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Does "Yi De" Reduce Good Fortune?—A Reexamination of the "De" Type Cases in the Shifa of the Tsinghua Slips

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Abstract. The "de" section of the Shifa of the Tsinghua slips contains at the same time two types of verdict expressions, "nai de" and "nai yi de". One view in the field interprets "yi" as the marker by which the special divination numbers (four, five, eight, nine) reduce the auspicious meaning, but the text also contains counterexamples in which the special numbers are present yet "nai de" is used, or the special numbers are absent yet "yi de" is used, and its core evidence, the four-season cases, also has the problem of multiple variables. Through a reexamination of the eleven "de" type cases, combined with mutual corroboration from the isomorphic sentence patterns inside the Shifa, this paper checks the argument chain of the "fortune-reducing" explanation one link at a time. The study finds: the special divination numbers and the character "yi" are not in a relation of sufficient and necessary correspondence; the four-season cases change several conditions at the same time and do not constitute a single-variable comparison, so they cannot establish that "yi" has a meaning of reduction in degree; and the stable grammatical function of "yi" in the Shifa is to take up another set of conditions under which the verdict holds, keeping the same verdict when the premise changes; meanwhile the limitation of "its loss is thirteen" is stated independently by the character "loss", and one cannot reason back from it that "yi" itself carries a downgrading meaning. This paper argues that what the "de" type cases of the Shifa preserve is not only the verdicts but also the conditions of application and boundary limits of the verdicts; this understanding also provides a perspective for understanding the regularized writing and the mode of knowledge construction of early divination literature.

Keywords: Shifa of the Tsinghua slips, yi de, special divination numbers, verdict expressions, conditional connection

1. Introduction

The "de" type examples of the Shifa of the Tsinghua slips These two examples, not far apart, raise a concrete question: if "yi de" means that the special divination numbers reduce the degree of good fortune, why do those with special numbers not show "yi", while those without special numbers show both "yi" and "loss"? However, giving one counterexample only shows that the correspondence "special numbers—yi—fortune reduction" is not an exceptionless rule; it does not yet answer two further questions: first, whether the four-season cases on which the "fortune-reducing" advocates rely can constitute a comparison sufficient to judge causation. Second, if "yi" is

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not read as a downgrading marker, how to explain "yi de" and "its loss is thirteen" at the same time. The argument of this paper advances in order: it first uses all eleven cases to fix the distribution that needs explaining, then examines the strongest comparison in the "fortune-reducing" explanation, and finally uses the isomorphic sentence patterns inside the Shifa to explain the connecting function of "yi", and places the verdict of "de" and the limitation of "loss" separately. In addition, this paper only discusses the basic role of "yi" in the "de" section; whether the special divination numbers are unfavorable in other divination categories must be discussed separately according to the material of each section.The "de" type examples of the *Shifa* of the Tsinghua slips[1]usually end in one of two ways, "de" and "yi de"; whether the latter involves a reduction in the degree of good fortune has received scholarly attention, and this question touches an important link in the existing explanation of the "e yao". Xie Naihe and Tian Xue used the "seeing ding numbers" case, in which the Dui hexagram coexists with the special divination numbers, to explain that the original auspicious image is discounted, and hence it is called "nai yi de" [1]. Sun Hang and An Litong further compared the first five "de" cases with the four-season cases; although both belong to divinations of obtaining, the latter show four, five, eight, nine and the character "yi", so they used "great fortune" and "small fortune" as an analogy to argue that the "e yao" has a "fortune-reducing" function [2].[2]This is not simply glossing "yi" as "small"; it tries to explain the difference in verdicts by the difference in the diagrams, and the explanation does grasp a correspondence between diagrams and verdicts that indeed needs explanation, and deserves careful examination. But the diagram of slips 7—8 contains the divination number nine, while the verdict is "nai de"; the diagram of slips 13—15 shows no four, five, eight or nine, yet the verdict is instead "yi de", followed by "its loss is thirteen" [3].[3]These two examples, not far apart, raise a concrete question: if "yi de" means that the special divination numbers reduce the degree of good fortune, why do those with special numbers not show "yi", while those without special numbers show both "yi" and "loss"? However, giving one counterexample only shows that the correspondence "special numbers—yi—fortune reduction" is not an exceptionless rule; it does not yet answer two further questions: first, whether the four-season cases on which the "fortune-reducing" advocates rely can constitute a comparison sufficient to judge causation. Second, if "yi" is not read as a downgrading marker, how to explain "yi de" and "its loss is thirteen" at the same time. The argument of this paper advances in order: it first uses all eleven cases to fix the distribution that needs explaining, then examines the strongest comparison in the "fortune-reducing" explanation, and finally uses the isomorphic sentence patterns inside the *Shifa* to explain the connecting function of "yi", and places the verdict of "de" and the limitation of "loss" separately. In addition, this paper only discusses the basic role of "yi" in the "de" section; whether the special divination numbers are unfavorable in other divination categories must be discussed separately according to the material of each section.

