

BRECHT AND THE
CLASSICAL CHINESE CONCEPT OF
CHANGE

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years, men and women of literary accomplishment, of science and of the various philosophies have marvelled at and respected the classical philosophical essays of the ancient Chinese dynasties. In thought and theory, they are comparable to the interpretive essays of Aristotle¹, but as regards subject matter, they are indeed comparable to nothing else written by the hand of man.

These astute and perceptive observations made by such men as Lao Tzu, Duke Chou and his father King Wen, Confucius and his followers have transcended the passage of time and eluded any one precise interpretation. These ancient works remain a mystery as to complete meaning or any definitive interpretation.

The works to be discussed in this paper are perhaps the most profound and provocative products of these ancient Chinese scholars: the I Ching or the Book of Change (YEE JEENG) and the Tao-Te-Ching, the Bible of the Taoist religion. It will be necessary to discuss these works in some detail as the point which I seek to make lies within the pages of these two books as well as in the mind of the late Bertolt Brecht, one of Germany's finest literary minds.

While serving with the United States Army Security Agency in south-east Asia, I had the rare opportunity to delve into the mysteries behind the I Ching on a personal, practical and concrete level. I was able to participate in many profound discussions led usually by Buddhist or Taoist Adepts. The point being that although I had read the I Ching prior to

my tour of duty in Thailand, my Western environment had not afforded me the opportunity to study under ideal conditions. The differences between reading, studying and understanding the I Ching on a most basic level are differences hard for the Western thinker to grasp. One could easily spend an entire lifetime endeavoring to decipher the cryptic messages of the I Ching, but unless a firm background of Chinese logic, history, philosophy and mysticism is included, the possibility of determining any conclusive personal interpretation is reduced considerably.

The question may well arise, why seek to compare the works of Bertolt Brecht with the classical Chinese concept of change? He is certainly not the only author to exhibit the characteristics of change, nor is he likely to be the last. He is however, one of the very few authors of non-Chinese origin to display so many of the ancient concepts of change coupled with Taoist belief and basic Taoist Principles. His works are replete with examples. His very concept of epic theatre, in short his entire writing philosophy displays so many applications of the ancient Taoist beliefs as to go far beyond mere coincidence. It is evident that he was familiar with the works of Lao Tzu and that he possessed relatively deep understanding of the Taoist philosophy.

Bertolt Brecht was a man of change. His style of writing, the epic concepts attempting to show us the beauty of reality, his simplicity of speech and form are all general examples of his probable preoccupation with this subject. I will in no way attempt to prove him a Taoist, or even to describe him as being partially obsessed with Taoist doctrine, but I will show how his very being was affected by the profound but simple truths of the I Ching and the Tao-Te-Ching and how he used the Taoist philosophy to illustrate his ever-changing views concerning the presentation of reality through drama to the people.

Reality for Brecht was a phenomenon to be probed, examined and

studied. Brecht went beneath the exterior and viewed life from an overall detached viewpoint. Through his drama, he encouraged us to do the same. His contention was to grasp life, turn it around, inside out and upside down and examine every possibility in order to uncover the basic truths or axioms which help us to understand the beauty of reality. To enjoy the beauty of reality is one basic principle of Taoism. The simplicity of this statement is misleading, for example: how can one enjoy the beauty of a tree if he cannot go beneath the surface to examine the xylem and phloem tubes carrying food and water to the upper parts of the tree or if he cannot answer such questions as; why is the trunk brown, why are the leaves green in summer, multi-colored in autumn and missing altogether in winter? What does the tree ingest? What does it contribute to the life cycle of others? To be able to answer these and other questions about every single phase of life is to enjoy the beauty of reality. This is a formidable undertaking to be sure, but nonetheless a very worthy one.

It is my opinion that Bertolt Brecht experimented with the basic idea of reality appreciation. He incorporated this idea into his drama by experimenting with constant change. He attempted to show that the virtues of tolerance and objectivity, expanded through the use of constant change, could afford deeper insight into the diverse aspects of reality. Man would then be free to form his own conclusions unobscured by pre-conditioned behavioral reactions. He attempted, as did the Taoists, to bring truth to the concrete level of understanding. He wished to strip it of its ambiguous and often meaningless abstractions and present it in a simple and unadorned manner. That his audience failed to grasp this attempt through his epic theatre was no more his fault than it was the fault of his audience. Brecht lost his battle because he lacked the self-moderation

necessary to convey such an understanding. Whereas constant change is admirable, it must be done with moderation lest one change himself and better his work faster than does the society in which he must live and work. This was Brecht's failure. His idea of epic theatre was genius; his downfall was a lack of self-moderation.

Bertolt Brecht was a man whose personal ideas concerning reality and change to achieve truth paralleled the ideas of Lao Tzu and many other advocates of truth through change. Whether Brecht's works were a conscious, semi-conscious or unconscious application of the Taoist idea of truth, presentation through constant change is important only in that change in drama was effected and through this change came yet another way of causing change in thought patterns and behavioral reactions in the mind of man. By changing the didactic elements in man's limited theatre environment, Brecht hoped also to change the larger didactic elements in man's larger work-a-day world environment.

Chapter II

THE TAO-TE-CHING

The Tao-Te-Ching, a work of immense antiquity, is the Bible of the Taoist religion, a religion developed from a Chinese mystic philosophy and Buddhist religion. This Chinese mystic philosophy emanates from the pages of the Tao-Te-Ching and teaches generally the virtues to be derived from a life of simple means and intense contemplative observation.

In approaching a definitive explanation of the Tao-Te-Ching, it will be necessary to examine some basic questions and analyze their various parts. Questions concerning the nature of the Tao-Te-Ching, by whom it was written, the time and place of its origin, its didactic elements, how it came to be written and the nature of the Taoist religion emanating from this book are all integral to understanding not only the basic ideas within the book itself, but also the possible applications of these ideas to the works of Bertolt Brecht, his ideas of epic theatre and the utilization of constant change to bring about the desired behavioral changes.

Contrary to widespread belief, the Tao-Te-Ching is one book and not a series of essays. The Tao-Te-Ching is a book of 81 poems containing the philosophy of the Taoist religion. Each poem can function as a separate entity and may or may not be integral to the development of basic thought as regards formulation of the Taoist philosophy. The book is considered to be the Bible of the Taoist Adepts and functions, unlike the I Ching, as a guide to exact and specific references for tracing the formulation of basic Taoist axioms.

Tao-Te-Ching, literally translated, means the Book of the Way and Its Virtue. Because it is considered by many thousands of Taoist followers throughout the world to be the doctrine governing man's behavior, it is

generally referred to in English translation as The Way of Life. Unfortunately, the author or indeed authors of the Tao-Te-Ching remain unknown. It is known that the book existed long before Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and that Confucius and his followers very probably added commentaries to each poem or chapter of the book. Because history demands that such a profound work must have an author, an author was provided. Lao Tzu or Lao Tan was chosen. The Tao-Te-Ching, the first compilation of Taoist philosophy, has been attributed to Lao Tzu based entirely on the accounts of ancient Chinese legend. It is however, impossible to prove that Lao Tzu is the author of the Tao-Te-Ching. We will examine first the legendary source of his existence and the source of Lao Tzu's alleged authorship and then the actual legend itself, which deals with the speculative source of the Tao-Te-Ching itself. We must however, constantly keep in mind that historical accounts from this time period are sketchy and ambiguous at best and that it is indeed quite difficult to prove that the person Lao Tzu ever existed.

There is only one semi-reliable account concerning the writing of the Tao-Te-Ching. By sheer coincidence, this account also contains a partial and somewhat scattered biography of Lao Tzu. Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the author of this account, wrote the first history of China in 100 B.C. According to Max Kaltenmark ², Ssu-ma Ch'ien freely admitted that the information he had collected concerning the history of Lao Tzu was merely a hodge-podge of opinions and that no one, including himself, could be completely sure what they indicated. According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Lao Tzu was a man from the village of Chü Jen, in the district of Lai, county of Hu in the kingdom of Ch'u (Chou). Ssu-ma Ch'ien claimed to have recorded opinions that Lao Tzu lived to be more than 200 years old. Lao Tzu practiced the Way and Its Virtue according to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, but as has now become rel-

atively apparent, very little of a concrete nature is known about Lao Tzu. He is somewhat of a legendary figure and the few quasi-historical accounts from Ssu-ma Ch'ien which mention him or his teachings read more like a chapter from a mythology text than from a reliable historical account.

Lao Tzu formulated and wrote down his work in anonymity and the reasons he supposedly gave for this have since become the one and only acceptable summation of all Taoist thought: he believed that one should learn as much as possible about life, mostly through quiet but intense observation. After this learning process had begun, one should then study and practice the virtue of silence thereby enabling one to develop a peaceful and humble spirit. The meaning extrapolated from this belief is simply that one who studies the Way and Its Virtue must not betray his inner peace and spiritual progress by attempting to explain the method of study and progress. In short then, he who knows of the Way and speaks of it, knows nothing, but he who knows of the Way and remains silent to contemplate its direction will experience a revelation of spirit and be able then to progress along the Way to T'ai Chi, to be discussed in greater detail in the chapter on the I Ching. This belief was related to the beliefs and practices of the Shaolin priests of later dynasties. They had incorporated a great deal of Taoist philosophy into their own Shaolin religion and generally considered Lao Tzu's doctrine of silence to be the one essential prerequisite to becoming a Shaolin priest. The star character of the television series, Kung Fu, is an idealized example of Taoist philosophy as regards the practice of contemplative silence in dealing with the solving of life's problematical encounters.

