

## **Consulting Change**

The depth psychologist C. G. Jung once said that God is what crosses our path, what interferes with our conscious will and ego-drive. Thus the hidden voice of Change will often first manifest as a problem or difficulty that interferes with your conscious desires or plans. You usually experience this as a disturbance, an unrest in the heart. Anxiety, confusion, a need to know the hidden meaning of things, a desire for validation, or the feeling you are grappling with something that cannot be dealt with through ordinary means of analysis all indicate there is an unknown force at work in the situation you are confronting. This place where your conscious will seems to be thwarted can point at an opening, an opportunity to deepen contact with the invisible world and transform awareness.

### **The Question**

Your entry into the World of Change thus begins with presenting your problem as a question. This begins the creative process of talking with the spirit and experiencing its effects on what the Sages call the heart-mind (*xin*). Making a question is a two step procedure. You should take time with this. The clearer the question and the deeper your perception of the issues at stake, the more precise and profound Change's answer can be.

### **Establishing the Field**

The first step is to consider the problem. Search out the feelings, images and experiences involved. Articulate what you feel and think about things, what you know and what you do not know. Look for relevant memories and experiences, hopes and fears, dreams and desires. Simply try to see what is there, no matter how contradictory. This will establish the field of associations that can focus the symbols and relate them to your personal concerns.

## **Formulating the Question**

The second step is to formulate the actual question as clearly as possible. Base it on what you want to do. Find the border, the place where your desire melts into uncertainty and search out the level of specificity you really need.

Yes and no questions are not usually effective. An effective formulation of a specific question is: “What about doing X?” or “What should my attitude towards X be?” If you are confused about the whole situation, you can ask the most basic question to Change: “What time is it for me? Please give me an image of my overall situation.” You can also ask for a strategy or guide: “What is the most effective stance to take towards this?” “How can I best achieve X?” or “How can I best help A?” If you are truly on the horns of a dilemma, you can ask for an image of each alternative, formulating two questions: “What about doing X?” “What about doing Y?” In asking these sorts of questions, or asking about another person, you should be sure your motives are clear, straight and compassionate. Tradition says that the book will respond clearly to a real need will not allow itself to be used for evil or manipulative ends.

## **Active Dialogue**

The question you ask can also be the starting point in a continuing dialogue with Change, what the depth psychologist C. G. Jung called active imagination. It can lead to further questions as you explore the matter you are considering in depth. Give the oracle’s first response careful consideration; turn and roll it in your heart, as the tradition says. If further questions arise, do not hesitate to ask them. Change invites this sort of dialogue. It accumulates *De*, power and virtue or actualizing–dao. It slowly transforms the way we think about ourselves and our problems, leading us farther and farther into the great world of the Symbols and the opening of the Way.

## Generating the Lines

The most basic way to use the Change is to form a question of personal importance then use any one of a series of random number generators – coins, yarrow stalks, 16 tokens or a computer program - to generate one of its 64 hexagrams as a basic response to your question.

All methods of generating the lines of a hexagram rely on something beyond your conscious control that lets a force other than your ego do the choosing. A magical explanation would say that the instruments used to make the choice participate in the nature of the cosmic process. A more modern idea is that they record synchronous clusters of meaning, clusters that create meaning without rational cause. The entrance of chance into the equation participates in the nature of fate or destiny.

### Circle of the Protectors

This is one of the two methods I prefer when I am using the Guideways. It produces a quick, clear and very incisive answer to a specific question. This method relies on what is called the Circle of the Protectors formed by the Eight Trigrams or Spirit Helpers that make up the hexagrams. To use this method you need the doubled sided **Consulting Template** provided in the study material and 8 identical tokens or coins with a mark made on the reverse side of one of the tokens.

- Lay the eight tokens out so you cannot see the mark and shuffle them.
- Lay them on the trigram circle one by one starting at the top and moving clockwise. When the hidden mark comes up it shows the lower trigram of your Primary Figure. Write it down.
- Shuffle the tokens and lay them out on the circle again. When the mark comes up it identifies the upper trigram of your Primary Figure. Write it above the first trigram.

To find the Transforming Line turn the Template to the Transforming Line side.

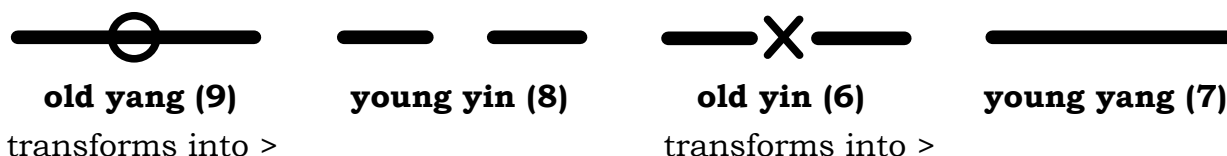
- Set aside two of the unmarked tokens so that you have six.
- Turn the tokens over one by one and lay them on the line positions from the bottom up until the marked token appears. This is the position of your Transforming Line. Mark in it your Primary Figure.

- Create the Relating Figure beside the Primary Figure. All the lines that are not indicated as changing in your reading will stay the same in this new hexagram. The line indicated as transforming will change into its opposite.
- Use the Key to the Hexagrams to find the numbers of these two figures. Use these numbers to find the texts that describe each of the hexagrams.

There are several other traditional ways to generate the lines of your Primary Figure. The best known are the Coin Oracle and the Yarrow Stalk Oracle.