[1] The Shifa originally had no title; the editors coined the name from its content and, according to the content, position and layout of the slip text, divided the transcribed text into thirty sections, each with a small heading. "De" is the editorial title of one of these sections and cannot be taken directly as a theoretical category labeled by the ancient authors themselves. However, although the title was added later, it is a verifiable textual fact that the corresponding column of slips 1—23 lists in succession the diagrams and verdicts concerning "de". This paper keeps this title only to delimit the scope of discussion.

[2] What is called the "fortune-reducing" explanation below refers mainly to the concrete argument, proven from the "de" type diagrams and verdicts, that the e yao reduces the degree of good fortune, and does not summarize all the claims of the two articles.

[3] Hereafter abbreviated as Qinghua Slips (IV). The slip text quoted in this paper uses a loose transcription; the two graphically distinct forms of "e yao" follow the character usage of the respective texts cited, and no distinction of concepts is made on this basis.

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2. The textual boundary and evidence distribution of the "de" type cases

Before the concrete discussion, this paper needs first to settle the question of the scope of the material, that is, in which combinations of diagrams and verdicts the difference between so-called "nai de" and "nai yi de" actually appears. Only by placing all relevant evidence in the same scope can individual cases avoid being mistaken for universal rules.

These eleven sets of diagrams and verdicts cannot yet be directly called eleven real divinations. Li Shangxin, based on the arrangement of the diagrams, the distribution of the numbers and the exemplifying function, holds that the cases of the Shifa are not original records of random real divination. Wu Xiaoxin, after comparing the Chu divination slips with the Shifa, also pointed out that records of actual divinations and texts of hexagram interpretation rules differ in nature.These eleven sets of diagrams and verdicts cannot yet be directly called eleven real divinations. Li Shangxin, based on the arrangement of the diagrams, the distribution of the numbers and the exemplifying function, holds that the cases of the *Shifa* are not original records of random real divination [4]. Wu Xiaoxin, after comparing the Chu divination slips with the *Shifa*, also pointed out that records of actual divinations and texts of hexagram interpretation rules differ in nature [5]. Therefore, what is done below is a statistical count of diagram-verdict correspondences inside the text, not a frequency count of the special divination numbers in ancient divination activity. Even if some cases may have absorbed practical experience, one cannot compute their real-world probability from eleven cases.

At the same time, to avoid writing the conclusion to be proven into the terminology in advance, this paper provisionally calls four, five, eight and nine the "special divination numbers". This name only means that they differ from the one and six usually used in the diagrams, and does not prejudge their fortune or misfortune. Liu Guangsheng once used the division of labor between number lines and symbol lines to explain the special position of these numbers in the Shifa.At the same time, to avoid writing the conclusion to be proven into the terminology in advance, this paper provisionally calls four, five, eight and nine the "special divination numbers". This name only means that they differ from the one and six usually used in the diagrams, and does not prejudge their fortune or misfortune. Liu Guangsheng once used the division of labor between number lines and symbol lines to explain the special position of these numbers in the *Shifa* [6]. Ma Mingzong discussed from the original meaning of "yao" why the uncommon divination numbers became objects of explanation [7]. Sun Hang and An Litong further distinguished the scopes of application of "yao", "xu" and "e yao" [2]. These studies are enough to show that four, five, eight and nine cannot be regarded as equal to one and six, but one cannot directly infer from them that these numbers necessarily reduce good fortune in every kind of divination. One may also say that having explanatory specialness and having a fixed unfavorable effect are two different propositions.

