

# THE YIJING AS ORACLE BONE'S SIDEKICK<sup>1</sup>

## THE MEANING AND IMPLICATIONS OF HENG 亨 IN THE CONTEXT OF YI DIVINATION

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Personally I find the character *heng* 亨, mostly translated as 'success' (Wilhelm) or 'offering' (Rutt), one of the most difficult characters to explore. The etymological dictionaries give various explanations of the origin of this character, often contradicting each other, which makes it problematic to arrive at a decisive conclusion about the meaning of *heng* 亨. The character is often considered synonymous with *xiang* 享, a character that also is used in the text of the Yijing. If we compare how the two are used, and in which context (if available), alongside with the variant characters that are used in the excavated Yi texts, we might be able to define the meaning of both characters more clearly within the context of the Yi. However, the context also has implications for our view of the Zhouyi and its place in the history of divination in China.

### Appearance

*Heng* 亨 and *xiang* 享 appears about fifty times in the received text of the Yi (see the table at the end of this article). It is almost only used in the Judgment texts, with a few exceptions which we will deal with later. I mainly see three patterns in which *heng* 亨 is used.

#### *Pattern 1. On its own.*

This pattern occurs most. *Heng* 亨 is used as a 'stand-alone' character without any connection to the preceding or following text. Since context is (apparently) missing here *heng* 亨 can be a verb, a noun, etc.

#### *Pattern 2. Modified.*

In these instances *heng* 亨 is modified by an adjective. The following modifiers occur:

- *yuan* 元, 'great, grand' (hexagram 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 14-0, 17-0, 18-0, 19-0, 25-0, 46-0, 49-0)
- *xiao* 小, 'small' (56-0, 57-0)
- *guang* 光, 'glorious' (5-0)

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Luis Andrade for reading the first draft of this paper. His valuable comments and suggestions have improved the contents on several points. The errors and false assumptions that remain are the sole responsibility of the author.

元  
yuan

光  
guan

Apart from 'source, origin, beginning' *yuan* 元 also means 'great'. I choose this meaning because the Judgment texts of hexagram 56 and 57 mention a *xiao heng* 亨, a small *heng* 亨. *Guang* 光 is an oddball – it only occurs in the Judgment of hexagram 5. The character mainly refers to things that emit light, and it can be also be a verb, 'to radiate'. Sometimes, especially in bronze inscriptions, *guang* 光 is used as a loan character for *kuang* 𠄎, 'to grant, to bestow'<sup>1</sup>. But since *heng* 亨 is also preceded by *yuan* 元 and *xiao* 小, which are adjectives, I choose to translate *guang* 光 as an adjective as well, 'glorious', with the sense of 'grand' in it. Some, like Wen Yiduo 闻一多 believe that *guang* 光 is a miswritten form of *yuan* 元<sup>2</sup>, and indeed in today's script the characters look similar (光/元). But the early forms of *yuan* 元 and *guang* 光 were very different (see image), and it is unlikely that in the earliest time of the Zhouyi the characters were mixed up. In Zhouyi Jijie 周易集解 by Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚 (Tang Dynasty (618-908); dates unknown) the historian Gan Bao 干寶 (?-336) is quoted, saying that *guan* 光 means *da* 大, 'great'.<sup>3</sup>

### Pattern 3. 'Applied'.

*Heng* 亨 and *xiang* 享 are preceded by *yong* 用, 'to use' or 'apply' (14-3, 17-6, 41-0, 42-2, 46-4, 47-2). It tells us that *heng* 亨 and *xiang* 享 are something that can be used, that you can exercise. This sounds as if the word that follows *yong* 用 must be a noun, but in the Yi that is not always the case, as is shown at several places: 勿用取女, "don't exercise (the act of) marrying the woman" (hexagram 4, line 3), 用涉大川, "exercise (the act of) crossing the great river" (hexagram 15, line 1), etc. This usage of *yong* 用 seems to be reserved to the Yi and wasn't in use anymore in later times.<sup>4</sup>

### Variant characters

This might be the right time to talk about the variant characters used in the excavated manuscripts, because their usage in combination with *yong* 用 gives us some motives to adjust the received text of the Yi.

