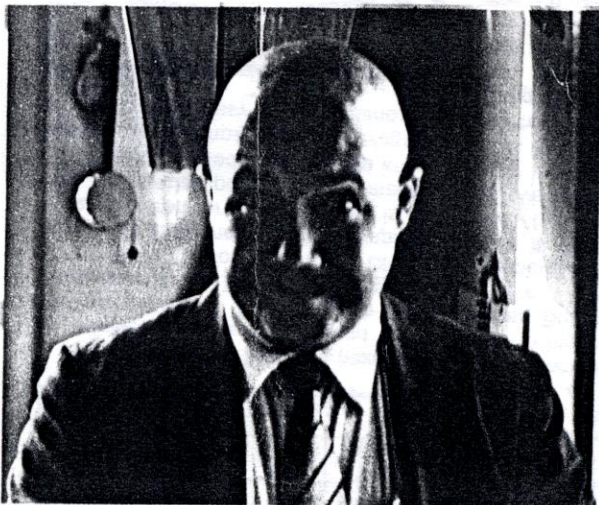


# KHIGH DHIEGH DIGS I CHING

By Robert Meyers



Back in the late '50s and early '60s, only the hip, the hipper and the hippies had ever heard of the "I Ching."

But now, thanks to the Age of Aquarius and a growing interest in mysticism and the occult that is, if not sweeping, at least lightly dusting the country, the I Ching has become the best-known and least understood bit of Orientalia on the current scene.

The center of I Ching interest in this country seems to be Los Angeles, where it has been adopted by many of the younger Hollywood TV performers. Also in Los Angeles is the International I Ching Studies Institute, founded and operated by—appropriately enough—

TV actor Khigh Dhiegh.

Khigh Dhiegh (say *kī dee*) has a long list of TV credits stretching back to the medium's Golden Age: *Studio One*, *Schlitz Playhouse of Stars*, *Lux Video Theatre* and *Playhouse 90*. More recently, he has appeared on *Mission: Impossible*, *Ironside* and *Hawaii Five-O*. Film goers will remember him from "The Manchurian Candidate" and "Seconds." He also worked on Broadway, in "Flower Drum Song."

Apart from all that, he has been studying the I Ching (say *ee jing*) for more than 30 years.

Clearly, it is no fad with Dhiegh, but exactly what is it? →

"The I Ching," Dhiagh says, "is not a religion but a psychological and philosophical method of dealing with life. It is a book whose title means 'The Book (Ching) of Changes (I)'"

The idea of the I Ching is to help people make easy adjustments to life's problems. "If one understands why a change, say, in attitude or situation is needed," Dhiagh says, "then the change is easy. The I Ching doesn't order or command changes—it merely suggests them. The rest is up to you."

If all of this strikes you as the sort of thing that should be lumped in with Ouija boards and gypsy fortunetellers, you should be aware that Dhiagh has done extensive research in the field of comparative religions.

And don't think that you must have an Oriental mind to comprehend a philosophy as characteristically Oriental as the I Ching: many people think Dhiagh is Chinese or Japanese, but he was actually born in New Jersey of Anglo-Egyptian-Sudanese parents.

During his richly varied life, Dhiagh has run a bookstore in New York City, sold handmade pipes to Paul Whiteman, Dizzy Gillespie and other celebrity smokers, owned a theatrical talent agency, acted as a personal manager and recorded poetry readings. He studied with actor-producer David Belasco, and in 1961 he won an Obie Award—a kind of off-Broadway Tony—for his performance in Brecht's "In the Jungle of Cities."

How did he stumble upon the I Ching? "I was quite violent as a young man," Dhiagh says today, "subject to fits and rages; black temper tantrums. From my studies of Buddhist thought I learned detachment, learned that until the solution to a problem is at hand, you can save yourself a lot of agony by rising above it. Then, from my studies of Jung in the 1930s, I learned of the traditional Chinese aid in actually solving those problems—the I Ching—and I have been studying it ever

since."

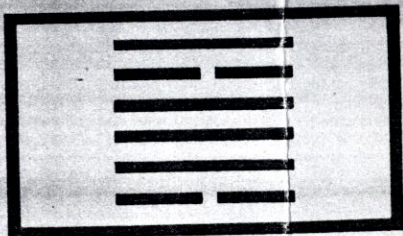
Dhiagh founded the Institute in the '60s in New York, then moved it to Los Angeles when he headed west for movie and TV work.

