



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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Reconsidering ‘*You Fu*’ in the *Book of Changes* Hexagram and Line Statements

1. Introduction

According to today’s version of the *Book of Changes*, the character ‘*Fu*’ 孚 appears 41 times. Among them, 26 times it is in the form of ‘*You Fu*’ 有孚. In *Cheng’s Commentary on the Book of Changes*, ‘*fu*’ is often explained as honesty or trust. This meaning was also used by many traditional commentators, such as Wang Bi 王弼, Kong Yingda 孔穎達, and Zhu Xi 朱熹. However, in modern times, scholars do not agree on the meaning of ‘*fu*’. Professor Zhang Yujin 張玉金, in his article *A New Study on ‘You Fu’ in the Book of Changes*, uses oracle bone texts to explain ‘*Fu*’. He gives a new idea. He thinks that in many cases ‘*Fu*’ in the *Book of Changes* should mean ‘to match’ or ‘to be fulfilled’. This view can explain some cases. But if we explain all ‘*fu*’ only as ‘fulfilled’, it may not always be suitable. Therefore, this presentation focus on Professor Zhang’s study. I also compare it with ancient commentaries. From my own view, I present some points that still need discussion.

2. Re-examining the Interpretation of *You Fu*

Professor Zhang thinks that *You Fu* in the *Book of Changes* should not change its meaning by context. He says all cases of ‘*fu*’ in the book should have one fixed meaning. This view is wrong. There are two reasons. First, it is wrong to use one meaning to explain all cases. Second, some old characters may have been read in the wrong way.

As Professor Zhang says, the words in the *Book of Changes* come from oracle inscriptions. This idea is fine. But he ignores one point. *Fu* and *You Fu* are not the same as words like good lucky or ominous in oracle texts, which give clear judgments. From my view, when *You Fu* is placed at the start of a sentence, it often has the meaning of a condition. For example, in Hexagram *Xu* 需 it says, ‘Waiting. If you are sincere, you have light and success. Perseverance brings good fortune.’ Here, during the time of waiting, because there is honesty, one can go forward with light and success. We can see that *You Fu* is a condition for success. Only when it is present, success can follow. This shows a clear and strict logic. Another example is Hexagram *Ge* 革, ‘The great man changes like a tiger. Without divination, he is believed by his people.’ Here, the great man changes like a tiger’ means the ruler carries out

reform, and his deeds are clear and striking, like the stripes of a tiger. ‘Without divination, he is believed by his people’ means that there is no need for divination, because of his honesty, the people will still follow him. Therefore, in this case, it is better to explain *You Fu* as sincerity. This makes a complete logic with the words ‘without divination’. If we force it to mean ‘to match’ or ‘to be fulfilled’, the meaning becomes, ‘The ruler’s reform, without divination, is already fulfilled.’ But in this line, we cannot see what exactly is fulfilled. Normally, ‘fulfilled’ must point to the success or failure of an event but the text only says ‘the great man changes like a tiger’. So it is hard to explain it as ‘fulfilled’. Examples of Professor Zhang’s weak explanations are easy to find, so I will not list them all here. Therefore, if we explain every *You Fu* in the *Book of Changes* only as ‘to match’, it is clearly not enough to cover its full meaning.

