

SHUO KUA
EIGHTH WING OF
THE *I CHING*
Chinese “Book of Change”

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I Ching (Book of Change)
SHUO KUA
DISCUSSION OF THE TRIGRAMS

The following translation of the *Shuo Kua* was published by the Work of the Chariot in 1973.

Chapter One

Section One

In ancient times the holy sages made the **Book of Change** thus:

- They invented the yarrow-stalk oracle in order to lend aid in a mysterious way to the light of the Gods. To heaven they assigned the number three and to Earth the number two; from these they computed the other numbers.
- They contemplated the changes in the dark and the light and established the hexagrams in accordance with them. They brought about movements in the firm and the yielding, and thus produced the individual lines.
- They put themselves in accord with Tao and its power, and in conformity with this laid down the order of what is right. By thinking through the order of the outer world to the end, and by exploring the law of their nature to the deepest core, they arrived at an understanding of fate.

Section Two

In ancient times the holy sages made the **Book of Changes** thus:

- Their purpose was to follow the order of their nature and of fate.
- Therefore they determined the Tao of heaven and called it the dark and the light.
- They determined the Tao of the Earth and called it the yielding and the firm.
- They determined the Tao of Man and called it love and rectitude.
- They combined these three fundamental powers and doubled them; therefore in the **Book of Change**, six lines always form a sign.

The places are divided into the dark and the light.

The yielding and the firm occupy these by turns.

Therefore the **Book of Change** has six places,
which constitute the linear figures.

Chapter Two

Section Three

Heaven and Earth determine the direction

The forces of mountain and lake are united.

Thunder and wind arouse each other.

Water and fire do not combat each other.

Thus are the eight Trigrams intermingled.

Counting that which is going into the past depends on the forward movement.

Knowing that which is to come depends on the backward movement.

This is why the **Book of Change** has backward-moving numbers.

Section Four

God comes forth in the sign of the Arousing,

He brings all things to completion in the sign of the Gentle:

He causes creatures to perceive one another in the sign of the Clinging;

He causes them to serve one another in the sign of the Receptive;
He gives them joy in the sign of the Joyous;
He battles in the sign of the Creative;
He toils in the sign of the Abysmal;
He brings them to perfection in the sign of Keeping Still.
All living things come forth in the sign of the Arousing.
The Arousing stands in the east.

They come to completion in the sign of the Gentle.

The Gentle stands in the southeast.

Completion means that all creatures become pure and perfect.

The Clinging is the brightness in which all creatures perceive one another. It is the Trigram of the south. That the holy sages turned their faces to the south while they gave ear to the meaning of the universe means that in ruling they turned toward what is light. This they evidently took from this Trigram.

The Receptive means the Earth. It takes care that all creatures are nourished.

Therefore it is said: "He causes them to serve one another in the sign of the Receptive."

The Joyous is mid autumn, which rejoices all creatures.

Therefore it is said: "He gives them joy in the sign of the Joyous."

He battles in the sign of the Creative.

The Creative is the Trigram of toil, to which all creatures are subject.

Therefore it is said; "He toils in the sign of the Abysmal."

Keeping Still is the Trigram of the northeast,

where beginning and end of all creatures are completed.

Therefore it is said: "He brings them to perfection in the sign of Keeping Still."

Section Six

The spirit is mysterious in all living things and works through them.

Of all the forces that move things, there is none swifter than Thunder.

Of all the forces that bend things, there is none swifter than the Wind.

Of all forces that warm things, there is none more drying than Fire.

Of all forces that give joy to things, there is none more gladdening than the Lake.

Of all the forces that moisten things, there is none moister than Water.

Of all the forces that end and begin things, there is none
more glorious than Keeping Still.

Therefore: Water and fire complement each other,

Thunder and Wind do not interfere with each other,

and the forces of Mountain and Lake are united in their action.

Thus only are change and transformation possible, and thus only
can all things come to perfection.

Chapter Three

Section Seven

The Creative is strong.

