

## The I Ching

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The information which follows is my interpretation of Chinese Book of Changes (I Ching). Some of the statements I make may be correct and others not, but is my understanding. I sometimes tell people that I have met two people I considered geniuses. When I asked them why they were so smart they revealed their underlying philosophy. One told me he had learned that everything is relative to your source of reference. The other told me that after many years of university he learned how to research and find out what he wanted know.



As a young man, at the age of 19, I had the good fortune of meeting a teacher by the name of Greg Moore. Greg introduced me to several great books and also taught me about how to listen to music. One of the books he told me about was the Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the I Ching, the Chinese Book of Changes. I remember my sister going to Mel Hurtig's bookstore in Edmonton and buying the book for me for my birthday. By the way, I have bought other translations of the I Ching but have not found them as easy to understand.

I really appreciated the introduction by Carl Jung which gave me the impression that every moment of time was unique. Certain conditions exist in each moment that uniquely represent that specific moment. When someone is born the time is unique for that individual.

The I Ching suggests that man and nature are different. Nature is the Tao and man is Teh. Consequently, people have talked about the way (nature) and the power (man).

The book suggests that time is made up of changes and that the changes occur as a function of chance. There is a natural order to the changes but chance influences the direction of the changes. I love the suggestion that Confucius said that if he had fifty years to add to his life he would devote it to the study of the I Ching to avoid making serious mistakes.

The book may be read to understand change or it can be used as an oracle. My teacher suggested that the book will not make decisions for you. It simply tells you the time in relation to a question you divine and from that understanding of the time you make a decision as to what to do. As a result of this understanding I often phrase questions in my mind like, "advice about ...", or "is it right for me to ...", as opposed to "should I"?





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There are two methods of divining; the yarrow stalk method and the method of using three coins. I have found the yarrow stock method a bit tricky and the coins are very easy so that is what I use. I acquired three Chinese coins from my friend Albert Lee. I assign the side of the coin with two symbols the numeric value of two and the other side the numeric value of three.



I shake the coins in my hands with my hands cupped into a circle and think about the question. When it feels right and a peace comes over me then I drop the coins on top of my book. I then add up the value of the coins and start to build a hexagram. I write down the values start at the bottom and add the lines working upward from the bottom to the top. You cast the coins 6 times for a question.

With three coins each having a value of 2 or 3 there are 4 possible totals:

Sum of coins	Line to be created
9	
8	
7	
6	

The line totals of 7 or 8 are seen as somewhat stable but the 6 or 9 lines are seen as potentially changing. The coins being all the same is seen as unstable and changes into the opposite. So yin changes to yang and vice versa. This is why the line symbols are different for 6 & 9.

The hexagram is made up of two trigrams, upper and lower.

For Example:



Changes into



here 11 changes to 5.

In the back of the Wilhem/Baynes translation of the I Ching book there is a fold-out page that cross references the hexagram number from the upper and lower trigrams. I read the hexagram from Book 1 at the front and then read from Book 3 at the back. If the changing line changes then the second chance hexagram will represent the new time.

In the book the hexagrams are generally divided into two large groups. The first set (1-30) are more core and the second half (31-64) refer more to social and family times. Within the hexagram there is reference to the time in general, followed by the Judgment (more earthly influences) and then the Image (more referring to the spiritual), then the lines that may or may not change.

I read the general information from Book 1 and then think about the Judgment and then read the Image as more mental or spiritual. Then I read the lines that change. Last go to the changing hexagram and read about the new potential time and its changing lines. If I need more information or another perspective, I go to Book 3 and repeat the process.

I store my coins in a small cloisonné container on top of my book – the container was a gift from an old friend, Helen Lee. I bring it down and use it when I have problems or when I am thinking of making somewhat major changes in my life.



I think the “old wisdom” is very useful and thank Greg for exposing me to this wonderful book. As Jimi Hendrix said, “what if a 6 turns out to be 9”? Well that is what we can gain some insight into!