United States Patent [19]

Bowart

[11] **3,749,406**

[45] **July 31, 1973**

[54] **ORACULAR CARD GAME**

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[22] Filed: **Mar. 30, 1971**

[21] Appl. No.: **129,352**

[52] **U.S. Cl.**..... **273/161,** 273/152.2, 273/152.44

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 9/18**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/138 R, 152 R, 273/161, 152.2, 152.44

[56] **References Cited**

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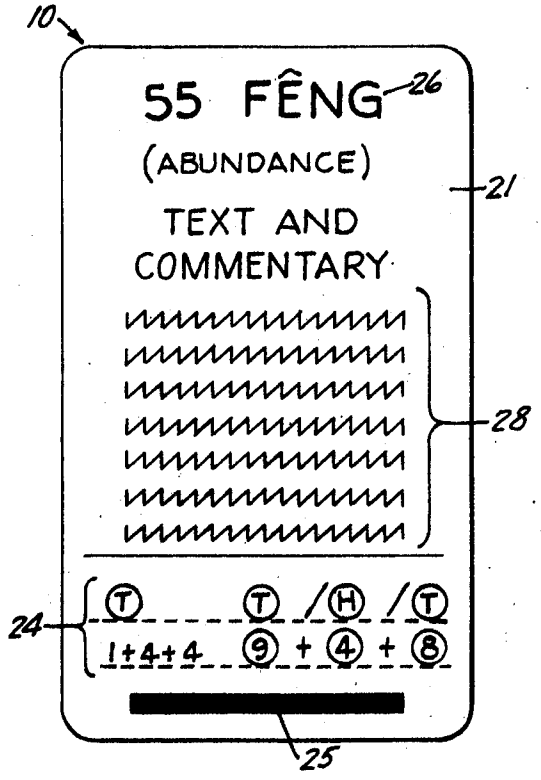
Scarne's Complete Guide to Gambling by John Scarne, published by Simon & Schuster, New York, 1961, page 664.

Primary Examiner—Anton O. Oechsle
Attorney—Thomas M. Meshbesher

[57] **ABSTRACT**

In the disclosed game, a deck of essentially 64 cards enables the player or players to consult the I Ching (ancient Chinese "Book of Changes") by drawing at random six (or 18 cards from the deck, each card bearing a "static" or "moving" Yang or Yin line (as well as a hexagram notation), thereby deriving one of the 64 hexagrams of the I Ching. The meaning of the thus-derived hexagram is then obtained by locating the card in the deck which bears the corresponding hexagram notation.

