infinite value so that, armed with this *self-confidence*, he tyrannises and suppresses other sides of his nature and finds it hard to be contented with himself’



(WLN 5[58]). On the other hand, Nietzsche regards morality as a stimulant, expressing the ‘deepest gratitude for what morality has achieved so far: but *now* it’s *only a pressure* that would prove disastrous! *Morality itself*, as honesty, *compels* us to negate morality’ (WLN 5[58]). According to Nietzsche, to be honestly self-actualizing in the process of the self-overcoming of morality is the way to justify the worth of an individual, because he believes that ‘what justifies man is his reality’ (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 32). The values of life are not determined by fixed moral concepts, but rather by our daily creation of them amid chaotic phenomena. Nietzsche would set us a new standard required to measure humanity other than morality. His *Übermensch* is the creator of truth who breaks the old ‘tables of values’. He is ‘the breaker, the lawbreaker; yet he is the creator’ who writes ‘new values on new tablets’ (Z P 9).

According to Nietzsche, man should strive for affirming life in the process of self-overcoming rather than knowing the truth. ‘The hardest question of all’, Nietzsche asks, ‘what, when seen through the prism of *life*, is the meaning of morality?’ (*BT An Attempt at Self-Criticism* 4) He even considers morality as ‘the danger of dangers’, because he believes that ‘morality would be to blame if the *highest power and splendor* actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained’ (*GM P* 6). What he envisions is ‘a type of supreme achievement’ (*EH Books* 1), which he designates by the word ‘overman’ or ‘superman’. Therefore, Zarathustra says:

*I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. (Z P 3)*

Nietzsche envisions a ‘spectacle of man’, a development of man from beast to *Übermensch*. ‘The existence on earth of an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, [would be] something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, and *pregnant with a future* that the aspect of the earth [would be] essentially altered’ (*GM II* 16). Nietzsche employs the metaphor of the beast to emphasize the terrible and absurd state of human transient existence on the one hand, and affirms the possible transformation of the human species in the future with reference to the *Übermensch* on the other. Nietzsche’s ‘higher type, which is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of overman’ (*A* 4) represents ‘an “idealistic” type ... half “saint,” half “genius”’ (*EH Books* 1), a type of supreme human achievement that we should strive for.



The authors of the *I Ching* also emphasize the importance of self-cultivation with reference to the Tao. Thus Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch* might show affinity with some features of Chinese philosophy especially with regard to the superior man of the *I Ching*. However, some differences are also apparent between these two philosophies. While the ancient Chinese thinkers emphasize the five cardinal relationships and their moral implications, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is supra-moral, or as expressed in the title of his work, '*beyond good and evil*'. Whereas a Chinese sage would take up his moral responsibility, Zarathustra's *Übermensch* would act as 'the annihilator of morality' (*EH* Books 1). While the authors of the *I Ching* emphasize the harmony between oneself and society in self-cultivation, Nietzsche's Zarathustra claims that 'one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star' (*Z P* 5). While the former stresses the pattern of the Tao, the latter emphasizes the storming and raging waves of forces; while the former advances the idea of adapting to a constantly changing environment, the latter suggests the possibility of overcoming the monster of forces for those who are wisest by means of the will to power, which 'shall become smooth and serve the spirit as its mirror and reflection' (*Z II On Self-coming*). Nietzsche claims that 'what distinguishes the higher human beings from the lower is that the former see and hear immeasurably more, and see and hear thoughtfully — and precisely this distinguishes human beings from animals, and higher animals from the lower' (*GS* 301). For the Taoist, 'human life is distinguished from [that of] other creatures because of their spiritual nature. Human beings can reach the state of "*tao*" through spiritual intuition, by elevating their spirit and ultimately assimilating it with the *tao*' (in Ting, Gao & Li 2002:212). The Confucians also emphasize the distinction between man and the other animals on the basis of this higher knowledge, 'a deeper understanding of man's life, and ... a higher state of self-consciousness in man with regard to his own actions' (Fung 1947:xiv). Thus, for the ancient Chinese thinkers, spiritual cultivation and leading a 'transcendental' or 'moral' life is crucial for a human being. The sage is a model of such a life.

However, the stress of obeying the instructions of a sage and of the presence of sages in society may seem to eradicate one's individuality and creativity, because one would only be moral if one conformed to the way of living, or the 'style' in Nietzsche's language, of the sage, and submitted oneself to the accepted social norms



and moral systems. For this reason Nietzsche, with his idea of the *Übermensch*, teaches ‘the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*’ (GS 335). Thus, Nietzsche’s idea of the *Übermensch* serves as a complement to smooth away the awe and stress of the presence of the sage and taps into individual unlimited potential.

The emphasis on change as inevitable in the *I Ching* seems in line with Nietzsche’s notion of the Will to Power, because he describes this world of the will to power as a monster of energy which is always in flux. Nietzsche’s approach to life, however, seems to be quite different from that of the *I Ching*. For example, he champions individual creativity — inventing one’s own virtue, rather than adapting and submitting oneself to the accepted social norms and moral systems. Solomon (2003:4) states that Nietzsche writes ‘in order to learn how to live a better life. And Nietzsche does have such lessons to teach us, all of us.’ Perhaps, by exploring Nietzsche’s philosophy and that of the *I Ching*, their points of convergence and difference might teach us a better understanding of life and how to lead a better life as well.

### 3.3. Model vs. vision

Behold, I teach you the overman. The overman is the meaning of the earth.

Let your will say; the overman *shall be* the meaning of the earth! (Z P 3)

Nietzsche offers us this vision in his masterpiece *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Zarathustra says that ‘never yet has there been an overman’ (Z II On Priests). When Zarathustra requests: ‘Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you’ (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 3), Nietzsche’s idea of the *Übermensch* may appear as an enigma. A. White (1990:14) refers to ‘the labyrinth that is *Zarathustra*, the labyrinth that is Nietzsche, and the labyrinth that is life,’ but points out that ‘Nietzsche’s labyrinth is our labyrinth, the labyrinth of the human condition.’ According to Nietzsche, the meaning of the earth is justified by the *Übermensch* who fosters life and creates itself in this labyrinth.

For Nietzsche, it is crucial to *will* the future creativity of humanity in the labyrinth, whereas the Chinese sages of the past have remained role models for generations and generations to follow. For example, Confucius invokes the three legendary kings and traditional sages, Yao, Shun and Yu, as role models. In *Analects*



Book 8, Confucius (1993:30) praises Yao, Shun and Yu in this way: ‘Great indeed was Yao as a ruler! Sublime indeed was he! It is only Heaven that may be deemed great, but only Yao modelled himself upon it’; ‘at the time of Shun’s accession things are thought to have flourished’; ‘in Yu it seems there is no fault as far as I am concerned’. Although both Nietzsche’s philosophy and that of the *I Ching* emphasize spiritual elevation, the former stresses self-overcoming and self-creating, whereas the latter relies on the instruction and inspiration of the sage for self-cultivation. Observing the eternal cosmic dance, the authors of the *I Ching* believe that fate might be shaped if its principles, or patterns, are known:

The holy sages were able to survey all the movements under heaven. They contemplated the way in which these movements met and became interrelated, to take their course according to eternal laws. Then they appended judgments, to distinguish between good fortune and misfortune. (1950:304 & 324)

So if the *I Ching* is correctly used, its follower can be led to harmony with the ultimate principles of the universe. The 64 hexagrams of the *I Ching* provide clues to those who consult the oracle to follow the pattern of the Tao. To follow and adapt to the changing pattern and its rhythm is a prerequisite for self-cultivation according to the *I Ching*. The holy man or sage is regarded as a role model for the ordinary man, because he provides a view of the divine way of heaven and so people submit to him. The impact of the sage on society is described in the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of the hexagram of *Kuan/Contemplation (View)* in this way:

A great view is above. Devoted and gentle. Central and correct, he is something for the world to view.

‘Contemplation. The ablution has been made, but not yet the offering. Full of trust they look up to him.’

Those below look toward him and are transformed. He affords them a view of the divine way of heaven, and the four seasons do not deviate from their rule. Thus the holy man uses the divine way to give instruction, and the whole world submits to him.(1950:486)

The authors of the *I Ching* simply urge ordinary men to submit themselves to the sage. They may seem to overestimate the function of a sage in society and to disregard the individual creativity of the ordinary man. ‘The Book of Changes gives counsel not for inferior men but only for the superior’ (1950:552). The notion of the superior man, the sage who is a role model for the ordinary man, has had a great



impact on the Chinese tradition, particularly with regard to obedience to authority. As Confucius (1993:47) states, ‘the nature of the gentleman is as the wind, and the nature of the small man is as the grass. When the wind blows over the grass it always bends.’ In his article ‘A Brief Comparison of Christian and Confucian Thinking’, Lloyd Sciban (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:77) indicates that ‘the tradition in China has been to believe that authority, at whatever level, was virtuous and, therefore, properly occupied the position it did. The metaphor often used was comparing the emperor’s virtue to the wind and his subjects obeisance to the grass that bent before it’. Moreover, Confucius (1993:29) asserts that ‘the people may be made to follow something, but may not be made to understand it.’ Such a society induces an individual into being a servile sycophant who obeys authority rather than being an affirmer of life who possesses the right ‘to stand security for oneself and to do so with pride, thus to possess also the *right to affirm oneself*’ (GM II 3). Perhaps this excessive dependence on the sage, especially a sage-ruler, led to Nietzsche’s critique of the morality of the Chinese as ‘the expression of a physiological *decline*’ (WLN 4[7]). Nietzsche’s analysis of the psychological need of genius might throw some light on the supremacy of the Chinese sages in the Chinese mind.

Nietzsche remarks about our psychological need of genius that ‘our vanity, our self-love, promotes the cult of the genius: for only if we think of him as being very remote from us, as a *miraculum*, does he not aggrieve us’ (HAH I 162). He continues that ‘to call someone “divine” means: “here there is no need for us to compete”. Then, everything finished and complete is regarded with admiration, everything still becoming is under-valued.’ (HAH I 162). According to Nietzsche, we are accustomed to believe that genius is an exception that we are unable to compete with and so we rather rely on them. In this way we are able to cover up our fear of our neighbours who demand conventionality and our laziness to make an effort to advance ourselves or to go beyond ourselves in a spiritual journey (SE 1). Nietzsche defines genius in this way: ‘*What is genius?* – To will an exalted end *and* the means to it’ (HAH II 378). Thus Nietzsche prompts us to reconsider ‘the consequences for *ourselves*’ and to make the effort to attain ‘a new and scarcely describable kind of light, happiness, relief, exhilaration, encouragement, dawn’ (GS 343). Zarathustra tells ‘the bold searchers, researchers, and whoever embarks with cunning sails on terrible sea—to you, drunk with riddles, glad of the twilight, whose soul flutes lure astray to every



whirlpool, because you do not want to grope along a thread with cowardly hand; and where you can *guess*, you hate to *deduce*—to you alone I tell the riddle that I *saw*, the vision of the loneliest' (Z III On the Vision and the Riddle 1). Nietzsche envisions a personal struggle, an adventure of spiritual quest rather than a sage accomplishing his task by establishing an environment for the common man in which to live. Nietzsche presents a vision of the future creation of humanity by means of his description of the *Übermensch*.

Nietzsche wills for the future development of humanity. He indicates that the real 'problem' of mankind is 'what type of man shall be *bred*, shall be *willed*, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a future' (A 3). His answer to this problem is the emergence of the *Übermensch*. Nietzsche's main concern is life and the future development of mankind. Thus he exclaims: 'Life *shall* be loved, *because*—! Man *shall* advance himself and his neighbor, *because*—! What names all these Shalls and Because receive and may yet receive in the future!' (GS 1) Zarathustra phrases the ultimate purpose of this 'love':

Your love of life shall be love of your highest hope; and your highest hope shall be the highest thought of life. Your highest thought ... man is something that shall be overcome' (ZI On War and Warriors).

The madman of Nietzsche's parable in *Gay Science* realizes that he has come too early, and that his time is not yet, but he still has hope that man himself would carry out this vision in the future:

This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars — *and yet they have done it themselves*. (GS 125)

Nietzsche calls upon us to work out his vision through the riddles of life *beyond* man to the emergence of the *Übermensch*. K. Ansell-Pearson (1997:40-41) states that 'the ideal of the overman is ... a fiction which Nietzsche devises as his consolation in the face of the world-weary, retired sickness of man and his diminishing returns. On another level, however, the overman ... is also the excessive invention of an overflowing abundant, newly discovered, newly redeemed, great health.' Although



life is full of suffering, different outcomes are attained according to different approaches to life for those who negate life and those who enhance life. Nietzsche champions the constant process of self-overcoming in order to lead an enhanced life. As Nietzsche emphasizes the process of self-overcoming, the ancient Chinese thinkers stress the importance of cultivating the Tao, although they long for the presence of a holy sage to inspire ordinary people.

### 3.4. Self-overcoming and self-cultivating

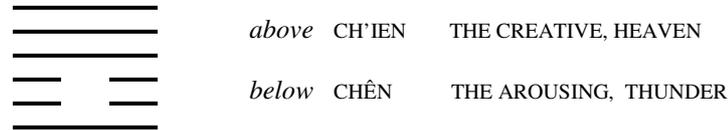
... the superior man does not tread upon paths  
That do not accord with established order.  
(1950:557)

Nietzsche describes the *Übermensch* as ‘godless, or unbelievers, or perhaps immoralists’, and asserts moreover that they are ‘all three in such an advanced stage’ (GS 346). His strategy of shock appears to be an attempt to exalt humanity so that in order to arrive at this advanced stage one does not simply rely on the safeguard of any moral system, but that one should be required to commit oneself to a constant process of ‘self-overcoming of morality’. Nietzsche states that morality, as ‘a way of living tried out, *proved* through long experience and testing, finally comes to consciousness as a law, as *dominating*’ (WLN 14[105]). He considers his personal experience as an example of this domination, stating that ‘my humanity is a constant self-overcoming’ (EH Wise 8). Ansell-Pearson (1997:15) states that ‘a careful reading of Nietzsche’s genealogy of morals demonstrates the extent to which for him the human is the site of a perpetual overcoming.’ Zarathustra depicts this constant process in this way:

For *that* is what I am through and through: reeling, reeling in, raising up, raising, a raiser, cultivator, and disciplinarian, who once counseled himself, not for nothing: Become who you are! (Z IV The Honey Sacrifice)

R. C. Solomon (2003:129) commends that Nietzsche’s ethics ‘can best be classified in introductory ethics readers as an ethics of “self-realization.”’ According to Nietzsche, the outcome of the process of self-overcoming would be ‘to become who you are’. He reminds us to follow our conscience: ‘*What does your conscience say?* — “You shall become the person you are”’ (GS 270). This idea is also

emphasized in the subtitle of his work, *Ecce Homo*, ‘How one becomes what one is’. The notion to work according to our nature is also recognized in the hexagram *Wu Wang/Innocence (The Unexpected)* of the *I Ching*:



The hexagram is made of two trigrams that the upper is *Ch'ien*, heaven, and the lower *Chên*, thunder. The attribute of the former is strength and that of the latter is movement. The lower trigram *Chên* is under the influence of the strong lines which are above it, heaven. The relationship of lines acts favourably because a firm line is in correspondence to a yielding line. The strong line in the fifth place symbolizes the essence of heaven and energetic sincerity. Thus the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of this hexagram indicates that ‘the firm is in the middle and finds correspondence’ (1950:510). If movement follows the law of heaven, it is in harmony with heaven, which is man’s true and original nature. Thus the ‘Judgment’ on this hexagram says:

INNOCENCE. Supreme success.  
Perseverance furthers.  
If someone is not as he should be,  
He has misfortune,  
And it does not further him  
To undertake anything. (1950:101 & 510)

The *I Ching* assumes that man receives from heaven a nature innately good, to guide him in all his movement, which fulfils the will of heaven. Thus he is able to bring forth ‘supreme success’. In this sense man has to devote himself to the divine spirit within himself, then his mind is natural and true without human artifice, and acts correctly. The ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of this hexagram emphasizes “‘Great success through correctness’: this is the will of heaven’ (1950:510). It follows that if someone does not fulfil his innate nature to be good, then he ‘is not as he should be’, and thus his movement, his way of acting, would bring forth misfortune.

Nietzsche seems to disagree with the Confucian idea that human nature is innately good. His metaphor of the boundless sea implies that one has to strengthen oneself and to broaden one’s horizon, to be like the sea rather than limited to a cup in



order to cope with polluted man. Zarathustra states that ‘verily, a polluted stream is man. One must be a sea to be able to receive a polluted stream without becoming unclean. Behold, I teach you the overman: he is this sea’ (Z P 3). The all-embracing nature of the earth is also expressed in the *I Ching* by the hexagram *K’un/The Receptive*. Although both the sea and the earth embrace and endure everything eternally, the waves of the sea move violently, while the earth serenely nourishes all things. Nietzsche’s metaphor of the sea bears affinity to, but also differs from that of earth in the hexagram *K’un/The Receptive*. The core of the difference is that the nature of the earth, according to the *I Ching*, is devoted and yielding, unlike the violent aspect of the sea in Nietzsche’s metaphor. In the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ it is said:

A mare belongs to the creatures of the earth; she roams the earth without bound. Yielding, devoted, furthering through perseverance: thus the superior man has a direction for his way of life. (1950:387)

While the Creative is symbolized by the dragon, the Receptive is symbolized by the mare. The Receptive receives the heavenly with devotion and it appears as the helper of the Creative. Although its characteristics are yielding and devoted, it embodies strength. This is the model for the way of life of the superior man in the *I Ching*. As in the natural world the earth must be alone with heaven to its advantage, in the human world the official must serve and obey only the ruler. Zarathustra emphasizes that ‘when you are above praise and blame, and your will wants to command all things, like a lover’s will: there is the origin of your virtue’ (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 1). Zarathustra encourages a state of mind which transcends accepted values of society and is free to command self-overcoming and self-creating. The authors of the *I Ching* emphasize the ethics of following and obeying the decree of Heaven, authority. With regard to the hexagram *Ta Yu/Possession in Great Measure* it is said that the superior man ‘obeys the benevolent will of heaven’ (1950:59). The Chinese sages, on the other hand, encourage their followers to confine themselves to the applause of others.

Self-cultivation through following the Tao of Heaven and Earth involves recognition of the following principles:

The Receptive in its riches carries all things. Its nature is in harmony with the boundless. It embraces everything in its breadth and illumines everything in its greatness. Through it, all individual beings attain success. (1950:386-7)



The Receptive carries everything, like a foundation that endures eternally. Although the earth is still, it is eternally receptive to the influences of heaven. In this way its life becomes inexhaustible and eternal. The essence of the Receptive is infinite in accordance with the Creative, and this produces its success. The source of the success of the Receptive is also manifest in the success of living beings. Its source of success is the Creative. ‘The movement of the Creative is a direct forward movement, and its resting state is standstill; the movement of the Receptive is an opening out, and in its resting state it is closed’ (1950:387). In its resting, or closed state, the Receptive embraces all things as though in a vast womb. In its state of movement, or opening state, it allows the divine light to enter, and by means of this light illuminates everything, and thus brings forth success. In order to attain success one has to imitate this quality of the earth:

The good fortune of rest and perseverance depends on our being in accord with the boundless nature of the earth. (1950:388)

The nature of the earth is still. The earth does not act of itself, but is constantly receptive to the influences of heaven. Thus man has to keep himself serenely receptive to the impulses flowing to him from the creative forces. The *I Ching* emphasizes the spontaneous nature of Heaven and Earth which man has to imitate in order to attain success and good fortune. This idea is shown explicitly in the second hexagram *K’un/The Receptive*, which demonstrates the qualities of the earth, and also in the first hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative*, which embodies the features of Heaven. The visible contrast between the six firm lines of the Creative and the six yielding lines of the Receptive illustrates the invisible vital energies that work according to the principles of yin and yang. The four attributes of the primal creative power — sublimity, potentiality of success, power to further, and perseverance — are apparent in both the ‘Judgment’ of the hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative* and the hexagram *K’un/The Receptive*. The former reads:

THE CREATIVE works sublime success,  
Furthering through perseverance. (1950:4 &369)

The hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative* represents the primal power. The power represented by the hexagram is light-giving, active, strong. It is to be interpreted in



terms of its effect on the universe and the world of men. This hexagram illustrates the strong, creative action of Heaven with relation to the universe and to the human world. It further illustrates the creative action of the holy man or sage who, through his power, awakens and develops his higher nature. While the Creative covers things from above, the Receptive carries them like a foundation that endures forever. The ‘Judgment’ of the hexagram *K’un/The Receptive* says:

THE RECEPTIVE brings about sublime success,  
Furthering through the perseverance of a mare. (1950:11 &386)

While the Creative is symbolized by a flying dragon in the heavens, the Receptive is symbolized by a mare, combining strength and devotion, coursing over the earth. The devotion of the mare is also characterized by these four attributes of the Creative. In the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of the hexagram *K’un/The Receptive*, it is said:

Perfect indeed is the sublimity of the Receptive. All beings owe their birth to it,  
because it receives the heavenly with devotion. (1950:386)

These lines indicate that the Receptive is dependent upon the Creative. The Creative is the generating principle to which all beings is indebted for their beginning, while the Receptive is that which takes the seed of the heavenly into itself and nourishes it to give rise to the bodily forms of all beings.

The four attributes of the hexagram are associated with the four cardinal virtues of Chinese ethics: ‘Sublimity is correlated with humanness, success with the mores, furtherance with justice, and perseverance with wisdom’ (1950:376). It is said that ‘the superior man acts in accordance with these four virtues’ (1950:377). These attributes of the Creative are essential to a ruler of men.

The first attribute is sublimity which is the primal cause of all that exists. In Chinese, the word *sublime* means literally ‘head’, ‘origin’ and ‘great’ (1950:4). It forms the most crucial and all-embracing attribute of the Creative. ‘The sublimity of the Creative depends on the fact that it begins everything and has success’ (1950:377). The sublimity of the Creative, which is the beginning of all things, is related to humaneness. The core of Confucian teaching is human-heartedness, benevolence, humaneness, 仁 (*ren*). Mencius (1970:197) says: ‘“Benevolence” means “man”.



When these two are conjoined, the result is “the Way”.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Chinese character of humaneness, which is made of two ideograms, ‘man’ 人 and ‘two’ 二 , ‘presupposes a dyadic relationship’ (in Deutsch & Bontekoe 1997:9). If two people come together, then benevolent behaviour is required. When Zonggong asks Confucius about humaneness, Confucius (1993:44) replies: ‘Do not impose on others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no resentment against you, either in the state or in the family.’ In this way Confucian ethics is manifested in the harmonization of the self and others within society. According to Hans Küng (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:17), ‘Confucianism emphasizes that the foundation of social justice lies in the human being’s moral and spiritual self-cultivation. It advocates “self-rectification” and upholds “the priority of righteousness”. These teachings contribute to the establishment of a just social order.’ Confucius holds that social order would be attained and ordinary men would be reformed by means of actualizing benevolence in human relationships. The superior man who embodies humaneness is able to govern other men and thus success is manifested in the society.

