

# An I Ching Paradigm for Individuation: A Comparison Between the Third Hexagram and the Hero's Journey as Applied to the Birth of Consciousness

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## Abstract

Individuation delineates personal growth towards achieving one's full potential in Jungian psychology. A three-stage path for individuation is found in myths. This process corresponds to the teachings from the third and fourth hexagrams in I Ching. The third and fourth hexagrams in I Ching combined lay out three factors for successful personal growth: the desire to grow, perseverance, and willingness to share. An action plan can be deduced from I Ching for those aiming to assist people in their individuation processes.

**Key words:** I Ching; Consciousness; Birth of consciousness; Hero's Journey; Instructional design; Education; Individuation

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The need for an effective and measurable way of spiritual growth

We need a way to help humankind to grow spiritually fast, effectively and on a large scale. As Erich Neumann points out in *The Origins and History of Consciousness*: "Psychology... is faced with the task of evolving a collective and cultural therapy adequate to cope with the

mass phenomena that are now devastating mankind." (Neumann, 2014, p. xxiv)<sup>1</sup>. Technology is the reflection of human consciousness, approaching fast the apex of current human's knowing realm. The widespread concern that humans may be replaced by machines testifies to the dire need for higher consciousness. When the development on the outside is pushing the limit, the inner growth must catch up to avoid an imbalance, which invariably leads to disasters on a global scale.

### 1.2 Guidance for individual's spiritual growth from the west and the east

The spiritual growth of the humankind begins with the spiritual growth of each individual. Individuation in Jungian psychology describes the process of expanding one's consciousness and towards reaching a person's full potential. Denoted "Hero's Journey," a three-stage pattern for individuation is found through Joseph Campbell's lifelong research in hundreds and thousands of myths around the globe.

Campbell's Hero's Journey is linear and detailed, in set stages and steps. It is deeply embedded in human consciousness as shown in repeated manifestations in folklores and myths around the world. Interestingly, the third hexagram in the ancient book of wisdom, I Ching, also depicts a way for the birth of an individual (physically, intellectually, mentally, and spiritually). It can also be divided into three similar stages. Such seeming coincidence points to a possible pattern that can help guide humans to find an effective way to grow spiritually.

However, in contrast to Campbell's linear description of the individuation process, I Ching provides concise and precise suggestions on how to act at various stages, supplying us with clearer instructions and guidance in

<sup>1</sup> To quote from Campbell: "[I]f we could dredge up something forgotten not only by ourselves but by our whole generation or our entire civilization, we should become indeed the boon-bringer, the culture hero of the day..." (Campbell, 2008, p. 12).

individuation. Furthermore, the fourth hexagram in I Ching speaks from the perspective of mentors. So we can more easily deduce an action plan for those guiding and helping with people's individuation. Hence the topic in this paper is relevant to teachers, instruction designers, psychiatrists, and many more.

This paper first examines the steps of individuation as depicted by the Hero's Journey and the I Ching. A comparison between the two is detailed. And important implications on individuation, or the birth of consciousness, from the I Ching are discussed. Then, suggestions from I Ching, particularly the fourth hexagram, on how to assist in effective spiritual growth are ventured. Finally the implications regarding world views from I Ching are briefly outlined.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 Individuation in Jungian psychology

Individuation is the capacity for wholeness and evolved consciousness (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 197). Individuation in Jungian psychology describes the process of expanding one's consciousness and towards reaching a person's full potential. "Becoming the personality that one innately is *potentially* from the beginning of life." (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 198, emphasis from the original quote). This "potential" is buried in the unconscious of an individual. Individuation is translated as " 'coming to selfhood' or 'self-realization'...the achievement of a center of personality which ... is also defined as the self" (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 156). The self is "the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious" (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 157). So individuation in psychology refers to growth, intellectually, mentally, and spiritually. And the growth as depicted in "the mythological fate of the hero portrays the archetypal fate of...all conscious development" (Neumann, 2014, p. 150). Hence spiritual growth results from one confronting one's unconsciousness and successfully turning a portion of the unconsciousness to consciousness.

