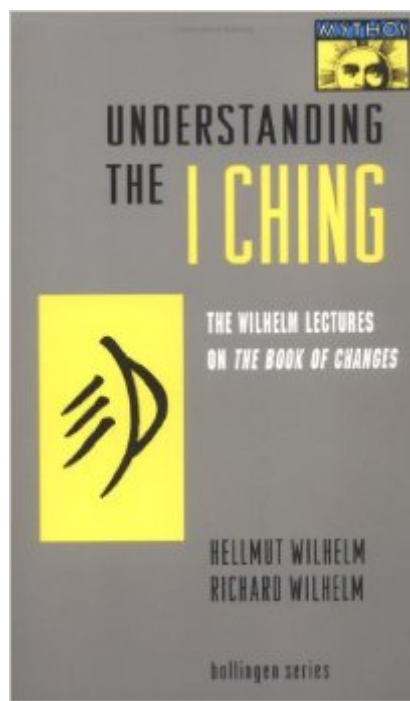


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# Understanding The I Ching



## Synopsis

The West's foremost translator of the I Ching, Richard Wilhelm thought deeply about how contemporary readers could benefit from this ancient work and its perennially valid insights into change and chance. For him and for his son, Hellmut Wilhelm, the Book of Changes represented not just a mysterious book of oracles or a notable source of the Taoist and Confucian philosophies. In their hands, it emerges, as it did for C. G. Jung, as a vital key to humanity's age-old collective unconscious. Here the observations of the Wilhelms are combined in a volume that will reward specialists and aficionados with its treatment of historical context--and that will serve also as an introduction to the I Ching and the meaning of its famous hexagrams.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The I Ching certainly is one of the most obscure, cryptic and mystifying texts in world literature. Its real meaning is lost to the ages, and it probably will be impossible to divine its intended purpose and meaning. Fortunately, ironically, the most cogent explanation of the I Ching comes from this father and son team, Richard and Hellmut Wilhelm. This collection of lectures consists of the combination of two separate books, *Change: Eight Lectures on the I Ching* by Hellmut Wilhelm and *The Constancy of Change*, by Richard Wilhelm. Both titles are contained in this one book. Hellmut's lectures consist primarily on how the hexagrams should be interpreted, interspersed with a discussion of their philosophical foundations. Hellmut's lectures contain extensive quotations

from commentaries found in Richardâ€™s original translation. Richardâ€™s lectures contain mostly philosophical ruminations concerning the issues and inspirations of the I Ching. Richardâ€™s lectures assume familiarity with the meaning and function of the hexagrams, and therefore may be too advanced for the general reader. Hellmutâ€™s lectures, on the other hand, are probably the best introduction for the reader to whom the I Ching is a complete mystery, which probably includes 99.9% of all of us. Together, these two sets of lectures, and this book, is the first stop for anyone interested in the I Ching.

This book is a marvelous collection of lectures by a father-and-son team who have no peers when it comes to I Ching scholarship. In my opinion, it is best read after a careful study of the companion Wilhelm/Baynes version of the I Ching itself. Taken as a whole, these lectures illustrate the broad range of applications this book can have to daily life. The book stimulated my interest in the I Ching and I had trouble putting it down until I had finished it the first time. The first of the Richard Wilhelm lectures, "Opposition and Fellowship" cries for an update to show how the values of the I Ching might be used to address and resolve the issues facing the world at the present time. What did disappoint and sadden me were the number of negative reviews of this extraordinary book. What were these people smoking? Did they not read the complete title? The subtitle of the book, "The Wilhelm Lectures on the Book of Changes" makes it clear that it was never intended to be I Ching 101. Too difficult to understand? Given the complexity of the subject matter, it is hard to imagine a set of lectures that could be as simple and clear as these are. And here's another thing: Neither this book of lectures, nor the I Ching itself, were ever intended to be read just once. The effort to understand what both are saying is a lifetime pursuit, through which significant understanding will come only as a result of great effort made over a long period of time. In other words, if you don't understand something, just put it aside for a while and try again later. After all, the I Ching is a highly spiritual document that, by its very nature, will always contain elements of mystery that may or may not be revealed to each individual who encounters it.

I was hoping this book would help teach me how to read the I Ching and how to read the individual lines within each hexagram but was a little disappointed. I admit, this book did help in some regard, but there is nothing that the original Wilhelm/Baynes text has that this book explains any better. This book basically goes in detail about everything expressed in the original work - detail that doesn't seem to be needed, at least for me. Like it says on the back cover, this book is pretty much essays on the I Ching that help explain its origins, eastern philosophy, and some concepts pertaining to the

hexagrams. Instead of buying this book, I recommend just reading the original Wilhelm/Baynes work and soaking up as much information as possible. Furthermore, it would help to get another I Ching just to get another interpretation and hence, another point-of-view. For a guide to which I Ching book you should get, consider these I Ching book reviewers:[...]

I wish that I had read this book 30 years ago. It's wonderful. Most of us will appreciate it's help with Classic. It answered many of my questions regarding the origins and history of the I Ching.

While I have not finished it, I wanted more on how to interpret changing lines, and so far it is primarily on its history and genesis.

what a wealth of knowledge and information...a great buy!

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