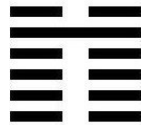


Hexagram 8 Grouping



Grouping.

Significant.

*Retracing the oracle-consulting: spiritual influence pervading,
Virtuous and firm.*

Without fault.

Dangers of the world approach.

Afterwards the managing and overcoming dangers.

Structure: All the yielding lines mutually hold together and follow the strong line.

Ideogram: Two people following each other.

All life flows toward the spirit. The laws of Tao regulate life in the same way that waters flowing over land come together into rivers and then into the ocean. In this hexagram, the yielding lines hold together with the ways of the spirit, the center of union. The spirit holds with those who follow its ways. Sages hold to the spirit joyfully and bring to life the ways of the spirit in the world¹

As social beings, people have deeply felt needs to belong and relationships. The coming together into a community that cares for the Earth and all beings fulfills that need as it is through relationships that we honor the spirit. The wise abide with the spirit first, and then all other relationships follow.

In dangerous times, partners mutually seek each other out. The spirit requires sages to act within the world with others to recover its balance and harmony by caring for the Earth and all beings. We need to be diligent in finding closeness with other wise partners as nobody can solve the problems of the world on their own.

Sages partner with the virtuous to benefit from their complementary talents and resources. They share a common understanding of the true purpose of life, accepting their common responsibilities to stop what harms and to bring to life the ways of the spirit. Within a wise group, we find a focus on duty and moral behavior within all interactions. The wise have a natural affection for others which makes interacting easy and trusting. Caring for the group's welfare, they serve each other and put the other first.

Closeness within a group develops over time through friendly mutual support in cultivating harmonious relationships. Aware of our need for each other to fulfill a great purpose, a group learns the wisest way forward and then acts. What holds a group together is its common dedication to caring for the Earth and all life, the basis of mutual understanding and practice.

¹ **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.

Members share responsibility for the well-being of the group. They avoid imposing their will upon others but together discern the way through challenges. The wise have the confidence that their commitment to shared common principles and their resolve to care for the world and all life are strong enough to do what needs to be done in partnership with others.

All associations based on worldly concerns hold only up to a certain point, beyond which the closest partnership may change into opposition. Selfish alliances may act as a force, but they cannot endure. The force of inner truth depends upon steadfast devotion to what benefits all. Only then will a bond based on caring for the Earth and all life remain so firm that it triumphs over everything. If we find that kind of support and encouragement lacking within a group, then we must leave. When members of a group give little and withhold much, they do not succeed in achieving their aim. Staying with a group that no longer nourishes our spiritual practice wastes our time.

Also, partnering must hit upon the right time. Relationships form and establish themselves according to definite inner laws, and common experiences strengthen these ties. Those who come too late miss the time when bonds get forged. Those who resist holding together with others have the freedom to go their way. The receptive come, and the rebellious go.

Members manage their own inevitable doubts and fear, despair and anger rather than entangling the group in them. Everyone treats others gently and with respect. The group uncovers the needs of the group and meets them. We may never find the perfect group that reaches the full potential of mutual support, yet we can persist in seeking it.

Those who join such a wise group take on a great responsibility for the integrity of the group, a responsibility that requires greatness of spirit, consistency, and strength. We must consider whether we are equal to the task of gathering with other wise partners to bring the spirit's ways into the world. Before joining such a group, the I Ching encourages us to ask if whether we have a true calling to do so. If not ready for such a challenge, we would cause confusion.

The wise come together of their own accord, gaining great influence and joy. Bringing together ever more partners and networks harness the power of ever larger number of people cooperating and achieving a shared purpose. Wise groups extend their blessings to others and give credit for their collective success to the many who made the achievement possible, a humility which continually broadens support for the work of the group. The wise group stands as an example for others to follow.

Line 1: The line has an inner and outer accord with what benefits all and avoid any sense of superiority over others. With such alignment, the ways of the spirit are brought to life.

Line 2: The line's inner being attracts those whose open hearts also resonate with the spirit.

Line 3: The weak line allies with harmful forces, abandoning the path. However, it has enough sense to not injure others.

Line 4: The line allies with the wise and respected. Together they work on caring for the Earth and all life.

Line 5: The line attracts others whose paths align with the spirit. It does not chase after those who distance themselves but allies only with those who want to support each other in caring for the Earth and all life. Thus a voluntary dependence develops among those holding together.

Line 6: The group does not hold with the spirit nor follow its ways. It acts arbitrarily, not knowing how to accord with the path or others. The group, without a direction or purpose, has nothing to steady it, which leads to accomplishing nothing.