Table 1. Conditions, verdicts and special divination numbers of the eleven "de" cases [3]

Case	Slips	Conditions listed in the slip text	Verdict and continuation	Four, five, eight, nine
1	1—2	Wife and husband as one	nai de	none
2	3—4	Three left same as right	nai de	none
3	5—6	Three right same as left	nai de	none
4	7—8	Three male same as female	nai de	nine
5	9—10	Three female same as male	nai de	none

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Table 1. (continued)

6	11—12	Seeing ding numbers	nai yi de	four, five, nine
7	13—15	Arising in yang, entering in yin	yi de, its loss is thirteen	none
8	16—17	Spring sees eight	nai yi de	eight
9	18—19	Summer sees five	nai yi de	five
10	20—21	Autumn sees nine	nai yi de	nine
11	22—23	Winter sees four	nai yi de	four

"None" only means that four, five, eight and nine do not appear in the diagram, and does not mean that the case has no special hexagram-image relations.

What Table 1 shows is not two groups of material that completely overlap. Among the six cases containing special divination numbers, case 4 still uses "nai de", and among the six cases using "yi", case 7 has no special divination numbers. Therefore the special divination numbers are neither a sufficient condition nor a necessary condition for the appearance of "yi". Of course one still cannot conclude here that the special divination numbers never reduce good fortune, because that a certain factor does not change the wording every time it appears does not mean it plays no role in any context. So what this distribution in Table 1 really raises is a stricter demand on evidence: if one wants to explain "yi" as a downgrading caused by the special divination numbers, one must prove in the cases where both appear that the change of the verdict is indeed caused by the special divination numbers and not by other conditions.

The original slips make this evidential constraint intuitive. The diagram of slips 7—8 shows a "nine", yet the slip text plainly says "nai de"; the four trigrams of slips 13—15 are all composed of one and six, yet slip 15 writes "yi de", followed by "its loss is thirteen". Figure 1 places the two groups of original slips side by side and does not adopt the transcribed diagrams redrawn by the editors; the purpose is not to re-interpret the characters, but to preserve the material connections between the forms of the numbers, the positions of the writing and the order of the slips.

What Figure 1 proves is only that the special divination numbers and "yi" have a crossed distribution; it does not by itself refute the "fortune-reducing" explanation, but suggests that one can neither presuppose a reduction upon seeing nine, nor reason back from seeing "yi" that the diagram must contain an e yao. Zhao Lu's discussion of "markedness" suggests that which features of the hexagram figures the Shifa chooses to explain is related to the category of divination and the relations among the images.What Figure 1 proves is only that the special divination numbers and "yi" have a crossed distribution; it does not by itself refute the "fortune-reducing" explanation, but suggests that one can neither presuppose a reduction upon seeing nine, nor reason back from seeing "yi" that the diagram must contain an e yao. Zhao Lu's discussion of "markedness" suggests that which features of the hexagram figures the *Shifa* chooses to explain is related to the category of divination and the relations among the images [8]. "Wife and husband", "left and right", "male and female", "ding numbers", "yang and yin" and the four seasons were never conditions of the same level; if the differences among these conditions are ignored and "nai de" and "nai yi de" are only ranked into two grades, the information in the diagrams and verdicts that really needs explaining will instead be covered up.