The connection between individuation and the development of consciousness as well as the collective unconscious is explored in a more structured way and in more detail in Neumann's *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. According to Neumann (2014), individuation is divided into three stages: the nurturance/matriarchal stage, the adjusting/patriarchal stage, and the integrating/individual stage (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 199).

### Hero's Journey as a pattern for Individuation

A more widespread attempt to depict the development of consciousness is Joseph Campbell's hero's journey. Digging treasures in the worldwide myths, Joseph Campbell found a common and repetitive pattern in all

myths: that the hero goes through a series of set stages in his journey—departure, initiation, and return (Campbell, 2008).

The Hero's Journey as a model for individuation has caught researchers' attention. Hinderliter (2010) explores the process of individuation through the lens of myth and attachment, and how it relates to stages of consciousness, concluding that the process of individuation is a lifelong journey that involves the integration of various aspects of the self and that myth can serve as a powerful tool for facilitating this process by providing a symbolic language for understanding and integrating these aspects of the self. Archambault (2010) advocates using the mythical hero's journey as a pattern that helps with one's inner growth. Hartman, Zimberoff (2009) explores how the first three stages of the hero's journey can be seen from the Jungian perspective as confronting one's shadows, working through the contra-sexual anima/ animus elements within, and encountering what he called the Mana-Personality.

### 2.2 Researches on I Ching

Research interests in I Ching within the western science community have grown deeper and more qualitatively in recent years. Shshchutskii (1979) went to great lengths trying to discern the correct translation and meaning of I Ching in English language. Similarly, the textual meaning is the focus in Doeringer (1980).

Later, research interests toward I Ching grew with regard to the rationales and principles buried in the six-line graphs. Nielsen (2014) expounds on one of the core cosmic views in I Ching—that things develop in cycles. Going a step further, researchers are directly applying the I Ching principles to problems in cryptography (Zhang, Chen, et al., 2018) and complexity theory (Schweitzer, 2022).

More prominently, the overlap between I Ching and Jungian psychology has received more enthusiasm. This is partly due to Jung's own appreciation for I Ching. (See e.g. Jung's foreword to Wilhelm (2003), p. xxii). Though Jung was somewhat reticent about his own use of I Ching in psychotherapy, the mysterious eastern wisdom has similarly charmed his followers. Douglas (1998) analyzes Jung's childhood and his development using Hexagram 4 of the I Ching. TenHouten and Wang (2011) draws a parallel between the eight trigrams and the eight primary emotions. Main (1999) suggests that I Ching may be the path integrating scientific, magical and spiritual thinking.

Though not directly studying I Ching, Beebe (2008) examined individuation through the lens of the Chinese Taoist principles, which share a lot in common with the I Ching. Heyong, Lan, et al. (2006) establishes a corresponding relationship between Jungian psychology and I Ching through analysis of the "heart" characters.

With growing interest in the eastern book of wisdom, more efforts in applying I Ching to various fields of research in the western science world are in due time.

Most previous research into I Ching lacks depth or specificity. Even though some researches are applying I Ching principles, few attempts have been made with regard to the sixty four hexagrams for more practical application. Even fewer are made in the field of individuation or growth of consciousness of individuals, which will lay the foundation for grander requests on how I Ching may assist raise the collective consciousness of the humankind.

This paper aims to make an initial step in exploring how I Ching, more specifically the third and fourth hexagrams, can help establish a framework for birth of consciousness, i.e. individuation. First, this paper briefly introduces the three-stage structure of individuation based on the Hero's Journey. The meanings of the third hexagram, with a focus on its similarities to the hero's journey and its implications on individuation, are then presented. In addition, the guidance for mentors or guides in a person's individuation is explored through examining the fourth hexagram. Finally, new perspectives on how the universe works from I Ching are listed, offering a peek into the immense potential of the ancient wisdom from the east.

### 3. DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 The western and eastern guidance on individuation or birth of consciousness

##### 3.1.1 The Hero's Journey

Deduced from worldwide myths and folklores and now widely adopted in Hollywood movies (see Volger, 2020), the Hero's Journey tells how an individual always goes through three stages in achieving one's full potential. First, the Departure stage is where the hero usually is faced with a problem in his or her current life that urges him or her to set out on a new journey in search for an answer. Second, in the Initiation stage the hero enters a higher realm or new world, ventures into usually a frightening inner cave, and finds the answer (usually symbolized as material wealth, new powers, or elixirs) to his or her original problem. In the third stage, the hero finally returns to his or her ordinary life, now equipped with the new knowledge, capabilities, or tools obtained in the journey, and rightfully solves the problem presented at the beginning of the story.

