

Hexagram 42 – Increasing Others



Increasing.

Benefit from having a purpose.

Benefit from moving toward that great purpose.

Structure:

- Wind above ☴ and thunder below ☳ increase each other.
- Outer influence, inner movement. Movement that influences.

The hexagram marks the first month of the ancient Chinese calendar, February to March, the time when the receptive and the creative powers unite to bring forth a new cycle of growth. It is the way of the spirit to make full the empty and empty the full. In this brief season of new growth, the wise use this opportunity wisely.

All regularly recurring processes in nature alternate through cyclic change: the growth and decline of plants, the waxing and the waning of the moon, the changing of the seasons. By this fundamental natural law, decrease leads to increase and that increase turns into decrease. A continuous decrease finally leads to a change into its opposite, an increase.

Sages reduce their faults to increase their virtue.¹ The way to dissolve the seeds of self-cherishing and hostility for others depends on a firm resolve and a dedicated effort within hardship and difficulty. When we reduce our self-cherishing and hostility and increase what we do to benefit others, our spiritual path deepens.

A fundamental principle of the Book of Changes is that sages and the wise serve. They extend their many blessings they have received to others without limit or preference, removing the excess of those with too much to care for the needs of all. Community stability increases through the equitable distribution of resources, just action, and impartiality. The sharing of blessings reveals the nature and manifests the spirit, which alone has the power to save the world.

Decreasing self-cherishing and hostility for others increases our harmony with the spirit, which then furthers decreases selfishness, and the virtuous cycle continues. Living this way dissolves dangers and nourishes all life. When people devote themselves to the ways of the spirit, they can do great things and even take on hardship if necessary.

If in a low position, the wise can still accomplish great deeds through small efforts, adapting to their situation and following the path. Servant leaders seek out the wise and capable, connecting and cooperating with those with more power to extend their blessings.

¹ For the words balance, complicity, cosmos, exceptionalism, harmony, interbeing, virtue, ways of the spirit, world, and worldly concerns, please visit the [Glossary](#), which provides a brief definition of their meanings as used in this commentary.

Sages use the blessings bestowed upon them to achieve something great for which they otherwise may not have had the energy or the readiness to take upon themselves. In the time of increase, balance and harmony are restored.

Line 1: The virtuous line vigorously acts to care for the Earth and interbeing. Although without a position of leadership, its actions create great spiritual blessings for all.

Line 2: The balanced and harmonious line brings forth the ways of the spirit in the world with the inevitability of natural law. Increasing what benefits the oppressed aligns with the highest laws of the cosmos, the sacred universe, and nothing can prevent the line's ultimate success. It receives many blessings because of its inner strength and steadfastness in serving the spirit. Thus, it acquires meaning before the sacred and in its life.

Line 3: Fulfilling our responsibility to care for the Earth and all beings has such powerful effects that even unfortunate events have beneficial outcomes. People free of error who act in harmony with truth gain such an inner authority that they naturally act in the ways of the spirit.

Line 4: The line, without a strong will of its own, flexibly supports strong leadership and allies with the oppressed. Supporting strong leadership and following the creative advice of the wise allow the line to fulfill its responsibilities. The line moves along with the needs of the people.

Line 5: There is no question that the line has a benevolent heart and conforms with the spirit. The line actualizes the ways of the spirit within the world and acquires its purpose to restore the harmony and balance of the world.

Line 6: The line resists any moral influence and has no interest in benefiting others. Such a one-sided and arrogant attitude evokes its own suffering as the time demands increasing those with less. Others despise those who focus only on benefiting themselves. In losing our virtue, we lose what protects us. If we do not care for others but attack them, then others attack us.