In addition, according to Professor Zhang, the word *Fu* appeared very early, already in the oracle bone period. However, the examples he used from *The Collected Explanations of Oracle Inscriptions* are actually another character, 𠄎, not *Fu*. Although Professor Qiu Xigui once read the character 𠄎 with the sound of ‘*Fu*’. But this was only a similar sound. He did not say that the character itself was *Fu*. So when Professor Zhang used this character 𠄎 as an example of *Fu* in *The Collected Explanations of Oracle Inscriptions*, it was already a mistake. And after that, this later discussion cannot be correct.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, when I read the ancient commentaries of the *Book of Changes* and Professor Zhang Yujin’s article *A New Study on ‘You Fu’*, I found three points to question. First, should the character *Fu* always have one single meaning in the whole book? Second, it is not a good solution to explain all *Fu* only as ‘to match’ or ‘to be fulfilled’. Third, the oracle bone character 𠄎 used by Professor Zhang is not the same as *Fu*. Therefore, I think his explanation of ‘*You Fu*’ still has room for discussion. Besides, according to most scholars, the *Book of Changes* is one of the sources of early Confucian thought. Its study must use careful philological methods and trace the original meaning of the words. But at the same time, we must also look at the context of the whole passage. As Professor Xu Fuguan said, ‘to study the history of thought, we must begin with language and meanings, but we must also check the sentences, the forms, and the sounds together, so that the meaning can be clear.’ If we

only explain the whole *Book of Changes* by single words, then it may become just a work of textual study, not a true study of ideas.

Reconsidering '*You Fu*' in the *Book of Changes* Hexagram and Line Statements

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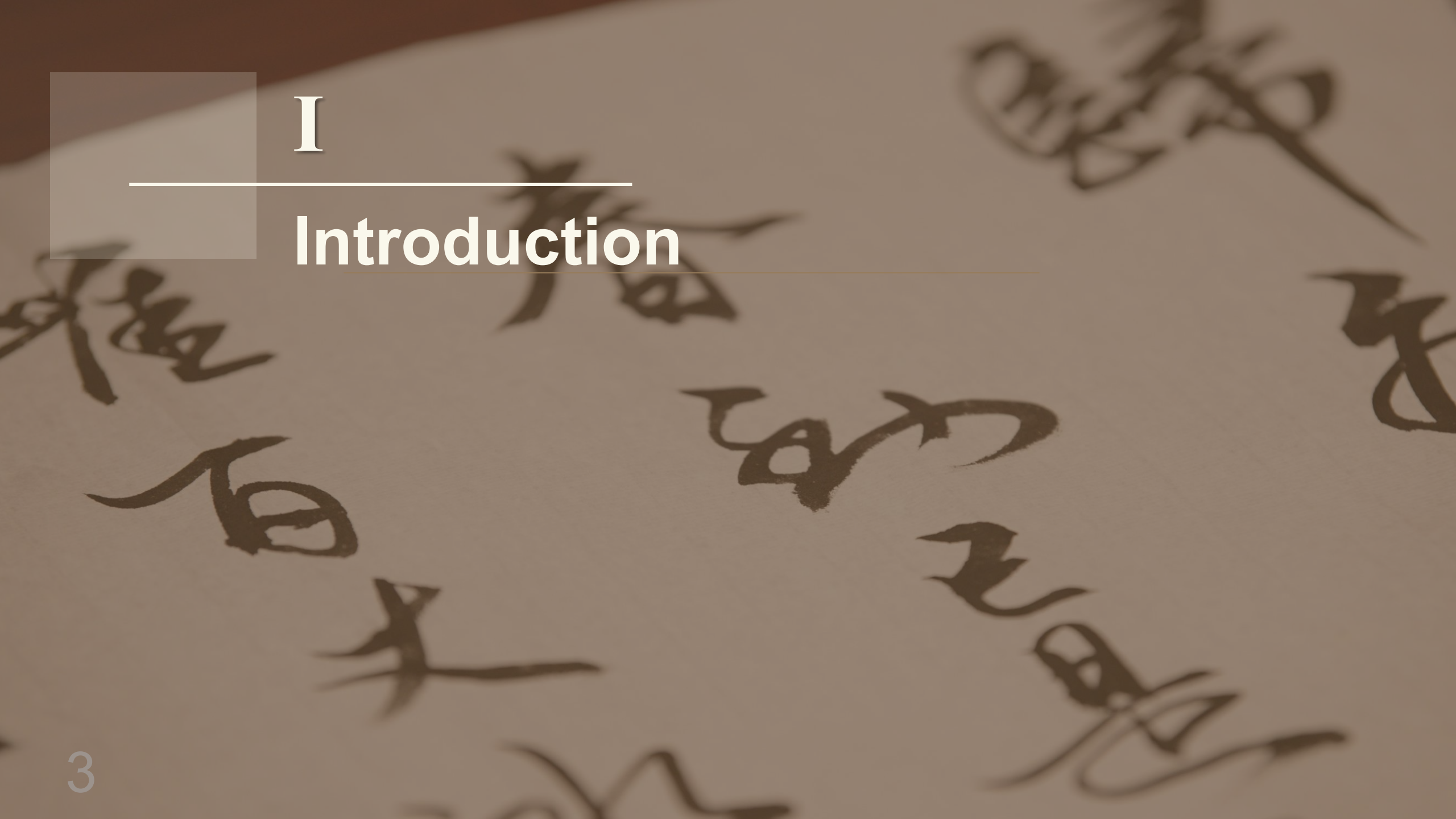
Contents

