

## Hexagram 26 – The Great Shaping



*The great shaping of wholeness.*

*Accumulating the power of presence.*

*Not staying within. Significant.*

*Benefit from bringing to life the ways of wholeness.*

**Structure:** Above, the mountain ☶. Below, the Creative power ☰. Creative within the mountain.

The trigram ☶ images the stillness of a mountain holding down the power of the Creator ☰, the sacred. Creation constantly surges outward into experience, a perpetual flux of possibilities. In this hexagram, the Mountain accumulates this sacred energy and transforms it into a powerful will to bring to life the sacred ways.

The Western culture denies the sacred and separates us from each other, all life, and the Earth. The denial of the sacred and separation from the Earth Interbeing frames our self-centered lives and willingness to harm others and the whole of Earth Interbeing for our self-benefit and then ignore the suffering we cause. Our culture depends upon violence, intimidation, deprivation, habituation, and addiction to condition us to live its omniscient ways.

The hexagram describes the spiritual process to free us from our emotional reactions, the compulsive patterns of culturally conditioned beliefs, values, and behaviors, the ways in which we act out the ways of an oppressive culture, harming ourselves, others, and the Earth Interbeing. Once we have sufficient awareness to see through our culturally conditioned beliefs and values, the spiritual path provides us with the tools we need to free ourselves from our conditioned emotional reactions.

At some point in our lives, we may begin to perceive a connection between our emotional reactive patterns and the suffering they cause. We see the difficult interactions that trigger emotional reactions: the overwhelming urge for more or the self-righteous necessity to have our way. Emotional reactions directed against our being drive us into anxiety or a great despair. However, awareness of the conditioned patterns, although a crucial step, cannot stop us from emotionally reacting.

In presence, we directly experience that we are one with the sacred wholeness of the Earth Interbeing. Conditioned emotional reactions obstruct our experience of presence. Attention is the power of will, the focus of being. The spiritual path cultivates higher levels of attention as the tool to dismantle the emotional reactions that obstruct presence.

Once an emotional reaction starts to run, it takes on a life of its own. At that emotionally charged moment, we do not see any other alternative but to yield to the urgent compulsion to behave in ways that harm us and others. The spiritual path to cultivate enough attention to see the first rising of an emotional reaction. A meditation practice, especially those that focus on the breath, cultivates the strength and stability of attention. We need to cultivate attention to overcome our harmful emotional reactions.

The spiritual practice of dismantling emotional reactions requires us to refrain from acting out an emotional reaction regardless of how urgently or seductively it compels us to harm ourselves and others for self-benefit. Instead, within this highly charged emotional moment, we simply but firmly drop the story we have in our head for the emotional reaction. We hold the disturbing emotions of the reaction within a

compassionate presence, not trying to change the emotions but to experience them as deeply as we can. We need not blame our emotions for emotional reactions. Rather, we are releasing them from their oppressive conditioning.

Within presence, we hold our emotions within a compassionate presence and fully experience them, whatever the suffering they embody, without acting on them. We stay with the bare emotions until the emotional wave subsides and no longer feel the urgency to harm others or ourselves. We relax and rest our minds within the sacred wholeness.

Should we find ourselves unable to rest because the amount of energy released by the emotional reaction exceeds our capacity to contain in attention, radiate that excess to the Earth Interbeing with the wish for all to awaken. This prevents the heightened energy of attention from flowing back into the weakened emotional reaction. Once calmer, rest.

Dissolving emotional reactions releases the energy that binds compulsive emotions to a conditioned stimulus. That energy is released into attention, which strengthens our will power. Conversely, every time we yield to an emotional reaction, some of the energy of attention flows back into and strengthens the bonding of the conditioned stimulus to the emotion.

As we begin to dissolve emotional reaction, we will find that they become more intense and harmful. Certainly, our increased attention causes our increased sensitivity to them, but we have put into play a deep conditioned resistance to change. We need to recognize the many layers of our conditioning and accept that it will take time and a great effort to free ourselves of them. By starting with the patterns that we most clearly see, we can ease into this practice. Gradually we strengthen our attention and can take on ever greater challenges.

Each time we dissolve an emotional reaction, we weaken the conditioning bond, releasing energy into attention. However, doing it once does not extinguish the bond. A gradual persistent effort over time will so strengthen our attention that we can better manage our encounters with these reactions. But we should expect their return, like weeds do in a garden.

Emotional reactions separate us from interbeing as they overwhelm our attention and focus it on our self-centeredness and willingness to harm others for self-benefit. As a daily, this practice recovers and renews our balance and harmony with Earth Interbeing. As we free ourselves from harmful cultural conditioning, we accumulate attention and empower our will to live the ways of wholeness.

In the larger philosophical sense, we see that the evolving illusions of every age insure that the masses will remain attached to the wheel of birth and death -- continuously repeating endless variations of the same basic lessons. When each individual is finally ready to escape from these cycles, it is only within the ancient and eternal template of the Work that transcendence can be found.

Rather than shaping other beings and the Earth to fit our beliefs and complicity in what harms, the wise shape themselves to best serve what benefits all and the Earth. Sages fulfill the sacred command to care for all life and the spirit freely and joyfully, harmonizing their feelings, thoughts, and actions with the spirit.

Sages stand firmly on spiritual ground. Through the chaos comes the cosmos.

**Line 1:** The strong line wants to advance, but it would err in judgement if did as that would bring it in opposition with the ways of wholeness. Instead it does not expose itself to danger and yields to non-action.

**Line 2:** The line keeps its balance in the midst of obstacles it cannot yet overcome. It does not advance further but rather accumulates the spiritual energy of attention needed for a vigorous advance later on.

**Line 3:** The wise recognize that everything changes and have developed the skills to advance and retreat as the situation calls for. The line takes nothing for granted. It understands the difficulties of its path and has prepared itself to always follow the ways of wholeness<sup>1</sup> in responding to whatever arises in changing experience.

**Line 4:** The wise restrain what has not yet gained full strength through precautions and preventive acts. The line strengthens its attention, shapes its impulses, and focuses on following the ways of wholeness.

**Line 5:** The line transforms the energy of its emotional reactions into powering a presence with Earth Interbeing and wholeness.

**Line 6:** The time of accumulating attention changes into the time of dispersal. The line has accumulated creative energy from shaping emotional reactions, an energy

which it now makes available to serving the Earth Interbeing in the ways of wholeness.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Ways of Wholeness of Earth Interbeing:** We know the sacred through the wholeness of Creation and worship the sacred through our devoted care for the Earth Interbeing. We interbe with all our sacred Earth Interbeing relations with love, equality, and respect. We know and respond to the mutual neediness of life. We know and care for our place as the ground upon which we enact our care for the Earth Interbeing. We know the sacred within all our interactions and open to the loving path through problems and dangers. We gift forward what we have taken and share the blessings we receive to recover, preserve, and renew the harmony and balance of the Earth Interbeing.

We live as unique whole beings and overcome what disrupts our balance and harmony with the Earth Interbeing, lovingly fulfilling our responsibilities to the Earth Interbeing and encouraging others to do the same. We know and resist what harms the Earth Interbeing through the ways of wholeness and stand in solidarity with the hungry, dispossessed, and exploited. We accept responsibility for the consequences of our actions. We know the enduring joy that comes from living the ways of wholeness of the Earth Interbeing and enjoy being, interbeing, and creation. (Rev. 11-5-24)