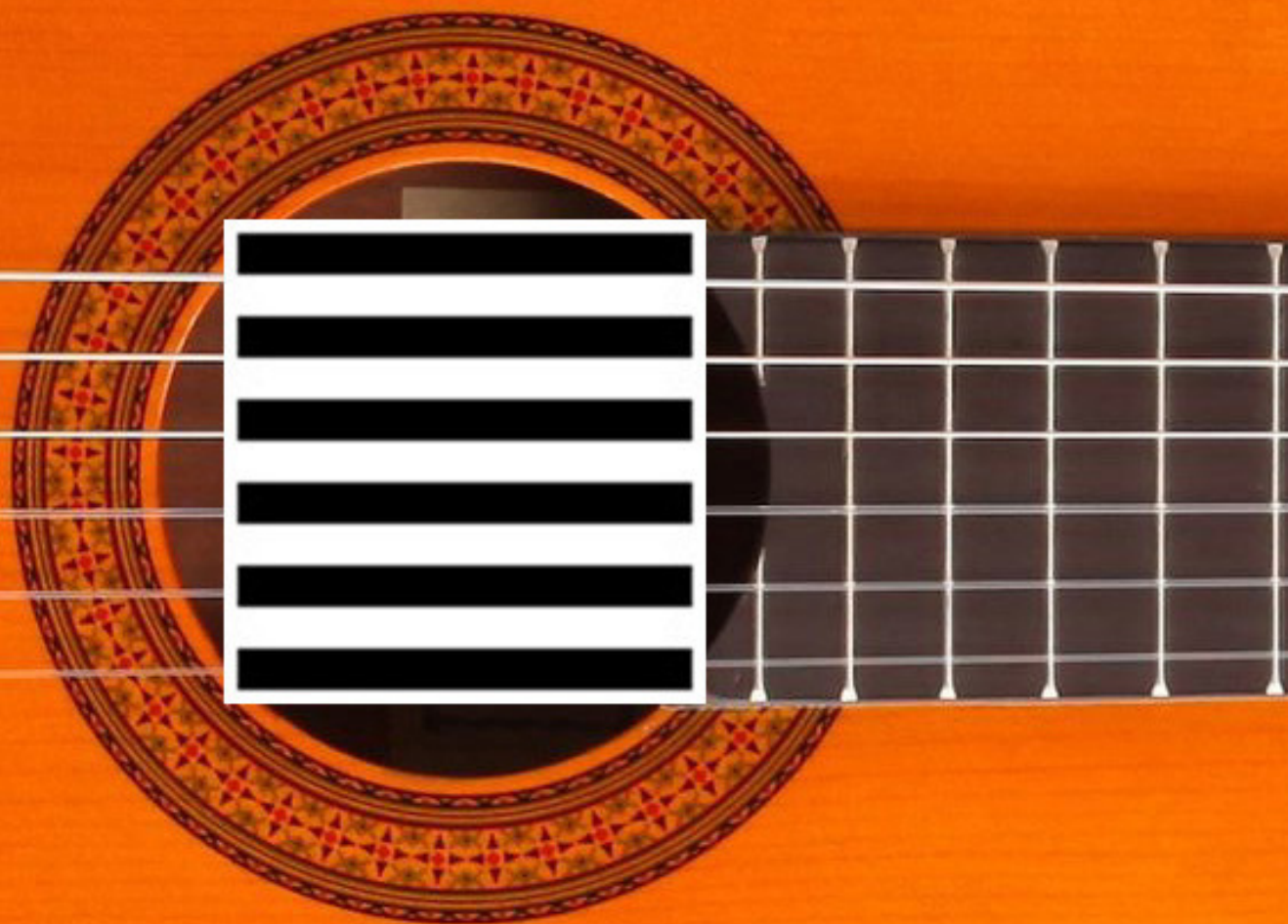


# THE GUITAR AND THE I CHING

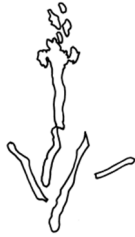


THEO RADIĆ

**THE GUITAR  
AND  
THE I CHING**

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**Theo Radić**



*Syukhtun Editions*

*THE GUITAR AND THE I CHING*

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*Yes, we three were happy, my wife, my guitar and me.*

– Big Bill Broonzy (1893-1958)

*There they are.*

– James Legge on the hexagrams

*THE GUITAR AND THE I CHING*

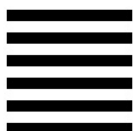


In memory of Master Fu-Yuan Ni (1915-2016)

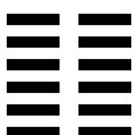
*THE GUITAR AND THE I CHING*

# INTRODUCTION

Old King Wen stacked them six-high,



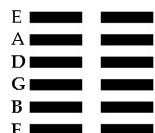
and, as if with a swift sword-stroke, cut them all in two:





From lyre to lute, from *kithara* to guitar, the silent strings are also stacked six-high, and tuned like this:



This is *Ch'ien* (Heaven), from where Music comes. The strings are now strummed with a swift thumb-stroke, and the chord resounds:



This is *K'un* (Earth), from where the musician comes. Each unplucked string looks like this:  . Each plucked string looks like this:  . Thus, the notes and chords progressing through the measures of sheet music for guitar correspond to one of the sixty-four hexagrams, depending on which strings are



plucked and which are not. For example, plucking the open third string, which is G,



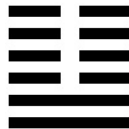
corresponds to the tenth hexagram, *Lu*:



Plucking the following notes on the top four strings (one of various ways to write the chord G),



corresponds to the nineteenth hexagram, *Lin*:



James Legge completed his translation of the *I Ching* (Book of Change) in 1855. In his preface he states that he at that time knew very little about the mystery which the book emanates. Legge continued: "I laid the volumes containing the result of my labour aside, and hoped, believed indeed, that [...] I should one day get a hold of a clue that would guide me to a knowledge of the mysterious classic." (10) After fifteen years, that day had not yet come for Legge, when, in 1870, his entire translation of the *I Ching* was soaked in the water of the Red Sea for more than a month (he

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does not explain why). This came as an omen for the Englishman. He carefully re-deciphered the once-soggy pages of his decipherment, but did not begin this new task until four years after the soaking in the Red Sea. Finally discovering what he called the "clue" to the enigmatic book, he concluded that his previous labors were in vain, "that my toil of twenty years before was of no service at all." Legge was now ripe to give the book the prolonged attention that resulted in his definitive translation of the *I Ching*.

\*

There are perhaps as many ways to confront the *I Ching* as there are people who confront it. I put off this confrontation for years, during which time I owned the book, but hardly opened it. Throwing the three coins in the popular manner to consult the divinations did not inspire me. Scholars of the *I Ching* do not regard its primary purpose as a method for divining the future, but as a philosophy of life. In the commentary on the *I Ching* attributed to Confucius called *Ten Wings*, the author believed in using the ancient book (perhaps the oldest on the planet) as a method to define his own inner development. I had not yet come to this conclusion when I first opened the book and perused it.

Indifference to using the *I Ching* for divination was also extant among Chinese scholars as early as the third century B.C., when the noted Confucian author Hsun-tzu wrote: "Those who make skillful use of the *I Ching* do not practice divination." (1) And so I went on with my life, waiting for the right moment to mix the hexagrams with my life in a more natural, unforced manner. I had nothing to ask the oracle. Nor did I want to simply "read" the hexagrams in King Wen's order, or delve into the mathematical implications that interest many people. It is the *poetic* nature of the *I Ching* that attracted me, and the numerical combinations of the hexagrams reach me as *musical* instead of mathematical rhythms. The shrine of

western poetry at Delphi was also a traditional source of oracles. The great poetry cultivated in ancient Greece with Delphi as a spiritual landmark evolved into modern western poetry which now has little to do with divination. Other things catch our attention.

The six lines of the hexagrams I quickly identified with the six strings of the classical guitar, which I play daily. This was over twenty-three years ago, when I first conceived of this book. (I begin writing it only now, one month after I turned seventy.) From the possibility of plucking all six strings (*K'un*) to plucking none (*Ch'ien*) – from sound to silence – the sixty-four hexagrams can represent all the possible combinations of plucked strings and unplucked strings in the entire repertory for guitar existing today. Now I have a reason to study the *I Ching*, of which tai chi master Cheng Man-ch'ing said: "The *I Ching* is the most profound classic of the Chinese sages. Confucius himself did not believe he was ready to begin the study of the *I Ching* until he was seventy!"(2) Confucius in the fifth century B.C., and the later Confucians, were interested in understanding "the reasons of the obscure and the obvious" by attaining the primordial essence of all things – Tao (the Way). This can be accomplished as a secluded monk or a lay person who combines worldly duties with spiritual disciplines.

For lack of a better word, the ancient Chinese sage Lao Tzu called the primordial essence 道 Tao (The Way). This can be paraphrased as *the manner in which the universe functions*. For billions of years the Way has functioned perfectly throughout the universe, and in every crink and cranny on earth – except for civilized societies. Suddenly creatures appeared on earth who were very proud and believed themselves superior to all other creatures. Subject to the delusions accompanying pride and vanity, they believed that they had better systems on which to construct a society than the Way. Every time they tried to implement these systems, disaster and collapse were the result, whether it was after seventy-two years as in the Soviet Union, or two-hundred and

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forty-three years as in the United States. Using the system with no name, Native American societies thrived on the continent for thousands of years. The shadowy Chinese societies of antiquity known only in legend began traditions and beliefs that were the seeds of taoism. They have as a North American counterpart the thousands of years of native cultures which as well have left no historical records. Both continents were peopled by societies in harmony with the Tao, without their being aware of it. The People of P'ò. The People of the Uncarved Block. The second sage of taoism, Chuang Tzu, wrote the following about the People of P'ò:

*They were upright and correct without knowing that to be so was righteousness. They loved one another without knowing that to do so was benevolence. They were sincere without knowing that it was loyalty. They kept their promises without knowing that to do so was to be in good faith. They helped one another without thought of giving or receiving gifts. Thus their actions left no trace and we have no records of their affairs. (3)*

Music is a profound spiritual discipline, blessing European culture with a profound spiritual teacher: Johann Sebastian Bach. The central chord of Bach's lute suite *Prelude, Fugue, Allegro* in D-major looks like this in musical notation for guitar:



The sharp signs (#) refer to F- and C-sharp, denoting the key of D-major. The corresponding third hexagram, *Chun* (Difficult Beginnings), looks like this:



Counting from the bottom of the above hexagram, the first and fifth strings remain unplucked. D-major is not the original key (which is E-flat major), since Bach composed for the lute, differently tuned than the guitar. It was indeed a very Difficult Beginning for me, a self-taught guitarist, to open the sheet music for the first time decades ago, pluck the first notes of the *Prelude*, and then, after years of practice, memorize all three movements. This lute suite by Bach is central to my life, having provided the structure to my autobiography, *Theophany: Prelude, Fugue, Raindance*. Once again it provides me with inspiration as a writer. In this manner, each hexagram presents itself to me as a wondrous, random surprise, along with the surprises that the guitar brings me as I now face the Difficult Beginnings of this book.

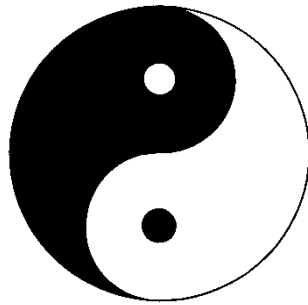
This (as yet unwritten) book addresses not only readers well-versed in the guitar or the *I Ching*, but also those who have little or no knowledge of these subjects. Musical notations are therefore used sparingly so as not to confuse non-musicians. The *I Ching* speaks of “ceaseless self-strengthening” and those who discovered this and other practical principles hidden among the hexagrams were highly respected by Chinese scholars. “Ceaseless self-strengthening” is also the credo of musicians, and many other individuals in society. Most of the music for classical guitar which I have listened to over the years was performed by the world’s best guitarists in a variety of recordings. Comparing my playing to theirs leaves me woefully insufficient, but at the same time, motivated into “ceaseless self-strengthening.”

Self-strengthening was regarded by the Chinese emperors as a requisite for warding off foreign invaders. The Self-Strengthening Movement (c. 1861-1895) was a period of institutional reforms initiated in China during the late Qing dynasty following the military disasters of the Opium Wars and other concurrent rebellions. The movement was inspired by this line in the *I Ching*:

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“The superior man makes himself strong.” The term *strength* in this movement was very much a reference to *military* strength and the westernization of the arms industry in China. However, as the 20th and 21st centuries reveal, military strength in the end reveals itself as *weakness*, debilitating nations, crushing individuals, and sowing war, misery, exhaustion and death far and wide.

The spiritual strengthening of the individual and society through the various arts of the Way (Tao) is another thing entirely. Art is true strength, and is more hardy than entire imperial armies. Emerging from the debilitating turmoil of the late Qing dynasty (1644-1912), the oral teachings of the martial art tai chi chuan were finally written down and published. At their core is the yin-yang symbol of harmony between opposites, the ancient foundation of the *I Ching*. This world famous symbol is called *Tai Chi*:



The eight trigrams (which are the historical beginning of the sixty-four hexagrams) are the foundation of tai chi chuan, each representing a specific tai chi movement. In this book the pairs of trigrams that form each hexagram can also evoke the three upper bass strings and the three lower treble strings on the guitar.

My first wish ever for a Christmas present from my single mother, when I was five years old, was a miniature guitar I had seen advertised in a catalogue for a department store... perhaps it was its womanly shape. From that moment began my groping toward

music and its magical “inner necessity.” I am a self-taught guitarist and have played the guitar since I was ten, and classical guitar for forty years. I began with the finger-picking style of American folk music at the age of ten, when I bought my first guitar. A good friend on Darby Street taught me the American classic of finger-picking guitar, “Freight Train” by Elizabeth Cotton. The agility of hands and fingers required for finger-picking guitar proved to be very helpful in meeting the demands of classical guitar playing.

The modern classical guitar has not strayed far from its original four-stringed ancestor named *kithara*, a hollow stringed instrument made of wood. Its evolution through thousands of years reveals that the Lyre – a stringed instrument in various forms – has maintained a solid identity throughout the ages. No musical instrument is more popular today than the guitar.

The origins of the guitar, like the origins of the *I Ching*, are mysterious. One finds a metamorphosis of the Greek word *kithara* throughout Europe and the Middle East, rhymed throughout time. In Persia it was *chartâr*, in India *sitar*, in Rome *cithara*. In medieval Europe it evolved into *kitaire*, and then in England into *gittern*, *cittern* and finally *guitar*. In France it became *guitare*, in Spain *guitarra*, in Italy *chitarra*, and in Sweden *gitarr*. Along with this evolution is that of the lute, from the Arabic word *al-'ud*, “the wood.” This instrument accompanied the medieval troubadours, but later lost its popularity to the guitar.

The modern guitar is still the companion of verse-makers of popular songs, as it was in the Renaissance, when first the word “guitar” was used to refer to the *guitarra latina* and the *guitarra española*, also called *vihuela*. (The Spanish name *vihuela* came from the Italian *viola da mano*, translated as *vihuela de mano*, and later simply *vihuela*, still audible in the Portuguese word for guitar: *violão*.) This popular instrument was easier to play than the lute, and for this reason the guitar developed a negative reputation among “serious” musicians that even prevails a bit today. In 1808 a critic

writing in Germany's leading periodical of music praised the guitarist/composer Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829) as a great maestro, but added it was a shame that such talent should be wasted on such an unworthy instrument as the guitar.

The transfiguration of Apollo's *kithara* into the modern guitar occurred within the illuminated darkness of all that happened to humankind which is unknown. At the end of the *Odyssey* Homer compared the skill of Odysseus stringing the great bow to putting a new string on a *kithara*: "... as when a man who is well-skilled in the *kithara* and song easily stretches a string about a new peg after lopping the twisted sheep-gut at both ends." Plucking the bow string with his hand to test its tautness before taking vengeance on the Suitors, Odysseus hears the note as the swallow's tone. As a guitarist and composer I have often wondered if the origin of plucked-string instruments like the harp and *kithara* were bows used for hunting or for battle that gave off an enchanting tone when the strings were plucked, inspiring their makers to create a musical instrument to accompany their chants about battles and hunting exploits. The legendary Chinese lyre player Po Ya smashed his instrument when his friend Chung Tzu-ch'i died, saying that there was no one left alive who could understand his music. The Chinese expression "know music" derives from this story and means to understand and appreciate the most intrinsic virtues and potentials of a friend.(3) In his poem "The Guitar" dedicated to Andrés Segovia, Carl Sandburg (1893-1958) wrote that the guitar is "A portable companion ready to go where you go – a small friend weighing less than a fresh born infant – to be shared with few or many – just two of you in sweet meditation."

The relationships that I make between the guitar and the hexagrams come about by chance and coincidence. There was no initial plan and the book is being composed exactly *now*, and although the following pages appear full to the reader, they are blank and unwritten from my viewpoint. They will be filled



through the same chance and coincidence as that of tossing sticks, said to lie behind the original idea for the trigrams and hexagrams. As an artist I feel right at home with chance and coincidence, for this is the very core of the great mystery which is the creative process and the harmony that is the result.

\*

Harmony is the most difficult thing for humans to learn, and at this writing, the constant feeling of doom hovering over the world is a sign that not yet are humans ready to put it in practice. Harmony awaits indifferently from within the sacred art of Music, once upon a time the lawgiver. I was a member of a classical guitar orchestra for four years. I quickly learned that the most serious transgression is to be out of harmony with the orchestra. Strike a false note at a concert and sour looks from the other musicians are sent your way. Unlike human societies, orchestras are gatherings of people who have Harmony as their fundamental law and guiding principle. Break the law and consider yourself *persona non grata* and outcast. This law is uncompromising, although, thank heaven, you are still allowed to strike a false note and continue playing, on the condition that you improve. Too many false notes, however, and the orchestra will be obliged to replace you with someone who *is* in harmony.

But in society at large, the master of harmony is very often the *persona non grata* and outcast, while unharmonious power-seekers, totally devoid of creative talent, misrule and make a mess of things. So it has been for thousands of years. It is foolish to believe that Harmony can also become the law and guiding principle of human society just as it is among musicians. Human nature rules that possibility out, for disharmony has established itself in human society with the ruthless momentum of millennia behind it. Students of harmony (artists) will remain a quaint oddity in a screeching, cacophonous society perishing in its poisons.

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The great symphony orchestras of the world, the great choirs, chamber music ensembles and soloists are impeccable at their craft. This impeccability is imperative to Music, for without it, musicians do not inspire sales of concert tickets and recordings, and will be booed off the concert stage. Thus, the impeccable performances in the world's musical tradition serve as a model for a harmonious society, with works like Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* functioning as a blueprint for Harmony. Alas, the model is ignored by world leaders. The keen discipline and judicious taste of great symphony orchestras are not to be seen among the politicians in world governments. Where impeccability is demanded by music lovers of the various musicians in a symphony orchestra, the same people blandly accept the undisciplined slovenliness of their governments. We have very simply learned to live with the incompetence of politicians, their utter lack of impeccability.

Should the politicians of a given nation ever be subjected to the critical scrutiny aimed at the world's great musicians, they all would be hissed and booed off the stage for creating such perverse cacophony as that for which they are responsible today. Why should we uncompromisingly demand Harmony from symphony orchestras and not governments? Why should we stringently demand competence from symphony conductors and not from political leaders? Why shall Harmony only be of consideration in Art? Shakespeare as well complained in *Troilus and Cressida*: "The specialty of rule hath been neglected."

Music is often mentioned in the taoist classic *Wen Tzu: Further Teachings of Lao Tzu*: "So in the composition of music it is enough to join feelings of enjoyment, not going beyond harmony, understanding the proportions of diminuendo and crescendo, mastering the appropriate measures of magnificence and austerity." (4) Not having a formal education in music theory, I have proceeded into my musical creativity with the tedious inferiority complex of an autodidact. The great composers were most often

professional performers with a formal training in music theory and composition. Their teachers were themselves often masters, as was Sergei Prokofiev's teacher Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov, or Miguel Llobet's teacher Francisco Tárrega. I have relied on my natural love of music and creativity, as well as books on music theory. Alone, with my inspiration, guitar and books, I was led by an "inner necessity" to compose for solo guitar, guitar ensemble and orchestra. I continue to do so because it is fun, and there are few things I would rather do with the very little free time with which I am blessed.

Charles Ives believed music to be the highest expression of the sacred, more spiritually meaningful to humanity than philosophy or religion, transcending itself to become "a vision higher and deeper than art itself!" His wife was named Harmony.

*Of the energies of the universe, none is greater than harmony.  
Harmony means the regulation of yin and yang,  
the division of night and day. (4)*

## TUNING

The guitar case is opened and the instrument gleams with its lacquered wood, the six strings meditating in total silence:



The silent strings are pregnant with possibilities. I think of the painting by the amateur violinist Henri Matisse, *Interior with a Violin*, with its opened violin case. I take the guitar. But before playing, the art of tuning is required. This is indeed a subtle moment, considering that stringed instruments are always in a state of being untuned. Plucked strings slip on their pegs, and the temperature and humidity of the air also effect the string tension. Arriving at the correct pitch for each string is not always done directly – as the crow flies. Depending on the idiosyncracies of the guitar, arriving at the correct pitch can be like seeing the steeple of a church in an old European town directly in front of you, but having to take a meandering path to it through a labyrinth of streets, at times moving *away* from the desired goal. Sometimes descending to the right pitch works better than ascending to it, or passing it by to return to it. Stretching the string gives even more minute precision to the tuning than is possible with the tuning peg alone. Is the string inaudibly flat or sharp? And after individually tuning each of the six strings, they may not harmonize with one another, requiring even more minute adjustments to arrive at *standard tuning*, as opposed to *scordatura*, alternative tuning.

Tuning the guitar begins with the first string, the E-string. There are battery operated tuners that allow even a deaf person to tune a guitar, a visual device that lights up with a green "E" at the right pitch. But this is an imperfect device constructed on scientific principles which has a margin of error that only the trained ear of a musician can fine tune. When the tuned first string is plucked it evokes the hexagram *Kou* (Temptation). Now she resonates "like a female who is bold and strong" (Legge's translation of the attributes of *Kou*).



44

KOU

TEMPTATION

My first tai chi teacher was "a female who is bold and strong." She is Swedish, and back then (37 years ago) she had just won a gold medal in shaolin at the international competitions for women in Taiwan. A photo in a magazine showed her breaking six cement pavement blocks with a sweeping blow of her forearm. She has become quite well-known in Sweden since then. Her tai chi, however, was not the real thing, and in my ignorance, it took me three years of training with her to understand that I was being duped, and found my *truly* first teacher of tai chi, the American William Dockens. After two years learning Bill's form I was to completely forget it as well, to learn the many forms of Master Fu-Yuan Ni in California.

The word tai chi first appears in the *I Ching*: "Tai chi is the key which dominates the generations and variations. It is the mother of the million objects between heaven and earth."(8) The relationship between the *I Ching* and tai chi is well established in the thousands

of years of classical texts and teachings. After more than 35 years training this art, I understand *tai chi* – uncapitalized – as the Thirteen Postures based on the eight trigrams and the five elements (water, earth, fire, wood, metal). Capitalized, *Tai Chi* (very close to being a synonym for *Tao*), is the Mother of Yin and Yang. In stillness the two are joined (*Wu Chi*), in motion they separate (*Tai Chi*).

In King Wen’s commentary on hexagram 44, one of the tai chi postures (ward off) is mentioned: “This hexagram represents warding off mundanity and preserving celestial energy.”(1) This may be a coincidence of translation, but the meaning of *ward off* (associated with the trigram Heaven ☰) is also present in the text. The translation of *I Ching* as Book of Change is directly related to Tai Chi, without which there is no change. The state of no change is called Wu Chi.

Tuning the body, like tuning a musical instrument, is an ongoing process. Daily practice of tai chi and meditation helps accomplish the fine-tuning of the metabolism which is a human being. This tuning is called the Five Regulatings in taoist internal alchemy (*neidan*): regulating the body, regulating the breathing, regulating the mind, regulating the vital energy (*ch’i*) and regulating the spirit. (8)

In the west, emotions are considered less reliable than logical thinking. A more complete view is seen in Chinese taoism, in which emotion is valued equally with logic. Regulating the mind for the ancient taoists involved harmonizing the Two Minds, using the analogy of the Monkey for “emotional mind” (*Xin*) and the Horse for “wisdom mind” (*Yi*). They work as a team. Although it can be the cause of much turmoil and chaos in a person’s life, for the taoists emotional mind (*Xin*) is “the master of the entire body, the commander of a hundred spirits. When it is calm, then wisdom is generated, when it is acting, then confusion is originated.”(8) It is easy for westerners to believe the contrary – that logic is the master. But it is not logic that regulates the myriads of functions in the

human organism in wakefulness and sleep. Emotional mind is the regulator of these processes which occur without our knowing. Wisdom Mind – logical mind – means very little in this regard. Maintaining personal hygiene, physical training, education, eating habits, muscle control, grooming – all these are done with Wisdom Mind. But this is *very* little compared to the unconscious functions of the body: the beating of the heart, the rejuvenation of the cells, the immune system, the circulatory system, the nervous system, the digestive system and much more, down to the cellular, molecular, atomic and sub-atomic levels of the metabolism of our bodies over which we have no control. Emotional Mind (*Xin*) is “master of the entire body” but can be very volatile and erupt into self-destructive behavior when not calm. As written in the taoist scripture above, when the emotional mind is calm, it generates Wisdom. The function of Wisdom mind (*Yi*) is to instill calmness in Emotional Mind, while having no control over the unconscious bodily processes the latter governs.



“This hexagram represents mixing in with the ordinary world, concealing one’s illumination, skillfully assimilating to others.” (1) In taoist internal arts there are the Five Regulatings. For the guitar, there are *six* regulatings, and the second of these corresponds to hexagram 13. The second string is plucked and the second line is broken. The twelve semi-tones in an octave, like the twelve months in the year, are synchronized as best as is humanly possible. Yet, the  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days of a year make the second month February mathematically troublesome, as is the second string B. This is the

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only string tuned at a different interval than the others. On my guitar it seems to get out of tune more often than the others. In Germany, B refers to what in English is B-flat. B for English musicians is H for Germans, as in the famous fugal theme of Bach in *The Art of the Fugue*, B (B-flat) –A–C–H (B):



The B-string, like the E and the G, is similar to nylon fishing line used by fishermen all over the world. It can support high tension without breaking, as fishing line can support heavy catches. In our age of spectacular technological achievements, small, quiet achievements are taken for granted. String for example. Who knows when the human creation – string – first came into existence? It is at least as old as the bow and arrow, along with arrowheads. The oldest fragments of a bow and arrow were found at Mannheim-Vogelstang in Germany dated 17,500-18,000 years.

String is one of the oldest human creations still in use. We read of Californian tribes rolling milkweed fibers on their thighs to make string for their cat's cradle games, nets and bowstrings. Some prehistoric hunter perhaps heard the "twang" of his bowstring while hunting and returned to his village to make the first lyre. The word "bow" can refer to hunting or to music, the "bow" of the hunter or that used by players of violin, cello, and contra bass. These strings have been made from many materials throughout history, including flax, hemp, horse hair and animal guts. William Shakespeare wondered:

*Is it not strange that sheep's guts  
should hale souls out of men's bodies?  
(Much Ado About Nothing)*



Taken to its culmination, the primitive enchantment over a vibrating string led not only to highly refined musical instruments, musicians and symphony orchestras, but to civilization itself. This enchantment led to unequaled appreciation of single individuals, as with Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. String, this very simple creation, at least equals the space shuttle in ingenuity.