I. Introduction

II. Re-examining the Interpretation of *You Fu*

III. Conclusion



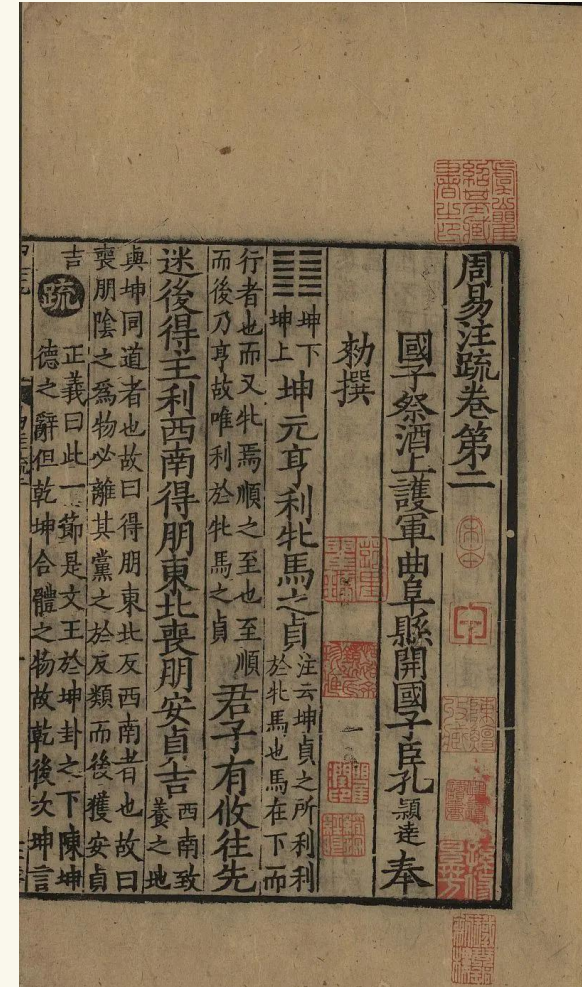


I

Introduction

The character in the *Book of Changes*

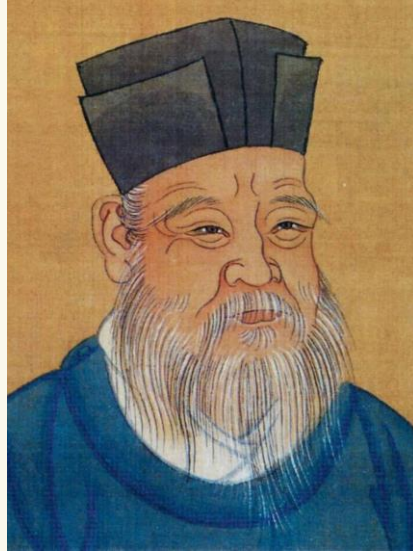
- The character 'Fu' 孚 appears 42
- 26 instances as 'You Fu' 有孚.