2 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



PATENTED JUL 31 1973

3,749,406

SHEET 1 OF 2

FIG. 1

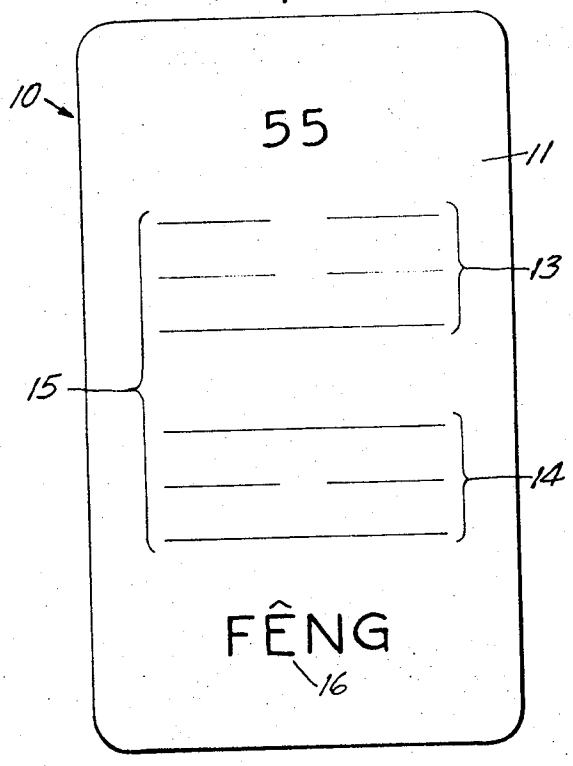


FIG. 2

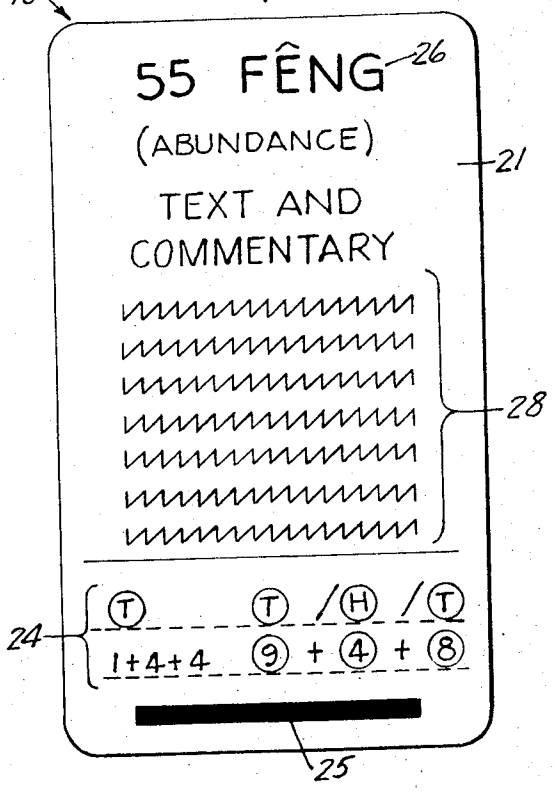
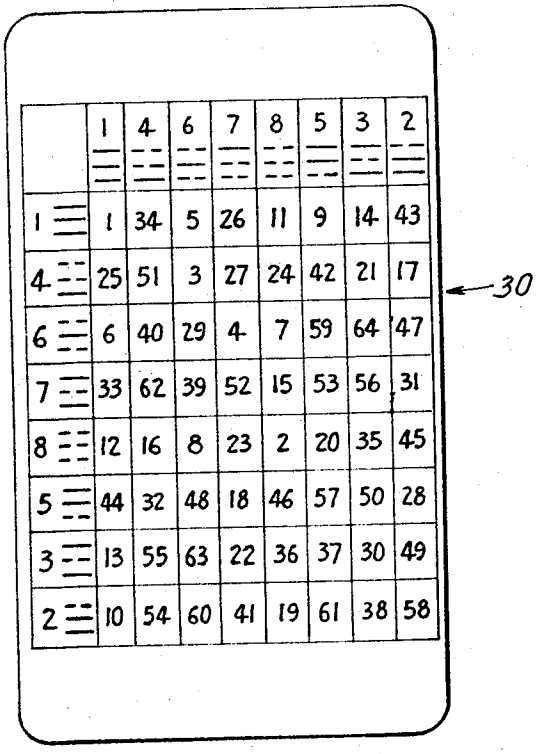