Years of daily tunings have led me to the belief that, even if I should one day acquire the best of instruments, a guitar can only be in an untuned state, and that virtuosos choose the best possible untuning before a concert. Infinitesimal dissonances remain, and untuned becomes tuned as in Dryden's *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*:

*The dead shall live, the living die  
And Musick shall untune the sky.*

Like a stringed instrument, the human metabolism also is in an untuned state, even at its healthiest. In a healthy person approximately one trillion cells die every day. If the same number of cells are not produced each day, aging occurs. The trillion dead cells must be excreted to not cause illness or imbalance in the body. Regulating the breathing in coordination with the mind allows the smooth intake of oxygen and exhalation of CO<sub>2</sub> containing the dead cells. Hexagram 13 is about people assimilating to other people (Community). This assimilation includes the flux of the the newborn entering into the community and the dead exiting the community, like the trillions of cells in a human organism being born and dying simultaneously.

Like Music, the *I Ching* is a mystery. To begin to understand it requires language. If, as in my case, the "investigator" does not know Chinese, he or she is left with various interpretations of various translators (even though the images are apparent to anyone with eyes). Hexagram 13 above can have "Community" as its name in translation, but also "Concording People," "Sameness with

## TUNING

People," "Fellowship with Men" or "Gathering Men." Along with the mystery of the ancient book that so bewildered James Legge comes the mystery of *everything that is lost in translation*.



The legendary G-string. The third broken line "shows a one-eyed man (who thinks he) can see; a lame man (who thinks he) can walk well; one who treads on the tail of a tiger and is bitten. (All this indicates) ill fortune." (10) When ill fortune brought Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840) into prison for killing a rival whom he found with his mistress, he had only the violin as company. One after the other the strings broke, until he only had the G-string left, on which he improvised astounding melodies. Violinists who play his music say that there is much for which the lone G-string is responsible in Paganini's compositions. He was also a guitarist. The G- (third) string is indeed perhaps the sturdiest on the guitar. I have never had one break on me.



Classical guitar is not an easy instrument to play well. As guitar pedagogue Frederic Noad writes, "most of the time both hands must be employed with minute precision just to produce a single satisfactory note. Those who do not play are usually unaware of this difficulty, and tend to be surprised to see a guitarist struggling to perfect music that sounds as easy as a beginner's piano piece." (6)

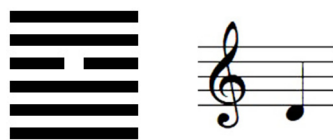
The quarter-note G and the note system above derive from from a tradition over one thousand years old. Musical notation came into existence as a direct result of the written tradition

preceding it. The musical notation we use today began as nearly illegible accent marks called *neumes* written over the texts of medieval choral songs. *Neume* means “nod” or “wink,” and one can imagine a choir leader nodding or winking at his singers to indicate a rise or descent in pitch. Alphabetical signs for sounds, words and ideas preceded by one and a half millennia the musical signs with which they were sung. Up to the 9th century choral music had been taught by ear. Just as with oral poetry, performances that were formerly memorized slowly yielded to sight reading from texts and musical scores. Paper began to usurp mankind’s memory.

Around 871 a monk in northern France began placing small accents (*neumes*) over the Greek and Latin texts of choral songs as a reminder of changes in musical pitch. (Pauses and how long a note was held were not yet indicated on the paper.) This was the simple beginning of the complicated musical notation to be used by Bach, Mozart and Beethoven almost 1,000 years later. The words of early poets and song-writers written on paper were the foundation of modern musical notation. In the ancient oral tradition, words emerged out of music. In the newer written tradition, music emerged out of the words. The unobtrusive little accent marks placed over words in choral texts were written more and more clearly over the centuries, becoming bolder and blacker, until choral music notation was developed in the 13th century. In sheet-music for songs today, one sees the traces of this evolution. The black, flag-waving notes of the melody dance on their staves over the lyrics, just as the primitive little accent marks hopped over the tops of words in medieval choral music.

A single line with dots over, on, or under to indicate pitch gradually evolved into the system of five lines used today. This was the direct result of “Guido’s hand.” Guido of Arezzo was an Italian monk, musician and choir master for Arezzo’s cathedral who lived from about 980 to 1050. Guido built upon the one-lined system of

notation and developed it into a system of four lines, based on the lines on the inside of his left hand. With his right hand Guido pointed to different joints on the fingers of his left hand as he led the choir, to indicate how high or low the notes should be sung. The hand was also drawn on paper, with different colors indicating the tones. A “key” (clef) was placed on the lines to “unlock” the system of notes by indicating the main note. The treble clef () is the remnant of a medieval “G” and the bass clef () is the remnant of an “F.” “Guido’s hand” made polyphonic music possible – choral music with different “voices” sung simultaneously. Guido of Arezzo is the originator of “do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do.” His system of four lines evolved into five and was divided up into “measures” each having the same number of beats that established the pulse of a given piece of music.



9

HSIAO CH'U  
RESTRAINED

“This hexagram represents nurturing the great by the small.”(1) Opening the guitar case today with expectations of another blissful session with Bach, the D- (fourth) string had broken in the darkness. It is the one that breaks most often on my guitar. The Bach lute suite will have to be “restrained” until I can buy a new D-string. “Grand schemes are out of the question.”(5) Not being able to play the guitar is frustrating. All of a sudden, the benefits of Music that I have taken for granted now are distant like a mirage on the horizon, instilling me with a feeling of weakness. I am reassured by the commentary on the broken fourth (yin) line of hexagram 9: “Fear and anxiety will give way only to truth. Then no error will be

made.”(5) The fact that Music enhances intelligence has been obvious for millennia. Among the new scientific discoveries today is one called “the Mozart Effect,” which reveals that listening to certain music by Mozart improves IQ test results, and that certain tempi have various beneficial effects on respective brain functions. Even without examining the details of this discovery, it seems indisputable. Indeed, it is so indisputable that it is like the famous indisputable discovery that “the king has no clothes!” It is not new at all, but is as old as Music itself. That it is considered a “new” discovery is evidence that human society has strayed far afield from the unscientific knowledge of Art. This knowledge formed the core of all aspects of ancient Greek society. However, societies which have scientific knowledge as their core no longer possess the instincts intrinsic to Art, and rediscover things that have been universal to civilization since its beginning. The “oedipus complex” of Freud was based on a work by a man more gifted and enlightened than Freud. It is insolent to assume that Sophocles did not know about the universal psychological implications of his play, and even more so for Freud to take the credit. In *King Oedipus* Jocasta speaks these lines to her son-husband:

*Nor need this mother-marrying frighten you;  
Many a man has dreamt as much.* (tr. Philip Vellacott)

The fact that “many a man has dreamt as much” is knowledge, common to humans for 2,500 years, which is to be credited to Art – to Sophocles – not science. In the compartmentalized bunkers of universities Art is referred to as one discipline among others, ranked equally with philosophy, science, mathematics and theology. This is an error. Art is not the sibling of the above disciplines, but their mother. Through Art – the most ancient manifestation of human knowledge – all other knowledge was born. These very same alphabetical signs on this page are the

vehicles of our knowledge, twenty-six drawings that have evolved from the most distant depths of paleolithic times. They are small, and yet powerful, as in King Wen's description of hexagram 9: "This hexagram represents nurturing the great by the small."(1) Civilization (the great) is nurtured by the alphabet and numbers (the small).



Hexagram 14, with only the fifth line broken, corresponds to the plucked fifth string. "This hexagram represents wealth with daily renewal, governing the inward with strictness."(1) I just put an old A- (fifth) string on my guitar after the former one snapped in the middle of a piece, not having a new one at my disposal. Turning the the creaking tuning peg, I coaxed the deep base tone up from the ultimate depths of silence. The elastic tone, on its way to eternity, was stopped at the pitch called "A." Now the old string must "cure" over the sound box, slowly harmonize with the other strings, until I buy a new A-string. But I can still play (as long as the old string doesn't break).

Daily practice over the years leads to illumination, the source of artistic inspiration, the source of musical compositions. "Growing increasingly illumined as strength increases, growing increasingly strong as illumination increases, it [hexagram 14] is therefore called *great possession*."(1) The "great possession" of humanity is creativity, which channels the artistic inspiration derived from illumination. For Socrates illumination was the inner voice that began when he was a child. The inner voice never

commanded him to do something, but always forbid him to do something he was about to do. In the same respect, I did not become an artist by choice. Art was what remained when I obeyed my “inner voice” and said “no” to all other occupations.

Antonio Carlos “Tom” Jobim (1927-1994) passed away today after having joined samba with jazz and raised their child, bossa nova. Mere moments ago I strummed the last C-major seventh chord of his *Corcovado*. A defunct human spirit abides here in my studio, as does the spirit of Matteo Carcassi when I pluck his happy *Andantino*, or that of Agustín Barrios’ when I play his *Madrigal*. The musicians come to dwell here, briefly back from death, unseen friends in my inner sanctuary, spirits whom I call and recall at my whim. Mr. Anonymous visits me from wandering troubador guilds, and Renaissance travellers stop by too. John Dowland’s *Frog Galliard* hops in at times and *Kemp’s Jig* which Shakespeare may even have heard. Johann Sebastian Bach holds up my lyre’s heaven, and he too is a frequent visitor. More lasting and real is Music than flesh and blood.

*When it comes to the spirit peacefully roaming between the heart and the hands, freeing the mind to depict the spirit, giving voice to its modulations in the notes of the strings, that is something that a father cannot teach his children, and children cannot learn from their father. This is a principle that is not transmitted. (4)*

Lao Tzu refers here to the inborn artistic gift that cannot be taught nor learned. Many people today still believe that artistic talent can be acquired by other means. The mother of Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941), an accomplished pianist, told her young daughter that artistic talent is inborn, a divine gift to be nurtured and cultivated. One has done nothing to deserve it. One has made no effort whatsoever to acquire it. However, in the case of Johann Sebastian Bach, the father did indeed teach his children,

and the children indeed learned from their father. His sons Carl Philipp Emanuel, Johann Christian, Wilhelm Friedemann, and Johann Christoph Friedrich were all accomplished composers. This successful teaching was possible only because the sons possessed the artistic gift at birth.



This E on the open sixth string is the lowest note attainable on the guitar, *if* unorthodox tuning is not being used. It is two octaves lower than the E of the first string (“a female who is bold and strong”). The commentary by King Wen’s son, the Duke of Chou, on this specific broken (yin) line in this specific hexagram is ominous: “Danger comes from a seed of evil in your own Self, perhaps a self-delusion or conceit that blinds you. Just when you feel you may relax your resolve and continue without helpers, it will cause you to err. Misfortune.”(5)

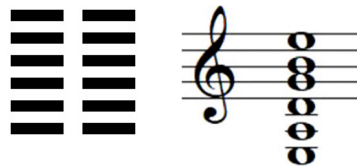
Another father who, like Bach, successfully taught his son was George Ives, musician father of Charles Ives (1874-1954). George, who had led a US army band in the Civil War, amused the citizens of Danbury, Connecticut with the brass band music he brought to the community. It also greatly influenced the compositions of his son, who said: “In ‘thinking up’ music I usually have some kind of brass band with wings on it in the back of my mind.” But it was not really considered “work” – music was mere entertainment. Both George and Charles, father and son, came to realize that hardly anyone took them seriously. The citizens of Danbury, while enjoying the father’s music, wondered when George Ives would get



a life. His brass band was expected to perform for free because it was fun. This neglect shown musicians is common in the history of music, back to the time of Henry Purcell (1659-1695), whose musicians in the courts of Charles II and James II were always pleading to be paid their long overdue salaries. Despite the splendor it brought to the pomp of royal pagentry, Purcell's music as well was only "entertainment," and the thought of punctually paying the musicians was not a high priority of the royal treasury.




Purcell collaborated with the poet John Dryden (1631-1700), writing verses meant to be sung with an orchestra, and not silently read. Purcell obliged Dryden to rewrite some of his verses that were to be put to music. Dryden complained that "the numbers [meter] of poetry and vocal music are sometimes so contrary that in many places I have been obliged to cramp my verses, and make them rugged to the reader, that they may be harmonious to the hearer."

Like hexagram 43, tonal music is about Resolution, bringing meandering tones (sometimes) back to the main note or chord which determines the key. Resolution in tuning the guitar comes when the deep tone of the E- (sixth) string resounds correctly. Tuning the guitar, I try to avoid a certain tenseness due to a somewhat scientific state of mind one finds oneself in, as opposed to the artistic state of mind of actually playing. Now the guitar is tuned. Although my art allows my science to initiate the tuning process, it remains only an assistant. Any last minute adjustments are made by the artistic *instinct*. A swift stroke of the thumb over the strings:



How she sings! Now I am ready to play.

## PLAYING

The sixty-four hexagrams are concise. The eight trigrams are inevitable. The two yang and yin lines are sharp and delineated without compromise. And yet, the hard, crystalline hexagrams emanate the soft, cloudlike commentaries on each hexagram and each of its lines. The first hexagram Ch'ien (Heaven) is comprised only of this line: . Nothing could be more cut-and-dried. But this single line evokes six different commentaries. The cloudlike quality of the *I Ching* continues with the philosophic commentaries by King Wen on the hexagrams and the trigrams contained within each hexagram. King Wen's son Wu completed his father's work by writing commentaries on each line in each hexagram.  $6 \times 64 = 384$  commentaries on  and . In addition to these commentaries are the later commentaries in two sections by the Confucian School called Overall Images and Mixed Hexagrams. The Confucian School is represented by the teachings of three major thinkers and several other unknown authors. The three major thinkers are: Confucius (551-479 B.C.), Mencius (c. 380-30 B.C.) and Xunzi (c. 310-230 B.C.). Later editions of the *I Ching* also include commentaries by Liu I-ming (1734-1821), one of the main teachers of taoist internal alchemy, or *neidan*. A more recent teacher of taoist internal alchemy is Master Fu-yuan Ni (1915-2016). On February 6, 2002, Master Ni said this to his students about yin and yang:

*The patterns of Tai Chi are formed from yin and yang.*

*A person's energy is also formed from yin and yang.*

*Yang is born from stillness and yin is born from movement.*








*Stillness is substance and movement is function.*


*The Extreme is stillness; stillness is what is called*

*"returning to the root."*


*Extreme pliability leads to extreme hardness.*

*Softness nurtures; exertion injures.*

In the *I Ching* it is written: “Therefore, *I* (Change) has *Tai Chi* (Supreme Ultimate) and thus begets Two Polarities (Yin and Yang). Two polarities produce Four Phases. Four Phases give rise to *Bagua* (Eight Trigrams).” (8) This means that because there is *Tai Chi*, there is Change. The infinite possibilities of Change begin with Yin and Yang, offspring of *Tai Chi*. The hexagrams represent sixty-four possible permutations of the trigrams, which themselves are the eight possible permutations of yin   and yang  grouped in threes. Grouped in twos, there are four possible permutations, the Four Phases:    .

In taoist internal alchemy the hexagrams are called the “cauldron of the eight trigrams.” (1) Each trigram within each hexagram has two sets of associations: health and decadence. For example, in health Heaven  can evoke strength, firmness and creativity; in decadence it can represent force, aggression and arbitrariness.

### THE EIGHT TRIGRAMS

  
*Ch'ien* (Heaven)

  
*K'un* (Earth)

  
*Li* (Fire)

  
*K'an* (Water)

  
*Tui* (Lake)

  
*Sun* (Wind)

  
*Ken* (Mountain)

  
*Chen* (Thunder)

“When the trigrams are considered, the lower trigram is taken to refer to the inner state of the person, while the upper trigram is taken to represent the outer state of the person or the environmental situation.” (1) The trigrams are viewed as a family: *Heaven* (father), *Earth* (mother), *Thunder* (eldest son), *Wind* (eldest daughter), *Water* (middle son), *Fire* (middle daughter), *Mountain* (youngest son), *Lake*

(youngest daughter). Thomas Cleary continues: “The terminology of yin and yang is a primary element of the foundation of the language of the *I Ching* and Taoist spiritual alchemy. [...] These pairs are used to refer to a dichotomy in the human being that can be bridged by practice.”(1) This can be tai chi and meditation, which I practice daily, but also classical guitar and music in general. The “dichotomy” which Cleary refers to is between what the taoists call “mind of Tao” and “human mind.” The essence of unconditioned human nature – “mind of Tao” – is also called Original Spirit in the taoist handbook on meditation called *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, also translated by Cleary. With the conditioning of history and the environment comes its sibling, Conscious Spirit, or “human mind.” Conscious Spirit is meant to be the servant of Original Spirit. Both work together in harmony when health prevails. With the tyranny of today’s technocracy, and the thinking that created it, comes the delusion of mistaking the servant for the master: Conscious Spirit usurping authority over Original Spirit in the workings of human societies. Now mental illness prevails. The *I Ching* emanates Health and Decadence. It is easy to overlook that the trigrams and the hexagrams evolved during centuries of Chinese history filled with endless wars, bloodshed and unspeakable horrors.

This sad tradition was still well established in 1949, when the communist emperor Mao Tse-tung took power over all of China, and a few years later, Tibet. The horrors were augmented to a level never before seen in human history, with tens of millions of Chinese intentionally starved or worked to death. The food that they produced and which would have saved them was instead exported to Russia to pay the debt for the industrialization and militarization of China – the Great Leap Forward. Mao Tse-tung urged his cadres: “We must kill. And we must say it is good to kill.” In 1960, “22 million people died of hunger. This was the largest number in one year in any country in the history of the world.”(7) Joseph Stalin, even as he was murdering millions of his own people, was actively

funding Mao's Great Leap Forward. Mao wanted atomic weapons like a spoiled child wants more toys. When Stalin's successor Krushchev began having second thoughts about supplying nuclear technology, Mao was ready to provoke the US to attack China with atomic weapons in order to convince Russia to help turn China into a nuclear power. Mao wrote to Krushchev:

*For our ultimate victory, for the total eradication of the imperialists, we [the Chinese people, who had not been consulted] are willing to endure the first [nuclear] strike. All it is is a big pile of people dying. (7)*

This is the mental illness and hubris of Conscious Spirit usurping Original Spirit, the servant confusing himself for the master. Mysteriously, the same culture which produced Lao Tzu and the wisdom of Tao also produced Mao Tse-tung. What answer can the *I Ching* provide for solving *this* mystery? I shall not throw the three coins. I shall not ask. The ancient spiritual traditions of China, those not destroyed in Mao's "cultural revolution," required veritable martial alertness, vigilance and courage to survive such calamitous lunacy.

Master Fu-yuan Ni was born in Ningbo, China (south of Shanghai) in 1915, and grew up in the midst of the civil war between the nationalists and the communists (who were formerly allies). We, his tai chi students, have been given only sparse details about his background by Master Ni, who was not overly talkative.

The Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party), founded in 1911 by Sun Yat-sen, assumed power over much of China in 1928 under Chiang Kai-shek. Master Ni was thirteen. In 1950, immediately after the communist take-over of mainland China, Master Ni moved with the Kuomintang to Taiwan. He was thirty-five. About what happened to him and his family in those violent decades we know nothing, except that he held the communist Chinese government in

the most profound contempt. In 1974, at the age of 60, he moved with his family to Santa Barbara, California where he taught tai chi for many years. In June 2003, one month before turning 89, he retired. He told his students: "I am healthy and happy. I could easily teach another year but I have chosen to retire." A few years later he returned to Taiwan after an absence of thirty-five years. Master Ni died in 2016 at the age of 101 shortly after his wife passed away. Lao Tzu as well left China in deep disappointment. Legend says that Lao Tzu rode through Han Pass on the back of a buffalo to disappear into legend. He spoke to Yin Hsi, gatekeeper of the pass.\* His utterances became the *Tao Te Ching*.

Writing this book at this moment of history is accompanied with a feeling of *doom*. I awaken each morning with such a merciless foreknowledge of *doom* that I seriously wonder if anyone will ever read these lines. Noisy wars are now accompanied by the Quiet War of science and technology: geo- bio- and social engineering. As with Mao's Great Leap Forward, normal people are the intended victims of the Quiet War – in the millions. Combined with the scientific discoveries and technological inventions conceived by Conscious Spirit – more advanced than ever before in human history – unheard of calamity and self-annihilation await us. What can the *I Ching* tell us here? The profound advantages of Original Spirit – inborn creativity, grace, intelligence, instinct, compassion, love – are more and more being seen as disadvantages by those in power, who are led by Conscious Spirit, the servant. Empathy and good will for fellow humans (which allowed the homo sapiens to evolve into such an amazing creature), are more and more rejected by the technocracy, which more and more sees human beings, as did Mao, as slaves which can be worked to death and replaced in a New World Order, as "so-called moral issues" are mocked as counter-productive.

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\*Writing two hundred or so years after Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu mentions Lao Tzu's funeral attended by mourning disciples. Modern scholars doubt that Lao Tzu was an historic figure.

On August 19, 1958, Mao Tse-tung said in a speech to selected provincial chiefs: "In the future we will set up the Earth Control Committee, and make a uniform plan for the Earth." (7) Such megalomaniacal lunacy is present among the "elite" oppressing humanity today. As I write (May 31, 2019), the 67th Bilderberg Meeting is taking place in Montreux, Switzerland, with the New World Order as its constant focus. About 130 participants from 23 countries now attend another "Earth Control Committee" like that envisioned by Mao. Mental illness is apparent in the fact that these miserable people (who believe themselves to be very clever) do not understand that for billions of years, the Earth has not required "control" by any of the creatures living on it – no "plan" laid out by a "committee." Tao was, is and always shall be in control.

*There was something perfect and  
formless before the universe was born.  
It is serene. Empty. Solitary. Unchanging.  
Infinite. Eternally present.  
It is the mother of the universe.  
For lack of a better name I call it*

道

(Tao)

– Lao Tzu

Control was also the intention of the first known Bilderberg meeting in 1954 (in the Bilderberg Hotel in Amsterdam). In the doctrine adopted by the policy committee, "diverting the public's attention from what is really going on" was declared paramount, as was *control* over "the irresponsible many" by the "worthy few." With total contempt for "so-called moral issues," guidelines for the total domination of the "inferior class" by the "superior class" were put forth at the Bilderberg Hotel – in a democratic nation of democratic Europe! The mainstream media as usual is silent about

the 67th Bilderberg Meeting, obediently “diverting the public’s attention” to less important things as called for in the original Bilderberg doctrine. Secrecy in writing it was a necessity: “Such a writing must be secured from public scrutiny. Otherwise, it might be recognized as a technically formal declaration of domestic war.” Such were the wars waged by Mao and Stalin against their own peoples. Tens of millions were killed. The advantage for tyrants of the Quiet War now being waged on the people today is that they do not know that war is being waged on them.

During the Noisy War, hundreds of thousands of people in Dresden, Hamburg, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and elsewhere were quite aware that they were the targets of war before they were killed. It is as if humanity is captive in the cave of Polyphemus, the Cyclops in the *Odyssey*. His cannibalistic feast terminated the lives of many Greeks. The State too is cannibalistic. The scene in the Cyclops’ cave is a microcosm of Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*, of the utter contempt the State – any State – has for the people. When people die of genetic malfunctioning and weaponized diseases (bio-engineering); cancers caused by radiation from smart phones, cell phone towers, thousands of atomic bomb tests in the atmosphere, and other toxic particles in the environment (geo-engineering); drug addictions and deadly medicines and vaccines that make the pharmaceutical corporations astronomically wealthy; poisons intentionally placed in the air, water and food sources; suicides and murders resulting from various forms of highly advanced mind control (social engineering) – when people die from these silent weapons in the Quiet War, they, unlike the victims of Mao, Stalin and Hitler, die not knowing that they have been targeted in the millions. “What Mao had in mind was a completely arid society, devoid of civilization, deprived of representation of human feelings [Art], inhabited by a herd with no sensibility, which would automatically obey his orders.”(7) Such is the global agenda of our time. It is “politically incorrect” to point this out.



Conscious Spirit runs amok. Original Spirit wastes its wisdom. Mass mental illness prevails as “the silent weapons for quiet wars” pronounced at the first Bilderberg Meeting in 1954 are being put into effect against the enemy – the people:

*When a silent weapon is applied gradually, the public adjusts/adapts to its presence and learns to tolerate its encroachment on their lives until the pressure (psychological via economic) becomes too great and they crack up. [...] It attacks the vitality, options, and mobility of the individuals of a society by knowing, understanding, manipulating, and attacking their sources of natural and social energy, and their physical, mental, and emotional strengths and weaknesses.*

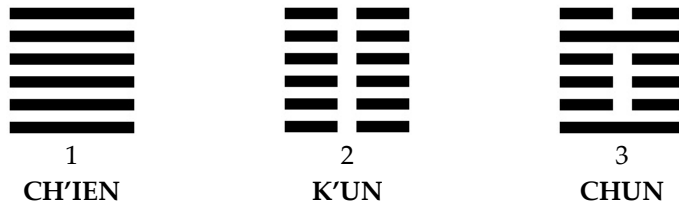
In tai chi, vitality is called *ch'i*. This universal energy is prevalent in the organic and inorganic realms. In human beings, it is their life-force, which is transformed into labor and then into money. Money is thus certificates of labor already produced or labor to be produced in the future by those who are still living and those who are as yet unborn. The debt they incur becomes so monstrous that it is unpayable, assuring their miserable destinies as indentured slaves in a “new world order.”

The Bilderberg doctrine, as it was for Mao Tse-tung, is to deplete the vital energy of the populace in order to augment their financial wealth. It is a finely-tuned mechanism of plunder that generates short-term profits by inflicting long-term costs – not only monetary, but spiritual costs. The current global agenda exhausts vital energy and natural resources, including air, land, and water, for temporary profits while imposing most of its costs, such as pollution and mass extinctions, on the environment.

The *I Ching* as an expression of health and decadence is a mirror of human actions – the best and the worst. Changing from one to the other often comes only after violent upheavals.

\*

In the Introduction I commented on the first three hexagrams in relation to the guitar:

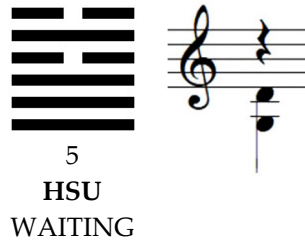


The taoist *I Ching* consists of two parts: the *I Ching* proper (the 64 hexagrams with the ancient commentaries) and the Mixed Hexagrams (with more recent commentaries). 56 of the Mixed Hexagrams are pairs which are the inverse of each other. For example, turning the third hexagram (above) upside down, results in the fourth hexagram:



Above is a chord from the eighth measure of Julian Bream's transcription for guitar of Debussy's *La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin* (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair). The sixth and the second strings are not plucked, corresponding to the sixth and the second unbroken lines of hexagram 4, Inexperience. Above, the trigram for "mountain," below the trigram for "water." "Both have forms of yin injuring yang; therefore it is called *darkness*." (1) I was inexperienced when I first began to play this piece. In fact, at the time its degree of

difficulty was almost insurmountable. But just as with Bach's lute suite *Prelude, Fugue, Allegro*, I kept coming back to the sheet music over time, until I was able to play it competently from memory. So too is my confrontation with the *I Ching*. My inexperience still prevails with hexagram 4, translated as "Inexperience" by R.L. Wing, "Darkness" by Thomas Cleary, and "Youthful Folly" by Richard Wilhelm. Adding to the confusion, other translations include "Enveloping," "The Young Shoot" and "Discovering." The respective translations of the commentaries and explanations are so completely different that they do not seem to be taken from the same original. Cleary's first text after the name reads: "In darkness is development. It is not that I seek naive innocence, naive innocence seeks me." Wing's first text after the name reads: "You are able to completely handle just about every facet of your life, except for the one facing you now." Legge's text reads: "Meng (indicates that in the case which it presupposes) there will be progress and success. I do not (go and) seek the youthful and inexperienced." To properly investigate these discrepancies, I would be obliged to learn Chinese, study the Chinese text and devote more time to this one hexagram than I devote to this book. The personalities, world views, prejudices, idiosyncracies and misconceptions of the translators play a huge role in how I, the reader, confront the *I Ching*, not knowing if I am being led or misled. The modern Dutch translator, Ewald Berkers, writes that the *I Ching* is "notoriously difficult to translate. The original Chinese text is brief, and there is no punctuation. The ancient words are not as precisely defined as in modern languages, and there is not that much contemporary text available that helps to establish the meaning of them." As opposed to the absolute clarity and finality of the 64 images, the texts associated with them are vague, diffuse and murky, even when they are not mistranslated. As a visual artist, the night black images reach me without ambiguity.



