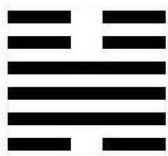


Hexagram 32 – Perseverance



*Continuing in the same way.
Spiritual influence nourishing all.
Without fault.
Benefit from virtuous actions.
Benefit from moving toward a worthy goal.*

Structure: Outward movement ☰, inner gentleness and devotion ☳. The outward movement of duration depends upon an inner devotion.

The I Ching recognizes three forms of change: cause and effect, sequential, and cyclic. Cause and effect describe the mechanical interactions of objects within the material. Sequential change, the linear succession of generations and history, never returns to its starting point.

The I Ching speaks to the dynamics of cyclic changes, opposites becoming the other. Wherever we look, we see increase and decrease, inhalation and exhalation, stimulus and response, empty and full. Every end transforms into a beginning. The seasons of the year follow fixed laws of change and transformation, producing effects that endure. We see blossoms, then fruit that ripens and falls to the ground. The fallen seeds rest and then germinate to repeat the cycle. The light principle comes forth again just when the forces of darkness have vanquished it, an eternal cyclic course. Constant cyclic change underlies duration, that which last long. The course of the cosmos endures and never ends as a new beginning follows every end. The movement of the Tao constantly returns.

Often changes occur so gradually that we cannot perceive the change itself. Change occurs naturally and spontaneously through the changes of the smallest parts. To perceive change, we need a non-changing frame of reference, which the innate laws of Tao provide, laws that regulate and determine all that happens. The unchanging laws of being, of love, endures through change. Persevering over time actualizes the potential. Its two conditions—adhering to the laws of Tao and constancy of change—cause the cosmos to endure.

Within the spiritual path, duration arises when the loving ways of the spirit supports virtuous actions. Our actions that benefit all deepen our spiritual being which renews our capacities to live by the ways of the spirit to benefit all. Love and action empower and renew the other: active love and loving action. Persevering in the ways of the spirit requires us to persistently act in gentle, loving ways. Enduring love leads to the goal of caring for and the Earth and all beings.

Perseverance alone does not support virtue. Some may seek persistently in the wrong places, searching forever without finding what they seek. Others constantly busy themselves with unceasing activity, clinging to inconstancy as a constant. Such movement may endure but accomplishes nothing. We will not find what we seek if we do it in the wrong way.

Neither does enduring mean sticking to one's corner and not changing. Change never stands still as that would lead to regression. Whatever does not change comes to an end. The duration of life and natural systems implies constant change. Sages constantly adapt to changing situations in enduringly loving ways that benefit all. The sage remains constant through changing times by staying focused on its duty as it presents itself in experience. Any fixation, knowing the constant but not the change, does not last.

The power of love persisting over time does not get worn down by hindrances. A great harm that has endured long requires careful reflection and gradual work over a long period of time to transform it. The sage embodies the conditions necessary to move through the resistances to change by persevering in the loving ways of the spirit.

Through all change, the mutually reinforcing loving union of the spirit and Creation endures. The sage perseveres through constant change by staying focused on its love and duty to care for the Earth Interbeing and acts as opportunities present themselves within experience. By keeping their inner strength greater than external circumstances, sages embody the conditions necessary to transform and dissolve resistance to the ways of the spirit, just as constantly dripping water sculpts rock.

Line 1: The line attempts to quickly solve a difficult challenge truly beyond its capacities and fails. The situation at this point calls for letting it unfold without intervening in it.

Line 2: The line endures and avoids all regret by abiding at the stable point, resting within the spirit. In this way it achieves its purpose by persevering in its present direction.

Line 3: The line does not consistently adhere to the spiritual path as it cannot tolerate what arises in experience. It remains at the mercy of hopes and fears aroused by the outer world, which leads to distressing experiences, humiliations that often come from an unforeseen quarter, the logical consequences evoked by the line's lack of toleration and self-centeredness.

Line 4: We must pursue in the right way what we seek. The line represents persistence in seeking spiritual wisdom without considering its attitude, beliefs, and behaviors, all of which hinder its efforts. The line wastes its life and achieves nothing. Those who calmly devote themselves to putting the spiritual path into practice have what they seek.

Line 5: Sages discern how to respond to challenging, changing situations in ways that benefit all. They do not yield to culturally conditioned reactions to feelings of attraction and aversion. Instead they follow the middle way in which their love for all leads them to caring for Earth Interbeing, both the ocean and the wave.

Line 6: The restless line, constant in busyness, does not attain an inner calm. It moves restlessly from one thing to the next without fulfilling its responsibility to care for the Earth Interbeing.