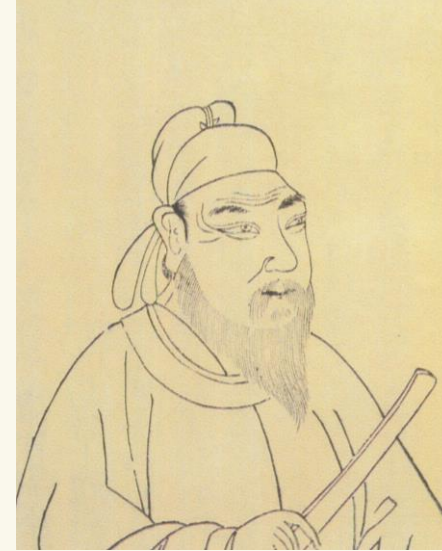
Traditional Interpretations



Wang Bi 王弼



Zhu Xi 朱熹



Kong Yingda 孔穎達

'fu' is often explained as honesty or trust

Professor Zhang Yujin's New Perspective

A New Study on 'You Fu' in the Book of Changes

《周易》“有孚”新探

——兼論《周易》卦爻辭的性質

張玉金

在今本《周易》中，“孚”共出現 42 次，其中有 26 次出現在“有”字之後，這個“有孚”是什麼意思，其他的“孚”又該如何解釋呢？對此，學術界有多種不同的說法。這些說法可以分為兩大類，一是對全書的“孚”作統一解釋的，二是對“孚”隨文釋義、作多種訓釋的。

下面先談對“孚”作統一解釋的說法。

《易傳》訓“孚”為“信”，解釋為“誠信”。這種說法多為傳統注家所採用，如魏王弼、唐孔穎達、宋朱熹等。今人亦多有從之者，如黃壽祺、張善文〔1〕、張立文〔2〕等。李鏡池〔3〕認為，《周易》中的“孚”大多數用作名詞或動詞，應是俘虜的意思。黃凡〔4〕認為，大部分可用“符合”來解釋。趙建偉〔5〕認為，孚”或“有孚”一為占辭，可釋為卦兆、徵兆、迹象；一為驗辭，可釋為徵驗、應驗、報應、結果等。裘燮君〔6〕專門考釋《周易》中的“有孚顯若”，他認為“有”宜釋為特指代詞“其”，是“那個”的意思；“孚”是“筮象”的意思，“有孚”意即“那個筮象”。劉大均〔7〕根據阜陽漢簡本、馬王堆帛書本《周易》中“孚”作“復”的事實，把“孚”讀為“復”，認為是“反復”的意思。王建慧〔8〕

- Oracle Bone Evidence
- ‘*fu*’ means ‘to match’ or ‘to be fulfilled’ rather than trust or honesty.

Zhang Yujin 張玉金, 'A New Exploration of *You fu* 有孚 in the *Zhouyi* 周易: On the Nature of the Hexagram and Line Statements,' in *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻, vol. 3.

II

Re-examining the Interpretation of *You Fu*

Two Critical Mistakes

1. It is wrong to use one meaning to explain all cases
2. some old characters may have been read in the wrong way.

In oracle texts

good lucky

ominous



Case Study: Hexagram *Xu* 需

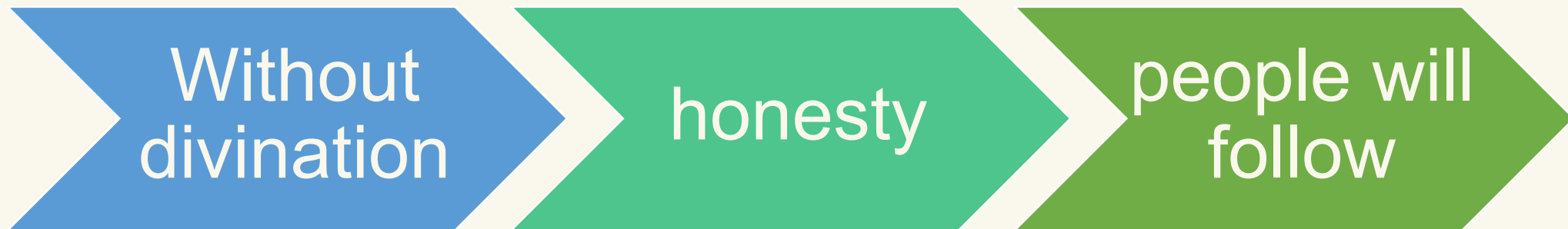
‘Waiting. If you are sincere, you have light and success.
Perseverance brings good fortune.’