How is the I Ching used? "The idea," Dhiagh says, "is to ask the I a question. The I contains lore, philosophy, history—the gamut of human experience. By telling us of the problems of other men, and how they solved them, the I encourages us to make our decisions and end our troubles."

The I Ching is used in conjunction with three coins or yarrow stalks. Dhiagh uses coins (any coins may be used if you assign to them the traditional values of 3 on one face and 2 on the other).

The texts we use today were formulated between 1150 and 1120 B.C. after thousands of years of evolution. The ancients, you know, saw the world as divided between two great principles, the male and the female—*yang* and *yin*. Associated with these are various attributes: positiveness to the male, negativeness to the female; odd numbers (such as 3) to the male, even numbers (as 2) to the female."

The coins are tossed, and their face values added together. Dhiagh's first toss is an 8: the total of two male sides (3 each) and one female (2). As 8 is an even number, it is attributed to the female (*yin*) and represented on paper by a broken line. Odd (male or *yang* numbers) are rendered as unbroken lines.



The coins are tossed six times to produce a six-line figure, or hexagram, like the one above. →

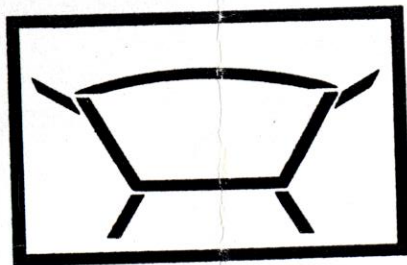
There are 64 possible hexagrams in the I Ching, each of which has a number and a name. The completed hexagram is looked up in the book by a two-step process. First comes the Key to the Hexagrams, which breaks the hexagrams into trigrams (three-line figures, each of which also has a name). The key looks like this:

UPPER TRIGRAM →	Ch'ien ☰	Chun ☱	K'an ☵	K'un ☷	Sun ☲	Li ☶	Tui ☳	
LOWER TRIGRAM ↓								
Ch'ien ☰	1	34	5	28	11	9	14	43
Chun ☱	25	51	3	27	24	42	21	17
K'an ☵	8	40	29	4	7	58	64	47
K'un ☷	33	62	30	52	15	53	56	31
Sun ☲	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
Li ☶	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
Tui ☳	13	55	65	22	36	37	30	49
	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

(From 'I Ching for the Millions,' by Edward Albertson, Sherbourne Press, Los Angeles)

The key identifies Dhiagh's hexagram as number 50. It is then looked up in the text of the I Ching, which calls hexagram 50 the *Ting*, or cooking pot.

"In the entry for the *Ting*," Dhiagh says, "the entire hexagram is compared to a cauldron or pot." A *ting* is, in fact, a special pot used for making offerings to the gods. With a little imagination, the comparison of hexagram 50 to a pot is easy to understand:



Therefore, Dhiagh explains, "the I is suggesting that we view life as a cauldron, as something that contains other things. Looking up the reference for the first (*bottom*) line, we read, 'It would be good getting rid of the bad part.' Notice that the I doesn't say *what* is bad, or *what* we should get rid of—perhaps a debt, perhaps a fear, whatever. The I simply *suggests* that something is bad, and that we find out what it is, that we get rid of it. The I is a prescription for action, but it is we who must act.

"Interpretation of the individual lines and the two trigrams (which have their own special meanings) fleshes out the prescription to help the individual choose his *course* of action."

Let the record show that the text devoted to the many parts of each hexagram is no handful of fortune-cookie one-liners. A popular edition of the I Ching assigns two-and-a-half pages of interpretation to the *Ting* alone.

Not yet convinced? Perhaps you would be after attending the I Ching Institute, or after hearing one of the many lectures Dhiagh delivers each year to high school and university audiences. But whatever you may feel about it, the I Ching is reaching growing numbers of interested people. Not only does it pop up occasionally on television, but it is available at bookstores all over the country in no fewer than eight editions.

As a clincher, C.G. Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, wrote, "The method of I Ching does take into account the hidden individual quality in things and men and in one's own unconscious as well . . . (it) is called upon when one sees no other way out."

And finally, there was the producer of a network television series which lasted for three years. He used I Ching each morning to help him plan his production schedule. There is no word on why, with all that I Ching, the series folded.

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