The second attribute is success. H. Wilhelm (1977:42) indicates that the word *success* ‘intrinsically means permanence, duration. It means that which has established itself, which possesses constancy and endurance and thereby gives expression to success.’ The success of creative activity is manifest in the power of water, which brings about the development and growth of all living things. Thus, the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of the hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative* reads:

The clouds pass and the rain does its work, and all individual beings flow into their forms. (1950:370)

This stanza denotes the attributes of greatness and success as they manifest themselves in the creative force in nature. Success, which is characterized as ‘the coming together of all that is beautiful’ (1950:376), is related to the mores, because the superior man unifies and organizes the masses to work together. Thus the deeply rooted social patterns emerge as something beautiful and worthy. The superior man recognizes the mysteries of creation inherent in end and beginning, in death and life, in decay and growth; he is reconciled to how these opposites balance out one another,

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<sup>1</sup> ‘This is not a simple phonetic gloss based on identical pronunciations, as the two words are in fact cognate’ (Mencius 1970:197).



and he thus overcomes the limitations of the transitory and attains success. In the ‘Commentary on the Decision’, it is also said:

The way of the Creative works through change and transformation, so that each thing receives its true nature and destiny and comes into permanent accord with the Great Harmony: this is what furthers and what perseveres. (1950:371)

The two other attributes, the power to further and power to persevere, are explained in their relation to the creative force in nature. The style of the Creative is continuous movement and development. All things are gradually changed until they are entirely transformed in their manifestations by means of this primal creative force. In this way the seasons and all living beings change and each thing attains the nature appropriate to it. With regard to the divine this may reveal appointed destiny. This would also involve the power to further. If each thing finds its style, then a great and lasting harmony arises in the world. This would involve the power to persevere:

Furtherance and perseverance: thus it brings about the nature and way of all beings. (1950:377)

Furtherance and perseverance imply ‘the urge to life and the fixed laws of nature’ (1950:377). The urge for life functions according to natural fixed laws: this is the way of all beings. Furthermore, Wilhelm (1977:42) indicates that *furthering* ‘really means profit, advantage, and in modern financial terms, interest’, and *perseverance* ‘means persisting in the right; it also means chastity, persisting in a state of nature considered to be correct and right’. In relation to the human world, ‘furtherance is the agreement of all that is just. Perseverance is the foundation of all actions’ (1950:376). Furtherance is related to justice, to what is right and fair, and to duty, what it is appropriate that a man should do. As the foundation of social life is guaranteed by justice, so the superior man brings people together through justice. Perseverance is related to wisdom which manifests itself by illuminating the established and enduring ways that would lead to success. As perseverance is consistency, it is crucial to all actions. Heaven represents a strong and eternal movement that causes everything to happen in due time. With the power to further and the power to persevere the sage, or superior man, who embraces the qualities of heaven and earth, attains supreme human achievement. At such the Confucians extol the three legendary kings and traditional sages, Yao, Shun and Yü, to the skies.



Confucians interpret traditional moral ideals as derived from Heaven. In *The Great Learning* it is said that ‘things have their roots and branches, human affairs their endings as well as beginnings. So to know what comes first and what comes afterwards lead one near to the Way’ (1942:146). In this light the Confucians regard the morally good man and the well-ordered society as being in harmony with Heaven. Fung (1948:6) explains about the supreme human achievement that ‘according to the Chinese philosophers it is nothing less than being a sage, and the highest achievement of a sage is the identification of the individual with the universe.’ Supreme human achievement is at once the realization of one’s nature and the apprehension of the divine and the beyond – the unity and harmony of Heaven and humanity. This notion of the oneness of heaven and humanity, in which the human and the cosmic cohere so that the microcosm and macrocosm correspond, is always emphasized in Chinese philosophy (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:113-115). According to Confucius, cultivating human-heartedness depends on one’s willingness. Confucius (1993:26) asks: ‘Is humaneness really so far away? If we ourselves wanted humaneness, then humaneness would arrive.’

Confucius attempts to ‘restore a social order, based on love for one’s kind and respect for authority, of which the social rites of public worship and festivities in ritual and music should be the outward symbols’ (Lin 1938:14), but Chuang Tzu champions purity and sincerity instead of ritual practice. In *Chuang Tzu* Confucius consults a sagacious old fisherman about this gift of humaneness. He is advised to concentrate on purity and sincerity. ‘He who lacks purity and sincerity cannot move others.’ And ‘the truth,’ says the fisherman, involves ‘purity and sincerity in their highest degree’ (1968:349). Truth is found within and thus affects the external spirit. With regard to human relationships it works thus:

In the service of parents, it is love and filial piety; in the service of ruler, it is loyalty and integrity; in festive wine drinking, it is merriment and joy; in periods of mourning, it is sadness and grief. In loyalty and integrity, service is the important thing; in festive drinking, merriment is the important thing; in periods of mourning, grief is the important thing; in the service of parents, their comfort is the important thing. (1968:349)

The fisherman follows the example of Heaven in order not to be swayed by the mundane. Chuang Tzu (1996:284) states that ‘the sage models himself upon Heaven, values truth but does not kowtow to convention.’ Whereas the Confucians attempt to



make ordinary men conform to convention, Chuang Tzu (1968:195) recognizes the importance of individuality, explaining that ‘fish live in water and thrive, but if men tried to live in water they would die. Creatures differ because they have different likes and dislikes. Therefore the former sages never required the same ability from all creatures or made them all do the same thing.’ Apparently, the Taoist interpretation of a sage differs from that of the Confucians. While the Taoist sage acts spontaneously according to his own nature, the Confucian sage follows the way of conventional morality. For this reason Chuang Tzu disagrees with the Confucian notion of benevolence and righteousness as the supreme values of man. In *Chuang Tzu’s* dialogue between Knowledge and the Yellow Emperor, the Emperor says:

When the Way was lost, then there was virtue; when virtue was lost, then there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost, then there was righteousness; when righteousness was lost, then there were rites. Rites are the frills of the Way and the forerunners of disorder. (1968:235)

Chuang Tzu (1968:100) doubts ‘if benevolence and righteousness are part of man’s true form’ and holds that being wise ‘has nothing to do with benevolence and righteousness; it means following the true form of your inborn nature, that is all’ (1968:103). A similar idea is expressed in Chapter eighteen of the *Tao Te Ching*:

When the great way falls into disuse  
There are benevolence and rectitude;  
When cleverness emerges  
There is great hypocrisy (Lao Tzu 1963:74).

For the Taoist sages, moral concepts such as ‘benevolence’ and ‘righteousness’ are mere hypocrisy and human artifice. Therefore the Taoist sages teach the realizing of one’s true nature. Copleston (1980:45-46) notes that the Tao ‘acts spontaneously because it is what it is, not intentionally nor with artificial contrivance.’ Chuang Tzu (1968:97) employs a fable to illustrate the death of one’s individuality and natural spontaneity because of human artifice:

The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief], the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden], and the emperor of the Central region was called Hun-tun [Chaos]. Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting in the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. ‘All men,’ they said, ‘have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn’t have any. Let’s try boring him some!’

Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died.





Lines occupying parallel places in the upper and the lower trigram sometimes exhibit the relationship of correspondence. As a rule, firm lines correspond with yielding lines only, and vice versa. The first and the fourth lines, the second and the fifth lines and the third and the top lines also correspond. 'The most important are the two central lines in the second and the fifth place, which stand in the correct relationship of official to ruler, son to father, wife to husband. A strong official is in the relation of correspondence to a yielding ruler, or a yielding official may be so related to a strong ruler' (1950:361). The former case can be seen in the hexagram *Yü/Enthusiasm*. The fourth line, the ruler of the hexagram, is the only firm line. It stands for the strong leading official, meeting with response and willing obedience from all the weak lines. It finds correspondence to the first line which expresses the law of movement along the line of least resistance. 'These laws are not forces external to things but represent the harmony of movement immanent in them' (1950:68). Thus in the 'Commentary on the Decision' it is said:

ENTHUSIASM. The firm finds correspondence, and its will is done.

Devotion to the movement: this is ENTHUSIASM.

.....

The holy man moves with devotion; therefore fines and punishments become just, and the people obey. ... (1950:467)

The other relationship, the relationship of holding together, also finds expression in this hexagram. 'Between two adjacent lines of different character there may occur a relationship of holding together, which is also described with respect to the lower line as "receiving" and with respect to the upper as "resting upon." As regards the relationship of holding together, the fourth and the fifth line (minister and ruler) are of first importance' (1950:362). This case is also demonstrated by the hexagram *Yü/Enthusiasm*, according to which it is favourable for a yielding minister to hold together with a strong ruler, because in this closeness reverence is of value. The two relationships are favourable in this hexagram, as the fourth line is the ruler of the hexagram, the first line corresponds with it, and the third and the fifth holds together with it. Apart from the trigrams, the symbolic constituent lines of the hexagrams express various relations for understanding and interpreting various situations in physical reality.

The representation of human relationships in the *I Ching* appears systematic and structural. In the *I Ching*, the five cardinal relationships are demonstrated in an



orderly fashion, but according to Nietzsche's notion of the Will to Power, the natural world of becoming, including all of us, appears as 'a monster of force' (*WLN* 38[12]), in which any order, or hierarchy, seems to be human imagination. He describes 'all that happens, all movement, all becoming as a determining of relations of degree and force, as a *struggle*' (*WLN* 9[91]). For Nietzsche, relations only manifest according to the decrease or increase of forces within each being, the former manifesting a descending line of life, the latter an ascending line. His notion of the Will to Power seems to imply the deficiency of the orderly, hierarchical human relationships emphasized by the Confucians.

The shortcomings of Confucian ethics are apparent in its later development. Chow (1994:37-38) indicates that in the Ming and Ch'ing period, some Confucian scholars regarded moral effort as an endeavour involving discipline, control, and conformity to rules, Confucian moral standards. In this context humanity is no longer interpreted from what humans do spontaneously and moral behaviour is no longer the result of the spontaneous extension of the innate knowledge of the good, but is rather characterized by what men do in conformity to Confucian norms. Moral behavior is here the control and shaping of one's physico-psychological self in accordance with external rules.

While Confucian ethics attaches much importance to human relations, Nietzsche is more interested in morality as an internal relationship. He insists that there is a difference whether 'a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an "impersonal" one' (*GS* 345). He finds out that nobody has so far 'approached morality in this personal way and ... knew morality as a problem, and this problem as his own personal distress, torment, voluptuousness, and passion' (*GS* 345). He regards morality as a problem for those who lack personality, who have 'a weakened, thin, extinguished personality' (*GS* 345). Thus Zarathustra asks: 'Are you the victorious one, the self-conqueror, the commander of your senses, the master of your virtues?' (*Z I On Child and Marriage*). Nietzsche emphasizes the self-overcoming of morality, which involves self-mastery in order to make progress in this constant process of self-creation. Nietzsche regards 'morality as a pose,' that is 'progress,' 'the dance in our spirit' (*BGE* 216). For Nietzsche, morality cannot be regarded as something fixed, imposed on us from without.



As Nietzsche considers morality as involving a process of self-overcoming rather than deriving from universal criteria, he asks: ‘What is the *criterion* of moral action? (1) its selflessness (2) its universal validity, etc.’ (WLN 7[4]) He points out that the neighbour ‘praises selflessness *because it brings him advantages*’ (GS 21). He insists that “‘selflessness” has no value either in heaven or on earth. All great problems demand *great love*, and of that only strong, round, secure spirits who have a firm grip on themselves are capable’ (GS 345). His interpretation of love derives from his extreme view that ‘the lust to throw away or to distribute can also assume the honorary name of “love”’ (GS 14). Zarathustra says that his overflowing love flows to all without any discrimination, stating that ‘my impatient love overflows in rivers, downward, toward sunrise and sunset’ (Z II The Child with the Mirror). Zarathustra also claims that “‘myself I sacrifice to my love, *and my neighbor as myself*” — thus runs the speech of all creators’ (Z II On the Pitying). Nietzsche interprets the love of one’s neighbour in this way: ‘Our love of our neighbor – is it not a lust for new *possessions?*’ (GS 14) To love ourselves and our neighbour may be seen to begin with a lust for the possession of ourselves. Nietzsche defines what such possession implies: ‘Our pleasure in ourselves tries to maintain itself by again and again changing something new *into ourselves*’ (GS 14). In this context Zarathustra states that ‘my great love of the farthest demands ... : *do not spare your neighbour!*’ (Z On Old and New Tablets 4). He considers that most of us are accustomed to please our neighbour, to follow the accepted values of society rather than to exercise our will. Thus we would lose ourselves and become what we are *not*, so Zarathustra emphasizes how important it is ‘to *learn* to love oneself’ instead of loving one’s neighbours:

One must learn to love oneself—thus I teach—with a wholesome and healthy love, so that one can bear to be with oneself and need not roam. Such roaming baptizes itself ‘love of the neighbor’: with this phrase the best lies and hypocrisies have been perpetrated so far, and especially by such as were a grave burden for all the world. (Z III On the Spirit of Gravity 2)

Nietzsche’s critique of the idea of the ‘love of the neighbor’ bears affinity to that of Chuang Tzu (1968:103), who holds that ‘he who does not look at himself but looks at others, who does not get hold of himself but gets hold of others, is getting what other men have got and failing to get what he himself has got. He finds joy in what brings joy to other men, but finds no joy in what would bring joy to himself.’ To enjoy



oneself without losing oneself to others is crucial to the Taoist mind and to Nietzsche, while the Confucian school teaches the following of sages. Of the man who follows the principles of Heaven the *I Ching* says:

He is blessed by heaven. Good fortune. Nothing that does not further.

The Master said: To bless means to help. Heaven helps the man who is devoted; men help the man who is true. He who walks in truth and is devoted in his thinking, and furthermore reveres the worthy, is blessed by heaven. He has good fortune, and there is nothing that would not further. (1950:321)

What the *I Ching* asserts is that good fortune is a reward, blessing of heaven, for one's performance in life. D. F. Hook (1975:3) states that 'when mistakes are made in life, cosmic laws are instantaneously activated in order to correct them. These may take the form of cause and effect (Karma), reversal, compensation, balance and so on, all of which are illustrated by the patterns of the *I Ching* and referred to throughout this work.' Thus the *I Ching* stresses the importance of following the way of Heaven and the teachings of the sages in self-cultivation. For example, in the hexagram *K'an/The Abysmal (Water)* the doubling of the trigram *K'an*, which is the image of water, represents constant running water, signifying the superior man who is constant in his virtue. As water flows on and on, so the superior man perseveres in the business of teaching and he thus makes a great impact on society. This idea is expressed in the 'Image' of this hexagram:

Water flows on uninterruptedly and reaches its goal:

The image of the Abysmal repeated.

Thus the superior man walks in lasting virtue

And carries on the business of teaching. (1950:116 & 532)

The highest stage of self-cultivation is to have an impact on society, so learning and teaching play an important role in order to attain such a level. In the Confucian context "learning for the sake of the self" is a personal task, but it is tantamount to the realization of communal well-being rather than a quest for private self-interest' (in Deutsch & Bontekoe 1997:9). Thus the *I Ching* emphasizes educating oneself by following the Decree of Heaven as indicated in the teachings of the holy sages, because they are those who are capable of carrying out and manifesting such abstract heavenly inspiration in our concrete reality. This way of self-cultivation appears to diverge from Nietzsche's idea of creating one's own way in self-overcoming. Nietzsche calls for the creativity of individuals in self-overcoming:



‘We, however, *want to become those we are* — human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves’ (GS 335). Nietzsche seems to agree with Chuang Tzu rather than with the Confucians with regard to individuality and creativity.

According to Nietzsche, we all should engage ourselves in this process of self-overcoming, but each individual is unique, so the specific content of this process differs from person to person, because ‘there are many ways of overcoming: see to that *yourself!*’ (Z On Old and New Tablets 4). Nietzsche seems to prompt us to try out and to create our own way in self-overcoming rather than following the way of anybody else. ‘Behold,’ life speaks to Zarathustra, ‘I am *that which must always overcome itself*’ (Z I On Self-Overcoming). For Nietzsche, life appears as an experiment. ‘In a hundred ways, thus far, spirit as well as virtue has tried and erred. Indeed, an experiment was man’ (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 2). Zarathustra envisions ‘a new hope’ on earth that he urges mankind to try in experiment: ‘There are a thousand paths that have never yet been trodden — a thousand healths and hidden isles of life. Even now, man and man’s earth are unexhausted and undiscovered’ (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 2). He attempts to make us aware of the huge potentiality of self-creating and self-overcoming in trying out such an experiment.

Nietzsche advocates ‘that life could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge’ (GS 324). He regards ‘*life as a means to knowledge*’ (GS 324). He states that ‘with knowledge, the body purifies itself; making experiments with knowledge’ (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 2). How does knowledge derive from experiments? Zarathustra provides us with this clue to attain knowledge from life:

I pursued the living; I walked the widest and the narrowest paths that I might know its nature. With a hundredfold mirror I still caught its glance when its mouth was closed, so that its eyes might speak to me. And its eyes spoke to me. (Z II On Self-Overcoming)

In fact, Nietzsche advocates a trial and error life strategy. He champions honesty in evaluating one’s experience, ‘a matter of conscience for knowledge’. He proposes asking series of questions in order to attain self-knowledge: ‘What did I really experience? What happened in me and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough?’ (GS 319) To follow one’s conscience implies that one should regard each



everyday life experience as an experiment in order to become what one is. He states that ‘we ... who thirst after reason, are determined to scrutinize our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment — hour after hour, day after day. We ourselves wish to be our experiments and guinea pigs’ (GS 319). He insists on observing and learning from one’s each and every experience. He argues for the case of self-observation as being ‘attested best of all by the manner in which *almost everybody* talks about the essence of moral actions,’ stating that :

when a human being judges ‘*this is right*’ and then infers ‘*therefore it must be done,*’ and then proceeds to *do* what he has thus recognized as right and designated as necessary — then the essence of his action is *moral*. (GS 335)

To judge ‘this is right’ is an action. How does one judge that to carry out this action as right? ‘Might it not be possible that one could judge in a moral and in an immoral manner?’ (GS 335) One might respond in this way: ‘Because this is what my conscience tells me; and the voice of conscience is never immoral, for it alone determines what is to be moral’ (GS 335). Nietzsche, however, points out that there are a hundred ways in which one can listen to one’s conscience. He says, for example, that the voice of conscience might derive from the fact that ‘you have never thought much about yourself and simply have accepted blindly that what you had been *told* ever since your childhood was right’ (GS 335). Thus Nietzsche urges us to ‘become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world’ (GS 335). He concludes that being a learner, ‘one will let strange, new things of every kind come up to oneself, inspecting them with hostile calm and withdrawing one’s hand’ (TI What the Germans Lack 6). Thus he calls for learners who would not follow blindly the moral tradition and the accepted social norms.

Nietzsche provides learners with a way of learning in which ‘one must learn to *see*, one must learn to *think*’ (TI What the Germans Lack 6). He considers ‘learning to *think*’ as learning from experience, not without taking any action. He employs the metaphor of ‘dancing’ to illustrate his point of view. Nietzsche states that ‘thinking wants to be learned like dancing, *as* a kind of dancing’, so one has to know ‘from experience the delicate shudder which light feet in spiritual matters send into every muscle’ (TI What the Germans Lack 7). Thinking requires a ‘will of mastery’, but not concepts, and thus Nietzsche indicates that ‘one cannot subtract dancing in every form from a noble education — to be able to dance with one’s feet, with concepts, with



words' (*TI What the Germans Lack* 7). 'Learning to *see*,' according to Nietzsche, involves 'accustoming the eye to calmness, to patience, to letting things come up to it; postponing judgment, learning to go around and grasp each individual case from all sides' (*TI What the Germans Lack* 6). In fact, Nietzsche advances a multitude of perspectives — 'perspectivism' as he calls it — in self-overcoming rather than simply accepting familiar experiences, so that one would broaden one's horizon in learning.

Ansell-Pearson (1997:42) remarks that 'the enigma of liberation involves a process of "self-mastery" in which one conquers not only one's virtues but also one's own overcomings. This requires a training in perspectivism.' For Nietzsche, perspectivism might give rise to '*mature* freedom of spirit which is equally self-mastery and discipline of the heart and permits access to many and contradictory modes of thought' (*HAH P* 4). Nietzsche informs the free, ever freer spirit: 'You shall get control over your For and Against and learn how to display first one and then the other in accordance with your higher goal. You shall learn to grasp the sense of perspective in every value judgement – the displacement, distortion and merely apparent teleology of horizons and whatever else pertains to perspectivism' (*HAH P* 6). A multitude of perspectives appears to be a viable way of learning for those triers who commit themselves to the process of self-overcoming. Zarathustra exclaims: 'What long trials and surmises and unpleasant surprises and learning and retrials! Human society is a trial: thus I teach it—a long trial' (*Z On Old and New Tablets* 25). 'A long trial' seems to imply that this process of self-overcoming is an experimental existence.

The spiritual quest envisaged by Nietzsche would take place amidst the interplay of enormous chaotic forces and the dancing spirit has to broaden its horizon in self-overcoming. 'Whoever looks into himself as into vast space and carries galaxies in himself, also knows how irregular all galaxies are; they lead into the chaos and labyrinth of existence' (*GS* 322). Nietzsche describes the way to manage this seemingly dangerous experiment with reference to

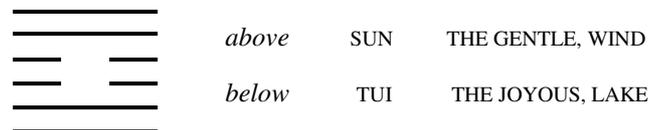
that inner spaciousness and indulgence of superabundance which excludes the danger that the spirit may even on its own road perhaps lose itself and become infatuated and remain seated intoxicated in some corner or other, to that superfluity of formative, curative, moulding and restorative forces which is precisely the sign of *great* health, that superfluity which grants to the free spirit the dangerous privilege of living *experimentally* and of being allowed to offer itself to adventure: the master's privilege of the free spirit (*HAH P* 4)

According to Nietzsche, a mature free spirit would make an effort to cultivate a spacious heart and to master its experimental and enigmatic spiritual journey. The free spirit acquires practical wisdom by means of experience (*HAH P 5*). Nietzsche emphasizes that the free spirit enjoys dangerous experiences as adventures and learns from them. Lao Tzu (1963:105) also favours experience of the physical world for self-cultivation, but he wants security and to avoid danger:

Know when to stop  
And you will meet with no danger.  
You can then endure.

Nietzsche's point of view appears to be different from that of Lao Tzu and Confucius, too. Confucius (1993:23) favours the following of familiar experiences in self-cultivation, saying that 'to be able to take one's own familiar feelings as a guide may definitely be called the method of humaneness.' While Confucius emphasizes guidance from familiar feelings in order to achieve benevolence, Nietzsche asserts the importance of learning from new experiences.