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Case 4, slips 7—8: nine appears yet "nai de" is written

Case 7, slips 13—15: no special divination numbers yet "yi de" is written

Figure 1. Diagram-verdict comparison of original slips 7—8 and 13—15 [3][4]

3. The argument chain of the "fortune-reducing" explanation and its evidential gaps

The above has fixed the counterexample and the burden of evidence; this section further examines the basis of the "fortune-reducing" explanation. Case 5 and the four season cases can both be summarized, by the sex composition of the hexagrams, as "three female same as male"; the former uses "nai de" and the latter "nai yi de". If the two groups of material differed only in whether four, five, eight and nine appear, the special divination numbers would naturally be the primary factor explaining the change of wording. However, the comparison shown by the original slips is not so simple.



Spring sees eight, slips 16—17

Summer sees five, slips 18—19

Autumn sees nine, slips 20—21

Winter sees four, slips 22—23

Figure 2. Condition combinations of the original slips of the four season cases [3][5]

[4] Only irrelevant areas were cropped and the images scaled proportionally; the content of individual slips was not redrawn, spliced or altered, nor the slip order adjusted.

[5] The images are arranged by the four season cases and scaled proportionally; the writing and hexagram drawings on the slips were not redrawn.

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From right to left, the four season cases are "spring sees eight", "summer sees five", "autumn sees nine" and "winter sees four". They indeed jointly maintain the relation of "three female same as male", but they do not replace one number after another on the same diagram. The upper and lower trigrams of the right column change as groups with the seasons, and the special divination number in the lower left trigram changes accordingly. The editors have pointed out that these four groups of upper and lower trigrams stand opposite in pairs, and the special divination numbers all do not occupy the middle line [3]. In other words, compared with case 5, what changes here simultaneously includes at least the season, the specific trigrams and the numbers. Such material can suggest correlation, but cannot directly show which variable turns "nai de" into "nai yi de".

The season in particular cannot be treated as an irrelevant background. The Shifa also has a "fortune and misfortune of the four seasons" section, which uses the four times to regulate the fortune changes of the eight trigrams. Liu Chengqun used the pairing relations of the four times, yin-yang and the divination numbers to show that temporal conditions have a structural role in the verdict system of this text.The season in particular cannot be treated as an irrelevant background. The *Shifa* also has a "fortune and misfortune of the four seasons" section, which uses the four times to regulate the fortune changes of the eight trigrams. Liu Chengqun used the pairing relations of the four times, yin-yang and the divination numbers to show that temporal conditions have a structural role in the verdict system of this text [9]. This paper is not asserting that the four cases of the "de" section must directly apply the "fortune and misfortune of the four seasons"; but it can at least show that when explaining "spring sees eight", one cannot first delete "spring" and then treat "eight" as the only condition. The four times and the divination numbers may together form the condition of obtaining, or may each play their own role; in the absence of a stricter comparison, both accounts should be kept.

The "seeing ding numbers" case likewise cannot by itself fill this gap. Xie Naihe and Tian Xue gloss "ding" as Dui, and use the fact that the Dui image is originally auspicious while the diagram also contains four, five and nine to explain that "nai yi de" means still obtainable after damage [1]. Ma Mingzong proposed the "inverted numbers" explanation from the arrangement relations of the divination numbers [10]. Wang Huaping re-discussed the connection between the character form and the hexagram drawings from usage examples related to the Dui hexagram [11]. Each of these explanations has diagram and text evidence, but if one first uses some reading to decide that this case should have been fully auspicious, then uses "yi" to prove that the special numbers reduce fortune, and finally uses the fortune-reducing explanation to confirm that reading, the argument may become circular between two links that are themselves to be proven. The safer order is to first determine the basic usage of "yi" in this text, and then judge whether this case also carries a concessive or degree flavor of its own.

The "fortune-reducing" explanation of course has its material basis. Sun Hang and An Litong have noticed that case 4 "has nine and still obtains", and explain this situation by the hexagram image determining the general trend while the line images occupy a subordinate position. In their theory the e yao can cause a reduction without overturning the overall verdict of "de" [2]. This account keeps case 4 from being a simple counterevidence, but a new question needing argument arises: if "nai de", "nai yi de" and even more strongly affirmative verdicts can all coexist with the e yao, then whether the e yao actually causes reduction can no longer be proven by the mere fact that the verdict remains affirmative; one must find examples in which the difference of degree is explicitly expressed by the text.

