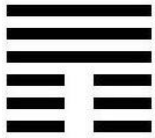


## Hexagram 12 – Drawing Apart



*To oppression belongs amoral people.*

*Not benefiting from a sage's wholeness.*

*The worthy going, the unworthy coming.*

### Structure:

- Creative ☰ above Earth ☷, spirit rising and Earth sinking deeper.
- Darkness is within, light without. The above moves away from the below.

**Image:** The Creative and Earth move apart, numbing all things.

The hexagram represents a time of disintegration, marking the 7<sup>th</sup> month in the Chinese calendar (August to September.) The Book of Changes holds that the union of spirit and Earth grows life, and their disunion brings an end to growth. The diminishing light and growth in autumn describes a seasonal occurrence. Natural changes bring about an unstoppable withdrawal of the conditions for growth.

When selfishness and hostility increase, the ways of the spirit decline. Those who benefit from domination and exploitation of others and the Earth resist and deny the sacred. When entangled with what harms, amorality dominates and the sacred withdraws. Wisdom has no influence over those whose unchecked self-cherishing and willingness to seriously harm the Earth Interbeing degrades the conditions upon which all life depends.

In this disadvantaged time, those who put themselves above the sacred increasingly produce more dangers as they willingly harm others for self-benefit without limits, creating ever greater imbalances and further marginalizing the wise. The declining human devotion to the sacred Earth Interbeing makes it increasingly difficult to discern the path toward restoring its harmony and balance.

Self-cherishing and hostility disrupt the flow of life and sever our communion with the sacred and Earth Interbeing. When we value wealth, power over others, materialism, and indulgence more than the spirit, we become an object among objects and subject ourselves to external influences. We suffer and cause the suffering of others. Mistrust prevails within families and in community life. The ways of wholeness<sup>1</sup> dwindle within the world.

When the destructive forces of oppression block the wise from benefiting all, they do not allow themselves to be turned from their principles. If conditions prevent the wise from exerting their influence within the world, they retreat. While waiting for conditions to change, they further develop

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<sup>1</sup> **Ways of Wholeness:** We interbe with all our sacred Earth Interbeing relations with love, respect, and care. We know the sacred within all our interactions and open to the loving path through problems and dangers. We live within Earth limits and moral bounds to sustain the sacred balance and harmony of the Earth Interbeing. We share and reciprocate the gifts we receive from the Earth Interbeing. We lovingly fulfill our own responsibilities to the Earth Interbeing as whole beings, creating opportunities for others to do the same.

their spiritual being and preserve the spiritual path. By not yielding to what harms, they succeed. When the time for growth comes again, the path forward reemerges.

The more people who live in oppressive cultures investigate and understand the effects of self-cherishing and hostility upon others and the Earth, the more we recognize our complicity in what harms. We see how we struggle against the ways of wholeness and cause suffering. In the Book of Changes, only people can remedy their willingness to harm others for self-benefit: we cannot expect salvation or miracles to do it for us. Only people can stop abusing each other and the Earth and undo the harm we have inflicted. We have the challenge to free ourselves and all life from oppression. When we overcome our deluded beliefs in our exceptionalism and our denial of the sacred and the Earth Interbeing, we pull out the roots of our willingness to harm others for self-benefit and all its harms.

When surrounded by those who use force to get what they want and ignore what the community and Earth Interbeing need, the wise retreat rather than futilely throwing their lives into harm's way. They know in such times they cannot move others toward wholeness nor singlehandedly resist what harms. Instead, they turn toward the spirit to deep their wholeness with the sacred Earth Interbeing and wait for the times to change.

**Line 1:** The line cannot change current conditions and withdraws from public efforts to do so. Its stays connected with others of like mind who together can bring dispersed elements back into a unity to serve the greater whole.

**Line 2:** The wise do not compromise their spiritual path by submitting to the selfish. Instead, they bear the consequences of the time of drawing apart, willing to suffer personally to preserve the fundamental principles of the path. The wise limit themselves to making small steps toward what benefits all as they know the conditions of the time prevent them from doing more.

**Line 3:** Those without talent or skill have taken on responsibilities beyond their capacities to fulfill. The self-serving line has used shameful methods to achieve its position.

**Line 4:** The time nears when the drawing apart changes. The line has the calling to bring to life the ways of wholeness, a purpose which the time favors. A path emerges that leads back to restoring balance and harmony within the world, a blessing that all share. When capable people aligned with the spirit act when the opportunity arises, they become whole and have joy.

**Line 5:** The time of drawing apart begins to yield to the ways of wholeness. The wise, however, remain cautious about losses, which serves them well as dangers still exist. Such periods of transition should make us fear and tremble. To successfully overcome complicity with what harms within oneself and oppression in the world requires the greatest caution. The wise attach themselves to the spirit firmly and regain their influence in the world, which benefits all.

**Line 6:** According to natural law, when things come to an extreme, they inevitably reverse. Oppression weakens, and the ways of the spirit strengthen. The time has come to transform what oppresses into caring for the Earth Interbeing, which brings great joy to all.