

The Second International Conference on the I-Ching (Yijing) and Contemporary Civilisation *

Sponsors

The International Society for Yijing Studies
The International Association of I-Ching Studies
Zhou-Yi Institute of the Republic of China

Introduction

The conference was graciously hosted at the headquarters of the Zhou-Yi Institute of the Republic of China, based in Tainan, Taiwan, from Sunday 27th to Wednesday 30th November 2005. Their hospitality was beyond compare, looking after all the delegates with an outstanding degree of organization, ensuring that we were all fed with an excellent selection of local vegetarian cuisine for lunch and dinner, and bussing us all between the hotel, the institute headquarters, and restaurants and local sites of historical interest.

The impressive headquarters building of the Institute is based on a Sung dynasty design. It has a substantial main hall, on the first floor, which was used for the opening and closing ceremonies and the invited key note papers. In addition, it has a number of smaller meeting rooms, used for the bulk of the presentations during the conference, plus substantial office space, an elegant reception room, and a sunny roof terrace. Professor Wu should be proud of the facilities he has!

The delegates to the conference came from all over the world. In addition to academics and students from the Zhou-Yi Institute, there were academics from main land China, from Korea and Japan, and from the USA, Denmark and Belgium and, of course, myself from the UK.

Conference Content

There are 82 papers collected in the conference proceedings, which were presented during the four days of the event. To help with the organization of the material, the papers are divided into seven categories as follows:

1. Invited Papers
2. Archaeology and Scholium of I-Ching
3. Interpretation of I-Ching
4. Philosophy of I-Ching
5. Science of I-Ching
6. I-Ching Application in Special Field
7. I-Ching Application to Life

I should say at the outset that most of the conference was conducted in Mandarin Chinese and, as I do not speak the language, I was unable to follow much of what was presented. However, enough was understandable to make it clear that

* Taiji logo and title characters scanned from the conference proceedings



Professor Wu, the head of the Zhou-Yi Institute, has created a devoted body of students, all eager to actualise the wisdom of the Changes in their daily lives.

A number of the presentations (in addition to my own) were in English, and some of the key parts of other speeches were translated into English by the ever helpful students of the Institute. Where a presentation had a substantial English component, I shall say a few words about it below. Otherwise, I only mention the titles of a few papers.

Opening Ceremony

Professor Chung-ying Cheng, Professor of Philosophy from the University of Hawaii and President of the International Society for Yijing Studies, spoke in English and Mandarin. He set the theme for the conference with his remarks during the opening ceremony speaking of the current trend toward globalisation and the importance of working to ensure that this becomes a force for good, rather than the reverse. It is his belief and hope that the Yijing can contribute to this through its positive philosophy of change and harmonisation; this needs to be made part of the developing global culture.

Invited Keynote Papers

After the opening ceremony, 5 invited keynote papers were presented on the mornings of the first and second days.

Sunday

On the Sunday morning, Professor Chung-ying Cheng, president of the International Society of Yijing Studies, Professor Wu Chiu-Wen president of the Zhou-Yi Society of the Republic of China, and Professor Qui Liang-Hui, Secretary-General of the International Association of I-Ching Studies all spoke.

Professor Chung-ying Cheng

Professor Cheng spoke in both English and Mandarin on the subject of the Five Senses of Yi (Change/Creativity). In addition to the traditional three given us by Zheng Xuan (127-200AD) known as change (bianyi), non-change (buyi) and simplicity (jianyi), Professor Cheng advances exchange (jiaoyi) and harmonization (heyi). He arranges these in a geometric figure with buyi at the centre, then two other senses are a vertical and a horizontal axis each. The final two senses are the square and circle perimeters on the axes. From this, he discussed a theory of human nature based on these five senses of change. A more extensive review of this paper is available in the Review section of my web site <http://www.yijing.co.uk>

Professor Wu Chiu-Wen

Professor Wu's intriguing title was *The Value of the Five Xians in Zhou-Yi and the Effectiveness of Being Universal*.

Professor Qui Liang-Hui

Professor Qui's apposite subject, in the light of the international attendance at the conference, was *Thinking About I-Ching Goes Worldwide*.

Monday

On the Monday morning, unlike any Monday morning in my regular work, Professors Robert Cummings Neville and Edward Shaughnessy spoke in the key note section of the conference.

Professor Robert Cummings Neville

Professor Neville spoke on *Change, Form and Eternity*, talking about the three modes of time: past, present and future and how these each have conditional and necessary properties. The conditional properties for each mode come from the other modes, an unavoidable imposition. Conversely, the necessary properties are inherent in each mode. These three modes of time are separate from time, creating a dynamic picture of eternity. This eternity is the actual source of change.

