



Strategy and Change: An Examination of Military Strategy, the I-Ching and Ba Gua Zhang

Tom Bisio

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Life is Strategy!

STRATEGY & CHANGE, by Tom Bisio, is an engaging meditation on the application of strategy to all facets of human interaction. Of equal interest to the business person, military theorist, martial artist, or anyone negotiating the uncertainties of the changing world.

How do you achieve success and prevail in a chaotic world? Chinese strategists have grappled with this fundamental question for centuries. Chinese thought advocates understanding the natural order of the world in order to harmonize and flow with it. One of the key ideas that permeates both *The Art of War* and the *I Ching* is that success is achieved by blending with and adapting to the constant change manifesting around us. **By aligning oneself with the changing circumstances, opportunity and success unfold naturally.**

STRATEGY & CHANGE examines **military strategy** in connection with the *I Ching* (the Classic of Change) and the internal martial art **Ba Gua Zhang** (Eight Diagram Palm).

By understanding patterns of change, one can understand how to function in crises situations or in times of upheaval and uncertainty. The hexagrams of the *I Ching* can be understood, not as symbols for divination, but instead as coded representations of specific but fluid situations in which unwise actions can undermine favorable circumstances, while wise actions can salvage seemingly hopeless ones. Looked at in this way, the hexagrams not only signify discrete states of change occurring in moments in time, but also larger, more global patterns of change, while simultaneously indicating **flexible decision-making strategies that can help one prevail in the midst of these changing circumstances.**

Ba Gua Zhang is a self-defense art and health preservation system whose physical movements and combat strategies stem from the *I Ching* and the ancient book of strategy: *The Art of War*. Hand-to-hand combat and warfare can be viewed broadly as crises situations in which failure to adapt can be fatal. Hence they have much to teach us about recognizing opportunity and taking advantage of favorable conditions.

Explored in detail:

- **The Eight Intentions/Dispositions** - a unique, flexible and organic system of strategic thinking used for centuries. These eight paradigms can be applied to any field of endeavor: social, political, business, self-defense or military. Examples from the martial arts and military history clarify this flexible system and make it immediately accessible and practical to the reader.
- **I Ching theory** and its relevance to Ba Gua Zhang as a martial art.
- An analysis of *The 36 Stratagems*, a Chinese primer of strategy.
- Examples of successful strategies from history's **great commanders** including **Alexander, Napoleon, Shaka Zulu, Hannibal, Belisarius, Sun Tzu** and **Mao Tze Tung**.
- Advice from the renowned Chinese strategist **Zhuge Liang**, whose insights into strategy and leadership are widely studied by Asian businessmen today.

Tom Bisio is known internationally as a martial artist and practitioner of Chinese medicine. He is the author of many books, including *A Tooth From the Tiger's Mouth* (Simon & Schuster), *The Essentials of Ba Gua Zhang*, *Zheng Gu Tui Na: A Chinese Medical Massage Textbook* and the *Ba Gua Nei Gong Series*. Tom is the founder of **New York Internal Arts** and **Internal Arts International** (internalartsinternational.com).

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