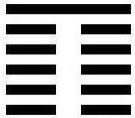


Hexagram 23 – Splitting apart



Splitting apart.

No benefit from moving toward a goal.

Structure:

- The Receptive moves downward ☷☷, and the mountain stays motionless ☶☶, loosening the hexagram's structure.
- The weak lines cause the downfall of the strong line at the top by sinking downward, taking the ground away from it.
- Mountain over Earth. Stillness and resting within the strength of the Earth.

Image: The top line pictures the roof of a house. The house collapses when the roof shatters.

The hexagram marks the 9th month in the Chinese calendar (October – November.) The dark of the year overtakes the light ever more powerfully, threatening to supplant it completely. The fundamental laws of Tao cause this natural alteration of increase and decrease, fullness and emptiness. As the yielding lines increase, they gradually and imperceptibly change the strong lines until they collapse. However, this hexagram expresses the fundamental law that a new cycle begins at the end of a completed cycle. Fruit must decay before its seeds can bring forth new growth. Sages know the futility of struggling against the ways of nature; thus, the wise do not resist the end of a cycle but submit to the time.

We experience the time of splitting apart when oppressive forces erode the conditions and values necessary to maintain life, denying the sacred and stripping away what benefits all within the world. The selfish tear down what the wise have achieved and ignore the suffering they cause in their rush for ever more wealth and power, the extreme result of differentiating between self and interbeing, valuing the part and turning away from the whole.

Inwardly, we may experience this stripping away of the good when we yield to self-cherishing and compromise our spiritual path. The forces of self-cherishing threaten to collapse the influence of those who care for the Earth and all beings. Oppressive energies do not work directly but subtly, undermining the ways of wholeness¹ until they collapse. In such times, those who harm for self-benefit act without restraint and defeat the wise.

Great harm, however, does not just destroy the good alone but inevitably itself as well, for that which lives solely by harming others and the Earth cannot continue to exist on its own strength. In the end, destructive forces can no longer sustain themselves, and they collapse. Sages respond to this difficult time by being as still and quiet as the mountain. They gain strength from the Earth by resting firmly within the foundation of the spiritual path.

¹ **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.

When dangerously harmful forces degrade conditions for life on Earth, the wise do not presume upon their strength, now at its weakest, to directly resist these forces. Neither do they undertake a great effort because they have little influence in this time. Yet even when the disintegrating forces are at their strongest, the wise still have small opportunities to bring for the ways of wholeness within the world. They achieve their purpose by remaining adaptable to opportunities and devoted to wholeness, strengthening their partnership with the oppressed and sharing resources with them to reduce suffering. The wise refuse to obey the amoral ways of the oppressor. By placing ourselves under the spirit's guidance, our path continues.

Although the dark forces splinter the light, the ways of wholeness survive. In nature, the fruit must decay before the new seed can fall to the ground and renew growth. The splitting apart reaches its end, and the time for recovery begins. The seed of good survives, and the sage regains influence and effectiveness. When the forces of selfishness and hostility peak, the heart turns to transforming the abuses of human freedom and remedying the harm they caused.

Line 1: The yielding disintegrating force advances and surreptitiously dissolves the foundation of the resting place of the strong. Erosion of the resolve to adhere to the virtues and live the ways of the wholeness begins here.

Line 2: The disintegrating forces grow stronger and increasingly ignores the responsibility to care for the Earth and all life. Individualism and separation from the spirit overwhelm the ways of wholeness.

Line 3: Disintegrating influences surround this weak, isolated line, which remains free of blame because of its adherence to the ways of wholeness. The line attains stability and frees itself from what harms while in the midst of wrongdoings. The line separates itself from corrupting influences.

Line 4: Here the disaster affects not only the line's resting place but its being. The danger has reached its peak, and nothing stops it. Self-cherishing and the willingness to harm others for self-benefit dominate the line and completely eclipse the spiritual path. Misfortune arrives.

Line 5: The line voluntarily sacrifices its desire to dominate for self-benefit and submits to the spirit, leading the other weak lines to the strong light-giving principle at the top, transforming destructive energies. All goes well.

Line 6: The splitting apart reaches its end. The selfish suffer the effects of their harming others. The willingness to harm others and the Earth for self-benefit destroys not the good alone but destroys itself as well. Yet, the strong line at the top embodies the seed of the future. When the strong line changes into a weak line, it collapses into the Earth and the good sprouts anew without any cessation.

The sage again attains influence and effectiveness. It receives common support to carry forward what benefits all. When disaster comes to a peak, people naturally think of ways to remedy it. The people's desire for healing leads to living the ways of wholeness.