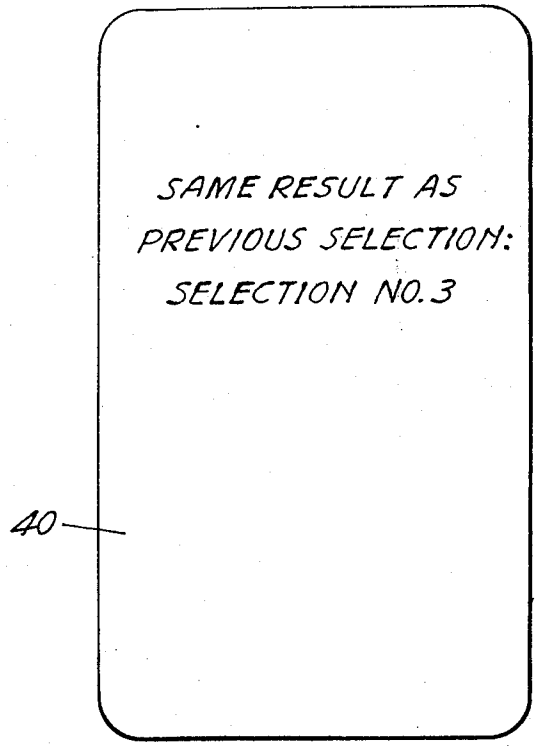
FIG. 3



	1	4	6	7	8	5	3	2
1	1	34	5	26	11	9	14	43
4	25	51	3	27	24	42	21	17
6	6	40	29	4	7	59	64	47
7	33	62	39	52	15	53	56	31
8	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
5	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
3	13	55	63	22	36	37	30	49
2	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

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FIG. 4



ORACULAR CARD GAME

This invention relates to an oracular card game or system which has both amusement and educational value for either serious or casual students of ancient Chinese culture and literature. An aspect of this invention relates to a set or deck of cards which serves to present the essential teachings of the ancient Chinese oracle or oracles who authored the I Ching ("Book of Changes"). A further aspect of this invention relates to an improved, convenient means and chance-determined method for consulting the "Book of Changes" and a convenient but meaningful means for obtaining an understanding of the significance of the chance-determined result flowing from this method of consultation.

The I Ching (ancient Chinese "Book of Changes") is well over 2500 years old. The ancient Chinese believed that this book could provide great insights into the mysteries of change and how change affects men's lives. In relatively recent years, Western scholars and even the most casual students of Chinese culture and literature have been fascinated by the "Book of Changes." Several English translations of the ancient book are available, the classical work being written by James Legge in the late 19th Century. Another well known English translation is based on the work of Richard Wilhelm. The John Blofeld translation available from E. P. Dutton and Co., N.Y., 1968 is one of the very recent versions. Chinese editions and translations of the "Book of Changes" contain elaborate instructions on how to consult its oracular teachings and symbols, as well as various guides to the interpretation of the textual, symbolic, and systematic aspects of these teachings. The heart of the "Book of Changes" consists essentially of 64 six-line hexagrams, a text accompanying each hexagram, and commentaries on the text, including commentaries on the six lines which make up the hexagram. The term "hexagram" refers to a notation wherein six lines are arranged in a vertical column, the "first" line being the bottom line, the "sixth" being the top line. Each line may be (1) solid, i.e. "firm" or "unbroken," known in Chinese as a Yang line, or (2) in two segments, i.e. "yielding" or "broken," known in Chinese as a Yin line. There are thus 64 possible hexagrams, and each of the 64 hexagrams is considered to consist of two trigrams, a trigram notation being a vertical column of three Yang or Yin lines. There are thus 8 possible trigrams. It is also possible that the Yang or Yin line may be either "moving" or "static," an additional characteristic of the line which may profoundly affect the interpretation of the hexagramic notation and its accompanying text.

The preferred ancient Chinese method of consultation involved the use of 50 divining sticks (preferably yarrow stalks) which were sorted and counted into groups of 1, 2, 3, or 4 sticks. The sorting and counting process was carried out with elaborate ritual and involved three countings to determine if the bottom line of the hexagram was Yang or Yin and whether it was "moving" or "static." These three countings were repeated for each of the other five lines of the hexagram.

The pace of modern Western civilization is ordinarily not well suited to the ritualistic divining stick method of consultation, and many Westerners prefer the coin toss method, wherein three coins are cast six times to determine the six Yang or Yin lines of the hexagram and their "static" or "moving" quality. This coin toss method may be appealing from the standpoint of simplicity, but is less desirable for the serious student of Chinese culture who would prefer the exactitude, authenticity, and perhaps even the ritualistic character of the divining stick method. Although the coin toss method is also Chinese in origin, it is not accurate and can produce a different rate of occurrence of the four kinds of lines.

