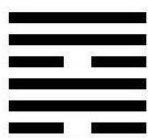


Hexagram 57 - Comprehend



Adapt.

The small growing. Spiritual influence nourishing all

Benefit from possessing directed going.

Benefit from viewing wholeness.

Structure:

- The hexagram doubles the trigram ☴, which denotes gentleness and adaptability. When doubled, it also represents comprehending the situation.
- The gentle yields to the strong.

Images of the hexagram:

- The wind (thought) blows everywhere and enters into every opening.
- Tree roots that penetrates deep into the ground respond with flexibility and adapt to whatever they encounter. The roots absorb water saturated with nutrients and bring them up to nourish the tree and for its new growth.
- In the ancient Chinese calendar, the trigram stands in the southeast between spring and summer, where it denotes the flowing of beings into their forms and receiving blessings.

Wind disperses clouds and clears the sky. Within the human realm, penetrating clarity and judgment thwart all harmful hidden motives. The wise gently uncover their harmful beliefs that hide in secret recesses.

Dangerous but intangible influences of harmful cultural conditioning affects people by suggestion. Conditioned beliefs and self-centeredness require a vigorous and relentless effort to uncover them. The more deeply we investigate our separation from the spirit and wholeness, the more we see our interconnectedness. When we see what divides us and penetrate them with understanding, they lose their power over us.

When we restrain our harmful tendencies while cultivating the Ways of Wholeness, we shape our intentions and thus our experience.¹ The wise learn which of their beliefs and behaviors to discard and which to preserve, what needs strengthening and what needs reduction. Once we gain clarity, we can act wisely within the world.

The sage remains rooted within the spirit. The hexagram points to humble submission to the spirit and devoted service to Earth Interbeing. We spiritually mature as our understanding of the Ways of Wholeness deepens.

¹ **Ways of Wholeness:** Sages relate to all their sacred Earth Interbeing relations with love and care, serving the well-being of all. 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. Sages know the sacred within all their interactions and situations and open to the loving path through problems and dangers.

Life lessons persistently teach us ways to overcome our willful ignorance and to align our lives with the ways of the spirit. Despite the struggle, we must try again and again to break through our resistance to following the spirit and to seek interbeing, learning each life lesson and strengthening our skills.

The cosmos, the sacred universe, moves from within. The wise know that whatever they choose to do will shape their experience. By seeking what endures within the seeming chaos and furthering what increases the transformative creative potential, sages prepare for acting without acting. Such calm, steady progress that overleaps nothing leads to the goal of wholeness

Both the trigram and hexagram represent the process that makes things flow into their form, to make them develop and grow into the shape promised by the seed. The wise prepare the ground to increase the potential of creative energies to spontaneously flow into their natural form. The new era cannot emerge in any other way.

This work begins with responding to whatever arises in our daily experience in ways that benefit all. We shape conditions by acting in the ways of wholeness rather than as an isolated part. The daily transformative work within our thin zone of the freedom to choose how to respond to experience increases this potential. Sages persistently work on shaping conditions to influence ever greater complexities of experience. These small efforts achieve their purpose by yielding constantly to the spirit by furthering wholeness.

Within the world, we identify the barriers that obstruct the emergence of the new era that benefits all and then transform them. By determining the nature of the hidden harmful cultural influences that affect people by suggestion, we can diminish their power by bringing them into the light of day and then overcoming them. Once barriers have been removed, then the new era freely flows into its form. We maintain our balance within transformation by staying present within quickly changing experiences, serving the oppressed, cooperating with the wise, and persistently acting in ways that benefit wholeness.

The wise remain inwardly obedient and outwardly adaptable, the process of gradual growth. Just like a tree, we must bend around what cannot change and take small steps to transform what we can. A great and difficult task engages us. No sphere of activity is too small. Our path that life has allotted us matures with us and serves as the sacred place in which we work, where the small concentrates the creative. Gradual and inconspicuous effects by a penetrating influence that never lapses yield enduring results.

Line 1: The line vacillates as it doubts its purpose. It does not have the will to advance resolutely yet does not want to withdraw. Myriad doubts arise, and it drifts irresolutely. In such a situation, the line steels itself and makes a firm decision to do its duty. The line applies resolute discipline to avoid irresolute indecisiveness.

Line 2: Priests, the intermediaries between people and the sacred, determine the roots of hidden influences that affect people by suggestion. Magicians, the intermediaries between the sacred and people, remove such influences.

Harmful but hidden intangible influences slink into dark corners and affect people by suggestion. The very anonymity of such plotting requires an especially vigorous, relentless effort. When these malevolent influences are brought to light and branded, they lose their power over people.

Line 3: The wise do not push penetrating investigation too far as they know it cripples the power to act decisively. The sage deliberates a concern, makes a decision, and then acts. Over-thinking brings fresh doubts and reservations, which leads to the humiliation of not acting.

Line 4: The line has comprehended what it must do to overcome the danger and acts. Its actions serve as an offering to the sacred, nourishment for those on the path, and a benefit for all. When an action fulfills all three purposes, the effort has great success.

Line 5: This line makes a needed mid-course correction. With a firm resolve, the sage abandons a wrong beginning and attains a good end. It begins by carefully considering how it should proceed. After making the changes, the sage observes the consequences of its actions to learn whether they benefit others.

Line 6: With penetrating understanding, the line follows up injurious influences into their most secret corners. However, excessive investigation of harmful influences weakens the firmness of the line, making it passive. When excessive yielding prevails over firmness, one cannot transform what harms and will lose what it has gained.