Professor Edward Shaughnessy

Professor Shaughnessy spoke in Mandarin on the subject *A look at the Composition of the Zhou Yi on the Basis of Excavated Texts*.

Themed Papers

The main part of the conference divided into three parallel tracks on each of the days: on Sunday afternoon and Monday morning these were i) Philosophy Studies, ii) Classic Studies and, iii) Livelihood Application Studies. On Monday afternoon Professional Studies swapped with Livelihood Application Studies for one session and then swapped back for the last session. On Tuesday, Archaeological Studies joined the Sunday afternoon trio, with Science Studies replacing Classic and Philosophical Studies for the second sessions.

The English language papers were clustered across the first and second sessions of the Monday morning. In addition to presenting my paper, *The Yijing as a Symbolic Language for Abstraction*, I was honoured to co-chair the Philosophy Study session with Zhang Qi-cheng, Professor of Chinese Medicine from Beijing University, not that I could add much to the proceedings, as I have no Mandarin.

Professor Bent Nielsen

Dr Nielsen spoke on *The Changes in Cultural Continuity*. He identified a number of connections with western science, starting with Leibnitz and moving through DNA, contemporary Chinese scholarship on the periodic table and mathematical fractal unfoldings. He then moved on to consider modern Chinese thought on the Yi in more detail, exploring their thoughts on the western originated concepts of dualism and Heidegger's ontology. A more extensive review of this paper is available in the Review section of my web site <http://www.yijing.co.uk>

Professor Joseph Grange

Dr Grange took as his topic *Yijing Philosophy and The Contemporary Environmental Situation*. In particular, he applied ideas from Whitehead, Peirce and Dewey to try and make the Yijing more comprehensible to western modes of thinking, suggesting that the importance of constructing symbols to describe and explain our experience is a common theme in both traditions. Further, Dr Grange suggested that there is a parallel between the semiotic categories of Peirce and the components of Yi divination.

Dr Andreas Schöter

I spoke on how the symbols of the Yijing can be used as an abstract representation of reality and, from that, a formal theory of perspectives can be developed, idealising the partial view each individual has of totality. My complete paper can be downloaded from my web site at <http://www.yijing.co.uk/papers>.

Professor On-cho Ng

Unfortunately, because of a clash with the session where I was presenting, I was unable to attend Dr Ng's presentation. He spoke on the topic *Text and Truth: The Confucian Commentarial Readings of the Yijing and Religious Hermeneutics*. As the final English language presentation of the conference, I was disappointed not to hear Dr Ng speak.

Chinese Papers

A couple of Chinese papers caught my eye; mainly, I have to admit, as a result of flicking through the proceedings looking for pictures. It would be nice to have had complete translations; however, the translations of the abstracts into English were a great help.

Professor Li Shicheng

The paper *The Three-dimensional Taichi Map* starts from traditional two-dimensional representations of taiji and concludes that the correct three-dimensional representation of the principle is the tennis ball. He's right, and the paper has some convincing photos of the result.

Professors Eileen Woo and Kate Woo

In their abstract for their paper *Lifinformation Science*, the Professors Woo start from the idea of the Implicate and Explicate orders introduced by Dr Bohm. I also explore these ideas in connection with the Yijing in my paper *The Nature of Divination* available from my web site <http://www.yijing.co.uk/papers>.

The Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony took place on the Wednesday morning. Everyone who spoke during the opening ceremony was given an opportunity to sum up their feelings about the conference. In particular, Robert Cummings Neville's eloquent remarks on the importance of balance and being open to philosophical correction were significant.

The Tour

During the tour Robert, the tour guide, asked me whether I was a Yijing master. I was taken aback by the question and could only laugh a denial. But more than that now, on later reflection, I feel that in some respects the Yijing is very like the practice of Taijiquan – you don't master it, but hope to open yourself enough to let it master you. You need a direct personal practice with it. For me, the practice of the Yi is two-fold: first, it is necessary to apply it to what you know; second, it is necessary to apply what you know to it. These two interacting processes create a dialogue with Change that allows the relationship to develop and evolve. As Professor Wang said, you can make the Yi real in your mind.

Thanks

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the Zhou-Yi Institute for their outstanding hospitality. I would like to thank everyone involved including Professor Cheng for inviting me to the conference, Professor Wu for the generosity of the Zhou-Yi Institute, to the students of the Institute, in particular, Steven Chen, Bruce Chen and Danielle Chiang for their help before and during the conference. Finally, I would like to thank the tour guides, Joe, Robert and Joe, for their knowledgeable exposition during our travels around Taiwan.