Lao Tzu had explained to his students that by discussing or explaining to others the method of study and progress used to proceed along the Way, the risk of destroying one's chances for spiritual revelation was

greatly increased. Keeping this in mind, let us now examine the legend which explains how the Tao-Te-Ching came into being. This account also comes from the historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien. As I have mentioned, Lao Tzu lived for quite some time in the kingdom of Chou. For reasons left unexplained by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Lao Tzu believed the political and social substructures within the kingdom were deteriorating and breaking up. Feeling then that he could no longer find the simple, peaceful and contented life in which he believed so passionately, he felt obliged to leave the kingdom and search elsewhere for the tranquility of spirit. An official by the name of Yin Hsi was on duty at the frontier and as was customary, asked Lao Tzu his reason for wishing to leave the kingdom. Lao Tzu explained that he intended to retire to a less troubled area. Upon learning his name, Yin Hsi asked Lao Tzu to write a book so that his wisdom and insight would not become lost in the passage of time. Supposedly then, Lao Tzu agreed and wrote a book in two parts or in five thousand words. According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, this book was the Tao-Te-Ching.

I consider this theory, relating Lao Tzu's alleged authorship of the Tao-Te-Ching, to be not only highly debatable but even demonstrably incorrect. Lao Tzu had made it quite clear that by discussing the individual method of placing one's spirit upon the Way or Tao as it is called, would only serve to hinder, delay and possibly destroy one's chance for spiritual revelation or insight into the nature of mystic phenomenon. It seems then, quite unacceptable that he would recant and compromise his beliefs collected in a lifetime of observation and contemplative meditation merely to appease the whims of a border guard. This is unfortunately the only such account or legend available and no matter how contradictory the story may be to Taoist philosophy, we must be content for the present to accept those resources available, despite their controversial nature.

Having established quasi-historical precedent as to the alleged authorship of the Tao-Te-Ching and having furnished some accounts of Lao Tzu's life and philosophy, let us now proceed to answer the most important questions usually raised by a beginning student. What is the Tao-Te-Ching, what does it teach and what are its axioms? If we accept Lao Tzu as an historically accurate character, then we must consider the Tao-Te-Ching to be the philosophy and religion of Lao Tzu. If we do not accept Lao Tzu as having at one time been an actual living person, and many people do not, we should then at least consider the Tao-Te-Ching to be an example of profound ancient Chinese philosophy teaching man to develop the spiritual virtues of a peaceful and simple life.

Basically then, the Tao-Te-Ching teaches us to live simple, finding contentment with a minimum of physical or material comfort, but above all, it endeavors to teach us that to value culture is an almost sacred task. Of all the basic beliefs of the Taoist philosophy, the one teaching us to prize culture over all else was the one main point the Taoist and Buddhist Adepts, who served as my teachers in Thailand, tried fervently to make me understand. Whereas we members of the Western cultures do regard culture as a very important step toward international understanding, we do this for the most part in an intellectually serious fashion as opposed to the combined efforts of intellect and spirit advocated by the Eastern students of cultural appreciation. I believe this is because the Western cultures have for the most part not understood the composite diversity of their own minds. We tend to reject, or at best to rationalize those events or happenings which do not lend themselves as of yet to scientific empirical analysis. The Eastern cultures on the other hand, reject subjective thinking, because to be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use a detached overall viewpoint in looking at prob-

loms. For all objective things are interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but, instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are, some people only look at things subjectively and know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so they cannot help but become alienated from overall, that is to say, international cultural understanding. We restrict ourselves with semi-conscious subjective thinking, whereas the Eastern students of cultural appreciation prefer to remain wholly open to any and all ideas, especially those conducive to the formation of a synthesis of understanding between intellect and spirit.

The Taoists worship the "Tao" or the Way, as it is most often translated, in a series of holy scriptures divided into three main sections called a "tung", which roughly translated suffices to mean the ability to communicate or see through the mysteries. Each "tung" of the "Tao" is said to have been revealed by one of the three divinities that head the vast Taoist pantheon. The "Tung" were then used in conjunction with the main beliefs of Taoism to help set the student on the way to T'ai Chi. These main beliefs and practices were for the most part alchemy, potions, charms and talismans in conjunction with the Taoist idea of breath control and peaceful life.

Perhaps the one most important belief of all serious students of Taoism will best help to clarify the extremely complex philosophy behind this most interesting school of thought. This one highly important belief is called "nei tan". The Taoist Adepts of "nei Tan" (Internal Alchemy) believed that man controls and shapes his destiny, not heaven. This will be an interesting point when dealing later with Bertolt Brecht and any possible parallel ideas. Although the explanation of the principle of "nei tan" should ideally cover at least one lengthy volume, I must for

reasons of expediency confine my explanation to considerably less space. To correctly apply the principle of "nei tan", a student must practice many times a day for many years and even then, unless sincerely pure in his or her intentions, may not be able to use it to its fullest degree of potency.

"Nei tan" is a Taoist belief through which man can achieve spiritual immortality, by transforming the human organism believed by the ancient Taoists to be an exact replica of the Cosmos. This was done with the use of internal alchemy and several basic metals. In the writings of Chang Po-Tuan (983-1082 A.D.), we find mention of the "interior elixir" (nei tan). In 1078 A.D., he completed his Essay on Awakening to the Truth⁴. In this extremely ambiguous essay, he outlines the use of "nei tan". The "interior elixir" is not to be prepared in a clay furnace with fire and bellows as is the case with traditional alchemy. It is to be done inside the alchemist's body. The ingredients should be true lead (the essence of Yang) and true mercury (the essence of Yin). Yin and Yang will be discussed in greater detail at a more appropriate developmental point in the chapter. By ingesting these two elements, the alchemist marries these two essences (Yin and Yang) in his stomach and gives birth to an embryo which grows and makes the alchemist immune to "tiger and rhinoceros, fire and sword."

The above was Chang Po-Tuan's explanation of "nei tan". To lend clarity to this exasperating explanation, let us extrapolate meaning. Evidently the embryo is the embryo of a new self, which is actually one's original or pure self. In my opinion, this new self is not physically immortal as the "tiger and rhinoceros, fire and sword" segment would seem to imply. Rather, it is immortal because it is enlightened, because no distinction is now made between subject and object, between the individual and T'ai Chi (the One, the Universal). It is then a non-physical approach to immortality, a synthesis of cosmic self and T'ai Chi. The

crux of this idea and indeed the most profound lesson to be learned from the Tao-Te-Ching is that along with "nei tan" goes the complete removal from the conscious mind of absolutely everything foreign to pure self. All that this means is that one must expel the social self in favor of a cosmic self to establish an awareness of the universe as opposed to a series of lesser states or planes of awareness.

Because the Tao-Te-Ching, coupled with the teachings of Lao Tzu and Confucius as well as many other highly significant philosophical works all originated, at the beginning of and during the Chou Dynasty, it is important to include a very brief history of this most fruitful dynasty. This will help to re-orient ourselves timewise and serve as a preface to the ensuing explanations of the Yin-Yang Interaction Theory, which subsequently will lend insight into the nature and understanding of "nei tan".

More than one thousand years before the birth of Christ, a people known as the Shang or Yin lived along the Yellow River in north central China. Although very little is known of their origin or history, they left a good deal of evidence indicating both sophisticated technical skill and amazing ingenuity in the creation of written language, which is the direct ancestor of modern Chinese characters. They were conquered around 1100 B.C. by a neighboring people known as the Chou, for whom the Chou Dynasty, the longest in Chinese history, is named. The Chou are best remembered for their development of an extensive written literature and for the original thoughts or philosophies of the highest degrees of competence such as Confucius and the writer or writers of the poems or chapters in the Tao-Te-Ching. This dynasty provided intellectual effort which furnished the Chinese people with provocative material for two and one half thousand years. It is believed that the later intellectual leaders of the Chou Dynasty based many of their thoughts concerning change in the

universe on the writings of the Yin-Yang experts who wrote possibly around the third century B.C. Although all of their written works have perished, the Yin-Yang experts are credited with formulating the earliest forms of cosmological thinking.

These early thinkers were the first to formulate the Yin-Yang Interaction Theory, for which we assume they are named. This is the only binding theory which links the Tao-Te-Ching to the I Ching in terms of change analysis. Very briefly then, Yin is the constellation of such qualities as shade since the literal translation of the concept behind this term means, "on the north side of a hill." It denotes darkness, coldness, negativeness, weakness, femaleness, etc. The word "femaleness" in relation to the other terms is usually misleading to the Western thinker. There are two good reasons why this must not be construed as a chauvinist definition: first, we must remember that we are dealing with a highly objective and intensely profound philosophy which transcends prejudice in any form. Secondly, the text of the Tao-Te-Ching indicated if anything that the opposite meaning is intended. Poem 28 indicates a preference for Yin over Yang. The wise man is generally described as having characteristics normally associated with women. The Holy Way itself (Tao) is described as a mother in poem 59. Even the ideal realm (T'ai Chi) is described as female in poem 61, possibly bringing to light memories of a long dead matriarchy. Such analytic interruptions as the one above are necessary if we do not wish to be led astray at this stage of my attempted explanation of Taoism. In returning, let us now define Yang. Yang, the opposite of Yin, denotes light, heat, strength, positiveness, maleness, etc. The Yin-Yang experts regarded the interaction of these principles as the explanation for all change in the universe; even politics is not exempt.