The "death and life" section of the Shifa provides a useful comparison. Beyond relations such as "three auspicious together with inauspicious" and "three inauspicious together with auspicious", the

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relevant slip text plainly says that the bad lines occupy it, and distinguishes the time of death with "dies now" and "awaits death".The "death and life" section of the *Shifa* provides a useful comparison. Beyond relations such as "three auspicious together with inauspicious" and "three inauspicious together with auspicious", the relevant slip text plainly says that the bad lines occupy it, and distinguishes the time of death with "dies now" and "awaits death" [3]. Sun Hang and An Litong discussed on this basis the e yao accelerating the unfavorable result; their account has at least both links, condition and result [2]. The "de" section, however, does not state the e yao explicitly, nor does it give a common scale of degree for "nai de" and "nai yi de". Material of other categories can show that the special divination numbers may produce unfavorable effects, but cannot replace the diagram-verdict connection missing in this section.

Among the eleven cases, what better reflects limitation is case 7's "its loss is thirteen"; the editors explain it as a three-in-ten chance of not obtaining [3]. Xie Naihe and Tian Xue hold instead that, since the verdict has already said "de", the following sentence should refer to the insufficiency of what is obtained, not a renewed denial of whether one obtains [1]. The two accounts place "loss" respectively on the probability of success and on the share obtained; to a certain degree they can show that "loss thirteen" puts this case's "de" under limitation. The key point is that this limitation is stated plainly by "loss" and its number, not expressed by "yi" alone. Wang Huaping also explained the difference from the relations of the yang and yin hexagram drawings and the corresponding numbers in this case; his path of evidence does not appeal to the e yao [11]. Whether or not one accepts the specific calculation, this case requires separating two questions: what relation of images causes the limitation, and which word expresses the limitation in the sentence, are not the same thing.

Therefore what this section denies is not that the special divination numbers may reduce certain divinations, but a generalized inference whose middle link has not been filled. The season cases and case 5 are not a single-variable comparison; "seeing ding numbers" involves divergent readings; "its loss is thirteen", though an explicit limitation, appears exactly in the case without special divination numbers. The existing evidence at most allows saying that some "yi de" cases may also carry a concessive flavor, but it cannot yet prove that "yi" in the "de" section fixedly marks the fortune reduction caused by the special divination numbers.

4. The conditional-connection function of "yi": mutual corroboration of sentence patterns inside the shifa

What the preceding text said is a response to the existing explanation; this section must directly answer: if "yi" does not take downgrading as its basic meaning, why do the eleven cases use the two wordings "de" and "yi de"? This paper holds that the most direct evidence lies inside the Shifa itself, in the verdict sentences isomorphic with "nai" and "yi".What the preceding text said is a response to the existing explanation; this section must directly answer: if "yi" does not take downgrading as its basic meaning, why do the eleven cases use the two wordings "de" and "yi de"? This paper holds that the most direct evidence lies inside the *Shifa* itself, in the verdict sentences isomorphic with "nai" and "yi".

The former sentence fixes a set of conditions under which "zhi" may be pronounced; the latter turns to the "rest" situation and adds the condition of "changed direction", still reaching the verdict of "zhi". Sun Hang, when reconstructing the interpretation concepts of the eight trigrams in the Shifa, also examined this set of material within the transitions among different hexagram-image relations.The "zhi" (arriving) section first says: "when the trigrams of the four cardinal directions are seen, nai zhi", and then says: "for the rest, when the direction changes, nai yi zhi." [3] The

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former sentence fixes a set of conditions under which "zhi" may be pronounced; the latter turns to the "rest" situation and adds the condition of "changed direction", still reaching the verdict of "zhi". Sun Hang, when reconstructing the interpretation concepts of the eight trigrams in the *Shifa*, also examined this set of material within the transitions among different hexagram-image relations [12]. The "yi" here first of all means that although the condition has changed, the verdict can still stand. Whether the latter "zhi" is later, harder or lower in degree, the original sentence does not say; to make that inference one must still find separate grounds in time, quantity or degree.

