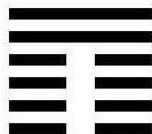


Hexagram 20 – Contemplation



Contemplation.

The moments between intention and making an offering.

Influence from harmonizing intentions with sacred values.

Structure:

- Wind ☴ above, penetrating. Earth ☷ below, receptive
- Devotion below. Gentleness above.

Ideogram: Vision and a waterbird, an aerial view.

Image: The structure of the hexagram suggests an ancient Chinese watch tower, from which one has a wide view of the countryside. Also, a watch tower situated on a mountain stands out as a landmark that people see from a distance. The Chinese character which names this hexagram means both seeing and being seen.

Time: September – October, the 8th month in the Chinese calendar, the time of the autumn equinox. The light-giving power retreats as the dark power increases.

The hexagram depicts an ancient Chinese sacrificial ritual, which opened with the emperor washing his hands and then invoking his ancestors' spirits by pouring a drink for them. Upon completion of these ritual acts, he made the sacrifice. The time between invoking the spirits and making the sacrifice held the ceremony's most sacred moments of deep inner contemplation. If the emperor manifested sincere piety, those who observed the ritual experienced awe.

The sage contemplates whether its intentions to act align with the values of the sacred Earth Interbeing before it acts.¹ We have total responsibility for how we respond to experience. When self-centered, we react in ways that open to the willingness to harm others for self-benefit. The wise do not act when confused or in an emotional turmoil. Once we have the confidence that our intended actions will cause no harm, then we can confidently act in that knowing. We apply the wisdom we have learned to bring to life the ways of the Earth Interbeing.

The spiritual path matures how we respond to arising experience. By knowing our harmful beliefs and behaviors, we bring them into our path. Overcoming them becomes our practice. The wise remain careful about not acting before they know their intentions actions align with the ways of

¹ **The Ways of the Sacred Earth Interbeing:** We worship the sacred through our care for Creation. We interbe with Creation, relating to all with equality, respect, and care so that life continues and thrives on Earth. We know the sacred ways for Creation to continue and thrive and to overcome what keeps us apart. We know and respond to the mutual neediness of life in ways that further the harmony of Earth Interbeing. We know and care for our place as the ground upon which we preserve the balance of Earth Interbeing by reciprocating for what we take through our stewardship of the Earth Interbeing. We live within interbeing's moral boundaries and Earth limits and learn from our life lessons how to overcome what keeps us apart. We live as unique beings in the ways of the Earth Interbeing to preserve Creation's harmony and balance and to overcome what keeps us apart. We respond to whatever we experience in the ways of the Earth Interbeing and hold ourselves accountable for our actions. (12/23/24)

Earth Interbeing. Sages live these ways. By their actions they influence others who then want to live the ways of the sage.

When confused about how to respond, we can seek spiritual advice from the I Ching. Those wanting to change the harmful Western culture and to learn how to live on Earth with other beings travel an uncharted path. We know that we do not know, a humble admission of our dependence upon a source of wisdom greater than us. When we act on the guidance of the I Ching, the spirit reaches out through us into the world.

Pausing between asking the I Ching for guidance and acting upon that wisdom gives us the opportunity to see the connections between the received wisdom and our intended action. Even if the I Ching's guidance contradicts what we feel impelled to do, the wise follow the I Ching's advice. We must have great honesty with ourselves in such moments rather than dismiss the teaching and forge ambitiously ahead.

There are as many ways to express our spiritual path to benefit the Earth Interbeing in the world as there are beings. We learn about the effectiveness of our path by observing our influence upon others. When we observe we have benefited others, then we have the joy of knowing we live the spiritual path.

Wisdom requires clear knowledge and an unobstructed openness to the sacred underlying what appears. Looking deeply into the values of our intentions transforms the seeker's relationship to others and all life. Once liberated from the dominance of harmful cultural conditioning, the wise contemplate life and through their action fulfill their great purpose of wholeness with the Earth Interbeing.

Line 1: The line has a superficial, shallow view of life. Those on the spiritual path comprehend their relationships and situations within a dynamic, interconnected whole.

Line 2: People commonly have a subjective, limited outlook on the world. They relate everything to themselves and cannot understand what moves others. Such a self-centered way of viewing others and life brings humiliation and harm.

Line 3: The line learns whether to advance or withdraw from the dynamics of the situation.

Line 4: The wise line contemplates and cares for the wholeness of Earth Interbeing. The line welcomes and honors greater wisdom.

Line 5: The line contemplates its influence upon others and situations to discern whether it has achieved its purpose to care for all and the Earth. If the outcomes of its actions have benefited others, the line has had a good influence and has no regrets.

Line 6: The line has freed itself from viewing life from a self-centered point of view and now contemplates how to move whatever its experiences toward wholeness.