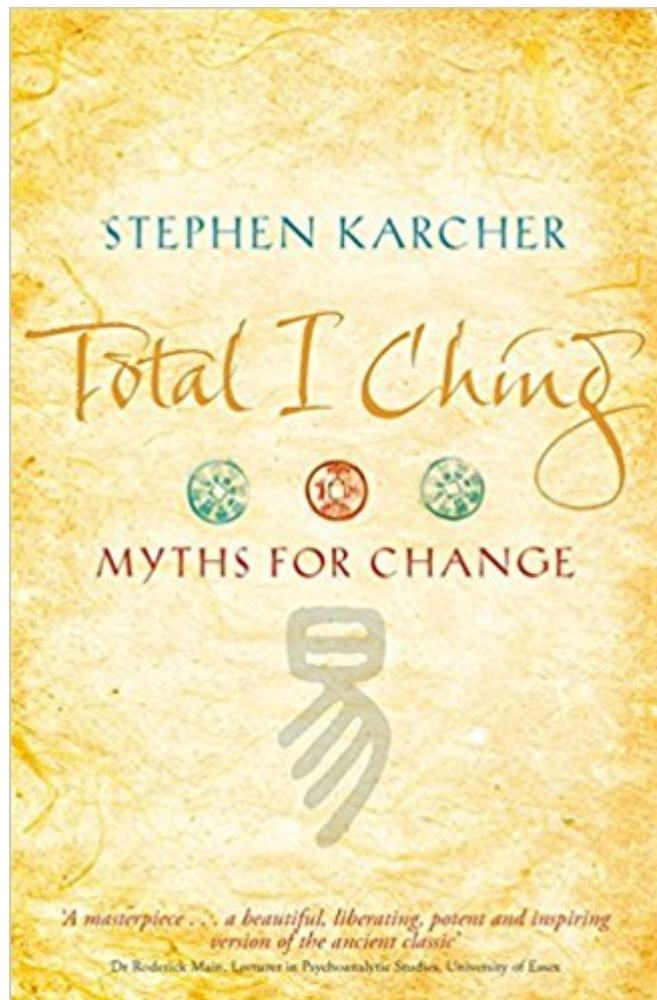


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Total I Ching



Synopsis

The I Ching (pronounced ee-ching) is the oldest and most respected oracle or divinatory system in the world. There are currently two translations available which offer somewhat conflicting interpretations - the popular Confucian version and an earlier Taoist version called Zhouyi. Reconstructed by twentieth-century scholars and archaeologists, Zhouyi presents the highly imaginative world of myth and ritual that is the hidden base of thousands of years of Eastern thought. Now, for the first time ever, Stephen Karcher fuses these two traditions using modern scholarship and archaeological and linguistic research, along with a wide background in Eastern philosophy and comparative religion, and presents them to the modern Western reader in a comprehensive and accessible new form. TOTAL I CHING is a complete oracle with instruction for immediate use in all life situations, but is also the first translation to detail the mythology of the divinatory system, offering a revolutionary new approach to the world's oldest wisdom tradition.

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Customer Reviews

This could be Karcher's masterpiece - a beautiful, liberating, potent and inspiring version of the ancient classic. Working with the original Chinese texts and drawing on the most recent scholarship, Karcher shatters the constricting cage of traditional interpretations to open up the oracle's lost mythic dimension. Even experienced users of the I Ching will be astonished by the extraordinary riches they will find in Total I Ching.

— Dr Roderick Main, Lecturer in Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex

I Ching is the oldest, most respected divinatory system in the world. There are currently two kinds of translations available, which offer conflicting interpretations—the Confucian version and an earlier version called Zhouyi. Reconstructed by 20th-century scholars and archaeologists, Zhouyi presents the imaginative world of myth and ritual that is the basis of Eastern thought. Now, for the first time, and after years of research, Stephen Karcher fuses these two traditions using modern scholarship, archaeological and linguistic research, Eastern philosophy and comparative religion, presenting them to the Western reader in a comprehensive, accessible, and vivid new form. Total I Ching is a complete oracle with instructions for use in all life situations. It is also the first translation to detail the mythology of the divinatory system, the Myths for Change. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The I Ching has been an immensely important influence on my life. For well over three decades, I have sought its advice, judgment and solace. It has remained an unchanging spiritual lifeboat for me, like the shoals of dolphins that rescue and secure the shipwrecked to safety. I credit the Wilhem/Baynes/Jung edition for saving my life and, in particular, the editions by Carol K. Anthony, Sam Reifler, Brian Brown Walker, Sarah Dening, R. L. Wing, John Blofeld and Stephen Karcher for enriching it. This latest of Karcher's books on the I Ching, Total I Ching: Myths for Change, is a masterpiece. Karcher successfully takes the original texts and jettisons almost all the moralistic moorings that are at times difficult to get around in other translations. He takes a shamanistic and pragmatic approach, eschewing doom-and-gloom predictions for succinct, somewhat dispassionate advice. For instance, rather than hearing hopelessly negative news from the 6th changing line of Hexagram 24 (Return), Karcher says "Trap!...You are returning to an old delusion, blinded by self-deception and infatuation. If you go on in this way, your hard-won growth will be destroyed. It will take at least ten years to deal with the repercussions of this catastrophe. The Way is closed. Think about where this desire comes from. Whatever you do, don't act this out....Take things in. Be open and provide what is needed." I find this type of advice far more useful than the stark proclamation of horrific bad luck given in some versions of the I Ching, which could almost cause the susceptible to contemplate jumping off the Golden Gate bridge. His commentary on the 2nd line of Hexagram 49 (Skinning/Revolution) is: "There is excellence in moving now. This is your time. Move into the dance. You can change the world. Put everything into solution. Don't be shy. Be a hero. Vigorous action opens the Way. This is definitely not a mistake. Be resolute. You are connected to a creative force." This successfully communicates the positive energetic information without quite making one giddy. I enjoy and need a slightly sober reminder that my good fortune lies

in remaining connected to the creative force, from which all blessings flow. Total I Ching provides this without the puritanical tone found in some other versions. It is easy to bypass some of the more esoteric information on each hexagram and go directly to the sections most important for divination. The tone is helpful and grounding, yet invigorating. I personally am more interested in that than the scholarly details, but those who seek them won't be disappointed. My only criticisms are that it would have been far, far more helpful to have the Hexagram numbers placed on each page. You have to go through pages and pages to get your bearings in the text, rather than being able to flip easily to the hexagram you want. Also, I really wish this book was available in hardback. For those of us that actually use and refer to the I Ching on a regular basis, this is essential as well as aesthetically preferable. The text deserves to be preserved in a hardback edition. This is a wonderful, wonderful book.

At first I was skeptical of this product--the title made me wonder if it was just a popular "translation" rehashing older interpretations. I did not know when I bought this book that Stephen Karcher is one of the foremost scholars of the Book of Changes. I was pleasantly surprised to find ways of reading this ancient text that I had not considered previously. Total I Ching: Myths for Change is definitely intended to be used for divination. This book is unique in that it doesn't rely on a close literal reading of the text to describe each hexagram, but neither does it rely on affective interpretation. Karcher uses the rigorous research he has done on the I Ching (see his other works) to inform this "poetic" translation. In the introduction he says he is aware of the benefits of close scholarly literalism, but he has also become aware of its limitations. He balances the tension between scholarship and reverence in a format that is clear, intuitive and simple. He shines light on the hexagrams in a unique fashion, without being obscure or decadently speculative. I highly recommend this edition for anyone new to the I Ching as well as to the seasoned student.

My go-to I Ching book and has been for over time. I was a newbie when I began to use Karcher's book and found the introduction helpful to get started. I continue to go back to it over the years as my skill in working with the I Ching as a tool with which to elicit guidance grows. Lot of meat in this I Ching, good for beginners and for every stage as one grows in development with the I Ching. The myths may not speak to everyone as they don't will me so much, but I read them anyway as sometimes the images that arise seem to help activate sources below the level of everyday awareness and that can be interesting. (Artists and Jungians would probably love this!) The sections to aid in stimulating insight are substantial, lots to work with, and are, for the most part,

comprehensible (can't say that for a lot of I Ching books!) I do at times use other I Ching to try and gain even greater clarity for myself, among them Sarah Denning's "The Everyday I Ching" (which I also call "The Scolding I Ching", though it is often helpful), and have recently purchased "I Ching for Beginners" on Kindle as something portable for check-ins with the I Ching when I'm on the road (and a liking it so far).

Just a bit about my journey with the I Ching. I became interested in the I Ching since last December. Let me start by saying that, unless you have a lot of patience to work through all the information presented in this book, this is NOT for beginners. But please, do not let this detract you from purchasing this book. I have translations from Hilary Barrett (good for beginners), Wilhelm/Baynes, Huang and finally this book from Dr. Karcher. This book is very technical and deep in the application of the oracle. This work was made with the design of presenting the I Ching in a holistic light: offering the many shades of meaning from different cultural points of relevancy, starting with the shamanistic background of a mythical world of spirits, while showing a growth of understanding of the oracle's meaning and application down to today. Presenting the information in this manner, one can distill the essence of the oracle's meaning. To me, this book is an excellent and very thorough work. I will certainly work with this book to glean more insights into this fabulous oracle.

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