The structure of the hexagram *Chung Fu/Inner Truth* in the *I Ching* might throw some light on this question of learning from experience:



The hexagram consists of the upper trigram *Sun*, 'The Gentle', image of wind, and the lower trigram *Tui*, 'The Joyous', image of lake. The wind blows above the lake and stirs its surface. The visible effect of the invisible is manifested in the movement of the water. The attribute of the trigram above is gentleness and forbearance towards inferiors, and that of the trigram below is joyousness in obeying superiors. Such conditions form the ground of mutual confidence that makes achievement possible. The two middle yielding lines, representing humanity, are between two firm lines above and below, symbolizing heaven and earth, so man brings about visible effects on earth by means of the actions of heaven and earth, although the invisible forces, or the Tao, cannot be seen. The harmonious impact of invisible and visible, the work of the principles of yang and yin, are apparent in this hexagram. The interweaving of



firmness with the yielding nature of the centre is the foundation on which the hexagram is built. In this hexagram the centre, which is open, implies a heart free of prejudices and thus open to truth. It also shows that inner truth begins with the center, which is emptiness. 'This emptiness of the heart, this humility, is necessary to attract what is good' (1950:700). In addition, both the two trigrams have a firm line in the middle, indicating the force of the inner truth in the influences they represent. Thus in the 'Judgment' it is said:

INNER TRUTH. Pigs and fishes.  
Good fortune.  
It furthers one to cross the great water.  
Perseverance furthers. (1950:235 & 699)

As pigs and fishes are regarded as the least intelligent of all animals and thus the most difficult to influence, the force of inner truth must grow tremendously before extending its influences to such creatures. If the great power of trust can extend even to these animals, then good fortune would certainly be achieved. In this way the 'Commentary on the Decision' refers to 'inner truth, and perseverance to further one: thus man is in accord with heaven' (1950:699). To make one's heart or mind wholly true one transforms one's inner forces to be in harmony with heaven. Thus it is said in the *Tao Te Ching*:

Empty yourself of everything.  
Let the mind rest at peace.  
The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their return.  
They grow and flourish and then return to the source.  
Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature.  
(Lao Tzu 1972:16)

Nietzsche expresses a similar idea when he advises: 'let yourselves be overthrown — so that you may return to life, and virtue return to you' (Z II On Great Events). The question is how to overthrow ourselves or to look outside ourselves. Zarathustra asks: 'For me — how should there be any outside-myself? There is no outside' (Z The Convalescent 2). The power of forgetting is Nietzsche's answer. It opens possibilities of nobility and creativity in man — to enable himself to face new situations, to give new responses to them and to welcome unexpected events, accidents, surprises or promises in every moment. Nietzsche asserts that forgetting is



an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression, that is responsible for the fact that what we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it (one might call the process ‘inpsychation’) as does the thousandfold process, involved in physical nourishment — so-called ‘incorporation.’ To close the doors and windows of consciousness for a time; to remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle of our underworld of utility organs working with and against one another; a little quietness, a little *tabula rasa* of the consciousness, to make room for new things, above all for the nobler functions and functionaries, for regulation, foresight, premeditation (for our organism is an oligarchy) — that is the purpose of active forgetfulness, which is like a doorkeeper, a preserver of psychic order, repose, and etiquette: so that it will be immediately obvious how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride no *present*, without forgetfulness. (*GM II 1*)

The question is: Who has the power to exercise the faculty of active forgetfulness, and even to forget or to become unaware of his own good deeds? This faculty of forgetfulness also appears as one of the distinct qualities of the Holy Man emphasized in Taoism.

R. E. Allinson (1989:143) states that ‘the project of self-transformation appears in the *Chuang-Tzu* under various labels, most frequently as entering into Heaven or obtaining the Tao or the Way. The master key to the attainment of the Tao or the entrance into Heaven is the employment of the strategy of forgetting the mind’, as Lao Tan’s advice to Confucius in *Chuang Tzu* indicates: ‘Forget things, forget Heaven, and be called a forgetter of self. The man who has forgotten self may be said to have entered Heaven’ (1968:133). Thus the mark of entering into Heaven is the success that one has had in forgetting one’s self. Allinson (1989:147) explains the concept of ‘mind forgetting’ by stating that ‘just as we can and in fact do forget the dream mind when awakening from the dream, we can and in fact will forget the waking concept of the “I” upon entering into a different level of consciousness which is the experience of Tao attainment.’ Perhaps Chuang Tzu’s famous dream story, the butterfly dream, might serve as an example.

Once Chuang Chou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn’t know he was Chuang Chou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuang Chou. But he didn’t know if he was Chuang Chou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Chou. Between Chuang Chou and a butterfly there must be *some* distinction! This is called the Transformation of things. (1968:49)



The butterfly dream represents the different levels of transformation within an awakened mind. First, there is a complete state of dreaming of being a butterfly. At this stage he is unaware that the situation is not real. Next is a state of awakening as being Chuang Chou. Now he wakes up from the dream, signifying his awareness that what was once thought to be real is now known to have been a figment of his imagination, but he is confused with who is dreaming. His confusion seems to remind us that we believe ourselves to be awake, yet in fact, we are unaware of the dreamlike character of physical reality. Chuang Chou is aware of a distinction between waking and dreaming, that is, between the butterfly and himself. This seems to imply that in the moment of awakening the content of the distinction between unreal and real is transcended. Thus Chuang Tzu (1996:56) says:

As we are all in a process of change, how can we know what unknown thing we will be changed into? As what we are changing into has not yet happened, how can we understand what change is? Perhaps you and I are in a dream from which we are yet to awake.

The dream is a metaphor for the illusory nature of the 'I'. It represents our illusion about the reality of the existence of the 'I', which we imagine to be something real, when in fact it is always in flux. The dream story reminds us that we are unaware of this illusory nature of the 'I' unless we experience a great awakening. When we dream, we do not know that we are dreaming, unless we awaken from our dream, then we recognize the illusory nature of our experience. R. E. Allinson (1989:145-146) indicates that 'the "I" that we think of as real is part of a dreamlike illusion' and that one of the discoveries of a great awakening is 'the illusory character of the "I"'. The concept of the "I", just like everything else in the world, is only tenable as a part of an illusory phase of consciousness, and when we attain to a more real phase of consciousness we will discover that the "I", just like everything else, is an illusory concept.' As a result of awakening, the 'I', as part of the dream content, is dispersed. Nietzsche seems to have attained such a great awakening in that he *knows* the whole of existence is but 'appearance and will-o'-the-wisp and a dance of spirits and nothing more'. Thus he states that 'among all these dreamers, I, too, who 'know', am dancing my dance; ... the knower is a means of prolonging the earthly dance and thus belongs to the masters of ceremony of existence' (*GS* 54).

Nietzsche indicates that 'the whole of our dreaming is the interpretation of total feelings with a view to possible causes' (*WLN* 15 [90]), in the same way as 'the



“soul” itself is an *expression* of all the phenomena of consciousness which, however, we *interpret as the cause of all these phenomena*’ (WLN 1[58]). In this context Nietzsche rejects the metaphysical *atomism* which ‘regards the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an *atomon*’, because he advocates ‘new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis’, such as the conception of ‘soul as subjective multiplicity’ (BGE 12). We imagine the existence of the ‘I’ as something real, unchangeable. Nietzsche, however, postulates ‘*a multiplicity of “wills to power”*’: *each one with a multiplicity of means of expression and forms*’ (WLN 1[58]). Nietzsche claims that as man is ‘a multiplicity of forces’, ‘the concept of the “individual” is false. In isolation, these beings do not exist: the centre of gravity is something changeable; the continual *generation* of cells, etc., produces a continual change in the number of these beings’ (WLN 34 [123]). Nietzsche attempts to remind us that the world is always in flux and that the same applies to all beings.

The ‘I’, Nietzsche says, ‘is, after all, only a conceptual synthesis’ (WLN 1[87]). He indicates that ‘feeling, willing, thinking everywhere show only outcomes, the causes of which are entirely unknown to me: the way these outcomes succeed one another as if one succeeded *out of* its predecessor is probably just an illusion’ (WLN 34[46]). He points to the fact that ‘we need unities in order to be able to count: we should not therefore assume that such unities exist. We have borrowed the concept of unity from our concept of “I”’ (WLN 14[79]), so to interpret ‘I’ as our only being is ‘a perspectival *illusion*’ (WLN 2[91]). Nietzsche also considers ‘being’ as a ‘fabrication by the man suffering from becoming’ (WLN 2[110]). He reminds us that we should recognize in the ‘I’ our conventional thinking and understand ‘the *I itself to be a construction of thinking*’, that is ‘a *regulative fiction* with the help of which a kind of constancy and thus ‘knowability’ is inserted into, *invented into*, a world of becoming’ (WLN 35[35]). Thus the concept of ‘I’ is seen as merely a human fabrication which we regard as real, but perhaps, when we wake up from our ‘dream’, we would arrive at a state of mind like that of Chuang Tzu in his butterfly dream story.

The illusion of the self or the emptiness of self might appear an enigma to many people, but it appears as one of the major teachings in Buddhism — Non-self. The notion of non-self or no-self is the second Dharma Seal:<sup>2</sup> ‘All things in the world

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<sup>2</sup> The three Dharma Seals are Impermanence, Non-self and Nirvana.



generated by causes and conditions have no self and are beyond control. Since they are not independent, they must rely on one another' (Hsin Ting 30). All earthly things are impermanent; they arise and fall because of causes and conditions, so they are all devoid of self-nature. 'Having no self-nature means that all things depend on other things for their existence. Not one of them is independent and able to exist without other things' (Hsing Yun 2000:86-87). If one understands that everything is empty of self-nature, one is not greedy for merit and not attached to anything and thus one eventually gains liberation. Such an individual might be what Nietzsche describes as a noble person. He defines what makes a person 'noble' as 'the discovery of values for which no scales have been invented yet' and 'a courage without any desire for honors; a self-sufficiency that overflows and gives to men and things. Hitherto, it was rarity and a lack of awareness of this rarity that made a person noble' (*GS* 55). The distinction between such a noble person and an ordinary person can be seen in a famous exchange between the Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism in China, Master Hui Neng, and that of Shin Shau, the senior disciple among one thousand disciples under the Fifth Patriarch, Master Hwang Yan. While the former has realized the Essence of Mind (or Primordial mind), the latter has only reached the 'door of enlightenment'.<sup>3</sup> The latter writes:

Our body is the Bodhi-tree,  
And our mind a mirror bright.  
Carefully we wipe them hour by hour,  
And let no dust alight. (1998:15)

The Sixth Patriarch responds:

There is no Bodhi-tree,  
Nor stand of a mirror bright.  
Since all is void,  
Where can the dust alight? (1998:18)

This clearly demonstrates the emptiness of the self. If a person recognizes that all is void, they would not attach themselves to earthly things, and thus become emancipated from delusion and restraint. C. Humphreys (1974:45) points to the interpretation of the doctrine of non-self of the Mahayana School: 'all form is void yet

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<sup>3</sup> Essence of Mind implies self-nature. Master Hui Neng (1988:11) indicates that Essence of Mind, 'the seed or kernel of enlightenment (Bodhi) is pure by nature, and by making use of this mind alone we can reach Buddhahood directly'.



the Void is utterly full. Positive and negative blend.’<sup>4</sup> This notion is illustrated by the workings of principles of yin and yang in the *I Ching*.

Not only the emptiness of the self, but also the inner stillness is recognized by Nietzsche. Zarathustra provides us with a picture of his inner world: ‘Still is the bottom of my sea: who would guess that it harbors sportive monsters? Imperturbable is my depth, but it sparkles with swimming riddles and laughters’ (Z II On Those Who Are Sublime). Zarathustra’s description of his inner reality may seem illogical and paradoxical to the Western rational mind, but it corresponds to an idea from the *I Ching* known as the Chinese puzzle.<sup>5</sup> The centre of this pattern is the number 5, which remains unchanged, representing stillness, even though it is surrounded by various changing elements, horizontally, vertically and diagonally, and forms a part of combinations adding up to the number 15. The idea of the co-existence of change and changelessness ceases to be a paradox in the Taoist interpretation of the mind. As all things are One in the mind of the sage or the perfect man, *Chuang Tzu* notes the importance of emptiness in such a mind. The oneness of mind — the mirror — is the outcome of emptiness:

Do not be an embodier of fame; ... Be empty, that is all. The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror — going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can win out over things and not hurt himself. (1968:97)

Both *Chuang Tzu*’s perfect man and Nietzsche’s noble man will neither for fame nor honours. Zarathustra refers to the ‘will to procreate. And he who wants to create beyond himself has the purest will’ (Z II On Immaculate Perception). The noble man, according to Zarathustra, ‘wants to create something new and a new virtue’ (Z On the Tree on the Mountainside). *Chuang Tzu*’s perfect man is unharmed, not creating, but handling everything by means of a reactive way of living.

*Chuang Tzu*’s perfect mind is a mirror. Nietzsche, too, says that the genius of the heart is ‘to lie still as a mirror, that the deep sky may mirror itself in them’ (BGE 295). The still mirror of the mind reflects all moving earthly things. This oneness of

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<sup>4</sup> Mahayana and Theravada are two branches of Buddhism. The former is the school of the Great Vehicle (of liberation), and it is also known as the Northern School (China, Korea and Japan). The latter is school of the Buddhism of Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, the Southern School of Buddhism (Humphreys 1974:187).

<sup>5</sup> See p.123

the universe is expressed by Nietzsche's water metaphor. It illustrates both aspects of water, movement and stillness, which exist not only within oneself, but also keep on flowing to others. The water of the lake is still and it thus is able to reflect, while the water of the river is running as his love of humanity keeps on flowing to man, the 'human sea', even understanding that his effort would be in vain because of the climate of his times — 'even the sea is asleep' (*Z III The Wanderer*). Thus Zarathustra exclaims: 'Let the river of my love plunge where there is no way! How could a river fail to find its way to the sea? Indeed, a lake is within me, solitary and self-sufficient; but the river of my love carries it along, down to the sea' (*Z II The Child with the Mirror*). Inwardly, the stillness of the lake represents the mind which would not be moved by the external appearances of earthly things. Outwardly, it represents 'the genius of the heart from whose touch everyone walks away richer, not having received grace and surprised, not as blessed and oppressed by alien goods, but richer in himself, newer to himself than before' (*BGE 295*). To attain the genius of the heart is crucial on the spiritual journey to the *Übermensch*. Thus Nietzsche urges his readers to commit themselves to this process of self-actualization or self-creation.

A. White (1990:10) comments that Nietzsche's 'later works are all "fish hooks," designed to pull readers out of the sea of dogmatic opinion and onto the shore from which they may begin their ascent of Zarathustra's mountain. Nietzsche admits that his fish hooks caught nothing, but denies that their failure establishes his incompetence as a fisherman; the problem, he insists, is that "there were no fish" (*EH X:1*)'. Even so Nietzsche never gives up his hope of humanity for the future, promising what Zarathustra calls 'honey sacrifices', being 'the best bait' to catch 'the queerest human fish' (*Z IV The Honey Sacrifice*).

Correlating to Nietzsche's recognition of the genius of the heart, Mencius (1970:164) believes that a person can learn to become a sage depending on what lives in their heart: 'What is common to all hearts? Reason and rightness. The sage is simply the man first to discover this common element in [their] heart'. Confucian ethical discourse stresses the realization of the innate moral aspect of the mind or heart in daily life.<sup>6</sup> Mencius (1970:182) says that:

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<sup>6</sup> The original Chinese texts usually uses the word 'heart' instead of 'mind,' but in general, the word 'heart' is translated as 'mind' in English texts. Thus mind and heart can be treated as the same, or as



for a man to give full realization to his heart is for him to understand his own nature, and a man who knows his own nature will know Heaven. By retaining his heart and nurturing his nature he is serving Heaven. Whether he is going to die young or to live to a ripe old age makes no difference to his steadfastness of purpose. It is through awaiting whatever is to befall him with a perfected character that he stands firm on his proper destiny.

Mencius regards moral behaviour as the result of the spontaneous extension of the innate knowledge of the good. Creel (1953:91) remarks about Mencius that ‘by “education” Mencius seems chiefly to have meant moral cultivation. This cultivation was aimed at preserving one’s original nature intact.’ Mencius (1970:83) recognizes that the innate tendencies to morality, what he calls the ‘germs’ of the virtues — ‘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’ — must be cultivated in order to reach their full effectiveness. Such spiritual development should be the outcome of one’s effort to behave morally in one’s everyday life. Thus Mencius (1970:172) says that ‘one who walks slowly, keeping behind his elders, is considered a well-mannered younger brother. One who walks quickly, overtaking his elders, is considered an ill-mannered younger brother. Walking slowly is surely not beyond the ability of any man. It is simply a matter of his not making the effort’, and he also points out why a man is incapable of such an achievement: ‘The trouble with a man is surely not his lack of sufficient strength, but his refusal to make the effort’. Mencius (1970:172) believes in the possibility for all of attaining the Way or the Tao and tells Ts’ao Chiao that ‘the Way is like a wide road. It is not at all difficult to find. The trouble with people is simply that they do not look for it. You go home and look for it and there will be teachers enough for you.’ Being a sage is not an ideal, but applicable to all, because this achievement lies in one’s willingness to make such an effort. Mencius (1970:164) indicates that ‘the sage and I are the same kind.’ Mencius (1970:172) admits that ‘all men are capable of becoming a Yao or a Shun’ by means of one’s efforts in daily life.

Nietzsche holds a similar idea that all of us have the potential to build beyond ourselves, to produce something higher than ourselves. He indicates that ‘genius too does nothing except learn first how to lay bricks then how to build, except continually

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interchangeable, as the mind/heart of an individual. Zukav (1979:88) also asserts that according to the findings of new physics ‘mind and heart are only different aspects of *us*’.



seek for material and continually form itself around it. Every activity of man is amazingly complicated, not only that of the genius: but none is a “miracle” (*HAH I* 162). Nietzsche reminds us to look at our habits that constitute our daily life: ‘Are they the product of innumerable little cowardices and lazinesses or of your courage and inventive reason?’ (*GS* 308) For Nietzsche, such habits obstruct the possibility of transforming the ordinary man into a genius, or *Übermensch*. With his idea of the *Übermensch* Nietzsche attempts to make us become aware of something that we have never imagined hitherto, so we might endeavour to make this possibility happen in the future. He prophesies the coming of a warlike age in which ‘human beings [will be] bent on seeking in all things for what in them must be *overcome*’ (*GS* 283). Nietzsche’s three metamorphoses of the dancing spirit as evolving in the process of self-overcoming might throw some light on the actualization of self-cultivation, also with reference to Chinese sensibility.

### **3.5. Zarathustra’s three metamorphoses and Chinese self-transformation**

Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child. (*Z I* On the Three Metamorphoses)

According to Nietzsche, the dancing spirit must experience three metamorphoses in the process of self-creating and self-overcoming. In his first speech, ‘On The Three Metamorphoses’, Zarathustra describes these three stages of an evolving spirit and the forms of its appearance. At first, the spirit appears as a camel, then as a lion and finally as a child.

#### **3.5.1. A camel: The load-bearer**

The camel, the load-bearing spirit who says to itself ‘Thou shalt,’ carries all hardship and assumes all duties. The spirit lowers itself in order to raise its virtue. It does not take its own way, but rather the way of the spirit it serves. ‘Life is a grave burden’ for this spirit, says Zarathustra, but points out that

only man is a grave burden for himself. That is because he carries on his shoulders too much that is alien to him. Like a camel, he kneels down and lets himself be well loaded. Especially the strong, reverent spirit that would bear much: he loads too many *alien* grave words and values on himself, and then life seems a desert to him. (*Z III* On the Spirit of Gravity 2)

Nietzsche's point is that man is burdened with too many moral 'grave words' and moral values, regarded as supreme. Man spends too much energy in conforming to these external norms and values rather than focusing on internal reality in self-creation. The idea of being confined to duties and accepted moral norms and values may be seen in the *I Ching*.

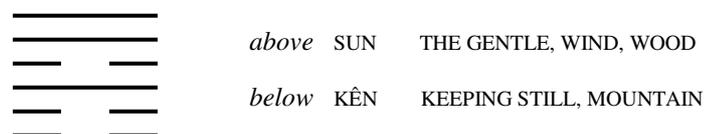
Nietzsche employs the metaphor of the camel who 'kneels down and lets himself be well loaded' to describe the first form of the evolving spirit. In the hexagram *Chien/Development (Gradual Progress)* the wild goose is the symbol of 'conjugal fidelity', the image common to all the lines, and 'the hexagram as a whole refers to the contracting of marriage' (1950:659). The two rulers of the hexagram occupy their proper places, a yielding line in the second place and a firm line in the fifth place. It follows that in the case of marriage, in order to attain a correct attitude of mind, making a personal moral effort to adapt to the external environment is crucial. Thus the 'Commentary on the Decision' reads:

The progress of DEVELOPMENT means the good fortune of the maiden's marriage.

Progressing and thereby attaining the right place: going brings success. ...

Keeping still and penetrating: this makes the movement inexhaustible. (1950:658)

The hexagram consists of two trigrams, *Sun* above, without, and *Kên* below, within. The image of the former is wood, representing penetration, and that of the latter is mountain, signifying stillness:



The two images of the trigrams represent a tree on a mountain developing gradually according to the law of its being and thus firmly rooted. The attributes of the trigrams indicate that 'within is tranquillity, which guards against precipitate actions, and without is penetration, which makes development and progress possible' (1950:204). The two trigrams illustrate the idea of a development which proceeds gradually by means of the combination of strength and central correctness. This development is



described as inexhaustible movement in the ‘Commentary on the Decision’. Thus the ‘Image’ of this hexagram says:

On the mountain, a tree:  
The image of DEVELOPMENT.  
Thus the superior man abides in dignity and virtue,  
In order to improve the mores. (1950:205 & 659)

A tree on the mountain, the image of the trigrams, grows gradually and eventually gives shade to influence its surroundings, implying the inner tranquillity of the superior man who makes a moral effort to exert influence on the external world. This suggests that ‘the inexhaustible source of progress is inner calm combined with adaptability to circumstances. Calm is the attribute of the inner trigram, Kên, adaptability that of the outer trigram, Sun’ (1950:659). According to the *I Ching*, the combination of cultivating inner strength while adapting to the external environment is the way to attain good fortune and self-preservation.

Nietzsche, however, criticizes that man should only be concerned ‘to do what is good for the preservation of the human race’ (GS 1). And he states that this instinct of preservation ‘constitutes *the essence* of our species, our herd’ (GS 1). This may imply that we divide our fellow men ‘into useful and harmful, good and evil men; but in any large-scale accounting, when we reflect on the whole a little longer, we become suspicious of this neat division and finally abandon it’ (GS 1). Nietzsche objects to ‘the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength — life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*’ (BGE 13). According to Nietzsche, life is bent on a struggle for power, or, more precisely, for growth, rather than a struggle for self-preservation.

Nietzsche’s notion of the Will to Power conceives of growth in terms of the violent movement of the ocean — as waves of forces. In the *I Ching*, on the other hand, three different types of growth or progress, expressed in three hexagrams, are described without reference to violence. Apart from the hexagram *Chien/Development (Gradual Progress)* discussed earlier, there are the hexagram *Shêng/Pushing Upward* and the hexagram *Chin/Progress*. While the latter describes light rising out of the earth, the former describes the growth of wood. The latter with its image of the sun rising above the earth is perhaps the most expressive of the three hexagrams because

of its illustration of the inexhaustible energy of the sun. The former involves success as an effort of the will, as a plant needs energy for pushing upward through the earth. The structure of the hexagram *Shêng/Pushing Upward* illustrates growth:



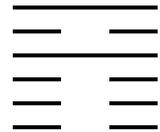
The hexagram is made of the upper trigram *K'un*, representing earth, and the lower trigram *Sun*, wood. The characteristic of the earth is devotion and that of wood is gentleness. Wood grows upward, by adapting itself to obstacles and bending around them, without haste and without rest. In this situation the importance of the devotion of the superior man, who never pauses in his progress, is stressed. Thus the 'Image' of this hexagram teaches:

With the earth, wood grows:  
The image of PUSHING UPWARD.  
Thus the superior man of devoted character  
Heaps up small things  
In order to achieve something high and great. (1950:179 & 621).