Though disguised in a myriad forms in folklores and myths, the Hero's Journey in essence depicts the birth of

consciousness on a micro level—one individual's one achievement in successive steps. It provides immense details for the various options and possibilities at every minute step of an individual's growth. Volger (2020) divides the three main stages into a further 12 steps (Volger, 2020, p. 220).

##### 3.1.2 The Third Hexagram: Chun

In I Ching, the third hexagram, Chun, means birth. The Chinese character of Chun symbolizes a blade of grass breaking through the mud. Given the sixty four hexagrams in I Ching cover all aspects of human life, Chun indicates all forms of birth, including the birth of consciousness. The main idea of Chun is described as:

*“Difficulty at the beginning works supreme success,  
Furthering through perseverance.  
Nothing should be undertaken.  
It furthers one to appoint helpers.”* (Wilhelm, 2014, p. 16)

So Chun, or the birth, is a time of great difficulty. Anyone undergoing the birth (of consciousness, or anything) needs persevere and “appoint helpers.” Here, by “appoint helpers,” the text guides the reader to actively “bring order out of confusion” (Wilhelm, 2014, p.17) by establishing rules, structures, or systems rather than maintaining the status quo (Wang, B. & Han, K., (2020), p. 47).

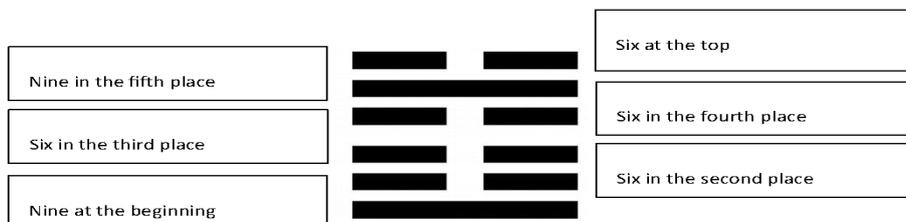
Furthermore, when we approach Chun with the three-stage structure from mythological studies in mind, surprisingly a three-stage for personal growth also emerges, with the first three lines corresponding to the first stage, the top three lines the second stage, and the sixth line the third stage.

##### 3.1.3 Structure of the hexagrams

In order to understand the Chun hexagram better, one need first have a basic knowledge of how the hexagrams are laid out in the I Ching.

I Ching, or the Book of Changes, consists of sixty-four hexagrams, along with corresponding commentaries. Each hexagram consists of six lines, the bottom line as the first, and the top line as the sixth.

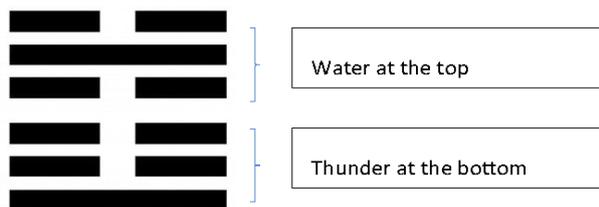
Each line is either consecutive (—) or broken (- -), standing for the yang (—) or the yin (- -) respectively. The yang line is denoted “Nine” and the yin as “Six.” For example, in I Ching, “Nine at the beginning” means the first line or the bottom line of the hexagram is of a yang/masculine nature. “Six at the top” means the sixth line of the top line is a broken line, of a yin/feminine nature.



Other than analyzing the hexagram through each line, another way of approaching the hexagrams is by dividing it into two trigrams: the three lines at the bottom as the inner trigram, or lower trigram, and the three lines on the top as the outer trigram, or the upper trigram. In fact, only eight trigrams were produced in history, each standing for a different element in nature. These trigrams consist of three lines. For example, Chi'en (乾卦 ☰) stands for heaven, the strong, and the creative. K'un (坤卦 ☷) stands for the earth, the receptive, and the devoted.

