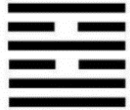


Hexagram 38 - Bridging Opposition



Opposition
The small affairs significant.

Structure:

- Clarity above ☲; joy within ☱. Joy arises within clarity.
- Flame burns upward, the lake below seeps downward. The two trigrams draw farther and farther apart, a natural movement.
- Joy unites, clarity finds the right way for union.

Life naturally groups experiences by their individual differences. We sense by perceiving contrasts: dark and light, increase and decrease, calm and agitated. Life itself increasingly differentiates for the whole to become more diverse and comprehensive, out of which evolves new patterns. Disintegration of the obsolete and differentiation of the new always takes place simultaneously.

After the dark of the winter solstice, the sun's light returns and strengthens. This pattern of decrease changing into increase holds true for all cycles occurring within wholeness. However, within an unbalanced world, proliferating differences separate us from the spirit, Earth, and life, disrupting the Earth Interbeing. We must transcend this phase of separation from each other and recover the balance of Earth Interbeing to avoid the disintegration of life on Earth.

Sorting people by their individual differences easily turns into the phase of Us against Them. Once we objectify and separate from others based on differences and wanting others to serve us, we have separated from the spirit, from the whole. We suffer from our sense of incompleteness, a dissatisfaction with our lives that we project onto others. The sense of incompleteness runs to what dissatisfies us in others and the world, agitating our wanting and not wanting and deepening opposition; thus, we suffer.

The experience of self and other dominates oppositional, divisive relationships. We cling to what we like about ourselves and project our own shortcomings upon others. Resisting in others what we do not like about ourselves strengthens the separation.

If we reject those not like us, our world fills with enemies. If we reject the petty and those we perceive as bad, we fail to live up to the duty of caring for all beings and increase our separation from the influence of the loving spirit. To bridge opposition, the wise must maintain communication with difficult people, which depends on our open interactions with them. The wise do not reject anyone.

The energies of opposition increase when in motion but settle when at rest. In opposition, sages do not push others who hold opposing views to agree with them as that would only increase resistance and cause greater divisiveness. In a lower energy state, what belongs together will eventually rejoin. If an opposition has not been poisoned by ill-will, it can be smoothed out. We make the mistake in letting it go too far.

Opposites do not exist in reality. We use them to describe attributes of an ever changing experience. Like self and other, opposites evoke each other, but they can also resolve and move beyond polarization toward what encompasses them both. The Book of Changes holds that what we perceive as opposites actually complement the other. When parts unite, the whole has qualities greater and beyond those of the isolated parts, which we experience in realizing our wholeness with Earth Interbeing.

When we experience opposition, the need for a bridge arises. The wise must find ways for those who oppose each other to recognize a common, larger purpose. Sages have learned how to transcend the phase of opposition within themselves, a blessing they share with others. They creatively bring what they oppose into a new, larger perspective and field of action. In this way, people can cooperate within an ever larger, more comprehensive frame. When we transcend opposition, the parts reconcile themselves within the whole, and a new situation emerges. Yet even when the whole transcends the parts, each part retains its unique experience of being.

The more we view the world as interconnected, the greater the attraction of reunion and desire to overcome our divisiveness. The wise smooth over the differences that divide and actively build interconnections, beginning with the least controversial aspects and respecting the views of others. We restore the harmony of interbeing when we immerse ourselves within the infinite interrelationships within creation and our interdependency with everything.

Sages place themselves below those whom with they want to interrelate, avoiding arrogance or servility. We must persist in this position regardless of the discomfort it may cause and not withdraw from it. The wise do not succumb to the stressful tension of opposition, which would entangle them in it and toss them to and fro, becoming merely an object among objects. Those caught in the repulsive forces of opposition cannot transform opposition. The transformation of opposition requires the dying of the self to act as the necessary agent capable of overcoming opposition within the world.

When people live in opposition, their views diverge, and they cannot work together on a common effort. At every step, internal and external obstructions arise. Inner contradictions rage. Often the burden feels too heavy a load, but the wise accept their duty and complete the task of restoring harmony and balance. At critical moments everything may unfold in unwanted ways, the precise time when the wise resist projecting their fears onto others and then blaming them for the difficulties. Condemning others destroys unity while supporting each other with understanding and love brings people together.

Throughout transcendence of opposition, sages keep a calm and glad mind and find ways to share their joy with others. The structure of the hexagram points to this path. The upper trigram has the attribute of joyfulness, which brings others into fellowship. The lower trigram represent wisdom, which discerns the path of union. Joy and wisdom avoid the sharpening of opposition and overcome differences.

We cannot allow opposition to cause the disintegration of life. We must acknowledge differences but constantly subsume them within an ever larger, interconnected whole. Within our time, we must seek to restore the balance and harmony of the Earth and Interbeing. When love frames the effort, everything will take a turn for the better. Compassion and love go beyond division.

Line 1: The firm line controls itself and does not run after those who have distanced themselves due to divisiveness. Rather than force unity when separation arises, the wise look inward to reduce their own faults that contributed to the separation. When disharmony decreases, those who belong together come back.

Line 2: Conditions keep apart those who belong together. The line tries to connect with wisdom in ways that do not compromise its spiritual path. Unexpectedly, they cross paths and meet in a challenging situation. With wisdom, the line strengthens its capacities to overcome what separates it from the sacred Earth Interbeing.

Line 3: The line feels everything conspires against it. It sees other hindering its progress to achieve its higher purpose, thwarting and dishonoring it. Yet the line does not let the situation cause it to lose faith in the path. Despite the struggle, it holds to the ways of the spirit and ultimately achieves its purpose.

Line 4: The line feels isolated and wants to join with those of similar spirit. Unexpectedly, the line meets another wise person and find they share the spiritual path. They struggle against what causes dangerous opposition within themselves and in the world, moving others to work with them to care for the Earth and all life.

Line 5: The weak line has an honored position in the time of opposition. The line comes upon wisdom (2nd line), who can help restore the ways of the spirit. The situation depends upon the wise to know what has caused the imbalance and disharmony. With the strength that flows from this wisdom, the 5th line discerns how to move toward restoring what was lost.

Line 6: At the extreme of disharmony, the line turns away from the spirit and accepts its harmful views and projections as normal. Doubts and ruminations about others come forth by the hundreds, like pigs covered with mud or a wagon full of devils. However, when its opposition reaches the extreme, the line restores its connection with the sacred and its ways. It now sees as blessing what it had feared.