

4.1 Oracle Reading by Comparative Study

Applying the Meaning and Principle Interpretive Approach

Several of the English translations I've referenced in the textbook are now in the public domain and freely accessible, though for those who can, consider adding a few of the other mentioned texts to your home library of I Ching sources. In this exercise, you'll be casting a hexagram, yielding a single hexagram line oracle message, and then consulting this text plus two more for a total of three sources to study.

For this divinatory method, you will be imaging yourself invoking the Lady of the Nine Heavens, 九天玄女 (Jiǔ Tiān Xuán Nǚ) and with her divine hand guiding yours, "channel" the hexagram. You'll also want to try this exercise at a late hour, preferably between midnight and 3 am.

Have pen and paper ready on hand. If you'd like to be fancy, get out your Chinese calligraphy set, prepare the ink from the inkstone, the water, and your calligraphy brush. As an aside, given the arm form required in Chinese calligraphy and the way you hold the brush, automatic writing, or channeled spirit writing, is a lot easier with a traditional Chinese calligraphy brush than with the modern-day pen.



Figure 4.5 Chinese Calligraphy Brushes and Inkstone Set

Begin by lighting incense. Select your personal favorite and the most prized incense you have. Turn off all electrical lighting and then light a candle. You'll want to cast this hexagram by candlelight only. As you light the candle, recite aloud the following:

**VENERABLE LADY OF THE NINE HEAVENS,
master teacher of the mystic arts, I light this flame in
petition for your presence. I seek to be guided by your
hand. By your hand taking a hold of mine, show me
The Way.**

If you are new to such methods, you may need to repeat the recitation several more times before you feel the shift. It's perfectly permissible to read the text aloud from your notes, though just like musical performance, when you can recite it from the heart, it's more powerful.

The candle flame will flicker in an inordinate way. You will naturally sit up straighter and taller. You suddenly feel more empowered, taking deeper breaths, and feeling a surge of confidence.

Detach from any and all knowledge you believe you have of the I Ching and yield to the mystical experience. Detach from any concentration or thought about what trigrams are being formed from your lines. Do not second-guess yourself. Whatever line, broken or solid, you feel being drawn by your hand, as if automatically, let it come.

Upon feeling the shift in consciousness and a powerful, potent, pressured hand taking a hold of your own, ask aloud, "What is the first line?" Let that line, be it yin or yang, flow from you. It is not a line you are drawing, but rather, the Lady of the Nine Heavens is moving your hand to draw. Draw that line, be it yin or yang, below:

Line 1:

"What is the second line?" you ask. Let that line, above the first, flow from you.

Line 2:

"Venerable One, what is the third line?"

Line 3:

And continue constructing the hexagram bottom up until your hand has been guided to draw all six lines: "Venerable Lady of the Nine Heavens, reveal to me the fourth line."

Line 4:

"Holy One, reveal to me the fifth line."

Line 1:

"Please guide my hand so I may receive the sixth and final line."

Line 6:

After the six lines are drawn, feeling as if another is in control, driving the movements of your arm, mark one of the six lines as the changing line to read. Place an “X” to the right of one of the chosen six boxes containing the yin and yang lines.

When the guided message is complete, on your own you are going to feel an immediate lurch or reversion back to your ordinary self, and that sense of divinity will have left you. You’ll know that the divination is complete and the Venerable One has returned to Heaven.

At this time, snuff out the candle and restore the lights. In this divination exercise, you did not present a specific question to be answered. Rather, you channeled a divine presence and asked to receive a revelation. Consider this revelation of six lines a complete book of six chapters. For a summary of this prophetic narrative you’ve received, look up the hexagram you’ve drawn and take notes on the Oracle message:

<i>Draw the hexagram diagram below:</i>	

When you marked an “X” next to a spontaneously chosen Line, you were being guided toward that line by the Divine Hand. Table 4.7 shows you the indications for the Line you had spontaneously marked during the channeling session.

Table 4.7 Hexagram Line Designations

SIX CHAPTERS WITH SIX REVELATIONS

Line 6	Forecast of the long-term future to come
Line 5	Forecast of the short-term future to come
Line 4	Practical advice on next step to take
Line 3	For seeking clarity when you feel lost
Line 2	How to prepare for the journey ahead
Line 1	For seeking a new direction in life

From Wen's *I Ching, The Oracle*:

Line # _____ From: _____

Line # From:

To apply a Meaning and Principle interpretive approach, you'll want to consider the moral principle that the living Oracle is imparting upon you. There is a double meaning to how the tradition of "Meaning and Principle" is pronounced in Mandarin: Yìlǐ 義理 is the name of the tradition, Meaning and Principle, and Yìlǐ 義理 also means "Righteousness" and "Reason."

Yi 義 means to conduct yourself in a righteous manner that serves a greater collective good, to only fight just wars, and to always be magnanimous in your actions.

Lǐ 理 means to cut and refine jade, or to refine your understanding of a principle. The word means logic, science, and truth-seeking.

Take some time to consider the moral of the story the Oracle has told, and the core principle or reasoning of that moral. Thus, apply a Meaning and Principle approach to understanding the hexagram. In my example, Hexagram 10 warns: do not unnecessarily provoke sleeping tigers just to appease your ego or self-pride. Hexagram 61 advises not to rush judgment of another before you've diligently considered all factors and perspectives. Keep your heart-mind open. Your reactions to another's transgression should always be responsive, not reactionary. The core principle here is, if you're going to put yourself at risk and in harm's way, then make sure you're doing so to fulfill a profound purpose, and not just to assuage a bruised ego.

Meditate on the value of righteousness the Oracle is conveying to you, and what core logical or rational principle is driving that message. Free-write in the space below.

[illegible]

The channeled approach you've just worked through is in line with the Plum Blossom Method circa AD 1011 – 1077.