'Heaping up small things' indicates a steady and impalpable progress, like the gradual and invisible growth of wood in the earth. Nietzsche emphasizes that 'we want to be the poets of our life — first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters' (*GS* 299). Thus one should make an effort to work out one's each and every activity in order to grow and to attain enlightenment. The *Diamond Sutra* begins with a description of a series of daily activities of Shakyamuni Buddha and serves as a vivid example of this idea:

One day, at mealtime, the World Honoured One put on His robe, took His bowl, and entered the great town of Sravasti to beg for His food. After He had begged from door to door, he returned to His place. When he had taken His meal, He put away His robe and bowl, washed His feet, arranged His seat and sat down. (1)

Another aspect of growth is shown in the hexagram *Chin/Progress* which consists of the upper trigram *Li*, 'The Clinging', and the lower trigram *K'un*, 'The Receptive', representing the sun rising over the earth:

	<i>above</i>	LI	THE CLINGING, FIRE
	<i>below</i>	K'UN	THE RECEPTIVE, EARTH

The hexagram symbolizes rapid and easy progress, which simultaneously means constant widening expansion and clarity. As the sun rises over the earth its light is by nature clear. The higher the sun rises, the more its light emerges from the dark mists and spreads the immaculate purity of its rays over a constantly widening region. This signifies that the nature of man is originally good, but it becomes defiled through contact with earthly matters and thus requires purification before it can shine forth in its innate clarity. Thus the 'Image' of this hexagram explains:

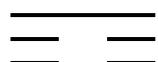
The sun rises over the earth:  
The image of PROGRESS.  
Thus the superior man himself  
Brightens his bright virtue. (1950:137 & 561).

The image of this hexagram implies a way of life where that which is inherently light rises over that which darkens. This achievement can be attained as a result of one's own power not thwarted by earthly things, devoted and obedient in its nature.

According to the *I Ching*, in the face of any setback one should persevere and remain calm. This is explained in the text of the first line of the hexagram *Chin/Progress*:

- Six at the beginning:
- a) Progressing, but turned back.  
Perseverance brings good fortune.  
If one meets with no confidence, one should remain calm.  
No mistake.
  - b) 'Progressing, but turned back.' Solitary, he walks in the right. Composure is not a mistake. One has not yet received the command.  
(1950:561)

The first line of this hexagram is a weak line and the lower nuclear trigram *Kên* is placed on it:<sup>7</sup>

	<i>Lower nuclear trigram</i>	KÊN	KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN
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<sup>7</sup> Each hexagram consists of two nuclear trigrams, the upper and the lower nuclear trigrams, which are hidden in the hexagram but they can be seen when the two outer lines of the hexagram are discarded.



In the course of progressing a standstill is imposed on the lowest line, implying a stop in the tendency to progress. In this case one should remain calm and continue in what is right in order to remain free of mistakes. One should calmly await the right time that will surely come.

To adapt to the external environment and to obey the five cardinal human relationships in order to remain unharmed and self-preserved is emphasized in the *I Ching* and more widely in the Chinese philosophy. Taoist philosophy stresses the notion of inutility with regard to self-preservation. Chuang Tzu (1968:66-67) points out that

the mountain trees do themselves harm; the grease in the torch burns itself up. The cinnamon can be eaten and so it gets cut down; the lacquer tree can be used and so it gets hacked apart. All men know the use of the useful, but nobody knows the use of the useless!

The notion of inutility undermines the strength of Taoism in modern times, as an ostensibly useless individual might find it difficult to cope with this changing and competitive world and also be despised by society as being a worthless person. The outcome of holding such a view is being either a hermit or being regarded as a failure.

The idea of inutility in Taoism is criticized because of suggesting a pessimistic vision of human existence. However, this Taoist point of view might be shown to accord with Nietzsche's argument that 'one misunderstands great human beings if one views them from the miserable perspective of some public use. That one cannot put them to any use, that in itself may belong to greatness' (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 50). Nietzsche's emphasis on a *rich inner life* is in opposition to the glorified utility that appears to be the value of life in our time. Solomon (2003:5) poses this question: 'How does one cultivate a rich inner life surrounded by so many distractions and so much noise?' Solomon (2003:4) comments that Nietzsche's way of life seems an appropriate answer to his question: Nietzsche

is a model for a very different sort of life than is celebrated as 'success' today. It is an outwardly simple and unglamorous life but a life of rich passion and ecstatic enthusiasm, expressed first of all in the privacy of one's notes and writing, a life of exquisite taste, cultivated through listening, looking, and the exercise of elegance in even the simplest things in life. Since our modern world so celebrates the very opposite, 'celebrity,' fame and public display, vulgarity, and mass culture, many of Nietzsche's efforts are directed toward a defense of 'high culture.'

Confucius (1993:21), too, appreciates his disciple Yan Hui who leads a rich spiritual but abstinent life: 'A man of quality indeed was Hui! He lived in a squalid alley with



a tiny bowlful of rice to eat and a ladleful of water to drink. Other men would not endure such hardships, but Hui did not let his happiness be affected. A man of quality indeed was Hui!’ Although both Nietzsche and Hui seem to favour a certain kind of rich inner life, for Nietzsche, to shape or to create one’s life according to one’s will is crucial. Nietzsche urges us to ‘*will a self*’: ‘Active, successful natures act, not according to the dictum “know thyself”, but as if there hovered before them the commandment: *will a self and thou shalt become a self*’ (HAH II 366). On the other hand, the five cardinal relationships taught by the Chinese sages demand moral responsibility and self-preservation rather than self-actualization.<sup>8</sup>

In the hexagram *Chien/Development (Gradual Progress)* the contracting of marriage is described as a moral responsibility. Social-moral responsibility is particularly emphasized in Confucian thought. The Confucians are concerned with the possible establishment of a Great Society which should begin with spiritual self-cultivation. The Confucian scholars regard this achievement as their life mission. For example, it is said of the philosopher Zhu Xi (*Chu Hsi*, 1130-1200) of the Sung dynasty that ‘his mission was always that of “saving the world,” but it was a mission that began with the spiritual self-cultivation. As individuals were fulfilled and extended their hands to others by sharing their discovery of the heavenly principle and the moral Way, larger social and political fulfillment could be attained’ (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:114). The process of this achievement is described in *The Great Learning* in this way:

The men of old who wished to shine with the illustrious power of personality throughout the Great Society, first had to govern their own states efficiently. Wishing to do this, they first had to make an ordered harmony in their own families. Wishing to do this, they first had to cultivate their individual selves (*hsiu shen*). Wishing to do this, they first had to put their minds right. Wishing to do this, they first had to make their purposes genuine. Wishing to do this, they first had to extend their knowledge to the utmost. Such extension of knowledge consists in appreciating the nature of things. (1942:146)

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<sup>8</sup> According to Maslow’s theory, the lowest level of the hierarchy of needs is physiological needs, then the need for security, the need for love, the need for esteem and the highest level is the need for self-actualization. The theory implies that ‘a higher need is experienced only when the preceding lower need *has at least been partially satisfied*, and the person feels assured of satisfaction of such lower need in the future’ (Jordaan & Jordaan 1984:651-652). Nietzsche urges us to reach for the need for self-actualization. But for most Chinese people, with their history of churning upheaval, the priority seems to be to satisfy physiological needs, survival in turbulence.



In his article ‘A Brief Comparison of Christian and Confucian Thinking’, Lloyd Sciban (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:75) asserts the merit of the Confucian emphasis on moral responsibility: ‘The belief that humans should be self-reliant in achieving a morally superior state empowers the individual to realize this end because they believe that they not only have the ability to do so, it is also their duty to do so’. He continues that ‘the Confucian holds that one can continually expand the range of the effect of one’s actions through one’s knowledge, to one’s will, to one’s mind, to one’s personal life, family, country, to eventually impact the world’. Armed with the ideal of establishing the Great Society and emphasizing moral responsibility, the ancient Chinese thinkers appreciate adaptation and order. However, the overestimation of adapting to the external environment and following order seems to promote the obedient and monotonous existence of a cog in an administrative machine. Thus Nietzsche mocks at this state of existence as ‘higher Chinesehood’ in which ‘mankind will *be able* to find its best meaning as a piece of machinery in the administration’s service: as a tremendous clockwork of ever smaller, ever more finely “adapted” cogs’ (WLN 10[17]). Nietzsche calls for a ‘counter-movement’, opposed to this machinery of interests and actions: ‘the *secretion of a luxurious surplus from mankind*, which is to bring to light a *stronger species*, a higher type, the conditions of whose genesis and survival are different from those of the average man.’ His *metaphor* for this type is the *Übermensch* or ‘superman’ (WLN 10[17]). Zarathustra envisions this evolving ‘counter-movement’ in his three metamorphoses. His first metamorphosis, the camel, is applicable to Chinese self-cultivation or self-transformation with its duties and moral norms and values. It needs to transform into Zarathustra’s second metamorphosis, the lion, the warrior and fighting spirit.

### 3.5.2. A lion: The warrior

Avoid all such unconditional people! They are a poor sick sort, a sort of mob: they look sourly at this life, they have the evil eye for this earth. Avoid all such unconditional people! They 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)

In the three metamorphoses, the second form of the spirit is the lion that maintains its freedom to pass by all duties. It says to itself ‘I will’. It creates freedom for itself for new creation, ‘to assume the right to new values,’ and it speaks out ‘a sacred “No”

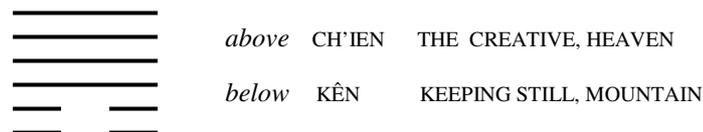


even to duty’ (Z I On The Three Metamorphoses). The lion fights to win his freedom and to be the master in his own desert. This fighting spirit is not found in the Chinese sensibility which always emphasizes order, retreat, obedience and adaptation to the external environment. For example, in the hexagram *K’an/The Abysmal (Water)*, the text on the second line says:

The abyss is dangerous.

On should strive to attain small things only. (1950: 116 & 533)

The interpretation of the line indicates that when we confront danger we might not get out of it immediately, so we should be satisfied with small gains. We should not seek the impossible but rather know how to adapt ourselves to circumstances in terms of retreat and achieving success in small matters. The hexagram *Tun/Retreat* can serve as an example to illustrate this point of view:



The first and the second two yielding lines show the dark principle ascending and the light principle retreating in security. ‘This retreat is a matter not of man’s will but of natural law. Therefore in this case withdrawal is proper; it is the correct way to behave in order not to exhaust one’s forces’ (1950:129). The outcome of retreat is expressed in the ‘Judgment’ of this hexagram in this way:

RETREAT. Success.

In what is small, perseverance furthers.

(1950: 129 & 551)

The ‘Commentary on the Decision’ indicates “‘Retreat. Success’”: this means that success lies in retreating’ (1950:551). But success consists in being able to carry out the retreat at the right moment and in the right manner. This voluntary withdrawal is interpreted as an understanding of the law of constructive retreat in the *I Ching*: ‘Retreat is not to be confused with flight. Flight means saving oneself under any circumstances, whereas retreat is a sign of strength. We must be careful not to miss the right moment while we are in full possession of power and position’ (1950:130).



According to the *I Ching*, we should avoid being drawn into a desperate life-and-death struggle. This is not to abandon domain to the rival, but rather to make it difficult for them to advance by demonstrating perseverance in mere acts of resistance. During the period of retreat we prepare for a counter-movement. The confrontation between the strong and the weak is expressed in the ‘Image’ of the hexagram *Tun/Retreat*:

Mountain under heaven: the image of RETREAT.

Thus the superior man keeps the inferior man at a distance,

Not angrily but with reserve. (1950:130 & 551)

Although the mountain rises up under heaven, owing to its nature it eventually comes to a stop, suggesting retreat. Heaven retreats upward and remains out of reach. Heaven represents the superior man and the mountain the inferior man. The superior man does not get angry when the inferior comes forward, which shows the strength of heaven. ‘The superior man keeps the inferior at a distance by being as reserved and inaccessible as heaven; thus he brings the inferior man to a standstill’ (1950:552). According to the *I Ching*, keeping a distance from the wickedness of inferior men and making a voluntary retreat enable the superior man to wait for a possible change in the future. This conviction is based on the principles of yin and yang, that when misfortune reaches its end, better times return. The Judgment on the top line of the hexagram *Po / Splitting Apart* illustrates the idea:

Nine at the top means:

There is a large fruit still uneaten.

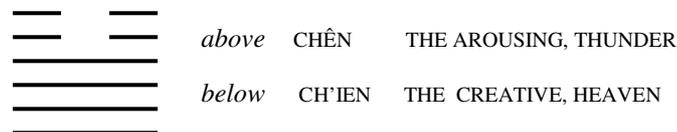
The superior man receives a carriage.

The house of the inferior man is split apart. (1950:96 & 503)

The ‘large fruit’ contains the seed of the future, the seed of the good, so when it falls on the ground, that good sprouts again from its seed. A ‘carriage’ represents public opinion. This line implies that the superior man is supported by public opinion as if he is in a carriage. Eventually, the inferior man’s house is split apart as a result of his wickedness. According to the *I Ching*, this event illustrates a law of nature: ‘Evil is not destructive to the good alone but inevitably destroys itself as well. For evil, which lives solely by negation, cannot continue to exist on its own strength alone. The inferior man himself fares best when held under control by a superior man’ (1950:96). The idea that the inferior man should obey the superior man is the core of Confucian teaching. Confucius (1993:67) teaches to follow the words and the way of the sages:

‘There are three things which the gentleman holds in awe: he is in awe of the decree of Heaven, he is in awe of great men, and he is in awe of the words of sages. The small man, being unaware of the decree of Heaven, is not in awe of it. He is rude to great men and ridicules the words of sages’. Accordingly, to follow fate, to obey the words of sages and to be submissive to authority is regarded as the best way for the ordinary men, or small men, to lead their lives in a turbulent world.

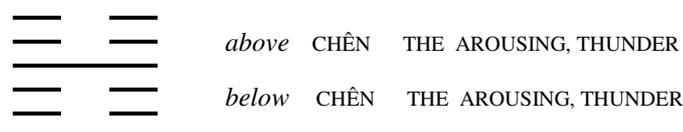
In contrast to the hexagram *Tun/Retreat* in which the lower lines are yielding lines, in the hexagram *Ta Chuang/The Power of the Great* the upper are yielding lines. While retreat is emphasized in the former, order is stressed in the latter. The structure of the hexagram *Ta Chuang/The Power of the Great* is as follows:



The four strong lines are powerful, drawing strength from below and about to ascend higher. The upper trigram is *Chên*, image of thunder, which produces movement. The lower is *Creative*, image of heaven, which is strong. The hexagram implies that the direction of the movement is in harmony with that of the movement of heaven, so it is a movement in accordance with heaven, and it thus produces great power. The harmony of movement and strength forms the meaning of this hexagram. It follows that the superior man avoids doing anything that is not in harmony with the established order. Thus in the ‘Image’ it is said:

Thunder in heaven above:  
The image of THE POWER OF THE GREAT  
Thus the superior man does not tread upon paths  
That do not accord with established order.  
(1950:133-134 &557)

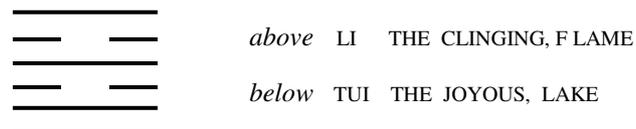
In the hexagram *Ta Chuang/The Power of the Great* it is clear that to conform to established order is highly appreciated. This idea can also be seen in the hexagram *Chên/The Arousing (Shock, Thunder)*, which consists of the doubling of the trigram *Chên*:



This hexagram implies that to set his life in order and to look within is the appropriate labour of the superior man, confronting fear and terror. The ‘Image’ of this hexagram says:

Thunder repeated: the image of SHOCK.  
Thus in fear and trembling  
The superior man sets his life in order  
And examines himself. (1950:198 & 648-49)

The trigram *Chên*, which is the image of thunder, is doubled in this hexagram, giving an impression of shock. ‘The first thunder denotes fear and trembling, [and] the second thunder denotes shaping and exploring’ (1950:649). This implies that a man who has learned within his heart what fear and trembling mean is safeguarded against any terror produced by outside influences. To set one’s life in order in terms of self-examination is taught in the hexagram *Chên/The Arousing (Shock, Thunder)*. In the hexagram *K’uei/Opposition* order is seen as a bridge over opposition:



The hexagram consists of two trigrams. The upper trigram *Li* represents the second daughter and the lower *Tui* the youngest daughter. The hexagram consists only of two daughters without the presence of any elder. This seems to imply opposition and a need to bridge this arises. Thus in the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of this hexagram it is said:

Heaven and earth are opposites, but their action is concerted. Man and woman are opposites, but they strive for union. All beings stand in opposition to one another: what they do takes on order thereby. (1950:575)

While the *I Ching* holds that order represents a bridge to unify opposites, Nietzsche emphasizes that man is himself this bridge. He warns us that ‘no one can construct for you the bridge upon which precisely you must cross the stream of life, no one but you yourself alone’ (*SE* 1). Nietzsche reminds us that only man has the privilege to build up this ‘bridge’ in his transient existence, ‘as if man were not a goal but only a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise’ (*GM* II 16). The promise of man lies in the fact that even the ‘No he says to life brings to light’, that man brings with it ‘an abundance of tender Yeses’ (*GM* III 13). K. Ansell-Pearson (1997:15) states that ‘man is a bridge, not a goal, but the bridge (man) and the goal (overman) are one, related



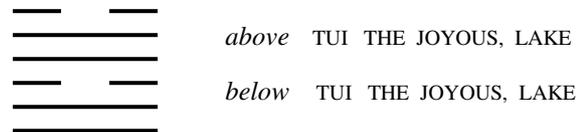
immanently, as in the “lightning-flash” that emerges from out of the “dark cloud” that is “man”. He envisions the emergence of the *Übermensch* out of mankind, which gives meaning to the earth and to humanity.

According to Nietzsche, the search for a fixed meaning or a purpose in life is meaningless and vain in the eternal process of self-overcoming, because ‘the form is fluid, but the “meaning” is even more so ... with every real growth in the whole, the “meaning” of the individual organs also changes’ (*GM II 12*). According to Nietzsche, man has to define his own meaning in terms of the Will to Power. Nietzsche states that ‘purposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function’ (*GM II 12*). By means of the will to power man gives meaning to his life in the process of self-overcoming, so life appears to be a bridge for humanity to evolve from the beast to the *Übermensch*. The fluidity of meaning is also recognized by Shakyamuni Buddha.

In the *Śūrangama Sūtra (Leng Yen Ching)*, Shakyamuni Buddha explains the fluidity of ‘meaning’ by means of a metaphor to his disciple Ānanda. He asks Ānanda whether the air in a square box is really square or not. ‘If so, it should not be round when “poured” into a round box. If not, then there should be no “square” of air in the square box’ (2005:67). Thus its ‘meaning’ depends on what one wants it to be. For Nietzsche, life corresponds to a bridge, the meaning of which is not determined according to something external but rather has to be created within man according to his will to power, ‘an insatiable craving to manifest power; or to employ, exercise power, as a creative drive, etc.’ (*WLN 36[31]*). He regards life as ‘a world of dangers and victories in which heroic feelings, too, find places to dance and play’ (*GS 324*), so man has to face up to ‘the beautiful chaos of existence’ (*GS 277*). The more one is competent in dancing in tune to the chaotic forces within and without, the more the strength of one’s will power represents. Thus Nietzsche indicates that ‘the more there is an urge to variety, differentiation, inner fragmentation, the more force is present’ (*WP 36[21]*). Nietzsche’s glorification of the spiritual value of variety, difference and fragmentation differs from that of the *I Ching*, which favours order and harmony.

One of the major differences between Nietzsche’s philosophy and that of the *I Ching* is the emphasis on order and harmony in the latter and the violence and war of the former. According to the *I Ching*, ‘heaven is high, the earth is low’ (1950:280), so order is decreed in obedience to natural laws and harmony is attained if everything works in accordance with the established order. Heaven and earth have their definite

laws, so the superior and the inferior places of the human world are to be established according to this heavenly manifestation. This is illustrated in the structure of the hexagram *Tui/The Joyous, Lake* with its doubled trigram *Tui*, ‘the Joyous’:



In the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of the hexagram *Tui/The Joyous, Lake*, order and harmony are prerequisite to the highest sphere of life, a joyous state of existence:

THE JOYOUS means pleasure. The firm is in the middle, the yielding is without. To be joyous — and with this to have perseverance — furthers; thus does one submit to heaven and accord with men.

When one leads the way for the people joyously, they forget their drudgery; when one confronts difficulty joyously, the people forget death. The greatest thing in making the people joyous is that they keep one another in order. (1950:686)

The doubling of the trigram *Tui* and its joyous attributes emphasize joyousness. Joy derives from the two strong lines within, expressing themselves through the mode of gentleness. The construction of this hexagram implies that joy rests on strength and firmness within and externally manifests itself as yielding and gentle. It shows that the right kind of joy is inwardly firm and outwardly gentle. The sage leads the way to give people joy. One inspires others if one enjoys a good relationship with one’s fellow men. In order to arrive at such an achievement one should accord with men and submit oneself to the laws of heaven. Nietzsche, however, asserts that in Nature there is neither order nor goal and nothing to correspond to human beliefs, which are only our “mythological” thinking, and thus:

there is no rule of ‘law.’ It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, fore-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we project and mix this symbol world into things as if it existed ‘in itself,’ we act once more as we have always acted — *mythologically*. (BGE 21).

Nietzsche stresses the natural law ‘that every man is a unique miracle’ (SE 1), so he rejects the tendencies of the masses, criticizing ‘how we hasten to give our heart



to the state, to money-making, to sociability or science merely so as no longer to possess it ourselves' (*SE 5*). He states that 'the man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily, let him follow his conscience, which calls to him: "Be your self! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself"' (*SE 1*). However, in the Confucian tradition the notion of becoming what one is seems seldom to be recognized, and one is encouraged to follow the familiar social ways rather than challenging new problems and ideas according to one's creativity. For example, Confucius (1993:23) notes the characteristics of the sage, or 'the humane man, [who] wishing himself to be established, sees that others are established, and [who] wishing himself to be successful, sees that others are successful. To be able to take one's own familiar feelings as a guide may definitely be called the method of humaneness.' Nietzsche, however, states that 'to become wise one must *want* to experience certain experiences, that is to say run into their open jaws. This is very dangerous, to be sure; many a "sage" has been gobbled up in the process' (*WS 298*). While the *I Ching* advances the notion of getting along with fellow men and obeying the Decree of Heaven, Nietzsche reminds us that this journey of self-conquest is a dangerous one, so that an adventurer should even dare to declare war on existence, as implied by the lion in the second Metamorphosis.