The Yin-Yang experts, as well as the Adepts of the I Ching, believed that at first, the Yin and the Yang were joined together within the Tao, forming an undifferentiated breath called the Primordial Breath. When the Yin and Yang separated, they formed Heaven and Earth and the mixture of the two gave birth to man and all creatures as well. This means then, that we are all, man and animal, made up of Yin and Yang and their constant interaction, possibly meaning to imply the primary interaction of conscious and subconscious, causes all change within our beings.

The Taoists then, only wanted to make themselves aware socially and psychologically of themselves. They desired and achieved the ability to look inwards and change that which was harmful to objectivity and non-intervention. Every technique conceivably was used to accomplish this task. Each method was changed and changed many times, as well as were the facets of each method changed in order to set the soul upon the path of the Tao. To aid in understanding the structure and poetic nature of the Tao-Te-Ching, I am introducing two poems from this great book.

Poem 33

It is wisdom to know others;
It is enlightenment to know one's self.

The conqueror of man is powerful;
The master of himself is strong.

It is wealth to be content;
It is willful to force one's way on others.

Endurance is to keep one's place;
Long life it is to die and perish.

Poem 33 is not, as it appears to be, random samplings of popular wisdom. It reflects rather, the author's praise of self-knowledge, quietude and acceptance of one's place in the scheme of nature. The Way gives life and the Way gives death, to this no one can object. If we know ourselves, we have learned contentment. We know our place in nature and strive to

keep it. We accept death as we accept life and, accordingly, do not perish; for we belong to the eternal scheme of things. Of perceptive creatures, it is only man who needs to learn this wisdom.

Poem 34

O the great Way o'erflows
And spreads on every side!
All being comes from it;
No creature is denied.
But having called them forth,
It calls not one its own.
It feeds and clothes them all
And will not be their lord.

Without desire always,
It seems of slight import.
Yet, nonetheless, in this
Its greatness still appears:
When they return to it,
No creature meets a lord.

The Wise Man, therefore, while he is alive,
Will never make a show of being great:
And that is how his greatness is achieved.

Poem 34 relates the characteristics of the Way. While it is everywhere, in everything, giving life to all, it is never coercive or possessive. The Way is without desire, and yet, this is the measure of its greatness. It is also the measure of greatness of the Wise Man, who conforms to it.

Although this is a brief explanation of Taoism and the Tao-Te-Ching, I believe we have covered enough to prepare us for a look at the I Ching and finally to consider the possible applications of this idea of change to the works and ideas of Bertolt Brecht.

Chapter III

THE I CHING

The I Ching, very possibly the oldest extant book in the world, is considered to be principally a book of divination. It is thought to be a product of the Chou Dynasty and was probably completed before the year 1200 B.C. In attempting to date this book with any degree of accuracy, we encounter one insurmountable obstacle. For reasons not entirely clear, most of the ancient literature of China was burned by order of the sovereign and his premier Li Sze around 213 B.C. . An exception was made of those books which treated medicine, divination and husbandry. The I Ching was considered to be a book of divination and so was preserved. As was the case with the Tao-Te-Ching, authorship has been attributed but not confirmed. It is interesting to note that the I Ching has a secondary value, outside its divinatory properties. It contains, by reason of its commentaries and actual texts, perceptive insight into the essence of change and its myriad effects. For this reason and not so much because of its divinatory properties, the I Ching will be examined and analyzed in an attempt to show analogies between its concept of change and that concept entertained by Bertolt Brecht.

As was the case with the Tao-Te-Ching, it will be necessary to go into some detail if any concrete and valid understanding of the I Ching is to be expected. Unlike the Tao-Te-Ching, the I Ching is not a book of spiritual or virtue-filled axioms used to develop a harmonious lifestyle. Nor is it a traditional philosophy or even a sophisticated arrangement of ideally logical behavioral reactions, as was the case with the Tao-Te-Ching. The I Ching is principally a complex method of flawless divination. It is a living work, a living testimonial to the yet to be rediscovered mag-

nitude and capabilities of the human mind.

A work of several volumes at the least would be needed to do justice to this sophisticated compilation of astute and perceptive observations dealing with the nature of change within the cosmos and its probable effect upon the will and mind of man. I am personally fascinated with the teachings of this book and have studied it assiduously for years. Despite the disadvantages to a brief analysis of this book, I find it difficult to do otherwise. However, we are not so much concerned with the mechanics of the I Ching as we are with its concept of change and that, we can effectively separate from the whole. We shall, at any rate, examine Brecht's possible allusions to the teachings within this book.

Let us begin this analysis with the unfortunately ambiguous, quasi-historical accounts as to when, where and by whom this profound book came into being. As we will recall from the preceding chapter, the Chou Dynasty, the longest in Chinese history, came into being when the Shang or Yin peoples along the Yellow River in north central China were conquered around 1100 B.C. The conquerors of these ancient but sophisticated peoples were known as the Chou, hence the name for the dynasty. This one dynasty, more than any other in Chinese history, furnished the peoples of ancient China with intellectual thought-provoking material for over 2500 years. The point being, that the Chou Dynasty produced not only the Tao-Te-Ching, the Bible of the Taoist religion, but the I Ching as well. The basic text is attributed to King Wen and his son Duke Chou in or very near 1150 B.C. The commentaries to the text are attributed to Confucius and his followers and therefore must have been added at a much later date. The commentary, having been refined through the passage of time, now forms an integral part of the whole and without it, a concrete interpretation of the hexagrams would be highly unlikely. We must, as was the case in

dealing with the Tao-Te-Ching, constantly keep in mind that the span of time separating us from the author or authors of the I Ching is so great as to make any of the aforementioned quasi-historical accounts impossible to prove. We do know that the philosopher Confucius, as he mentioned from time to time in his famous Analects, considered the I Ching to be an ancient work and that was well over 2500 years ago. By virtue of ancient Chinese calendar discrepancies, it is safe to assume that some parts of the book are at the very least 3000 years old, thereby making it one of the oldest extant books in the world.

Very basically, the I Ching shows how everything that happens in the universe is governed by an immutable law of change; and that change itself is made up of exactly 64 constituent processes each subdivided into six stages and all interacting upon one another. It is a way, if used correctly, by which the mind of man and therefore man himself, can be brought back into harmony with life's rhythmic processes and the undertaking of these processes. The I Ching then, when used properly, interprets the various interlocking cycles of change. The Book of Change, as it is most often referred to in English translation, is more concerned with methods, as was the Tao-Te-Ching for the most part, of attaining inner satisfaction and peaceful harmony with our physical and mental surroundings than with helping us along the way to material success. It was pointed out to me most stringently by the same Thai Adepts of Taoist thought mentioned in the preceding chapter, that the concept of the preceding sentence was especially true if that material success was likely to cause hardship for others or adversely effect their character or peace of mind. The Adepts further pointed out that although many Christian faiths believe generally that certain thoughts and words are in themselves evil, the authors of the I Ching held that they are less the product of evil than of ignorance. As a concrete example on my behalf, I was told

that any man or woman gifted with great insight is not tempted to harm others or himself; an astute observation I shall never forget.

In addition to its philosophical attributes, the I Ching's primary function and in my estimation, the most profound function of all, is divination. The Book of Change enables any reasonably unselfish person who is willing and capable of fulfilling a few simple conditions both to foresee and to control the course of future events. By "reasonably unselfish", I mean an individual who has successfully established a state of cosmic or collective awareness and has therefore placed himself above the need for acquiring physical or material wealth. The I Ching is not a Chinese Oui-Ja board. It will not tell you what stocks to buy, but it will, by helping you to understand the interlocking cycles of change, help you to restructure your life by giving you insight into your place or destiny if you will, in the overall scheme of things. This is not an overnight process, nor is it a simple process. You must be willing to train your mind in the development of patience, diligence, tolerance and objectivity if you hope to make any progress at all toward understanding the nature of change during the course of your physical life.

Referring to the Book of Change as a book enabling one to foresee and control the course of future events usually results in the partial or total closing of the Western mind, as regards objectivity, on this point or it is reluctantly accepted as the culmination of a subjective chain of reasoning. I have no means, nor do the Adepts who consult the Book of Change have any means of convincing the skeptics unless by asking them to test the accuracy of the I Ching in all sincerity, which their very disbelief will make it virtually impossible for them to do. Correct interpretation of the Book of Change requires a particular state of mind, in which respect, based on belief, is a vital factor. Students of Zen poss-

ess a special advantage because of their deep understanding of this state of mind. The fact remains that a really skilled interpreter who consults the Book of Change correctly, will find the answers given are never wrong. Unfortunately, the answer to the question of why this is true will have to be rediscovered by the Taoist Adepts of the future.

