

Origins of I Ching:

The Origins of the Book of Changes are largely unknown, but dated:

~1100BCE – 300BCE [*Zhou Dynasty*]

Ancient Past:

Bone throwing divination – throwing bones and see how they align to better predict the future.

Zhou Dynasty: 1100BCE – 300BCE

- [*Mythical*] Emperor Fu Xi – credited with the Trigrams
 - KEY: I Ching's ideas existed before King Wen
- [*Real*] King Wen – credited with compiling works and making the Hexagrams
 - “Zhou Yi” / “Changes of Zhou”
 - continued by son, King Wu

Warring States Period: 481BCE – 221BCE

- Gong Dan – scholar who completed the works and added the commentary “Ten Wings”



Philosophical Expansion:

During the Zhou Dynasty, a very special *Kungfu Tzu* (Confucius) made I Ching part of the 5 Classics (五經 *wǔjīng*):

1. Book of History
2. Book of Poetry
3. Book of Rites
- 4. Book of Changes (I Ching)**
5. Spring and Autumn Annals

Made it *mandatory* for scholar-officials' training/schooling

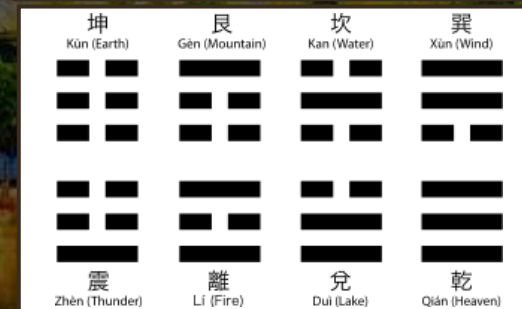
Han Dynasty:

Synthesized:

- Buddhism (impermanence) +
- Neo-Confucian (Morality) +
- Taoist spirituality and metaphysics

Combined with virtue
德 (dé)
And "Superior Person"
君子 (jūnzǐ)

孔夫子



Honorable Mention: Richard Wilhem and Carl Jung (Western Translations)





I Ching : Chinese Metaphysics

One of humanity's earliest *written* attempts at metaphysics.



- *The Universe is interconnected binary (阴阳 : yin yang)*
- *Things interplay dynamically, recombining to create all universe's phenomenon*
- *There are layers of subtly and increasingly complex combinations making things as they are*
- *By understanding the basics patterns of these changes, we can navigate life better*
 - *Practical application goes here*



Trigrams and Hexagrams

8 Trigrams (八卦 bāguà) = 3 lines with base meaning

- - yin
- yang

‘Building blocks of the universe’

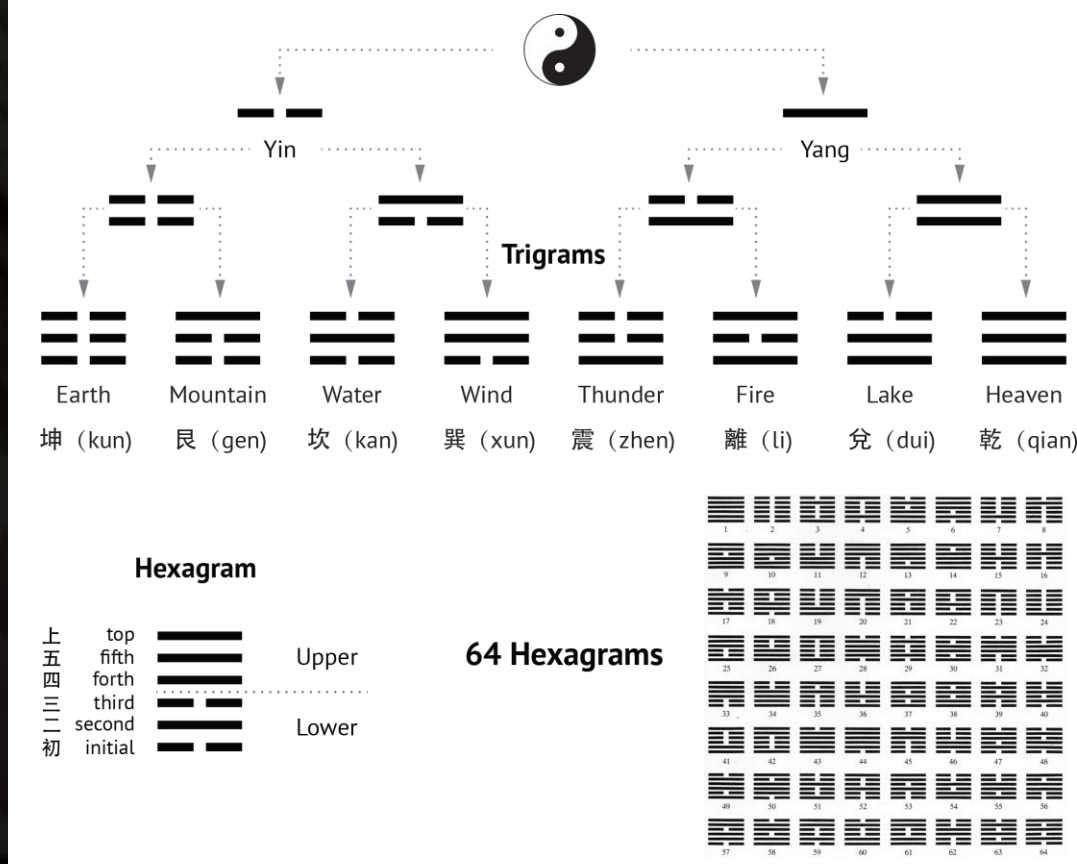
(Reason the number 8 has cultural significance)