Later, in order for the I Ching to cover a wider arrange of affairs and situations in the more and more complex human life, each trigram was combined with another trigram to create a six-line hexagram, resulting in a total of sixty-four hexagrams that we now read in the I Ching.

In particular, the Chun hexagram consists of first the Chen (震卦 ☳) trigram, meaning the thunder, the arousing and the inciting movement, and second the K'an (坎卦 ☵) trigram, meaning the water, the abysmal, and the dangerous. As will be shown in the next section, each trigram corresponds to the first and second stages of the Hero's Journey, with the sixth line implicating the third stage.



### 3.2 Chun: Three Steps in birth of consciousness

Chun consists of two trigrams: Chen at the bottom and K'an at the top. Chen means thunder and first movement, while water means danger. Hence, Chen corresponds to the first stage of the Hero's journey where the hero takes the initiative and embarks on a journey. Water symbolizes the second stage where the hero reaches the heart of the forest or a cave (symbolizing danger).

#### 3.2.1 First stage: desire to grow and motivation

##### Meaning of the Chun Hexagram (the Chen trigram)

Chen, or the lower trigram of Chun, corresponds to the first stage of the Hero's Journey. Chen is "symbolized by thunder, which bursts forth from the earth and by its shock causes fear and trembling" (Wilhelm, 2003, p. 197). Hence, in the context of birth of consciousness, the Chen symbolizes motivation, move, action and corresponds to the first stage of Hero's Journey—call to the adventure and setting out for the journey.

The first line, desire to grow, symbolizes the motivation to leave one's comfort zone or current situation, prompting a person to yearn for expansion and to experience challenges while searching the opportunity

to grow. Chen is formed when the bottom line in Kun (symbolizing the land, the yin energy) turns from the broken line to the consecutive line, from yin to yang. So Chen, especially its first line, symbolizes a force breaking forth, shaking the land and emerging from underground.

The second line, yin or Six, urges one to continue on the journey, while not forgetting the initial reason why one embarks on the journey—to stay true to one's initial inspirations. In the commentaries, an analogy is given that illustrates the need for perseverance and integrity. Here, the Six in the second place is analogized to a maiden who belongs with the Nine, or the yang, in the fifth place. But because the yang in the fifth place is far and the Nine in the first place is close, it is tempting that Six at the second place would give up waiting for the true love and instead go with the other.

I Ching here gives counsel that one in a similar situation need persevere when faced with tempting wrong choices. Just as the maiden should persevere and wait to meet here true love, so the hero on a journey of individuation shall persevere despite dangers and difficulties and not fall for other seemingly easier paths. Here I Ching cautions that only with integrity can one continue on the journey of birth of consciousness.

Six in the third place warns that one shall not enter the dark forest without an experienced guide. This corresponds to the the stage in the first part of the hero's journey, when a mentor shows up and bestows gifts, talents, super powers, or other tools that aid the hero on his or her journey. Here, a similar message is conveyed that only with a mentor's help shall one dare cross the threshold to a higher realm, or the Kan trigram.

#### Implications for individuation or birth of consciousness

In the first stage of individuation as denoted by the Chun hexagram, three factors for a successful growth are listed. First, one's motivation is key. Learning is possible when and only when the learner has a strong, intrinsic desire to grow. Second, one need persist when faced with temptation to go onto a different path than the original desired growth. Third, one need a guide before delving into the depth of human unconsciousness for growth.

#### 3.2.2 Second stage: entering the unconsciousness and persisting when faced with danger

##### Meaning of the Chun Hexagram (the K'an trigram)

K'an, the top trigram in Chun, corresponds to the second stage of Hero's Journey—stepping in to a womb-like space (many times literally and more times metaphorically). This is where the hero, having passed tests and finding allies, enters the innermost cave to retrieve the elixir or reward of this journey for spiritual or intellectual growth. In myths, heroes usually enter the innermost cave, where the greatest danger lies and where the heroes usually face a threat of death, to retrieve a reward. The innermost cave symbolizes one's unconsciousness or subconsciousness.

