

## What is the I Ching Oracle?

(From the Introduction to *The Holistic I Ching, or the Oracle of Wholeness.*)

The I Ching is a book of enduring wisdom that is consulted in relation to a current problem. It originated in ancient China, but contains universal wisdom. The I Ching or Book of Changes provides counsel about the most balanced, ethical and compassionate approach to take in a given situation. The texts can help one to become more whole, mature and empowered.



The wisdom of the I Ching was put into an oracle format, deliberately. It was probably realized that an oracle would be used far more often, than a book of philosophy gathering dust on a bookshelf! Furthermore, such a book could avoid threats. For example, the I Ching was one of the few Taoist and Confucian classics to survive the massive book burnings of the First Emperor of China in 213 BCE. The originators of the system were wise enough to present an ethical philosophy, in a form that could appeal to people of all eras, nations and races. The book has been translated into many languages and is useful to a person from any cultural setting, religion, or ideology. The main symbols are timeless, whereas the commentaries on the texts have been restated in new ways throughout the centuries.

## How is it used?

A reading is gained by using a method of random choice of texts, fully outlined in the Introduction to *The Holistic I Ching*. One allows the subconscious (rather than the more limited ego-consciousness) to choose the section of the book that corresponds most closely to current conditions. This process was called by the Swiss psychologist Dr. Carl Jung and others Synchronicity, i.e. a surprisingly significant, meaningful and relevant coincidence. How can this be so? Taoists and Zen Buddhists would have no qualms about such phenomena, as they have been saying for thousands of years that nothing is outside of Mind or beyond its Unity.

## The Underlying Philosophy

It is based on an ancient form of Taoism (pronounced Dowism). The word Tao (Dow) has several meanings. It is made up of the Chinese characters for head (conscious thinking) and going or stepping. The Tao implies: a Way of Balance – the Middle Path between extremes – a Way of harmonizing with the Eternal or the Great Tao.

It suggests travelling consciously towards a state of wholeness, rather than aspiring towards perfection. It has been described as treading lightly on the earth, or flowing with Life like water. Taoism is not just a set of ideas from the past, but a way of being in harmony with the world, that is always relevant and forms part of the eternal truths of all balanced teachings.

Further commentaries were attributed to Confucius (551-479 BCE) but were probably added to by later Confucian Scholars. Confucius was a contemporary of the Taoist Great Sage, Lao Tsu. The writings of Lao Tsu are more mystical and intuitive, while Confucius or Kung Tsu, concentrated on practical matters. The teachings of these two great Sages complement one another and both can be found in the I Ching. The word Tsu denotes someone who combines simplicity and innocence with wisdom and experience.



### Is it Fortune-telling?

It is not fortune-telling in that it is designed to focus upon the present situation. However **the texts do suggest very likely outcomes because of seeds being sown now**. Therefore the book is an oracle, but mostly in the form of self-counselling. The I Ching cannot provide precise detailed advice for every enquirer over the thousands of years of its use. Obviously it presents the principles or key issues at work, when receiving a particular text. Yet it can help one to think laterally about a problem and to find unique solutions. Carl Jung and other Depth Psychologists acknowledged the I Ching to be a valid technique for tapping the subconscious. For it reveals truths via your own psyche.

This seems to involve a balancing process between the conscious and the unconscious. Perhaps it operates via a form of resonance between the archetypal patterns of the I Ching (collective and universal in their application) and the state of the psyche in its present environment. The key is the interrelationship between ourselves and the universe, which is a fundamental tenet of Taoism. The structure of the system is itself a reflection of patterns of natural cyclic unfoldment.

It is not possible to explain the I Ching, nor how it works, as Carl Jung outlined in the Introduction to the Wilhelm edition. If you pride yourself on being rational or reality based, then why not test the system for yourself?

Ask at least **ten personal questions using the Holistic I Ching** (about current issues only) over one month. Record each reading received. Then review this information in another month's time. I am sure you will come to see how pertinent and helpful it can be. Anyone would have to admit that guidance about how to act in a balanced, ethical and compassionate manner, could be only useful to humanity. For much of our suffering in life is avoidable.



A former friend who was meteorologist told me that people ring the Weather Bureau and complain that their forecasts were out by one degree. He used to reply: "We do our best, but only Mother Nature knows what the weather will actually be." The forecaster can use knowledge of the way weather patterns form, what the former precedents were and thus a likely outcome. Often this is quite accurate, but Nature is never totally predictable. This is very similar to the way the I Ching works. Over its long use, users have built up experience due to precedents of what happened before when specific lines were received. The whole system is based on patterns of Nature. Yet life always surprises us! And isn't this wonderful.

*Taoist Gem: When you try to be perfect, you just end up in an unholy mess.  
Only the Tao or flow of Life is perfect, not the Ten Thousand Things.  
It's time for more joy.*