Although this book is virtually unknown in the Western cultures, it has been a source of political, military and even social tactics for thousands of years throughout the Eastern cultures. In Japan, until the time of the Meiji Reformation less than a century ago, even military tactics were based upon a pattern inspired by the Book of Change. It is doubtful if anyone in Mao-Tse-Tung's China is encouraged to read the Book of Change, unless as part of a course in ancient literature, but I would be only slightly surprised to learn that the strategy of his generals owes something to its inspiration. Confucius once said that, had he fifty years to spare, he would devote them entirely to studying the I Ching. Every day in my work in Thailand for the U.S. Army Security Agency, I read countless messages referring to this book and the use of this book by both communist and non-communist military leaders directly involved with the Vietnamese War, both in their personal and professional messages sent to one another to either further or hinder the war effort.

When using the Book of Change to determine the course of future events through prophecy, we must always keep in mind that we are not using magic or any other concept of supernatural powers. We are using rather an extremely complex but amazingly accurate application of the laws of probability which more than likely goes far beyond understanding of these laws today. Whereas the why behind the books' amazing accuracy would be interesting to ascertain, we need only concern ourselves with the fact that the book works, just as we are finally beginning to accept acu-

puncture without understanding exactly why it relieves pain or cures certain disorders. Perhaps by qualifying the word "prophecy", a better understanding of the divinatory aspects of this book will be possible. Instead of rigid prophecies, the I Ching makes suggestions, based on an analysis of the interplay of universal forces, not about what will happen but what should be done to accord with or to avoid a given happening. It will not for example, help us to get rich or to cause hardships or injuries to our enemies, unless they happen to be working against the public good, but it will help us to make the very best of our lives and to live in harmony with prevailing circumstances, whatever they may be.

Many Western scholars are troubled by the fact that no one author or group of authors can be said, with any degree of certainty, to have written the Book of Change. This to me, seems to be only of academic interest. What is most interesting is that the I Ching, when properly put to the test, responds in such a way as to remove all doubts about its value as a book of divination. The Book of Change is not a Chinese guide to the supernatural and for those who approach it with this conviction, be it conscious, semi-conscious or unconscious, frustration and exasperation will be their only reward. The book will reject, sometimes humorously, any question that is improper in itself or put to it in improper circumstances such as the winner of the next Miss America Contest or the outcome of a future football game. The Book of Change must be treated with the respect due to its immense antiquity and to the wealth of wisdom it contains. No living man can be worthy of equal respect, for the I Ching is a method of obtaining insight into the processes of vast and never-ending cosmic change, those endless chains of actions, reactions and interactions which assemble and divide the countless objects coming from and flowing into T'ai Chi----the Absolute.

We mentioned T'ai Chi in the preceeding chapter and before going on, I would like, for reasons of clarity, to introduce my own explanation of T'ai Chi. The same Thai Adepts of Taoist thought mentioned earlier tried very hard to present as clearly as possible a working explanation of T'ai Chi. I was at the time a struggling novice and was unfortunately unable to fully understand their explanation. I have since studied the I Ching and Taoism in depth and coupled in part with their explanation and the ideas I obtained through further study, I have pieced together the following in an attempt to define or rather to pin down this very complex aspect of the I Ching.

There exists T'ai Chi, the Absolute, the All, the Universal Principle, the Eternal, the Ultimate Cause, the Ever-Changing, the Never-Changing, the One. Nothing lies outside it, there is nothing which does not contain all of it. All things come from it; nothing comes from it. All things return to it; nothing goes into or returns to it. It is all things, it is no thing. It is T'ai Chi. This is not to be confused with the Tao (Way) mentioned in the preceeding chapter. The Tao could be safely construed as the Path to T'ai Chi. It is the Way of Existence on all planes, physical and spiritual. It is the Path upon which all men and women tread from one life to another in a sometimes lengthy journey through time and mind to purify the essence of oneself, thereby enabling one to become absorbed into T'ai Chi.

T'ai Chi's most easily observable function is change. There is nothing that remains without movement, without change. Every single thing is either coming into existence, developing, decaying or going out of existence. Never-ending change progresses according to certain universal and observable rules. By using the I Ching to reveal future events, as I have mentioned, we are not dealing with magic, but calculating the gen-

eral trend of events and seeking the best way to accord with that trend by relating whatever matter one has in mind to the predictable cycle or cycles of events to which it belongs. Change is then a product of the interaction of the two complimentary aspects of T'ai Chi, namely the Yin Principle and Yang Principle, covered in the preceeding chapter.

Change is the one constant aspect of the entire universe normally perceptible to human beings. The I Ching stresses that individual change is relatively unimportant. The process of change itself is the factor which needs to be emphasized. We must learn that the process of change itself is an unalterable phenomenon and that unless we remain objective on this point, any benefits to be derived from collective change, which happens anyway, will go unnoticed. The universe constantly changes and with it, we as individuals are affected by this process everytime we step out of our own subjectively created spheres of existence and mingle with other people, other ideas, concepts, rules, laws, customs, cultures and thought exchanges. Everytime we read a book, enter into a conversation, take a walk, turn on the television or indeed open our eyes, we encounter and are affected by the never-ending process of change. It is then, infinitely more important to perceive the collective overall effects of this process than it is to dwell upon an individual personal level of perception. To the novice then, if there is to be one point learned from all the I Ching's information, that one point must be that change is the one and only constant in the entire universe. It only follows then that if a given line or school of thought seems to be marking time instead of advancing, that line or school of thought must be totally open and if not, at least subjected to change if its followers are to progress.

In partial summation, it is the purpose of the Book of Change to interpret the various interlocking cycles of change. The I Ching does not

enable us to stop the tides or cause the wind to blow, but it does enable us to navigate the sometimes treacherous currents of time by teaching us to conduct ourselves in harmony with the existing processes of transformation, of change. It teaches us to weather the storms of this life and of all lives until, having penetrated to the very heart of change, we enter the Absolute, the One. One must then live by the teachings of the Book of Change in order to attain the thoroughly receptive state of mind necessary when consulting the I Ching.

These teachings very briefly summed up are basically; to live close to nature, to observe natural processes, as was the case with Hegel's theory of Dialectics, and then to perceive our place among them and be content. The virtues of water are especially stressed in the I Ching. Why?----because water, without the influence of man, does not seek to attack impregnable obstacles, but peacefully finds its way around them. The I Ching teaches us not only how to act, but when not to act as well which more often than not, requires more courage and insight than does the overt act itself.

In closing, let us examine the physical makeup of the 64 hexagrams found within the main text of the Book of Change. The I Ching is composed of 64 hexagrams, of six lines each. Each line is either a Yin line or a Yang line. The broken lines are generally referred to as Yin lines and the unbroken lines as Yang lines.

To lend clarity to the structure and mechanical nature of the hexagrams, I feel it necessary to include a brief example from the I Ching and then to comment on the didactic elements therein. The following, hexagram six, is called "Sung" or "conflict" in translation:

————— Component Trigrams:
 ————— Below: K'an, water, a pit.
 ————— Above: Ch'ien, heaven, male, active.

— — — — —
 —————
 — — — — —

The text, literally translated, reads: "Conflict. Confidence accompanied by obstacles. With care, affairs can be made to prosper in their middle course, but the final outcome will be disaster. It is advantageous to visit a great man, but not to cross the great river (or sea)." In this hexagram, the upper trigram (upper three lines) indicates firmness; the lower danger. When danger is met by firmness, conflict follows. What is said above about affairs prospering in their middle course if care is exercised, is derived from the firm line in the middle of the lower trigram. The final disaster occurs because the conflict is one which cannot be resolved. The advantage of going to see a great man is indicated by the firm line just mentioned. It would be unwise to cross the great river (go on any journey) as we should inevitably tumble into the watery abyss, suggested by the lower trigram. It is important to point out that the intuitive faculty is essential in relating the answer given by the I Ching to a question asked, but intuition is the very faculty which among Western people is generally the least developed. Consequently, any previous training one may have had in Zen or analogous systems of supra-intellectual development would be most helpful. In general, it can be said that the hexagrams arranged in their proper order symbolize the entire sequence of change through which everything in the universe, at all levels, passes in continuous cycles. It is by relating our own person affairs to parts of this sequence that it becomes possible to forecast with great accuracy how far they will prosper or decline and, in some cases, find means of effecting the issue to our own advantage.

Each hexagram, composed of six Yin or Yang lines, contains two trigrams. According to tradition, they were discovered by the Emperor Fu Hsi (2852-2738 B.C.), the first recorded ruler in Chinese history, who is generally regarded as being a legendary figure. The trigrams are immensely old, predating the Book of Change itself. Primarily, they represent cer-

tain aspects of nature. They can also be identified with the elements, the seasons and many other things. Ch'ien, which contains three firm lines, stands for the Yang Principle and all its qualities. K'un, composed of three yielding or broken lines stands for the Yin Principle and all its qualities, including passive acceptance. Together, they represent the whole universe in its basic Yin-Yang form. How these trigrams and hexagrams function as well as the movement of the lines, the interrelationship of the lines and their family relationships coupled with the correct and precise ritual used when consulting the Book of Change could only cause confusion at this point and since this paper is not concerned with a total explanation of divinatory mechanics used when consulting the I Ching,⁶ we will not go into these interesting aspects .

