

CURRICULUM MATERIALS REVIEWS

The Multimedia I Ching

A CD-ROM Edition of the
Book of Changes

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINCETON TEACHING ASSOCIATES SOFTWARE, BOLLINGEN SERIES XIX, 1996

WIN/MAC MINIMUM SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS:

MPC/Windows: 486 processor or better; Windows 3.1 or higher; Windows '95; VGA Monitor, 256 colors; 8 MG installed RAM recommended; 4 MG available hard disk space recommended; CD-ROM drive.

Macintosh: 68030 processor or better (LCIII or better recommended) color monitor; 8 MG installed RAM recommended; 4 MG available hard disk space recommended; CD-ROM drive.

The *I Ching*, a Chinese book of divination and one of the culture's classics, has been with us for well over two thousand years. There have been many scholarly editions of the work, several of which are listed below. Now the *I Ching* is available in an electronic multimedia edition from Princeton University Press which should appeal to a new generation of students and seekers of Eastern wisdom.

The foundation of the *I Ching* divination system is a series of Chinese graphic symbols created from all possible arrangements of broken and unbroken lines arranged in a series of three; the symbols themselves, the hexagrams, are further compounded of two such sets of three. Here, for example, is one such hexagram:



A much more artistic representation of a hexagram, as well as a demonstration of the program itself, can be found at the web site for this Princeton publication: <http://iching.princeton.edu/>.

In using the *I Ching*, the inquirer frames a question, then through one of several means—most of which traditionally are quite complicated and time consuming—arrives at one or more hexagrams, each



I Ching Library

of which has long been associated with an interpretative reading and more voluminous commentaries which can be read in various ways.

The core of the *Multimedia I Ching* is the scholarly standard, the Richard Wilhelm version, which is included in its entirety; it also includes the text of his son Richard's illuminating lectures published as *Change: Eight Lectures on the I Ching*. If this were the totality of the *Multimedia I Ching*, it would be no more than another example of that contemporary artifact,



I Ching Oracle Island

the CD-ROM-better-left-as-a-book. However, the *Multimedia I Ching* is set in a truly dazzling display of computer-generated Chinese landscapes and rooms through which the inquirer or student can roam at will, going to the Lakeside

pavilion to consult the oracle, or proceeding through a huge library full of useful graphics and textual wisdom concerning the *I Ching*, or, if wearied, stroll a garden with yet more useful materials. Even on an aged Macintosh IICX with a 1X CD-ROM drive, the program ran smoothly; on a PowerPC, it was an impressive production. The program includes appropriate classical Chinese music, and a very

pleasant spoken tour of the program's offerings. The whole nicely reinforces the content of the text and will give those who have never seen a Chinese landscape or a temple a feeling for the material culture relevant to the work. The presentation was at no point condescending, but accepted the *I Ching* at face value while placing it into its appropriate historical setting.

The *Multimedia I Ching* is a worthy addition to its many text-based predecessors and will particularly appeal to secondary students who could well learn a great deal not only from the text itself, but from its marvelous presentation. A note of caution: while students will find navigation highly intuitive, the teacher would do well to print out the several useful help files to fully take advantage of the great depth of this program. For a web-based edition of this

review which gives additional attention to computer-related issues, see: <http://ssd1.cas.pacificu.edu/as/reviews/ICHING.htm>. ■

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blofeld, John. *I Ching. The Book of Changes*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1968.
- Legge, James. *I Ching, Book of Changes*. Secaucus, New Jersey: University Books, 1972.
- Wilhelm, Hellmut. Tr. Cary F. Baynes. *Change. Eight Lectures on the I Ching*. New York: Harper & Row, 1960. The Bollingen Foundation.
- Wilhelm, Richard. *The I Ching or Book of Changes*. Tr. Cary F. Baynes. Foreword by C. G. Jung. New York: Bollingen Foundation and Princeton University Press, 1968.

Jeffrey Barlow

JEFFREY BARLOW holds the Matsushita Chair of Asian Studies, Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon. Dr. Barlow is a specialist in Modern Chinese History, webmaster for the regional branch of the A.A.S., Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC), and editor of the E-journal of the American Association of History and Computing (under construction).

Editor's Note

For further classroom uses of the *I Ching*, see "Teaching the *Book of Changes*," by Tze-ki Hon, in the Fall 1997 issue of *Education About Asia*.