The sentence pattern of the "guo" (fruit) section is neater: "for outer affairs the count goes out, nai guo; for inner affairs the count goes in, yi guo." [3] Outer and inner affairs require different directions of counting, yet the latter clause still gives the verdict "guo". The conditions before and after differ, the verdict is the same; "yi" brings the latter condition into the scope of application of "guo". If one ranks the guo of inner affairs in a lower grade only because the latter clause has one more character "yi", that instead requires assumptions outside the text.

Looking back at "de" from "zhi" and "guo", "yi de" can receive an explanation that does not depend on a degree sequence. The first five cases use relations such as wife-husband, left-right and male-female to explain obtainability; case 6 turns to "seeing ding numbers"; case 7 turns to the exit and entry of yin and yang; the last four cases further introduce the combination of seasons and special divination numbers. The latter six cases do not weaken item by item the same condition of the first five cases; rather, after changing the explaining conditions, they are still classified under the verdict "de". So what "yi" does is to take up these newly added conditions. And this inference relies only on the visible fact that the slip text indeed changes the statement of conditions while keeping the verdict on the result.

Case 7 can also receive, within this structure, an explanation that sacrifices none of the explicit text. "Arising in yang, entering in yin" states the condition; "yi de" confirms that under this condition it can still be classified as a divination of obtaining; "its loss is thirteen" further adds a limitation on the realization. If "its loss is thirteen" is understood as insufficiency of what is obtained, this case is obtainable but not complete; if it is understood as three in ten not obtaining, then the verdict of obtaining comes with a risk of failure. Both accounts must rely on the latter sentence to specify the limitation concretely, and neither needs to make the single character "yi" do two jobs at once, adding conditions and reducing degree.

This explanation can also show why "de" should not be directly understood as "ji" (auspicious). "De" first answers whether the matter asked about can be realized, while "ji" evaluates whether the result is favorable; the two often coincide in concrete cases but are not necessarily identical in degree. The third case of the "small de" section of the Shifa contains four and five, yet the verdict still reads "nai de zhi". This explanation can also show why "de" should not be directly understood as "ji" (auspicious). "De" first answers whether the matter asked about can be realized, while "ji" evaluates whether the result is favorable; the two often coincide in concrete cases but are not necessarily identical in degree. The third case of the "small de" section of the *Shifa* contains four and five, yet the verdict still reads "nai de zhi" [3]. Xie Naihe and Tian Xue have pointed out that the concrete understanding of "small de" involves word meaning and divination category, and cannot be directly equated with "small fortune" [1]. The "divining for husband and wife" section still has the verdict of "pure fortune" under diagrams containing special divination numbers, which also shows that the degree of affirmation cannot be predetermined only by whether the special divination numbers appear [3]. If "nai de" is taken as "great fortune" and "nai yi de" as "small fortune", one must further explain whether the scale of comparison is the amount obtained, the ease of realization, the speed in time, or accompanying loss, and so on; except for case 7, the other "yi

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de" cases provide no concrete measure. So the two should not be directly understood on a common scale.

Of course, "yi" as a marker of condition supplementation does not exclude a concessive color in context. Precisely because the added condition may depart from the common situation earlier in the text, "still obtainable" can pragmatically well carry the flavor of "even so, it is still obtainable". But concession is not the same as a fixed lowering of degree, and it cannot be attributed entirely to a certain class of special numbers. Sun Hang's research on "gua", "chun" and "xiao" emphasizes that the numbers work within concrete hexagram-image relations [12]. Along this line of thinking, the unit of analysis should be the complete combination from a certain kind of divination to a certain set of conditions to a certain verdict, rather than assigning "yi" a degree grade apart from the many interwoven conditions.