I believe we have a relatively good picture of the Book of Change and most of its myriad side points of interest to give good firm ground upon which to work in pointing out Brecht's possible applications to some of the concepts of change which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Chapter IV

BRECHT AND CHANGE

Since Brecht's death, many volumes of secondary literature have come out on either his works or his life and philosophy. Individuals like Marianne Kesting, Max Spalter, Gerhard Szczesny, John Willett or the Tulane Drama Review and the Modern Language Association have all examined and re-examined the works of Bertolt Brecht in an attempt to accurately present not only interpretations of the didactic elements within Brecht's works, but also as much as possible about the ideas he may have had concerning epic theatre directly and change indirectly and the methods he used to convey these ideas to his audience and to his readers. After having read a sampling of these interpretive publications, it became apparent to me that the "Great Teacher" Brecht was never completely or generally understood. I do not profess to say that I do understand the sometimes mysterious ideas and concepts of Bertolt Brecht, but I do feel strongly that his life and his works are much much more than the works of a man endeavoring to create and present a new concept of drama. Bertolt Brecht was a man of change; he must have dreamed of the didactic impact of change and through his ever-changing concept of how drama should be and the presentation of such drama to the people, he displayed not so much the characteristics of a playwright, as rather the characteristics of an innovator, who realized that for him, drama was the best means by which he could effect psycho-societal change within the minds of the people, who were stagnating while under the influence of a cause and effect, tradition-oriented society.

Very few of the aforementioned secondary sources, who chose to attach themselves to the works of Brecht, presented an accurate picture of this

cosmic thinker simply because they did not, as a whole, attach themselves as well to the diversity of his mind. When dealing with a person of change, one must analyze the overall individual concept of change as well as the chosen concrete applications of change, such as dramas, novels or whatever means the individual concerned chose as his or her mode of presenting the broad and more general concept produced on a much higher and more cosmological plane. In other words, I have found it to be frustrating and fruitless to spend too much time trying to identify and type one tree when I have the entire forest to cover. Such an endeavor fails to produce the key of understanding which a detached look at the whole will produce. The overall concept of change is to be emphasized, not the changes themselves. This is where and how an apparent majority of the aforementioned sources have overlooked, for the most part, the genius of Bertolt Brecht. Analyzing Brecht's plays in great detail can't help but produce some type of picture of the man himself, but care must be taken not to dwell too long upon one or more concrete applications of the whole, as this would be to miss his overall concept of change. If each door to the revelation of change has a different lock, each requiring a different key, would it then not be easier to find and use the master key opening all the locks as opposed to finding and using each individual key one at a time? This master key, which unlocks the doors to understanding as regards Brecht, is change and not the physical or concrete acts of change themselves or even the methods by which they were brought about.

Let us now attempt to define change as seen by Bertolt Brecht and by the ancient Chinese, who devoted centuries of careful observation and experimentation to this subject. Sometime in the last months before his death, Brecht furnished the world with a very probably semi-conscious summation of his concept of change. His friend, the protestant clergyman

Karl Kleinschmidt, preserved these words for us: "Do not write that you admire me. Write that it was troublesome to have me around and that I propose to remain troublesome after my death." In breaking this statement apart, we find an almost exact restatement of the Taoist idea of effecting change through the whole, without the unnecessary usage of abstractions. In the first sentence of this quote, we find the logical ending of this statement, "...for what I have done", to be understood. I believe Brecht meant that we should not admire him for plays or poetry or even for his attempt to formulate a new type of drama, in which one finds new methods of attempting to invoke certain reactions on the part of the audience to whatever segment or segments of society Brecht was satirizing or attacking. We should remember him as having been and still being a great innovator. Change for Brecht was a kinetic process. It did not mean that once change was achieved, it should be sat upon and allowed to stagnate. Change is constant and so was Brecht. He saw flaws in society and sought to constantly change society so that eventually society would learn to change itself, for through constant change, a tremendous output of information makes itself available and with this constant stream of information, society can progress by changing its entire face instead of just a few features. Instead of changing our black-white relations or our problems with inflation, war, repression and so forth, we should rather strive to find the common motives that all these problems share and then change these motives, which are single facets, and in so doing, change society itself. This is a paraphrased rule of thumb used by the Taoists to effect change. Brecht's talent was in the field of drama. This then, became his most familiar and most effective tool. He used it expertly to get his point across to the people, who are society. The effect of his epic theatre mirrored the sentiment that man not only can but must change if he is to progress positively.

General trends of change ideas and thought development concerning change are discernible in Brecht's later works; works completed after his epic theatre concepts had jelled. I read these works and then decided to pin down the overall trend of change development instead of determining the individual manifestations of this collective idea found within each play; for the I Ching tells us, change in an overall form is the point to be stressed and not the individual applicative methods. On the other hand, specific comparative examples are necessary to perceive the overall trend of change development which transcends individual method. I have then extrapolated ideas and meaning from these overall trends and specific methods and paraphrased my ideas of what Brecht must have thought and believed.

History had served Brecht, the the case of Galileo, to underscore the responsibility of the intellectual to his age. In speaking out against war, history provided him with the raw and bloody material to shape his warnings against war in general and specifically against an impending war, World War II. Man must change. This point is illustrated through the consequences of ignoring change, found in Brecht's Mother Courage. The play, a treatise on the evils of war, is replete with symbolic examples. In the last scenes, symbolic of the only profiteers of war; War itself and those on top who wage it for their own interests, Mother Courage does not change and learns nothing. Katrin is dead due to her love of children and her desire to warn a besieged city of a night-time assault by the enemy. She beats the drum to warn them, the symbolic voice of human involvement, and is rewarded with death. Mother Courage sets off now alone, a worn old woman who has learned nothing. What does this tell us of Brecht's concept of change? Should he, at the end of the play, have included concrete results in the behavior and deeds of Mother Courage? Brecht replied: "This piece was written in 1938, when the playwright foresaw a great war. He was not convinced that people, abstractly, learn

from the misfortunes, which, in his eyes, had to befall them. The playwright was the realist here. If, however, Mother Courage herself learns nothing further---it is my opinion that the public, viewing her, can learn something." The I Ching and the Tao-Te-Ching tell us that change, like water, seeks its way around impregnable obstacles and does not attack them. My interpretation of the between-the-lines elements in this quote is that war is the chief protagonist, the public its victim. If, by presenting entrenched behavioral reactions, those displayed by Mother Courage, to the public and making them aware semi-consciously of their consequences, we can effect change in these reactions, then the approach is ideally valid. Brecht then encouraged the public to make the transition Mother Courage did not. This is in agreement with the Tao-Te-Ching's idea of contemplative observation to solve life's problematical encounters.

The orient continued to fascinate Brecht. The Caucasian Chalk Circle, based on an old Chinese play, the Chalk Circle, is a quarrel between two Soviet collective farms but its overall purpose is to define morality in terms of social use and to point out the possibility for change through objective use of role reversal. Azdak, a tramp who at the outbreak of upheaval in the play had hidden the escaping Grand Duke, is the instrument of change. In this play, the biological mother rejected her child. Grusha, a kitchen maid, brings her social morality into play and makes the child her own through her own sacrifices. Each act of benefit to the child jeopardizes her own chances of escape or survival. She then brings order into the disorder of the times, just as the disorderly tramp Azdak, spokesman for the underlings, cynically does also. But through his actions, traditional order is revealed as oppression and tyranny, and his disorderliness as humaneness. This role reversing gives the public a chance to view other concepts of justice and humaneness; it pulls them from subjective awareness to objective reality by considering other alternatives to

thought perception. This is a scaled-down version of the I Ching's approach to collective change perception. Look at all the facets, as Brecht in this case encouraged us to do, and the individual methods of effecting change will become discernible.

The Good Woman of Setzuan is also a study in change through detached observation. Three gods visit the earth in search of a "good person". Shen-Te, the central figure, is the only person in the community willing to shelter them. They reward her with money, which proves to be her psychological undoing. She becomes so hardpressed by petitioners that she is forced to assume another face; Shui-Ta, the counterpart to the good-hearted Shen-Te. She encounters many trivial difficulties, the most important being injustice. Wang, a water carrier, who initially tried to find lodgings for the gods, is the instrument of this didactic element. When he is mistreated by a wealthy and cruel barber, Shen-Te exclaims in horror at the general indifference:

"What a city is this! and what sort of men!.....
Your brother is outraged before you, and you shut your eyes....
When an injustice is done in a city, there must be an uproar,
And where there is no uproar, it is better the city perish
In flames, before nightfall."

The Tao-Te-Ching, again in agreement, tells us that what effects one man, collectively effects all men, that is to say it becomes manifest in the collective unconscious. Brecht echoed this sentiment in the aforementioned excerpt. He calls upon us to leave our individual subjective spheres and not to wait for problems, in this case injustice, to smack us in the face before we act. We should rather perceive the overall detached scope of things and act before discernible collective symptoms can be transformed to damaging reality manifestations. As I have mentioned, these interpretations are extrapolated from the overall trend of change development perceptible on a collective level in the later works of Bertolt Brecht.