It has long been known to use packs of cards, similar to ordinary playing cards, in fortune-telling games and the like. These cards usually contain legends, sayings, and/or pictures relating to events or aspects of a person's life. Many of these prior art playing card packs are designed for relatively simple games or systems which lack the profound literary and cultural significance of the "Book of Changes." Still less do these prior art card games provide any clue for dealing with the mathematical, procedural, semantic, and linguistic complexities of enquiry, consultation, and interpretation inherent in a proper use of the ancient wisdom of the "Book of Changes."

Accordingly, this invention contemplates an improved means and method for consulting the I Ching or "Book of Changes," whereby much of the authenticity and exactitude of the ancient methods of consultation can be preserved with little or no inconvenience for the casual student of Chinese culture. This invention further contemplates a means and method for adapting a set or deck of cards to the mathematical and procedural principles inherent in a proper chance-determined method of consulting the ancient Chinese "Book of Changes." This invention also contemplates a deck or set of cards having textual matter and special indicia means imprinted and arranged thereon to provide an easy, simple, convenient and compact summary of the Chinese "Book of Changes" and an improved means for consulting it.

Briefly, this involves providing a set or deck of cards, preferably at least 64 in number, wherein essential elements of the oracular teachings of the "Book of Changes" are printed on the cards and wherein each card has one or more indicia means thereon for chance-determining the lines of one of the 64 six-line hexagrams of this illustrious oracular book. It is an important feature of this invention that by randomly drawing cards, one after the other, reinserting each card drawn and reshuffling in between each draw, the six Yang or Yin, "static" or "moving" lines of a hexagram are chance-determined with substantially the mathematical probability inherent in the traditional methods of consulting the "Book of Changes." In one embodiment, each of the 64 cards has the following indicia: (1) one of the 64 hexagramic notations and accompanying text and commentaries, and (2) a "moving" or "static" Yang or Yin indica means, e.g. one of the four following notations:

(*a*)	(solid, i.e. "firm" or "unbroken": a "static" Yang line)
(*b*)	(broken: a "static" Yin line)
(*c*)	(a "moving" Yang line)
(*d*)	(a "moving" Yin line).

In this embodiment, there are a total of 20 cards, each of which is provided with indicia means (*a*), 28 cards with means (*b*), 12 cards with means (*c*), and 4 with means (*d*). This distribution of hexagramic components provides substantially the same probability of chance-

determining a given hexagram that is inherent in the divining stick method described previously. For the less preferable coin toss method, which lacks the ancient authenticity of the divining stick method, the distribution of means (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*) would be 24, 24, 8, and 8, respectively. Even this distribution would be superior to the actual tossing of coins, because uncontrolled extraneous circumstances can alter the mathematically probable outcome of a series of coin tosses. In other embodiments of this invention, the nature and distribution of Yang or Yin line indicia means (hereinafter referred to as the "consultation indicia means") can be simplified or made more complex; alternatively both simple and complex consultation indicia can be provided in the same set of cards. It is preferred to provide the hexagramic notation on one side or face of the card and the text, commentary, and consultation indicia means on the opposite side. It is generally desirable to also provide indicia relating to the trigramic component parts of the hexagramic notation, since the consultation process always involves determining first the lower trigramic component part and then the upper trigramic component part. A further desirable feature is the inclusion of about 1–10 instruction cards in the deck of 64 cards, bringing the total number to, say, 72 or more. These additional cards avoid the need for a printed set of instructions separate from the card deck.

The invention can be more clearly understood by referring to the Drawing, wherein:

FIG. **1** is a top plan view illustrating a face of one of the cards in a set of cards made according to a preferred embodiment of this invention.

FIG. **2** is a bottom plan view of the card illustrated in FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3** illustrates a preferred form of an instruction card to be included in the set of cards to conveniently provide a trigram cross-reference chart.

FIG. **4** illustrates a replacement card to be inserted in a set of cards to restore the indicia distribution when one of the aforementioned sixty four cards has been withdrawn from the set.