So the complete distribution of the eleven cases shows that "yi" and the special divination numbers do not correspond one to one, and the original slips of the season cases show that the existing comparison changes several conditions at once, so the causation of fortune reduction cannot be confirmed on this basis. Meanwhile the "zhi" and "guo" sections provide positive examples inside this text, showing that "yi" can maintain the same verdict when the condition changes; and case 7's "its loss is thirteen" also shows that the limitation is expressed plainly by the following text. Therefore, understanding "yi de" as "obtainable also under another condition", compared with understanding it as a lower degree of fortune, requires fewer additional assumptions and can preserve the differences among the cases more completely.

5. Conclusion

What this paper asks is whether "yi" in the "de" section can by itself prove the unfavorable effect of the special divination numbers, not whether the special divination numbers have an unfavorable effect. The special divination numbers and "yi" co-occur in most cases, and the relation between them is worth further pursuit; but the existing eleven cases contain at the same time cases with special numbers but no "yi" and cases without special numbers but with "yi", and the season cases and the "three female same as male" case do not form a comparison differing by only one number. Therefore, inferring directly from this that "yi" marks fortune reduction may still need more sufficient evidence.

So this paper holds that rather than presuming for "yi" a grading of result degrees, it is better to first restore the order of judgment preserved by the sentences. The Shifa first lists which image or season relations hold, then pronounces the verdict "de", "zhi" or "guo"; when the condition changes while the verdict stays, it uses "yi" to connect; and if the result has another limitation, it is added with words such as "loss".So this paper holds that rather than presuming for "yi" a grading of result degrees, it is better to first restore the order of judgment preserved by the sentences. The *Shifa* first lists which image or season relations hold, then pronounces the verdict "de", "zhi" or "guo"; when the condition changes while the verdict stays, it uses "yi" to connect; and if the result has another limitation, it is added with words such as "loss".

The Shifa writes the diagrams, conditions, verdicts and limitations together into the slips, which shows that when early divination books fixed the divination method, they did not only store ready-made conclusions; they also stored under what circumstances the conclusions could hold, and whether further explanation was still needed after they held. From this one can understand more concretely the textual nature of the Shifa as a divination book: what the slip text fixes is not a rule or an answer, but the correspondences of what judgments can be made within the mutual combination and influence of many elements; so it may be said that regularization did not cancel the space of

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interpretation, but brought the conditions on which interpretation depends into the writing as well. Of course this understanding cannot be directly generalized into a universal model of the evolution of early Yi learning; applying the rules of the Shifa to explain other pre-Qin divination cases still requires first proving that the different texts have comparable divination systems. But within this range, the original slips do suggest a way of reading easily covered by the received texts: the meaning of a verdict lies not only in the verdict itself, but also in why it holds and to what degree it holds. Only by reconnecting these three layers does the "yi" of "yi de" cease to be an isolated problem of a function word and become an entrance for observing how early divination knowledge was organized and transmitted.The *Shifa* writes the diagrams, conditions, verdicts and limitations together into the slips, which shows that when early divination books fixed the divination method, they did not only store ready-made conclusions; they also stored under what circumstances the conclusions could hold, and whether further explanation was still needed after they held. From this one can understand more concretely the textual nature of the *Shifa* as a divination book: what the slip text fixes is not a rule or an answer, but the correspondences of what judgments can be made within the mutual combination and influence of many elements; so it may be said that regularization did not cancel the space of interpretation, but brought the conditions on which interpretation depends into the writing as well. Of course this understanding cannot be directly generalized into a universal model of the evolution of early Yi learning; applying the rules of the *Shifa* to explain other pre-Qin divination cases still requires first proving that the different texts have comparable divination systems. But within this range, the original slips do suggest a way of reading easily covered by the received texts: the meaning of a verdict lies not only in the verdict itself, but also in why it holds and to what degree it holds. Only by reconnecting these three layers does the "yi" of "yi de" cease to be an isolated problem of a function word and become an entrance for observing how early divination knowledge was organized and transmitted.

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