The Receptive is yielding.

The Arousing means movement.

The Gentle is penetrating.

The Abysmal is dangerous.

The Clinging means dependence.

Keeping Still means standstill.
The Joyous means pleasure.

Section Eight

The Creative acts in the horse,
the Receptive in the cow,
the Arousing in the dragon,
the Gentle in the cock,
the Abysmal in the pig,
the Clinging in the pheasant,
Keeping Still in the dog,
the Joyous in the sheep.

Section Nine

The Creative manifests itself in the head,
the Receptive in the belly,
the Arousing in the foot,
the Gentle in the thighs,
the Abysmal in the ear,
the Clinging in the eye,
Keeping Still in the hand,
the Joyous in the mouth.

Section Ten

The Creative is heaven, therefore, it is called the father.
The Receptive is the earth, therefore, it is called the mother.
In the Trigram of the Arousing, she seeks for the first time the power of the male and receives a son. Therefore, the Arousing is called the Eldest Son.
In the Trigram of the Gentle the male seeks for the first time the power of the female and receives a daughter. Therefore, the Gentle is called the Eldest Daughter.
In the Trigram of the Abysmal she seeks for a second time and receives a son. Therefore, it is called the Middle Son.
In the Trigram of the Clinging he seeks for a second time and receives a daughter. Therefore, it is called the Middle Daughter.
In the Trigram of Keeping Still she seeks for a third time and receives a son. Therefore, it is called the Youngest Son.
In the Trigram of the Joyous he seeks for a third time and receives a daughter. Therefore, it is called the Third Daughter.

Section Eleven

The Creative is heaven. It is round, it is the prince, the father, jade, metal, cold, ice; it is deep red, a good horse, an old horse, a lean horse, a wild horse, tree fruit (straight, dragon, upper garment, word).
The Receptive is the earth, the mother. It is cloth, a kettle, frugality; it is level, it is a cow with a calf, a large wagon, form, the multitude, a shaft. Among the various kinds of soil, it is the black.
The Arousing is thunder, the dragon. It is dark yellow, it is a spreading out, a great road, the eldest son. It is decisive and vehement; it is bamboo that is green and young, it is reed and rush.

Among horses it signifies those which can neigh well, those with white hind legs, those which gallop, those with a star on the forehead.

Among useful plants are the pod-bearing ones. Finally it is the strong, that which grows luxuriantly.

The Gentle is wood, wind, the eldest daughter, the guideline, work; it is the white, the long, the high; it is advance and retreat, the undecided, odor.

Among men it means the gray-haired; it means those with broad foreheads; it means those with much white in their eyes; it means those close to gain, so that in the market they get threefold value. Finally it is the sign of vehemence.

The Abysmal is water, ditches, ambush, bending and straightening out, bow and wheel.

Among men it means the melancholy, those with sick hearts, those with earache.

It is the blood sign, it is red.

Among horses it means those with beautiful backs, those with wild courage, those which let their heads hang, those with thin hoofs, those which stumble.

Among chariots it means those with many defects.

It is penetration, the moon. It means thieves.

Among varieties of wood it means those which are firm and have much pith.

The Clinging is fire, the sun, lightning, and the middle daughter.

It means coats of mail and helmets; it means lances and weapons.

Among men it means the big-bellied.

It is the sign of dryness. It means the tortoise, the crab, the snail, the mussel, and the hawksbill tortoise.

Among trees it means those which dry out in the upper part of the trunk.

Keeping Still is the mountain; it is a by-path; it means little stones, doors and openings, fruits and seeds, eunuchs and watchmen, the fingers; it is the dog, the rat, and the various kinds of black-billed birds.

Among trees it means those which are firm and gnarled.

The Joyous is the lake, the youngest daughter; it is a sorceress, it is mouth and tongue. It means smashing and breaking apart; it means dropping off and bursting open. Among the kinds of soil it is the hard and salty. It is the concubine. It is the sheep.

End of the *SHUO KUA*