

Interpretation

Section I : the I Ching

Chapter I

The Coin method

This program uses the coin method to determine the outcome of a divination. An outcome will always consist of three hexagrams, the Actual hexagram, the Future hexagram and the Mediator. The Mediator will be discussed in section II.

Click Throw the coins.... under Oracle and next Complete. You'll see three coins being thrown six times. Tail represents yin and has the value 2, as indicated. Head represents yang and has the value 3. Obviously, the outcome of a throw will be between 6 and 9, inclusive.

One head, value 7, is called a 'young yang'.
Three heads, value 9, is called an 'old yang'.
One tail, value 8, is called a 'young yin'.
Three tails, value 6, is called an 'old yin'.

In a random context, there's only a one in four chance of a line changing: after the first coin, the outcome of which is irrelevant, the second gives a fifty-fifty chance of the line being unchanging and so, again, does the third. Thus unchanging lines, in the long run, outnumber changing ones by a factor three.

A young yang ascends to to become old, then recedes to become a young yin.

A young yin descends to become old, then rises to become a young yang.

Thus old lines change their character, while young ones don't. This is illustrated by the hexagrams that emerge simultaneously. The actual hexagram is on the left, the future hexagram on the right.

Young lines will carry the character they have in the actual hexagram into the future hexagram.

Old lines will change their character, and thus become the opposite, in the future hexagram.

If a question were attached to this process, then the two hexagrams (or one, in case no old lines did appear) would hold the answer. Before the Connexion all interpretation had to spring from this source. This is no longer the case,

but since the Connexion doesn't change the basics of interpretation, but only adds to them, we'll look into these basics first. Trigrams, for instance.

Chapter II

The Trigrams

§ 1. General

Hexagrams should be considered as being composed of two trigrams, rather than of six individual lines. These trigrams are open for interpretation according to the different sides of their nature: their properties, their images and their position within the family in the Inner World Arrangement (See Arrangements under Book).

Ch'ien, Creative Principle: Father	Strong	Heaven	
K'un, Passive Principle: Mother	Receptive	Earth	
Chen, Thunderclap: son	Arousing	Thunder, wood	1st
K'an, Abyss: 2nd son	Dangerous	Water, clouds	
Ken, Inaction: 3rd son	Resting	Mountain	
Sun, Mildness: daughter	Penetrating	Wind, wood	1st
Li, Clinging Brightness: daughter	Lightning	Fire, sun	2nd
Tui, Joy: 3rd daughter	Joyful	Lake	

Moreover, the positions of the trigrams with regard to each other should be taken into account: the lower trigram is under, inside, in the back, and its lines are considered waxing ; the upper trigram above, outside, in front, and its lines are considered waning.

§ 2. The Time

The total situation expressed by a hexagram, is called the time and must be interpreted according to the character of the hexagram.

In hexagrams where the situation as a whole involves movement, time is the increase or decrease caused by this movement. Hexagrams of this group are, for example, 23. Disintegration and 24. the Turning Point.

In a similar way time may be the act or the process characteristic for a hexagram, for example 6. Conflict and 21. Biting through.

Or time may be the law expressed by a hexagram, for example 31. Influence and 32. Endurance.

Finally time may be the symbolic situation expressed by a hexagram, for example 48. the Well and 50. the Cauldron.

In all of these cases, the time is essential for the interpretation of the situation: from this the individual lines derive their meaning.

§ 3. The Places

The different places occupied by the lines, represent an order of importance. The lines represent a division in noble and mean, determined by their relative positions. As a rule, the bottom- and top-line have minor impact, while the four central places are active within the time. Of these, the fifth is the place of the ruler, the fourth that of the minister near him. The third place has a transitional position of which the significance may vary, while the second place represents a civil servant in the province, with a direct connexion to the ruler in the fifth place. Likewise, the fourth place sometimes represents the ruler's wife, the second his son. Under certain conditions, the second place may be the wife, taking care of business inside, while the man in the fifth place is active in the outside world. Though names change, relations remain similar.

