

The Practical Application of the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) in Chinese Medicine: China and the West - A Comparative Study

He who does not know the Yijing is not worthy to be called a great physician

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The aim of my research project is to investigate the practical application of the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*) in Chinese medicine as it is practiced in the 21st and late 20th century - in China as well as in the West. The motivation for this comparative project is essentially rooted in my own more than 25 years of sinological research on the one hand and in my practical experience as a therapist of Chinese Medicine and user of the *Yijing* on the other hand. For there is an essential commonality of *Yijing* and medicine, which is revealed in their approach: Every diagnosis of the present situation is at the same time always also a prognosis.

Furthermore, it is crucial for my choice of topic that the *Yijing* and Chinese medicine show a high resilience in China as well as in the West since they are still practiced at the present time against all global tendencies of modernization and scientification as well as the related cultural- political changes.

While the tradition of Chinese medicine and the *Yijing* in China can look back on a history of more than 2000 years, this time span is significantly shorter in the West. However, the Book of Changes belongs to the best-known and most popular prognostic works not only in China, but since its first translations into English and German (James Legge and Richard Wilhelm) also in the Western world. In the process of a gradual "appropriation" of the *Yijing* in the West, its interpretation and practical application have undergone various diffusion and transfer processes over the past 100 years, which in turn have reverberated back to China.

The situation is similar with Chinese medicine. Although Chinese medicine has been known in the West since the 16th century, it was not until the 1970s that it became more widespread in the West and is currently one of the most widely used alternative medical systems. My research project gives the rare opportunity to study the differences, shifts and mutual influence of *Yijing* practice in Chinese medicine between China and the West. Of particular interest are the transfer processes, their mutual feedback, and their effects on concrete practice.

Comparative examination of this practice may further illuminate the blind spots that inevitably arise when engaging with a foreign culture. Further essential guiding questions of my planned research project are whether this is one or different practices, as well as which theoretical explanatory models may explain the resilience of the application of the *Yijing* in the context of Chinese medicine in the face of the current interpretive sovereignty of technology and science.