The trigram K'an means water, danger, and the abyss. (Wilhelm, 2014, p. 1). It is represented as two yin lines with a yang line in the middle. An example as represented by K'an is a person who is righteous at heart, but faced with difficulties in all directions in his life. In the context of individuation, K'an symbolizes treasure buried in the dark unconsciousness of a person. Sitting at the top of the Chun Hexagram, K'an teaches first that individuation requires one to enter into the unconsciousness, second that retrieving the information buried in the unconsciousness is the way for becoming a whole spiritually, and third that one needs persevere and stand strong in this dangerous part of the journey.

Specifically, the three lines in the K'an trigram advise one to continue on the journey, seize the treasure, and return to where he or she comes from.

Six in the fourth place depicts a situation where one needs to act but lacks sufficient power, then an opportunity presents itself (Wilhelm, 2014, p. 19). So a hero who just enters the higher realm can have faith and move on boldly, while seeking allies and help along the way. This corresponds to the beginning of the second stage in the Hero's Journey, where the hero crosses the first threshold and meets allies and enemies (Vogler, 2008, p. 8).

Nine in the fifth place signifies first the treasure and second the innermost cave where the treasure sits. It signifies the treasure because Nine in the Fifth Place is the "emperor" position<sup>2</sup>. In the Chun hexagram, the Nine in the fifth place is the most prominent line, ruling over all other five lines like an emperor. It signifies the moment of great achievements, obtaining what one is after, and having one's wish fulfilled.

Correspondingly, the Nine in the fifth place in Chun is the equivalent of the latter part of the second stage in the Hero's Journey where the hero finally finds the treasure or elixir from a dangerous place. In the context of individuation and inner growth, this is when a person finds the information in his or her unconsciousness that can help further his or her own growth.

To draw a parallel between the Hero's Journey and the Chun hexagram, the fourth line and the fifth line in the K'an trigram symbolize the second stage in the Hero's Journey, where the hero enters a higher realm, refines his skills, and finds the treasure.

<sup>2</sup> This analysis comes from the Ch'ien Hexagram. The two most prominent hexagrams in I Ching are the Ch'ien (or the heaven, the creative, the father) and the K'un (or the earth, the receptive, the mother). In the Ch'ien hexagram, which is composed of six consecutive lines, the Nine in the fifth place symbolizes "flying dragon in the heavens" (Wilhelm, 2014, p. 9). Compared with all other lines in the Ch'ien hexagram, the Nine in the fifth place is the only one has achieved the full potential. The meanings given to each line in the Ch'ien hexagram are the backdrop against which all other sixty-two hexagrams (other than the Ch'ien and the K'un) are interpreted.

### 3.2.3 Third stage: return to ordinary life and share the knowledge

#### • Meaning of the Chun Hexagram

The third stage of the Hero's Journey is only implied in the six line of Chun Hexagram. In the commentary to Chun, Six at the top says:

*"Horse and wagon part.  
Bloody tears flow."* (Wilhelm, 2014, p. 20)

An obvious message from this line is that anyone in this situation suffers severe pain and is therefore advised to stop on the journey. But a hero must go on. What can one do? The implied solution to this situation is to change the broken line (signifying yin) at the top to the consecutive line, or the yang.

And behold. A change in a component changes the whole. Changing the top line from Six to Nine (or yin to yang) leads us to another hexagram: the I Hexagram (益卦 ䷗), numbered forty-second in I Ching and meaning increase (Wilhelm, 2014, p.162):

*"Increase. It furthers one  
To undertake something."*

#### • Implications for individuation

So, if the hero continues on his journey of individuation, the third stage in Chun requires him to imitate the yang energy, rather than the yin energy. Nine or Yang means being open, assertive, and active. This points to a righteous action once one has learned a new knowledge—to be assertive and open about that knowledge, be active in sharing and making known. Only through this way can one avoid the bad ending in the top line in Chun. And through this one is led to I Hexagram, or an increase of one's knowledge, or consciousness.

This correlates to the third stage of the hero's journey where the hero must and is called to return to the ordinary world and spread what he has achieved in his journey. Inner learning, having the elixir to oneself, is not enough, the elixir needs be spread in order for the reward to truly bring value to one's life.

So individuation is not a straight way ahead. One needs stop and change direction upon attaining the reward. One important teaching from the Chun Hexagram is that returning to the common life to share what one has learned is crucial to avoiding a tragic ending.