#### The Guodian manuscript

In the Guodian (GD) manuscript, also known as the Shanghai Museum manuscript, *heng* 亨 is most often replaced by a character which is transcribed as *qing* 卿. The GD form closely resembles the Small Seal script as found in the Shuowen dictionary: 卿, and when we trace it back to its form on oracle bone inscriptions (OBI) it hasn't changed much in more than thousand years. But on OBI the character 卿 is the mother of several later characters, one of which is *xiang* 饗. This is a known variant for *xiang* 享<sup>5</sup>, but this is a relatively late development. During the early days of the Zhou dynasty there was a slight distinction between 饗 and 享:

古文字鄉每讀為饗，絕大多數用於生人。（...）金文又有享字，多用於祭祀鬼神。（...）但二字亦有混用者。（...）劉雨《西周金文中的饗與燕》說：“在西周金文中，鄉（饗）與享，一用於生人，一用於鬼神，極個別混用者，可能是音同通假，二字的分別是相當嚴格的。”

In ancient script the character 鄉 has to be read as 饗 in every case, and in the majority of cases it is used with living persons. (...) In bronze inscriptions 享 is also used, but this character is mostly used for offerings to ghosts and spirits. (...) On the other hand, both characters are also used promiscuously. (...) In his article *Xian and yan in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions* Liu Yu says: "In Western Zhou bronze inscriptions 鄉(饗) and 享 are used, one is used for living people, and one is used for ghosts and spirits. Very rarely they are mixed up, their distinction is quite strict."<sup>6</sup>

If there was any distinction between 饗 and 享 that distinction disappeared in later times. In ancient times the character 饗 had the meaning of keeping a banquet, either for guests or for ghosts and ancestors, but it is also

<sup>1</sup> Wang 2008, p. 399. Karlgren identifies the bronze character as [𠄎+女], but says 'The identification of the graph is very uncertain', which means he isn't sure if 光 can be read as 𠄎 (Karlgren 1963-1967, p. 52).

<sup>2</sup> Wen 1993, Vol 10, p. 237; Rutt 1996, p. 298

<sup>3</sup> Li, p. 85

<sup>4</sup> Chi 1999, p. 738

<sup>5</sup> Luo e.a. 2001, vol. 12, p. 575

<sup>6</sup> Wang 2008, p. 400

used with the meaning of *enjoying* the offerings that are given.<sup>1</sup> In old texts several examples of this meaning can be found:


祝祭于祊、祀事孔明。  
先祖是皇、神保是饗。  
The priest sacrifices inside the temple gate,  
And all the service is complete and brilliant.  
Grandly come our progenitors;  
Their Spirits happily enjoy the offerings.<sup>2</sup>

腥肆爛臠祭，豈知神之所饗也？  
The flesh of the victim might be presented raw and as a whole, or cut up in pieces, or sodden, or thoroughly cooked;  
but how could they know whether the spirit enjoyed it?<sup>3</sup>


王三宿，三祭，三吒。上宗曰：饗。  
Thrice he slowly and reverently advanced with a cup of spirits (to the east of the coffin); thrice he sacrificed (to the spirit of his father); and thrice he put the cup down. The Minister of Religion said, 'It is accepted.'<sup>4</sup>

Especially the example from the Shujing is interesting as it uses *xiang* 饗 on its own, just as *heng* 亨 in pattern 1 mentioned above. It means that the offering is accepted and that the spirits will confer their blessings.

#### The Mawangdui manuscript

In the Mawangdui (MWD) manuscript *heng* 亨 is written in its earlier form , which leaves us nothing new to tell here. But if we go back to pattern 3 discussed above, in which *heng* 亨 and *xiang* 享 are 'applied' by *yong* 用, we notice something interesting:

		MWD	GD	FY	XP
14-3	公用亨于天子.小人弗克.	芳 			
17-6	拘係之.乃從維之.王用亨于西山.	芳  亨 	亨 	亨 	
41-0	二簋可用享.	芳 			
42-2	王用亨于帝.吉.	芳 			
47-2	困于酒食.朱紱方來.利用享祀.	芳 			亨 

Two times *heng* 亨 is replaced by *fang* 芳 in the MWD, and three times *xiang* 享 is replaced by it. The MWD text isn't the only document where *xiang* 用 is replaced by a 'fang' character. A Qin dynasty text excavated at Jiudian 九店 designates the third month of the year as *xiangyue* 享月, while another text, excavated at Shuihudi 睡虎地, names the third month *fangyue* 紡月.<sup>5</sup> The fact that the MWD text uses *fang* 芳 in all cases of '用X' might imply that X should be read as *xiang* 享, 'make an offering'. The GD text supports this view: at 17-6 it gives 亨, an old form of 享. Interestingly the 楚漢簡帛書典 dictionary of characters from silk and bamboo documents puts several different forms under *xiang* 享, even though their shapes are clearly different (see image on p. 11)<sup>6</sup>. The MWD character has an open base on top of a vertical line, which the other forms don't have. Therefore I regard  as *heng* 亨, while the other forms probably refer to *xiang*.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*; Karlgren 1972, p. 187