shows a clear and strict logic

Case Study: Hexagram Ge 革

‘The great man changes like a tiger. Without divination, he is believed by his people.’



It is better to explain *You Fu* as sincerity

Why 'Fulfilled' Fails

1. Logical Gap

1. 'The ruler's reform, without divination, is already fulfilled.' But in this line, we cannot see what exactly is fulfilled.

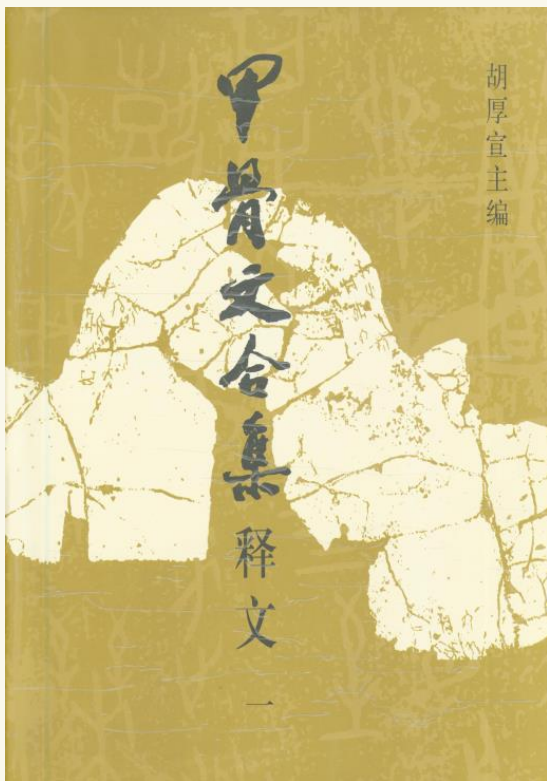
2. Missing Reference

1. 'fulfilled' must point to the success or failure of an event but the text only says 'the great man changes like a tiger'.

'To match' is clearly not enough to **cover its full meaning**.

The Misidentification of *Fu* in Oracle Bone Inscriptions

*The Collected Explanations
of Oracle Inscriptions*



𠩺 × 孚

Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, *Jiaguwen heji shiwen* 甲骨文合集釋文 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999), e.g. 94.

The Misidentification of *Fu* in Oracle Bone Inscriptions

00094 正

(1) 辛丑卜，殼，貞帚好出子。二月。

(2) 辛丑卜，亘，貞。王固曰：好其出子。

𠄎。

12357

(1) 不雨。𠄎。

(2) 戊子卜，內，翌己丑雨，己轍。

(3) 翌己丑不其雨。

(4) 〔庚〕寅〔不〕其〔雨〕。

Professor Qiu Xigui said that was only a similar sound.

𠄎 ≈ 孚
sound

𠄎 × 孚
meaning

III

Conclusion

Conclusion

1. Should the character Fu always have one single meaning in the whole book?
2. It is not a good solution to explain all Fu only as 'to match' or 'to be fulfilled'.
3. The oracle bone character  used by Professor Zhang is not the same as *Fu*.

Xu Fuguan said: 'to study the history of thought, we must begin with language and meanings, but we must also check the sentences, the forms, and the sounds together, so that the meaning can be clear.'

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Thank you for listening