From the viewpoint of time, the bottom- and top-place usually mark beginning and end. Under certain conditions, the bottom-line marks someone starting to participate in the meaning of the time, without having entered its field of action; likewise, the top-line may represent someone withdrawing from the activities of the time. Whether or not these places are significant, depends on the meaning of the time represented by the hexagram.

§ 4. Character of the lines

The character of the lines is said to be strong or weak, central or not central, correct or incorrect.

Strong or 'yang' are the undivided lines, weak or 'yin' the divided.

Central refers to the trigrams, and thus to the lines in the second and fifth place, independent of their influence.

Correct is a line in a corresponding place, meaning a strong line in the bottom-, third or fifth place, or a weak line in the second, fourth or sixth place.

Strong and weak lines both can be favourable or unfavourable, depending on the demands of the time. If the time asks for firmness, strong lines are favourable; if it asks for receptiveness and submission, weak lines are favourable. This implies that 'correctness' isn't always in one's favour: if the time asks for submission, a strong line in the third place, though correct, may be a disadvantage due to the double hardness of both line and place. In such a case a compensating weak line is better.

The central positions usually are favourable regardless of correctness. A weak ruler in the fifth place may harmonize very well with a strong civil servant in the second place or a strong minister in the fourth, all lines being incorrect.

§ 5. Harmony

The corresponding lines of the upper and lower trigram are called correlates, and sometimes engage in a bond called harmony. This applies to the relation of the bottom-line with the fourth, the second with the fifth, and the third with the top-line. If the lines are different of nature, the correlation is called 'proper', but there are a few cases of harmony in an improper correlation.

In terms of correlation, the central lines are most important, in the proper relations of ruler and civil servant, father and son, man and wife. Especially a weak ruler and a strong civil servant, or a strong ruler and a weak civil servant, tend to harmonize.

Harmony does occur between the bottom- and the fourth line. In that case a strong bottom-line and a weak line in the fourth place is the best combination.

Harmony between the third and the top-line seldom occurs: the withdrawing sage in the sixth place would, entangled in worldly affairs, risk to lose his purity, whereas the civil servant in the third place would seem to ignore his ruler.

If another line rules the hexagram, harmony may occur in relations different from the ones above.

§ 6. Solidarity

Adjacent lines of a different nature may engage in a bond called solidarity, in which the lower line is considered to be 'receiving', while the upper line is considered to be 'resting on'. For this relationship the fourth and the fifth place, minister and ruler, usually deserve consideration. Here however, unlike the bond between the second and fifth line, the relation is most favourable if a weak minister serves a strong ruler: greater nearness requires greater respect.

Solidarity between the fifth and the top-line also occurs: a ruler paying tribute to a sage. Usually this involves a weak ruler and a strong sage. Solidarity in the lower regions does occur sporadically, and always brings with it the danger of nepotism, which should be avoided. If another line rules the hexagram, solidarity may occur in relations different from the ones above.

§ 7. The rulers of a hexagram

There are two kinds of rulers in a hexagram: constitutional and governing. The constitutional ruler is the line that gives the hexagram its characteristic meaning, regardless of its level and position.

One example is the weak bottom-line in 44. Coming on: its unexpectedly invading to the strong lines, disrupting the peace, is the constituting characteristic of the hexagram.

Governing rulers become what they are by their position and the meaning of the time; they always have a good character. Usually they occupy the fifth place, but occasionally other places house a ruler.

If a governing ruler is at the same time constitutional, he is sure to be good and his character and position are in accordance with the demands of the time. If not, then the constitutional ruler's character and position are not in accordance with the demands of the time.

A hexagram may have several governing or constitutional rulers. In the hexagrams, you'll find them under the Lines.

Constitutional rulers are marked **X**, governing rulers are marked **O**. If they are identical, the sign of the governing ruler has been used.

Chapter III

The Actual Hexagram

Click Connect & Complete under Oracle, and next OK.

Now you've got a Connexion with several marked hexagrams.

For the moment we're not interested in the Connexion, but only in the actual hexagram, which is the one marked with a yellow hexagon.

Click it to obtain the text.

The first appearance of anything is what we call an image; when it has received its complete form, we call it a definite thing.

Ta Chuan, section I, chapter XI, §4.