<sup>2</sup> Legge 1861, Vol. 4, p. 370

<sup>3</sup> Legge 1879, Vol. 27, p. 446

<sup>4</sup> Legge 1879, Vol. 3, p. 241

<sup>5</sup> Hubei-Wenwu-Kaogu-Yanjiusuo 2000, p. 6; Bai 2008, p. 280

<sup>6</sup> Zhi 1998, p. 65

## Proceed as planned

Back to *heng* 亨. If *heng* 亨 has the meaning of *xiang* 饗, 'the offering is accepted/enjoyed' then this might tell us something about the way the early form of the Zhouyi was used. It tells us that, before the Zhouyi was consulted, an offering was made, and that the outcome of the consultation indicated that the offering was accepted. *Yuan heng* 亨/*xiang* 饗 could indicate that a major offering (or the first offering) was accepted, whereas a *xiao heng* 亨/*xiang* 饗 indicated the acceptance of a smaller sacrifice.

I'm not the first to notice that *heng* 亨 might refer to a past event. In 2008 my good friend Luis Andrade wrote on the forum of Clarity:

Most of the instances of 亨 are in the Tuan Ci where they either stand on their own or are used in combination with modifiers like 元 (*yuan*→great, big, etc) or 小 (*xiao*→little, small). This gives me the impression, in context, that these instances are post-fact, a completion, a description of something that has happened. It is a passive description of something. In this case, and keeping it within the context of the discussion, the fruits of a "sacrifice" and, by inference, "success," as translated by Wilhelm (see Wilhelm's, 1.0 and passim, where 元亨 is translated as "sublime success"), for example.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, as Luis shows, the context, with the assistance of the GD text, implies that *heng* 亨 refers to something that has been completed, in this case the acceptance of an offering.

After the acceptance of the offering the oracle could be consulted. That is what the phrase *li zhen* 利貞 means: 'favourable to divine'. When the sacrifice was accepted you could proceed with the divination, knowing that the ancestors would approve your plans and that the divination would result in a positive outcome because the spirits were satisfied:

The duty of the diviner was to ensure that the appropriate offerings were made so that the future would be auspicious or, at least, so that calamity could be avoided by anticipating the needs of the spirits who could otherwise wreak havoc randomly. He thus proposed his offerings and cracked the bone. (...) Divinations about the future were the other side of this same system. They were an attempt to confirm that the spirits were satisfied with the offerings and that they had been received rather than an attempt to prophesy the future. A statement about what would happen was made in order to elicit a response. If the offerings were satisfactory, then the future would produce 'no misfortune'.<sup>2</sup>

The divination itself was a formal ceremony affirming the contract between the spirits and the king: the outcome that was desired was carved in the bone, along with the king's affirmation that it would be so. Divination with the Yijing can be compared with the charges that are found on the oracle bones:

[These charges] were (...) not questions, but predictions, wishes, statements of intent in search of spiritual approval. They did not provide answers about what to do; that had already been decided. They provided reassurance about what was being done—the offering of a scheduled sacrifice, the conduct of a hunt, the wishing for no misfortune in the coming week, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes the outcome was carved on the bone as well, and this verification would always confirm that the contract was fulfilled – there are hardly records of false outcomes, or broken contracts, so to say.<sup>4</sup>

## Milfoil used alongside bone oracle

The phrase *yuan heng li zhen* 元亨利貞 suggests that the Zhouyi was used *after* the offering and *before* the act of divination. Which may sound odd, because the Zhouyi itself is an oracle. But we know from old sources that milfoil oracles (which the Zhouyi supposedly is) and oracle bones, or tortoise divination, were used simultaneously:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.onlineclarity.co.uk/friends/showthread.php?p=66161#post66161> (retrieved February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> Allan 1991, p. 121. See also Smith 2008, p. 25

<sup>3</sup> Keightley 1988, p. 379

<sup>4</sup> For examples of wrong predicted outcomes see Keightley 1999.