My contention is that society did not and still does not understand Brecht's idea of change. For example, Gerhard Szczesny reacted in the following manner to the aforementioned quote of Bertolt Brecht: "The dramatic grandeur of an uncompromising identification with the concept of a radical renewal of the world finally boiled down to the hope of being remembered as 'troublesome'." Mr. Szczesny's usage of the word "radical" is perhaps questionable. I assume however, that Mr. Szczesny meant radical in the literal sense of the term, namely one who advocates great and sweeping change in laws and government, which describes Brecht only partly, as Brecht wanted to change society and not just the laws and government within it. I will take issue with Szczesny's assumption that Brecht, realizing his failure to implement epic concepts into the theatre, would retreat to what Szczesny described as, "...the hope of being remembered as 'troublesome'." Brecht seemed to indicate that through his change concepts and through his applications of these concepts in the field of drama, he had planted a seed which was ideally to grow within the confines of collective sociological behavior. Once this seed grows, the overall concept of change as understood by the ancient Chinese, it will produce for the first time in Western literature, the emphasis on the importance of change itself, rather than on the lesser acts of change or on the methods used to bring them about. Mr. Szczesny, it would seem, is still fumbling with the individual keys to different locks and lacks the objective ability to discover the master key which would make his work so much easier. This concept will very definitely be "troublesome" to all tradition-oriented societies. An innovator of any type is usually considered to be troublesome, as very few individuals advocate such whole and complete change within a society.

One of the Taoist concepts which Brecht used was the enjoyment of the beauty of reality. For centuries, after this concept had been formulated

by the author or authors of Taoist philosophy, man has toyed with the complexity of this concept. Aristotle was very taken up with the idea and devoted a great deal of time to its study. In his essay, The Individual as a Composite of Form and Matter: A Theory of Change, Aristotle stressed the point that the ability to perceive and enjoy the beauty of reality must be preceded by the ability to perceive the cycles of overall change. Aristotle, Brecht and the ancient Taoists all considered the study of change to be quite essential to the perception, understanding and appreciation of reality. Aristotle and the ancient Taoists wrote of the dangers and retarding factors to be expected if one dwells upon the components of change rather than upon a concrete perspective of the whole or complete cycle of overall change itself. Brecht maintained that the truth is concrete and therefore readily recognizable. When dealing with an abstract problem, Brecht's idea was to strip the problem of its abstract qualities. In so doing, he maintained the idea that the answer, readily recognizable now because of its concrete whole, was then to be found at the lowest level of perception. A similar approach was used by the ancient Taoists, especially when the ability to detach oneself from a given problem in order to study its overall concrete superstructure was not fully developed. Aristotle was in complete agreement with this idea of the concrete nature of truth and change. He stated in the aforementioned essay that the things most easily and immediately cognizable by us are concrete and particular, rather than abstract and general; whereas elements and principles are only accessible to us afterwards, as derived from the concrete data when we have analyzed them.

Apparently then, we should or must advance from the concrete whole, after having first perceived it in its entirety, to the several constituents which it embraces; for it is the concrete whole that is the more

readily cognizable by the senses. And by calling the concrete a "whole", I mean that it embraces in a single complex a diversity of constituent elements, factors or properties. This would be a good rule to follow if we wish to study change and the beauty of reality. In order to do this properly, Brecht realized that life and the reality therein must be examined with absolute sincerity. It must be studied as if it were a living thing capable of displaying reactions. Only by observing life and society in this manner, can man expect to perceive symptoms of disorder and societal disturbance.

Brecht reacted exactly as the chapters of the Tao-Te-Ching suggest one to act. Instead of observing only the symptoms of disorder and unrest, he stood back to envision the entire scope of reality within society and then proceeded with his attempt to effect overall change by attacking and satirizing the problem areas in a constantly overlapping manner. His initial attempts were genius. He failed due to a lack of self-moderation. With this statement, we come again to subjectivity versus objectivity mentioned in the preceding chapter. Because Brecht's ideas of epic theatre originated within his own mind, despite objective influences from contemplative observation, the root of his interpretation is plainly subjective by nature and by definition. Brecht attempted but failed to transplant and simultaneously to transform a subjective idea within his own mind to an objective thinking reality in the collective mind of the theatre audience. By self-moderation then, I mean that Brecht failed to wait for signs of acceptance or understanding from audience before progressing to the next stage of change in behavior patterns within the collective or group mind of his theatre audience. In terms of thought progression, Brecht advanced ahead of his audience and eventually left them floundering far behind. The Tao-Te-Ching as well as the I Ching suggested

a different course of action and, had Brecht followed it, his chances for success would have been greatly enhanced. This course of action simply put, is to advance two steps and retreat one. By continuing this process, the elements of change advocated will constantly renew themselves while keeping the opposition guessing. This is a safeguard to advancing or effecting change too rapidly. If an individual wishes to effect this change within a given society, he must be extremely cautious not to advance faster than society's ability to comprehend and eventually to follow. He must practice self-moderation. When one functions within the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching, one functions within the ideal. Brecht encountered serious difficulties in applying the ideal to reality, because he was not a Taoist. He followed a line of constant advancement and eventually left society floundering behind him. This was Brecht's mistake and this is fine if one functions wholly within the ideal, but life is not ideal, nor is it abstract. Life is concrete and simple, as is truth.

When Brecht made the statement that truth is concrete, he was closer than at any other time to societal reality. This is an essential element when endeavoring to effect change. Brecht understood, as did the ancient Chinese Taoists, that truth, when cloaked with abstract ambiguities, will retard the comprehension factor of the people. If truth is disguised, the people will usually not recognize it and if the people do not recognize it, they will remain unaware of the necessity for change. If truth is concrete, then every man and woman has the ability to digest, reflect upon and finally to understand it. In realizing this, Brecht must have considered drama as the ideal tool, since drama is so often a mirror in which the didactic elements of reality and life within a society are reflected. The next step was simple; to create a new concept of drama in which truth is merely presented through reality and therefore always concrete. This concept, which Brecht called his epic concept of theatre, is in complete

accordance with a very basic Taoist axiom: observe life as it is and truth will appear upon the surface of reality.

Brecht's formulation of epic theatre and the elements of epic drama so closely follows the ideas and wisdom of the Tao-Te-Ching and the change concepts of the I Ching as to be almost uncanny. In the next paragraph, I will illustrate and give examples of this apparent lack of coincidence by showing parallels between Brecht's concept of epic theatre and the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching and the I Ching. Coincidence is disproved when analyzing Brecht's concept of change in conjunction with the concepts within the Book of Change and the Tao-Te-Ching. This is distinctly reminiscent of Hegel's comment as to the formulation of his theory of Dialectics. He stated that he had only witnessed a natural law in motion, observed it and then gave it a name. A close analysis of Brecht's epic theatre in relation to ancient Chinese change theory will best serve to illustrate this point.

As Brecht was formulating his concept of epic theatre, he developed a schematized explanation of stress or accent shifting from the traditional Aristotelian form of theatre to his own epic form. In so doing, he demonstrated physical evidence of his understanding of and insight into the immutable law of change. Brecht's theatre was narrative as opposed to active. He advocated the simple unadorned introduction of reality into drama through simple concrete narrative accounts of life as it really is. Unlike traditional theatre, the spectator was encouraged to become a simple observer and not to become involved in the stage action. The Tao-Te-Ching tells us to observe reality from a detached viewpoint so that an overall picture of motives behind societal disturbance will become clear. Once this is the case, a reason to act will arouse the capacity to act instead of squelching this capacity through total involvement. This, Brecht realized, was the first step necessary if he had any hopes of planting the

first seeds of change into the mind of the spectator. Once this capacity to act is aroused, the presentation of controversial topics through the simple concrete presentation of truth through reality will encourage the spectator to take a stand and to finally make a decision as opposed to mere empathetic reaction. Again, the Tao-Te-Ching teaches us that truth, good or bad, when presented as it actually is, can produce change in individual thought formulation and this change will then produce new lines of thought or action.

Brecht's epic theatre sought to move the spectator to adopting an overall view of the world as opposed to viewing smaller segments. This is an almost verbatim restatement of the Taoist concept of cosmic awareness. This is again the detached viewpoint effect desired by all serious students of Taoism. It enables us to gain insight into the overall nature of things and teaches us not to become bogged down with an overabundance of cause and effect analysis. This element of epic theatre, as well as Brecht's idea of the alienation effect is clearly illustrated by the above-mentioned Taoist concept. His alienation effect is unto itself a very good example of the Taoist desire to view reality or life from a detached viewpoint. The silent listener, in Brecht's case the silent spectator, listens to and observes truth in simple realistic presentation. Through detached, silent observation, he is more likely to achieve an overall view rather than dwelling too long upon individual aspects of this overall picture.

Brecht's epic theatre sought to confront the spectator with something concrete, usually a symptom of imbalance within his society. Brecht refrained from drawing the spectator into the action, instead he merely confronted him with that action. The suggestion of imperfection or injustice was discarded in favor of the blunt but simple presentation of the argument to be considered. In so doing, Brecht is once again in agreement with

the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching and the I Ching. As these books tell us, life is concrete and simple, to disguise the truth with abstractions is to become lost within the endless frustration of ambiguity. These two books tell us that truth can be disguised as probability if a course of action is merely suggested instead of presented. Such a move can very effectively retard thought revelation.