While the hexagram *Tui/The Joyous* urges man to confront difficulty joyously by submitting himself to heavenly order rather than challenging and trying to overcome resistances, Nietzsche champions a chaotic and warlike human existence: 'War has always been the great wisdom of all spirits who have become too inward, too profound; even in a wound there is the power to heal' (*TI Preface*). Nietzsche describes his soul as 'unmoved and bright as the mountains in the morning' (*Z P 5*). The *I Ching* also emphasizes inward firmness, but with outward gentleness. While the *I Ching* asserts an orderly and harmonious movement like the alternation of day and night, Nietzsche emphasizes violent movement. While the authors of the *I Ching* seek order and harmony and avoid danger in life in order to attain good fortune, Nietzsche declares that 'the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is — to *live dangerously*' (*GS 283*). Zarathustra claims:

Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman — a rope over an abyss. A dangerous across, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping. (*Z P 4*)



Like the running water, a wanderer does not stay in one place, but is always on a journey. For Nietzsche, to engage oneself in this wandering one is always ‘on-the-way’ in between beast and overman. In the process of self-overcoming, one’s life appears ‘as a work *in progress*’ (Schrift 1995:73), or a ‘becoming-*Übermensch*’, as Schrift notes. Schrift (1995:70) indicates that ‘becomings take place *between* poles.’ In fact, man is always evolving in-between the beast and the *Übermensch*.

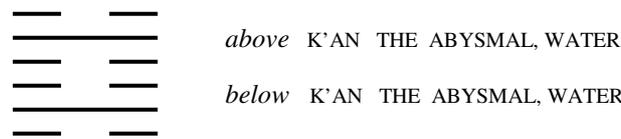
R. E. Allinson (1989:7) states that ‘the “wandering” refers to the absolute freedom of the *mind* to move in any direction that it fancies, a level of freedom that is possible only after achieving a state of transcendence or transcendental happiness. This state, which can only be achieved in turn by spiritual transformation, is one in which the mind can move in uninhibited ways because it is not bound by the limitations of any particular standpoint.’ The term ‘wanderer’ seems to denote those who engage themselves in such a journey for spiritual growth, a journey like climbing a mountain. In the section ‘The Wanderer’ Zarathustra says that he is ‘a wanderer and a mountain climber’ (Z III The Wanderer). Zarathustra is also regarded as a wanderer by the saint of *Zarathustra’s Prologue*: When Zarathustra descends from the mountain and meets a saint in the forest, the saint calls Zarathustra a ‘wanderer’ who walks ‘like a dancer’ (Z P 2). Being described as a ‘dancer’ accentuates the freedom and light of the spirit in his wandering. Nietzsche insists that ‘one has to be *very light* to drive one’s will to knowledge into such a distance and, as it were, beyond one’s time, to create for oneself eyes to survey millennia and, more over, clear skies in these eyes’ (GS 380). Thus, for Nietzsche, the wandering depends on manifold conditions, but the core is how light and free one is.

Zarathustra describes his wandering as a journey of descending to the human abyss and the climbing to the height of the mountain. Being a wanderer, Zarathustra attempts to climb upward over himself, ‘to look down upon myself and even upon my stars’ (Z III The Wanderer). Zarathustra indicates that the way to greatness is to commit oneself to the process of climbing to the peak of the mountain and descending to the abyss of the human sea. He states that ‘peak and abyss — they are now joined together’ and in this process one should strive for the path of ‘impossibility’ (Z III The Wanderer). In fact, this constant process involves ‘the highest *will to power*’ which is ‘to *imprint* upon becoming the character of being’ (WLN 7[54]). Although Zarathustra’s wandering is a very dangerous one, he is grateful for this journey.



Nietzsche describes a step further in convalescence, where the free spirit ‘looks back gratefully - grateful to his wandering, to his hardness and self-alienation, to his viewing of far distances and bird-like flights in cold heights. What a good thing he had not always stayed “at home”’ (HAH P 5).

Although Nietzsche recognizes the danger and hardship in his wandering, his strategy is self-overcoming by means of a fighting attitude. The word ‘abyss’ is a metaphor for life, a dangerous journey. The image of the abyss signifying danger can also be seen in the hexagram *K’an/The Abysmal (Water)*, but its approach here differs from that of Nietzsche:



The doubling of the trigram *K’an* represents the situation of a person who finds himself in danger, like water in the depths of an abyss. In the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ the person is inspired by the movement of the water which shows him how danger could be overcome: ‘Water flows on and nowhere piles up; it goes through dangerous places, never losing its dependability’ (1950:531). The dependable character of water implies that our strength to overcome danger does not lie in seeking the impossible but rather in flexibility and knowing how to adapt ourselves to circumstances. The nature of water also signifies the divine nature of our heart which is necessarily to be cultivated in order to overcome danger. Thus in the ‘Judgment’ of the hexagram *K’an/The Abysmal (Water)* it is said:

The Abysmal repeated.  
If you are sincere, you have success in your heart,  
And whatever you do succeeds. (1950:115 & 531)

The trigram *K’an* represents the heart in which the divine nature is locked within the natural dispositions and tendencies, so that it is in danger of being consumed by desires and passions. The two firm lines which form the middle of each trigram assert that in order to overcome danger one has to hold firmly and sincerely to one’s innate disposition to good. By doing so, one might bring about achievement despite any danger. Lao Tzu (1972:78) is also inspired by the nature of water in dealing with daily life and says:



Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water.  
Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better.  
It has no equal.  
The weak can overcome the strong;  
The supple can overcome the stiff.  
Under heaven everyone knows this,  
Yet no one puts it into practice.  
Therefore the sage says:  
He who takes upon himself the humiliation of the people  
is fit to rule them.

The downward movement and soft nature of running water inspire the Chinese sages to seek the qualities of ‘humiliation’ and ‘modesty’ in the human world so as to attain success and good fortune. This notion is also asserted in the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of the hexagram *Ch’ien/Modesty*:

MODESTY creates success, for it is the way of heaven to shed its influence downward and to create light and radiance. It is the way of the earth to be lowly and to go upward.

It is the way of heaven to make empty what is full and to give increase to what is modest. It is the way of the earth to change the full and to augment the modest. Spirits and gods bring harm to what is full and prosper what is modest. It is the way of men to hate fullness and to love the modest.

Modesty that is honoured spreads radiance. Modesty that is lowly cannot be ignored. This is the end attained by the superior man. (1950:462)

According to the *I Ching*, it is heavenly law to make fullness empty and to make full what is modest, the yang to yin and vice versa, just as the sun must turn toward its setting after arriving at its zenith and must rise toward a new dawn after reaching its nadir. The same law of heaven also works in the fate of men: ‘It is the law of fate to undermine what is full and to prosper the modest. And men also hate fullness and love the modest’ (1950:64). Being able to be modest is not regarded as weakness but rather as an indication of the strength of an individual. If man understands that the way to expansion leads through contraction, then although his destiny is subject to fixed laws, he would fulfil himself by means of his conduct to bring about good fortune. The hexagram *Ch’ien/Modesty* is the only hexagram out of sixty-four hexagrams where all the judgments on the six lines designate good and favourable circumstances. The judgment on the fourth line declares: ‘Nothing that would not further modesty in



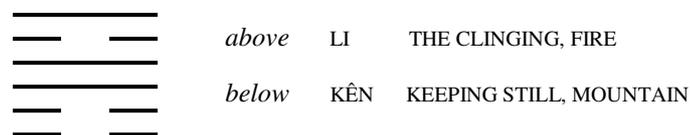
movement' (1950:66 & 464). This assertion of 'modesty' in the *I Ching* differs from the vision of Nietzsche.

Although Nietzsche also recognizes that emptiness which leads to fullness, he does not champion modesty. Nietzsche dislikes modesty and appreciates violence, which he regards as challenge, eventually to bring about pleasure in self-overcoming. 'Life is a well of joy,' claims Zarathustra and explains: 'You flow for me almost too violently, fountain of pleasure. And often you empty the cup again by wanting to fill it' (Z II On the Rabble). Furthermore, in the section entitled 'On Virtue That Makes Small', Zarathustra refers to the small people who attempt 'modestly to embrace a small happiness — that they call "resignation"', but what they want is, in fact, 'that nobody should hurt them. Thus they try to please and gratify everybody. This, however, is cowardice, even if it be called virtue.' Zarathustra continues to say that such people

lack fists, their fingers do not know how to hide behind fists. 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 asserts the fighting spirit which would make the most out of the horror of existence in order to grow in self-overcoming, while the authors of the *I Ching* advocate modesty in dealing with the hazards of life, so as to succeed in self-cultivation.

Zarathustra the wanderer does not fear danger because of his belief in making the most out of it. His state of mind is quite different from that of the wanderer in the *I Ching*. This can be seen in the hexagram *Lü/The Wanderer*:



The upper trigram is *Li*, symbolizing the fire which flames up and does not tarry, and the lower trigram is *Kên*, the mountain which stands still. The former represents clinging to outside things, while the latter represents keeping still, inner reserve. The fact that the two trigrams are not unified signifies the wanderer's lot in strange lands and his separation. The ruler of the hexagram is the fifth line, which is a yielding line



between two firm lines, and is in the outer trigram, symbolizing the wanderer in foreign places. A yielding line between two firm lines represents reserve and unpretentiousness, indicating submission to the firm. Thus a wanderer, as a stranger, should neither be gruff nor overbearing, but cautious and reserved in order not to provoke misfortune. How the wanderer should behave in order to attain success and good fortune in foreign places is interpreted in the 'Commentary on the Decision' in this way:

'THE WANDERER. Success through smallness': the yielding attains the middle outside and submits to the firm.

Keeping still and adhering to clarity; hence success in small things.

'Perseverance brings good fortune to the wanderer.' (1950:675)

If a wanderer wants good fortune and to go his way unhurt, then he should take care to remain upright and persevering. If he is obliging towards people, he would attain success, so he should make an effort to stay only in right places and to associate only with good people in his wandering. The authors of the *I Ching* emphasizes order, modesty and adaptation to circumstances in life. Nietzsche, however, favours a declaration of war on the human predicament, an overcoming of resistances, so the Will to Power could find expression. Nietzsche's approach to life might serve as a complement to the Chinese surrender of oneself to adapting to the external world.

For Nietzsche, life means 'constantly transforming all that we are into light and flame — also everything that wounds us' (GS P 3). He welcomes chaos and pain, because 'only great pain is the ultimate liberator of the spirit', and he insists that 'out of such long and dangerous exercises of self-mastery one emerges as a different person, with a few more question marks' (GS P 3). Such a fighting spirit, with its will to power, delights in questioning every aspect of life, and in confronting life as it appears a great problem. Nietzsche asserts that 'the attraction of everything problematic, the delight in an x, is so great in such more spiritual, more spiritualized men' (GS P 3). Such a spirit takes life as an opportunity to grow and an expression of growing. Nietzsche cites his personal experience as an example, stating that 'at the very bottom of my soul I feel grateful to all my misery and bouts of sickness and everything about me that is imperfect, because this sort of thing leaves me with a hundred backdoors through which I can escape from enduring habits' (GS 295). According to Nietzsche, man's enduring habits, such as laziness, fear and cowardice,



obstruct his growth. His life pattern of following the familiar tracks would be broken should he confront dangers and chaos, so self-transformation would be made possible because of adding new things and new experiences. Nietzsche insists that man 'must organize the chaos within him by thinking back to his real needs' (*UDH* 10). In this light, confronting chaos and conflict in the inner and outer world with a warlike attitude on the one hand, and maintaining a calm and reflective state of mind on the other, one has the strength to create something new out of oneself. Nietzsche indicates that 'man is a creature that makes shapes and rhythms', so he envisions the dancing spirit as one who 'creates itself something to see' (*WLN* 38[10]). It enjoys the freedom of creating its own values. Nietzsche explains that 'freedom means that the manly instincts which delight in war and victory dominate over instincts, for example, over those of "pleasure"', so the measure of freedom in individuals and peoples is 'according to the resistance which must be overcome, according to the exertion required, to remain on top. The highest type of free men should be sought where the highest resistance is constantly overcome' (*TI* Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 38). Nietzsche's interpretation of freedom apparently differs from that of the *I Ching*.

The Chinese concept of freedom is inspired by the devotion of movement in nature. In the hexagram *Yü/Enthusiasm*, it is said that 'the holy man moves with devotion' (1950:467). Heaven and earth are devoted to movement, and neither heaven nor earth knows constraints. In heaven the constellations move along their paths without any constraint. They move freely and unrestrained. On earth, spring comes and departs, as the earth does not seek to retain anything, so it permits the alternation of the four seasons. The authors of the *I Ching* champion the superior man who 'obeys the benevolent will of heaven' (1950:458), so they prompt their followers to follow the 'will of heaven' in order to bring about unity, harmony and order, but according to Nietzsche, such a frame of reference is the manifestation of a weak will, as he insists that 'the greater the urge to unity, the more one may infer weakness' (*WLN* 36 [21]).

Unlike the holy sages of the *I Ching*, Nietzsche favours a warlike attitude which appears as a proper means for confronting dangers in the process of self-creating and self-overcoming. Thus he writes: '*Out of life's school of war*: What does not destroy me, makes me stronger' (*TI* Maxims and Arrows 8). He even propagates war on oneself, stating that 'under peaceful conditions a warlike man sets upon himself' (*BGE* 76). Nietzsche's point is that conflict is required for those who have



abundant energy, or excessive strength, and they demand ‘not peace but war’ (A 2) in order to overcome resistance: ‘*Our fatum* — the abundance, the tension, the damming of strength’ (A 1). C. G. Jung (1988:562) agrees with Nietzsche that ‘nobody gets anywhere who has no conflict: we need the conflict and the willingness to accept it. For conflict is the origin of our psychical energy — there can be no energy without it’. In this context Nietzsche defines the terms ‘good,’ ‘bad,’ and ‘happiness’ for the man of abundance:

What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself.

What is bad? Everything that is born of weakness.

What is happiness? The feeling that power is *growing*, that resistance is overcome’ (A 2)

Nietzsche welcomes resistance which represents a test of one’s strength by means of executing one’s will power to grow in self-overcoming, stating that ‘the will to power can only express itself against *resistances*’ (WLN 9[151]). In overcoming resistance one might attain the highest pleasure. For Nietzsche, pleasure does not derive from any external material gain or the applause of others, but rather from internal spiritual growth. He considers ‘pleasure as a *stimulation* of the *feeling of power*: always presupposing something that resists and is overcome,’ so he regards ‘all pleasurable and unpleasurable phenomena [as] intellectual ... interpretations of it’ (WLN 7[18]). In his doctrine of the Will to Power, Nietzsche is interested in executing one’s will and attaining practical experience of life, rather than in any abstract interpretations of morality.

Joan Stambaugh (1988:80) indicates that ‘two elements are fundamental for the Will to Power. One is the element of command, of mastery. Ultimately the highest command is command over oneself’, and ‘the other element is that of increase, of becoming More’. The essence of the Will to Power transcends both the domain of instinct and that of consciousness ‘by striving to become More and by mastering this More in the grip of self-command’ (Stambaugh 1988:81). The art of self-mastery is a prerequisite for the will to power in commanding and obeying. Zarathustra explains that the practice of commanding and obeying with oneself brings forth danger. When the living ‘commands *itself*, it must still pay for its commanding. It must become the judge, the avenger, and the victim of its own law’ (Z II On Self-Overcoming). But the

strong fighting spirit enjoys its superiority, its triumph over resistances by means of a constant process of commanding and obeying within itself according to its own will.

In *BGE* 19, Nietzsche considers how a person carries out his actions in willing. First is to be aware of the ‘plurality of sensations’, and ‘the sensations of constraint, impulsion, pressure, resistance and motion, which usually begin immediately after the act of will’, then the recognition of the ruling thought. Next comes the exercise of ‘the effect of the command’, which Nietzsche terms ‘the freedom of will’:

that is the expression for the complex state of delight of the person exercising volition, who commands and at the same time identifies himself with the executor of the order — who, as such, enjoys also the triumph over obstacles, but thinks within himself that it was really his will itself that overcame them. In this way the person exercising volition adds the feelings of delight of his successful executive instruments, the useful ‘under-wills’ or under-souls — indeed, our body is but a social structure composed of many souls — to his feelings of delight as commander. (*BGE* 19)

Nietzsche indicates that freedom of will is essentially a feeling of superiority over the one who must obey. Thus ‘a man who *wills* commands something within himself that renders obedience, or that he believes renders obedience’ (*BGE* 19). So under given circumstances he is a commanding party and at the same time an obeying party who executes the command. ‘In short, he who wills believes with a fair amount of certainty that will and action are somehow one’ (*BGE* 19). As a result, such a person would attain a feeling of superiority over resistances, judging that the will itself is what overcomes the resistances, and recognizing that ‘*L’effect c’est moi*’ (*BGE* 19).<sup>9</sup> Thus Nietzsche emphasizes that willing should be included in the sphere of morals, so that morals should be interpreted as ‘the doctrine of the relations of supremacy under which the phenomenon of “life” comes to be’ (*BGE* 19). In *commanding* and *obeying* ‘life should be defined as an enduring form of the *process of testing force*, where the different combatants grow unequally’ (*WLN* 36 [22]). In this process, says Nietzsche, ‘the weaker pushes its way to the stronger’ and conversely ‘the stronger repulses the weaker’ (*WLN* 36 [21]). Nietzsche envisions the outcome of this tremendous process as ‘the ripest fruit’. This ‘is the *sovereign individual*, like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral.’ Such a person ‘has his

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<sup>9</sup> I am the effect.



own independent, protracted will and *the right to make promises*' (*GM II 2*). Nietzsche states that 'this emancipated individual, with the actual *right* to make promises, this master of a *free* will, this sovereign man' is conscious of his own power and the freedom of 'mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all more short-willed and unreliable creatures', and thus he 'possesses his *measure of value*' (*GM II 2*) according to a dominating instinct which Nietzsche calls *conscience*:

The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct. (*GM II 2*)

Nietzsche describes this 'ripe fruit' as 'a *late* fruit' of humanity (*GM II 3*), because there seems to be none in his time, but he believes that it would emerge in the future. He considers it as the 'responsibility' of the sovereign man to commit himself to 'the task of breeding an animal with the right to make promises' (*GM II 2*). Thus Zarathustra longs for a 'new nobility [who] shall become procreators and cultivators and sowers of the future.' He uses the metaphor 'children's land' to describe this new nobility, envisioning how our 'sails search and search' for 'the undiscovered land in the most distant sea' (*Z III On Old and New Tablets 12*). In this context Nietzsche distinguishes two types of people, the strong and the weak, or the noble and the mob or slave. He longs for a type of nobility that

experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, 'what is harmful to me is harmful itself'; it knows itself to be that which first accords honor to things; it is *value-creating*. Everything it knows as part of itself it honors: such a morality is self-glorification. (*BGE 260*).

Nietzsche interprets morality as 'self-glorification', so that in as far as he is concerned, morality is a manifestation of the will to power. What concerns him is the quality of power, whether ascending or descending. Nietzsche advances morality as 'a way of living tried out, *proved* through long experience and testing [that] finally comes to consciousness as a law, as *dominating*' (*WLN 14[105]*). Thus 'the noble human being honors himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself,' and 'who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness' (*BGE 260*). The noble man with a strong will welcomes hardness and danger in his existence. Nietzsche asserts life to be 'only a matter of



*strong* and *weak* wills' (BGE 21). Life is 'the will to power in every combination of forces – *resisting what's stronger, attacking what's weaker*' (WLN 36[21]). The strong exhibits an attitude of dominance in its instinct for health, courage, dignity, joy and life, while the weak exhibits unhealthy, slavish, tired instincts, hostile to life. Steiner (1960:61) indicates that Nietzsche 'concerns himself with the way people develop their truths according to their instincts, and how they further their life goals through them'. What Nietzsche advocates is a kind of natural or *healthy morality* which 'is dominated by an instinct of life,' and he attacks *anti-natural morality* which turns '*against* the instincts of life' (TI Morality as Anti-Nature 4). Nietzsche states that 'every natural morality is the expression of one kind of man's satisfaction with himself' (WLN 35[17]). His impulse of 'return to nature' appreciates an ascending form of life, 'up into the high, free even terrible nature and naturalness where great tasks are something one plays with, one *may* play with' (TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 48). To play freely even in the acknowledgement of terrible nature, 'great health' is a prerequisite. Nietzsche states that

spirits strengthened by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs; it would require habituation to the keen air of the heights, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense; it would require even a kind of sublime wickedness, an ultimate, supremely self-confident mischievousness in knowledge that goes with great health; it would require, in brief and alas, precisely this *great health!* (GM II 24).

For Nietzsche, a war against danger and uncertainty appears to be a viable way to attain nobility and greatness. He indicates that 'not to perish of internal distress and uncertainty when one inflicts great suffering and hears the cry of this suffering — that is great, that belongs to greatness' (GS 325). Inner distress and uncertainty are not addressed by the holy sages of the *I Ching* who always emphasize maintaining harmony and keeping order at the micro and macro level. Thus the master says:

Is not the Book of Changes supreme? By means of it the holy sages exalted their natures and extended their field of action.

Wisdom exalts. The mores make humble. The exalted imitate heaven. The humble follow the example of the earth. (1950:303)

The *I Ching* teaches humility and following the way of the holy sages. The spirit of the warrior, Zarathustra's lion, seems never to be addressed in the writings of the



ancient Chinese thinkers. The metaphor of a babe is employed to designate the human achievement of self-cultivation. For example, the *Tao Te Ching* remarks that ‘one who possesses virtue in abundance is comparable to a new born babe’ (1963:116). Mencius (1970:130) says that ‘a great man is one who retains the heart of a new-born babe.’ Zarathustra designates the child as representing the final stage of the metamorphosis of the evolving spirit.

### 3.5.3. A child: The dancer

At the subatomic level there is no longer a clear distinction between what is and what happens, between the actor and the action. At the subatomic level the dancer and the dance are one. (Zukav 1979:193)

Zarathustra’s third metamorphosis of the spirit is described as a child. This is the highest form of the spirit that plays ‘the game of creation.’ It creates its own value according to its own will. The message that a child could convey is ‘innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred “Yes”’ (Z I On The Three Metamorphoses). The sacred ‘Yes’ signifies the evolving spirit who is capable of ‘saying Yes to opposition and war’ (*EH BT 3*) and ‘saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems’ (*EH BT 3 & TI What I Owe to the Ancients 5*). It possesses an excess of strength and represents ‘the triumphant Yes to life beyond all death and change’ (*TI What I Owe to the Ancients 4*). Nietzsche employs the metaphor of a child at play to represent the evolving spirit on its way to maturity. He states that ‘a man’s maturity — consists in having found again the seriousness one had as a child, at play’ (*BGE 94*). This presents his notion of the innocence of becoming. He insists that ‘becoming has been deprived of its innocence when any being-such-and-such is traced back to will, to purposes, to acts of responsibility’ (*TI The Four Great Errors 7*). Nietzsche indicates that ‘that is no goal, that seems to us an *end*’ (*BGE 225*), and that ‘man is not the effect of some special purpose, of a will and end,’ but rather that ‘we have invented the concept of “end”’: in reality there is no end’ (*TI The Four Great Errors 8*). Thus we should reconsider reality as becoming, an eternal cosmic changing process without end.