See also Ta Chuan, section I, chapter VIII, §§ 1-2.

If a question were attached to the process, this hexagram would represent

the answer as far as the actual situation is concerned. The most important aspects are the Image, the Judgement and the Lines, especially the changing ones.

The Image introduces the hexagram as an interaction between its trigrams, and shows the state of mind a superior man would adopt under the circumstances.

The Judgement focuses on the subject and how he or she should act under the circumstances to proceed with advantage or to avoid calamity. The circumstances may be good or bad, but there's always a best strategy. Generally speaking the I advises the course of the due mean, or 'the way of the superior man', as such. This is what the I says:

[Beginning with taking note of its explanations, we reason out the principles to which they point. Thus we find that it does supply a constant and standard rule. But if there be not the proper men, the course cannot be pursued.](#)

Ta Chuan, section II, chapter VIII, §4.

One may not aspire to the course of the due mean. In that case there's little point in asking advice, even less in following it. Freedom may very well exist in losing the interest of Those above and dealing with one's demons all alone. This is what the I asks:

[Can anything be done by him whom the will and appointment of Heaven do not help?](#)

25. Wu Wang , Commentary.

Attached to the Judgement is a Commentary that elaborates on the various points. Though separated by some seven centuries, these commentaries are very much in the same spirit as the Judgements themselves, and should be read carefully.

Now we get to a very important part, the Lines. Here the tendencies of movement that surround the question become manifest. First of all, the complete section should be read. Its subject can be followed as he goes through the different stages of the hexagram, encountering good or evil as the case may be, and the advice that goes with it.

This is what the I says:

[There is difficulty in knowing the significance of the first line, while to know that of the topmost line is easy; they form the beginning and the end of the hexagram. The explanation of the first line tasked the calculating of the makers, but in the end they had but to complete this.](#)

Ta Chuan, section II, chapter IX, §2.

These symbolic stages may represent, or trigger the response of, different levels of the subject's mind, as well as actual situations he's involved in. The first line is the most difficult because it represents a first and minute movement as it becomes manifest.

As such it is easily overlooked by busy minds.

If there are evil tendencies with regard to the question, internal or external, the I warns against impulsive reactions and shows the best way to cope with the problem.

If no lines did change, the answer must be interpreted from the above, and from any additional information that may have appeared in the form of an appended judgement, or a reference made to the Ta Chuan or the Shuo Kua.

If lines did change, the above provides a context for the next step, which is the interpretation of these changing lines in terms of the question. They carry the most weight, and should be contemplated with care. For them the Commentaries should also be taken into account, though their quality may vary.

You may have forgotten which lines did actually change! In the third section you will find how this can be retraced by comparing the 'neighbour-pattern' of the actual and the future hexagram (marked with a blue hexagon). Meanwhile it's far easier to look at the Mediator (marked with a white hexagon): starting bottom-left and going anti-clockwise, its yin-lines indicate the positions where the actual hexagram did change its lines.

Chapter IV

The Future Hexagram

Click the future hexagram to obtain the text. This is the outcome of the several tendencies working in the actual hexagram, and it represents the situation towards which its subject is moving.

The time this process will take depends first and foremost on the time span implied in the question. Asking the best strategy for a job interview on the next day is another matter than asking the prospects for a relation over the next three years. So you yourself are the prime factor in this respect, and indicating a time span along with the question is good strategy.

Secondary factors regarding time can be read from the nature of the actual hexagram and from the relative positions of the hexagrams in the Connexion. I'll come to that in section II.

Keeping the time factor in mind, the nature of the developing situation can

be read from the Image and the Judgement of the future hexagram. The Commentary should also be taken into account, but the Lines no longer play a role.

In the textfile of any hexagram you will find three hexagrams marked reverse, inverse and exchanged. Any one of these appearing as a future hexagram or a Mediator, is also a matter is worth considering. I'll come to that in section II too.

This concludes the basic procedure of a divination (without a Connexion) and by this time you may have encountered several problems trying to interpret the symbolism. To make this easier, explanations of a few of the most frequent symbolic phraseologies have been collected in the file Symbolism under Help.