These are two notes from *Little Serenade* (fifth movement “Duo”) by the Swedish composer Dag Wirén (1905-1986). It is the only work he composed specifically for the guitar. The sixth and fourth strings are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 5. Above, the trigram for “water,” below the trigram for “heaven.” “This hexagram represents nurturing strength, awaiting the proper time.”(1) The D and the G on the note system, and the hexagram, are small details of bigger pictures: all the measures of all six movements (March, Preludium, Solo, Intermezzo, Duo, March) of *Little Serenade*; and the name, description, lengthy “explanation,” as well as six rubrics and “explanations” for each of the six lines of hexagram Hsu. In this book the respective hexagrams and note systems can only be small details of bigger pictures in the *I Ching* and the sheet music (as well as performances) of, in this case, *Little Serenade*. A sample of the bigger picture for this hexagram can be seen in only the rubrics of the six lines, which read as follows:

- Entering the cave. Three people come, guests not in haste: Respect them, and it will turn out well.
- Waiting with food and wine, it is good to be correct.
- Waiting in blood. Leaving the cave.
- Waiting in the mud, bringing on enemies.
- Waiting on the sand, there is some criticism, but it turns out well.
- Waiting on the outskirts, it is beneficial to employ constancy; then there is no fault. (1)

These phrases evoke the language of Chinese fortune cookies. Their diffuse meanings can be interpreted differently on different days, in the morning or in the evening. They are each followed by a lengthier “explanation” of each line’s rubric. (Then come the Confucian commentaries, as well as those of the 19th-century commentator Liu I-ming.) Like the language of the Bible, they are ancient-sounding, uncomfortably distant from modern language. The translators only add to the confusion. For example, the rubric for the bottom line of hexagram 5 above is translated by Legge thusly: “waiting in the distant border. It will be well for him constantly to maintain (the purpose thus shown), in which case there will be no error.” Omitting any reference to “outskirts” or “distant border,” R.L. Wing comes with something totally different for the same (bottom) line: “Do not become agitated by your sense of impending problem.” Richard Wilhelm brings us even further from understanding the bottom line (  ): “Waiting in the meadow. It furthers one to abide in what endures. No blame.” *Waiting* for clarity, I feel a need to return to the sharp corners and keen edges of the uncompromisingly black image of the hexagram, at times gleaming with a faint color spectrum at the unambiguous meetings of black and white.



This is the first measure of *Fantasia* by Francesco da Milano (1497-1543), an Italian lutenist, recognized throughout Europe as the foremost composer for lute of his time. The first and third strings are plucked, corresponding to the first and third broken

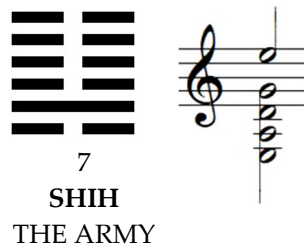
lines of hexagram 6 (which is hexagram 5 turned upside down). Above, the trigram for “heaven,” below the trigram for “water.” “This hexagram represents the downfall of truth and the contest for victory.”(1)

In the more than 500 years since Francesco da Milano, the guitar has today become most popular among the lovers of pop, rock and hard rock music. These particular music lovers have little patience for the repertory for classical guitar, but few are aware that the electric guitar of hard rock has its roots in the long tradition of classical guitar. The enchantment of this wooden box with vibrating strings is that it is at once a highly sophisticated instrument of classical music, and the most popular instrument of “grass roots” musical traditions. Many contemporary masters of the classical guitar have a broad repertory that arches between Bach and the Beatles. Rock guitarists seldom come close to having such a broad scope in their playing. The rock-and-rollers and other popular musicians dominate music today, and are much more known internationally than the best classical guitarists. But this domination may be temporary. The question arises as to which hard rock guitarist can endure 500 years in the memory of humankind as has Francesco da Milano.

Only in the silence of this page can I confess: I do not like the sound of the electric guitar. It prevails over loud, boisterous crowds because of the decibels coming from its amplifiers. The music is not even disrupted by the hysterically screaming crowds! The delicacy of the classical guitar demands a silent audience. Here is the *Conflict* of hexagram 6: “Conflict develops when one feels himself to be in the right and runs into opposition.”(14) The *I Ching* is about changes. Everything changes, even mountains and continents. The history of the guitar is one of splendid ongoing changes from Gaspar Sanz (1640-1710) to the Cuban guitarist/composer Leo Brouwer (1939- ). In the time of Sanz hard rock music would have been called *musica ruidosa* (noisy music). Amazing virtuosity exists

in both genres. Many electric guitarists can dazzle the audience with virtuosity. As a young man Robert Schumann's favorite composers were those who focused on flamboyant virtuosity as an end in itself. These composers are forgotten today. Schumann abandoned his youthful favorites and began deep studies of the composers who would be the main influence on his own music: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert.

Whether popular music or classical music, the *conflict* between *ruidosa* (noisy) and *con limpieza* (with cleanliness) has been relevant for hundreds of years. In *Transformational Writings* the taoist adept from the tenth century T'an Ch'iao wrote: "The sound of a harp produces a feeling of tranquility. Sensual music produces rapture and abandon. The sound of scraping bricks sends shivers up the spine. [...] If it is harmonious it evokes positive energy, which produces a benign influence that enlivens everything. If it is unharmonious it evokes negative energy, which produces a harsh influence that degrades everything. [...] The science of the use of music is very great indeed."(9)



In the above chord all the open strings except the second are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 7, with all but the second line broken. Above, the trigram for "earth," below the trigram for "water." "This hexagram represents using yang to drive back yin."(1) In the many ways to consult the *I Ching*, there may or may not be "errors." The commentary to this hexagram reads: "For the leader of the army to be right, a mature person is good; then there

is no error.”(1) An error has several dimensions. When divination is not an issue, as in the present book, errors, if not non-existent, are hard to identify. However, when consulting the *I Ching* as an oracle, there are strict rules as in a card game or chess, and errors can be as obvious as  $2+2=5$ .

For example, I throw the three coins to determine the first line of a new hexagram: *heads, tails, tails*. Heads has a value of 3, tails has a value of 2, giving a total of 7 for the first (yang) line.\* Any other interpretation of these mathematical details is an error. There are other rules which if not followed result in error. Throws with all tails or all heads are considered “changing lines,” which become part of a forming parallel hexagram. That is, after six throws of the coins, the result is *two* hexagrams. A changing line is one that changes from yin to yang or vice versa in the second hexagram. The hexagram that is formed with the changed lines must also be considered, if one is to “correctly” consult the oracle. (If there are no throws with all heads or all tails, the second hexagram is identical to the first.) Despite their obscure and vague nature, there is a “correct” way to “consider” the texts to avoid “errors” in divination. Ewald Berkers explains the very confusing rules:

- *No changing lines:*  
*Consider the hexagram text.*
- *1 changing line:*  
*Consider the line text of the changing line.*
- *2 or 3 changing lines:*  
*Consider the line texts and also the text of the resulting hexagram.*
- *4, 5 or 6 changing lines:*  
*Consider the hexagram texts of both hexagrams.*

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\* Throwing the three coins can result in sums of 6, 7, 8, or 9. The even totals produce a yin line, the odd totals produce a yang line.



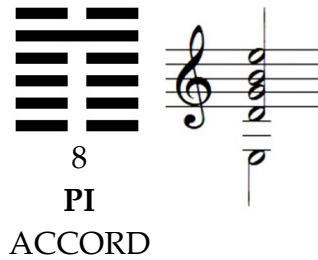
Were this the only way to interact with the *I Ching*, I would not be writing this book, since I have no interest whatsoever in its virtues as a parlor game. "Those who make skillful use of the *I Ching* do not practice divination." (Hsun-tzu)(1)

I can see no other reason for printed texts than as a way to understanding Reality. This is in fact the title of a taoist classic, *Understanding Reality*. In his introduction to this work, Chang Po-tuan (c. 983-1082) wrote: "My aim is that when people with the same aspiration [understanding reality] read this they will understand the root on seeing the branches, and will give up illusions to follow reality."(9)

The hexagrams themselves are something other than text. Like the yin yang symbol, they refine reality into a compact visual essence that represents changes on earth, in the individual and in the universe. The hexagrams are embedded in what is known as a "Classic." Ironically, although they represent Change, a "Classic" is unchanging: "A *Classic* is a pathway, a road, a constant; it means a perennial path in life, something lasting and unchanging." (Liu I-ming, *A Commentary on the Classic on Yin Convergence*)(9) In 1816, after a life of travels, writing commentaries on the classics, and teaching, Liu I-ming chose a place for his tomb in a cave in the Qiyun mountains. In 1821 he entered the cave, said his final words to his disciples, and died. A major commentator of the *I Ching*, he was also the author of a large number of works on taoism and *neidan* (internal alchemy).

Bypassing the many rules for divination, an investigator of the *I Ching* has access to a much simpler method as written in the *Book of Balance and Harmony* from the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368 C.E.):

*Application of the I Ching is accomplished simply by openness and tranquility. When open, one takes in all; when tranquil, one perceives all. (1)*



In the above chord all the open strings except the fifth are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 8, with all but the fifth line broken. Above, the trigram for “water,” below the trigram for “earth.” “This is the path of making the wrong *accord* with the right, making the artificial accord with the real.”(1) When the guitar is tuned, it is time to part with the mundane and momentarily attain the sublime. Listening is good, but playing is better. Beyond playing await the difficulties of improvising and composing.

Sound is energy. The cacophony of semi-trucks, ambulances with sirens wailing, irritated motorists honking with impatience in the traffic-jam – this is negative sound, negative energy. This constant unharmonious sound produces harsh influences on human souls, degrades everything in its proximity, and I would not be surprised if it drove mass-murderers to their gruesome deeds. For a musician, this is unbearable torment. Negative sound can also be seemingly more innocent. At home, it comes from central heating systems, ventilation systems, refrigerators, water pipes, humming computers and neighbors.

Once upon a time, people raked leaves serenely in autumn with garden rakes. Now, diabolic technicians have invented gasoline-powered leaf-blowers that bring me terrible anguish, and must indeed awaken all the dead souls in Hades each time they are started up. Have humans become such senseless brutes that this vile noise is preferable to raking leaves in an intelligent tranquil mood? Our times demand that we work faster, produce more, and acquire higher levels of competence in order to survive. How will

we be able to cope with these increasing demands of the atomic age, if there is not one place for peace and quiet in our lives?

Harmonious, positive sound energy comes from some (not all) music. This harmonious energy produces tender effects in human souls, uplifts everything in its proximity, and accompanied Milarepa's spirit up and out of the flames of his funeral pyre in ancient Tibet. Such is also the message of the 10th-century taoist sage T'an Ch'iao:

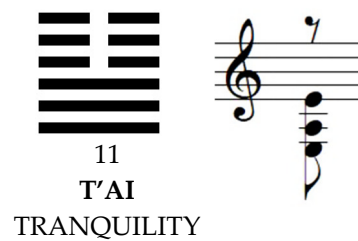
*When energy moves, sound is emitted: when sound comes forth, energy vibrates. When energy vibrates, influences are activated and things change. [...] The knowledge of the use of music is very great indeed. (9)*

I grew up in southern California, where in the summer people were warned about breathing the air around them, especially if they were asthmatic or had respiratory problems. The authorities never provided us with an alternative source for taking air into our lungs than Earth's atmosphere, which now, after thousands of years of being clean, was dangerously toxic from smog. During smog-alerts – “critical breathing days” – we were merely advised to stay inside.

The pollution is so intense that the air is even excited with invisible electromagnetic, radio and television waves, carrying excited encoded voices and images of troubled humanity flitting over the tree-tops, with all sorts of unimportant messages making round trips across thousands of miles on land and hundreds of kilometers into space and back, day in and day out, without one single volt of energy devoted to Wisdom. Much less discernible to people are the networks of super-highways, powerlines, landfills and blown-up mountains imprinted in each individual soul, a constant excitation that even enters their sleep, distracting the billions from the nature of their own humanness. Hexagram 8 is about “making the wrong *accord* with the right.” Epic task!

Hexagram 9: see page 21

Hexagram 10: see page 19



The above chord is from *Homage to Debussy*, the only work composed specifically for the guitar by Manuel de Falla (1876-1946). The sixth, fifth and fourth strings are plucked, corresponding to the top three broken lines of hexagram 11. The two trigrams are “earth” above, “heaven” below. “This hexagram represents the mixing of yin and yang.”(1) It emanates a similar *tranquility* as does the tai chi symbol – equal amounts of yin and yang (as with its inverse, hexagram 12 below). Debussy also evokes *tranquility*.

When Cuban guitarist/composer/conductor Leo Brouwer (b. 1939) first heard de Falla’s *Homage to Debussy*, he saw the guitar as a “delicate orchestra,” adding: “I compose for the guitar thinking of orchestra.” Another guitarist/composer/conductor is Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). Little is known about Berlioz and the guitar. It seems that he began learning the guitar in 1819 when he was 16. That year he composed thirty beginner pieces which do not reveal the mastery he was later to manifest. In *The Lives of the Great Composers* Harold Schonberg wrote: “Berlioz never learned to play a useful instrument correctly. All he could do was pluck a few chords on the guitar or tootle a few notes on the flute or flageolet.” The stigma of not being a “useful instrument” has cursed the guitar for centuries. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states that Berlioz was, on the contrary, a “virtuoso” on the guitar. Listeners complain that the classical guitar is not loud enough. But its six strings can evoke an entire orchestra.

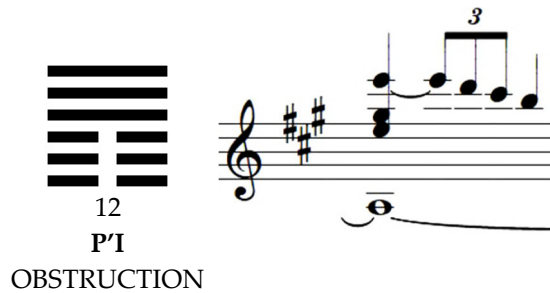
The memoirs of Dmitry Shostakovich (1906-1975) reveal that *tranquility* in his orchestration was born of anguish. He lived in such constant fear and anguish of being arrested and shot by Stalin's thugs, that he considered suicide: "Suicide is a hurried escape from danger. It is the act of a child who has been scared by life. In my unhappy life there were many sad events but there were periods when danger gathered ominously, when it was particularly palpable, and then my fear augmented. In the period about which we were talking just now [after the premier of the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* which displeased Stalin], I was near to suicide. The danger horrified me and I saw no other way out."\*

Despite the horrors of Stalinist Russia, and ill health, the life and work of Dmitry Shostakovich reflect the text of hexagram 11: "Heaven and earth are in contact and combine their influences, producing a time of universal flowering and prosperity."(14) Despite the constant anguish over the possibility of being arrested and executed at any moment, Shostakovich miraculously emanated *tranquility* in his music, as in the second movement of his piano concerto no. 2. Few things have moved me so deeply as this andante, with its subtle evocations of Beethoven's piano concertos.

Playing the guitar, or any musical instrument, movements are carried out the most of which the musician is not fully aware. After long years of training and study, the cognitive part of music-making is secondary to the instinctive part. When one first learns to ride a bicycle, one is concentrated on not falling off. Later, when riding becomes second nature, the countryside can now be appreciated, the wind in the face, the songs of the birds. Playing Bach preludes that I have practiced for many years, I am amazed at how some deep instinct takes over as the fingers of the left and right hands seem to know exactly what to do, enhancing the enjoyment.

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\**Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitry Shostakovich*, as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov, translated by Antonia W. Bouis, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1979.



“Strength and receptivity are separated.”(1) This chord begins the seventh measure of *Remembering the Rain* by Bill Evans (1929-1980), as arranged for guitar by Ralf Jarchow. The third, second and first strings are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 12. The two trigrams – “heaven” above, “earth” below – are quite fitting for the origin and destination of rain. (The A in the bass is not plucked, but is tied to the A in the previous measure.) Years ago I jotted this down in my journal: “Today the rain stopped after several days of downpour. I took out the sheet music for Bill Evans’ *Remembering the Rain* which I had been contemplating for weeks, and began learning it. With the air still moist and cool outside my window, and the memory of watching Bill Evans play at the Village Vanguard in New York, playing *Remembering the Rain* was a thoroughly artistic experience.”

The *I Ching* reveals: “This hexagram represents yin and yang not joining: it follows on the previous hexagram (䷋)... promoting strength with harmony and joyfulness, causing yin and yang to join, so strength and receptivity are united.”(1) The present hexagram is the opposite – strength and receptivity *separated* (Obstruction). I think of Bill Evans’ premature death due to drug abuse. One of Evans’ friends described his struggle with drugs as “the longest suicide in history.” He was not only a jazz pianist and composer, but an accomplished classical pianist as well. Hexagrams 11 and 12 are the inverse of each other, one representing joy, the

other sorrow, the very themes of Music. "Starting with Beethoven's accomplishments it was no longer simply one feeling (for example pure joy or sorrow) that was the object of his musical creation, but also the transition from one mood to another – conflicts, nature's influence on us, humor and poetic ideas." (Gustav Mahler)

Bill Evans was a master of jazz improvisation. He did not rehearse before a performance, as do classical musicians. He would go on stage, sit down at the piano, and with the bass player and drummer who formed the Bill Evans Trio, begin to play at the highest level of difficulty. It was never the same as the previous performance of the same piece. A magical awareness and instinct united the musicians in a sublime musical conversation. Evans had a classical education in music, very familiar with Bach, Beethoven and other classical composers. (He performed Beethoven's fourth piano concerto as a young man.) A lifetime of training, hours and hours every day, is required to achieve the level of mastery that Bill Evans had access to at any moment, spontaneous improvisation without sheet music. "And if you sit down and contemplate what you're going to do, and take five hours to write five minutes of music, then it's composed music. Therefore I would put it in the classical, or serious, whatever you want to call it, written music category. So there's composed music and there's jazz."\*

The classical guitarist John Williams has said that improvisation is a skill he admires greatly but which he does not possess. Improvisation in the time of Bach was a normal skill. Today most classical musicians play what Evans called "composed music" with a foundation in a written score. However, some contemporary guitarists like Egberto Gismonti (Brazil), Paco de Lucia (Spain), Roland Dyens (France), Uroš Dojčinović (Serbia), and John McLaughlin (England) are masters of improvisation.

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\* Bill Evans, quoted in Les Tomkins, "A Group Dialogue Featuring the Bill Evans 3," *Crescendo*, March 1965. As published in *Bill Evans: How my Heart Sings*, Peter Pettinger, Yale University Press, New Haven & London 1998.

Hexagram 13: see page 16

Hexagram 14: see page 23



This is the last chord from *Canço de Lladre* (Song of the Thief) by the Catalan guitarist/composer Miguel Llobet (1878-1938). Llobet was the pupil of Francisco Tárrega, and the teacher of Andrés Segovia. All of the strings except the third are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 15, with all but the third line broken. Above, the trigram for “earth,” below the trigram for “mountain.”

For English-speaking readers, the two legendary classics of China, the *I Ching* and the *Tao Te Ching*, are both dependent on the interpretations of the translators. What is lost in translation? Not only does each individual translator interpret the ancient texts according to his or her own biases and whims, but each epoch in history imposes the biases and whims derivative of that epoch. Many (sometimes radically) different translations make the idea of an absolute “thing-in-itself” – the *I Ching*-in-itself or the *Tao Te Ching*-in-itself – impossible. *Change* throughout the generations is the essence of both classics in translation. But the numerology at the core of each work is absolute and unchanging even in translation. The *I Ching* is based on the number 2, with its  $2^6 = 64$  hexagrams. The *Tao Te Ching* is based on the number 3, with its  $3^4 = 81$  chapters.

Another unchanging aspect at the core of both works is 道 (Tao), the Way in which the universe functions. In chapter 42 of the *Tao Te Ching* Lao Tzu says, “The Way begets one; the one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures.”(11) Even



before the universe existed there was Tao. From Tao comes *Wu Chi* (No Extremity), from which comes *Tai Chi* (Supreme Extremity), from which comes *Yin* and *Yang*, from which come the 64 hexagrams and the “myriad things.”

Just as ways of comprehending the *I Ching* differ drastically, so do ways of comprehending Music differ drastically. Scientists (at times amateur musicians themselves, as was Einstein), often have a pragmatic approach to Music very distant from the profoundly *spiritual* approach of Johann Sebastian Bach and the other great composers. In *The Descent of Man* Charles Darwin wrote: “As neither the enjoyment nor the capacity of producing musical notes are faculties of the least use to man [...] they must be ranked among the most mysterious with which he is endowed.” Music is useless. Art is useless... or perhaps not. As I wrote above, the mysterious enchantment in the sound of a vibrating string may very well have been the seed of all civilization, whose epic story is “wedded to the [kithara’s] string.” (Aeschylus) Such is the sublime utility of Music! A contemporary scientist, the world famous psychologist Steven Pinker, agrees with Darwin that Music is useless: “What benefit could there be to diverting time and energy to making plinking noises? [...] As far as the biological cause and effect are concerned, music is useless. [...] It could vanish from our species and the rest of our lifestyle would be virtually unchanged.”\* Is that what Bach devoted his life to, “making plinking noises”? And is this the face of modern science, with hundreds of years of “empirical evidence” as its foundation, categorically announcing with clairvoyant all-knowing that our lives would be “virtually unchanged” if there had never been Music? The *humility* of hexagram 15 is absent here. “Those who are not superior people think they have what they have not, think they are fulfilled when in fact they are empty.”(1)

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\* Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1997/2009.



This chord is from *Waltz* by Andrés Segovia (1893-1987). Only the fourth string is unplucked, corresponding to hexagram 16 with its single unbroken fourth line. Above, the trigram for “thunder,” below the trigram for “earth.” “The fourth line, undivided, is the lord of the figure, and being close to the fifth or place of dignity, is to be looked on as the minister or chief officer of the ruler. The ruler gives to him his confidence; and all represented by the other lines yield their obedience.”(10) The fourth string, D, is also the “lord” of this piece, which is in the key of D-major. Composers who do not play the guitar and who compose for this instrument can at times face frustrating combinations of notes common on the piano, but impossible to be plucked simultaneously on the guitar, for example:



One can overcome this problem by raising the bottom note, E, an octave, but the deeper sound in the bass must be sacrificed. Transcribing music from one instrument to another, like translating texts from one language to another, involves making sacrifices. The result, music and words, are perhaps the greatest gifts humans bestow on other humans. “Men of wealth and rank make gifts of money while benevolent men make gifts of words.”(11) These words are attributed to Li Erh, librarian in charge of the archives in Chou, also known as Lao Tzu (“Old Boy”). They do not come from the *Tao Te Ching*, but from the biography of Lao Tzu written by Ssu-

ma Ch'ien from the first century B.C., over four centuries later. I would like to continue believing that, according to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Lao Tzu fathered a son whose descendants were still living in the biographer's day, met and conversed with the younger Confucius, and made a westward journey out of China through the Han Pass, writing the *Tao Te Ching* at the request of the Gatekeeper of the Pass. However, D.C. Lau wrote that "there are no strong reasons to believe that [these events] were founded on fact. In all probability Lao Tzu was not a historical figure at all." (11) He believed that the classic is an anthology written by several "elders" over time.

Hexagram 16 is named Joy. The *I Ching* emanates both Health and Decadence. The health of joy is obvious. Not so obvious is the decadence of joy. Meditation is a process in which the practitioner remains emotionally neutral. Buddhism teaches that human suffering is caused by the seven passions: happiness, anger, sorrow, joy, love hate, desire. (12) (Even *love* is deemed harmful by the monks!) The aim of meditation among buddhists (to terminate the cycle of reincarnations) differs from that of taoists, who teach: "Birth is not a beginning; death is not an end. There is existence without limitation; there is continuity without a starting-point." (Chuang Tzu) These teachings evolved beyond the idea of reincarnation, and imply that that which is not born cannot be reborn. Matter and spirit are not born, are not reborn, but are *transformed*. Chuang Tzu (4th century BC) is the second sage of taoism, author of the classic of the same name, *Chuang Tzu*. (Even *his* existence is questioned by scholars.) According to the 2nd-century BC historian Sima Qian, "Chuang Tzu had made himself well acquainted with all the literature of his time, but preferred the views of Lao Tzu, and ranked himself among his followers." Confronting these two departed sages today, "The wood is consumed but the fire burns on, and we do not know when it will come to an end." (Chuang Tzu on Lao Tzu's departure)(13)

The image shows the hexagram 17, Sui (Following), which consists of the upper trigram Lake (Dui) and the lower trigram Thunder (Zhen). The hexagram is represented by six horizontal lines: from top to bottom, they are broken, solid, broken, broken, solid, and broken. To the right of the hexagram is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation shows a sequence of notes: a quarter rest, a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4, a quarter note on C5, and a quarter note on D5. Below the staff, there are two bass notes: a quarter note on F#3 and a quarter note on G3.

17  
SUI  
FOLLOWING

This is the fourth measure of *Prelude No. 3* by Mexican composer Manuel Ponce (1882-1948). In the chord the sixth, third and second strings are plucked corresponding to hexagram 17 with its sixth, third and second lines broken. Above, the trigram for “lake,” below the trigram for “thunder.” “This hexagram represents seeking feeling through essence.”(1) A prelude implies something to *follow*. In Ponce’s case, as with Bach and many later composers, what follows a prelude is a fugue.

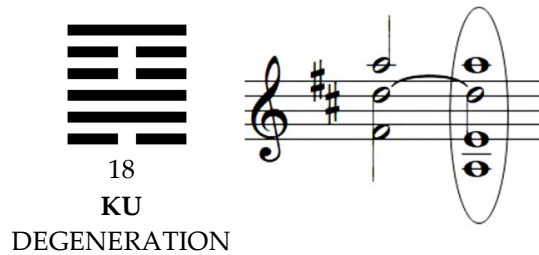
A process of *following* can bring with it life-long self-delusion, or spiritual knowledge leading to a better understanding of reality. In the religions of western culture, myths, superstition and fairy tales have replaced reality, producing hundreds of millions of credulous *followers*. Decades of research have led certain biblical scholars like D.M. Murdock to believe that Jesus and Moses were equally as much fictitious characters as Apollo and Hercules. When the Roman caesars were transformed into popes, power-hungry scribes gained control over literature. The widespread illiteracy of the ancient world allowed the scribes to present the myth of Jesus as history to the myriads of devotees *following* the new religion. Centuries of painters depicting Jesus with hundreds of totally different faces reveal a profitable industry of fiction-making à la Hollywood used to control minds. The masterful *trompe l’oeil* made the credulous gasp at the “reality” of these portraits. Surely this man lived! (Yes, as a model in the painter’s workshop!) Many lifetimes of self-delusion throughout centuries were the result of

this premeditated deception based on myths plagiarized from other cultures, which were deformed into bogus historical facts and characters, to then be mixed with veritable historical facts and characters. (Even the pagan festivals of the winter solstice and vernal equinox were plagiarized to become Christmas and Easter.) Understanding reality was not the intention of this European brotherhood, but rather – controlling souls. “The biblical story thus ranks as historicized fiction, rather than fictionalized history. The difference may be subtle but is important.”\* (The difference can be likened to *War and Peace* as fictionalized history and *Gulliver’s Travels* as historicized fiction.)

Subtle teachings conveying that which is – without pretense – have had great difficulty surfacing in the turmoil of never-ending falsehoods that form the core of western cultures. Chang Po-tuan (983-1082) admonished his fellow citizens one thousand years ago: “Practitioners of recent times have arbitrary fixations and do not understand the reality of the subtle teaching.”(9) Having had the advantage of growing up in a non-religious home, I was blessed with never having to “revolt” against religion, as did James Joyce. With common sense as my guide, I weeded through the world’s spiritual teachings and eventually discovered the wisdom of taoism. (Like my teacher Master Fu-Yuan Ni, I *follow* the Tao but am not a taoist.) Chang Po-tuan had this to say about being a taoist: “Is it not a fact that the doctrines [taoism, buddhism, confucianism] may be three, but the Way is ultimately one?”(9) The ancient school of thought said to be founded by Lao Tzu 2,500 years ago is called in Chinese *tao chia*, “school of the Tao” or taoism. What is the Way? “The Way that can be spoken of/ Is not the constant Way.”(11) This statement nullifies *everything* that is said about the Tao. Hexagram 17 is named Following. Even the Universe is a *follower* of the Tao.