In his article ‘The Drama of Zarathustra,’ Gadamer (in Conway & Groff 1998:129) asks: ‘How can the innocence of a child be proclaimed as an end?’ He



indicates that ‘to this extent all the speeches of Zarathustra amount at the same time to a silence,’ so that ‘we have to look beyond that which is said. There we may discover a significance of the action for the sense of its wholeness.’ A child at play signifies the quality of wholeness of the innocence of becoming:

One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole; there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare, or sentence our being, for what would mean judging, measuring, comparing, or sentencing the whole. But there is nothing besides the whole. (*TI* The Four Great Errors 8)

According to Nietzsche, the dancing spirit evolves in the infinite process of becoming in which everything interweaves with everything else in a dynamic relationship within the whole. Nietzsche’s notion of becoming may be seen to be validated by experiments in particle movement: ‘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 basic feature of becoming is the absence of fixed terms and values, so within the whole the various constituents parts cannot be isolated and measured according to any fixed moral values and laws. Nietzsche believes ‘that the moral way of holding values was losing its credibility and foundation’ (in Solomon & Higgins 1988:36). He refers to Goethe who is capable of seeing the whole of life as an example. ‘What he wanted was *totality*’ Nietzsche says, ‘he disciplined himself to wholeness, he *created* himself’ (*TI* Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 49). The totality or wholeness of a person in the process of self-creation is addressed by Nietzsche’s idea of ‘*processes as “beings”*’ (*WLN* 36[21]).

Stambaugh (1994:97) states that Nietzsche strives to be ‘free of the relation to an existent ground, any kind of “being”, outside the process of becoming’ and also free of ‘any goal anywhere at all.’ Nietzsche envisions a world which is ‘neither imperfect nor subordinate.’ He describes such a world through the metaphor of ‘a playing child who sets down stones here, there, and the next place, and who builds up piles of sand only to knock them down again’ (*BT* 24). He plays simply and naturally without making any value judgments in his game. The child at play represents the mind in this process of becoming. Nietzsche’s point is that ‘the fact of “mind” *as a becoming* proves that the world has no goal and no final state and is incapable of being’ (*WLN* 36[15]). Stambaugh (1994:98) indicates that ‘with the emphasis on becoming, the innocence of becoming means that there is no unchanging being beyond or outside the world of becoming’. Nietzsche insists that ‘as soon as we



*imagine* someone who is responsible for us being thus and thus, etc. (God, nature), attributing our existence, our happiness and misery to it as its *intention*, we corrupt for ourselves the *innocence of becoming*. We then have someone who wants to achieve something through us and with us' (WLN 9[91]). In this sense his notion of the innocence of becoming is crystallized in the metaphor of the playing child.

A child at play is free to decide what he wants to play and how he likes to play his game, and he thus creates his own values and conquers his own world. In this process of playing, or more precisely, becoming, the innocent child focuses his mind only on playing his game without aiming at any goal and even knowing that what he creates would be destroyed eventually, and therefore, he is free from any moral judgment, right and wrong, good or bad. Thus Nietzsche asserts the value of this game of life: 'to become what one is, one must not have the faintest notion *what* one is' (EH Clever 9). The metaphor of an innocent child at play illustrates Nietzsche's idea of becoming what one is. Nietzsche considers *play* 'as a sign of greatness' (EH Clever 10). He describes the evolving spirit

who plays naively — that is, not deliberately but from overflowing power and abundance — with all that was hitherto called holy, good, untouchable, divine; for whom those supreme things that the people naturally accept as their value standards, signify danger, decay, debasement, or at least recreation, blindness, and temporary self-oblivion; the ideal of a human, superhuman well-being and benevolence that often appear *inhuman*. (GS 382)

This playful attitude of disregarding accepted moral values and norms, that might appear 'inhuman' to some, is a unique characteristic of the dancing spirit who possesses overflowing power and abundance and is willing to perish 'in pursuit of the great and the impossible' (UDH 9). According to Nietzsche, the playing child symbolizes the great achievement of 'maintaining cheerfulness in the midst of a gloomy affair, fraught with immeasurable responsibility' (TI P). An innocent child who dedicates his life to 'playing' exhibits the features of the evolving spirit who is so full of strength as 'to take life as a game', and who is strong enough to be capable of 'playing with life' in creating his own *bridge*, himself (HAH I 154). As a child is free in play, in taking life as a game one would spontaneously or unconsciously let go of conflict and opposition.

With regard to the *I Ching*, the consulting process involves a combination of consciousness and unconsciousness to attain the oracle. The person consulting the oracle has to formulate his problem in words, so the 'conscious process stops with the



formulation of the question. The unconscious process begins with the division of the yarrow stalks' (1950:314). The invisible, changing patterns of life are revealed in the unconscious process of attaining the oracle. D. F. Hook (1975:8) commends *The Book of Changes* for 'the fact that its very core is concerned with the changing patterns of existence motivated by the unconscious and the power of thought.' Furthermore, Hook (1975:3) states that

... there is a definite design into which everything fits with perfect harmony and synchronization within the cosmic whole, nothing being haphazard. Man *must* learn to attune himself to this pattern and its rhythm. In this respect life could perhaps be compared to a dance in which the steps to be taken are known only to the dancing master, who in this case represents the unconscious. Each dancer has to find out for himself what he is supposed to be doing and where he is meant to be at a given time, but, as only the dancing teacher knows the whole pattern, each is obliged to turn to him for instruction. Should the dancers choose to exercise their free will by ignoring him, they would undoubtedly blunder into and hurt one another in the process.

Dance, metaphorically, represents life, which involves a definite pattern or process. In order not to 'blunder into and hurt one another in the process' balance and harmony is required, so the dancer '*must* learn to attune himself to this pattern and its rhythm,' rather than dancing according to his or her own tempo and creativity. Such an understanding appears to be at the core of the *I Ching*. The Taoist sage Chuang Tzu (1968:291-292) also champions those who seek the Tao in following the rhythms of nature:

The yin and yang shine on each other, maim each other, heal each other; the four seasons succeed each other, give birth to each other, slaughter each other. Desire and hatred, rejection and acceptance thereupon rise up in succession; ... The principle of following one another in orderly succession, the property of moving in alternation, turning back when they have reached the limit, beginning again when they have ended — these are inherent in things. ... The man who looks to the Way does not try to track down what has disappeared, does not try to trace the source of what springs up.

According to *Chuang Tzu*, the man of Tao cultivates his mind in accordance with the rhythms of nature, so that he dances freely and transcends opposites in his spiritual journey. The authors of the *I Ching* describe this achievement in the hexagram *K'uei/Opposition*: The upper trigram is *Li*, image of fire, which moves upward and



the lower is *Tui*, the image of lake, consisting of water, which seeps downward.<sup>10</sup> These movements are in direct opposition, from which the name of the hexagram is derived. Generally, opposition appears as an obstacle, but when it is brought within a comprehensive whole, it has important functions, as it keeps on rejuvenating the whole. The oppositions of heaven and earth, man and woman, when reconciled, bring about the creation and reproduction of life.

This spiritual achievement is also recognized by Nietzsche. Zarathustra arrives at a state of unity and reconciliation: ‘Zarathustra has changed, Zarathustra has become a child, Zarathustra is an awakened one’ (Z P 2). Zarathustra, who has become a child, transcends opposites and dances according to his own will. Nietzsche advances the idea of mastering one’s creative force ‘to continue freely shaping *oneself*: will to power a self-heightening and strengthening’ (WLN 5[63]) in self-creation and self-overcoming. Zarathustra says that ‘whoever wants to be a creator in good and evil, must first be an annihilator and break values. Thus the highest evil belongs to the greatest goodness: but this is – being creative’ (EH Destiny 2). By advancing his idea of the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche rejects a fixed moral valuation of good and evil, because he considers being creative as being more important for the growth of the evolving spirit. He believes one’s moral judgment to be evidence of one’s personal abjectness, of impersonality (GS 335), because he regards ‘the demand that one *wants* by all means that something should be firm’ as the demand of the ‘*instinct of weakness* which ... conserves them’ (GS 347). He proposes a contrary situation where

one could conceive of such a pleasure and power of self-determination, such a *freedom* of the will that the spirit would take leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, being practiced in maintaining himself on insubstantial ropes and possibilities and dancing even near abysses. Such a spirit would be the *free spirit* par excellence. (GS 347)

Nietzsche’s slogan ‘beyond good and evil’ characterizes the free spirit, who is capable of self-creating without knowing good and evil, but shaping his life according to his own values. Zarathustra insists that ‘what is good and evil *no one knows yet*, unless it be he who creates. He, however, creates man’s goal and gives the earth its meaning and its future. That anything at all is good and evil — that is his creation’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 2). Thus, in opposition to the dwarf who says: ‘Good for all,

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<sup>10</sup> See p. 192 with regard to the construction of the hexagram.



evil for all,' Zarathustra claims of his stance that 'this is *my* good and evil' (Z III On the Spirit of Gravity 2). Nietzsche considers that the value of life cannot be measured by means of fixed moral judgments but rather that 'the will to power *interprets*: the development of an organ is an interpretation; the will to power sets limits, determines degrees and differences of power' (WLN 2[148]). The creative force interprets its own values in self-overcoming, to become what it is. Nietzsche indicates that 'when we speak of values, we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life: life itself forces us to posit values; life itself values through us when we posit values' (TI Morality as Anti-Nature 5). As everybody is unique, the value of life would be interpreted differently from person to person. To Zarathustra, being 'uncommon is the highest virtue' (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 1). This expresses exactly what Nietzsche basically objects to in Christian morality as morality itself, the very assumption of morality as universal and fixed. He regards the individual 'as a form of the will to power, [which] itself has existence (but not as a "being"; rather as a *process*, as a *becoming*) as an affect' (WLN 2[151]). For Nietzsche, life as will to power is a process which is beyond good and evil.

R. Schacht (1995:30) points to Nietzsche's slogan 'Beyond Good and Evil' as being a manner of existence. He states that Nietzsche 'attempts to develop a new way of thinking about morality that would endow it with significance within the context of a naturalized conception of life and its enhancement.' Nietzsche poses the question: 'Why have morality at all when life, nature, and history are "not moral"?' (GS 344) He insists that 'there are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena' (BGE 108). With his slogan 'Beyond Good and Evil', the title of one of his books, he prompts us to be aware that 'good' and 'evil' form the cradle of moral 'grave words and values' (Z III On the Spirit of Gravity 2), which are only human illusion. Nietzsche indicates that 'good and evil are only interpretations, by no means facts or in-themselves' (WLN 2[131]). Lao Tzu and Nietzsche agree about the childlike quality of the sage who makes no distinctions based on conventional morality:

Those who are good I treat as good. Those who are not good I also treat as good. In so doing I gain in goodness. Those who are of good faith I have faith in. Those who are lacking in good faith I also have faith in. In so doing I gain in good faith.

... The people all have something to occupy their eyes and ears, and the sage treats them all like children. (Lao Tzu 1963:110)



An innocent child plays in a heavenly way, disregarding any moral judgements of good and evil, or faithfulness and unfaithfulness, because such discriminations are only human artifice. Such a recognition can also be seen in *The Sutra of Hui Neng*. The sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an School, Master Hui Neng (1998:22) speaks to a monk called Wei Ming who becomes enlightened after hearing these words: 'When you are thinking of neither good nor evil, what is at that particular moment ... your real nature (literally, original face)?' Indeed our real nature is as pure as Heaven, which is neither good nor evil. Zarathustra points out that 'good and evil themselves are but intervening shadows and damp depressions and drifting clouds' (Z III Before Sunrise), which would stain the purity of heaven. 'O heaven above me, pure and deep', Zarathustra invokes heaven, 'to hide in your purity, that is my innocence' (Z III Before Sunrise). This inspiration of 'the heaven Innocence' (Z III Before Sunrise), is also apparent in the hexagram *Wu Wang/Innocence (The Unexpected)* in the *I Ching*.

In the 'Miscellaneous Notes', it is said: 'THE UNEXPECTED means misfortune from without' (1950:510). According to the construction of the hexagram, the upper trigram *Ch'ien* and the lower trigram *Chên* express a very strong ascending tendency.<sup>11</sup> This upward movement is in harmony with heaven, signifying that man is in harmony with heavenly fate, which is his true and original nature. The hexagram conveys the idea that man is by nature free of mistakes. Innocence is free itself from mistakes, so misfortune of internal origin cannot overtake it. If misfortune takes place unexpectedly, it has an external origin, because a person feels the influence of others upon himself and loses his state of innocence to desires. Man has to maintain a natural state of innocence in order to avoid misfortune. Man's original natural state of innocence is expressed in the 'Image' of this hexagram as follows:

Under heaven thunder rolls:  
All things attain the natural state of innocence.  
Thus the kings of old,  
Rich in virtue, and in harmony with the time,  
Fostered and nourished all beings. (1950:101 & 511)

The attribute of 'rich in virtue' is symbolized by the trigram *Creative*, heaven. The trigram *Chên* refers to time and indicates east and spring. 'In springtime when thunder, life energy, begins to move again under the heavens, everything sprouts and

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<sup>11</sup> See the structure of the hexagram *Wu Wang/Innocence (The Unexpected)* in p. 156.



grows, and all beings receive from the creative activity of nature the childlike innocence of their original state' (1950:101-102). Thus, man has to follow the original impulses of his heart, which are always good, and which are imbued with the creative activity of nature. If a person performs their daily activities in harmony with heaven, with other people and with time, then such a person is as rich in virtue as the kings of old. In *Chuang Tzu*, the metaphor of fish illustrates this original state of innocence:

Fish thrive in water, man thrives in the Way. For those that thrive in water, dig a pond and they will find nourishment enough. For those that thrive in the Way, don't bother them and their lives will be secure. So it is said, the fish forget each other in the rivers and lakes, and men forget each other in the arts of the Way. (1968:87)

This metaphor indicates that people living with their mind on Tao live in such abundance, that the consideration of whether to act morally or immorally is never relevant. If the fish, however, do not stay in water, but get on to the shore, then they behave in a moral way for their survival:

When the springs dry up and the fish are left stranded on the ground, they spew each other with moisture and wet each other down with spit — but it would be much better if they could forget each other in the rivers and lakes. (1968:80 & 163)

When fish lack water, they act 'morally' for their survival. The same principle may apply to 'humaneness' or 'benevolence', which requires morality as a prerequisite. According to Confucianism, human-heartedness or humaneness is the key to the cultivation of the Tao. Confucius (1993:69-70) states that 'one who can bring about the practice of [these] five things everywhere under Heaven has achieved humaneness': 'Courtesy, tolerance, good faith, diligence, and kindness. If one is courteous, one is not treated with rudeness; if one is tolerant, one wins over the multitude; if one is of good faith, others give one responsibility; if one is diligent, one obtains results; and if one is kind, one is competent to command others.' Thus Confucian ethics requires human relationships in which one has to suppress one's desires to be in harmony with others. For the Taoist sage, the ultimate reality, the Tao, is the source of all things, which has nothing to do with humaneness or harmonious human relationships. The Tao cannot properly be said to act, but from it all things flow. Chuang Tzu (1968:254) believes that a baby represents this perfection: 'The baby acts without knowing what it is doing, moves without knowing where it is



going. Its body is like the limb of a withered tree, its mind like dead ashes. Since it is so, no bad fortune will ever touch it, and no good fortune will come to it either. And it is free from good and bad fortune, then what human suffering can it undergo?’ The Taoist sage advocates that one is to turn one’s attention within. Thus Chuang Tzu (1968:103) remarks:

When I speak of good hearing, I do not mean listening to others; I mean simply listening to yourself. When I speak of good eyesight, I do not mean looking at others; I mean simply looking at yourself.

This habit of self-examination seems to correspond to ideas in Nietzsche. Solomon (2003:16) points out that Nietzsche’s philosophy is ‘aimed at provoking self-examination and “self-undergoing,” to “know thyself” and, ultimately, to “become who you are.”’ In this sense Nietzsche aims at a creative life in which one grows according to one’s own nature, like a child, energetic and creative in playing his game. Solomon (2003:4) also indicates that Nietzsche emphasizes ‘energy, vibrance, enthusiasm, and engagement with the world. [This is where “power” comes into play.] A virtuous life is a creative life, a life of energetic enthusiasm and exquisite good taste.’ Unlike Chuang Tzu who favours a secure and calm life, Nietzsche champions a creative life, which is a process of self-mastery where the free spirit has to train to see ‘how power and right and spaciousness of perspective grow into the heights together’ (HAH P 6), mastering its super-abundance of energy.

Nietzsche identifies two paradigms, the paradigms of ‘hunger’ and of ‘super-abundance’ (GS 370), relevant to the process of self-creation. The former refers to ‘the desire to fix, to immortalize’, and the latter to ‘the desire for destruction, for change, for future, for *becoming*’ (GS 370). As a result, ‘there are two kinds of sufferers: first, those who suffer from the *over-fullness of life* — they want a Dionysian art’ and then ‘those who suffer from the *impoverishment of life* and seek rest, stillness, calm sea’ (GS 370). Zarathustra favours the super-abundant paradigm of life: ‘When your heart flows broad and full like a river, a blessing and a danger to those living near: there is the origin of your virtue’ (Z I On the Gift-Giving Virtue 1). When one’s heart, or soul, arrives at such an abundant horizon, one transcends conventional moral relativity. The playing child symbolizes this type of super-abundance.



Nietzsche indicates 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). The little child is a vivid symbol of this wealth. Nietzsche promotes that in the process of self-overcoming one should strive for broadening one’s mind to attain a bird’s view, ‘a feeling of bird-like freedom, bird-like altitude, bird-like exuberance’ and to see ‘a tremendous number of things *beneath*’ (*HAH P 4*). When one’s mind is able to arrive at such a height, everything beneath one appears to be the same, beyond good and evil. Thus Zarathustra states that ‘whoever climbs the highest mountains laughs at all tragic plays and tragic seriousness’ (*Z I On Reading And Writing*). For Nietzsche, ‘laughing’ is an expression of the inner world full of excessive strength. Because of this strength one does not make relative value judgments about good and evil, favourable and unfavourable. Even in an unfavourable environment, one is not beclouded by fear and anxiety but rather affirms it to be a challenge. Perhaps, *Chuang Tzu’s* description of the view of the big bird, P’eng, might throw some light on Nietzsche’s viewpoint:

‘When the P’eng journeys to the southern darkness, the waters are roiled for three thousand li.<sup>12</sup> He beats the whirlwind and rises ninety thousand li, setting off on the sixth-month gale.’ Wavering heat, bits of dust, living things blowing each other about — the sky looks very blue. Is that its real color, or is it because it is so far away and has no end? When the bird looks down, all he sees is blue too. (1968:29)

This myth reminds us that our logical and rational analysis is insufficient to describe the wholeness of the universe. If a person has a big heart or mind, like the big bird that flies above and looks down, even though ten thousand things manifest in this world, he would see a uniform pattern — ‘all he sees is blue too’ without any distinctions. R. E. Allinson (1989:31) notes that ‘the entire text of the *Chuang-Tzu* is to be understood as a special kind of myth. The pattern of myth is one in which things are not either true or false in an ordinary sense.’

Like the Taoist sage, Nietzsche attempts to make us become aware of the fact that the abstract distinction between morality and immorality is not the only way to access the values of life, stating that ‘we need more, we also need less. How much a

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<sup>12</sup> The *li* is about one-third of an English mile. (1906:37)



spirit needs for its nourishment, for this there is no formula.’ (GS 381). Evolving within the whole, it is ‘the greatest possible suppleness and strength that a good dancer desires from his nourishment’ (GS 381). For Nietzsche, morality/immorality is relevant only according to a narrow-minded and limited viewpoint. Chuang Tzu (1968:175-176) also indicates that ‘you can’t discuss the ocean with a well frog — he’s limited by the space he lives in. You can’t discuss ice with a summer insect — he’s bound to a single season.’ Similar to our recognition of the limitation of an idea of time in the summer insect and that of space in a well-frog, the distinction between morality and immorality would be dissolved in terms of a larger horizon. With such an horizon, perception is transformed, so destruction becomes happiness. Nietzsche emphasizes a process of self-conquest. In this state of existence

the most spiritual men, as the *strongest*, find their happiness where others would find their destruction: in the labyrinth, in hardness against themselves and others, in experiments; their joy is self-conquest. (A 57)

Nietzsche champions this labyrinthine state of existence as supreme. ‘The supreme state,’ Nietzsche says, ‘is always accounted the mystery as such for whose expression even the supreme symbols are inadequate’ (GM III 17). Lao Tzu (1972:56) uses the term ‘primal union’ to describe the highest state of existence, a state that transcends opposites:

He who has achieved this state  
Is unconcerned with friends and enemies,  
With good and harm, with honor and disgrace.  
This therefore is the highest state of man.

Lao Tzu’s description of ‘the highest state of man’ shows affinity with Nietzsche’s ‘supreme state’ of existence which he regards as ‘liberation from all illusion, as “knowledge,” as “truth,” as “being,” as release from all purpose, all desire, all action, a state beyond even good and evil. “Good and evil,” says the Buddhist — “both are fetters: the Perfect One became master over both”’ (GM III 17). Nietzsche’s reference to Buddhism can be linked to Master Hui Neng’s teachings. The sixth patriarch (1998:25) indicates that ‘Buddha-nature is non-duality’: ‘Buddhism is known as having no two ways. There are good ways and evil ways, but since Buddha-nature is neither, therefore Buddhism is known as having no two ways.’ Master Hui Neng



(1998:13) notes in an interview with the Fifth Patriarch that ‘although there are northern men and southern men, north and south make no difference to their Buddha-nature. A barbarian is different from Your Holiness physically, but there is no difference in our Buddha-nature.’ Ordinary people do not recognize their Buddha-nature, or the Essence of mind, because of having a discriminating mind.<sup>13</sup> In the *Leng Yen Ching*, Buddha provides an example to illustrate this point of view, saying it is ‘like an ignorant man who overlooks on the great ocean but grasps at a floating bubble and regards it as the whole body of water in its immense expanse’ (2005:58). Nietzsche describes his ‘enlightenment’ as an awakening from a dream in ‘The consciousness of appearance’ in *Gay Science*:

How wonderful and new and yet how gruesome and ironic I find my position vis-à-vis the whole of existence in the light of my insight! I have discovered for myself that the human and animal past, indeed the whole primal age and past of all sentient being continues in me to invent, to love, to hate, and to infer. I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish (*GS* 54).

Nietzsche also remarks ‘that the sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge perhaps is and will be the highest means to *preserve* the universality of dreaming and the mutual comprehension of all dreamers and thus also *the continuation of the dream*’ (*GS* 54). Ordinary people are like dreamers who are unconscious of their dreamlike and illusionary existence and only those who are enlightened recognize the illusory state of existence, as when a person wakes up from a dream. Thus Master Hui Neng (1998:27) says that

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<sup>13</sup> Master Hui Neng (638-713) becomes enlightened when he heard the fifth Patriarch speaks of this sentence in the *Diamond Sutra*: ‘One should use one’s mind in such a way that it will be free from any attachment’. According to Ch’an Master On, “to be free from any attachment” means not to abide in form or matter, not to abide in sound, not to abide in delusion, not to abide in enlightenment, not to abide in the quintessence, not to abide in the attribute. “To use the mind” means to let the “One Mind” (*i.e.*, the Universal mind) manifest itself everywhere. When we let our mind dwell on piety or on evil, piety or evil manifest itself, but our Essence of Mind (or Primordial mind) is thereby obscured. But when our mind dwells on nothing, we realise that all the worlds of the ten quarters are nothing but the manifestation of “One Mind” (1998:19). When Master Hui Neng (1998:20) becomes thoroughly enlightened, he realises that ‘all things in the universe are the Essence of Mind itself’.



the Wisdom of Enlightenment is inherent in every one of us. It is because of the delusion under which our mind works that we fail to realise it ourselves, and that we have to seek the advice and the guidance of enlightened ones before we can know our own Essence of Mind. You should know that so far as Buddha-nature is concerned, there is no difference between an enlightened man and an ignorant one. What makes the difference is that one realises it, while the other is ignorant of it.