凡國之大事，先筮而後卜。上春，相筮。凡國事，共筮。

In all important matters of state, milfoil divination is done first and then tortoise divination. At the beginning of the year, a new kind of milfoil is chosen. In all (minor) matters of state, recourse is had to milfoil divination.<sup>1</sup>

不見吉凶于蓍，復以卜何？蓍者、陽道多變，變乃成。

Why is it that when by the divination with the milfoil neither a favourable nor an unfavourable indication is to be seen divination with the tortoise-shell is resorted to? The milfoil follows the way of the yang; it has many permutations, and by its permutations [things] come to completion.<sup>2</sup>

The bone oracle seems to be superior to the milfoil oracle. Michael Loewe says about this:

While there are hints of a hierarchy whereby divination by tortoise-shells was regarded as being superior to that by yarrow-stalks, the evidence is somewhat conflicting. According to one passage, while the Son of Heaven does not divine with stalks, the leaders of the states (*zhuhou* 諸侯) do so; but they do not use the stalks when they are outside their own states, except when they are determining a place of residence. That statement that the Son of Heaven does not use tortoises to determine the situation of the ancestral shrine is explained on the grounds that he has already carried out divination by this means in order to establish the seat of his kingdom.<sup>3</sup> (...) From the foregoing references it would appear that divination by tortoise had acquired a higher place than that of yarrow stalks. In the Zhou Li however we may read that 'for major decisions of state, divination should be done first by stalks and then by tortoise shells.'<sup>4</sup>

Loewe interprets the passage from the Zhou Li as if it means that divination by tortoise is considered inferior to milfoil. But one can also say that, because tortoise is used after milfoil, the tortoise is decisive and can overrule the outcome of the milfoil. I believe that the bone oracle was a direct way to communicate with the ancestors, a quality that milfoil might have lacked, which might give the bone oracle a higher status than milfoil.

Zhu Bokun 朱伯崑 surmises that milfoil might have been a supplement to tortoise divination, and therefore considered a lesser oracle:

《左傳》僖公四年記載卜人的話說：“筮短龜長，不如從長。”這些評論，除表明龜卜的形式比占筮更加神秘外，還反映了一種情況：龜卜的歷史悠久，而點筮則比較晚出。或者說，占筮乃一種新的形式，被看成是對龜卜的補充，所以遭到卜人的輕視。

In the Zuo Zhuan, in the fourth year of the reign of Duke Xi it is recorded that a diviner said: “milfoil is short, tortoise is long; you had better follow the long”. Besides that this remark indicates that the method of divination by tortoise shells is more mysterious compared to milfoil, it also reflect another circumstance: the history of tortoise divination is long, whereas milfoil divination emerged relatively late. Perhaps one could say that the practice of milfoil divination was a new method, regarded as a supplement to tortoise divination, therefore it was met with contempt by the diviners who used tortoise shells.<sup>5</sup>

Zhu is expanding on the general accepted idea that the bone oracle is from the Shang and the milfoil, with its agricultural background, comes from the Zhou. But since milfoil doesn't leave an archaeological imprint there is

<sup>1</sup> Zhou Li 周禮, quoted in Lagerwey 2008, p. 407

<sup>2</sup> Ban e.a. 1949, p. 525. The translator adds in a footnote, “I must confess that the explanation here offered is not clear to me. In important affairs both methods of divination were employed, first by the milfoil, then by the tortoise-shell, the latter being decisive.” Luis Andrade suggested that “the milfoil follows the way of the yang” appears to attest to the statistical probabilities that favour a changing *yang* line, a 9, as opposed to a changing *yin* or a 6 (personal email).

<sup>3</sup> Loewe 1994, p. 165, paraphrasing the Liji 禮記: “子曰:「大人之器威敬。天子無筮; 諸侯有守筮。天子道以筮; 諸侯非其國不以筮。卜宅寢室。天子不卜處大廟。」 The Master said, ‘The shell and stalks employed by the great men must be held in awe and reverence. But the son of Heaven does not divine by the stalks. While the princes are keeping guard in their states, they divine by the stalks. When the son of Heaven is on the road (travelling), he (also) divines by the stalks. In any other state but their own they do not divine by the stalks. They consult the tortoise-shell about the chambers and apartments of the houses (where they lodge). The son of Heaven does not so consult the tortoise-shell he stays always in the grand ancestral temples.’ (tr. James Legge) Kong Yingda 孔穎達 says in his commentary to the Liji that before the Son of Heaven goes out the tortoise is consulted (‘始將出, 卜之’); when during travel he encounters small matters the milfoil is consulted (‘道有小事則用筮’). (Ma 2000, p. 1748) I don’t agree with Legge’s translation of 天子不卜處大廟, I follow Loewe’s version (‘the Son of Heaven does not use tortoises to determine the situation of the ancestral shrine’). The mentioning of tortoise divination for residences and chambers (‘卜宅寢室’) is interesting as it reminds of the phrase 利居貞 in the Zhouyi: ‘favourable for divinations about residences’ (3.1, 17-3), and 居貞吉: ‘divinations about residences will be auspicious’ (27-5, 29-6).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Zhu 2005, vol. 1, p. 8. See also Shaughnessy 1983, p. 59-60 for David Keightley’s thoughts on the subordinate position of the milfoil oracle.

