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I Ching

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I Ching is an ancient Chinese book of divination. 'I' in Chinese means "change", so another name for I Ching is The Book of Change¹. It makes use of the sixty-four hexagrams, each hexagram contains six horizontal lines and each line can be either a solid line or a broken one. The broken and the solid line are called Yin and Yang, respectively. The book was originally written by four men namely Fu Hsi, King Wen, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius.² Fu Hsi introduced the concept of I Ching as a different line system. After that, King Wen formulated the sixty-four hexagrams and the Duke of Chou, his son, added some more comment on the lines. Lastly, Confucius edited the I Ching that become the I Ching that we have known until now.

In historical view, I Ching was believed to be the oldest book of wisdom found in the world.³ The idea of it is from the balance of opposite sides. The two sides are totally opposite, for examples, male and female, black and white, dark and light. When one asks I Ching, it would give the future prediction according to specific situation or event. People in China have used it for a long time since it was first

¹ James Legge, I Ching Book of Changes. 1986 p. xxvii-xxxi

² Richard Wilhelm, The I Ching. 1970 lviii-lix

³ Wikipedia contributors. "I Ching's influence" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*.

< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Ching's_influence >

developed during the Hsia dynasty.⁴ In the past, it was normally used by the emperor and the royal family. Nowadays, the I Ching is still widely used throughout the world especially by the Chinese who make up a very large number of population. As the first book of wisdom, I Ching's most contribution to mankind is its influence on Chinese philosophy and the culture which has a great impact throughout the world.

When people in the past had to make important decisions, they would turn to consult I Ching. Even during the war time, the Emperor also consulted I Ching about how to win the war. We could see that the I Ching was very important to the ancient Chinese. Therefore, it has a great influence on Chinese valuable philosophy. One can say that the I Ching has an influence on all the Chinese philosophy including the well-known Yin-Yang doctrine. The concept of Yin-Yang is closely connected with the interpretation of I Ching. Confucius and Lao Tzi, the two great Chinese philosophers, also adapted the principle of I Ching for the philosophy they wrote.⁵

In the last 2000 BC. , I Ching was developed in China and written in Chinese language. And, later it was known to the outside world by the translated edition of the book by Richard Wilhelm, a German missionary. He first translated I Ching to German, his native language. Moreover, other translators were able to translate the book into English. The English version gives opportunity to people around the world to understand the Chinese culture by reading the I Ching. And of course, people around the world can make use of it.

⁴ James Legge, I Ching Book of Changes. 1986 p. xxvii-xxxix

⁵ Wikipedia contributors. "I Ching's influence" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*.

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Feng Shui also uses the principle of I Ching.⁶ It uses the law of Heaven and Earth; each must be balanced. Feng Shui has influence on people decision. To get a good start, we must have a good Feng Shui. This will generate the energy to people who make use of it in the correct way. When people want to buy a house or run new business, Feng Shui is important to make them stay peacefully in the house or bring luck to the business. The I Ching concept is applied to the Bagua or the eight trigrams. Some schools are even open the Feng Shui course for the student. Even now, we have a lot of Feng Shui consultants around the world including the young generation.

I Ching is the system of fortune telling. It is famous because of its long history of development. Most of the Chinese, since the ancient age, believe that the I Ching's prediction will turn to be true. As people believe that it will be true, the prediction will always be in their mind. So, one day it will be true due to their belief. I Ching has been proved to be useful over its long history. Surely, it will continually be used as long as it still works. Moreover, nowadays, the Chinese population is living in every part of the land around the world. I Ching and the concept of it would be widely used. Its implementation too, some of it can prove that it works well in everyday life.

⁶ Wikipedia contributors. "Feng shui" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feng_shui>