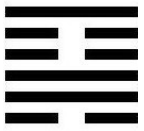


Hexagram 18 Overcoming Harmful Conditioning



Overcoming harmful conditioning.

Creative. Spiritual influence nourishing all.

Benefit from entering the stream of life with a great purpose

Before acting, discern the way forward.

After acting, observe the consequences of acting.

Ideogram: A bowl in which worms breed.

Structure: Gentle indifference of the lower trigram has come together with the rigid inertia of the upper, resulting in corruption and decay.

Ignoring the harms we inflict upon others and the Earth for self-benefit corrupts social and natural conditions. This situation has roots in the abuse of human freedom: people choosing to willingly harm others and the Earth for self-benefit. The community has ignored this corruption for generations, and now people freely exploit the community and the Earth. However, the situation demands removal of the cause, which lies within the community's unwillingness to face and address its problems.

People conditioned to harming others and the Earth allow harms to proliferate within their lives and the Earth Interbeing. They come to consider these abuses against others, all life, and the Earth as normal. Rigid adherence to the harmful cultural beliefs and conventions for generations resists change, especially among those who materially benefit from complicity with what harms. If people allow these corruptions to fester for generations, they lose the knowledge and skills for how to restore a culture's balance and harmony. A sense of powerlessness overwhelms those who seek to free themselves from the corruption as the culture disconnects them from the spirit and each other, atomizing their vision. They wait for heroes to do their work.

People have the power and capacity to overcome their harmful cultural conditioning. We begin to recover the balance and harmony of Earth Interbeing when we master our willingness to harm others for self-benefit and turn toward the spirit for guidance. When we understand and practice the fundamentals of moral discipline and virtues, we strengthen our capacities to stop harming the Earth Interbeing and return to respect and care for it, our home. We deepen our spiritual being when we restore our selves and community's balance and harmony through the ways of the spirit: love, moral and Earth limits, wisdom, and just action.

Effective action depends on proper deliberation. When we do not fathom the cause and instead rely on speculation, our efforts will not get to the root of the danger and likely cause even more danger. If we uproot the source of this spiritual disease, we do not waste our time and efforts on futilely treating the myriad symptoms of it.

Once they understand the root cause of the what harms the Earth Interbeing, the wise can then work together to heal the disease that denies the sacredness of Earth Interbeing and claims the right to dominate it. Healing occurs through the ways of the spirit. The wise keep their faith in the transformative power of love. Curing us of the spiritual disease of sacrilege and domination accords with the possibilities of the time. The wise pay attention to the subsequent recovery of the harmony and balance with the Earth Interbeing to avoid a relapse after the start.

We have the task to bring awareness and healing to the root of the social decay: the willingness to harm others for self-benefit and then ignore the suffering caused. Even though we know this work will lead us through great danger and difficulty, the wise do not recoil from it. As we move closer to the corruption's source, dangers press ever closer. We need to courageously go beyond the constraints of self-benefit and serve Earth Interbeing, serve love.

The hexagram does not speak to those who have inflicted great harm upon the Earth Interbeing, but to those who have been called to cure the spiritual disease and recover our harmony and balance. Only by shouldering this responsibility and acting to benefit all do we become the courageous leaders we seek. We have no other way. We must free ourselves from our conditioning to ignore the corruption and act. Decisiveness and energy take the place of the inertia and indifference that have led to decay so that a new beginning can follow its ending.

The wise persistently act in the ways of the spirit, which daily renews their strength and resolution to do great things, including crossing into the new era. Love prevails over both the beginning and the end.

Line 1: The line uproots the corruption of past generations, the work of a sage. The wise have no fault. They end the difficulties and dangers caused by the denial of the spirit and the willingness to harm for self-benefit.

Line 2: Corruption has been allowed to fester due to the weakness and complicity of the community. In setting things right, the situation requires the line to exercise gentle consideration. In order not to wound, the line does not proceed too drastically. It restrains its self-righteousness and approaches the situation as if correcting the mistakes of a beloved relation, tenderly helping the community make beneficial decisions.

The strong and talented line does the work of those who have the responsibility to remedy the corruption but lack the firm will to do so. The line helps them fulfill their responsibilities in ways that benefit all. An aggressive and brusque approach with leadership would cause them to resist. If those responsible to act do not go along with the line's advice and bring about failure, the fault lies with the advisor who did not find ways to agreeably guide reforms.

Line 3: The line works on the healing of the spiritual disease that previous generations caused and allowed to fester. To proceed too vigorously in righting the irresponsibility and injustices within the world invites discord, but no serious harm results. The time calls for people to act firmly rather than perpetuate their excuses of powerlessness.

Line 4: The line, in a responsible position, furthers the spiritual disease to advance own self-benefit. It ignores its duty to root out the decay within the community. The time comes when such people will experience shame and regret for the ruin they have allowed. The wise heal the self-cherishing and denial of the spirit as they meet them with clarity and firmness.

Line 5: This line, a sage who follows the spiritual path, has the calling to manage the corruption originating from the community's neglect of the path. Blessings come from serving the Earth Interbeing through the ways of the spirit.

Line 6: The highly developed sage distances itself from the turmoil of the world life to create incomparable human values for the future. It does not enter public life to reform it but does not remain idle and merely criticize. The sage works not for one era but for all life and for all time.