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# Unearthing The Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts Of The Yi Jing (I Ching) And Related Texts (Translations From The Asian Classics)



## Synopsis

In recent years, three ancient manuscripts relating to the Yi jing (I Ching), or Classic of Changes, have been discovered. The earliest—the Shanghai Museum Zhou Yi—dates to about 300 B.C.E. and shows evidence of the text's original circulation. The Guicang, or Returning to Be Stored, reflects another ancient Chinese divination tradition based on hexagrams similar to those of the Yi jing. In 1993, two manuscripts were found in a third-century B.C.E. tomb at Wangjiatai that contain almost exact parallels to the Guicang's early quotations, supplying new information on the performance of early Chinese divination. Finally, the Fuyang Zhou Yi was excavated from the tomb of Xia Hou Zao, lord of Ruyin, who died in 165 B.C.E. Each line of this classic is followed by one or more generic prognostications similar to phrases found in the Yi jing, indicating exciting new ways the text was produced and used in the interpretation of divinations. Unearthing the Changes details the discovery and significance of the Shanghai Museum Zhou Yi, the Wangjiatai Guicang, and the Fuyang Zhou Yi, including full translations of the texts and additional evidence constructing a new narrative of the Yi jing's writing and transmission in the first millennium B.C.E. An introduction situates the role of archaeology in the modern attempt to understand the Classic of Changes. By showing how the text emerged out of a popular tradition of divination, these newly unearthed manuscripts reveal an important religious dimension to its evolution.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A truly wonderful book, masterfully conceived and extremely well crafted. Edward L. Shaughnessy demonstrates once again why he is, among all Western scholars, the premier translator and interpreter of the early history of what became the Classic of Changes – arguably the most important single work in all of premodern Chinese history. (Richard J. Smith, author of *The I Ching: A Biography*) Shaughnessy has written the definitive account of these materials. Nothing like it exists, in any language. Closely argued, and drawing on an impeccable control of the literature, this study re-forms our understanding of how and what the Yijing might have been. (Kidder Smith, Bowdoin College) In his skillful presentation of three groups of bamboo-strip manuscripts discovered in China since the 1970s, Shaughnessy gives new meaning and pleasure to reading one of the two oldest works of Chinese literature, the Classic of Changes. These manuscripts bring to life the significance of divination in early Chinese culture, while remaking our understanding of the 'Changes.' (Donald Harper, University of Chicago) As a master of the 'Changes,' one of China's most influential and yet most perplexing texts, Shaughnessy presents specialist scholars and students with an admirably clear account of the difficulties of interpretation and a comprehensive review of recently found manuscript copies of the book. His deeply researched text breaks new ground for the study of Chinese manuscripts and China's methods of divination, with penetrating contributions to the scholarly handling of fragments, the recovery of lost literature, and the problems of textual criticism. (Michael Loewe, University of Cambridge) Highly recommended. (CHOICE) Unearthing the Chances will appeal to the archeologist in everybody... Beautifully designed... Shaughnessy's attention to detail is admirable, and makes this an essential book for those interested in the history of the I Ching. (Contemplating IChing) A groundbreaking work. (Journal of Asian Studies) A perfect reference work for students and specialists of both the Zhouyi and Chinese palaeography. (Dimitri Drettas *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*)

Edward L. Shaughnessy is the Creel Distinguished Service Professor of Early China at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts and Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics*; translator of *I Ching, The Classic of Changes: The First English Translation of the Newly Discovered Second-Century B.C. Mawangdui Texts*; and coeditor of *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*

My rating is not a criticism of Prof. Shaughnessy's fine scholarship but rather a condemnation of the production values of the Kindle version. Many of the Chinese characters are illegible, some are

rendered in a font that does not increase in size, and footnotes commonly have characters missing, making the Kindle edition very difficult to use for a careful examination of the texts. I own Kindle versions of other Asian texts which display the Chinese very well, so the failure here to produce a usable text doesn't result from a limitation of the technology but from carelessness and disdain for the reader. I'll continue to count on Shaughnessy's depth and clarity as I've done for many years, but I'll be real careful about buying electronic editions from this publisher in the future. What really bothers me is that there's no way to rate the content and the production separately. The content deserves 5 stars, the production 0.

Dr. Shaughnessy is pretty much THE authority, in the English-speaking world at least, on the Book of Changes and its convoluted history and meaning. This book presents translations of long-lost versions of it that have turned up in tombs in the last few decades. More amazing is the appearance, in the tomb of a man who was apparently a diviner, of the Gui Cang, a Changes-type oracle book lost since the Han Dynasty and known only from a few quotations (which, happily, turn out to have been accurate). Quite apart from the value of the book, it is a delight because Dr. Shaughnessy is such a disarmingly good and clear writer. One finds oneself hanging on every word about the various permutations of an obscure character in the highly fluid, evolving script of pre-Han China. As a member of the now rapidly diminishing band of ex-hippies who grew up with the old Wilhelm-Baynes translation of the "received" form of the Changes, I have some nostalgia as I read. Carl Jung wrote an introduction for the Wilhelm book--a typically Jungian mix of brilliant insight and wild, woolly speculation (and none the worse for that). I wish a Jung-like figure would emerge to do as much for the newly recovered versions.

Although no longer in an academic field, I have been curious about the discoveries of texts since about 1990 that were important to me as a student of ancient Chinese literature. This book showed me enough to satisfy my curiosity, although its emphasis on the Yi Jing still fails to indicate why anyone would be interested in it. I suppose that in that case the book can be said even more to satisfy any curiosity about Yi Jing.

Another Shaughnessy masterpiece. assiduous, meticulous, deeply informative and revealing. seems no rock left without review - this academic approach is a bliss - widens historic perspectives as to different layers of interpretation and contributions to the I Ching based on the Zhoyi with other divinatory sources.. It will take me a long time to really take this in. worth it!

It's academic and dense, despite an evident effort to make it readable. I was into a few of the details, and it had them. Which paid for it.

It's all about lineage, as follows; Xia evolved into Shang, Shang evolved into Zhou, Zhou evolved into Han, and by the effort of our modern time confucianists, received Yijing evolved again into what we know as the philosophy of Yi. From above perspective, this book was confirming this evolution of Yi, at least from Shang to Han era Yijing, based on facts and told in a very fascinating way. What surprised me was this; Gui Cang text have less words, that make me assumed Gui Cang was simpler than Han era Yijing and even more simpler than received Yijing comparatively. Unfortunately, this book didn't tell us background of such evolutions which related with successions of historic ancient Chinese dynasties, didn't tell us about impacts of such evolutions in ancient Chinese cultures and also didn't tell us how ancient peoples used it in their ancient daily routines. But it is hard to let unnoticed this comparative study especially for peoples who interested in the history of eastern philosophy and because of that, the book should be four stars.

Another phisophoser book with lots of babel and lots of teeny tiny notes. Still important. It proves that most of what was previously handed down is at least close to the original.

I find the very idea of giving this book a star rating very silly. Do you want to read transcriptions, translations, and commentaries of newly discovered manuscript variations in the I Ching and an important related text called Guizang? Yes? Well, here you go, this is your book. Shaughnessy is the dean of I Ching scholarship and you will not need another book than this one (there aren't any other books about this anyway). If that's not what you wanted, then, sorry, you must have come to this page by accident. Click on one of the related books and away you go.

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