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\* D.M. Murdock, *Did Moses Exist? The Myth of the Israelite Lawgiver*, Stellar House Publishing, 2014.



From *Pavana No. 2* by Luis Milan (1500-1561). Milan, born in Valencia, Spain played the vihuela, a precursor to the guitar. The time signature is 3/2, or three half notes per measure (the same value as one whole note and one half note). The top number in the time signature denotes the *number* of beats in a measure, the bottom number the *type* of beat. The second half-note (D) above, with the tie, is not plucked. The three whole notes are plucked on the fifth, fourth and first strings, corresponding to hexagram 18 with its broken fifth, fourth and first lines. Above, the trigram for “mountain,” below the trigram for “wind.” “This hexagram represents abandoning the false and returning to the true.”(1)

Unplayed for long periods, the guitar becomes untuned and undergoes *degeneration*, “the lowering of effective power, vitality, or essential quality to an enfeebled and worsened kind or state,” according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. The six vibrating strings ring false. Playing the *Pavana* on them would produce chaos and cacophony, a fitting metaphor for the state of society today. The time frame of *degeneration* in human societies can be years, decades, centuries, millennia, when what Nietzsche called “instincts of decadence” are given free rein: “We squander the capital of our ancestors.” (*The Will to Power*) He described the fate of European civilization as “a river that longs to end, that no longer can come to its senses, that is afraid to come to its senses.” (*The Gay Science*) These misgivings came long before the outrageous wars and crimes of the 20th and 21st centuries, and the epic destruction

of the terrestrial environment. What horrifying calamities lie between him and me! Tens of millions of human beings slaughtered, huge metropolitan cities laid waste in an instant, moral bankruptcy, rampant perversity, mass lunacy, organized crime running nations, bandits given the names prime minister, president... No wonder Nietzsche went insane! This is the *degeneration* he foresaw: "For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade." (*The Will to Power*) Over and over again they arrive at this point after brief periods of prosperity: *degeneration* into nihilism and exhaustion. And, like an ungifted, spoiled child breaking its toys, they destroy entire societies in a rage, as sheer love of destruction and suicide replaces the life force of humanity. In his last lucid moments, Nietzsche predicted the conjoined twins fascism and communism clashing in the 20th century: "Tremendous forces have been unleashed; but they conflict with each other; they *annihilate* each other."

Most people are hypnotized into passivity by the propaganda machine of the state. Here is the religion of the new global age as predicted by Nietzsche: *nihilism*, "the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability." The high priests of the new religion are able to routinely commit acts of outrageous evil and proclaim with straight faces: "This is good." What is worse, the "majority" – the *raison d'être* of democracy – fully believes them. Democracy is the pillar on which nihilism rests. As long as those who protest the evil find themselves to be the "minority," democracy will forever give its blessings to the evil, which receives the votes of the "majority." The text of hexagram 18 reads: "When people are first born, they are utterly good, with no evil, integrated with natural principle. [...] As negative energy advances, the original being degenerates. [...] The way to correct degeneracy is not in empty tranquility without action; it is necessary to work in the midst of great danger and difficulty."(1)



The above notes come from *English Suite (Prelude)* by English guitarist/composer John Duarte (1919-2004), dedicated “to Andrés Segovia and his wife on the occasion of their marriage.” Duarte’s only formal musical education consisted of two years of jazz guitar lessons. Otherwise he was self-taught and composed 150 pieces for guitar and lute. The four encircled notes are plucked on the sixth, fifth, fourth and third strings, corresponding to hexagram 19 with its broken sixth, fifth, fourth and third lines. Above, the trigram for “earth,” below the trigram for “lake.” “This hexagram represents watching over [*overseeing*] the furnace, culling the elixir.”(1)

The legendary *elixir* often mentioned in taoist texts is too vast a subject to adequately address here, but I offer a few thoughts on it nonetheless. *Overseeing* the furnace of vital energy is the process John Duarte went through as he patiently went from having no knowledge of the guitar to becoming one of the important guitar composers of the 20th century.

In the meditative state described by Ancestor Lu (7th century) as “being like an imbecile all day long,” The Three Treasures (*san pao*) of taoism are refined: *ching* (sexual energy), *ch’i* (breath energy) and *shen* (spirit of vitality). *Overseeing* the extent of their abundance determines the quality of one’s health and the length of one’s life. Ancestor Lu says, “When the three become one, the great elixir is made.”(9) In *T’ai Chi Ch’uan and Meditation* the 20th-century master Da Liu (1906-2000) wrote of the practical approach to spirit intrinsic to taoism: “Progress in this practice comes very slowly and requires



faithfulness and perseverance. It is essentially a process of energy purification in which *ching* is transformed into *ch'i*, which can be circulated through the eight psychic channels when it combines with the breath. The circulation of the *ch'i* purifies it, ultimately transforming it into *shen*. At the highest level *shen* becomes *shu* [emptiness]." In his taoist classic *Understanding Reality*, Chang Po-tuan called this transformation "three flowers gathered on the peak," also known as "making the elixir." Slipping back into bad habits will result ultimately in failure. "Therefore it is said that if there is even a hair's breadth of deviation one cannot make the elixir."(9)

Transformation of The Three Treasures into the elixir is said to result in immortality. Throughout history deluded emperors, pharaohs and kings have misunderstood the idea of "immortality." Qin Shi Huang (259 BC-210 BC) was the founder of the Qin dynasty and was the first emperor of a unified China. Later in his life, he feared death and became obsessed with acquiring the legendary elixir of immortality. Not understanding that the elixir is the result of *overseeing*, self-discipline and training, he thought he could purchase it from alchemists. Emperor Qin Shi Huang supposedly died from poisoning after ingesting mercury pills made by his alchemists and court physicians, believing it to be the elixir of immortality. He was only 49 when he died.

In the texts for each of the six lines of hexagram 19, only the third (yin) line is not beneficial, revealing the "presumptuous *overseeing*" of emperor Huang: "being weak and ignorant, saying the right things but not being right at heart, working on externals and losing the inner." One counteracts the *degeneration* of hexagram 18 with the "sensitive *overseeing*" of hexagram 19. "Then positive energy grows and negative energy wanes; this is why *overseeing* has creativity and development."(1) Sweet degrees of artistry can be achieved after long years of training, discipline and *overseeing*.



This chord ends the polka by Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909) called *Rosita*. The four notes are plucked on the fourth, third, second and first strings, corresponding to hexagram 20 with its broken fourth, third, second and first lines. Above, the trigram for “wind,” below the trigram for “earth.” “This hexagram represents alert observation with clarity of mind.”(1)

Francisco Tárrega is considered one of the greatest guitarists of all time. As a child, he fell into an irrigation ditch and injured his eyes. Fearing that his son might lose his sight completely, his father, a flamenco guitarist, enrolled Francisco in music classes, since as a musician he would be able to earn a living, even if blind. Both of his first music teachers were blind. “Alert observation with clarity of mind” is often associated with intellectuals, those who think – like the legendary “great thinkers” of European culture. Tárrega is not remembered as a “thinker.” But few philosophers have attained such a subtle level of thought encompassing everything around us. Music is *thinking* at its most subtle. Tárrega’s contemporary Friedrich Nietzsche did not possess the artistic depth, nor creativity, of this nearly blind musician from Barcelona. Philosophers, like scientists, often lack musicality (even though Nietzsche was a pianist and composer). When western intellectuals speak of great “thinkers,” they refer to scientists, mathematicians, philosophers and writers of fiction and non-fiction. Few among them understand that master composers like Debussy, Mahler and Shostakovich (as well as the master painters) are subtle “thinkers”

who go much deeper, much higher, than the philosophers. With Johann Sebastian Bach as the guide, the great western composers are in fact true spiritual leaders, closest to that evasive thing – Wisdom – which has so long evaded word-addicted philosophers lacking music in their souls. Philosophers pretend to be spokesmen for Wisdom like art-dealers pretend to be spokesmen for Art. Throughout the centuries, they simply do not give the impression of being *wise*.

Cosmologists are “thinkers” engaged in *observing* the universe, and today three have been awarded the Nobel prize in physics for 2019. Among their other achievements, the prize focuses on research using theoretical tools and calculations which show a universe in which just 5% of its content is known. The remaining 95% is unknown “dark matter” and “dark energy.” The theory of the universe presented to us by science at the present moment is still under debate by the experts themselves. The *spiritual* aspect is where scientific inquiry suffers from an all too human perceptual handicap, helplessly adrift, speculating beyond the zones where empirical evidence can’t reach. The unwillingness of many scientists to consider spirit in their evaluation of the phenomena they study is likely due to their immediately associating concerns for spirit with religion. However much science continues to neglect spirit, hexagram 20 encourages *spiritual observation*: “So the path of alert observation, involving *observing* the spirit and also extensive observation, should never be departed from by those who practice the Tao. It begins with striving, by extensive observation, and ends in nonstriving through spiritual observation.”(1)

The relationship between the awareness of the observer and the universe has not been established by science. If he or she may be a biologist, chemist, poet, musician or meditating sage – like the blind men and the elephant – there are different understandings depending on who is *observing*. Science is only one of them.



From *Darcie's Spirit* by John Dowland (1562-1626). Born in London, Dowland was employed at the court of the music-lover Christian IV of Denmark, who paid the lutenist a very substantial salary. Dowland was dismissed in 1606 and returned to England, where he secured a post as one of James I's lutenists in 1612. His life parallels that of Shakespeare (1564-1616), who may have heard Dowland sing and play. The chord with three notes is plucked on the fifth, third and second strings, corresponding to hexagram 21 with its fifth, third and second broken lines. Above, the trigram for "fire," below the trigram for "thunder." "This hexagram represents the study of investigating things and finding out principle." Here one also sees the caricature of a face which is *biting through*, "the mouth closing [as] when eating something. [...] The yangs on the top and bottom symbolize lips, the three yins symbolize teeth, and the yang in the middle represents something in the mouth."(1) *Biting through* signifies an action that is not in vain.

Creating art throughout decades as I have done – paintings, books and music – with almost no recognition, has been frustrating. But there is a bliss as well. I have often imagined disappearing at death in the veritable taoist manner, leaving behind no trace whatsoever, no name, no legacy, no opus. Forgotten and obliterated like a fallen birch leaf that disintegrates into nothingness, even then my art would not have been in vain. Art is the ash left behind after an inner alchemical transformation. After *biting through*, "finding out the principle," art becomes secondary when the transformation has been attained. This serene realization also came to Charles Ives

when he wrote: "Whatever excellence an artist sees in life, if sincerely and intuitively reflected, his work is a reflected part of that excellence. Whether he be accepted or rejected, whether his music is played or never played, all this has nothing to do with it. It is true or false by his own measure."

Unlike Ives, Horace (65 BC-8 BC) was focused on immortality, confident that poetry assured him fame which *fuga temporum* (the flight of time) could not destroy. He ended his *Odes* with this boast: *Exegi monumentum aere perennius* (I have built a monument more lasting than bronze). His fame has indeed lasted 2,000 years, but this is a short period of time when compared to the time span implied in "immortality." In geological terms of tens of millions of years, elemental forces will overwhelm states and governments. This is Tao. Everything and everyone shall disappear without leaving a trace, even Horace, because

*An imperishable fame of a thousand years*

*Is but a paltry, after-life affair.*


– Tu Fu (712-770), "Dreaming of Li Po."\*

Tu Fu's verse to fellow poet and friend Li Po (701-762) places minimal value on "fame." Being forgotten – like a birch leaf falling in autumn and disappearing into the soil – is merging with Tao. Ambiguous translations of the last line of chapter 33 in the *Tao Te Ching* obscure this subject: "To die but not to be forgotten – that is true long life." (Henricks) "He who lives out his days has a long life." (D.C. Lau) The reader is left to sort out the ambiguity. *Biting through*, "investigating things and finding out principle," reveals the Tao (like Destiny) as neither benevolent nor malevolent. "Indeed, the work of investigating principle is no small matter."(1)

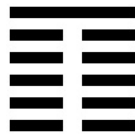
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\* *Sunflower Splendor, Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry*, Irving Yucheng Lo, Anchor Books, New York, 1975. (tr. Eugene Eoyang)



and the *acciaccatura* (from an Italian verb *acciaccare* meaning “to crush”). The *acciaccatura* is very short (literally “crushed”), played on the beat together with, or imperceptibly before, the principal note. The grace note is generally written as a small eighth note with a stroke through its stem and lies in front of the principal note as an *adornment*: .

The value system at the core of thousands of years of occidental music could be summed up as “choosing what sounds good or relevant,” regardless of theories and dogmas prevailing at a given moment in history. Guitarist and Barrios biographer Richard Stover believed that the musical tradition of the west has arrived at a sort of dead end: “Essentially I am of the opinion that using 12 tones for our musical system is in fact the problem.” The solution according to him is to “abandon 12 notes entirely [...] and evolve a new system of harmonic acoustics.” In tai chi we learn the value of having a “center.” Likewise, I value the tonal “center” of western music – as did Richard Stover – but I do not agree that the system at the core of thousands of years of musical evolution in the occident should be “abandoned.” 12 tones, 26 letters, 6 colors – there is a sort of finality about these systems. The finality of the color spectrum reflects the finality of our ultra-ancient octaves. They will serve us well in the future – if our self-annihilation does not come first. At the same time as the atonalist composers, Barrios was creating in the tradition of Tárrega and Bach, and surpassed all other guitar composers. Why should this magnificent tradition be “abandoned”? A dozen seeds for further growth to the ultimate stand-off: will Art prevent the suicide of the homo sapiens, or will the present chaos, excitation and downfall lead to our self-annihilation? It is ironic that Richard Stover expressed such aversion for Schoenberg and his atonality, and such love for Barrios and his tonality, yet advocated “abandoning” the very system that made such splendid music possible. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”



23

PO

STRIPPING AWAY



From *Anita* by Manuel Y. Ferrer (1828-1904), a 19th-century American virtuoso guitarist. All but the sixth string are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 23. Above, the trigram for “mountain,” below the trigram for “earth.” “Po is the symbol of falling or of causing to fall, and may be applied, both in the natural and political world, to the process of decay, or that of overthrow.” (10)

Ferrer was born in San Antonio, Baja California (Mexico) of Spanish parents. At the age of eighteen, he left his native town, travelling by stage coach to Santa Barbara, in Alta California. He met a priest at mission Santa Barbara, a skilled guitarist, who gave him advanced instructions. Ferrer trained diligently, and gradually established his reputation in the musical world of the entire United States. In 1850 he moved to San Francisco, where he taught guitar and performed for fifty years. His wife Jesusita de Vivar was also a musician, as were three of his ten children: Adele (guitar), Carmelita (mandolin), and Ricardo (violin).

Ferrer was a contemporary of two extreme examples of “the process of decay, or that of overthrow” of hexagram 23. In 1846 John C. Fremont and his army invaded California, which was then a part of Mexico, resulting in the final *stripping away* of the many indigenous cultures that had existed there for millennia. The subsequent mass immigration following the discovery of gold two years later brought on perhaps the worst genocide that ever occurred in any of the fifty states. Although Spanish and Mexican occupation of California in the 18th and 19th centuries was cruel



and catastrophic for the indigenous societies, it was not genocidal. The indigenous people were used as slaves, and slave-owners are not interested in destroying their property. Benjamin Madley's term "California's killing machine" can only be applied when the Americans arrived: "The US Congress fed the killing machine with money provided by taxpayers from across the country." Along with the invasion of the Americans came the agenda of premeditated genocide, as clearly expressed during a public meeting in Arcata, California in 1858, which called for "a war of extermination, total extermination, of every man, woman and child in whose veins coursed the blood of the Indian race."\* This was and is the ongoing agenda of Manifest Destiny, *stripping away*.

The second extreme example of "decay and overthrow" during Ferrer's lifetime is the Civil War, in which an astonishing 600,000 Americans were slaughtered by their own countrymen! This American "killing machine" not only exterminated the many indigenous cultures, but citizens of their own culture – in the hundreds of thousands! Each of the fifty states has its own indigenous trauma. Many transcontinental narratives resemble those of Auschwitz and the Soviet gulags, beginning more than a century before there was a United States. "The object of the evil worker is the overthrow of all firm correctness." (10)

The music of the indigenous cultures has been for the most part ignored by American musicians: "In California today, more is known in music (composer's) circles about Indonesia or India than about the state's own Indian culture."\*\* Today many of the songs recorded by anthropologists long decades ago on wax cylinders, aluminum discs or tapes are now being sung again in ceremonies, often by native people who do not understand the words they sing.

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\* Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2016.

\*\* *Jaime de Angulo: The Music of the Indians of Northern California*, edited by Peter Garland, Soundings Press, Santa Fe, 1988.



This chord comes from my *Fugue on a Theme by Mahler* based on a theme from his first symphony in D major. This theme was also used by Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) in *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer) no. 2, "Ging heut' Morgon übers Feld" (This morning I walked over the field). All but the first string are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 24. Above, the trigram for "earth," below the trigram for "thunder." "There will be advantage in whatever direction movement is made" (which is the opposite message of hexagram 23: "It will *not* be advantageous to make a movement in any direction whatever.") The previous hexagram signifies a loss of yang energy. Turned upside down to become hexagram 24, "one yang moves below a group of yins; this is the first *return* of yang energy." (1)

Chang San-feng, 12th century patriarch of tai chi chuan, had this to say about hexagram 24: "At the extreme limit, stillness gives rise to movement. Suddenly there is a point of spiritual light the size of a grain of rice. This is the indication of the production of the medicine [elixir]. This is represented by the *I Ching* sign "Return," and is when the Root of Heaven appears." (9)

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) had a thought about *return* that came to him suddenly one day in August 1881, while he was taking a walk along a lake in Switzerland. The songs of this "wayfarer" resulted in his book *The Gay Science*, in which he presented the idea of eternal recurrence. The idea of eternal *return*, or eternal recurrence, has existed in various forms since antiquity: the idea that existence recurs in an infinite cycle as energy and

matter transform over time. The ancient Greeks believed that the universe went through returning stages of transformation similar to the idea of *samsara*, “the wheel of life” of hinduism and buddhism. *Samsara* is a Sanskrit word that means “wandering” or “world,” with the connotation of cyclic change. Nietzsche realized that the common reaction would be one of utter despair: the human condition is tragic; life contains endless suffering; the thought that one must relive it all an infinite number of times seems terrible. Enlightenment to buddhists means that this cycle is broken, that one becomes One with the cosmos. Countless books have been written on this subject. In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche wrote:

*What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: “This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you. [...] The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!”*

*Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? (tr. Walter Kaufmann)*

Not Nietzsche. Unlike the buddhists, he considered eternal *return* a joyful blessing. The taoist view is different. Everything – beings and non-beings – is made of matter and energy. Science tells us that these essences cannot be created nor destroyed, only transformed. I am content that “I” stops existing at my death, that the matter and energy (spirit) comprising my existence will be forever transformed, and that whatever joy and suffering that takes place after me will be the fate of other “I’s”. Yang (————) returns as “the root of heaven” in hexagram 24, but it is a different yang each time, just as “I” is a different “I” each time.



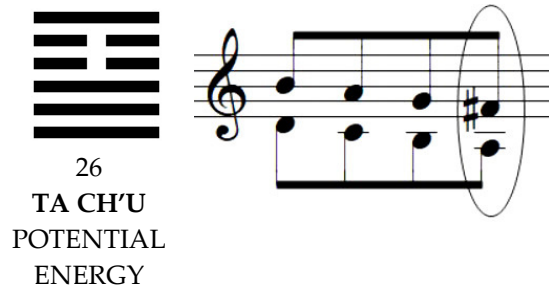
“So the benefit of the path of *fidelity* is all a matter of gaining balance and correct orientation.”(1) My friend Ulf G. Åhslund (1938-2013) was a key figure in the 20th-century Swedish guitar world, performer, teacher and composer. His guitar suite no. 4 *Autumn* (excerpt above) was one of the first things I learned on the classical guitar over 40 years ago. The three identical pairs of eighth notes are played on the second and third strings, corresponding to hexagram 25. Above, the trigram for “heaven,” below the trigram for “thunder.” Autumn in Swedish is *hösten*. I told Ulf that when I first learned to play it, I was learning Swedish. I confused *hösten* with *hästen*, which means “the horse.” And so, when I should have been visualizing snow glittering in a forest clearing, I visualized a horse galloping over a meadow. He said that worked OK too.

Playing Ulf’s music six years after his death is a sublime experience of communing with the dead, as is performing the tai chi forms of Master Fu-Yuan Ni every day. Years ago I spent a whole day with Ulf and his wife Inger at their home in the countryside outside of Stockholm. It was the week between Christmas and New Year, very cold with much snow. At one time a virtuoso concert guitarist, he no longer played the guitar, but worked daily taking care of his sheep and other animals, as well as remodeling his house and administering the many acres of forestland that he owned. This involved unbelievable physical labor: cutting down trees, deliveries to and from the sawmill, stacking lumber, chopping firewood, cleaning stables, feeding livestock and most astonishing of all,

digging an entire cellar room with only a shovel and a pulley system for removing the dirt.

When I was there the cellar room was completed and neatly furnished. I looked up at the ceiling over my head and the dozens of cubic meters of space and was astounded that Ulf did this all alone with a shovel! Here was a real veteran from the iron mines of his hometown Kiruna in northernmost Sweden, mines that are over a kilometer deep. Needless to say, his former delicate hands of a concert classical guitarist were replaced with the rough hands of a farmer, stone mason and lumberjack. Downstairs in his studio he took a guitar and strummed it a bit with those workman's hands. He had gone many years without playing. His sheep were one of his main interests, seeing to it that they were sheared once a year. All the work eventually became overwhelming to his health. He sold his sheep and completely stopped doing heavy labor. We had sporadic contact over the years. He and Inger visited my art exhibitions in central Stockholm, and were gracious buyers. During Ulf's final illness, after he had a pace-maker operated into his heart, he told me, "Now I'm running on batteries." My wife and I were in the Canary Islands. We had a special moment alone dreamily watching the intense full moon and its myriads of brightly glimmering reflections on the Atlantic Ocean. I later realized that it was the very day Ulf died.

The text of hexagram 25 states: "The 'moon reaching fullness' is in the oral transmission of the secret; the subtlety of 'the hour reaching midnight' is communicated mentally." The sheet music for *Hösten* has now become a subtle mental communication between the dead and the living. "If you know how to advance yang, and with total attention on reality, twenty-four hours a day, without interruption, consider essence and life the one matter of importance, then external things cannot thwart you, and you can gradually reach true *fidelity*, the state of integration with the celestial principle."(1)



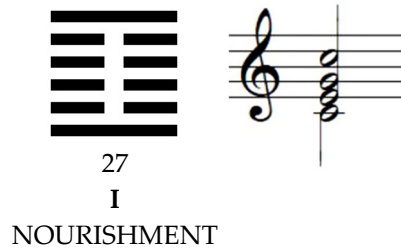
From *Étude No. 6* by Matteo Carcassi (1792-1853), from his often-played collection *25 Etudes, Op. 60*. The last pair of eighth notes are plucked on the fifth and fourth strings, corresponding to the fifth and fourth broken lines of hexagram 26. Above, the trigram for “mountain,” below the trigram for “heaven.” These *études* bridge the *potential energy* of elementary and advanced stages of playing guitar, and contain many of the fundamental elements of guitar techniques, like arpeggios, slurs and barrés. “This hexagram represents incubation nurturing the spiritual embryo.”(1)

The idea of *étude*, or “study” can mean a trial providing practice material for perfecting a specific musical skill, an “incubation” of future works. With Chopin, an *étude* is already a fully grown work, even though he too intended them to have a didactic function. Composing *études* can be likened to “nurturing the spiritual embryo” – internal practice leading to the final goal of taoist meditation. The tradition of writing *études* emerged in the early 19th century with the rapidly growing popularity of the piano. The guitar was also a popular instrument. As early as 1815 guitarist/composer Fernando Sor published his *12 Études, op. 6* for guitar in London, each exploiting a single facet of technique. The Carcassi sample above shows parallel motion of pairs of notes with the same interval (major sixths) between them.

Motion is change. Like the *I Ching*, Music is about change. Everything changes. What does not change is the intrinsic will to change. The *potential energy* of change, from yin to yang and back

again, generates an endless cycle of development and decline. The *Tao Te Ching* elucidates: "Turning back is how the Way moves; weakness is the means the Way employs."(11) To turn back is to return to one's root. One's root is the weak and submissive, the condition of a newborn child – "the means the Way employs" for the weak to become the strong, which inevitably is defeated by the weak. Once something reaches the limit of development, it returns to its root, it declines. This is inevitable. This is the principle of tai chi chuan. Master Fu-Yuan Ni instructed his students: "The extreme is stillness; stillness is what is called 'returning to the root.'" Stillness is weak.

The cyclic motion between weakness (yin) and strength (yang) is not uniform like a merry-go-round, but an uneven combination of exertion and relaxation, like Sisyphus laboriously pushing the boulder to the top of the mountain, to then let it roll back down without exertion. Development is not inevitable. Newborn children die never to develop into maturity. Sprouts in the wheatfield die in the drought, never to develop into sheaves of grain. But decline *is* inevitable, revealing the inherent "strength" in weakness – it dominates in the end. In his introduction to the *Tao Te Ching*, D.C. Lau wrote: "In fact, not only is development not inevitable, it is a slow and gradual process, every step of which has to be sustained by deliberate effort. Development and decline are totally different in nature. Development is slow and gradual; decline is quick and abrupt."(11) It is not easy for people to accept this idea of the *Tao Te Ching*: "To hold fast to the submissive is called strength." In the constant state of war in which the early taoists found themselves, the virtue of non-contention mentioned in the *Tao Te Ching* helped not only to survive, but to physically defeat the enemy. Chinese martial arts were founded on this principle. In *The Art of War* the philosopher-warrior Sun Tzu (544 BC-496 BC) wrote: "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting."(15)



*Allegretto* (Op. 50 No. 3) by Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829) ends with this classic C-major chord, one of the first that people learn in their initiation to the guitar. The four notes are plucked on the fifth, fourth, third and second strings, corresponding to the fifth, fourth, third and second broken lines of hexagram 27. Above, the trigram for “mountain,” below the trigram for “thunder.” The two yang lines are seen as the upper and lower jaw, the four yin lines the open mouth, ready for *nourishment*. “This hexagram represents choosing good and holding fast to it, becoming empty to seek fulfillment. [...] The ‘mouth’ is something empty inside; ‘fulfillment’ means satisfying, filling.”(1) The C-major chord is *nourishment*.

The key of C-major was “returning to the root” for Johann Sebastian Bach in his *Well-Tempered Clavier*. He composed preludes and fugues in all of the 24 musical keys, major and minor, completing this cycle twice to return to the root each time: C-major.\* The first set was completed in 1722 while Bach was in Köthen; the second followed 20 years later in 1742 while he was in Leipzig. Bach complained in a letter that his experience as cantor in Leipzig had been one of “almost continual vexation, envy, and persecution.” Yes, acquiring spiritual *nourishment* from the chaos of events, sensations, deceptions and temptations inundating society can be frustrating to an artist. But such “vexations” can also be seen as *nourishment*, as the painter Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) wrote:

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\* An octave includes 12 semi-tones, each of which gives its name to a major key and a minor key, making 24 keys.