### 3.2.4 New Perspectives from Chun Hexagram

In conclusion, according to the Chun Hexagram, an individual's spiritual growth goes through three stages: desire to move, entering the dangerous unconsciousness to retrieve reward, and spread the knowledge. This structure corresponds to the hero's journey, with refreshing details and different perspectives of the laws of the universe. In I Ching, the factors that guarantee success on this journey include: the motive to learn, the

determination to persevere, having a mentor, proceed with courage, trust in the universe, and sharing. I Ching requires integrity, courage, inspiration, generosity, bravery, and trust in the universe. It teaches not only skills and tactics but also morality. In I Ching's world, the intellectual learning comes naturally with adherence to these virtues.

A most striking aspect of the analysis of Chun with regard to the birth of consciousness is when the analysis takes us from Chun hexagram to the I hexagram. This shows that the system of I Ching is flexible, responsive, and a whole, the components of which echo and facilitate each other.

In addition to developing to I Hexagram, a second possible development is from Chun to Meng, the fourth hexagram that follows immediately the Chun hexagram. In Meng, I Ching provides us even more assistance on individuation. The Meng hexagram (蒙卦 ) means teaching or education. The close proximity of Meng and Chun hexagrams provide teachers or anyone guiding another person's individuation with valuable guidance on how to assist such process.

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## 4. MENG HEXAGRAM: INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MENTOR

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### 4.1 Meaning of Meng Hexagram

The Meng Hexagram, the fourth in I Ching, literally means youthful folly. And commentaries after each line in Meng provide advice on how to overcome the youthful folly through education.

One important information given in Meng states:

*"It is not I who seek the young fool;  
The young fool seeks me"* (Wilhelm, 2014, pp. 20-21).

So at the outset, Meng emphasizes that in personal growth, the individual must take the initiative to start the process by seeking assistance from guides, mentors, or teachers. Individuation is possible only when the individual desires to grow. This echoes the first principle given in Chun.

### 4.2 Relationship between Chun and Meng: two sides of a coin

The Meng Hexagram is correlated with the Chun in several ways. First, it comes sequentially after the Chun. It is a linear extension of what happens naturally after Chun. Most prominently, Chun stands for the natural birth of a person, and Meng stands for the education one must receive in one's youth. So Meng expounds on the rules of education. If one travels smoothly on this road, the sixth and top line in Chun brings one to Meng, which means youthful folly and expounds upon rules for teaching or enlightening the youthful folly. It shows how when one reaches the utmost height of learning or obtaining new

information in Chun, the righteous path next is to teach and spread, consistent with the teaching in the sixth line in Chun.

Second, if we turn Chun upside down, we get Meng. So Meng and Chun essentially carry the same principles, seen from two different perspectives. Meng speaks to the teacher, while Chun speaks to the learner. They are the two sides of a coin. And examining one can greatly facilitate our understanding of the other. Now that we know how one achieves individuation through the Hero's Journey, or the path as depicted by Chun, we can know more about how to assist that process from the perspective of a teacher or a mentor by examining the teachings from Meng Hexagram.

### 4.3 Three Stages for Mentor in Meng Hexagram

#### 4.3.1 First stage: Mentor sets up rules and punishments teachings from all six line in Meng

##### • Meaning of Meng Hexagram

In the first stage, depicted by the lower trigram K'an in Meng, the mentor is to guide the individual through perils. As discussed above in —(give the number where K'an is discussed in Chun), K'an symbolizes water, unconsciousness, and danger. A mentor's guidance is essential in this part of individuation. And the key factors as given in the first three lines of Meng include: law, initial success, and teaching integrity.

The first yin line, six at the bottom, suggests that a system of punishments and rewards must be set up at the beginning of teaching. But punishments, if prolonged, can wreak havoc. "Law is the beginning of education.... However, discipline should not degenerate into drill" (Wilhelm, 2014, p.22). So at the outset of one's growth or learning, the mentor should set up a clear system of punishments and rewards. But punishments should be carried out modestly.

The second line, Nine in the second place, signifies initial success of the hero on his journey. I Ching describes this situation where the individual "who has no external power yet, but who has enough strength of mind to bear his burden of responsibility" (Wilhelm, 2014, p.22). As analogy, I Ching describes a young man mature enough to take in a wife and establish a family, but not yet powerful enough to make a bigger impact in the larger society. This corresponds to the initial tests a hero usually encounters at the early stage of his journey, where he achieves a little, sharpens his skills, and builds confidence.