Throughout the description of the Drawing, the various features (e.g. the hexagram, the faces of the cards, etc.) are to be considered generic to an entire set of cards and are illustrated as specific elements to facilitate understanding the invention.

Referring to FIG. **1**, the illustrated card **10** bears a conventional hexagram notation **15** on face **11** of card **10**. The hexagram notation **15** is fifty-fifth in the sequence of the 64 hexagrams of the "Book of Changes;" accordingly, the appropriate number, 55, is provided above hexagramic notation **15**. Notation **15** is made up of two trigramic notations **13** and **14** in the conventional manner. The name **16** of the hexagram, i.e. Feng, is also indicated on face **11** of card **10**. Optionally, the names of the component trigrams, Li (lower trigramic notation **14**) and Chen (upper trigramic notation **13**), though not shown, can also be indicated on face **11**, if desired, as well as their meanings; viz., "fire [brilliance or beauty]" and "thunder [movement or sprouting]," respectively. The meaning of Feng, "abundance" or "fullness" can, if desired, be indicated on face **11**, as well as on face **21** (FIG. **2**). Card **10** is preferably playing card size, e.g. 3 × 5 inches (8 × 13 cm), but can be any desired size.

FIG. **2** illustrates the opposite face **21** of card **10**. Face **21** is provided with the name **26** of the hexagram notation **15** on face **11**, any other desired identifying data, and the text and commentary **28** which accompanies the fifty-fifth hexagram of the "Book of Changes." Face **21** is also provided with various types of consultation indicia means **24** for chance-determining a line of one of the **8** trigrams; hence a line of one of the **64** hexagrams. The top right section of indicia means **24** consists of the letters T, H, and T — indicating tails, heads, and tails — one of eight possible results that could occur upon the casting of three coins. One "head" and two "tails" determines a "static" Yang line, also shown by solid line **25**. The lower right section of indicia means **24** consists of the numbers nine, four, and eight which represent three countings of divining sticks. One "four" and an "eight" and a "nine" are functionally equivalent to the "head" and two "tails" result described previously. Thus, drawing six cards similar to card **10** and reading the line **25** or the right half of indicia means **24** is a simple but mathematically and ritually correct method which simulates the casting of three coins, six times, or the traditional eighteen countings of divining sticks (three countings six times); provided, each drawn card is replaced and the deck is reshuffled between draws.

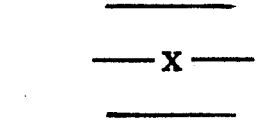
The left side of consultation indicia means **24** provides a means for another method of divination or consultation: here, only a single coin toss is indicated by T (for "tails") or a single divining stick counting is indicated by the numbers "1 + 4 + 4," totaling nine, which total is functionally equivalent to "tails." To use the left side of indicia means **24**, a total of nine random selections of cards must be made (i.e., three cards three times) to chance-determine a trigram; a total of eighteen random selections will chance-determine a hexagram. Again, each drawn card (or a card with equivalent indicia means) should be replaced and the deck reshuffled between draws.

FIG. **3** illustrates a typical type of instruction card **30** that may be included along with 64 cards of the type shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**. Card **30** sets forth a conventional trigram cross-reference chart to facilitate location of the card containing the chance-determined hexagram.

In operation, a deck containing 65 cards (64 similar to card **10** plus an instruction card **30**) are used as described subsequently. The six-card consultation technique is described first.

(1) After an enquiry has been framed (e.g. "Will I be successful in my new job?"), card **30** is removed from the deck and the remaining 64 cards are thoroughly shuffled in one of the conventional ways used in card games.

(2) A card is first selected at random from the shuffled deck, and the opposite face **21** is consulted. Line **25** is noted; the card (or an equivalent indica-bearing card) is replaced, and the deck is re-shuffled. The random-selection/noting/replacing/re-shuffling sequence is twice repeated. Let us say that lines **25** that were noted, when placed in the traditional bottom-up order, appear as follows:



This trigram is Li, trigram number three of the "Book of Changes." The Yin line of Li is a "moving" line, and this factor is noted for future reference.