no way we can be sure. It is interesting to notice that in two examples of Yi usage in the Zuo Zhuan the tortoise is consulted first, and when the answer isn't clear or trusted the milfoil is consulted as a second resort, or as backup.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of using milfoil together with the tortoise oracle is older than the passages from the Li Ji and the Zuo Zhuan. There existed a long tradition of using numerical figures, what nowadays are called *shuzigua* 數字卦, a group of three or more numbers stacked together:

Number sets belonging to the pre-*yinyang wuxing* era date as early as the Shang period when diviners recorded number sets onto the surfaces of hard materials – stone, bone, ceramic, metal, and bamboo (...). The earliest number sets were most often recorded on oracle bones that had been buried in mortuary contexts, such as tombs or pits in burial grounds or at building sites with possibly religious functions. As the link between oracle bones and ancestor worship can be traced back to the fourth millennium BCE, it is possible that stalk divination – the presumed method of number generation – extended farther back into time as well. During the early Western Zhou period (11<sup>th</sup> century – 771 BCE), diviners recorded sets of numbers on oracle bones and bronze sacrificial vessels. By the late Warring States period, they recorded them on bamboo texts both in the context of their use as an omen and as part of interpretative *yi* texts themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The number sets are found on oracle bones (see picture<sup>3</sup>), pottery, bronze objects and bamboo manuscripts, ranging from a period of 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE to ±300 BCE. Just as the hexagrams in the Yijing they are assumed to be generated by a kind of milfoil oracle. In studies of these number sets the numbers are often converted to *yin* and *yang* lines, even numbers being *yin* lines and odd numbers being *yang* lines. However, despite some similarities with hexagrams<sup>4</sup>, there is no evidence that these number sets are related to the hexagrams of the Yi<sup>5</sup>, or hexagrams in general, and since we don't know how these number sets were generated, turning them into hexagrams might give a wrong idea of their original formation and usage.



The fact that these number sets are found on oracle bones might be an indication that some sort of milfoil oracle existed during the Shang and Zhou period, and that it was used alongside the bone or tortoise oracle.<sup>6</sup>

### The images of the tortoise

In the Zuo Zhuan it is said that

龜，象也，筮，數也。

The tortoise-shell is images, the milfoil is numbers.<sup>7</sup>

The bone oracle produces images, the milfoil oracle generates numbers. Here we have one of the earliest references to the link of milfoil with numbers, and it immediately reminds us not only of the number sets discussed above, but also of the numbers six to nine that you get when you consult the Yi in the traditional manner, either by milfoil or coins. That oracle bones generate images can be seen in examples from the Li Ji and Zuo Zhuan:

石駘仲卒，無適子，有庶子六人，卜所以為後者。曰：「沐浴、佩玉則兆。」五人者皆沐浴、佩玉；石祁子曰：「孰有執親之喪而沐浴、佩玉者乎？」不沐浴、佩玉。石祁子兆。衛人以龜為有知也。

<sup>1</sup> Rutt 1996, p. 178-179, 182-184

<sup>2</sup> Cook 2006b, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> Cao 2002, p. 7

<sup>4</sup> For instance, just as in ancient Yi versions like the MWD and GD texts, the number sets in the Baoshan manuscripts are often separated in groups of three, like trigrams. (Cook 2006a, p. 161-162)

<sup>5</sup> Xing 2003, p. 95

<sup>6</sup> Li Xueqin 李學勤 believes the number sets from the Warring States bamboo documents should not be read as numbers but merely as hexagram pictures (chapter '论战国简的卦画' in Li 2006, p. 280-285). See also Wu 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Legge 1861, Vol. 5, p. 165+169



Shi Tai-gong died, leaving no son by his wife proper, and six sons by concubines. The tortoise-shell being consulted as to which of them should be the father's successor, it was said:

沐浴	<i>muyu</i>	bathing (and)
佩玉	<i>peiyu</i>	jade girdle pendants

...make the omen. Five of them accordingly bathed and put on the girdle-pendants with their gems. Shi Qi-zi, however, said, 'Whoever, being engaged with the mourning rites for a parent, bathed his head or his body, and put on his girdle-pendants?' and he declined to do either, and this was considered to be the indication. The people of Wei considered that the tortoise-shell had shown a (true) knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

孫文子卜追之，獻兆於定姜，姜氏問繇曰，兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。

Sun Wenzhi cracked a turtle-shell regarding pursuit, and then presented the crack to Ding Jiang. Lady Jiang asked him for the omen. He said:

兆如山陵	<i>zhao ru shanling</i>	A crack like a mountain overhanging
有夫出征	<i>you fu chuzheng</i>	There was a chief who led a raid
而喪其雄	<i>er sang qi xiong</i>	Instead, 'twas he who lost his braves. <sup>2</sup>

秦伯師于河上，將納王，狐偃言於晉侯曰，求諸侯莫如勤王，諸侯信之，且大義也，繼文之業，而信宣於諸侯，今為可矣，使卜偃卜之，曰，吉，遇黃帝戰于阪泉之兆，公曰，吾不堪也，對曰，周禮未改，今之王，古之帝也，公曰，筮之。

The earl of Qin was with an army on the He, intending to restore the king, when Hu Yan said to the marquis of Jin, "If you are seeking the adherence of the states, you can do nothing better than to show an earnest interest in the king's behalf. The states will thereby have faith in you, and you will have done an act of great righteousness. Now is the time to show again such service as was rendered by the marquis Wen and to get your fidelity proclaimed among the states." The marquis made the master of divination, Yan, consult the tortoise-shell about the undertaking. He did so and said, "The oracle is auspicious:

黃帝戰	<i>Huangdi zhan</i>	Huang Di's battle
于阪泉	<i>yu Fan Quan</i>	in Fang Quan."

The marquis said, "That oracle is too great for me." The diviner replied, "The rules of Zhou are not changed. The king of today is the emperor of antiquity." The marquis then said, "Try it by the milfoil."<sup>3</sup>

晉趙鞅卜救鄭，遇水適火，占諸史趙，史墨，史龜，史龜曰，是謂沈陽。

Zhao Yang consulted the tortoise-shell about relieving Zheng and got the indication of fire meeting with water. He asked an explanation of it from the historiographers Zhao, Mo, and Gui. Gui said, "This is called 'quenching the Yang [light or fire].'<sup>4</sup>

Similar phrases are found in the Yijing:

屯如遭如	<i>tun ru zhan ru</i>	Assembling, turning
乘馬班如	<i>chengma ban ru</i>	Four-in-hand returning
匪寇婚媾	<i>fei kou hun gou</i>	Not an enemy, he sincerely wants to marry.
(女子貞不字	<i>(nüzi zhen bu zi</i>	(When divining for a woman: not pregnant
十年乃字)	<i>shi nian nai zi)</i>	Only after ten years she will be pregnant) <sup>5</sup>
枯楊生梯	<i>ku yang sheng ti</i>	A withered poplar grows new shoots
老夫得其女妻	<i>laofu dei qi nü qi</i>	An old man gets a young wife
(無不利)	<i>(wu buli)</i>	(Nothing unfavourable) <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Legge 1879, Vol. 27, p. 181

<sup>2</sup> Tr. Field 2000, p. 2 (see also Legge 1861, Vol. 5, p. 44; Shaughnessy 1983, p. 99-100)

<sup>3</sup> Legge 1861, Vol. 5, p. 195

<sup>4</sup> Legge 1861, Vol. 5, p. 819

<sup>5</sup> Hexagram 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> line. About the translation: *tun* 屯 means, 'to station troops', 'assemble' (Liu 1997, p. 29; Wang 2000, p. 241). *Ru* 如 indicates that the character preceding it is a verb, and it denotes the appearance or state of something (Chi 1999, p. 458-459). *Ban* 班 is 'returning home after an expedition' (Wang 2000, p. 713-714). I am reading *gou* 媾 as its MWD substitute *hou* 厚, 'honest, sincere' (Luo e.a. 2001, Vol. I, p. 921)

