

I-Ching: The Tao of Drumming

Michael Drake

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In this user-friendly interpretation of the I Ching, Michael Drake presents drumming as a revolutionary way to approach the ancient Chinese oracle. A synthesis of shamanic drum ways and Taoist philosophy, *I Ching: The Tao of Drumming* provides for the first time the rhythmic structure of the 64 hexagrams or potential human situations. Drum patterns derived from the hexagram images render the essence of each archetype of experience into sound, giving it physical, mental, and spiritual impulse. Through the natural law of resonance, the drummer then embodies the qualities and attributes necessary to effect change or harmonize with change in any given situation. With clear and practical explanations of each of the 64 hexagrams along with useful exercises and illustrations, the author demonstrates how drumming these simple rhythm archetypes brings the essential self into accord with the pattern or way of cyclical change, and that way is known as Tao.

More than an oracle, the I Ching is the wellspring of Chinese thought, stressing the connection between humanity's destiny and the natural world. Philosophically, it describes the universe as a single, flowing, rhythmic being, and all things in it in constant cyclical change. Everything is t'ai chi, "one universal energy," which expresses itself as two polarized yet complementary aspects, yin and yang. Yin and yang ebb and flow, creating the cycles and rhythms of life. By observing nature, the sages perceived all of the rhythms and energy patterns that arise from the interaction of yin and yang. They then coded these rhythmic patterns into a "book of life." The I Ching's sixty-four hexagrams represent a code or program of the operating principle of life itself. Each six-line configuration is the visual representation of a rhythm archetype. The image pattern of each hexagram generates a particular drum pattern based on the sequence of the yin and yang lines. Each rhythmic pattern pulsates a particular resonance, which stimulates, works with, and informs the body, mind, and spirit in the most optimal manner for effecting change or harmonizing with change.

For the drummer, then, there is a need for a version of the I Ching that conveys the resonant qualities and attributes of these archetypal rhythms. My purpose in this new interpretation is to fulfill this need. The drummer may then utilize it as a gauge, a precise means for placing oneself in relation to the pattern or way of cyclical change. Find an I Ching Rhythm for your need of the moment.

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