(3) Three more lines are noted by repeating the aforementioned sequence three times. Let us say that the result for these three sequences is:



This is the Chen trigram, trigram number four.

(4) Card **30** is now consulted in the conventional manner; see page 65 of the previously cited Blofeld translation. The column headed by Chen (upper trigram) intersects the row beginning with Li (lower trigram) at the square containing the number "fifty-five." Thus, Feng is the chance-determined hexagram, and the card illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **2** should now be consulted for the answer to the enquiry. The answer, Feng, indicates "abundance;" hence, according to the commentary, success.

(5) However, the second line of the hexagram (the second line of the lower trigram) is a "moving" line which "moves" from Yin to Yang, thus indicating a more complex answer (or perhaps a two-part answer) to the inquiry. Card **30** is again consulted in the usual manner — Chen still at the top, but Ch'ien, number one trigram, at the bottom. The answer, hexagram **34** (Ta Chuang) must therefore also be consulted to get the full insight of the "Book of Changes." Had the second line been "static," however, there would have been no need to consult this additional hexagram.

In the eighteen-card consultation technique described previously, the random-selection/noting/replacing/re-shuffling sequences can be used such that three of these sequences are used to chance-determine each line of the trigram or hexagram.

In the portion of the deck or set containing 64 cards similar to card **10**, one preferred distribution of consultation means (e.g. indicia means **25**) is as follows:

a. 20 cards are provided with a solid line on face **21** ("static" Yang; probability = 5/16)

b. 28 cards have a broken line on face **21** ("static" Yin; probability = 7/16)

c. 12 cards have a line through a circle on face **21** ("moving" Yang; probability = 3/16)

d. 4 cards have a line interrupted by an "X" on face **21** ("moving" Yin; probability = 1/16).

For the **18**-card "heads" vs. "tails" (coin toss) method, there are simply **32** "heads" cards and **32** "tails" cards, and in the 18-card method which simulates the divining stick method, indicia means representing a single counting of sticks are distributed throughout the deck in the appropriate mathematical frequency. In any of the methods of this invention it is always preferred to replace a drawn card prior to the next card selection or draw; unless, of course — as is not preferred — the hexagram were determined by consulting the face of a single drawn card. Alternatively, a replacement card (e.g. card **40** of the type illustrated in FIG. **4**) can be inserted in the deck with the notation: "Same result as previous selection; Selection No. —," with the blank appropriately filled in with, e.g. for the six-card method, one of the numbers one through five (e.g., in the case of card **40**, "No. **3**"). (The replacement step is, of course, superfluous in the case of the last draw which determines the sixth line of the hexagram.) Restoration of the indicia distribution that existed during the first shuffling of the deck preserves the authentic mathematical probabilities.

The present invention has unique flexibility in its ability to enable the user to consult the "Book of Changes" by either a fast, modern method or a slow, traditional method — as the user desires. No such flexibility is possible with coins or yarrow stalks. Of course, one or more of the indicia means **24** may be omitted; e.g., the cards could be provided only with lines similar to line **25**, or only with the two possible indicia "H" or "T."

Many modifications of this invention are possible and will occur to the skilled artisan or technician. For example, the number of cards with consultation means could be varied and could be, for example, various multiples of 2 or 6, e.g. 8, 18, 32, 36, 64, 128, etc. Maximum convenience is however obtained with 64 cards, one for each hexagram, and any suitable additional instruction cards that may be added. A system of only eight consultation cards can be based on the trigrams alone, but this over-simplified system would be less authentic and interesting. More than one hexagram can be printed on a card, but this also might detract from the fascination of the preferred means and method. Game boards and apparatus can be combined with the set of cards, although such combinations would be somewhat less compact and convenient to use. It is preferred, however, to provide an attractive case or cover for the set of cards.