The third line, Six in the third place, emphasizes integrity again. Carrying the same message as the second line in Chun, I Ching warns that one should not take a maiden who loses possession of herself upon seeing a man with fortunes. Similarly, a hero should maintain his integrity and continue on his journey even when he feels tempted to stay for rewards other than those initially sought for. Instead, he should persevere on his journey.

• **Implications for individuation**

First, at the outset of individuation, as one is starting to explore the unconsciousness, the mentor needs provide guidance on how the rules of the world of unconsciousness—give a clear list of dos and don'ts, making it clear that one is to be punished and rewarded depending on their behaviors.

Second, the mentor shall set up simplified or easier tests that help the individual try out their newly learned skills. Only when the individual succeeds at this initial test can he or she continue on the journey. This will be done under the supervision of the mentor. In other words, only by succeeding in the initial tests can one move along the journey to conquer later obstacles.

Third, the mentor is responsible for passing on intellectual knowledge as well as building the individual's character and aspirations. When the individual feels like giving up for fear or for other temptations, the mentor shall set the course straight and urge the individual on the journey.

The first stage is where the mentor is most active. Almost entirely contrary to the active role the mentor plays in the first stage, in the second stage (depicted in the fourth and fifth lines of Meng) the mentor needs make himself or herself absent.

**4.3.2 Second and third stages: Mentor is reactive**

The fourth and fifth lines in Meng depict the second stage of the Hero's Journey. It is notable that, in this stage, Meng depicts only the status of the hero, implying that the mentor plays only a minimal role in this part. Absence, rather than presence, of the mentor is essential to individuation.

• **Meaning of Meng Hexagram**

The fourth line, Six in the fourth place, says “entangled folly brings humiliation” (Wilhelm, 2014, p.23). In this stage, the individual is entangled in his folly or unconsciousness, desperate trying to find the way out. In this scenario, the mentor is suggested to “leave the fool to himself for a time” as the “only means of rescue” (Wilhelm, 2014, p.23). This is when the hero goes through trials and errors in perfecting the skills learned in the first stage. The suggestion that the mentor leave the fool alone reinforces the idea that the hero shall take initiative on this journey, and that the greatest possible autonomy should be given to the hero. This is when the mentor ceases to be, as in Harry Potter when Dumbledore dies. Compared to the initial test in the first stage, this period is when the hero faces a greater challenge still, his integrity, perseverance,

and skills being tested against the real world without the protection and help from the mentor. On the way to the bigger challenge, students take the lead and mentors play a minimal role in this part. This is where students show courage or fear, integrity or lack of faith.

Having gone through the darkest nights of the journey, one comes to the fifth line, Six in the fifth place, which signifies a time when the hero achieves success. Fifth line is where the learner reaps fruits of his or her learning. Similarly, here the mentor is barely visible.

• **Implications for individuation**

In giving instructions to individuation, a mentor needs remain absent or at least seemingly invisible in this stage. The continuing need of a mentor signifies that the hero is still in the first stage, unable to embark on the journey all on his own.

In other words, upon acquiring the necessary skills in exploring the unconsciousness, the hero is to be left alone and continue the journey, testing out his skills and persevering. The absence of the mentor is essential in establishing the hero's independence and further crafting their skills.

**4.3.3 Third stage**

• **Meaning of Meng Hexagram**

The sixth line in Meng, Nine at the top, says:

*“In punishing folly...  
The only thing that furthers  
Is to prevent transgressions.”*

This marks a situation when punishments are necessary from the mentor in an effort to establish order and guard “against unjustified excesses” (Wilhelm, 2014, p.23). In conclusion, the role of the mentor in the second and third stages is a passive and reactive one. Action is prescribed in limited circumstances—when the individual continues in a wrongful course, which could bring chaos or wreak havoc.