**The Coin Oracle** comes from the Tang Dynasty, and was popularized in the Sung Dynasty, but this type of tossing oracle is found all over the world.

To use the Coin Oracle you need three coins with a head and tail. Old Chinese bronze coins with a square hole are often used. Heads are given the value 3, tails the value 2. You toss the three coins six times, adding the values each time. You will get 6, 7, 8 or 9.



As you can see from the diagram 6=transforming yin; 7=stable yang; 8=stable yin; 9=transforming yang. Write your lines from the bottom up to create a Primary Hexagram. If any lines are transforming, make the changes and generate the Relating Figure. Then use a *Hexagram Lookup Table* to find the number of your hexagrams.

**The Yarrow Stalk Method** is an older, more ceremonial and more complicated form, with a different mathematical ratio between yin and yang.

To use the yarrow Stalk Oracle you need a set of 50 thin sticks, about 12-15 inches long, traditionally taken from the tips of the *achillea millefolium* or yarrow. You divide and count out this bunch of stalks three times to produce one line. Each time you go through this process, you produce a number (6, 7, 8 or 9) and thus a line of your figure.

- Put the bunch of 50 stalks on the table in front of you. Take one stalk and put it aside as the Witness. It will remain unused *throughout the whole process*.
- Divide the remaining bunch into two random piles.
- Take one stalk from the pile on your left. Put it between the fourth and fifth fingers of your left hand.

- Count out the pile on your right into groups of four, laying them out clearly on the table in front of you until you have a remainder of 4, 3, 2 or 1.
- Put this remainder between the third and fourth fingers of your left hand.
- Count out the remaining pile in groups of four until you have a remainder of 4, 3, 2 or 1. Put the remainder between the second and third fingers of your left hand.
- Take all the stalks you have put between your fingers and lay them aside. They are out for this round.
- Make one bunch of the stalks that remain and repeat the entire procedure. Again, put the stalks you have collected between your fingers aside for this round.
- Repeat the process a third time. This time, count the number of groups of four left on the table. It will be 6, 7, 8 or 9. This indicates the first or bottom line of your Figure.
- Repeat the entire process five more times to obtain the complete figure. Enter the lines and make the transformations if there are any. Then use a *Hexagram Lookup Table* to find the number of your hexagrams.

The second method I use is what I call the **16 Token Oracle**. It is direct, elegant and preserves the mathematical ratios of the Yarrow Stalk Oracle, the oldest way of consultation. I use this when I need a detailed analysis of the dynamics of a complex situation.

**The 16 Token Method** combines the ease of the coins, the mathematical odds of the yarrow and an amazing directness, for you do not use the set of four numbers. To use this method, you need a small bowl and 16 marbles or other identically shaped tokens of four different colors: one of a first color; three of a second color; five of a third color; and seven of a fourth color. The one marble of the first color indicates transforming yin; the three marbles of the second color indicate transforming yang; the five marbles of the third color indicate stable yang; the seven marbles of a fourth color indicate stable yin. Put the marbles into the bowl and draw one out. It is your first line. Write the line down, return the marble to the bowl and draw again. This is your second line. Repeat four more times until you have completed the Symbol, then make the transformations. Then use a *Hexagram Lookup Table* to find the number of your hexagrams.

### **The Basic Reading**

The hexagram directly generated by any consulting process is called the **Primary Figure**. It describes the overall situation and suggests basic strategies to understand and deal with it. The Primary Figure generates a series of other hexagrams that amplify and further explain it. The most basic

is the hexagram produced when the lines indicated as *transforming* in the Primary Figure change shape. This is the **Relating Figure**. It shows the sea of feeling connections in which the reading swims: future potential, central concerns, a goal or desired outcome or a warning. Another hexagram, produced by the inner four lines of the Primary Figure, describes the Core or **Heart Theme** of the reading, its central drive and goal.

The Primary Figure and the Relating Figure are connected by the **Transforming Lines** indicated in the consultation process. These Lines show the point where energy is activated and trace hidden pathways through which transformation can occur.

### **Reading the Answers**

Reading the answers Change gives us is more of a dance than an analytical process. By gently circling through the symbols and letting them re-shape the way we are thinking about the situation we can sense the hidden forces that are shaping it. There is a real, though quite friendly, spirit involved that should be treated with respect. This is not a matter of belief, but of imagination and being open to experiencing something. At this point all you need is an open mind and a willingness to entertain possibilities. As *Dazhuan* says, turn and roll the symbols in your heart-mind and spontaneously the Way will arise. You can move through:

- the **Primary Figure** that opens the field of the reading.
- the **Spirit Helpers** that show how you can participate in the process.
- the **Heart Theme** that tells you about the problem and goal.
- the **Cycle of Seasons** that shows you how it will play out over time.
- the **Pair** that shows you the deep structure it comes from.
- the **Relating Figure** that shows you future potential and goal.
- the **Transforming Line** where Change talks to you directly

The tradition of Change acts primarily as a help in making decisions. It reformulates your awareness of a situation, opening and deepening it, putting you in touch with the places where creative energy is active and available. By imagining yourself and your situation through the symbols of the oracle you

allow Change to change the way you perceive yourself, the situation and your interactions with the world around you and within you. This process aims at a release from unconscious or needless suffering through recognition of the real situation and the forces at work in it and offers you the means, tools and strategies to effect this release.

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