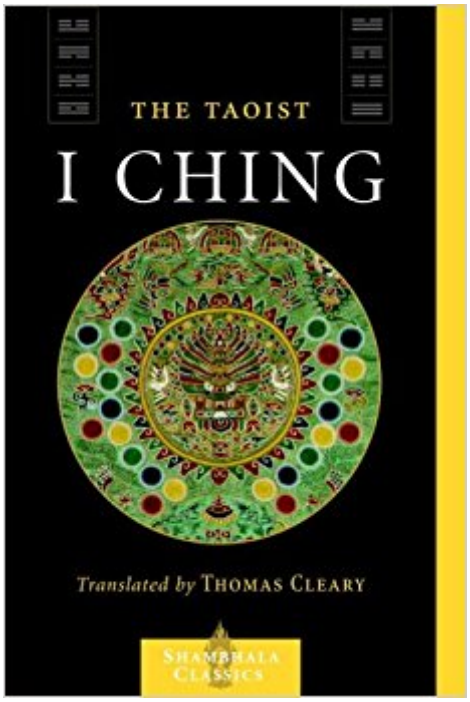
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The Taoist I Ching (Shambhala Classics)



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Synopsis

The I Ching, or "Book of Change," is considered the oldest of the Chinese classics and has throughout history commanded unsurpassed prestige and popularity. Containing several layers of text and given numerous levels of interpretation, it has captured continuous attention for well over two thousand years. It has been considered a book of fundamental principles by philosophers, politicians, mystics, alchemists, yogins, diviners, sorcerers, and more recently by scientists and mathematicians. This first part of the present volume is the text of the I Ching properÃ¢â ¬â •the sixty-four hexagrams plus sayings on the hexagrams and their linesÃ¢â ¬â •with the commentary composed by Liu I-ming, a Taoist adept, in 1796. The second part is Liu I-ming's commentary on the two sections added to the I Ching by earlier commentators, believed to be members of the original Confucian school; these two sections are known as the Overall Images and the Mixed Hexagrams. In total, the book illuminates the Taoist inner teachings as practiced in the School of Complete Reality. Well versed in Buddhism and Confucianism as well as Taoism, Liu I-ming intended his work to be read as a guide to comprehensive self-realization while living an ordinary life in the world. In his attempt to lift the veil of mystery from the esoteric language of the I Ching, he employs the terminology of psychology, sociology, history, myth, and religion. This commentary on the I Ching stands as a major contribution to the elucidation of Chinese spiritual genius.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Chinese (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The "Book Of Change" is considered the oldest of the Chinese classics. A book of fundamental principles by philosophers, politicians, mystics and others. To be read as a guide to comprehensive self-realization. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is quite different from what I expected. It is an interpretation of the I Ching written by a Taoist meditation master. It is filled with technical Taoist terminology which will be difficult for the average person to understand. Thomas Cleary has written an excellent Introduction explaining some of the terminology and historical background. To an experienced Taoist meditator, one who has mastered the meditational terms, this book will speak directly. For myself, this book will be an occasional backup to the well known Wilhelm / Baynes translation.

Having read many translations & owning about 8, I always find myself returning to this one. Each translation I own has a place, and It can be valuable to compare different takes on a hexagram. But when I want what I feel is a more pure voice, in line with my Taoist sensibilities, I reach for Cleary’s translation. Where other texts seem to get mired in language, The Taoist I Ching gets to source, always leaving me dialed in. Where another might have me considering specifics, this work nurtures my ability to let go and allow. I’m quite fond of this translation. I own both a softcover and digital edition.

I have several editions of the i-Ching, but this is the one I would take to a desert island. This iteration of the text and commentary is relatively recent -- 18th century -- and very well developed.Each book in Cleary’s i-Ching trilogy -- Buddhist, Taoist and the Tao of Organization -- offers something unique and appealing. The Taoist i-Ching is the most metaphysical of the three and the most developed. Although the Buddhist i-Ching is a bit more human and friendly, Taoist thinking tends to mesh better with the underlying concepts.The Taoist i-Ching is based on Complete Reality Taoism, which is very adaptible to beliefs from all walks of life. The processes of yin and yang rising and falling are most prominent in the commentaries. Overall, the edition reads as a very modern take on the ancient text.

Liu I-Ming’s treatise on the I Ching is well worth reading if you are interested in Taoism generally

and/or its spiritual-alchemy tradition specifically. One thing to bear in mind is that his commentary is not, in my opinion anyway, all that suited to the more random divinatory approach that many look to the I Ching for. Instead, it is Liu's case for seeing the I Ching as a system that might advise one on his/her Taoist-alchemical path. For example, he reads the hexagrams in a narrative sequence, and the lines within the hexagrams in sequence as well. In his system, then, it seems to me, it wouldn't make much sense to read any line randomly, as one might in strict divination practice, since you would therefore lose the context of his commentary on that line. It's not about randomness for Liu, but rather seeing the whole I Ching as one system. And, given that it's a particular system, it helps to have some prior knowledge of the alchemical "language" (though translator Cleary provides a good introduction explaining it). If you have no interest in Taoist alchemy, it's probably not the book for you. While some information is given on "consulting" it as an oracle, as aforementioned it almost doesn't make sense to do so this way.In regard to Liu's alchemical system, it is similar to his commentary on Chang Po-Tuan's 'Understanding Reality' (also translated by Cleary) -- one seeks to balance yin and yang, leading to a firing process that eventually allows the golden elixir to crystallize. As usual with Taoist alchemical texts, Liu stops just short of giving you the actual secret to doing all this -- instead, you are directed to find a teacher who will give you the oral instructions. That's great, if you're able to find one. If not, you may be out of luck, as Liu specifically warns against individual guesswork. Interestingly, he also attacks those who vaunt the circulation of energy as the secret: on p. 228 he witheringly refers to "Excess in being ignorant and acting arbitrarily, listening to blind teachers, striving for elevation by conveying the energy up to boost the brain, or conveying the energy up into the head, or keeping the thought on the point between the brows. . . " -- so if you thought the "microcosmic orbit" was what it was all about, Liu would seem to suggest you're wrong. And he was indeed one of the foremost commentators on spiritual alchemy. He also attacks excess in meditation (i.e to the point of "quietism", though not all meditation itself). Oftentimes, this book seems to be more about balance in life, which is something seemingly within reach. Yet, tantalizingly, there seems to be some further secret that always remains unavailable to those uninitiated with by private oral instructions.Well, whatever about all that, this book is well worth reading, will challenge you, and make you work hard (at least mentally). But if you just want an easy oracle that tells you what you should do in some given situation, go with the old Wilheml/Baynes.

I have been a student of the I Ching for forty-two years. For forty-one years I consulted Richard Wilhelm's translation. Last year I discovered this, Thomas Cleary, translation, and it is now the book

I consult. This I Ching was written by the Taoist adept, Liu I-ming, "to show how the I Ching.....can be read as a guide to comprehensive self-realization while living an ordinary life in the world." (Thomas Cleary, Forward to The Taoist I Ching). Thus The Taoist I Ching simply best captures the essence of the teaching of the I Ching.

I became familiar with the 1986 edition of the I Ching...as translated, and considered by Thomas Cleary. So...when my nephew asked me to recommend the "best" of the present editions...after a look-see, I bought the one with his name on it.

I love Thomas Cleary's translation. His Art of War is also a favorite of mine. If you ruminate upon/masticate and digest the material, you will be better for the time spent.

I am still reading it. The translation is great and the author is well regarded by Taoists.I am only in the process of reading it. But gaining wisdom is a long, daily process. So I think I will share more about this book in time to come.

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