• **Implications for individuation**

The top trigram of Meng is Ken, or the mountain, resting, and keeping still. One central piece of information from Ken is that of humility (Wilhelm, 2014, p./). In the sixth line mentor teaches humility and generosity—how one should make use of the knowledge obtained, in a righteous way that is beneficial to the world. When this is violated, an action from the mentor is called forth. Otherwise, the mentor shall remain still, leaving the ground for the hero to explore freely.

Stages	Chun	Meng	Hero's Journey <sup>3</sup>
First stage	Motivation to grow/learn Continue on the journey	Presence Teach only when asked Establish a reward and punishment system Oversee initial success	Call to adventure Meeting the mentor Crossing the threshold
Second stage	Entering the dangerous unconsciousness to retrieve the reward Perseverance	Absence	Initial tests Entering the cave Retrieving the elixir
Third stage	Return to the original problem with the reward Share and teach	Limited presence exert penalty in case of transgressions	Return with elixir Resurrection

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the picture at Vogler (2020) at p. 220.

From Meng, we see that the most active part for mentors is the second and sixth line. Learning is student centered and can only be student centered. While the role of mentor is essential, the absence of the mentor is as crucial as mentor's presence.

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## 5. CONCLUSION

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### 5.1 Three factors of individuation from Chun

Chun hexagram teaches that successful individuation depends on three factors: desire to grow, perseverance, and willingness to share. Efforts to teach those not intrinsically motivated to learn will be in vain. Education systems that force knowledge onto others will go into waste.

Morality or virtues are another valuable insight from Chun. From the analysis, integrity, staying true to one's initial aspirations, perseverance in face of dangers, and generosity are essential qualities for successful learning. I Ching asserts that morality along with skills or intellectual knowledge is an essential part of learning growing and teaching. This shall put an end to the age old debate between whether an educator should cultivate a student's morality or knowledge. The answer is both. Without integrity and honesty and humility, true learning does not happen. The student fails in middle way without such valuable qualities.

### 5.2 Action plan for the mentor from Meng

Meng outlines three stages for a mentor. Using instructional design as an example, Meng teaches that the first stage should be teacher-centered, where the teacher teaches, demonstrates, and establishes rules. The second and third stage should be student-centered, the teacher being absent in the second and present only to exert penalties in the third.

From Meng emerges a common theme ---- that the positive and the negative are equally necessary in one's growth. In the first stage, teachers need set up an award and punishment system. The positive feedback and negative feedback from the mentor are both essential to the students' learning. Similarly, the presence and absence of the mentor need be effected in the process. Finally, Meng is also the third stage from Chun. A student must learn to distribute and teach in this stage in order to fully grasp the new knowledge. So for a student, to receive (in Chun) and to give (in Meng) are the beginning and the ending of one's individuation.

### 5.3 Worldviews from I Ching

Besides shedding new light on individuation through the direct teachings in the third and fourth hexagrams, I Ching brings new world views from the ancient east. For example, I Ching exudes a confidence and relaxed world view. The ordeal that is the focus of discussion in both Campbell's Journey and Neumann is not very much mentioned in I Ching. The first correspondence

lies in the meaning of the top trigram—ken, or water, means danger. Additionally, The fourth line in Chun gives only brief suggestion for action—as is the case in all hexagrams—proceeding on the journey and one will succeed. A third brief mention of this ordeal appears in the third line, which advises one not to enter the dark forest without a guide. The metaphor of this journey for spiritual growth to a dark forest echoes the dark cave, land of death as depicted western analysis. But compare the two we find I Ching offers a very relaxed perspective towards this ordeal, nonchalant almost. This reflects a deep trust in the universe or in how things play out in one's spiritual growth, that one need only a heart to find, a guide along the way, and the courage to proceed. Success is guaranteed, provided you move under the guidance offered in I Ching, which shows us the way how the universe works. This brings out the loving aspect of the womb or the cave, from which new births of consciousness proceed. Here we see a drastic difference between the eastern and western assumptions towards existence and how the universe works.

Another important implication in I Ching's world view is that to receive requires giving---to share or give is to receive. Through the analysis of the third and fourth hexagrams, it is shown that the inner learning is one and the same as outer teaching. To teach is really to learn. To grow is to help others grow. The culmination of one's inner growth is the outer growth, growth in all those around him. Learning by the hero and the hero only is incomplete and out of balance in I Ching's view.

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