

Hexagram 14 - The Great Possessing



The great possessing.

Root of the spiritual path.

Spiritual influence nourishing all

Structure:

- Within dwells the firmness and power of the Creative ☰. On the outside ☷, clarity and understanding prevail.
- The empty line occupies the honored place and possesses all the strong lines.

Image: The sun in the sky shines far and on everything, causing all to become visible in its light.

The hexagram marks the time when inner strength expresses itself wisely and gently, which supremely benefits all. Those open to the ways of the spirit find meaning and great joy, from which flows great blessings.

The Creative loves the Earth and all life; its blessings extend to all just as the sun shines upon everything. The Creative only command for humanity is to care for each other and the Earth. Fulfilling this responsibility requires a firm inner resolve to benefit all. The sage accords with the spirit and brings to life its ways.

Inner Practice: Clarity is the open awareness of the Creative within experience. The sun brings light to what causes suffering and what benefits all. Inwardly, the sage subdues what harms and outwardly nurtures what furthers life and the Earth. When beneficial feelings and thoughts arise, the sage cultivates them, obeying the spirit and finding happiness in following the Way. We are called to uncompromisingly disentangle our lives from what harms. Knowing the many dangers we must overcome makes us careful to attend to them as they arise.

With a lucid mind, the sage discerns principles clearly and thoroughly, seeking truth with understanding, taking to whatever benefits all, transforming every fault, daily renewing itself. Those with inner strength have a firm mind with a far-reaching will and cultivate every virtue.¹ The wise have ever greater clarity and efficacy as their wisdom grows. We all make mistakes, but the wise simply recognize the fault and resolve to remedy it.

Practice in the world: Bringing to life the ways of the spirit within the world² depends upon sages fulfilling their responsibility to extend their care to all. They do this by letting their spiritual treasures flow through them to others. The sage selflessly uses its great spiritual possession to serve creation.

¹ **Virtues** shape our behavior and align us with the spirit. The Tao brings forth the good and great, which we experience as love. The Tao causes all life to develop and flow within natural limits, regulating and organizing love, which we call a moral discipline that benefits all. The Tao transforms life so that each attains its true nature, a power that we call justice that ensures that all life has the means to achieve its potential according to its being. The Tao harmonizes all life within interbeing, which we call wisdom, and separates what endures from what perishes. The completed sage uses these virtues to shape the world.

² **World** does not refer to the Earth but to how people live on Earth. The world – civilization, culture, history, society, science, economy, education, technology – is embedded as a subsystem within the natural system. People create their world through the choices they make.

The belief that we somehow have earned the blessings we receive obstructs the spirit from flowing through us. The wise avoid the distinction between *mine* and *thine*. Blessings considered private property cannot endure. Great possessions harm the petty because, instead of extending their blessing to others, those who self-cherish keep the blessings of creation for themselves. They selfishly give in order to gain and use their wealth to enhance themselves, unwilling to offer what they have received for the good of all.

Sages cooperate with others to share the blessings of the spirit within the world. This work depends upon having partners equal to the task, those who understand the true purpose of life. Collectively they share the great responsibilities of stopping what harms and promote the ways of the spirit within the world.

The treasure: The wise find happiness by fulfilling humanity's sacred responsibility to stop what harms and to promote what benefits all, the true purpose and meaning of our lives. Acting upon this spiritual responsibility is a great treasure to which no material possession can compare. Without this direction, our lives feel empty. When we try to fill this emptiness with anything other than our spiritual calling, we create suffering for ourselves and others.

Thus, the sage creates the conditions for possessing a great inward treasure, which it shares with all beings. Like the sun in the sky, the wisdom of the sage shines on everything, covers everything. All things come to the selfless and kind. Their success in fulfilling the Creative's demand depends upon their firm determination to respond to difficult situations wisely and gently.

Line 1: The sage has just begun to manifest within the world its spiritual treasures. It has no relationship with what harms. Yet the line knows it will have to overcome the many difficulties ahead of it. Great possession in a lowly place attracts danger; thus, the line remains mindful of these difficulties and avoids the mistakes of getting entangled in what harms.

Line 2: The line has the great responsibility to bring to life the ways of the spirit. Because of its great capacities to do this work, it successfully fulfills its duty.

Line 3: Sages offer their talents and resources to benefit all as they do not regard their blessings as their own. This attitude ensures continued blessings. By serving the ways of the spirit, sages benefit all. The selfish harm themselves by keeping the blessings they receive as their own and give merely for the desire of gain. They oppose the spirit and will not serve it.

Line 4: Opposition surrounds the line, a dangerous position. The line focuses on its work and shuns the temptation to conflict with others, remaining devoted to benefiting all. The sage avoids conflict by not claiming credit for what it has achieved.

Line 5: The honored sage remains modest and true. It moves the other lines to have confidence in the spiritual path. Others who experience the deep spiritual being of such sages are transformed.

Line 6: The top line, at the peak of illumination and understanding, does not hold on to its blessings but fulfills its responsibilities to care for the Earth and all being. It brings to life the ways of the spirit and fully experiences the spirit's love and protection.