*The man who is truly called does not fear obstacles because he feels himself able to overcome them; they are for him one more medium and the fever which they excite in his soul often becomes the cause of the most astonishing predictions. I will say further that if obstacles and difficulties discourage the mediocre man, they are on the contrary as necessary for the genius as his food; they ripen him and exalt him.*

The text of hexagram 27 recommends “becoming empty to seek fulfillment.” In the previous chapter I commented on the irony of “strength” being inherent in weakness. The emptiness preceding fulfillment is also weak, but what power it holds! In the same respect, the taoist principle of *wu wei*, acting without striving, brings the practitioner into direct contact with the intrinsic energy of the Tao – by exerting no effort. In his book on taoism, Chang Chung-yuan wrote: “To cultivate one’s mind is to exercise deliberate effort, *yu wei*, the opposite of *wu wei*.”(3) Scientists strive to know and are uncomfortable in a state of not knowing. It is imperative for them to know, their *raison d’être*, even if they must delude themselves into believing that they know, as they did (until quite recently) by establishing as scientific “fact” that the Milky Way galaxy is the entire universe. The scientists did not know that *they did not know*. By being comfortable not knowing, however, one gets to know the unknown that much easier, with no effort whatsoever. This is *wu wei*, acting without striving. At the opposite of *wu wei*, in utter hubris, human beings actually believe that they are able to administer the most sacred and mysterious functions of the planet itself, flattering themselves that they are “stewards” of the Earth. The “climate activists” today who *strive* to “save the planet” do not understand that this is not in their power. They hold mass demonstrations world-wide in hysterical excitement, at the antipode of *wu wei*, not realizing that striving has devastated our planet; that the only thing in our power is not to destroy.



Following the tradition of 19th-century guitar composers like Giuliani and Carcassi above, 20th-century Cuban guitarist Leo Brouwer (1939- ) composed 20 *Estudios Sencillos* (Simple Etudes) which also have a pedagogic function. Above is part of a measure from his *Etude No. 9*, with the E and F-sharp plucked on the sixth and first strings, corresponding to the broken sixth and first lines of hexagram 28. Above, the trigram for “lake,” below the trigram for “wind.” “This hexagram represents harmonious blending of the medicinal substances, in which fullness requires use of emptiness.” *Excess of the great* implies a moment when taking action is harmful and “not going too far is auspicious.”(1) The *Tao Te Ching* teaches,

*Know when to stop  
And you will meet with no danger.  
You can then endure. (11)*

Tai chi chuan (chuan = “fist”) as a martial art utilizes this technique in the exercise for two people called pushing hands. Cheng Man-ching (1902-1975) said: “Do the form as if someone is there, do pushing hands as if no one is there.” The full art of tai chi consists of both civil and martial aspects. One without the other is incomplete, like playing the guitar with one hand. Its fullness “requires use of emptiness.” “Know when to stop” means to not over extend oneself and give the adversary the advantage. Tai chi existed as oral instructions long before the five essays known as the

“Tai Chi Classics” were edited and written down in the 19th century by Wu Yü-hsiang and his nephew Li I-yü. The former was a student of Yang Lu-Chan (1799-1872), founder of Yang style tai chi chuan. These writings lay the foundation for all the tai chi styles practiced today by millions of people all over the world. Yang Chengfu (1883-1936), the grandson of Yang Lu-Chan, wrote: “The ability to teach the art of self-cultivation and self-defense [...] is complete civil and martial tai chi.” At times balance between the *martial* and the *civil*, between yang and yin, cedes to excess of yang energy: violence.

Very few practitioners train tai chi as a veritable fighting art. I briefly trained with Dan Docherty, originally from Scotland but who lived many years in Hong Kong. He is a master of the fighting art tai chi chuan, and has groups of students in England, Finland, and Sweden. Dan describes his first meeting with his teacher, Cheng Tin-hung (1930-2005): “With his belly hanging over his shorts, his cigarette dangling in the corner of his mouth as he talked, with his flip flops, string vest and unshaven mien, he didn’t look the part of a top level Tai Chi master.” Nonetheless, Sifu Cheng was “the best known combat Tai Chi Chuan master in South East Asia.” Dan went on to become an international champion of full-contact fighting using tai chi chuan against a variety of other martial arts styles. After less than a year training he entered a tournament: “In my first fight [1976], I received two black eyes, a bleeding nose, a cut lip and severe bruising from the left hip down to the foot from Thai Boxing kicks and stamps. When I won the open weight division in 1980 at the 5th South East Asian Championships, I didn’t have a mark on me.”\* “*Excess of the great* means there is an excess of yang energy.” (1) “Tai chi” means the separation of yin and yang, neither in excess, neither deficient. “At the extreme limit [Tai Chi], stillness gives rise to movement,” wrote tai chi’s founder Chang San-feng.

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\* Dan Docherty, Practical Tai Chi Chuan website: <https://www.taichichuan.co.uk/>



Here is the beginning of the last measure of *Andante* (Op. 32, No. 5) by Fernando Sor (1778-1839). The sixth, fourth, third and first strings are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 29 with its sixth, fourth, third and first broken lines. Above, the trigram for “water” (danger) and below the trigram for “water” (danger). “Going from one danger to another, yet able to get through successfully in spite of danger, it is therefore called *mastering pitfalls*.”(1)

Fernando Sor was considered the best guitarist in the world by his contemporaries. Born into a military family in Barcelona, he left his career in the military and began a long career as a performer and composer, not only for guitar, but opera, orchestra, string quartet, piano, voice, and ballet. When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808, Sor was promoted to captain in Córdoba and may have fought in battles against the French. After the Spanish defeat, he was appointed to an administrative post in the occupying government, and was officially labeled *afrancesado* (Frenchified) along with the other Spaniards who collaborated with the French. After the the French were expelled in 1813, Sor and other *afrancesados* left Spain for fear of retribution. He travelled to Paris, never again to return to his home country. After *mastering pitfalls* in France, England and Russia, his successful career still included annoyances – opus 43 is entitled *Mes Ennuis* (“My Annoyances”). Sor was obliged to also compose and publish technically simple works for the public, since no guitarist possessed his level of virtuosity. He sarcastically dedicated opus 45 “to the person with the least patience.”

The text of hexagram 29 says: “There is excellence in practice.” This is the credo of practioners of guitar, tai chi, and so many other disciplines that require time, effort and patience. The expression *kung fu* is often misunderstood to refer only to fighting arts. But training as a classical guitarist for 45 years, this too is *kung fu*. According to Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, *kung* (or *gong*) means energy and *fu* means time: “If you are learning or doing something which takes a great deal of time and effort to accomplish, then it is called Gongfu (Kung Fu). This can be learning how to play the piano, to paint, to learn martial arts, or to complete a difficult task which takes time and patience.” (From his book *Taijiquan, Classical Yang Style*) The text of hexagram 29 continues:

*Once one can believe and can practice, without hypocrisy or deception, practicing truly, one improves daily with daily practice, rising from lowliness to loftiness, gradually learning a state of exalted illumination, developing one’s nature to the fullest extent and realizing one’s purpose in life, returning to the fundamental, without difficulty. (1)*

Fernando Sor’s virtuosity, both as a composer and performer, can be likened to that of the Paraguayan maestro Agustín Barrios (1885-1944), regarded as one of the greatest performers and most prolific composers for the classical guitar. (I will write more on Barrios below.) The “daily practice” emphasized in the text of hexagram 29 is essential for such masters to achieve a “state of exalted illumination, developing one’s nature to the fullest extent.” The taoists call this becoming a *Real Human Being*. The unrelenting discipline of daily practice taught by Master Fu-Yuan Ni to his tai chi students is perhaps more meaningful than the tai chi exercises themselves. Master Ni worked his students hard, taught all levels, beginner to advanced, sometimes up to seven levels in the same class – especially on Saturdays – to the age of 89.



These two Bs an octave apart begin a measure of *Georgia on my Mind* by Hoagy Carmichael (1899-1981), arranged for guitar by Swedish guitarist Börje Sandquist. The fifth and second strings are plucked, corresponding to the fifth and second broken lines of hexagram 30. Above, the trigram for “fire” and below the trigram for “fire.” I have played this piece for many years, and have participated in two summer guitar seminars led by Börje Sandquist, which took place on Visingsö, a lovely island in Vattern, Sweden’s second largest lake. I remember that musical summer as *illuminated*, a word used very many times in the text for hexagram 30, *illuminated* by two trigrams for “fire.” We were uniquely musicians, united by music, absorbing music, emanating music, like we did in the final performance as a guitar orchestra on the last day. The orchestra is the prototype of good government, each individual intelligently carrying out a task with harmony as the unifier. The *Tao Te Ching* is a work on the art of government.

In the introduction to his translation of the *Tao Te Ching*, Din Cheuk Lau (1921-2010) wrote: “Almost all ancient Chinese thinkers were concerned with the way one should lead one’s life, and this was never confined to conduct in the personal sense, but covered the art of government as well.”(11) Tao is government over all beings and non-beings, organic and inorganic, in every crink and cranny of the universe except... civilized societies. There is an awareness forever lurking in creation – in the universe – an enigmatic “it” that has nothing to do with religion, science nor any other human endeavor. Being without gender “it” is not God. “It”

has no name. To name "it" is to waste words. According to taoists, "it" was never born and never dies, existing unobserved and unsuspected. Lurking... What is very probable may never happen, and what is very *improbable* – the *fire* of life – may happen only once in the vastness of the universe. The ancient words concerning the origin of the universe in the *Tao Te Ching* reach me with more lucidity than the words of modern science on the subject:

*Nonbeing is called the beginning of heaven and earth;  
being is called the mother of all things [...]  
These two come from the same source but differ in name;  
both are considered mysteries. (11)*

Mysteries are *unknowable*. Whatever beliefs about the origin of the universe scientists may have, they are educated guesses colored by their respective branches of science, whether the biology of Richard Dawkins, or the physics of Stephen Hawking. The result is not one, but various scientific cosmologies, just as the world's creation myths are colored by their respective cultures. It is like the fable of the blind men and the elephant, one guessing what an elephant is by its toenail, the other by its trunk, and so forth. An overview of the entire phenomenon known as the universe in all of its microcosmic and macrocosmic details – absolutely *everything* – is not within the grasp of the human mind. Everything in the universe is vibrating. Darkness is vibrating. Light is vibrating. Various frequencies of light vibration give us the various colors; various frequencies of sound vibration give us the different tones in an octave. But there are frequencies that are not accessible to humans. If you compare light energy to musical scales, we can visibly perceive only one octave, right in the middle. The other frequency bands that the senses cannot perceive represent a very big *hole* in our perception of what is really there, a perceptual handicap that we can never overcome.



From *Turégano* by Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982), one of the fourteen guitar compositions in the collection *Castillos de España* (Castles of Spain). The sixth, second and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, second and first broken lines of hexagram 31. Above, the trigram for “lake” and below the trigram for “mountain.” “This hexagram has the meaning of yin and yang responding to each other, so it is called *sensitivity*.”(1) Although he did not play the guitar, Torroba had a deep *sensitivity* for the instrument, according to virtuoso Pepe Romero. Master Fu-Yuan Ni once told his students: “The purpose of tai chi is to develop *sensitivity*.” He added that *sensitivity* comes from lightness, not from hardness. *Sensitivity* is required for proper awareness of the Way.

The method used by the sages to bring the people to Tao was to “hoodwink” them. This method was also used by the Native Californian trickster Coyote in the myths, to “hoodwink” them into wisdom. However, this method has not worked in thousands of years. Perhaps people were wise in prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies, but civilized people shun wisdom. “When the worst student hears about the Way / He laughs outloud.”(11) In many ways the *Tao Te Ching* and the *I Ching* are siblings. The text of hexagram 31 reads: “The mind of Tao is real, the human mentality is artificial.”(1) One could guess, wrongly, that this came from the *Tao Te Ching*. Using the artificial human mentality, *sensitivity* is damaged, and leads to the symbol instead of reality, to religion instead of Tao. The taoist *Book of Balance and Harmony* puts it this



way: "The shining mind is the mind of Tao, the straying mind is the human mind."(1) The straying mind leads to excited consumers indulging in excess; glutted super-highways; metropolitan and suburban wretchedness; land-fills (once pristine valleys) into which the cities vomit industrial and domestic waste; military installations on sacred land; endless wars; pristine island cultures in the Pacific obliterated by nuclear bombs; powerlines, diverted rivers and mountains blown apart; malfunctioning nuclear reactors; obscene bio-, geo- and social engineering; widespread violence and sexual perversity – this is all part of the normal everyday *insensitivity* of the straying human mind.

Such insensitivity enabled the conquering of North America by Europeans and the premeditated genocides of the indigenous peoples who had lived there for millennia. Vine Deloria, Jr. (1933-2005) was an Oglala Lakota writer from the same tribe as Crazy Horse, legendary warrior and holy man who was murdered by the American military when he surrendered in 1877, one year after the victory at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. These two great Native Americans, along with the other indigenous cultures, emanate a degree of *sensitivity* to all the subtle nuances of the continent which the invading Europeans were never able to match. The subdued humor of Vine Deloria, Jr. is revealed in his view of the defeat of General Custer's army at the Battle of the Little Bighorn as "a *sensitivity-training* session." (my italics) He wrote in *God is Red* how there exists an irreconcilable difference between the spiritual beliefs of the two societies. Western spirituality is history-oriented, he wrote, while indigenous spirituality is Earth-oriented. "This conception of land as holding the bodies of the tribe in a basic sense pervaded tribal religions across the country." But ancient scriptures from distant Asia Minor (the Bible) were paramount for the European invaders of the Americas, by far more meaningful to them than *sensitivity* to the continent beneath their feet.



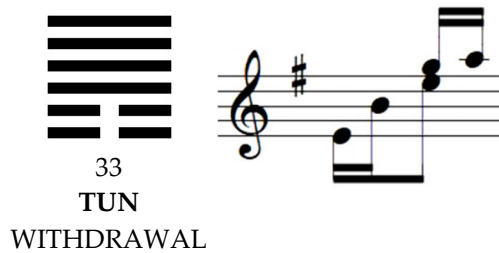
These notes are from *Little Serenade* (fifth movement “Duo”) by the Swedish composer Dag Wirén (see hexagram 5 above). The sixth, fifth and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, fifth and first broken lines of hexagram 32. Above, the trigram for “thunder” and below the trigram for “wind.”

“*Constancy* means singlemindedly applying the will, the longer the stronger, not becoming lazy and slacking off.”(1) This is the manner in which Master Fu-Yuan Ni practiced and taught tai chi and meditation. However, many people demonstrate what is called “incorrect constancy” in the *I Ching*, following false paths for their entire lives: “The blind practitioners in the world who go into deviant paths, taking what is wrong to be right, aggrandizing themselves, boasting of their practices and cultivating vain reputations, striving all their lives without ever awakening, most assuredly are capable of *constancy*, but they are constant in aberrated paths, not constant in the right path.”

Such people as described in this text of hexagram 32 suffer from what the great female taoist poet Sun-Bu-er (b. 1124) called “illusory states” which she advised should be discarded with all haste. Her commentator, the modern Chinese taoist adept Chen Yingning, sees these “illusory states” as hallucinations produced by hidden influences in the human condition, which “may induce people to enter false paths. In extreme cases they can cause dementia and self-destruction.”\* Such is the *false path* that leads to

\* *Immortal Sisters: Secrets of Taoist Women*, tr. Thomas Cleary, Shambhala, Boston, 1989.

the stockpiles of atomic weapons all over the world; such is the *dementia* that led to their being used on large cities; and such is the *self-destruction* with which these demented people threaten all humanity today. Their unrelenting *constancy* – the quality of being unchanging with unwavering firmness of mind – far from being a virtue, can be the vice that brings extinction to the homo sapiens. *Constancy* to this evil agenda made possible routine atmospheric nuclear tests from 1945 to 1962, when forthcoming bans on these tests resulted in an orgy of nuclear tests in outer space at 50, 100, 250 and 400 kilometers altitude. Radioactive particles from these atmospheric tests still circulate in the atmosphere at this moment. The series of five nuclear explosions above the earth's atmosphere – extremely dangerous examples of scientific *dementia* – was given the name Operation Fishbowl. These atomic explosions were 1,000 times more powerful than the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The holes in the ozone layer are also attributed to these tests. As with the initial Trinity test at Los Alamos, the nuclear physicists did not know what the result would be. Even with the possibility of igniting the atmosphere or damaging the magnetic shield protecting the earth against solar winds, the mentally deranged men, in their *constancy*, took colossal risks motivated by mere curiosity, and caused irrevocable damage in the earth's radiation belt, ozone layer, atmosphere, oceans and topsoil; killed tens of thousands of people from radioactive fallout and subsequent cancers; destroyed blissful Polynesian cultures in existence for centuries; inflicted the children and grandchildren of test survivors with fatal genetic deformations – while “aggrandizing themselves, boasting of their practices and cultivating vain reputations,” as the complaint of hexagram 32 makes apparent. This is the incorrect *constancy* of cancer consuming a host organism, the *constancy* of decay and death. The correct *constancy* that leads to justice for these many crimes against humanity is not attainable by our societies.



From the *Prelude of English Suite* op. 31 by English composer John Duarte (see hexagram 19 above). This is a three-movement work evoking the Renaissance style of lutenists John Dowland and John Johnson. The paired E and G are plucked on the second and first strings, corresponding to the second and first broken lines of hexagram 33. Above, the trigram for “heaven” and below the trigram for “mountain.” This hexagram evokes the tai chi chuan movement called “roll back,” in which the strategy of, not stubborn constancy, but *withdrawal* is used. “Strength is based on stillness; using strength with restraint, one has strength yet does not lightly use it arbitrarily. Therefore it is called *withdrawal*.”(1)

The essence of *withdrawal* is expressed by Sun Tzu in the *Art of War*: “It will be advisable not to stir forth, but rather to retreat, thus enticing the enemy in his turn; then, when part of his army has come out, we may deliver our attack with advantage.”\* Perhaps the best known example of the strategy of *withdrawal* in western history is when the Russian army and most of the remaining residents abandoned the city of Moscow on September 14, 1812, allowing Napoleon’s army to occupy the city after the Battle of Borodino. General Kutuzov decided on the strategy of *withdrawal* in order to preserve the Russian army as long as possible. The strategic Russian pursuit of the fleeing invaders, in the freezing conditions of winter, left only a small remnant – 93,000 of the 690,000 men – of the *Grande Armée* to return home alive.

\* Translated by Lionel Giles, originally published 1910.

The strategic *withdrawal* of troops and citizens from Moscow resulted in victory. "This is withdrawal without losing control." (1) The unexplainable *withdrawal* of inspiration from an artist results in the loss of control. During his double career as composer and insurance executive, Charles Ives, prolific creator of music, could also experience a *withdrawal* of inspiration when least expected: "I am afraid that in 'thinking up' music I usually have some kind of brass band with wings on it in the back of my mind and when it comes to putting it down on paper it turns the nearest corner."\* The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) had a similar problem with his epic poem *Kubla Khan*, which he had dreamed in its entirety in a laudanum trance. But he was interrupted by "the person from Porlock" while in the process of writing it. The result was permanent *withdrawal* of the inspiration which had come to him so completely in his trance. A small fragment of *Kubla Khan* is all that he left posterity. He forgot the rest.

"This is a *withdrawal* that has personal entanglement [‘the person from Porlock’]; that affliction is very dangerous." (1) This text concerns the third yang line of hexagram 33. The complexity of the many different levels of text in the *I Ching* in respect to the whole hexagram, each of the two trigrams and every individual line (as shown for hexagram 5 above), reveals different degrees of nuance between health and decay, correct and incorrect. Are yin and yang distinct from each other, or nuances of one thing, as in this line from the *Tao Te Ching*: "The high and the low incline towards each other." D.C. Lau pondered: "The point here made is that opposite terms are relative. Take away the high, and there will no longer be the low. This line of thought, pushed to its logical conclusion, is capable of destroying the distinction between opposites." (11) This paradox reveals the limitations of symbolic representation of the spiritual.

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\* (letter to T. Carl Whitmer, 1928) Jan Swafford, *Charles Ives: A Life with Music*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1996. Note: Ives' father George led a brass band.



These two identical bass notes end *Etude No. 1* by Vasily Sarenko (1814-1881), transcribed from the Russian seven-stringed guitar to the European six-stringed guitar by Matanya Ophee. The sixth string (fingered at the fifth fret) and the open fifth string are plucked simultaneously, corresponding to the sixth and fifth broken lines of hexagram 34. “In applying forces to the situation at hand, be certain that your timing is exact and that your actions are correct – that is, in the best interest for all concerned.”(5) This can apply to all musical performances.

Vasily Sarenko was a Russian singer and composer for seven-string guitar who studied at the medical faculty at Moscow University, serving as a military physician. One of his teachers in music was Modest Musorgsky (1839-1881). Although Sarenko was an outstanding performer, he almost never performed in public and rarely gave guitar lessons. The rich repertory for the guitar in Russia is often overlooked by western guitarists. I have only briefly peeked at this treasure. In the seven volumes of *The Russian Collection*, Matanya Ophee has gone deeply into this little-known music, adapting, fingering, publishing and marketing his comprehensive collection of Russian guitar music.

Had the guitar developed in Europe as it developed in Russia, with seven strings, I would not be writing this book and the *I Ching* would be much less relevant. However, its randomness can always be made relevant to anything, that is its charm. George Harrison’s celebrated song ‘While My Guitar Gently Weeps’ was inspired by

the *I Ching*, although he did not associate the six strings with the six lines. He randomly opened the first book he saw and was inspired by the first thing he read, as he explained: "I was thinking about the Chinese *I Ching*, the Book of Changes. [...] I picked up a book at random, opened it, saw 'gently weeps,' then laid the book down again and started the song." In the same manner, random chance paired the two totally unrelated guitarist/singers Vasily Sarenko and George Harrison (1943-2001) in this chapter on the hexagram *great power*. "People of *great power* have extraordinary direction in life; [...] Having powerful will, they can carry out powerful affairs, do what others cannot do, be what others cannot be."(1)

A *great power* can also be a sovereign state having the ability to exert its economic, political and military influence on a global scale. "However, the path of *great power* calls for power to be correct." In the case of the United States and Great Britain, incorrect *great power* brought with it the ability to lay waste Europe and kill hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in Hamburg, Dresden, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and elsewhere. As we know too well, China, Russia and Germany also abused *great power* in horrifying ways. The aspects of health and decay in the *I Ching* represent enormous contrasts in the "correct" and "incorrect" application of each hexagram. With hexagram 34, problems arise when people with *great power* "follow deviated paths," engage in unending global exploitation and wars, routinely bringing destruction, turmoil and misery throughout the world – like clockwork. Alone, such people are weaklings with no power. Through intricate deception, they become parasites on the vigor of millions of gullible souls who are deceived by them, actively contributing to their own slavery and downfall. "Not only is their vigor unable to be great, but they even harm life by power. Then what is the value of power? [...] The benefit in correctness of *great power* requires perfection of virtue by the Tao as its ultimate achievement."(1)



This A-major chord ends the very cheerful *Pasaje Aragueño* by Venezuelan composer, guitarist, singer Antonio Lauro (1917-1986). The sixth and fourth strings remain unplucked, corresponding to the sixth and fourth unbroken lines of hexagram 35. Above, the trigram for “fire” and below the trigram for “earth.” Lauro composed works for orchestra, choir, piano and voice, many of which remain unpublished. His father was an Italian immigrant, a barber who could sing and play the guitar. He taught his son what he could, but died when Antonio was still a child. In 1948, the military *junta* of Venezuela imprisoned Lauro. He later told his friends that prison was a normal part of life for the Venezuelan man of his generation. “Regret vanishes.”(1) He continued composing even in prison, and after his release immediately returned to performing with a classical guitar trio.

“When the light of the sun emerges over the earth, it goes from darkness to light. This is the image of *advance*.”(1) As mentioned earlier, the *I Ching* has different groupings of the hexagrams. One grouping is the odd and even sequences. Thus, in the odd sequence hexagram 35, *Advance*, is paired with hexagram 33, *Withdrawal*. These two actions, *advance* and *withdrawal* (retreat), are two of the “five elements” of tai chi, along with “look to the right,” gaze left” and “central equilibrium.” When added to the eight movements corresponding to the eight trigrams, they become the Thirteen Postures, another name for tai chi chuan. The “five elements” of qigong, tai chi and Chinese medicine – wood, fire, earth, metal, and



water – are names of fluid processes rather than actual “elements.” They interact and control one another, like the children’s game “rock, paper scissors.” When they are in balance, health is the result. When they are in imbalance, sickness is the result. The doctor of Chinese medicine Ted J. Kaptchuk writes that the term “five elements” is a mistranslation of what should be called the Five Phases of Chinese medicine, a teaching that is thousands of years old. “Its place in Chinese medicine and other Chinese intellectual pursuits has been misunderstood ever since the first Occidentals tried to explain Chinese natural philosophy to the West over three hundred years ago. During this century, the academic world has made some *advances* [my italics] toward a better appreciation of the Five Phases theory, but true understanding is rare among people involved in the practice of Chinese medicine in the West.”\*

Although westerners can regard such Chinese traditions as primitive hocus-pocus, the profundity of Chinese culture is mostly ignored in the west. China has the most comprehensive record of inventions in the history of the world. We were misled to believe that the printing press with movable type was invented in Germany by Johannes Gutenberg in 1450. In fact, the Chinese invented the printing press with movable type, which was in use in China 1,000 years before Gutenberg was born. Steam engines were also in widespread use in China 600 years before James Watt was born. The Chinese also invented manned flight with kites, hot-air balloons, the parachute, the wheelbarrow, matches and paper. Thousands of inventions that the west claims as its own originated in China hundreds and sometimes thousands of years before the west copied them. This is why Marco Polo is known to the Chinese as “Europe’s great thief,” who described China in the 13th century as wealthier and more *advanced* than any nation in Europe.

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\* Ted J. Kaptchuk, *The Web that has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine*, Cogdon & Weed, Inc., Chicago, 1983.



This is the final B-minor chord of *Allegro solenne*, the third and last movement of *La Catedral* by Agustín Barrios Mangoré (1885-1944) from Paraguay. The third and first strings remain unplucked, corresponding to the third and first unbroken lines of hexagram 36. Above, the trigram for “earth” and below the trigram for “fire.” “This hexagram represents being personally illumined and truthful.”(1) A fitting description for Barrios.

Along with Fernando Sor and Francisco Tárrega, Barrios is one of the greatest guitarist/composers in history. He composed over 300 works for guitar, with a career of concerts in Europe and Latin America, and many 78-rpm recordings. Listening to old recordings of Barrios playing, I was deeply moved, as many have been moved. John Williams, who did much to restore Barrios’ music, believes that Barrios is “the best of the lot”:

*As a guitarist/composer, Barrios is the best of the lot, regardless of ear. His music is better formed, it’s more poetic, it’s more everything! And it’s more of all those things in a timeless way. So I think he’s a more significant composer than Sor or Giuliani, and [a] more significant composer – for the guitar – than Villa-Lobos.\**

Despite several friendly encounters between Andres Segovia and Barrios in the 1920s in Buenos Aires, Segovia displayed jealousy for his superior which led to the conscious *concealment of*

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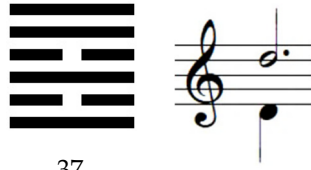
\* John Williams, 1993, as quoted in “Agustín Barrios, His Life and Music Part IV: Discussion and Analysis,” Richard Stover, *Guitar Review*, Spring, 1995.