64 Hexagrams = trigram + trigram

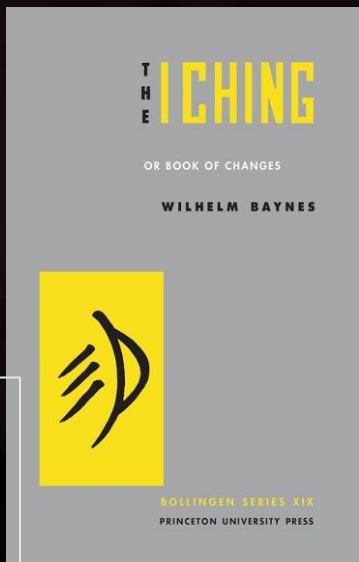
each combination = status in the cycle of change
 combinations catch the subtleties of reality

Use of **I Ching book** to help guide caster in figuring out what hexagram means what, and how to interpret the casting.

Each casting is usually hyper-specific to the situation, it’s a very thorough system combining with interpretation of modern questions.



Can be considered “Geomancy”



Casting the Trigrams and Hexagrams



There are multiple casting methods, evolved over thousands of years:
Begin with knowing your intent, and your question.

- **Yarrow Stalk Method** (most traditional, most in-depth):
 - 50 sticks: 1 set aside to represent the Tao's unity
 - Divide 49 remaining sticks into complex patterns, correlates with cosmic numbers
 - Successive divisions generates numbers for each line
- **Three Coin Method:**
 - Take 3 coins and throw them before you 6 times.
 - heads (3) tails (2): add up, each outcome makes a line, crossed line, or broken line.
 - Create Hexagram and interpret with the I Ching book from there.
- **Digital Method** (viability changes per website):
 - Many different websites and apps
 - Try to maintain ritualistic elements and the randomness to keep validity of reading

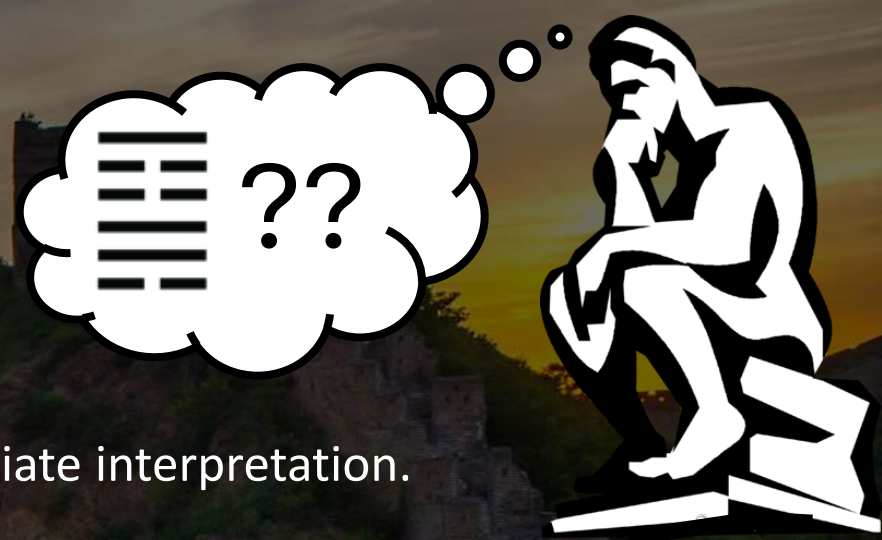


Interpreting the Casting:

There are six main methods of interpretation:

1. **Literal** (表面, Biǎomiàn): “primary” judgement, first degree of immediate interpretation.
2. **Symbolic** (象徵, Xiàngzhēng): use of traditional symbols and correlations with the hexagrams.
- EX: ☶ is “mountain” carrying all meanings with it.
3. **Practical** (實用, Shíyòng): Specific guidance on action or non-action.
4. **Spiritual** (靈性, Língxìng): Deeper universal truths and spiritual lessons.
5. **Contextual** (背景, Bèijǐng): general, cultural, or particular principles apply to the situation.
6. **Dynamic** (動態, Dòngtài): The transformative aspects revealed with the changing of the lines and relationship between the hexagrams.

And of course, how to interpret has changed a lot over ages. Most modern ones are *Literal and Contextual*



Permeates Chinese Culture



China society *Opinion / Letters*

Letters | Turn to the I Ching to build character, not to look into the future

Readers discuss the wisdom young people could draw from an ancient Chinese text, excessive expectations Hong Kong parents have of their children, and the falling birth rate in China



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Sources:

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