The 'enlightened man' is characterized by Nietzsche in this way: 'For anyone who grows up into the heights of humanity the world becomes ever fuller' and 'the higher human being always becomes at the same time happier and unhappier' (*GS* 301). In *Ecce Homo* 'Nietzsche as Educator' (*EH* The Untimely Ones 3) envisions himself as a philosopher who 'knows well enough how to seek out its fellow-enthusiasts and to entice them on to new, secret paths and places to dance' (*BT* An Attempt at Self-Criticism 3), who is able to inspire his fellow men and whose task would be 'to mould the whole man into a living solar and planetary system and to understand its higher laws of motion' (*SE* 2). The laws of gravity do not work within such a state of mind. Thus Nietzsche demands of the philosopher of the future to 'take his stand *beyond* good and evil and leave the illusion of moral judgment *beneath* himself' (*TI* The "Improvers" of Mankind 1). He calls into question 'the ideal of the *sage* – to what extent has it been a fundamentally moral one till now?' (*WLN* 2[165]). Above all, he champions an artistic creative existence rather than a moral life.

Nietzsche regards Zarathustra as 'a creator in good and evil' (*EH* Destiny 2) and as the one 'who first *creates* truth, a *world-governing* spirit, a destiny' (*EH* Z 6). The creator of truth is depicted as a child at play, who carries out his actions to create his world according to his own will. Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of practice rather than theory and he promotes 'philosophers of the present and the future, *not* in theory but in praxis, in practice' (*GS* 372). The importance of practice is also described in the *Leng Yen Ching*: 'a man ... cannot satisfy his hunger by merely speaking of food' (2005:45). Thus both Buddhist teachings and Nietzsche's philosophy emphasize taking action, rather than simply theorizing.

The authors of the *I Ching* assert the importance of working together with insight and action. H. Wilhelm (1977:41) indicates that 'within the human cosmos the authors of the Book of Changes divided the creative process into two phases: creative insight and actual creation.' The interplay of the opposite powers of the Creative and the Receptive, and the tension between them, is so strong as to provoke out of chaos



creative changes that produce our world. The creative process is expressed in the four attributes of this process: sublimity, success, furthering and perseverance, which are all united in the superior man. The holy sages of the *I Ching* insist that strength lies in the harmony or balance between the dark and light forces within and without. A similar idea is expressed with regard to the ‘perfect character’ in a conversation between Confucius and Duke Ai in *Chuang Tzu*: ‘Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat — these are the alterations of the world, the workings of fate’ and Confucius tells Duke Ai that ‘if you can harmonize and delight in them, master them and never be at a loss for joy, if you can do this day and night without break and make it be spring with everything, mingling with all and creating the moment within your own mind — this is what I call being whole in power’ (1968:73-74). When one transcends earthly relativity, nothing can disrupt one’s innate harmony. In this light our Virtue is without shape. Confucius concludes that

Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony. Though virtue takes no form, things cannot break away from it. (1968:74)

The Chinese sages employ the metaphor of ‘water at rest’ to describe inner harmony and perfect balance, so virtue is expressed as ‘perfect harmony’ in those who commit themselves to the creative process. Yet, the attempt only to maintain balance and harmony between opposite or even chaotic forces seems to imply that one has to be confined within these forces. Although Zarathustra also employs a water metaphor in saying: ‘still is the bottom of my sea’ (*Z II On Those Who Are Sublime*), he also states that ‘a lake is within me, solitary and self-sufficient; but the river of my love carries it along, down to the sea’ (*Z II The Child with the Mirror*). The solitude of the lake signifies the stillness of his heart, and simultaneously the running water of the river flows to the human sea. An overflow of strength allows Nietzsche to disregard chaotic forces within and without in the process of self-creation. He even dares to call himself ‘the first immoralist’ and to mock at the consequence that he might be regarded as ‘a bogey, or a moralistic monster’ (*EH P 2*). In this light the Dionysian artist seems to be able to transcend opposites and to say ‘yes’ to life. Nietzsche claims that ‘I obey my Dionysian nature which does not know how to



separate doing No from saying Yes' (*EH* Destiny 2). Above all, Nietzsche disregards the abstract concepts of morality and immorality in accentuating concrete action.

Nietzsche holds that one's real strength expresses itself through artistic action in the process of self-overcoming or self-creating. A. Nehamas (in Conway & Groff 1988:317) in his article 'The Most Multifarious Art of Style' explains Nietzsche's point of view regarding action: 'Nietzsche urges that values are created through actions.' Nietzsche employs Shakespeare's Hamlet as an example of how true knowledge might prevent one's taking action to show the importance of art. Nietzsche indicates that the 'Dionysiac man is similar to Hamlet: both have gazed into the true essence of things, they have *acquired knowledge* and they find action repulsive, for their actions can do nothing to change the eternal essence of things' (*BT* 7). Evidently, 'knowledge kills actions', as takes place both in the case of Hamlet and that of the Dionysiac artist in that they attain 'true knowledge, insight into the terrible truth, which outweighs every motive for action' (*BT* 7). However, Nietzsche considers art as an effective means to 're-direct those repulsive thoughts about the terrible or absurd nature of existence into representations with which man can live' (*BT* 7). For Nietzsche, art makes it possible to embellish life with lies. In the section 'Playing with life', Nietzsche admires the Greeks for taking 'life as a game,' saying that 'they do not deceive themselves, but they deliberately and playfully embellish life with lies' (*HAH* I 154). Man invents art as a 'kind of cult of the untrue' (*GS* 107) to bear the horrible truth of existence. Nietzsche regards art

as the *good* will to appearance. We do not always keep our eyes from rounding off something and, as it were, finishing the poem; and then it is no longer eternal imperfection that we carry across the river of becoming — then we have the sense of carrying a *goddess*, and feel proud and childlike as we perform this service. (*GS* 107)

Thus Nietzsche urges his readers to acquire a perception of some higher delight in all things, an aesthetic delight, to see behind 'the territory of pity, fear or the morally sublime' (*BT* 24). He indicates that 'our highest dignity lies in our significance as works of art – for only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*' (*BT* 5). According to Nietzsche, art appears as a feasible means to veil the terrible and absurd nature of existence.

Nietzsche poses a crucial question: 'How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not?' He states that this is '*What one should learn from artists*' (*GS* 299). The tragic artist is 'precisely the one who says



Yes to everything questionable, even to the terrible — he is *Dionysian*' (*TI Reason in Philosophy* 6). Nietzsche believes 'that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of this or that poetry and art; only then is a human at all tolerable to behold' (*GS* 290). In this way Nietzsche asserts that 'an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us' (*GS* 107). He insists that 'art is the great stimulus to life' (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 24), because

it has taught us for thousands of years to look upon life in any of its forms with interest and pleasure, and to educate our sensibilities so far that we at last cry: 'life, however it may be, is good!' This teaching imparted by art to take pleasure in life and to regard the human life as a piece of nature, as the object of regular evolution, without being too violently involved in it – this teaching has been absorbed into us, and it now reemerges as an almighty requirement of knowledge. (*HAI* 222)

Life, which is transformed into a piece of artwork in terms of the constant labour of the Dionysian artist, becomes bearable, attractive and beautiful. In the mysterious Dionysian state, 'even the ugly and disharmonious is an artistic game which the Will, in the eternal fullness of its delight, plays with itself' (*BT* 24). Despite the imperfection and transience of human life, the artist tries his best to make all things grow to completion and perfection under his hands. Thus, Nietzsche indicates that 'in art man enjoys himself as perfection' (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 9). He defines art in this way:

In this state one enriches everything out of one's own fullness: whatever one sees, whatever one wills, is seen swelled, taut, strong, overloaded with strength. A man in this state transforms things until they mirror his power — until they are reflections of his perfection. This *having* to transform into perfection is — art. (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 9)

Although we all are doomed to change and death, Nietzsche indicates that the Dionysian artist 'would always patiently accept death with the feeling, "now we are ripe for it"', and he conceives of this state as an expression 'of a certain autumnal sunniness and mildness that the work itself, the fact that the work has become ripe, always leaves behind in the author. Then the tempo of life slows down and becomes thick like honey' (*GS* 376). For Nietzsche, the Dionysian artist, as the child, is capable of being an author of life and to write his own script without following the guidelines or rules of others by virtue of his super-abundant force. Stambaugh (1988:82)



indicates that ‘Nietzsche’s “aesthetic” is based on the artist himself, not on the observer.’ Nietzsche is inspired by the rich and overflowing Hellenic instinct which bears the name of Dionysus, stating that ‘it is explicable only in terms of an *excess* of force’ (*TI* What I Owe to the Ancients 4). He employs the term ‘Dionysian’ to represent the highest type of humanity and to present ‘the psychology of the orgiastic as an overflowing feeling of life and strength’:

Saying yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types — *that* is what I called Dionysian, *that* is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. (*TI* What I Owe to the Ancients 5)

Nietzsche explains about the ‘Dionysian’ that ‘the desire for *destruction*, change, and becoming can be an expression of an overflowing energy that is pregnant with future’ (*GS* 370). The Dionysian artist is capable of transcending and triumphing over the hardest problems as result of discharging his overflowing energy in the process of self-creation. This process involves a constant inner labour: ‘All the great artists have been great workers, inexhaustible not only in invention but also in rejecting, sifting, transforming, ordering.’ (*HAH* I 155). The Dionysian artist is able to transform the world of forces into forms and rhythms with his creative artistic power and, finally, life is created as a work of art. Thus Zarathustra claims that ‘your virtue is your self and not something foreign, a skin, a cloak, that is the truth form the foundation of your souls, you who are virtuous’ (*Z* II On the Virtuous). For Nietzsche, being virtuous is the expression of a creative process.

Art is the product of a creative process, involving the actions and desires of the artist. The question is how one can transform one’s life into a work of art. Nietzsche provides us with this clue: ‘The individual becomes convinced that he can do just about everything and *can manage almost any role*, and everybody experiments with himself, improvises, makes new experiments, enjoys his experiments; and all nature ceases and becomes art’ (*GS* 356). Art manifests itself in a unique way by means of the artist’s subtle creative will power. The decisive factor in being an artist is to have ‘a tremendous drive to bring out the main features so that the others disappear in the process.’ This gives rise to ‘the feeling of increased strength and fullness’ (*TI* Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 8). Nietzsche considers the strongest instinct as the will to power (*TI* What I Owe to the Ancients 3). The great will to act applies to various artistic creations, such as that of ‘the actor, the mime, the dancer,



the musician, and the lyric poet [who] are basically related in their instincts and, at bottom, one' (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 11). Nietzsche insists that 'the highest feeling of power and sureness finds expression in a *grand style*', which implies 'the power which no longer needs any proof, which spurns pleasing, which does not answer lightly, which feels no witness near, which lives oblivious of all opposition to it, which reposes within itself, fatalistically, a law among laws' (*TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 11). In the end, this piece of artwork that is life represents the expression of the artist's will to power. '*The grand style*' is, according to Nietzsche, 'an expression of the "will to power" itself' (*WLN* 11[138]). He urges us to be artists of life by giving style to our character, to transform ourselves into being 'a great and rare art'. This art

is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed — both times through long practice and daily work at it. ... In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste! (*GS* 290)

Such a 'single taste' is the result of the will to power expressing itself in its extreme form. The 'Dionysiac world-artist,' Nietzsche says, 'has forgotten how to walk and talk and is on the brink of flying and dancing, up and away into the air above. ... Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: all nature's artistic power reveals itself here, amidst shivers of intoxication, to the highest, most blissful satisfaction of the primordial unity' (*BT* 1). In this state of existence the dancer and the dance are unified. To create life as a work of art, like a dance, is a constant process that only manifests itself in its performance. Thus Nietzsche notes of the spirit of a philosopher that 'the dance is his ideal, also his art' (*GS* 381). According to Nietzsche, the philosophers of the present and the future should actualize their ideal in dancing, that is in deed, not in hypothesizing.

Nietzsche's concept 'Dionysian' relates to 'a *supreme deed*' and in Zarathustra who is capable of transcending all contradictions and opposites, 'all opposites are blended into a new unity' (*EH Z* 6). While Nietzsche asserts a unity of opposites which can be expressed in the life of the Dionysian artist, the authors of the *I Ching* believe such a unity comes into being through following the Decree of Heaven as it



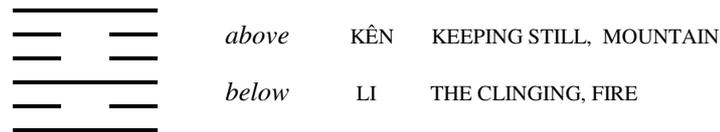
extends to the human world as moral order. Nietzsche asserts artistic self-creation to make possible the primordial unity, so that the Dionysian artist experiences life ‘as a profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things’ (*SE* 5). This notion of the basic oneness of the universe appears as the core of Chinese philosophy. The Chinese sensibility acknowledges change as inevitable, but simultaneously it appreciates the unity and harmony of heaven and humanity as the highest achievement of man. Confucius (1993:24) admonishes: ‘Set your heart on the Way, base yourself on virtue, rely on humaneness, and take your relaxation in the arts.’ Being moral seems to be a prerequisite for an achievement of unity, especially in the Confucian school of thought.

Unlike Confucius, Nietzsche champions an aesthetic approach to existence rather than a moral approach. He states that ‘in thought the Dionysiac, as a higher order of the world, is contrasted with a common and bad order of things’ (*DWV* 3). In fact, the moral judgement of good or bad cannot be applied to an aesthetic phenomenon, for instance, the value of the play of the child in the metaphor, which could not be determined by any external rules and criteria. ‘Beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ an old saying goes.

According to Nietzsche, the artist who follows his Dionysian nature to become what he is enjoys constraint and interprets his environment ‘as *free* nature: wild, arbitrary, fantastic, disorderly, and surprising’ (*GS* 290) in the process of self-creation. Nietzsche indicates that ‘it will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own,’ while ‘it is the weak characters without power over themselves that *hate* the constraint of style’ (*GS* 290). The Dionysian artist strives for the former achievement so as to become what he is in his dance, while the spirit of art in the *I Ching* seems to dance according to the rhythm of society and tradition rather than laying down its own law. However, there is also another interpretation of the constraint of tradition in the *I Ching*.

In his work ‘The Spirit of Art’ R. Wilhelm (1995:194) indicates that some hexagrams in the *I Ching* express, inwardly, the spirit of art, the art of the imagination, and outwardly ‘the art of conduct, the art of fashioning life forms and their results.’ The hexagram *Pi/Grace*, which stands for imaginative art, serves as an example: ‘Grace — beauty of form — is necessary in any union if it is to be well

ordered and pleasing rather than disordered and chaotic' (1950:90). The Tao is the energy that inspires the line with real meaning, causing form to have order so that everything will be in its proper place. This hexagram demonstrates a tranquil beauty, the union of clarity within and quiet without. The nature of this hexagram demonstrates the Chinese interpretation of the spirit of art:

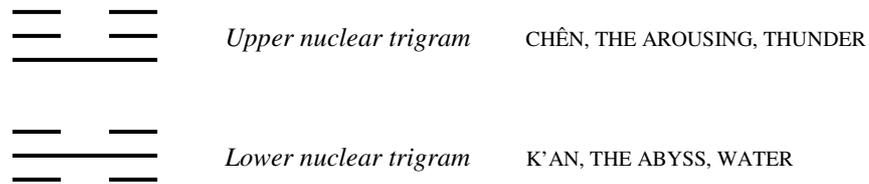


The lower trigram represents *Li*, image of fire, which breaks out and blazes upward, illuminating and beautifying the mountain, represented by the upper trigram *Kên*. 'In the lower trigram of fire a yielding line comes between two strong lines and make them beautiful, but the strong lines are the essential content and the weak line is the beautifying form' (1950:90). A strong line at the top of the upper trigram, heading two yielding lines, also implies the strong element as the decisive factor. Thus in nature the life of the world depends on the light of the sun, but to the strong there are added pleasing diversities by the moon and stars. 'In human affairs, aesthetic form comes into being when traditions exist that, strong and abiding like mountains, are made pleasing by a lucid beauty' (1950:91). In the 'Commentary on the Decision' of this hexagram it is said:

'GRACE has success.' The yielding comes and gives form to the firm; therefore, 'Success.' A detached firm line ascends and gives form to the yielding; therefore, 'In small matters it is favourable to undertake something.' This is the form of heaven. Having form, clear and still: this is the form of men. If the form of heaven is contemplated, the changes of time can be discovered. If the forms of men are contemplated, one can shape the world. (1950:495)

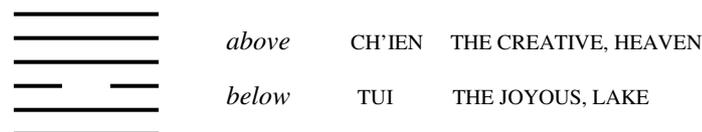
This passage indicates that the yang principle appears as the content and the yin principle as the form. In the lower trigram the central yin line gives form to the two yang lines, and thus brings about success. The construction of the upper trigram implies that the detached yang line, by lending content, indirectly gives the two yin lines the possibility of attaining form. The form of heaven is symbolized by the upper and lower trigrams, as well as the upper and lower nuclear trigrams. The lower trigram *Li* is the sun, and the lower nuclear trigram *K'an* is the moon; the upper

trigram *Kên*, by its stillness, stands for the constellations, and the upper nuclear trigram *Chên*, by its movement, stands for the Great Bear:



The upper nuclear trigram *Chên*, Thunder and ‘The Arousing’, is formed when the top line is discarded; the lower nuclear trigram *K’an*, Water and ‘The Abyss’, is formed when the bottom line is discarded. Wilhelm (1995:199) indicates that the two trigrams, *K’an* and *Chên*, ‘are the hidden nuclear trigrams, and because they are embraced by two strong lines — one above and one below — the work of art is invested with tension and rhythm. Internal tension, produced by the descending Abyss and the ascending Arousing, reveals the internal structure of the art work, a structure produced by the union of spiritual and soul elements.’ The heavenly form applied to human life implies that the form of man should be shaped in accordance with the Tao, clarity (*Li*) and stillness (*Kên*). It is ‘the clearly defined (*Li*) and the firmly established (*Kên*) rules of conduct, within which love (light principle) and justice (dark principle) build up the combinations of content and form’ (1950:496). Thus love is the content and justice is the form of human life. At the highest stage of development, form does not conceal content but rather brings out its value to the fullest, because perfect grace consists in the simple fitness of its form.

According to the *I Ching*, another aspect of art involves ‘the order of change, the art of action, in short, the art of living’ (Wilhelm 1995:224). Again, the art of living is expressed through behaviour in accordance with proper conduct and according to order. The hexagram *Lii/Trading* [*Conduct*] may serve as an example of this notion:



The upper trigram *Ch'ien*, ‘The Creative’, representing the father, is above and the lower trigram *Tui*, ‘The Joyous’, representing the youngest daughter, is below. The structure of this hexagram expresses the idea that the art of action is made possible by



means of proper conduct, as the youngest daughter walks behind the father. Of the eight trigrams, the trigram *Ch'ien*, image of Heaven, is the first and the trigram *Tui*, image of Lake, is the last. The explicit distance of the two produces order. Thus in The 'Image' of this hexagram it is said:

Heaven above, the lake below:

The image of TREADING.

Thus the superior man discriminates between high and low,

And thereby fortifies the thinking of the people. (1950:45 & 437)

Heaven stands for what is highest and the lake for what is lowest. Their differences in development imply a rule for conduct, as the youngest daughter follows her father obediently and joyfully. The core of proper conduct is differentiation, a dynamic differentiation of high and low. Wilhelm (1995:228) indicates that 'a person may be simple and modest, and yet somehow, somewhere a situation exists where a person can give or promote. In this way all mankind is harnessed into a coordinated system, a graded system of a movement from above to below, which is dynamic. Only because of this proper conduct arises.' The basic inequality in the human situation could bring about proper conduct according to an orderly system of human relationships.

The superior man creates differences between levels of society in accordance with differences in natural attributes, so that the thinking of the people is fortified. They are reassured when these differences correspond to nature. As the low spontaneously imitates the high, the differences in levels are productive. It is a force activated from within rather than forced from without. In this hexagram 'we see a universe moved from within, without external manipulation. And since the universe is also within the human being, internal universal order leads to order without by the force of necessary differentiation' (Wilhelm 1995:229). In order to follow his destiny a person has to consciously shape his being according to this transcendent relationship. As destiny is something creative, he has to find his appropriate place, like the youngest daughter has to follow her father, her inner creative force. A further point is made in the 'Judgment' of this hexagram:

TREADING. Treading upon the tail of the tiger.

It does not bite the man. Success. (1950:44 & 436)

The youngest daughter helplessly follows her father. Wilhelm (1995:230) indicates that the tiger does not bite the man, the daughter, 'because of his helplessness, this



helpless joy, which after all is the greatest power on earth.’ The tiger does not bite the smiling child. The art of action ‘presupposes being childlike in its highest sense, it presupposes that the joy of heart, internal joy, is preserved intact, and inner trust is offered to one and all’ (Wilhelm 1995:230-231). Thus the hexagram consisting of the trigram *Tui*, joyousness, within and *Ch’ien*, strength, without indicates the core of proper conduct, which is the art of living.

The *I Ching* asserts a certain kind of living that always involves submission to order and a voluntary withdrawal or resignation in confronting danger. Nietzsche, however, prefers a warlike attitude to the process of self-overcoming and self-creating. Thus, although Zarathustra’s first and third metamorphoses might show affinity with the Chinese sensibility, his second metamorphosis seems to be in opposition to it. While Zarathustra employs his three metamorphoses to symbolize the different stages of the spiritual transformation of the evolving spirit, the first hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative* of the *I Ching* depicts the six steps of the self-transformation of the dragon.

#### 3.5.4. The Chinese metamorphoses

Because the holy man is clear as to the end and the beginning, as to the way in which each of the six stages completes itself in its own time, he mounts on them toward heaven as though on six dragons. (1950:371)

The first hexagram of the sixty-four hexagrams of the *I Ching* is the hexagram *Ch’ien/Creative*. The way of the Creative involves metamorphosis. Wilhelm (1977:47) indicates that ‘the word *metamorphosis* means a revolution, a transformation that makes something new out of something old. Such a transformation is the first principle of all creation, cultural as well as artistic.’ The dragon, the creative force which is the image attributed to all the lines, demonstrates different stages of transformation. In the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of this hexagram, it is said:

Great indeed is the sublimity of the Creative, to which all beings owe their beginning and which permeates all heaven. (1950:370)

The attributes of the sublimity and success of the hexagram *Ch’ien/Creative* manifest themselves in the creative force in nature, as ‘the clouds pass and the rain falls’



(1950:379), and also in creative beings. The creative force takes shape correspondingly in the sage who is in harmony with the creative power of heaven. The holy man, or the sage, who understands the mysteries of creation inherent in end and beginning, life and death, growth and decay, and who recognizes how these opposites balance one another, becomes superior to the limitations of change and transience. He is aware of every moment and uses the six stages of growth as if they were six dragons on which he mounts toward heaven. In this way the attributes of sublimity and success of the Creative are manifested in the sage.