*illumination* which he had beheld in the Native American maestro. Agustín Barrios, considered by many as the greatest guitar composer of the 20th century, “was not a good composer for the guitar” according to the grouchy Spanish diva. The naïve Barrios was none the wiser, playing several of his own compositions for Segovia at the latter’s residence, “which pleased him greatly,” as he wrote to his brother Martín. “There wasn’t the slightest hint of petulance between us.” Barrios had given Segovia a dedicated copy of the sheet music to his masterpiece, *La Catedral*, which he took back to Spain with him, supposedly to play in his concerts. (Segovia denied ever having received the score.) Barrios’ friend, the Uruguayan guitarist Miguel Herrera Klinger, wrote: “If he [Segovia] had played it [*La Catedral*], with the extraordinary abilities he possessed, he would have elevated Barrios to inaccessible heights, thus detracting from his own artistic prestige.”\* Of course, Segovia did not include *La Catedral* in his programs. This is *injury of illumination*, the second name of hexagram 36: “If you do not know the process, not only will you be unable to nurture illumination, you will obscure illumination.”(1)

His modest life in San Salvador was *concealment of illumination*, “acting unobtrusively while in fact illumined.” On July 2, 1944 Barrios, knowing he was close to death, was giving a lesson when suddenly someone knocked at the door. He opened and an old lady stretched out her arm saying, “Una limosna por el amor de Dios” – “An alm for the love of God.” Barrios gave her a few coins and then went back to his student, telling him that he was working on a new piece and would incorporate the knocking at the door in it. Barrios died on August 7th and left this masterful tremolo piece finished, but without a title. It was finally called *Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios*. It is also often called *El Ultimo Canto* – The Last Song.

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\* Richard D. Stover, *Six Silver Moonbeams: The Life and Times of Agustin Barrios Mangore*, Querico Publications, 1992.



37

**CHIA JEN**  
FAMILY

Notes in one *Etude* from *25 Typical Etudes* by the French guitarist composer Napoléon Coste (1805-1883). The fourth and second strings are plucked, corresponding to hexagram 37. Above, the trigram for “wind” and below the trigram for “fire.” Coste studied under Fernando Sor, whose *Complete Method for the Guitar* he edited and republished. “This hexagram represents refining the self, mastering the mind, turning the attention around to gaze inward.”(1) This is the essence of taoist meditation.

These spiritual teachings from China are convincing, since they deal with – not myths and fairy tales – but *understanding reality*. Western narcissism has propagated the error of deeming Chinese culture “primitive.” (Even Carl Jung was guilty of this.) Before the devastating invasions of China by the western nations, the idea of hexagram 37 – “like a *family* being orderly” – was the Confucian ideal of the empire. But despite its gift for innovation, which included the invention of gunpowder, China lost the arms race. The subsequent 200-year hiatus in China’s innovative superiority was therefore due almost entirely to the disorder resulting from military invasions by the western powers, ravaging, pillaging, plundering and destroying the *family* which once was the empire. Mass opium addiction in the 19th century was not, as it was portrayed to us school children in the US, a Chinese vice, but an imported European vice. Just as is the case today, the western governments were also the biggest drug dealers in the 19th century. Addiction meant profits. (In the 20th century China’s decline was also due to Mao

Tse-tung's contempt for his own culture.) In the two Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860) the powerful western nations imposed the opium trade on China. The occupation of the Eight-Nation Alliance came in response to the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. (They were called *Boxers* because many were practitioners of Chinese martial arts.) The invasion force consisted of tens of thousands of troops from Germany, Japan, Russia, Britain, France, the United States, Italy and Austria-Hungary. These major powers proceeded to cut up China for themselves and enslave the remnants of the nation. Today, after the wars and invasions by the west in the 19th century, and Mao's cultural revolution in the 20th, much of China's ancient culture is lost forever. A large part of the recorded knowledge of Chinese culture was maliciously destroyed in the looting and burning of the Yuanmingyuan, the Old Summer Palace, which contained more than ten million of the finest historical treasures and scholarly works from 5,000 years of Chinese history. On October 18, 1860, the British High Commissioner to China, Lord Elgin, whose father had plundered the ancient sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens, ordered the destruction of the Old Summer Palace. What could not be looted was destroyed, and the entire massive palace was burned to the ground. "They plundered treasures and the centuries of data from the ancient observatories, disassembling the instruments and removing them to Europe, returning some to China as part of the Treaties after the First World War. [...] What China didn't expect, was the West stealing all these ideas, turning them into weapons of colonization and war, returning to the nation that was the source of that knowledge, and invading it to colonize, steal resources, enslave and massacre the population."\* "The *family* is society in the embryo."(14) The dysfunctional human *family*...

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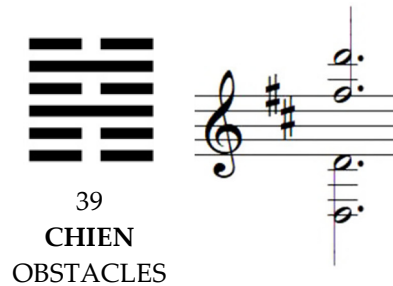
\* "History of Chinese Inventions. The Present and the Future. Recent Chinese State of the Art Innovations," Larry Romanoff, *Global Research*, October 24, 2019.



These are the last notes of Ulf G. Åhslund's guitar suite no. 4 "Autumn," first movement of six. The fifth and third strings are plucked, corresponding to the the fifth and third broken lines of hexagram 38. Above, the trigram for "fire" and below the trigram for "lake." I have written previously about Ulf (see hexagram 25) and his central role in the development of classical guitar studies in Sweden. His obituary in 2013 in *Dagens Nyheter* ended with these words: "The versatile, dynamic Ulf G. Åhslund developed enviable skills even outside the world of music. According to eyewitnesses, he could single-handedly gut and skin a moose or construct an excavation machine with the same self-assurance that he fingered a G7 chord."

The text of this hexagram reveals that harmony is represented by the mind of Tao, while *disharmony* is represented by the human mind. As such, "disharmony must ultimately be reconciled." This "must" comes as a command which civilization has disobeyed for thousands of years, although musicians have come closest to reconciling *disharmony* with harmony. It is a command that very possibly can only be obeyed by the extinction of our species. Can it be that only *then* will harmony return to earth? "Even though the human mind is the chief of villains, it is also the chief in merit; it is not an enemy, but really a partner."(1) The meeting between European cultures and Native American cultures is where *disharmony* truly becomes apparent. A delusion about "superiority" lies at its core. The first historical contacts even displayed some hope

for harmonious relations. The expedition of Meriwether Lewis and Willam Clark emanated bonafide good will to the tribes of Turtle Island – an intelligent interaction with the indigenous cultures of the continent that is rare in our violent history. The child born to the Snake woman Sacajawea and the French interpreter of the expedition was given the name Pompey. After eighteen months of difficult travel the baby had survived and was affectionately called “my boy Pomp” by Clark. In this tender little nickname one can intuit the good will inherent in the expedition. Almost all the chiefs and medicine men (who were called “jugglers” by Lewis) were left with fond memories of the expedition. Some were cured of chronic diseases by the two captains. Peter Cruzatte played the violin and led dances in the native villages. In time of famine, the master hunter George Drewyer (Drouillard) came back with game when the natives were unable to find game, and the meat was generously given to hungry villagers. This generosity was reciprocal and the expedition was often on the receiving end. The Nez Percé chieftain Hohastillpilp offered Lewis and Clark the pick of the horses running at large near the village as food for their hungry group. In his diary Lewis wrote that such hospitality was superior to that of his fellow Americans: “I doubt whether there are not a great number of our countrymen who would see us fast many days before their compassion would excite them to a similar act of liberality.” (Tuesday, May 27th, 1806) There had been at times a culture shock between the Americans and the indigenous peoples they met on their transcontinental trek. But that year they shared one main thing with the Snake culture: *famine*. Since the time of Columbus such harmonious interaction between the two cultures was rare. In the US today light shines on the deeds of Columbus and there is rejoicing on Columbus Day. “Rejoicing in what is not to be rejoiced in, bringing to light what is not to be brought to light, joy (☰) and light (☰) are not appropriate, so it is called *disharmony*.”(1)



This is the last D-major chord of Agustín Barrios' *Villancico de Navidad* (Christmas Song). The sixth, fourth, second and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the the sixth, fourth, second and first broken lines of hexagram 39. Above, the trigram for "water" and below the trigram for "mountain." I first heard this piece on the radio in Stockholm in 1978. At that time I used to listen to the radio program *För gitarrvänner* (for friends of the guitar) and listened to the live broadcast of Göran Söllscher's concert in Paris at the International Guitar Competition. The Bach suite *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro* which he played has been a part of my repertoire as a self-taught guitarist for all these years. I remember that after the concert the radio broadcaster asked Göran how he felt after winning the competition, and instead of explaining in words he played the mellow *Villancico de Navidad* by Agustín Barrios (see hexagram 36). This piece as well has worn out many strings on my guitar.

"The hexagram pictures a dangerous abyss (☵☵) lying before us and a steep, inaccessible mountain (☶☶) rising behind us. We are surrounded by *obstacles*."(14) This translation by Richard Wilhelm of the name for hexagram 39 differs from Thomas Cleary's "halting" and James Legge's "difficulty." (Indeed, all three words reveal the the dilemma facing a western reader of this classic.) The yin lines in the *I Ching* are often seen as "eroding" the yang lines, as water erodes a mountain, "where yin energy has nearly stripped yang completely away."(1) Contemplating the most archetypal of *obstacles* in human existence, my spinning mind stops at Suffering.

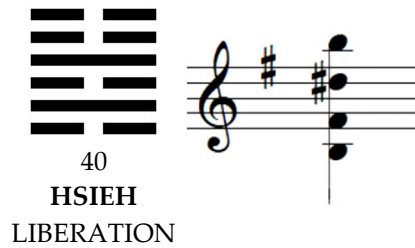


This is the *obstacle* which shocked prince Siddhartha at the age of 29 when he left the palace at Kapilavastu. Despite his father's efforts to shield him from the endless suffering outside the palace, the shock was such that he devoted his life to alleviating suffering, ultimately achieving enlightenment as the Buddha. 2,500 years later, during which time hundreds of millions of buddhists were actively devoted to the same task, the *obstacle* – suffering – remains firmly entrenched in the world. Here is a basic difference between buddhism and taoism. The latter confronts suffering as being intrinsic to Tao, and therefore unavoidable. Considering that the goal of conferring benevolence on all suffering "sentient beings" has not been reached in the 2,500 years since Buddha's death, then I must agree with the T'ang poet Liu Tsung-yuan (773-819) when he reburied the bones of Chang Chin, the hired-hand, strewn far and wide by a flood: "Benevolence for all things is not mine to confer."\*

Today, January 4, 2020, tens of thousands of homeless people live (and die) on the sidewalks and vacant lots of the big cities in California and the rest of the US. Far from the reality of alleviating their suffering (despite many good deeds carried out on their behalf) their ranks are constantly increasing along with their misery. A new Buddha would not be able to help them. The text for line four (yin) of hexagram 39 reads: "This too describes a situation that cannot be managed single-handed. [...] If a person were to forge ahead on his own strength and without the necessary preparations, he would not find the support he needs and would realize too late that he has been mistaken in his calculations, inasmuch as the conditions on which he hoped he could rely would prove to be inadequate. In this case it is better, therefore, to hold back for the time being and to gather together trustworthy companions who can be counted upon for help in overcoming the *obstacles*."(14)

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\* *Sunflower Splendor, Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry*, Irving Yucheng Lo, Anchor Books, New York, 1975.



This is a chord from Julian Bream's transcription of Debussy's *La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin* (the girl with the flaxen hair), which is to be played *très calme et doucement expressif* (very calm and softly expressive). It is a barré chord at the seventh fret. The fourth and second strings are unplucked as is seen in the fourth and second unbroken lines of hexagram 40. Above, the trigram for "thunder" and below the trigram for "water." "So on the path of *liberation* from difficulty and escape from danger it is important to know the proper timing."(1)

In learning pieces for my repertory, I often memorize them in pairs that in some way are related. With the above piece by Debussy I have paired *La Filla del Mercader* by the Catalan guitarist Miguel Llobet (1878-1938). It is sheer coincidence that I learned these two pieces for guitar simultaneously. They are kindred because of the "girl" in their titles, the soft dreamy mood of each, and the copious use of harmonics in each. (String harmonics are high pitched tones, like a chimes, and are produced when the guitarist lightly touches certain points on a string.) But along with these relationships comes the pairing of the two composers in an anecdote recorded by Julian Bream that is a pleasing coincidence to my random association of these two works: "There is a well-authenticated story that Debussy, on hearing the great Catalan guitarist, Miguel Llobet, planned to write some pieces for the guitar. He requested Llobet to visit him and show him the technical aspects of writing for the instrument; but the timid Llobet was so overawed by the great Debussy that he never ventured to follow up the assignation." Debussy was never to

compose for the guitar. Llobet's favorite guitar, La Leona, was built in 1859 by the legendary luthier Antonio de Torres (1817-1892). He refused to have a split in the back of his guitar repaired for fear that it would affect the exquisite tone. Torres was a simple country carpenter who revolutionized the six-stringed Spanish guitar to what we know today. He was born near the Mediterranean town Almeria, and at 27 he became a widower with a ten-year old daughter, having lost his young wife and two daughters. A legend today, Torres was also a legend during his lifetime as a guitar builder in Seville. The future great composer, seventeen-year-old Francisco Tárrega, travelled across Spain to Seville from Barcelona to purchase a guitar from Don Antonio who, now in his fifties, was at the height of his career. But there was now a boom in the art of guitar building with many instruments of the highest quality available. Despite his reputation, Torres could no longer support himself, his second wife and four children by making guitars. He returned to his hometown Almeria. For ten years he no longer built guitars, but sold porcelain in a shop with his wife, who soon died in her forties. For a second time, Don Antonio was a widower with two small children. Now an old man, he began building guitars again, with orders all the way from South America. He returned to his village La Cañada de San Urbano where he died.

One luthier in Sweden (I forgot his name) began the process of building a guitar with a walk in the forest where he located a tree that "spoke" to him. He returned later, cut down the tree and began the very long drying process of the wood. Then began the intricate time-consuming work that resulted in a finished guitar. My guitar was built in Madrid in 2001 by Paulino Bernabe (1932-2007). Born in Madrid, Bernabe studied the classical guitar with a pupil of Tárrega when he was seventeen. He went on to learn the art of making classical guitars from José Ramírez III, grandson of José Ramírez (1858-1923), who followed the designs of Antonio Torres.



This chord comes from *Les Barricades Mystérieuses*, a baroque piece for harpsichord by François Couperin (1668-1733) transcribed for guitar by Richard Yates. It is to be played *vivement*, lively. The “tr” stands for “trill,” a musical ornament consisting of a rapid alternation between two adjacent notes. The fifth, fourth and third strings are plucked corresponding to the fifth, fourth and third broken lines of hexagram 41. Above, the trigram for “mountain” and below the trigram for “lake.”

Although there are many speculations about the title of this piece from 1717, its meaning remains a... *mystery*. The speculations about just what these “mysterious barricades” could be include the barricades of female virginity, between present and past, between life and death. The harpsichord, like the piano and organ, is a mechanical instrument which gives the keyboard player an ease in playing notes with the correct tonality that is denied to the guitarist. Frederick Noad adds: “But the guitarist’s compensation lies in the range of tonal quality and variety impossible for the pianist, in the rich harmony unavailable to the violinist, and in the dynamic range totally beyond the harpsichordist.”(6) Dynamics refers to the degrees of loudness in the music. “Diminishing what is excessive, adding to what is insufficient – thus it is called *reduction*.”(1) Turned upside down hexagram 41 becomes hexagram 42, *increase* (䷗). Reduction and increase are constantly at play by the musician moving through the dynamic range of a piece, from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. A musical *reduction* is also an arrangement of an existing composition in which the complexity is reduced to make analysis,

performance, or practice easier or clearer. My *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra* obliged me to hire a pianist to make a *reduction* of the entire score for wind and string instruments so that the soloist (Uroš Dojčinović) could practice to piano accompaniment. (It came to nothing and the concerto has not yet been performed.)

As occurs with the other hexagrams, there is a “correct” and “incorrect” application of *reduction*. Correctly applied, it involves “diminishing what is excessive” to arrive at the equilibrium of Tao. To diminish that which is already in equilibrium with Tao is incorrect application of *reduction*. A propos, today I listened to a recording of the first and only symphony of the Austrian composer Hans Rott (1858-1884), who was twenty when he composed it. It is a splendid four-movement symphony. After his tragic death, his younger friend Gustav Mahler said of him: “His genius soars to great heights even in this first symphony, written at the age of twenty. It makes him – without exaggeration – the founder of the new symphony as I understand it.” During the competition for the Beethoven Prize in Vienna in 1878, which regularly determined the best new talents among the classical composers, he was a favorite to win. In spite of this, Johannes Brahms, one of the jury members, told Rott that he had no talent whatsoever and that he should give up music. Rott was so devastated that on the train ride home he had a nervous breakdown, confronting a passenger about to light a cigar with a revolver and exclaiming that the train had been filled with dynamite by Johannes Brahms. He was taken to a psychiatric hospital diagnosed with “hallucinatory insanity,” where he died a few years later of tuberculosis at the age of twenty five. Many friends, including Bruckner and Mahler, attended Rott’s funeral. As an admirer of Brahms’ music, I am troubled by his behavior. By diminishing a man of genius (as declared by Mahler himself) Brahms’ behavior reveals an incorrect application of *reduction*, from the equilibrium of artistic genius into the chaos of artistic insanity.

The image shows hexagram 42, 'Increase', consisting of the upper trigram 'Wind' (☴) and the lower trigram 'Thunder' (☳). To the right is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by a quarter rest, and then two chords: a G4-A4-B4 triad and a G4-A4-B4-C5 tetrad. Below the staff, a vertical line connects the first line to a note on the first space, with the number '42' and the character 'I' written below it, and the word 'INCREASE' at the bottom.

This is the first measure of *Valsa Chôro*, third in the collection of five pieces called *Suite Populaire Bresilienne* by Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959). The fourth, third and second strings of both chords are plucked, corresponding to the fourth, third and second broken lines of hexagram 42. Above, the trigram for “wind” and below the trigram for “thunder.” The randomness of consulting the 64 hexagrams means that the choice of Villa-Lobos is random, for there are very many musical moments in guitar scores that would also correspond to hexagram 42. The above chords “appeared” as I was reviewing numerous pages of sheet music to find corresponding samples for all 64 hexagrams. The text for the first yang line of this hexagram reads: “In the beginning of *increase*, one can go straight ahead with vigorous power into great works and great acts.”(1)

When Villa-Lobos was about eighteen he began travels into Brazil’s interior and along the Amazon, alert to the native music he encountered. There is serious doubt about some of his narratives from the ten years or so he spent on these expeditions, and about his capture and escape from cannibals. However, the “vigorous power” of this young man indeed led straight “into great works and great acts.” His first compositions resulted from improvisations on the guitar from this period. After his Amazon adventures, he gave up any idea of formal training in music, and, with himself as teacher, began the steady *increase* of his skills, becoming a cellist, pianist, guitarist, composer and conductor, absorbing the musical influences of Brazil’s Portuguese, African and indigenous cultures.

The phenomenon music depends on sound waves, which are variations in air pressure. A sound must have an identifiable pitch, a pleasing quality of tone, and repeating pattern or rhythm to be music as opposed to noise. The previous hexagram (Reduction) and the present one (Increase) are also indicative of the interactions of various forms of waves surrounding us, micro and macro, natural and man-made. Physicists define “wave” as a disturbance of one or more fields (water, air, etc.) from its stable equilibrium when at rest. Waves interacting is known as interference. When waves move through each other, there is either “constructive interference” or “destructive interference” depending on the type of interaction of wavelength, frequency and amplitude. When sound waves are in phase, the peaks and troughs of each wave are in line with each other, resulting in an *increase* in amplitude (loudness). This is constructive interference. When sound waves are out of phase, the peaks and troughs of each wave are out of line with each other, resulting in a wave with a *reduction* of amplitude. This is destructive interference. The tone quality of a vibrating string on the guitar is a combination of the intrinsic quality of the string and the wood of the body (with billions of cells and a hundred or so years of growth rings) resonating with sound waves, amplified and expelled from the soundboard through the sound hole, setting in motion molecules in the air, which reach the listener’s ear and brain as music. Master Swedish guitar builder Georg Bolin (1912-1993) wrote of the “marvelous power and wisdom” of wood: “You cut in toward the wood’s heart; right through hundreds of years of history’s annual rings. There lies music.”\* Like guitar builders, builders of concert halls take into account sound wave interference patterns in designing the building and choosing the materials. They want everyone in the audience to hear loud, clear sounds.

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\* Oscar Hedlund, *Georg Bolins gitarrbok*, Reuter & Reuter Förlags AB, Örebro, 1982.

Hexagram 43: see page 25.

Hexagram 44: see page 14.



This chord is from *Saraband* by Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750), transcribed from the lute by Frederick Noad. The sixth, third, second and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, third, second and first broken lines of hexagram 45. Above, the trigram for “lake” and below the trigram for “earth.” “Each of the six lines indicates something being *gathered*, but they are different in respect to right and wrong, aberration and correctness.”(1)

Weiss, the court lutenist at Dresden, was one of the most prolific lute composers in history, and one of the most famous and skilled lutenists of his day. In later life, Weiss became a friend of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, the organist in a Dresden church, who introduced him to his father, Johann Sebastian, in Leipzig in 1739. Bach arranged some of Weiss’ music, and the two were said to have played music together. It is often written that Weiss inspired Bach (who did not play the lute) to compose “the four lute suites” made famous for guitar by Andres Segovia, Göran Söllscher and other guitarists. This is what contemporary Canadian lutenist and luthier Clive Titmuss calls *The Myth of Bach’s Lute Suites*. He writes that certain music historians “depicted a lute-playing Bach, a composer who understood the lute’s idiosyncrasies and was fully cognizant of its strengths and limitations. There was pressure to promulgate a Bach hagiography – Bach as a masterful genius who composed solo



music for the lute in much the same way as he did for harpsichord, organ, cello and violin.”\* Titmuss believes that the “lute suites” were in fact composed for a keyboard instrument, on which Bach was a virtuoso. The instrument in question was a lute-harpsichord, with gut strings producing a mellow tone like that of a lute, instead of the harsher tone of metal strings on a baroque harpsichord. The lute suite *Prelude, Fugue, Allegro* mentioned previously very likely was not composed for lute. (I will write more on this subject under hexagram 63 below.) In Leipzig it was part of Bach’s duties as cantor to perform a church cantata every Sunday and holiday, conducting soloists, the choir and orchestra as part of the church service. He regularly composed and conducted a new cantata every week for three years, displaying an enormous gift for *gathering* together people for one purpose. The text of hexagram 45 elucidates: “The *gathering* together of people in large communities is either a natural occurrence, as in the case of the family, or an artificial one, as in the case of the state. [...] Where men are to be gathered together, religious forces are needed. But there must also be a human leader to serve as the center of the group. In order to be able to bring others together, this leader must first of all be collected within himself. Only collective moral force can unite the world.”(14) Between the family and the state is the *gathering* which is the musicians. The collective moral force is Harmony. Bach wrote more than 200 cantatas, part of the “sacred” music he composed. His secular music, like *The Well-tempered Clavier* and *The Art of the Fugue*, is equally as sacred. Although “religious” was once a synonym for “sacred,” religions have strayed from the essence of sacredness and their rituals have become, to use Lao Tzu’s words, “the flowery embellishment of the Way.” This is why I am not a religious man. This is why taoism appealed to me. A taoist monk put it this way: “Ours is not a religion but a way to the Way.” (16)

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\* <http://earlymusicstudio.com/library>

The image shows the hexagram 46, Sheng (Rising), which consists of the trigram for Earth (Kun) above the trigram for Wind (Xun). To the right of the hexagram is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation shows a sequence of notes: a half note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G#4. The notes are connected by a slur, and there are vertical lines indicating fingerings or breath marks.

This difficult chord (the left hand stretches over six fret bars) is in Stanley Myers' famous *Cavatina* for guitar. The second and third strings are unplucked, corresponding to the second and third unbroken lines of hexagram 46. Above, the trigram for "earth" and below the trigram for "wind." Finding the best fingering for the left hand (when it is not included in the sheet music) is like finding one's way down a cliff to the ocean. There is a logic in what path to take, where to place the right foot, the index finger, the left foot, the ring finger, etc. You may think you have found the best fingering, but after playing for a while and acquainting yourself with the piece, you find even better fingering. *Cavatina* was originally written for piano, but at the request of guitarist John Williams, Myers re-wrote it for guitar and expanded it. This serene music has the guitar singing an aria. A *cavatina* is short solo song as those in operas, or a songlike instrumental piece. The word comes from the Italian *cavata* "extraction, production of sound from an instrument," from the verb *cavare* "to dig out, extract, excavate." This piece is very popular among guitarists all over the world.

"*Rising* means climbing from lowliness to the heights."(1) Understanding can be said to be a *rising* from misunderstanding. Tao is easily misunderstood by us westerners. In his introduction to Richard Wilhelm's translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, a taoist handbook on meditation techniques, I believe that Carl Jung misunderstood the meaning of Tao. (I have previously written about this in *Crazy Devil Sweeping: A Janitor's Reflections on Art and*

*Tao*.) Applying a psychoanalytical and christian viewpoint to this phenomenon, Jung missed the point. As stated in the previous chapter, Tao is unaffiliated with any religion. Taoism, “a way to the Way,” reached Europe very late in its 2,500 year history. During the European colonialization of China Jesuit missionaries translated texts on taoism, confucianism and the philosophies found in the *Tao Te Ching* and *I Ching*. In 1816 the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) lectured on these subjects in Heidelberg. Chang Chung-yuan wrote that Hegel “was surprisingly well informed, notably on the subject of Taoism.”(3) Hegel’s words are indeed insightful: “To the Chinese what is highest, the origin of things, is nothingness, emptiness, the altogether undetermined, the abstract universal, and this is also called *Tao*.” Taoist ideas had now begun a gradual *rising* into the minds of westerners, producing many contradictory interpretations, attempts at grasping the ungraspable “thing-in-itself” – *Tao*. This name is totally meaningless, and is something completely different than the Chinese 道, just as the name “Stephen” is completely different than the French “Etienne.” Understanding without words is essential. The two trigrams of hexagram 46, Earth (☷) and Wind (☴), represent two phenomena that are best understood *without words*. Doing the tai chi form while interacting with gravity pulling downward and the life force pulling upward is to experience Earth without words. To stand on the beach and feel the full force of the gale is to experience Wind without words. The word “wind” never enters my mind when it is blowing over my face. So it is with Tao. Without words, one knows a *rising* into direct pure sacred contact with its essence, with no impurities from absurd religious fairy tales to diminish and sully the experience. The Way cannot be explained. Trying to explain it is doing. It is attained by non-doing. “Progressing at an easy pace, going in accord with the time, neither clinging nor departing, one gradually enters true eternity; therefore it is called *rising*.”(1)



This chord ends the *Courante* from *French Suite No. 2* by Johann Sebastian Bach, as transcribed for guitar by Isaias Sávio. The sixth, third and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, third and first broken lines of hexagram 47. Above, the trigram for “lake” and below the trigram for “water.” “Among the various kinds of *exhaustion* and *impasses* represented by the six lines, there is the *exhaustion*, or *impasse*, of great people, and the *exhaustion*, or *impasse*, of petty people.”(1) Bach’s life reveals several such *impasses*. In 1705 he called a music student in Arnstadt a “nanny goat bassoonist” (*Zippelfagottist*). The latter, named Geyersbach, did not forget the insult. As twenty-year-old Bach was walking across the market place, Geyersbach, who was sitting on a bench with other students, rose and attacked Bach with a stick, saying he had made abusive remarks about him. Bach denied it, but Geyersbach said that if he had not abused him, he had abused his bassoon, and whoever abused his bassoon abused him. Bach’s superiors reproached him and said that one must live among *imperfecta*, that he must get along with the students, and that they must not make each other’s lives miserable. He was also reproached for taking a prolonged absence to Lüneberg (he was given four weeks leave and stayed four times as long), and improper playing.\* Gustav Mahler experienced a similar *impasse* with a musician at an infamous rehearsal in 1892. Mahler kept making one of the flautists in the orchestra repeat a certain phrase alone. The player rushed out of the hall in tears and

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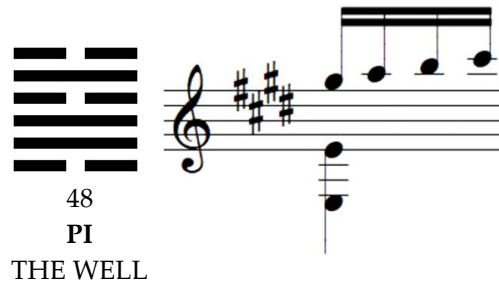
\* *The Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, edited by Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, J.M. Dent & Sons, London, 1945, 1966.

gathered some belligerent friends to give the composer a beating. Mahler was obliged to summon a police escort to accompany him home.\* “Thus everywhere superior men are oppressed and held in restraint by inferior men. [...] He who lets his spirit be broken by *exhaustion* certainly has no success.”(14) Under hexagram 31 above I commented on what I saw as affinity between the two classics, the *Tao Te Ching* and the *I Ching*. D.C. Lau felt this to be a mistake: “Here I only wish to call attention to the *yin* and the *yang*, the central concept of the *Book of Changes* and the basis for the process of cyclic change. In the *Lao Tzu [Tao Te Ching]*, the *yin* and the *yang* appear only once, [...] and there is no reason to suppose that they occupy an important place in the thought of the whole work.”(11)

When weakness and strength are misunderstood, calamity results. “Strength” eventually turned Europe into a wasteland of smoking rubble. The “weakness” of the meditating sage is revealed as true strength. Nietzsche contrasted “the calm of strength” with “the calm of *exhaustion*.” (*The Will to Power*) The latter is the calm that came to Europe after the defeat of Hitler, the calm that came to Japan after Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the calm of *exhaustion*. An organism naturally strives against weakness to insure health and strength. That is the essence of the life force. The calm of strength. The calm of the sage who “never leads but always follows behind others.”(11) When the natural *exhaustion* of the body growing old is not accompanied by an exhausted mind, it is called “dealing with *exhaustion* correctly.” I am now looking at a photo of Master Fu-Yuan Ni at the care home in Taiwan in his 101st year, wearing a drainage pouch and polyurethane tube around his waist, entering the tai chi posture called “holding a single whip.” How alert, and weary, he is. “Those who deal with *exhaustion* and impasse rightly, who are able to be joyful even in difficulty, are great people.”(1)

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\* *The Life of Mahler*, Peter Franklin, Cambridge University Press, 1997.