<sup>6</sup> Hexagram 28, 1<sup>st</sup> line

田有禽	<i>tian you qin</i>	There is game in the fields
利執言	<i>li zhi yin</i>	Favourable to maintain a kind appearance
(無咎)	<i>(wu jiu)</i>	(no fault)
長子帥師	<i>zhangzi shuai shi</i>	The eldest son leads the army
弟子輿尸	<i>dizi yu shi</i>	The youngest rides the hearse with corpses
(貞凶)	<i>(zhen xiong)</i>	(the divination is inauspicious) <sup>1</sup>
伏戎于莽	<i>fu rong yu mang</i>	Hiding weapons in the thick grass
升其高陵	<i>sheng qi gao ling</i>	Ascending the high hill
三歲不興	<i>san sui bu xing</i>	For three years he is not able to set out. <sup>2</sup>

The images from the Zhouyi bear a resemblance to the images from the tortoise consultation in the Zuozhuan. It is possible that the Zhouyi contains samples of oracle bone divination.

### 利貞 and 貞吉

It is interesting to notice that the phrase *li zhen* 利貞, ‘favourable to divine’ occurs twenty times in the Judgment texts, and only three times in the line texts. At the same time the phrase *zhen ji* 貞吉, ‘the divination is auspicious’ occurs thirty-one times in the line texts, and only five times in the Judgment texts. The Judgment texts indicate that the oracle yet has to be consulted, while in the line texts the result and the (in-)auspiciousness of that consultation is noted.

Edward Shaughnessy surmises that the Judgment text might be the result of the first divination, and the line texts the result of a second divination.<sup>3</sup> I would like to expound on this, and assume that the Judgment text might be the outcome of the milfoil oracle, while the line texts contain images of the bone or tortoise oracle that followed it. If we look at the Judgment text we mainly see ‘judgments’ (duh): this is good, that is bad; do this, don’t do that. It’s very much about do’s and don’ts and good and wrong. There is relatively little imagery in the Judgement texts, most lines from it can be taken literally, and I assume they were meant to be taken literally, ‘crossing the great stream’, ‘appointing feudal lords’ etc. But the line texts contain a lot of imagery, often centered around a theme - an army (7), waiting (5), treading (10), etc. Most of these texts are meant to be interpreted. The Judgement texts lack images, but the line texts are full of them. That is why I believe that the Judgement text might be the result of milfoil, and the line texts the result of tortoise.

### Conclusion

The character *heng* 亨 is often translated as ‘success’, ‘fulfilment’, or ‘prospering’, but the variant texts show that this reading is not correct. They also show that there is a clear difference between *heng* 亨 and *xiang* 享: *heng* 亨 denotes the acceptance of the offering by the spirits or ancestors, while *xiang* 享 denotes the bringing of the offering to the ancestors or spirits. The MWD and GD texts hint at a possible copy error in the received text; 用亨 should likely be read as 用享.<sup>4</sup> Reading *heng* 亨 as *xiang* 饗 as given in the GD text implies that an offering has been given and accepted, and that after that the tortoise oracle could be consulted, knowing that a positive outcome would be guaranteed. The line texts in the Zhouyi might contain recordings of images generated by tortoise divination, with statements added deciding their auspiciousness.

<sup>1</sup> Hexagram 7, 5<sup>th</sup> line. Treating *yan* 言 as *yin* 閏, ‘kind appearance’ (Wang 2000, p. 1260)

<sup>2</sup> Hexagram 13, 3<sup>rd</sup> line.















































<sup>3</sup> Shaughnessy 2010. Shaughnessy’s article is compulsory reading for anyone who desires an up-to-date understanding of the phrase 元亨利貞.

<sup>4</sup> Another possible scribe error is the double occurrence of *heng* 亨 in the Judgment text of hexagram 45. The MWD and GD texts do not give the first occurrence. It was known that in early times there were versions of the Zhouyi that omitted the first instance of *heng* 亨; Lu Deming 陸德明 (556-627) writes in his 經典釋文, “王肅本同，馬、鄭、陸、虞等並無此字”: “Wang Su’s text is the same; Ma Rong, Zheng Xuan, Li Ji and Yu Fan their texts don’t have this character.” These are authors from the Later Han dynasty (25-220). The Xiping Stone Classics 熹平石經, erected from 175 to 183, conform with the received text, which might indicate that during that period different versions of the Zhouyi still existed. (Ding 2011, p. 127)



# Occurrences of *heng* and *xiang* in the received text and the variant texts

*Heng* is marked **red**, *xiang* is **green**. P1-3 mark the patterns that are discussed after the table. The next columns give the variant characters as given in the Mawangdui text (MWD), the Guodian text (GD), also known as the Shanghai Museum Manuscript, the Fuyang Manuscript (FY) and the Xiping stone fragments (XP).

