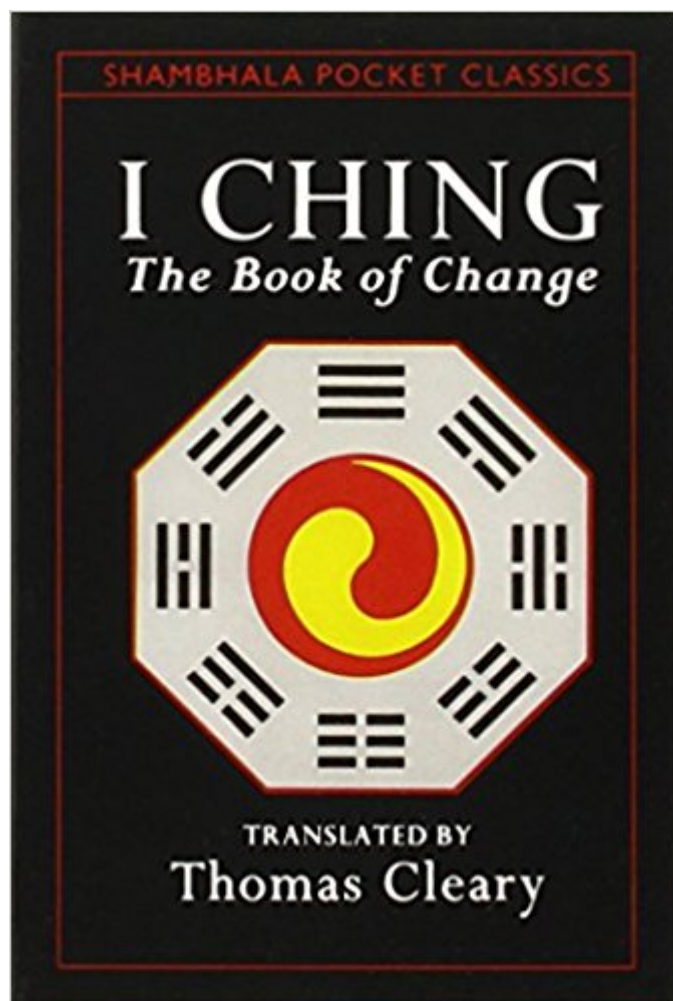


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I Ching (Shambhala Pocket Classics)



Synopsis

The I Ching is the most ancient and profound of the Chinese classics, venerated for over three thousand years as an oracle of fortune, a guide to success, and a dispensary of wisdom. This new translation, with commentary by Confucius, emphasizes applying practical wisdom in everyday affairs. Complete instructions for consulting the I Ching are included.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As others here note, this is a handy reference for the experienced user. Beginners would do better with Hilary Barrett, or perhaps R. L Wing or Carol Anthony (among others). Shambhala shows a publication date of 1992; I suspect this is a much earlier work by Cleary, who's reputation rests on clear and accurate translation rather than poetic indulgence. The text here -- the source of which is never stated -- is rather clunky and obtuse, recounting the Confucian epigrammatic description, judgment, and image for each of the 64 hexagrams along with commentaries on the changing lines. Those generally familiar with the I Ching will soon be at home with this bare-bones political manual stripped of Victorian-era sentimentality (via to Legge and Wilhelm) and pop-psychological/new age fluffiness (thanks to latter-day Jungians), and might gain some useful insights. New users will be less than edified by commentaries such as "If you fasten something with the hide of a yellow ox, nothing can unloosen it." The introductory text, though insightful, seems to be written for academics; the book ends with a "List of Hexagrams with their Primal Correlates and Structural Complements."

What this means and why the reader should care is not explained. In sum: It is indeed a handy pocket guide for those who (like me) cogitate on hexagrams and do an occasional cast throughout the day, and like to have a concise source-book on hand. Beginners would do well to build their libraries on more accessible texts before acquiring this one.

A previous reviewer mentioned the fact that Cleary's translation seems to "miss the point." While I don't know what "point" it missed, I do agree that this really isn't the book for a first time approach to the I Ching. Western readers unfamiliar with the tenets of Eastern philosophy or the use of hexagrams will find this edition of the Book of Change particularly unhelpful. For a seasoned user of the I Ching this is likely an excellent way to keep the book on one's person at all times--if that's you, this book cannot come more highly recommended. However, for the first time user, the book is vague and almost impenetrable. The instructions for consulting the Book of Change Cleary includes are interesting, but again, of little import to a person unfamiliar with the whole concept the book is founded upon. Overall, however, Cleary seems to demonstrate his prowess at translating Eastern works (if not necessarily explaining them fully), and this work is akin to his groundbreaking translation of the Koran (Qur'an): clear and concise in language.

This is probably my least favorite translation of the I Ching (I have about three others). It is such a dry and literal translation it is almost unusable. Example: "Predominance of the great is when the great or almighty predominate. The ridgepole bending symbolizes weakness at the basis and in outgrowths." The only reason I keep it is because it is, indeed portable. However, I find myself using it more as a guide for the hexagram numbers, (which I have come to know fairly well) NOT the readings themselves. For what its worth, I have personally found Brian Walker Browne's translation/interpretation to be by far the wisest and most readable version of the I Ching. I never leave home without it.

Shambhala Pocket Classics capture the essence of this version of the I Ching. I have a few other Shambhala Classics and am impressed with their ability to focus on the important ideas. I have the Wilhelm/Baynes edition of the I Ching which is great of deep study and research. But this little book is great for a quick look up of the meanings. The book fits easily in the palm of your hand. Is it available for the Kindle, or a smart phone?

Tough, tough going on this one. Requires a lot of patience and decoding to make it make any sense

to the modern world. Under that, though, it's clearly brilliant, as it describes the whole gamut of possible situations in a society. Book is quite small and the paper is cheap-ish.

I have the Hardcover edition of this edition of the I-Ching by Thomas Cleary, and for my purposes the edition works well, so I just purchased the Pocket Edition a few days ago. I also have Cleary's "The Taoist I-Ching" and "The I-Ching Mandalas", as well as the classic Wilhelm/Baynes/Jung edition. This edition works well for me because 1) It includes a commentary by Confucius, and 2) I don't use the I-Ching for divination, but instead prefer to read the commentary for the hexagrams and work with the tri-grams. The Hardcover edition is fairly handy, while the pocket edition is good for keeping with oneself and when traveling. I wouldn't recommend this edition to those who desire to learn to use the I-Ching for divination, but if one is already acquainted with the I-Ching, the pocket edition is quite handy. I wish and/or Shambhala would have done a better job of advertizing this edition of the I-Ching so that it would be purchased by the proper audience. Many who purchased this edition have written somewhat negative reviews because they were expecting something different. This is disappointing, because this book is better than the overall rating given by those who purchased this edition. Although I wish Thomas Cleary would do a better job with providing references in his translations, I find the actual translations to be easy to understand. Therefore, even if I believe there is a better translation of a particular work, many times I will also purchase the Cleary translation. Also, besides the editions of the I-Ching I mentioned above, I also recommend The Complete I-Ching by Taoist Master Alfred Huang, and for beginners, John Blofeld's book on the I-Ching.

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