From *Preludium* by William Byrde (1538-1623). The sixth, fourth and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, fourth and first broken lines of hexagram 48. Above the trigram for “water,” below the trigram for “wind.” William Byrde’s first known appointment was as organist and master of the choir at Lincoln Cathedral in 1563. Six years later he was cited by the leadership for “certain matters alleged against him” and his salary was suspended. It seems that the allegations concerned unacceptable polyphony (a musical texture with two or more voices, as opposed to one with just a single voice). For centuries, certain instruments and modes were forbidden by the church because of their association with secular music and pagan rites. The dissonant clash of notes which sometimes occurs in polyphony was labeled evil by the Church, and therefore polyphony was the devil’s music. After banishing polyphony from the liturgy in 1322, Pope John XXII warned in his 1324 bull *Docta Sanctorum Patrum* against the diabolic elements of this musical innovation. Its water is clear, but “if the rope does not reach all the way into *the well*, if the bucket breaks, that is unfortunate.” 247 years later, polyphony was still seen as the devil’s work, and *the well* of William Byrde’s creativity, like that of so many other European artists throughout the centuries, was polluted by church doctrine. “If one does not meet people who can understand, this poses a limitation and makes development impossible. This is like when *the well* is clear but people do not drink from it.”(1) The text of hexagram 48 describes images of both *the well* with clear

water and “an abandoned well with mud in it and not water; with an accumulation of all sorts of pollutants in it, even animals ignore it.” What fine metaphors for Art and the Church. Nothing in any other human discipline surpasses Art for in-depth confrontation with spirit. Remove Art from the Church — all the poetry, music, paintings, architecture — and it is stripped of its spiritual legitimacy, “an abandoned well” administered by often sexually deviant men with no talent and nothing whatsoever to offer humanity, “yet presumes to have what one has not.”(1)

Many christians today believe that we who do not share their faith have neglected the spiritual aspects of existence, and therefore we are threatened with a horrific disadvantage in the cosmos “come Judgement Day.” Trying to communicate with them about *the well* of divinity common to all humans, regardless of cultural traditions, is next to impossible. The Californian poet Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) wrote in “Carmel Point” about the need to “uncenter our minds from ourselves.” As an “inhumanist” he believed that our consciousness is an evolutionary error that separates humans from a sense of Oneness with all Creation, just as religion separates. Jeffers’ spiritual independence is an example for religious people who have considered leaving religion to do so, and find spiritual teachings that do not deceive and pervert, as does the Church. Jeffers believed that there is a *non-human* Intelligence behind all phenomena in the universe, not an anthropomorphic male “god” created by humans with many cultural identities in a variety of religions and sub-religions. Where religious systems are restricted to the short histories of human beings, Jeffers’ non-religious spirituality is centered in the System which has been ever-present in the universe since its beginning, indifferent to prayers, unaffected by wishful-thinking and contradictory dogmas. Taoists call it *Tao* – the Way. “When the self-development of practitioners of Tao is sufficient, this is like a *well* having water in it.”(1)

The image shows the hexagram 49, KO, Revolution. It consists of the upper trigram Lake (☱) and the lower trigram Fire (☲). Below the hexagram is the number 49, the name KO, and the word REVOLUTION. To the right is a musical staff in G minor (one flat) showing the first measure of a piece. The notes are G4 and D4 (simultaneous), followed by G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. Below the staff, three pairs of notes are indicated: G4 and D4, A4 and B4, and C5 and D5, representing the simultaneous playing of the upper and lower strings.

Above is the first measure of *Preludio Criollo* by the Venezuelan composer Rodrigo Riera (1923-1999). Several of his guitar students are now international celebrities, and a composer's competition was established bearing his name. As a boy Rodrigo Riera shined the shoes of the great Agustín Barrios (see hexagram 36) when he was on tour in Caracas. The first pair of notes (G and D) are played simultaneously on the sixth and second strings, corresponding to the sixth and second broken lines of hexagram 49. Above the trigram for "lake," below the trigram for "fire." I have played this splendid piece for decades. There is a wonderful flow and some difficult fingerings for the left hand, culminating in the chord which is inevitable: G-minor. The key of G-minor is indicated by the two flat signs (♭). (To confuse matters, they can also indicate the key of B-flat major.)

The major and minor "modes" are the two used most often among the seven musical modes with ancient Greek names: Ionian (major), Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian (minor), Locrian. Each mode has the same seven notes, but is determined by which note one starts with. The intervals (distance between notes) actually sound different played on untempered instruments. For example, the intervals of C to D and D to E, which are both whole steps in modern tuning, were not exactly the same size before. As a result, each ancient mode had its own flavor. Equal temperament tuning in European music, which began in the 16th century, signifies an equal perceived "distance" from every note to its nearest neighbor. In his *Well-Tempered Clavier* Bach intended that



the pieces *not* be played on an untempered instrument. A *revolution* in music had occurred. “*Revolution* means riddance. The reason for riddance is obsolescence.”(1) The untempered instruments of lore had become obsolete. Western musicians homogenized the tones with equal temperament, sacrificing the accuracy of intervals for variety – the ability to go into different keys. Although the names of the seven modern modes are Greek, they do not indicate a connection with ancient Greek music theory, and do not represent the ancient sequences of (unequal) intervals.

As with language, our perception of music has been conditioned by culture and history. What is perceived, acquired tastes, emotions and thoughts – all imply *something else* that simultaneously goes unperceived, like the unknown music of the ancients, which perhaps would not suit our tastes today. As a painter of so-called “abstract” paintings, I fully understand that the paintings of Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) would not have been appreciated by his countryman Rembrandt (1606-1669). The constant *revolution* occurring in different cultures is a mysterious movement through time, a play of light and shadow, sound and silence, leaving fossils which are called Art.

“In *revolution*, the sun of the self is truth: This is creative, developmental, fruitful and perfect. Regret vanishes.” Hexagram 49 represents the essence of the *I Ching* – change, *revolution*. But as with the other hexagrams, there can be correct and incorrect applications. In the latter case, regret does not vanish, but becomes all too apparent, as happened after the *revolution* in Russia in 1917, which replaced something bad with something worse. The correct *revolution* is conquering the ego, returning to propriety and getting rid of the pollution of “acquired conditioning” which makes knowledge of the Tao impossible. “This path is not hard to know; what is hard is to carry it out. It is simply a matter of people being able to be sincere in *revolution*.”(1)



The above notes appear in *Love Waltz* by Danish guitarist and composer Ulrik Neumann (1918-1994). The fifth and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the fifth and first broken lines of hexagram 50. Above the trigram for “fire,” below the trigram for “wind.” “The six lines construct the image of Ting, The Cauldron; at the bottom are the legs, over them the belly, then come the ears (handles), and at the top the carrying rings. [...] This hexagram and The Well are the only two in the *Book of Changes* that represent concrete, men-made objects.” (14) In taoist alchemy the hexagrams are called “the *cauldron* of the eight trigrams.” The body too is a *cauldron*. Under hexagram 29 I mentioned that in Chinese alchemy the term *gong fu* (or *kung fu*) refers to work/cultivation (*gong*) which takes much time and effort (*fu*). The ancient art of *qigong* (*qi* being vital energy) is therefore the study of the body’s energy field as directly related to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. Tai chi chuan is a form of *qigong*. Even among Chinese adepts, the definition of *qi* (or *ch’i*) varies. But there is agreement on the “three natural powers” – Earth, Humanity, Heaven – and the *qi* related to each, with definite rules and cycles. In the calculation of these rules and cycles the Chinese used *Bagua*, The Eight Trigrams, and The Sixty-four Hexagrams derived from them. Thus, *qigong* refers to the *qi* of Earth, Humanity, Heaven – a vast reservoir of knowledge accumulated over thousands of years concerning patterns in the changes of seasons, climate, weather, rain, snow, drought and all the other natural phenomena, including the stars and planets and the human metabolism. “Heaven” to the Chinese can mean very

simply “sky.” (Weather in Chinese is “heavenly *qi*.”) In the human domain, “qigong starts with physical science (strengthening the body), then moves on to energy science (*qi*), then with mental science (neutralizing the mind), and finally reaches spiritual science (enlightenment).” (8) Evolving among different classes of people in China, four major categories of qigong emerged from the scholars, medical doctors, martial artists and monks. The practice of qigong brings the practitioner a gradual understanding of the connection between sexual energy (*ching*), vital energy (*qi*) and spiritual energy (*shen*) – all forms of one and the same universal energy. The connection can be likened to the three forms of water: solid (ice), liquid (water) and gas (steam), which are all forms of one and the same essence. Combined with meditation, daily training qigong produces a state of being alert and vitalized instead of being sluggish and depressed, especially now in this merciless dark winter in Scandinavia. Medical qigong is not considered to be a part of mainstream medicine, since there is no peer-reviewed scientific evidence to support its effectiveness for specific medical conditions. However, Dr. Yang Jwing-ming emphasizes: “Qigong is a science. It is not a religion or a superstitious belief.” (8) Unfortunately, this important knowledge is often ignored by western scientists because it is inaccessible to them via the traditional methods of western science, which has no branch dealing with spirit. Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, originally from Taiwan but now an American citizen, is a very enlightened teacher of tai chi, shaolin, qigong and meditation. Dr. Yang (who has a degree in physics) writes of the need for “spiritual science” in the west. He believes that the spiritual realm “has not yet been understood by today’s science. If you are able to step in and practice [meditation and the internal arts], you will become a pioneer of the study and practice of spiritual science.” When it comes to deep understanding of spiritual reality, “the East has developed far beyond the West.” (12)



This chord is from *Valses Poeticos II* by Catalonian composer Enrique Granados (1867-1916), arranged for guitar by Edson Lopes. The first and fourth strings, remain unplucked, corresponding to the first and fourth unbroken lines of hexagram 51. Above the trigram for “thunder,” below the trigram for “thunder.” “When *thunder* comes there is alarm,…” Granados, on his way home from an American tour in the middle of World War I, was a passenger on the *Sussex*, which was torpedoed in the English Channel by a German U-boat. In a failed attempt to save his wife Amparo, whom he saw in the water some distance away, Granados jumped out of his lifeboat and drowned. “...then laughter.”(1) Tragedy is replaced by Comedy. Recalling the good-humored Granados, his classmate and friend Ricard Viñes said: “Enric’s character was one of optimism and a happiness that suddenly infected those around him, given his jokes and strong laughter.”

Granados was a victim of the “war to end all wars.” His fear, Amparo’s fear, in those final moments cannot be fathomed. Multiplied by millions, fear becomes a cosmic force. “In all six lines there is a kind of fear.”(1) An estimated nine million combatants and seven million civilians died as a direct result of this world war, classified as number “one.” Number “two” came only two decades later, the worst mass slaughter in ten thousand years of civilization. The shock of fate. This pathological numbering of world wars makes number “three” almost inevitable. “There are three kinds of shock – the shock of heaven, which is *thunder*, the shock of fate, and, finally, the shock of the heart.”(14) Wars rage on earth at this

moment as orgies of misunderstandings among brute minds wreak devastation and carnage. So it has been since I was one year old, when the Korean war began. The suicidal culmination of civilization mercilessly rolls onward to its final double *thunder* shock of fate. We have been left to weather the storm as shipwreck survivors on this unseaworthy craft called the Nation, leaking and captained by fools. When they need cannon fodder for their wars, there are always hundreds of thousands of trusting souls willing to waste their lives – for nothing. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) made a solitary and defiant stand against the USA's war on Mexico. The soldiers of that time who trotted off to Mexico like trusting hounds following their masters did not inspire Thoreau with admiration, for in *On Civil Disobedience* he indeed compared them to dogs. Who is most responsible for wars, the tyrants giving the orders, or the soldiers who willingly comply?

Of course, there was something called "peacetime" during my life, but it was very deceptive: "Mao Tse-tung, who for decades held absolute power over the lives of one-quarter of the world's population, was responsible for well over 70 million deaths in peacetime, more than any other twentieth century leader." (7) Many modern adepts of taoist practices left China and established strong roots in Taiwan and foreign countries, as did Master Fu-Yuan Ni. There was little that was conducive to staying on and practicing Tao for China's sake. It is ironic that millions of individuals all over the world have profited from knowledge of Tao, but not China as a whole. Mao's apparent dislike of taoist wisdom fits a pattern of Chinese governments of lore. During the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 CE), the taoists had to go underground, and although taoism was officially sanctioned during the T'ang dynasty (618-907), becoming the state religion, it seems to have been a black sheep to politicians. "Ruling the empire is as simple as cooking a small fish" must sound ridiculous to most statesmen and politicians.



This chord is from *Galliard* by Francis Cutting (1550-1596), one of the earliest known English lutenists. The sixth and third strings remain unplucked, corresponding to the sixth and third unbroken lines of hexagram 52. *Ken* is “mountain” and the two trigrams are both *Ken*, mountain upon mountain, the inverse of hexagram 51, thunder upon thunder. “Inwardly still and outwardly still, one stops inside and also stops outside. Because one stillness pervades inside and outside, it is called *mountain*.”(1) This is the terminology used in meditation (which is the English name given to this hexagram by R.L. Wing). “The hexagram signifies the end and the beginning of all movement.”(14)

This also describes the stillness of meditation, a practice for which which Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) had little sympathy. In the preface to his 1929 German translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* mentioned above (translated into English by Cary F. Baynes), Wilhelm sarcastically wrote: “I take this opportunity to point out certain misunderstandings to which even well-informed readers of this book fell victim. Not infrequently people thought that my purpose in publishing the book was to put into the hands of the public a method of achieving happiness. In total misapprehension of all that I say in my commentary, such readers tried to imitate the ‘method’ described in the Chinese text. Let us hope that these representatives of spiritual profundity are few in number!” Master Fu-Yuan Ni, on the contrary, encouraged his students to do just that, follow the method described in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Written in poetic language, the meditation technique describes a

method of quiet sitting, breathing, and eliminating thoughts. In 1991 Thomas Cleary published a new translation of this taoist handbook on meditation, and commented on Wilhelm's grammatical, technical and spiritual errors: "In many cases Wilhelm does not seem to have been able to decipher the text well enough to discern where a sentence begins or ends." Cleary complained that Wilhelm "tends to read weird and superstitious ideas into the text," and criticized the validity of Wilhelm's translation, characterizing it as incomplete and inaccurate. With this in mind, a reader may wonder about the validity of Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching*. (For this reason I rely mostly on Cleary's translation of this classic.)

"Both action and stillness must stay in the proper place."(1) Sitting in stillness like a *mountain*, there is nonetheless internal action with breathing and the functions of internal organs. How much calamity can be avoided when knowing *not* to act! "There are routes not to be followed, armies not to be attacked, citadels not to be besieged, territory not to be fought over, orders of civilian governments not to be obeyed."(15) Action too has its place. Why did peaceful monks develop fighting arts on a *mountain* in China called Wudang? In the violent times which were so frequent in Chinese history, to isolate oneself in a remote area for meditation and self-cultivation, one was not guaranteed a sanctuary free from marauding bands of hired thugs in the service of one warlord or another who demanded subjugation and tribute. Meditation and martial arts became bound together like the yin and yang of the Tai Chi symbol. The Wudang mountains are renowned for the practice of tai chi and taoism, the taoist counterpart to the shaolin (buddhist) monastery. Wudang mountain is one of the "Four Sacred Mountains of Taoism" in China, an important destination for taoist pilgrimages. The essence of the two *mountains* of hexagram 52 is seen in the action and stillness practiced by the adepts on Wudang mountain, combining martial arts with meditation.



These notes are from *Etude Op. 31 No. 16* by Fernando Sor (see hexagram 29). The chord is dissonant. Played alone, it sounds false, but played in the sequence of notes it is totally harmonious. The fingering is difficult – the left hand spans the fifth fret to the eighth. (I still have not perfected the grip.) The fourth, second and first strings are plucked, corresponding to fourth, second and first broken lines of hexagram 53. Above the trigram for “wind,” below the trigram for “mountain.” “Only by gradually *developing* your relationship with the area of your concern can you make the kind of progress you desire.”(5) How fitting a remark for dissonance – “the area of your concern” which demands *developing* into a resolution. “Stand up and take your dissonance like a man,” said Charles Ives. Although a star baseball player and football player in school, Ives spent hours at the piano as a boy when other boys were out doing physical things. “At length Ives would arrive at a perverse view of dissonance as a token of manliness in music.”\*

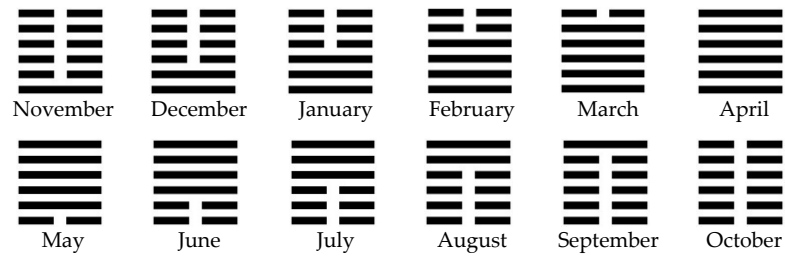
In music, consonance and dissonance can refer to simultaneous (as in the above chord) or successive sounds. Consonance is sweet, agreeable, acceptable. Dissonance is harsh, unpleasant, unacceptable. They seem to be a dichotomy defining each other by mutual exclusion: a consonance is what is not dissonant, and a dissonance is what is not consonant. However, a finer view reveals that the distinction forms a gradation, from the

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\* Jan Swafford, *Charles Ives: A Life with Music*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1996.



most consonant to the most dissonant. A dissonant chord requires “resolution” through a procedure called “voice leading,” the linear *developing* of individual voices and their interaction with one another to create harmonies, the waxing and waning of dissonance and consonance, yin and yang. A solar year also undergoes *developing*, “a careful and natural unfolding of events.”(5) The following sequence of twelve hexagrams reveals the waxing and waning of yin and yang through the twelve months of the year:



April, with the full potency of spring, is pure yang. October, with the full potency of autumn, is pure yin. In taoist meditation one practices the breathing techniques called “lesser heavenly circulation” and “greater heavenly circulation.” The latter is often symbolized by the *developing* twelve months and the sequence of hexagrams shown above. “This particular idea of the waxing and waning of the physical universe was paralleled to the process of circulation in the human body.”(3) As with previous hexagrams, there is a correct and incorrect side of *developing*. “There are those who do their practices all their lives without stopping – they are certainly proceeding gradually [*developing*], but their gradual progress is not correct. So they waste their lives, growing old without achievement. What is the good of that? So it is necessary to proceed gradually in the correct manner, thoroughly investigating truth, completely realizing essence, to arrive at the meaning of life. [...] Everyone can attain the great Tao.”(1)



Thus begins *Burgalesa* by Federico Moreno Torroba (see hexagram 31). The sixth, fifth and third strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, fifth and third broken lines of hexagram 54. Above the trigram for “thunder,” below the trigram for “lake.” *Burgalesa* is a female from the city or province of Burgos in northern Spain. The Spanish folksong *Burgalesa Burgalesa* begins:

*Son las mujeres de la tierra del Cid  
castigadoras de corazones, que con su gracia y su modo de andar,  
oiga usted, mire usted, que fijo verá una mujer ideal.*

*They are the women of the land of El Cid  
heartbreakers, with their grace and way of walking,  
listen, look, you will see an ideal woman.*

I imagine that many proud Burgalesas were nonetheless made to marry. “*Making a young girl marry* means intercourse is not proper.”(1) Hexagram 54 mentions polygamy, and how a young girl who becomes “junior wife” should “humble” herself to the older wife or wives and not do anything that is “improper” – not exactly compatible with modern western values: “A girl who is taken into the family, but not as the chief wife, must behave with special caution and reserve. She must not take it upon herself to supplant the mistress of the house, for that would mean disorder and lead to untenable relationships.”(14) The tradition of polygamy may just be

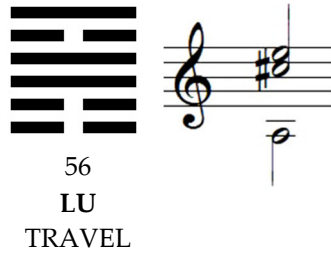
an example of “conditioned yin and yang” which is contrasted in the text with “primordial yin and yang.” “The dividing line between the primordial and the conditioned is but a hairbreadth.”(1) Along with tai chi and qigong, something which has led to the popularity of taoism in the west is the very elaborate science of “taoist sex” or “sexual kung fu,” even though the taoist texts often emphasize celibacy. In the east and west there are numerous examples of supposed spiritual teachers – whether taoist, buddhist, hindu, jewish, muslim or christian – for whom celibacy is only a façade behind which unbridled sexual indulgence is practiced under the devious guise of “spiritual teachings.” In the dojo, ashram, temple, synagogue and church, sexual scandals have become commonplace today, unfortunately often involving children. Many are the pedophiles who masquerade as “holy men.” In all world religions, at one time or another, “the girl is forcibly wed before her time.”(1) Such traditions are a misuse of “the three treasures” (*san pao*) of taoism: *ching* (sexual energy); *qi* (breath energy) and *shen* (spirit of vitality). The degree of their abundance determines the level and quality of one’s health and life. Their transformation into the “elixir” brings about “immortality.” This quest for some practitioners involves “sexual king fu.” However, some of these practices can harm those who are overly interested in sex but do not know the aim of taoism. They can leave the “student” psychologically damaged with harmful side-effects like psychosis, headaches and other ailments. These practices are not needed at all to live a happy and healthy life. But understanding the benefits of cultivating “the three treasures” is very important and can improve one’s quality of life enormously. It all comes down to the often repeated advice of the *I Ching* to make the right choice between correct and incorrect. “If the practitioners of Tao want to persist to the end, they should first know what is wrong; if they know what is wrong, they will not be deluded by the depraved words of false teachings.”(1)

The image shows the hexagram 55, Feng (Abundance), consisting of the upper trigram Sun (Thunder) and the lower trigram Li (Fire). To the right is a musical staff in G major (one sharp) with a treble clef. The notes for the name 'SEGOVIA' are written above the staff: S (G4), E (A4), G (B4), O (C5), V (D5), I (E5), A (F5). The notes are connected by a horizontal line, indicating they are to be played simultaneously as a chord. Below the staff, the notes for the lower strings of a guitar are shown: E2, A2, and D3.

This is a measure from *Tonadilla on the name Andrés Segovia*, the best known in the series of “postcards” by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) composed for his friends, based on their names formed on a musical alphabet. This particular musical alphabet begins with the letter A, corresponding to the “A,” the last note in “Segovia” above. The sequence of letters in this alphabet proceeds with each rising semi-tone to Z, which represents the highest note, “C.” Using this musical alphabet was popular in the time of Robert Schumann, who loved playing this game. Otherwise, the “musical alphabet” is considered to be the notes of the octave: ABCDEFGA or more commonly, CDEFGABC. The sixth, fifth and second strings of the chord are plucked, corresponding to the sixth, fifth and second broken lines of hexagram 55. Above the trigram for “thunder,” below the trigram for “fire.” “Thunder and lightning both arrive, abundant. [...] This is the image of *abundance*.”(1)

The alphabet and numerical signs are finite symbols which are completely inadequate when used to express the infinite *abundance* of the universe, and therefore a scientific explanation for the origin of the universe using these symbols cannot be thorough or accurate. The second sage of taoism, Chuang Tzu, wrote: “There is that which explanation does not explain. [...] So we know that to stop at what is unknowable is as far as we can go.”(13) Calculations based on mathematical probability and improbability are meaningless if something that is very probable never happens, and something that is very improbable (Life) happens to our knowledge only once in

the universe. The phenomenon of intelligence pondering over the origin of intelligence results in a variety of beliefs. In *The God Delusion*, biologist Richard Dawkins expresses the scientific belief that intelligence “comes into existence only as the end product of an extended process of gradual evolution.” (his italics) Dawkins continues: “Creative intelligences, being evolved, necessarily arrive late in the universe, and therefore cannot be responsible for designing it.” According to him, before homo sapiens, creative intelligence was nil in the universe. However, if we examine the periodic table of the elements on the walls of our science classes, we see an intelligent organization of the elements in the universe and their intricate relationships that infinitely surpasses the intelligence of Einstein. This intelligent organization of the elements is obvious and real, not the fairy tale of a “supernatural agent” which evokes Dawkins’ scorn. Not being an *unintelligent* organization of the elements, scientists are obliged to consider the source of this non-human Intelligence emanating from the periodic table, totally unaffiliated with any religion, theory of evolution, or anything else created by humans. It is important to acknowledge that there *is* a non-human source of this Intelligence, and equally as important to leave “it” unnamed. To give it a name is to waste words. To call it “God” is to mock it, for it is neither masculine nor feminine. The Name which is beyond the scope of language cannot be uttered. Throughout the universe, permeating all its parts, distant and nearby, is the *abundance* of non-human intelligence emanating from the periodic table of elements. The word “God” is the wrong word denoting the wrong thing. The word is wrong because of its many cultural identities far removed from the One truth. The figure being denoted is wrong because “he” is a fiction created by humans in their own image. “If students are able to judge truth and act effectively, there is no doubt that they will reach the state of *abundance* of qualities of the Tao, where wealth is daily renewed.”(1)



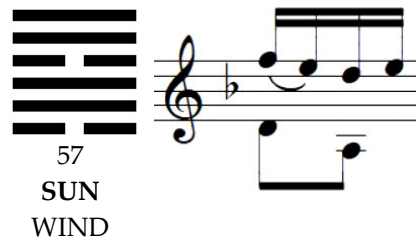
This chord finishes *Pillow Dance* by Béla Bartók (1881-1945), one of the piano pieces in the collection *For Children*, arranged for guitar by Ferenc Brodsky. The cycle is based on Hungarian and Slovak folk tunes, written as pedagogical works. However, in recent times, some concert pianists have begun including some of them on their recital programs because of their intrinsic musical value. The fifth, second and first strings are plucked, corresponding to the fifth, second and first broken lines of hexagram 56. Above the trigram for “fire,” below the trigram for “mountain.” “*Travel* means passing through and not lingering.”(1)

From the vast paleolithic migrations thousands of years ago to the trans-oceanic jet flights bringing atomic age immigrants, adventurers and tourists to all parts of the world, *travel* blends cultures, creates new languages and nations, making permanent transformations in the human family that can never be reversed. “In general, *travel* as a path means just passing through once – you should not remain attached to the realm you pass through.” When *travel* ends, attachment to the realm – settlement – begins. Long before the mass migrations of Europeans to to the Americas, unknown migrations of indigenous peoples from Asia filled North and South America, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Two groups, the Wiyot and Yurok, comprise the only Algonquians in California, a distant and rare outpost on the Pacific coast of a great language family concentrated east of the Mississippi and along the northern Atlantic coast. What unknown, epic migrations do these two remote Algonquian tribes represent, after ending their *travel* on the Pacific

coast? The science of glottochronology reveals that the Yurok and Wiyot languages diverged from a common parent language over two thousand years ago. The hundreds of Native American languages and societies were formed and transformed by *travel*. At this moment in history, *travel* leads millions of migrants from the Middle East and Africa into all parts of Europe, following a favored route from Syria to Turkey over the Aegean islands to Greece, the Balkans, Hungary, northern Europe and finally Scandinavia. The resulting transformation of these many European societies is significant and irreversible. This same favored route into Europe was also used 8,000 years ago when the first practitioners of agriculture migrated from what is today Turkey. "Over the course of centuries and millennia, the hunters and farmers intermarried with one another."\* Supplanting the societies of hunters who had lived in Europe for many thousands of years, the farmers brought about an epic transformation that is as well irreversible. This also occurred when the continent known as Turtle Island was irreversibly transformed into North America. The indigenous societies were not alone to suffer. The continent suffered as well. Like the farmers in Brazil today burning down the Amazon forest, the invading farmers from Europe devoted much of their working time to the conscious destruction of forests. They realized Ben Franklin's dream to reserve the continent for "the White People on the Face of the Earth" by "Scouring the Planet, by clearing America of Woods, and so making this Side of our Globe reflect a brighter Light to the Eyes of Inhabitants in Mars or Venus." How many cultures were "scoured" from the planet? *Travel* brought Franklin's father from England to Turtle Island. "On a journey on which you burn the lodge, though your *travel* may be correct, you arouse the hatred and suspicions of others, so this still is a road that brings on danger and disaster."(1)

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\* Karin Bojs, *Min europeiska familj: de senaste 54 000 åren* (My European family the last 54,000 years), Mån-pocket, Stockholm, 2017.