Brecht understood this basic Taoist idea that in simply confronting one with imperfection through concrete truths, the course of action results in inevitable change. In Brecht's case however, the course of action did not result in inevitable change. I believe this is because of the subjective nature of Western society as opposed to the objective nature of Eastern society. I personally believe Brecht did succeed in transforming his concept of epic theatre, a subjective idea, into an objective reality. I think his audience's inability to interrelate culturally on an international level is possibly one reason why Brecht failed to achieve his goal. At this point, an important question usually arises: Why is international awareness necessary for perception of the realities Brecht was presenting? If the truth is operative or effective, it should work within one culture as well as across several. If truth is concrete, then all the people should be able to see and understand it, as I mentioned earlier. These are all good questions containing good points, but the fact still clearly remains that the realities which Brecht attempted to present were in themselves examples of international awareness, because they did not lend themselves to any one stamp of national acceptance or approval or thought formulation. The truth is concrete, but we, as members of one culture have cloaked the truth, on an international level, with our own national and cultural influences. The truth does transcend cultural borders, but is only cognizable if we establish a state of international awareness and thereby enable ourselves to see the scope of truth internationally as opposed to

nationally. Just as the limitations of the mind are those which have been self- or group-imposed, truth awareness on an international level is possible only if we as individuals and then as a group remove our national barriers and become involved with the establishment of an international state of cultural and truth awareness.

I have studied Eastern society because I know such study is essential to international cultural understanding. Brecht's audience could weed out and then perceive the Western cultural influences found in his epic concept but could not incorporate the Eastern influence also found in his epic concept into a general synthesis of understanding. This is due largely to their probable ignorance of Eastern culture and thought, which in turn is due in part to their geographical isolation. They failed to break loose from their lesser states of Western awareness to form an overall state of international awareness. They allowed themselves for whatever reason to become alienated from this international awareness and regarded themselves as Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Danes or whatever and thereby delayed indefinitely the capacity to transform national awareness to international awareness. I am an internationalist by nature and I accept the Western and the Eastern elements in Brecht's concept of epic theatre, but internationalists are a minority and as long as this remains true, Brecht's concept will probably continue to have a hazy and partial effect upon the collective mind of Western society.

It now becomes clear that Brecht's conscious or semi-conscious pre-occupation with the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching and the I Ching is of academic interest only. The fact that his concept of change and how to effect it, is the point of interest and object of study. It is my opinion that once a philosophy is formulated, if it can be proven beyond reasonable doubt just once that a single person, detached from this philosophy by time, culture or simple geography with either no or limited knowledge

of this philosophy, practices the basics of this philosophy on either a conscious, semi-conscious or unconscious level, then the philosophy or line of thought have universal collective attraction and will very probably endure for all time, or at least until a better line of thought develops from the old. This point is best illustrated by observing certain distinct analogies between the Christian Bible and Tao-Te-Ching.

In continuing the comparative analysis of Brecht's epic concepts to the concepts of change, as practiced by the ancient Taoists, other trends of parallel thought development come to light. Brecht rebelled against the idea of preserving those feelings acquired through behavioral conditioning. The entire concept of epic theatre encouraged the spectator to purge himself of those feelings and replace them with truth-oriented realizations. Brecht, realizing that the theatre is more often than not a condensed mirror image of society, very probably conceived the notion of changing these pre-conditioned feelings of the spectator in his small but controlled theatre environment, and thus effecting change in the role-playing habits of the spectator in his larger work-a-day world environment. He was then attempting to change their role habits. Brecht had observed and clearly understood that the Aristotelian theatre encouraged the spectator to step into the theatre-going role as soon as he stepped into the foyer. More often than not, the spectator was unable to expand his theatre learning experience pas the lower level of entertainment. Brecht sought to demonstrate that entertainment is only one aspect of reality and because the theatre, due to its didactic elements, reflects reality in a realistic, surrealist or even humorous manner, what better place to begin the breakdown of rigid adherence to rules and roles than the theatre? By changing the spectator's smaller world of theatre, Brecht hoped to change his larger world of reality. A very simple-sounding but deceptively difficult task. The spectator had first to feel reason for change and it

was Brecht's desire to furnish this reason through his epic concepts of theatre.

Brecht's idea of forcing the spectator to transform feelings into realizations is in agreement with the ancient Taoist idea of observing the unadorned beauties of reality through detached contemplation. The I Ching however, teaches us that feelings, gut instinct or hunches are not to be entirely suppressed. Feelings can produce accurate reality-based and valid thought development, but due to the mysterious nature of the subconscious, the I Ching feels that a more than occasional dependence upon these feelings can lead to deceptive and sometimes damaging thought reactions, as was the case, according to Brecht and according in part to the I Ching, with the Aristotelian repetitive response conditioning and role reinforcement.

In keeping with the teachings of the I Ching and the Tao-Te-Ching, the idea of the detached contemplation of life and reality once again corresponds to another of Brecht's change concepts through epic theatre. Brecht didn't want the spectator to feel empathy with the characters by projecting themselves into the action and thus experiencing each segment of the action with the characters. In so doing, the spectator becomes absorbed into and lost within the action and is no longer able to take a detached stand. Brecht simply wanted the spectator to confront and study what he saw and more importantly, to think about what he saw and decide whether this or that idea is sound and if not, how best to change it before he goes on to the next area of controversy. This is the exact purpose of transcendental meditation as used by the ancient and modern Taoists, as well as by the Adepts of the I Ching. Every point of controversy was contemplated meditatively until a satisfactory solution or change element was uncovered. This, on a much lesser scale, was what Brecht

hoped to introduce to his spectators, the idea of change through intense study and analysis. Brecht hoped that in so doing, the spectator would eventually come to realize that man is an object of continuous investigation and not the simple creature Aristotelian theatre would leave one to assume. The handling of characters in Aristotelian drama is simple, because it presents a superficial look at man on the lowest levels of entertainment and utopian idealism. Traditional theatre does not seek to investigate man but to pacify him and in so doing, overlooks his complex diversity of mind. Brecht was probably leery and suspicious of the superficial psycho-sociological assumptions presented by the tradition-burdened Aristotelian theatre. If psychology, the science of mind and behavior, admits that man is by no means known, how then can Aristotelian theatre not only present this groundless assumption but feel quite comfortable within it? The answer is simple; Aristotelian theatre is not so much concerned with investigating man as it is with pacifying him. Because the goal of Aristotelian theatre is primarily to pacify, the investigation of man and the reasons for behavioral reactions are often artificially presented through contrived, archaic and unbelievable means. When this occurs, man is encouraged to fabricate his own contrived means to explain away or rationalize with unfounded generalities the complexities of reality and his own existence.

To Brecht, man was an object of investigation. Instead of having to paraphrase the I Ching to illustrate this point, I chanced upon a quote from this book which will serve very nicely. "If the form of heaven is contemplated, the changes of time can be discovered. If the forms of men are contemplated, one can shape the world." If then, as Aristotelian theatre would have it, the forms of men are not to be contemplated, then the world, instead of being shaped by sweeping change, would or rather is being polished to shine with the imperfections and obsolete traditions of

yesteryear.

The next logical step to the idea that man is an object of continuous investigation is the realization of the fact that man is alterable; man can be changed. This idea is intuitively obvious to the dedicated followers of change, as advocated by the I Ching. In Brecht's later works, in which his ideas of epic theatre had been more fully developed, he sought to present this idea to his spectators at every opportunity. To obtain this point from the I Ching, the student must think in overall terms because the Book of Change is laced throughout with this idea of man's ability to change and his ever-changing nature. The spectators then had only to accept the obvious, to rediscover firmly in their own minds, the discovered fact that change is the only true road to continuous progress.

My personal view is that we must accept change for the sake of change alone. Let me give you a personal but specific example: If someone wished to paint the walls of my room black, I would allow it, because there is that chance that the color or the new color would bring different thought patterns and different reactions to these patterns. Objectivity would be encouraged because a new environment would be present. Environment conditions and we stagnate when this conditioning process is restricted to one set of stimuli, (ie. colors, sounds, thoughts, smells or anything having to do with the six senses). On the other hand, if my theory proved to be incorrect, I could always have the room repainted, but always with a different color, so as not to restrict the possibility of developing objective thought patterns. Perfection, like infinity, can be approached but never reached and constant change is the only tool with which we can effect the desired progress of man.

Perhaps Brecht's first parallel to the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching was the writing of a play in such a fashion as to make each scene stand for itself. The Aristotelian concept of one scene existing for another

subconsciously encouraged the spectator to treat life in the same manner. This is not reality as Brecht saw it, as I see it, or as the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching see it. Life is simply not a progression of experiences each integral to the development of the next. This is cause and effect thinking in its most damaging form. Each experience in life is separate and profound unto itself. In accepting the total cause and effect relationship, man cannot help but be reluctant and even afraid to effect change. Each experience has its didactic elements, which when ignored or left unobserved force dependence upon feeling as opposed to reason. This, in turn, invites assumptions based on feeling to be made, which are seldom valid. If each experience, or in Brecht's case, each scene does not exist for itself, then where does one find the time for reflection and thought so necessary to objective conclusion? This was Brecht's argument to the Aristotelian idea of scene interdependence..

Brecht's plays, along with the life experiences of the I Ching, hold that each scene or experience, because of its didactic elements, had to be contemplated and deeply thought through if the experience or scene was to have any worth at all. Life can be, but is never always entertaining. Through Brecht's ideas of epic theatre, he tried to inject this point beyond the tradition-toughened skin of Aristotelian theatre into the collective mind of his audience. Therefore, each of Brecht's epic scenes, like each of life's experiences was separate unto itself in order to force the spectator to contemplate the beauty of reality. The I Ching maintains that each experience in life is a means of exploiting potential change for the good of understanding as regards ensuing experiences. If each experience in life contains didactic elements, as they all do, then its contemplation will cause the understanding of the next experience to be all the more enriched. This is what Brecht hoped to achieve for his spectators

by making each scene exist for itself.

