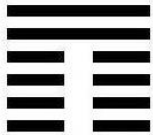


Hexagram 20 – Contemplation



Contemplation.

The moments between preparing for an offering and making it.

The influence of according inner being with one's actions.

Structure:

- Wind ☴ above, penetrating. Earth ☷ below, receptive
- Devotion below. Gentleness above.

Ideogram: Vision and a waterbird, which has an aerial view.

Image: The structure of the hexagram suggests an ancient Chinese watch tower, from which one has a wide view of the countryside. Also, a watchtower situated on a mountain stands out as a landmark that people see from a distance. The hexagram describes contemplating the consequences of our actions and also others observing us as an example.

Time: September – October, the 8th month in the Chinese calendar, the time of the autumn equinox. The light-giving power retreats as the dark power increases.

The hexagram depicts an ancient Chinese sacrificial ritual, which opened with the emperor washing his hands and then invoking his ancestors' spirits by pouring a drink to offer them. Upon completion of these ritual acts, he made the sacrifice. The time between invoking the spirits and making the sacrifice held the ceremony's most sacred moments of deepest inner contemplation. If the emperor manifested sincere piety, those who observed the ritual experienced awe.

The hexagram means to partly take by seeking to understand life through contemplation and to partly give by serving an example. Sages seek wisdom and then apply that knowledge in their lives. Sages also serve as objects of observation. We can observe and apprehend how sages benefit others and then follow their example.

Sages express the ways of wholeness with the Earth Interbeing ¹ within their lives, using their wisdom to teach by example what they have come to know. Sages live these ways, and others experience their influence and want to make it their path.

We know others by observing their behavior. Those who willingly harm others for self-benefit ruin themselves and remain in darkness. Those who busy themselves with worldly concerns persist in mindless complicity with what harms. The selfish and small-minded observe others and the Earth to find ways to take advantage of them, the lowest form of observation.

¹ **Ways of Wholeness with Earth Interbeing:** Sages relate to all their sacred Earth Interbeing relations with love and care, serving the well-being of all. Sages know the sacred within all their interactions and situations and open to the loving path through problems and dangers. Sages live within Earth and moral limits to sustain the sacred balance and harmony, reciprocate for the gifts they receive from the Earth Interbeing, and hold themselves accountable for their actions. Sages take responsibility for their own wholeness and fulfill their responsibilities to the wholeness of Earth Interbeing, creating opportunities for others to do the same.

People who look outward from a subjective, self-referential standpoint cannot understand others. Such limited and confused observation does not reach far. For those engaged in community life, such a narrow egotistical point of view causes harm.

The wise preserve a spiritual awareness in stillness and action, reversing the turbulence of worldly concerns. Deeply conditioned beliefs and patterns of behavior take time to undo, yet our tendencies for self-cherishing and hostility for others withdraw in the awareness of the sacred. Once we see and rest within the spirit's love, the influences of cultural conditioning and beliefs weaken. The wise first honor the spirit and then act to bring forth the ways of wholeness within themselves and in their relationships with all life and Earth.

Those to whom others look up must contemplate our influence upon others. Only by observing our faults and harmful beliefs can we free ourselves of them. When we observe we have benefited others, then we have the joy of knowing we live the spiritual path.

Wisdom requires clear knowledge and an unobstructed openness to the sacred underlying what appears. Practitioners of the spiritual path observe the great purpose of life: caring for the Earth and all life. Profound contemplation transforms the seeker's relationship to others and all life. Once liberated from the dominance of harmful cultural conditioning, the wise contemplate life and through their action fulfill their great purpose of wholeness with the Earth Interbeing.

Line 1: The line has a superficial, shallow view of life. Those on the spiritual path comprehend their relationships and situations within a dynamic, interconnected whole.

Line 2: People commonly have a subjective, limited outlook on the world. They relate everything to themselves and cannot understand what moves others. Such a self-centered way of viewing others and life brings humiliation and harm.

Line 3: The line learns whether to advance or withdraw by observing the effects of its actions. Through such observation, it learns how to move in the ways of wholeness.

Line 4: The wise line contemplates and cares for the wholeness of Earth Interbeing. The line welcomes and honors greater wisdom.

Line 5: The line contemplates its influence upon others and circumstances to discern whether it has achieved its purpose to care for all and the Earth. If the outcomes of its actions have benefited others, the line has had a good influence and has no regrets.

Line 6: The line has freed itself from viewing life from a self-centered point of view and now contemplates its wholeness with it.