		P-1	P-2	P-3	MWD	GD	FY	XP
1-0	乾.元 <b>亨</b> 利貞.				亨			
2-0	坤.元 <b>亨</b> .利牝馬之貞.				亨			
3-0	屯.元 <b>亨</b> 利貞.				亨			
4-0	蒙. <b>亨</b> .匪我求童蒙.童蒙求我.							
5-0	需.有孚.光 <b>亨</b> .貞吉.利涉大川.				亨		卿	
9-0	小畜. <b>亨</b> .密雲不雨.自我西郊.				亨			
10-0	履.履虎尾.不咥人. <b>亨</b> .				亨			
11-0	泰.小往大來.吉. <b>亨</b> .							
12-1	拔茅茹以其彙.貞吉. <b>亨</b> .				亨			
12-2	包承.小人吉.大人否. <b>亨</b> .				亨		亨	
14-0	大有.元 <b>亨</b> .				亨		亨	
13-0	同人于野. <b>亨</b> .				亨		亨	
14-3	公用 <b>亨</b> 于天子.小人弗克.				芳			
15-0	謙. <b>亨</b> .君子有終.					卿		
17-0	隨.元 <b>亨</b> 利貞.無咎.				亨		卿	
17-6	拘係之.乃從維之.王用 <b>亨</b> 于西山.				芳	富		亨
18-0	蠱.元 <b>亨</b> .利涉大川.				亨		卿	
19-0	臨.元 <b>亨</b> 利貞.至于八月有凶.							
21-0	噬嗑. <b>亨</b> .利用獄.						亨	
22-0	賁. <b>亨</b> .小利有攸往.						亨	
24-0	復. <b>亨</b> .出入無疾.				亨			
25-0	無妄.元 <b>亨</b> 利貞.				亨		卿	
26-6	何天之衢. <b>亨</b> .				亨		卿	
28-0	大過.棟橈.利有攸往. <b>亨</b> .				亨		亨	
29-0	坎.有孚.維心. <b>亨</b> .行有尚.				亨		亨	
30-0	離.利貞. <b>亨</b> .畜牝牛.吉.				亨		亨	
31-0	咸. <b>亨</b> .利貞.取女吉.				亨		卿	
32-0	恆. <b>亨</b> .無咎.利貞.利有攸往.				亨		卿	
33-0	遯. <b>亨</b> .小利貞.				亨		卿	
41-0	二簋可用 <b>亨</b> .				芳			
42-2	王用 <b>亨</b> 于帝.吉.				芳			
45-0	萃. <b>亨</b> .王假有廟.利見大人. <b>亨</b> .				亨		卿	
46-0	升.元 <b>亨</b> .用見大人.勿恤.南征吉.				亨			
46-4	王用 <b>亨</b> 于岐山.吉.無咎.						亨	

		P-1	P-2	P-3	MWD	GD	FY	XP
47-0	困.亨.貞.大人吉.無咎.有言不信.				亨 亨			
47-2	困于酒食.朱紱方來.利用亨祀.				芳 亨			亨 亨
49-0	革.巳日乃孚.元亨.利貞.悔亡.				亨 亨	義 亨		
50-0	鼎.元吉.亨.							
51-0	震.亨.震來虩虩.				亨 亨			
55-0	豐.亨.王假之.勿憂宜日中.				亨 亨			亨 亨
56-0	旅.小亨.旅貞吉.				亨 亨	卿 亨		
57-0	巽.小亨.利有攸往.利見大人.				亨 亨			亨 亨
58-0	兌.亨.利貞.				亨 亨			亨 亨
59-0	渙.亨.王假有廟.利涉大川.利貞.				亨 亨	卿 亨		
60-0	節.亨.苦節不可貞.				亨 亨			
60-4	安節.亨.							
62-0	小過.亨.利貞.可小事.不可大事.				亨 亨			亨 亨
63-0	既濟.亨.小利貞.初吉終亂.				亨 亨			亨 亨
64-0	未濟.亨.小狐汔濟.濡其尾.無攸利.				亨 亨			亨 亨



Figure 1. *Heng* and *xiang* in bamboo and silk manuscripts. Red characters are from the MWD Yijing manuscript.

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