The other two attributes of the Creative, the power to further and power to persevere, are explained in their relation to the creative force in nature. The style of the Creative which is continuous movement and development is shown in the transformation of the six dragons in the six firm lines. Through this creative force all things are gradually changed until they are totally transformed in their manifestations. Thus each thing receives the nature appropriate to it, which is called its appointed destiny. This is expressed in the idea of furthering. When each thing finds its style, a great harmony will arise in the world. This is shown in the idea of perseverance. The six individual lines represent the six stages of growth in the creative process in which at the same time the fate of the sage is reflected.

The text of the bottom line is: 'Hidden dragon. Do not act' (1950:7 & 373). This is because 'the light-giving force is still below' (1950:373). Wilhelm (1977:44) indicates that the word *hidden* 'literally means: submerged under the water, concealed in it, and water, naturally, is the dragon's original element.' The symbol of the light-giving force is the dragon which remains in the lowest place, still wholly hidden beneath the earth. The following advice is given at this stage: the major concern of the creative principle is concentration, going down into its own depth, so the situation is uncertain as to what will emerge. Any action is inappropriate. The significance of this short text as applied to the individual being is explained as follows:

This means a person who has the character of a dragon but remains concealed. He does not change to suit the outside world; he makes no name for himself. He withdraws from the world, yet is not sad about it. He receives no recognition, yet is not sad about it. If lucky, he carries out his principles; if unlucky, he withdraws with them. Verily, he cannot be uprooted; he is a hidden dragon. (1950:379)

Again, this passage emphasizes taking appropriate action according to the given situation. It is said that 'the superior man acts in accordance with the character that



has become perfected within him. This is a way of life that can submit to scrutiny on any day' (1950:379). However, the perfect character of the superior man differs from that of Nietzsche's overman. While the former might withdraw with his principles, the latter acts according to his will; while the former might withdraw from the world as emphasized by the word 'hidden', the latter overcomes resistances by means of his will power. 'Being hidden means that he is still in concealment and not given recognition, that if he should act he would not as yet accomplish anything. In this case the superior man does not act' (1950:379). Whether recognition is received or not seems to Nietzsche to have no impact on the natural play of forces.

In the second line, the situation is changed because the dragon does not remain below but emerges from the water. The text of this line says: 'Dragon appearing in the field. It furthers one to see the great man'. What does the text signify? It is explained that

this means a man who has the character of a dragon and is moderate and correct. Even in ordinary speech he is reliable. Even in ordinary actions he is careful. He does away with what is false and preserves his integrity. He improves his era and does not boast about it. His character is influential and transforms men (1950:380)

The situation shows that it is still not the time to act, because the field is not the proper realm for a dragon. Its realm is in the water or in heaven. In the course of the creative process, the form is not yet validly shaped.

The words 'moderate', 'reliable', 'careful' are used to describe the qualities of 'the man who has the character of a dragon.' However, these qualities seem to be in opposition to that of the lion, which is the form of Zarathustra's second metamorphosis. The difference lies in the desire for a ruler apparent in the *I Ching*:

'Dragon appearing in the field.' The reason is that he is not needed as yet.

'Dragon appearing in the field.' Through him the whole world attains beauty and clarity. (1950:380)

These lines describe the Chinese philosophical tradition of a desire for the presence of a sage-ruler who would bring beauty and clarity to the world. Such an ideal has been criticized. Zhu Xi, for instance, is criticized for his 'naiveté of placing his hopes on a sage-ruler' (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:113). Lloyd Sciban (in Shen & Oxtoby 2004:77) also indicates that 'the Confucian perspective can be criticized for being too trustful of human willingness to pursue good, thereby allowing for abuse of power and



rationalization of suspicious behavior.’ The conviction that ‘being the most virtuous was sufficient condition to rule’ meant that ‘rulers were trusted to do the morally right thing.’ The desire for the sage-ruler to establish the Great Society remains the hope of many generations, yet it appears to be in vain and especially in the Confucian school of thought it leads to recollection of the good old days of the three legendary emperors Yao, Shun and Yu. As a society is established by its members, to aim at creating a promising future for generations by means of the elevation of the ‘style’ of each and every citizen is more feasible than placing hope on a sage-ruler. Advice for this stage of self-development is as follows:

The superior man learns in order to gather material; he questions in order to sift it. Thus he becomes generous in nature and kindly in his actions. (1950:380)

The following line indicates danger inherent in the situation: ‘All day long the superior man is creatively active. At nightfall his mind is still beset with cares. Danger. No blame’ (1950:380). The Master accounts for the significance of the text in this way:

The superior man improves his character and labours at his task. It is through loyalty and faith that he fosters his character. By working on his words, so that they rest firmly on truth, he makes his work enduring. He knows how this is to be achieved and achieves it; in this way he is able to plant the right seed. He knows how it is to be brought to completion and so completes it; thereby he is able to make it truly enduring. For this reason he is not proud in his superior position nor disappointed in an inferior one. Thus he is creatively active and, as circumstances demand, careful, so that even in a dangerous situation he does not make a mistake. (1950:381)

This passage also indicates that one has to adapt to circumstances and to perform carefully what these demand in order not to make any mistakes when confronting danger. Such an idea seems not to be present in the characteristics of the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, who sets sail to the unknown on an uncertain sea in order to attain experience and who prefers to ‘live dangerously’ (GS 283). The notion of living dangerously is never encouraged in the *I Ching*. Nietzsche remarks that ‘with the unknown, one is confronted with danger, discomfort, and care; the first instinct is to abolish these painful states’ (TI The Four Great Errors 5). The *I Ching* seems to desire a sense of security and self-preservation for its readers.

The text of the fourth line of the hexagram *Ch’ien/The Creative* says: ‘Wavering flight over the depths. No blame’ (1950:381). The fourth line is the first



line in the field of the upper trigram in which the superior man might start to try his strength. This refers to a situation in which one is about to transform oneself and which requires decision. It is said:

‘Wavering flight over the depths.’ He tests his powers.

‘Wavering flight over the depths.’ Here the way of the Creative is about to transform itself. (1950:382)

The situation of the fourth line involves artistic creation in a broad sense, namely that of living. How does such artistic creation come into being?

The Master said: In ascent or descent there is no fixed rule, except that one must do nothing evil. In advance or retreat no sustained perseverance avails. Except that one must not depart from one’s nature. The superior man fosters his character and labours at his task, in order to do everything at the right time. Therefore he makes no mistake. (1950:381)

The constant labour of fostering one’s character according to one’s nature seems to correlate to Nietzsche’s idea of ‘becoming what one is’. However, the emphasis on doing ‘nothing evil’ and doing ‘everything at the right time’ presents moral criteria for the artistic creation of the superior man in the *I Ching*, while the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, who acts beyond good and evil, aims to master his own fate and create his own world according to his own law.

The fifth line is the ruling line of the symbol of the Creative: ‘Flying dragon in the heavens. It furthers one to see the great man’ (1950:374). The dragon is no longer wavering, because it has raised itself into its own element. It is in heaven where it can flourish. The flying dragon in the heavens represents ‘a supreme way of ruling’ in a position ‘appropriate to heavenly character’ (1950:382). The presence of the sage assures the success of creation:

Things that accord in tone vibrate together. Things that have affinity in their inmost natures seek one another. Water flows to what is wet, fire turns to what is dry. Clouds follow the dragon, wind follows the tiger. Thus the sage rises, and all creatures follow him with their eyes. What is born of heaven feels related to what is above. What is born of earth feels related to what is below. Each follows its kind. (1950:382)

This passage indicates that the presence of the sage is important, as he attracts the divine types that bring about creation. The success of the sage seems to lie in a favourable external environment rather than in triumph over resistance. This excessive reliance on the sage seems to imply that although all creatures transform



according to their own nature, the rise of the sage enables them to follow rather than to create in their own style. In following the principles of heaven and earth,

the great man accords in his character with heaven and earth; in his light, with the sun and moon; in his consistency, with the four seasons; in the good and evil fortune that he creates, with gods and spirits. When he acts in advance of heaven, heaven does not contradict him. When he follows heaven, he adapts himself to the time of heaven. (1950:382-383)

The sage who has a heavenly character is able to follow the principles of heaven and earth and to adapt himself to the external environment. A favourable situation without any contradictions allows the sage to function in society with great satisfaction and admiration. In fact, in submitting to the Decree of Heaven the sage subjugates himself to the interplay of the forces, rather than to transcend the polar forces of opposites. This also diverges from Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch*. While the Chinese sage prefers to obey the Decree of Heaven, Nietzsche asserts the will to power to overcome resistance and the waves of forces.

The very favourable situation represented by the fifth line of the hexagram *Ch'ien/Creative* is changed into an unfavourable one in the sixth line, the top line of the hexagram. This implies that when yang forces reach their extreme, yin forces come into being. The text reads: 'Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent' (1950:9 & 383). The word 'arrogance' implies that 'one knows how to press forward but not how to draw back, that one knows existence but not annihilation, knows something about winning but nothing about losing' (1950:383). Thus one has to be aware of going to the extreme, for the text implies that 'everything that goes to extremes meets with misfortune' (1950:383). The importance of the presence of the sage, or the holy man, is emphasized because

it is only the holy man who understands how to press forward and how to draw back, who knows existence and annihilation as well, without losing his true nature. The holy man alone can do this. (1950:383)

The word 'alone', however, may suggest an excessive praise of the holy man. The capability and function of the holy man or sage in the society seems to be overemphasized and exaggerated and the potential of each individual is thus disregarded. The overall result would be over-reliance on the sage to make the world right, and discouraging the individual from making a difference, ignoring individual effort. In fact, each member of a society has the potential to make a valuable



contribution to the society and even to attain enlightenment. The sage can only give guidance, but the attainment of enlightenment involves personal experience, depending on individual effort, not on the sage's knowledge. An individual who acquires such experience is, as described in Master Hui Neng's (1998:23) metaphor, like a water-drinker who knows how hot or how cold the water is, because the experience of the hotness or coldness of water cannot be attained by means of knowledge, but rather through actual practice.

Master Hui Neng (1998:29) indicates that each individual, whether a wise man or an ignorant man, has the potential to attain enlightenment, depending on their own practice, because 'what the ignorant merely talk about, wise men put into actual practice with their mind'. The Sixth Patriarch (1998:33) asserts that 'the ignorant may attain sudden enlightenment, and their mind thereby becomes illuminated. Then they are no longer different from the wise man.' Whereas Master Hui Neng holds sudden enlightenment as a possibility, Mencius (1970:199) stresses the process of self-cultivation:

The desirable is called 'good'. To have it in oneself is called 'true'. To possess it fully in oneself is called 'beautiful', but to shine forth with this full possession is called 'great'. To be great and be transformed by this greatness is called sage; to be sage and to transcend the understanding is called 'divine'.

The passage shows that the 'good' is the point of departure in the process of self-cultivation and defined as desirable by Mencius. But the desirable seems to correspond to acting in conformity to accepted social values and norms rather than according to individual preference and creativity, because Mencius (1970:185) exhorts: 'do not do what others do not choose to do; do not desire what others do not desire. That is all.' This way of self-cultivation is that of the evolving spirit, which is over-loaded with moral burdens, and which takes the form of a camel in Zarathustra's first metamorphosis. In Chinese philosophy the metamorphosis from a over-loaded camel to playing child is apparent, but not the fighting spirit who takes the form of a lion. However, there is mention in *Chuang Tzu* of a mysterious transformation.

Zarathustra opens with 'On the Three Metamorphoses' to raise hope for the future development of humanity. Chuang Tzu, too, begins his book with a myth to account for the mysterious quality of ultimate self-transformation. Allinson (1989:24) indicates that 'the general objective of the *Chuang-Tzu* is the self-transformation of the reader.' Chuang Tzu's myth of ultimate self-transformation seems to correspond



to Nietzsche's idea of those '*incomprehensible ones*' who keep on growing and changing, which is the destiny of a dancing spirit, as Nietzsche asserts that 'we grow in *height*', and 'we ourselves keep growing, keep changing' (GS 371). Chuang Tzu (1968:29) begins his book in this way:

In the northern darkness there is a fish and his name is K'un.<sup>14</sup> The K'un is so huge I don't know how many thousand li he measures. He changes and becomes a bird whose name is P'eng. The back of the P'eng measures I don't know how many thousand li across and, when he rises up and flies off, his wings are like clouds all over the sky. When the sea begins to move, this bird sets off for the southern darkness, which is the Lake of Heaven.

Heaven represents light, while 'the Lake of Heaven' represents darkness. The principles of yin and yang, or dark and light, are always at work not only in the macrocosm of the universe but also in the microcosm of living things. While the fish lives in the sea, darkness, the bird flies in the sky, light. The mystical transformation suggests the possibility of self-transformation, as the fish possess the inner capacity of transforming itself into another creature. The transformed creature is a bird, generally associated with freedom and transcendence. The two monstrous creatures carry a message that 'the capacity for self-transformation lies within us, and that the outcome of this is the attainment of freedom and happiness' (Allinson 1989:42). This message is also conveyed in the metaphor of the playing child of Zarathustra's third metamorphosis.

The process of self-transformation is a feature shared by Nietzsche and Chuang Tzu, but in the dragon of *The Creative* Nietzsche's warlike attitude towards life cannot be seen. What Nietzsche emphasizes about the free spirit is its super-abundant strength and incredible ability of self-overcoming the restraints and dangers of transient human existence. However, for the holy men of the *I Ching*, to act at the right time and in the right manner is crucial for avoiding danger and restraints. Chuang Tzu (1968:30) indicates that P'eng's flight depends on appropriate time and conditions, because 'if wind is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up great wings. Therefore when the P'eng rises ninety thousand li, he must have the wind under him like that. Only then can he mount on the back of the wind, shoulder the blue sky, and nothing can hinder or block him. Only then can he set his

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<sup>14</sup> *K'un* means fish roe. Watson (1968:29) indicates that 'Chuang Tzu begins with a paradox — the tiniest fish imaginable is also the largest fish imaginable.'



eyes to the south.’ The strength of the P’eng relies on enough wind, which signifies the importance of acting at the right time and in the right way.

The situation expressed by the hexagram as a whole is called ‘time’. Both firm and yielding lines might be favourable or unfavourable with regard to the time requirement of their respective hexagrams. If the time calls for firmness, then firm lines are favourable, but if the time requires giving way, then yielding lines are favourable. If the relationship between lines in a hexagram is said to be correct, generally the result is favourable, but time conditions also play an important role in the result. For example, in the hexagram *Lü/The Wanderer*, a wanderer in a foreign place cannot easily find his proper place, so it is important to grasp the meaning of the time. Thus in the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ of this hexagram it is said that ‘the meaning of the time of THE WANDERER is truly great’ (1950:675). If one is in accord with time, then one’s action will bring about success. With regard to the hexagram *Tun/Retreat*, the ‘Commentary on the Decision’ also asserts the importance of time in the action of withdrawal:

‘RETREAT. Success’: this means that success lies in retreating.

The firm is in the appropriate place and finds correspondence. This means that one is in accord with the time. ...

Great indeed is the meaning of the time of RETREAT. (1950:551)

This hexagram emphasizes that to retreat at the right moment and in the right manner is the decisive factor of success. In this sense, although being in the right place at the right time may be regarded as a matter of fate, one’s will to perform an action might also play an important role in attaining success. Furthermore, in the commentary on the third line of the hexagram *Ch’ien/Creative*, it is said: ‘ “All day long [the superior man] is creatively active.” He moves with the time’ (1950:381). To act according to the demand of a situation is always the core of the *I Ching*, so the dragon should act according to what the time requires:

The nine in the third place shows redoubled firmness and is moreover not in a central place. On the one hand, it is not yet in the heavens above; on the other hand, it is no longer in the field below. Therefore one must be creatively active and, as circumstances demand, careful. Then, despite the danger, no mistake is made. (1950:381)

Being ‘careful’ and making ‘no mistake’ in this passage requires that creative action should be taken. The idea of overcoming and triumphing over resistance and danger



seems to be absent from the *I Ching* when, in fact, danger appears as a stimulant to attain spiritual growth. This idea is asserted by Master Hui Neng (1998:37) in this way:

The Kingdom of Buddha is in this world,  
Within which enlightenment is to be sought.  
To seek enlightenment by separating from this world  
is as absurd as to search for a rabbit's horn.  
Right views are called 'transcendental';  
Erroneous views are called 'worldly.'  
When all views, right or erroneous, are discarded  
Then the essence of Bodhi appears.

Whether a situation is regarded as 'transcendental' or 'worldly' depends on one's point of view, while nature remains as it is neither being right or erroneous. All phenomena arise and cease, constantly changing, due to causes and conditions. Thus, in Buddhism the first Dharma Seal is impermanence, or 'becoming' in Nietzsche's language, or change as emphasized in the title of the *I Ching*. The second Dharma Seal is Non-self, the illusory nature of the 'I', recognized as the dreamer in Nietzsche's and Chuang Tzu's writings. These ideas together with the principles of the yin and yang on which the fundamental laws of the *I Ching* are based may seem unfamiliar to some Westerners who insist on reason and knowledge in explaining the visible physical world. Nietzsche states that

around everything accessible to reason and investigation there lies a misty and deceptive girdle of quagmire, a band of the impenetrable, indefinable, and eternally fluid. It is precisely through the contrast it presents to the realm of darkness at the edge of the world of knowledge that the bright world of knowledge close to us is continually enhanced in value. (WS 16)

Although the authors of the *I Ching* as well as Nietzsche recognize that the physical world is brought forth by the interplay between the realm of darkness and that of brightness, the former affirm moral order and moral values as supreme because of deriving from the laws of Heaven. Nietzsche asserts that 'existence, as something like a work of art, does not fall under the jurisdiction of morality at all' and defines his own position: 'to place myself outside all praise and blame, independent of all past and present, in order to run after my own goal in my own way' (WLN 36[10]). On the one hand, Nietzsche's disregard of praise and blame seems to accord with Master Hui



Neng's teaching that 'when all views, right or erroneous, are discarded, then the essence of Bodhi appears.' On the other hand, his emphasis on the creativity of life as a work of art seems to discard harmony in human relationships. The holy sages of the *I Ching* constantly emphasize harmonious relationships within and without.

The authors of the *I Ching* believe man to be confined by the factors of time and conditions in every situation, so that individual fate seems to subjugate individual creativity. However, fate may not be used as a feeble excuse to do nothing. For example, when an individual draws the hexagram *Ch'ien/The Creative*, 'it means that success will come to him from the primal depths of the universe and that everything depends upon his seeking his happiness and that of others in one way only, that is, by perseverance in what is right' (1950:4). The authors of the *I Ching* insist that one adapts to one's proper position and situation in confronting one's fate. Solomon (2003:191) indicates that 'being born into wealth and privilege as opposed to hardship or poverty was considered definitive of one's fate by the ancient Chinese' and also that the Chinese consider 'the fate of the individual in the context of the times (*shi*, or *shi ming*)', so that the time one is born has an invincible impact on the life one lives. Solomon (2003:191) gives some examples:

Just think of the twentieth century, from Sun Yat-sen's revolution that created the republic to the Japanese invasion in the 1930s to Mao's revolution in the 1940s to the horrors of the "Great Leap Forward" and the Cultural Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. ( ... brutally clear how personal initiative is bound and geared to larger necessities.) In such circumstances, it is virtually impossible to avoid thinking of one's life as bound and determined by forces much larger than oneself, how one may rail against that fate or resolve to make one's way in the face of it.

To accept fate and surrender oneself to fate is emphasized in the *I Ching*, as 'to follow the order of their nature and of fate' (1950:264) is the calling of the holy sages who wrote the *Book of Changes*. Chinese fatalism seems to disregard each person's uniqueness and individuality. Its emphasis on moral order seems to aim at self-preservation, not only for the individual, but for the family, society and the country. Nietzsche's critique of the judgment of 'good' and 'evil' runs: 'one holds that what is called good preserves the species, while what is called evil harms the species' (GS 4). As the emperors of each dynasty in China attempted to maintain their authority, Chinese fatalism has made people remain on the lowest level of need, the



need for self-preservation rather than the need for self-actualization. In this respect Chinese thought differs from the vision of Nietzsche.

Solomon (2003:192) indicates that Nietzsche's fatalism and his sense of responsibility are based on the idea of self-creation: 'it is by way of cultivation and to some extent the invention of one's self that new values will be invented and old values revalued.' Solomon (2003:192) notes that

Nietzsche's fatalism is both a goad and a challenge to become who we are, to discover, explore, and develop our talents, to scrutinize ourselves and suffer through the agonies and humiliations of 'going under,' to realize our 'destines' through courage, intelligence, hard work, and discipline. In short, Nietzsche tells us to 'create ourselves' and with that 'invent new values,' but always *in accordance with* our inborn abilities and limitations.

Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch* advances an idea of growth. In fact, growth is made possible by the experience of 'going under.' For Nietzsche, 'going under' means to benefit humanity as the sun does. 'Like the sun, Zarathustra too wants to go under,' and Zarathustra claims that 'I want to go to men once more; under their eyes I want to go under' (Z III On Old and New Tablets 3). Zarathustra states: 'Verily, like the sun I love life and all deep seas. And this is what perceptive knowledge means to me: all that is deep shall rise up to my heights' (Z II On Immaculate Perception). What Nietzsche means by 'height' involves the notion of creating oneself as a sun whose love overflows to humanity. The way to arise to such a height is through the deep human sea, that is through helping others while creating oneself. This is why Master Hui Neng (1998:37) affirms that 'the Kingdom of Buddha is in this world, within which enlightenment is to be sought.' This love of humanity is further characterized by Zarathustra: 'All solar love is innocence and creative longing' (Z II On Immaculate Perception). Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch* involves growth, which involves the wisdom of self-creating, building to the height of the sun and descending from there to bring love to the human sea. In fact, such a way of living represents the path of the Bodhisattva. Zarathustra is described as '*the teacher of the eternal recurrence*' (Z III The Convalescent 2). This dance of the eternal recurrence is the dance of the Bodhisattva in Buddhism, which I will explore in the concluding chapter.

The holy sages of the *I Ching* assert the human potential for being and doing good. Doing evil deeds proceeds from being contaminated by a polluted external



environment and ignorance of the emptiness of the self. The recognition of ‘impermanence’ and ‘non-self’ enables bodhisattvas to triumph over the polluted external world, and also over ‘the great sickness, the great nausea, the great seasickness’ (Z III On Old and New Tablets 28) which Zarathustra experiences. I propose an answer which derives from both the *I Ching*’s ideal of the superior man or sage and from Nietzsche’s philosophy. I consider the answer to lie in the dance of the Bodhisattva, which I will discuss in the next chapter.