The time for this reflection and thought pertaining to each scene was furnished usually between scenes or sometimes in the scene itself. Brecht's pause for thought is in complete harmony with reality and in complete agreement with the teachings of the Tao-Te-Ching which explains that as each life experience is encountered, time must be taken to reflect upon the experience or experiences encountered prior to the present one, due to the didactic elements of all experiences. Brecht did not need to implement an exact interpretation of this idea as the spectators knew that another scene was forthcoming due to the controlled environment of the theatre. They were however, afforded time for reflection, contemplation and thought usually between the scenes or at a convenient time during the scene.

In so doing, Brecht gave his spectators the opportunity to formulate decisions and conclusions to each separate scene which in turn encouraged them, because of all this information, to form a better arrived-at final conclusion which was ideally to be an objective reappraisal of their own ability to change, based upon the changes not only within the play itself, but also the manner in which it was presented.

It is unfortunate that this opportunity was not taken by a majority of his audience. Why?--again we can only speculate. I believe Brecht just didn't give his audience enough time to make the transition from subjective observers to objective thinkers. They were confronted with an entirely new concept in theatre that could not be typed or classified nationally. They probably felt uncomfortable because they could not relate to a medium of international scope, and even if they had, it would have been subjectively confined to their own small spheres of Western influence. They cannot be blamed or chastised for this and on the other hand, we cannot blame Brecht either.

Where then does the fault lie or can we call such a phenomenon fault?

Although the answers to these questions are many-faceted, they all seem to fall in place when we examine Brecht's alienation or distancing effect, which is the true foundation of his epic theatre. The alienation effect occurs as the displacement or removal of a character or action out of its usual context, so that character or action no longer can be perceived as wholly self-evident. Scales may then fall from the eye and distancing, then, reveals the same alienation at home: displacement leads to revelation.

But this ability to detach oneself from individual or personal spheres of perception to perceive the whole or the total scope of things is unfortunately not a common occurrence. This ability, probably simple for Brecht, was difficult for his spectators. When people come together, they are no longer individuals nor do they function as individuals; they are now a group and the behavioral characteristics which they display as a group indicates the presence and action of a collective or group mind. If as individuals in their own homes, they could not or would not exercise the capacity for displacement, how then could they be expected to display this ability as a group in the theatre? Aristotelian theatre counted on the interaction of the collective mind. Brecht wanted and needed this interaction also, but he just couldn't effectively penetrate the subjective shell of awareness surrounding his theatre audience, despite the fact that his epic theatre afforded all the necessary tools. In the future, when we learn to incorporate knowledge and wisdom with total indifference to the sources, or in other words when we all become internationalists, I believe we will experience a Brecht revival because one of the prerequisites to internationalism is change through displacement. Then and only then will the full impact of Brecht's epic concept be felt on the collective mind of man.

Brecht tried to surround his spectators with change as concerned their pre-conditioned theatre roles and in so doing, laid the subconscious groundwork for change acceptance on the larger societal level. Such pauses for thought and such concrete presentation of reality again encouraged the spectator to use his powers of reason as opposed to thought formulation based upon feeling. I have already covered the I Ching's opinion on total dependance of feeling to form conclusions. Brecht's epic theatre insisted upon or rather demanded the use of reason on the part of the spectator. Brecht, in agreement with the Book of Change, fought against the use of feeling in favor of reason, but unlike the I Ching, he wanted his spectators to more or less give up completely the idea of experiencing possible insight into change revelation by beginning a possibly fruitful thought process with the use of instinctive feeling.

Before moving on to other areas of interest in Brecht's relation to the classical Chinese concept of change, let us now reflect upon Brecht's overall concept of change, the misunderstanding of which has caused considerable controversy.

It would be difficult to prove that Brecht's concept of change was his application of the teachings within the Tao-Te-Ching and the I Ching. Nowhere in his works is there any specific or concrete reference to his having consulted either of the two books. It was therefore necessary to study as many of his works in conjunction with the superstructure of his epic theatre as time would allow in an attempt to uncover, or to simply decipher any references linking Brecht's concepts of change with those found in the Tao-Te-Ching or the I Ching.

We can safely assume that Brecht consulted the Tao-Te-Ching or at the very least, was familiar with the legend concerning authorship. This becomes evident when we read his one and only poem on the subject, Legende

von der Entstehung des Buches Taoteking auf dem Weg des Laotse in die Emi-
gration. The assumption that Brecht was probably familiar with the con-
cepts of change outlined in the I Ching is a difficult one to make, how-
ever careful study and contemplation of his works and his private thoughts,
some of which have been carefully preserved, offer too many parallels to
the Book of Change's concept of change to be considered mere coincidence.

We have already discussed the I Ching's concept of change as being a
detached contemplative analysis of change as a whole as opposed to its
many-faceted lesser states. John Willett is one of the secondary authors
who has compiled a great deal of Brecht's personal observations on epic
theatre, two of which link specifically Brecht's concept of overall change
to the concepts of the I Ching. Firstly, while commenting on the epic
theatre and its difficulties, Brecht made the observation, that the effect
of a play on an audience is of lesser importance than is the effect of a
play on the theatre. To paraphrase this observation, the lesser states of
change within the overall change advocated are of lesser importance than
is the overall, whole and complete act of change upon whatever whole or
all-inclusive element there is to be effected. Secondly, Brecht realized
that the old Aristotelian pre-conditioned behavioral reactions had to be
changed first before the audience, realizing it was in a new theatre en-
vironment, could change its reactions. The effect upon the whole is in-
finitely more important than the effects on the constituent parts, to para-
phrase the I Ching's idea of sweeping overall change. Brecht then took
this observation one step farther. "It is understood that the radical
transformation of theatre can't be the result of some artistic whim. It
has simply to correspond to the whole radical transformation of the men-
tality of our time."

This quote indicates that Brecht conceived of change as an overall
sweeping process that he felt must not be applied to lesser states of

of transformation, specifically because these lesser states are contained within the whole, and the whole is the area of concentration. He understood that to change the whole is to change its parts and this, in essence, is exactly the concept of change contained within the teachings of the Book of Change.

One needs only to find such quotes and other related observations to convince oneself that concrete proof of Brecht's having consulted the Book of Change is of academic interest only. The fact remains that the concept of change as held by Bertolt Brecht and the concept of change found within the I Ching and more indirectly within the Tao-Te-Ching are so closely related as to appear at times synonymous. The unfortunate failure of Brecht's epic ideas to move his audience to adopting new concepts of change is due in part to the cultural gap between East and West. This is a gap of understanding because there is no common ground between the two. Brecht's epic theatre could be considered an attempt to construct a piece of common ground by incorporating ideas from both cultures to form a synthesis of international cultural understanding. He was then, in effect, a "Dazwischentreter", hovering between the two. It is a pity that his audience just wasn't ready to join him in this new realm of international interrelation.

Because Brecht spurned the pre-conditioned psycho-sociological reactions and political rules which hover over such gaps, he spanned it easily and was therefore capable of appreciating the profound results to be derived from the mixing of the two cultures. He was a man of change. The I Ching is the Book of Change and the Tao-Te-Ching contains the philosophy of change. I for one, am very glad that the mind of Bertolt Brecht and the concepts within these two great books merged, if only for a short time. The result was an innovator whose contributions to the theatre and

therefore to the world provided us with refreshing new possibilities for applying the wisdom of these books to reality and to life.

Brecht was not a Marxist, Communist or even a Marxist-Leninist. He was Brecht the man, the innovator. The concepts of Marxism provided Brecht with more comfortable ground upon which to build his concepts of change and its relation to society as a whole. He was not a political figure or, as Günter Grass very incorrectly observed, a revolutionary. He was a gifted man who observed flaws, corruptions and general symptoms of decay within all society and merely sought to change them for the good of man. He was an artist in the finest sense of the term. My only regret is that he is dead.

FOOTNOTES

1. Norman F. Cantor, "Selections from Aristotle's Work," Ancient Thought, "ed." Norman F. Cantor, (Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 88-91.
2. Max Kaltenmark, "Lao Tzu", Lao Tzu and Taoism, "trans." Roger Greaves, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 5-7.
3. Max Kaltenmark, "The Taoist Religion", Lao Tzu and Taoism, "trans." Roger Greaves, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 122-126.
4. Holmes Welch, "The Taoist Movement", The Parting of the Way, (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 130-132.
5. Author unknown, "Introduction", The I Ching, "trans." James Legge, (New York, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1963), pp. 1-3.
6. Author unknown, "The Method of Divination", I Ching, "ed., trans." John Blofeld, (New York, New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968), pp. 59-71.
7. Gerhard Szczesny, "The Indictment", The Case against Bertolt Brecht, "trans." Alexander Gode, (New York, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), pp. 2-4.
8. Holmes Welch, "The Problem of Lao Tzu", The Parting of the Way, (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 5-9.
9. John Willett, "The Epic Theatre and its Difficulties", Brecht on Theatre, "ed. trans." John Willett, (New York, New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), pp. 22-24.

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