The true scope of the invention is to be determined from the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of playing a card game comprising the steps of:

1. shuffling a set of at least 64 cards bearing indicia means for consulting the oracular teachings of the ancient Chinese Book of Changes, said indicia means comprising:
   a. 64 hexagramic notations corresponding to the 64 six-line hexagrams of said Book of Changes, and
   b. at least two different consultation indicia means for chance-determining a three-line trigramic component part of each of said hexagrams, said consultation indicia means being arranged on the faces of the cards of said set of cards in a manner whereby the random selection of at least one card from said set of cards will determine by chance a line of a said three-line trigramic component part, hence a line of said six-line hexagram,
2. selecting at random a card from said set of cards without altering the completeness of said consultation indicia means which existed during step (1),
3. alternating steps (1) and (2) until all of the six lines of one of said six-line hexagrams has been determined, and
4. selecting for study a card bearing the hexagramic notation corresponding to the chance-determined result determined by steps (1) - (3).

2. Method according to claim **1** wherein steps (1) and (2) are alternatively carried out a total of six times to randomly select six of said cards, and wherein each of said six cards have displayed thereon one of the following consultation indicia means:

a solid line,
a line divided into two segments,
a solid line passing through a circle,
a solid line divided into two segments with an X interposed
between the segments.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,749,406 Dated July 31, 1973

Inventor(s) Walter H. Bowart

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Abstract
Line 2 Underline "I Ching"
Line 4 "(or 18 cards" should be --(or 18) cards--
Line 5 Underline "Yang" and "Yin"
Line 7 Underline "I Ching"

Underline "I Ching" in the following:
Col. 1 Line 9
Col. 1 Line 17
Col. 2 Line 24

Underline "Yang" in the following:

Col. 1	Line 43	Col. 2	Line 56
Col. 1	Line 48	Col. 3	Line 11
Col. 1	Line 49	Col. 4	Line 12
Col. 1	Line 60	Col. 5	Line 25
Col. 1	Line 67	Col. 5	Line 43
Col. 2	Line 49	Col. 5	Line 47

Underline "Yin" in the following:

Col. 1	Line 45	Col. 2	Line 56
Col. 1	Line 48	Col. 3	Line 11
Col. 1	Line 49	Col. 5	Line 2
Col. 1	Line 60	Col. 5	Line 25
Col. 1	Line 67	Col. 5	Line 45
Col. 2	Line 49	Col. 5	Line 49

Col. 2 Lines 57-62 (Chart incorrect - see attached sheet)

Col. 3 Line 51 "55" should be --fifty-five--

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,749,406 Dated July 31, 1973

Inventor(s) Walter H. Bowart

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Underline "Feng" in the following:

Col. 3	Line 54	Col. 5	Line 18
Col. 3	Line 61	Col. 5	Line 20

Underline "Li" in the following:

Col. 3	Line 56	Col. 5	Line 2
Col. 5	Line 1	Col. 5	Line 16

Underline "Chen" in the following:

Col. 3	Line 57	Col. 5	Line 15
Col. 5	Line 12	Col. 5	Line 28

Underline "Ch'ien" in the following:

Col. 5 Line 28

Underline "(Ta Chuang)"

Col. 5 Lines 30-31

Underline "line" in the following:

Col. 5 Line 38

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,749,406 Dated July 31, 1973

Inventor(s) Walter H. Bowart

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Col 2 Lines 57-62 Chart Incorrect

(a) ——— (solid, i.e. "firm or "unbroken": a "static" Yang line)

(b) —— —— (broken: a "static" Yin line)

(c) —o— (a "moving" Yang line)

(d) —X— (a "moving" Yin lime)

Signed and sealed this 26th day of February 1974.

(SEAL)
Attest:

EDWARD M.FLETCHER,JR.
Attesting Officer

C. MARSHALL DANN
Commissioner of Patents