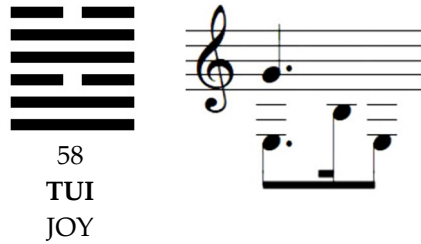


The second measure of *Capricho Op. 13, No. 3* by Hungarian guitarist composer Johann Kaspar Mertz (1806-1856). The fourth and first strings are plucked (first pair of notes), corresponding to the fourth and first broken lines of hexagram 57. Above the trigram for “wind,” below the trigram for “wind.” Mertz was a highly acclaimed virtuoso performer regularly touring Europe, and a composer most of whose guitar works were transcriptions or arrangements of famous classical works. “This hexagram represents progressing on the path by flexible obedience.”(1)

With “flexible obedience” Mertz’s guitar music followed the piano compositions of Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann. (His wife was a concert pianist.) Certain liberties taken by our beloved composers, if taken in the domain of literature, would be called plagiarism. But in music it is often the way creative growth occurs. One hears Haydn in Mozart, Mozart in Beethoven, and Beethoven in Brahms. In his biography of Schubert, Brian Newbould called this phenomenon “stylistic kleptomania.” He illustrated this in the way the teen-aged Schubert used a measure from a Mozart’s 38th symphony in his first. The third note of Mozart’s measure is a D-sharp, but Schubert made it an E-flat, the exact same note. Newbould asked: “Is the youngster salving his conscience?” His answer was that Schubert did not need to have bad conscience, for “building on good models is a fair way for a teenage composer to learn.” One surmises that not only teen-aged composers were “stylistic kleptomaniacs.” Schubert’s famous song *Ave Maria* is an arrangement of Bach’s first prelude in *The Well-*



*Tempered Clavier*, even though many people identify it as uniquely Schubert's music. But Johann Sebastian Bach as well practised "stylistic kleptomania." Bach imitated the work of many other composers, and frequently used their musical themes and ideas in his own works. (Unlike today, such borrowing was common among composers and would not have been frowned upon.) Bach studied Palestrina's *Missa sine nomine* while writing his own *B-minor Mass*, and based a fugue (BWV 579) on Corelli's Opus 3 from 1689. The concertos and arias of Vivaldi influenced Bach's *St. John Passion*, *St. Matthew Passion*, as well as his cantatas. Several other major composers influenced him. Australian conductor Martin Jarvis believes that certain of Bach's works (among them the cello suites) were composed by his second wife, Anna Magdalena Bach. The English cellist Steven Isserlis believes this theory to be "pure rubbish." According to *Wikipedia*, Anna Magdalena was employed as a soprano and met Bach in 1721 at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen, where he had been working as *Capellmeister* since 1717. She gave birth to 13 children, not all of whom survived. The commentary for hexagram 57 appropriately says: "Wind following wind is the image of harmonious progress." Despite harmonious progress as a family of composers, "even if faithful, there is misfortune."<sup>(1)</sup> At Bach's death in 1750, Anna Magdalena was left alone to care for herself and her two youngest daughters, plus her stepdaughter from Bach's first marriage, with no financial support from family members. She became increasingly dependent upon charity and handouts from the city council, and ended up begging in public to survive. The only child or stepchild who likely provided any support to her was her stepson Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, whose letters show he provided regular financial assistance. She died on the street in 1760 with no money at all, and was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave at Leipzig's Johanniskirche. The church was destroyed by Allied bombing during World War II.



This is from the third measure of *Barcarole* by the Polish composer Alexandre Tansman (1897-1968). The French word comes from the Italian *barca*, “boat” and refers to a traditional folk song sung by Venetian gondoliers, with a rhythm reminiscent of the gondolier’s stroke of the oar. Tansman was a concert pianist and also known for his guitar pieces, mostly written for Andrés Segovia. The sixth and the third strings are plucked, corresponding to the sixth and the third broken lines of hexagram 58. Above the trigram for “lake,” below the trigram for “lake” (one of eight hexagrams formed by a double trigram). “This hexagram represents *joy* in practicing the Tao.”(1)

“Ode to Joy” (*An die Freude*) is a famous ode written in 1785 by German poet Friedrich Schiller. It is most remembered as the choral setting in the final (fourth) movement of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, celebrating (however much it may be wishful thinking) the harmonious unity of mankind. As for so many others, this sacred hymn to *joy* moves me to tears. However, the *I Ching* emphasizes that *joy* is only beneficial when it is correct. “If incorrect, it is not beneficial, and one loses one’s *joy*.” The use (or rather, misuse) of Beethoven’s *An die Freude* as the “anthem” of the European Union is incorrect *joy*. After nearly 50 years living in Europe as an immigrant from California, I can now regard myself as a European. There are two distinct realities here: Europe and the European Union. *An die Freude* is correct *joy* for the ancient, ongoing civilization of Europe, not the bureaucratic dictatorship centered in Brussels calling itself the European Union. The text for hexagram 58

warns against “induced *joy*” brought about by the haughty and self-satisfied, whose talents “are not worthy of consideration.” How well the text describes the overfed bureaucrats who lord it over us: “Delighting in outward appearances, using clever words and a commanding demeanor, not liked by others yet inducing others to like one, such people pretend to have what they have not, pretend to be fulfilled whereas they are empty; they are unwilling to think of their own errors, and also induce others to err. In the end they they cannot make others joyful, and wind up being disliked themselves. This is the *joy* of the weak who concern themselves with externals. So there are differences between real and false, right and wrong.”(1) Unfortunately, the unifying force of Bach, Beethoven and all the other European masters of harmony is not considered as a model for good government, and haughty people with no talent continue to oppress human beings all over the world. There is no sign of amelioration, but many signs of continued deterioration. Everyday events are becoming so implausible and fantastic that people, even as they revel in the incorrect *joy* of mindless distractions, seem to secretly long for the epoch-destroying calamity which will once and for all bring an end to their insanity. Correct *joy* for me was seeing the Pacific Ocean for the first time as an infant. All I knew up to that moment was land, land, land. And then... all the way out to the dreamily distant horizon, it was water, water, water. In the following years, watching the sun set over that horizon was a constant source of *joy*, a vision that I have not witnessed for many years now. As I was watching the sun set over the Pacific Ocean in southern California during my youth and adulthood, Master Ni was watching it rise over the same ocean in Taiwan. The western bulge of North America compliments the eastern bulge of Asia, California being the geographic yang of China’s yin, two parentheses between which all human folly gestates. “When the mind is pure, *joy* follows like a shadow that never leaves.” ( Buddha)

The image shows the hexagram 59, Huan (Dispersion), which consists of the upper trigram Sun (Wind) and the lower trigram Kan (Water). To the right of the hexagram is a musical staff with a treble clef. The staff contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, a quarter note on B4 with a sharp sign, and a quarter note on C5. A horizontal line is drawn above the staff, spanning the width of the notes. Below the staff, the word "questionnez" is written.

59  
HUAN  
DISPERSAL

questionnez

Here, in Erik Satie's moody *Gnossienne no. 1* (transcribed for guitar by Peter Kraus) the chord is plucked on the first, third and fourth strings corresponding to the first, third and fourth broken lines of hexagram 59. *Gnossienne* is derived from *gnosis* (Satie was involved in gnostic sects). He enigmatically instructs the player to *question*. The second time one plays this segment you are instructed to "postulate on your own" (*postulez en vous-même*), which almost sounds like the language of the *I Ching* (or Chinese fortune cookies). The trigram above is "wind." The trigram below is "water." In a mood of enigma reminiscent of Erik Satie (1866-1925), the *I Ching* instructs: "It is beneficial to cross great rivers." The text continues: "This hexagram represents yin and yang being lost in confusion, then reordered; [...] because yin and yang are disordered, one progresses harmoniously to balance them."(1) This is the essence of Satie's piece, which has no time signature nor measure bars, but is *dispersed* over one endless note system like wind over water. During his lifetime Satie was not considered a "serious" musician by certain of his contemporaries, even though Debussy was alert to his genius. He is whimsical, goofy, eclectic. Another passage in the *Gnossienne* is to be played "very brightly" (*très luisant*). This luminosity in music is its *raison d'être*. The Greek god of music, Apollo, was also known as Phoebus – Radiance. Even in bleak poverty, Satie was *très luisant*. Another passage in this piece is to be played "on the edge of an idea" (*du bout de la pensée*). Contemplating, forming and editing the present sentence of this book (over weeks, as it turns out),

deleting, revising, pondering, I too am forever “on the edge of an idea.” The order of a successful work of art is preceded by the disorder of *dispersal*. “Yin and yang do not interact, essence and sense are separated; so it is called *dispersal*.” Resolving *dispersal* means yin and yang interact in harmony. Disharmony is seeing the sky crisscrossed with chemtrails left by huge jet planes on routine geo-engineering missions. The *dispersal* of these nano-particles leaves the entire sky milky and hazy from horizon to horizon. “*Dispersal* means disorganization and disorder.”(1) Tens of millions of tons of nano-particles of aluminum, barium, lithium and other substances are annually sprayed into the upper atmosphere, resulting in the total disruption of weather patterns. “We know that the world’s most recognized geo-engineer, Dr. David Keith, has stated the goal of geo-engineering to spray ten to twenty megatons – that’s ten to twenty million tons – of aluminum, nano-particulates, the most lethal form of particulate because they are so small, into the atmosphere annually.”\* After decades of routine *dispersal* in the atmosphere, these nano-particles are being breathed in by humans and animals, afflicting us with respiratory ailments. Even the trees are unhealthy, attacked from above by the nano-particles settling on their leaves, and from below in the root systems that take up these same particles in the ground water. Tens of thousands of scientists, technicians and pilots are needed to carry out this level of global geo-engineering. Part of the academic coverup of this crime is that these are not chemtrails, but normal condensation trails, although I never witnessed such phenomena growing up in California near military air bases. This crime against humanity has been ongoing for decades. In 1962 at the University of Texas, vice-president Lyndon Johnson ranted about a weather satellite which controlled the weather, and “he who controls the weather controls the world.”

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\* Dane Wigington, November 11, 2018, *Geoengineeringwatch.org*. (see also p. 34, “the silent weapons for quiet wars.”)



endless wars dead or alive, their servility was in vain. Their blind obedience is seen as a virtue, but it is in reality “painful discipline” leading to epic death, destruction, suffering and sorrow. “When *discipline* gets to the point of inflicting suffering, it brings on danger itself even where there is no danger; you will only suffer toil and servility. [...] At the end of *discipline*, being weak and infirm is called painful discipline.”(1) To maintain the Vietnam war for more than a decade required *discipline* at all levels of the American military establishment, resulting not only in total defeat, but the deaths of 3.8 million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans. “This is a calamity in the path of *discipline*.” The trademark of the military is *discipline*. It is a haven for people who have difficulty asserting themselves as sovereign individuals. The *discipline* of the soldier makes him a part of something bigger and stronger than himself. He *becomes* his platoon, his army, his nation. A person who feels inadequate as an individual is made to feel all-powerful in the military. People flee him when he points his rifle. He is feared in his helmet and uniform. He is important. However, a soldier who knows right from wrong, a truly moral person who speaks out against the immorality of his fellow soldiers – as happened in Vietnam – is sadistically mobbed and risks his sanity and his life. Moral beings have made a choice, just as immoral beings have made a choice. As true morality decreases in a given society, freedom decreases proportionately, the people becoming more and more controlled and manipulated by those in power, becoming dumbed-down slaves conditioned by “painful discipline.” As true morality increases, freedom increases proportionately, and the people assume responsibility for their own actions as sovereign individuals emerged in “peaceful discipline.” Becoming truly moral beings is the only option society has to extricate itself from the swamp of immorality in which it wallows today. “Contented *discipline* is good: If you go on, there will be exaltation.”(1)

The image shows the hexagram 61, Chung Fu (Insight), which consists of the upper trigram Sun (Wind) and the lower trigram Kan (Lake). To the right of the hexagram is a musical notation snippet in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first two notes, A and D, are marked with a circled 4 and a circled 3 respectively, indicating they are to be played on the fourth and third strings of a guitar. The notes are followed by a triplet of three eighth notes: E, F, and G.

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) is known for his 555 sonatas for harpsichord. Above is part of a measure from *Sonata K. 78* as transcribed for guitar by Eythor Thorlaksson. The first two notes, A and D, are plucked simultaneously on the fourth and third strings, corresponding to the fourth and third broken lines of hexagram 61. Above the trigram for “wind,” below the trigram for “lake.” The ④ indicates that the A is to be played on the fourth string. Scarlatti described his cat Pulcinella as being fond of walking across the harpsichord keys, curious about its sounds. He wrote down a phrase from one of these “improvisation sessions,” which became the theme for his *Cat Fugue*, “a penetrating understanding and *insight* based upon actual experience.”(5). The two inner yin lines are emptiness, the outer yang lines solidness. Emptiness is the *insight* of meditation, tai chi and qigong. The Song dynasty poet and scholar Chu Hsi (1130-1200), who published an annotated edition of the *I Ching*, considered reality prior to the *I Ching*:

*We study the Changes after the lines have been put together.  
 Why should we not set our minds on that which was  
 before any line was drawn?  
 When we understand that Two Forms  
 have originated from the Ultimate  
 We can safely say that we can cease to study the I Ching. (3)*

The enigmatic book encourages just that: to cease studying it and embrace the Tao which was reality thousands and millions of years “before any line was drawn” and continues to be reality into



the future. “Here *insight* and influence are in their finest hour. The deeds you do, the words you speak, resonate in the hearts and minds of others near and far.”(5) Wing’s *insight* becomes *faithfulness in the center* for Cleary, and *inner truth* for Wilhelm/Baynes. However, prior to the *I Ching*, “before any line was drawn,” there were no frustration and confusion about contradictory translations, interpretations, distortions and myriad meanings. The reality that we focus on – Tao – was and is and shall forever be unambiguously self-evident. Thousands of years “before any line was drawn,” people lived in accordance with the Way. Chuang Tzu, called them the People of P’o. The People of the Uncarved Block. The Sámi people of Norway, Sweden and Finland have lived and worked in these arctic and subarctic regions for 3,500 years, tending their reindeer herds, living in accordance with the Way. However, the Swedish government felt obliged to make the Way unlawful, “*insight* brought about by guile and unreality.”(5) The Sámi were forcibly moved from their ancient homelands to other areas to be in compliance with new laws. Great suffering and generations of trauma were the result. Sámi reindeer herders had to use all their know-how to force the animals to migrate south in obedience to the new laws, when, for time immemorial, they were used to migrating to the north in spring. Although the reindeer were guarded around the clock, the older reindeer broke loose, and parts of the herds went back north in defiance of the Swedish government, and pregnant reindeer made their way to their usual calving grounds in the north, although they were breaking Swedish law. Thousands of years of ingrained migration cycles did not matter. Sámi families lost hundreds of reindeer and several annual incomes, often without more than meager relocation allowances. Reindeer found in the wrong places were shot, collective fines were issued and any disobedience (that is, following the Way) resulted in mass slaughter of animals and /or more fines. (*Dagens Nyheter*, February 19, 2020)



This is from my *Song of the Islands, Variation on a Luiseño Theme* for solo guitar. The third and fourth strings remain unplucked, corresponding to the third and fourth unbroken lines of hexagram 62. "This is very auspicious."(1) Above the trigram for "thunder," below the trigram for "mountain." The islands are the Channel Islands off the coast of southern California. Luiseño is a Spanish term derived from mission San Luis Rey in southern California with which these people were associated. The piece is to be played "with longing" for I have longed to visit these many islands my whole life. (Thus far, I have only visited Santa Catalina.) The original song was sung in the Luiseño language for Cahuilla/Serrano musician Ernest Siva by Margaret Holly. In other books I have written about the indigenous cultures of California, and how such variety and congestion of languages, in such a small geographic area, is only known in Sudan and New Guinea. Here as well dwelt the People of P'o, until... "This is called calamity."(1)

"*Predominance of the small* means that yin exceeds yang. [...] This is suitable for a small affair but not a great one." A small affair is daily life. A great affair is the evil that dominates the world and threatens us with extinction. At the present writing, there is no force which can overpower this evil. It dominates. Its victims are in the tens of millions. It routinely vandalizes the divine order of nature which has dominated the earth for millions of years. Never before has an earthly creature caused so much havoc. The small bubbles of domesticity that we have created for ourselves are the last refuge

against the evil which nothing, it would seem, can successfully oppose. Each person consciously participating in the evil “draws upon himself misfortune at the hands of gods and men, because he deviates from the order of nature.”(14)

*It has now become clear that the destruction of mankind will be brought about by its own hand – that is, it will be suicide, not the end foreordained: rather than wait for this, the species will probably dispatch itself of its own accord.\** (Nadezhda Mandelstam)

The terrors of Stalinist Russia were about the great oppressing the small. Writers like Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) and Nadezhda Mandelstam (1899-1980) established the *predominance of the small* against impossible odds. Wife of the poet Osip Mandelstam, who died in a transit camp in Siberia in 1938, Nadezhda wrote two memoirs about their lives together during the Stalinist terror: *Hope Against Hope* (1970) and *Hope Abandoned* (1974). Nadezhda means “hope” in Russian, and each title has a second meaning: “Nadezhda against hope” and “Nadezhda abandoned.” Although there was no triumph over evil, the small prevailed over the great, as happened in the Vietnam war. “Sublime and subtle indeed is the *predominance of the small* that is beneficially correct.”(1)

A mother gives birth and for the very first time looks into the eyes of her newborn whose return gaze establishes *predominance of the small* for many years to come. Within the depths of those newborn eyes dwell the unknown lineages of ancestors stretching back tens of thousands of years. Still smaller than the newborn baby are the ovum and sperm which created it, as are the microscopic cells and spores generating all animal and plant life forms for over 4 billion years. The mystery of life itself is the *predominance of the small*. “The small predominates, but the good it does is great.”(1)

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\* *Hope Abandoned*, Nadezhda Mandelstam, tr. Max Hayward, Collins & Harvill, London, 1974.



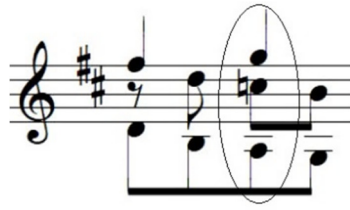
“A state of perfect equilibrium has been reached.”(5) With this serene D-major chord, Bach’s lute suite *Prelude, Fugue, Allegro* comes to an end, so appropriately in the spirit of hexagram 63: “mutual completion of yin and yang.” Above the trigram for “water,” below the trigram for “fire,” corresponding to the tai chi movements “press” and “push.” One of the concluding postures of Master Ni’s Wutang Sword Dance, which I have practiced for over two decades, is called “Water and Fire Working Together.” This is a taoist reference to these two trigrams. “When water (☵) in a kettle hangs over fire (☲), the two elements stand in relation and thus generate energy.”(14)

After decades playing this suite, I now learn that calling it a “lute suite” is incorrect. In his essay “The Myth of Bach’s Lute Suites,” lutenist and guitarist Clive Titmuss wrote: “As student guitarists, we learned that J. S. Bach wrote four suites and a number of miscellaneous pieces for the lute, now played on the guitar. [...] A more up-to-date reading of the evidence would be that Bach did not write any music specifically intended for solo lute. [...] Recent scholarship and the work of a number of makers and players of 18th century style keyboards have made it obvious that Bach wrote the music for, and probably at, the lute-harpsichord. [...] They are not technically possible on the lute without fundamental changes.” (see also hexagram 45)

People fascinated with the *I Ching* mathematically have gone into dizzying depths that leave me baffled. There are perhaps also mathematical patterns in the score of this Bach suite that could

occupy mathematicians for lifetimes. But they would then be neglecting the music. Others have looked into the oracular side of the *I Ching*, and some see it measuring a “time wave” like the Mayan calendar. They even concluded that “the final interpretation of the data” leads to an identical “end date” for the world predicted by the *I Ching* as the Mayan date for this event – December 21, 2012. Yet, *after the end*, the music of the *I Ching* was being neglected.



I often wonder why King Wen ordered the 64 hexagrams in just *this* sequence. There have been many attempts to explain this sequence over the centuries. Some basic elements are obvious: There are 32 pairs. Each hexagram is paired with an “upside-down” neighbor, except for 1, 27, 29, and 61 which are the same when turned upside down, and paired with “inverse” neighbors: . The placement of 1 (Heaven) and 2 (Earth) – pure yang and pure yin – is obvious. But the placement of 3 and the following hexagrams is not equally as obvious. Thomas Cleary does not provide an explanation, but writes: “The next sixty-two signs of the *I Ching* illustrate particular ‘paths’ or aspects of the Tao in practice.” Each yang and yin line “describes the use or misuse of firmness and flexibility according to the experiential time.”(1) Experiential time – *now* – decrees a certain use of language in tune with the times. Wilhelm/Baynes (male/female) provided the following translation (from Chinese to German to English): “Thus, the superior man takes thought of misfortune and arms himself against it in advance.”(14) Taking liberties in “the experiential time” nearly forty years later, Cleary chose to replace “man” with “people”: “Thus superior people consider problems and prevent them.”(1) Not being able to understand the original Chinese text, I cannot say if “man” is what was intended, nor whether Cleary “uses” or “misuses” the original in order to be politically correct. One translation excludes women, the other includes them. What does the *I Ching* itself say? “The beginning is auspicious, the end confused.”(1)



*Before the end* of Bach's suite *Prelude, Fugue, Allegro* comes the *Fugue*, where these notes appear. The fifth, third and first strings are plucked corresponding to the fifth, third and first broken lines of the 64th and last hexagram. Above the trigram for "fire," below the trigram for "water." "The accomplishment of the goal is in sight. It appears that long-impending matters may be brought to fruition with an acceptable amount of effort." (5) The goal is Harmony. After "an acceptable amount of effort" I have memorized this Bach suite on the guitar and play it often. It is perhaps the most technically difficult in my repertory. My fingers move over the frets and pluck the strings as if performing tai chi movements. When I stop playing, anxiety closes in on me again, and harmony is lost. But I will soon again embellish music on the guitar. "It is only after harmony is lost that people embellish music." (4) Music is a sanctuary *before the end* in the midst of our collapsing world from which harmony and wisdom are banished. The very high level of musical embellishment in our civilization reflects its high degree of deviation from the Way (Tao) – its loss of harmony. A harmonious society did not produce Bach. A highly *unharmonious* society produced him, for such a society lacks and needs harmony as medicine, and that is what the great composers have supplied in great doses. But, as the reader must know, it all has been to no avail. The harmony of the great artistic masters is displayed behind glass, as if in a museum or a bell jar, devoid of practical contact with the daily workings of the modern infernos in which we live. We are doomed to behold harmony as a distant vision on a far horizon, despite the fact that it

has always been in our midst, intrinsic to life itself. When harmony was a natural part of human societies, the embellishment of music was not needed. "Joy and anger are deviations from the Way, anxiety and lament are loss of virtue." (4) Playing Bach I experience joy. Seeing the earth routinely pillaged and plundered, I am angry. I experience anxiety over the future of humanity, and lament our degradation. *Such* is my deviation. *Such* is my loss of virtue. My accomplishment is not yet realised. "*Before the end* tells us that the successful accomplishment of whatever the writer had in his mind had not yet been realised." (10) Although Tao is as readily available to all humans as the air they breathe, it is foreign to all societies and held in suspicion. Enacting millennia of obscene outrages, their men of knowledge, politicians, military, and priests claim in unison to have found a better way than the Way. It is easy for humans to detract from life, but to enhance life in its sacred perfection is supremely difficult. Bach enhances life. Music enhances life. In it is concealed the main teaching for coexistence in human communities. So difficult is the discipline of harmony that, in thousands of years of human chronicles, it hardly appears. "Therefore it is said that to know harmony is called the constant, and to know the constant is called illumination." (4) Bach's *Art of the Fugue* is the teaching at its most sublime. The coming into existence and the going into extinction of species is like the process of one cosmic fugue. The Theme is introduced again and again in different voices at different pitches – throughout time, recognizable in the family resemblance of the embryos of all creatures. The same process which produced Bach's 20 children – bringing some to the culmination of human achievement, as with Carl Philipp Emanuel, and killing others in infancy – produced Bach's opus. The Mind of Tao. "This hexagram presents a parallel to spring, which leads out of winter's stagnation into the fruitful time of summer. With this hopeful outlook the *Book of Changes* come to its close." (14)

## AFTERTHOUGHT

It might seem evident that in such a work yin would represent silence and yang sound. However, the book was inspired by the purely visual similarities between  and an unplucked string,  and a plucked string. While contemplating this contradiction half way through the book, I became frustrated to the point of almost abandoning the whole project. Was I forcing my “string theory” to the point of contradicting the essences of yin and yang? But then I contemplated the “unbroken” wholeness of silence throughout the universe, and its yang permanence being briefly “broken” by the yin transcendence of sound, like the broken yin line. Sound is ephemeral, needs an atmosphere in which to resonate, and quickly dissipates, submissive like yin. Silence is indifferent to an atmosphere or the vacuum of space, eternal, dominant like yang. With this insight, I was able to continue work on this book with no qualms of conscience.



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