

Hexagram 18 Decay



Decay

Sacred. Sacredness.

Benefit from moving through the danger.

Consider what needs to be done before acting.

Consider what needs to be done after acting.

Image Tradition

Decay. Rigid inertia above and feeble yielding below.

Decay. The sacred and ways of sacredness remedy the disorder of the world.

Benefit from moving through the danger.

Leaving decay requires a great effort.

Consider what needs to be done before acting.

Consider what needs to be done after acting.

Removing the decay leads to a beginning.

A sacred transformation, indeed.

Ideogram A bowl in which worms breed. **Meanings of ideograph:** decay, purification, poisonous; intestinal worms, venomous insects; evil, magic; disorder, error; unquiet ghost.

Structure: Gentle indifference of the lower trigram together with the rigid inertia of the upper trigram.

The heinous crimes perpetrated against the sacred, life and the Earth in the founding of a harmful culture reverberate through time. The ways of the founders become the ways of the culture that each generation perpetuates through its crimes against the sacred, life, and the Earth. The monstrous ways of the odious culture spread like a plague among those vulnerable to wanting power over others and great wealth. It transforms everyone entangled with the harmful ways and views of the founders into a monster that has the willingness to destroy life on Earth for self-benefit.

Harmful cultures persist from one generation to the next by conditioning moral weaknesses, wrong views, and indifference to the suffering of others. Cultural conditioning causes people to view harming others for self-benefit as normal. Efforts to reform the culture meet with resistance, especially among those who materially benefit from complicity with what harms. We lose our will to restore a balanced and harmonious culture. A sense of powerlessness overwhelms us as we witness the collapse of life on Earth.

Even though we have no power to reform the harmful culture, we can change ourselves. When we humbly turn to the guidance and support of the sacred to live the ways of sacredness, we become a medicine that remedies the disorder of the world.¹ We have a sacred path.

¹ **Ways of the sacred and sacredness:** We live within the reality caused by the sacred, a reality marked by the sacred ways: interdependence, change, equality, and sacredness. The ways of sacredness guide us to living sacredness to further life on Earth, the sacred purpose of all life: awakening to sacred knowing; wisdom of living sacredness; harmonious and respectful interactions; devotion to the sacred; humble submission to sacred ways and direction; responding to the suffering of others; restoring and preserving a balanced life; manifesting the sacred purpose to further life on Earth.

We avoid perpetuating generational harm by stopping ourselves from harming others and overcoming our harmful views. However, ridding ourselves of our amoral behaviors and views requires a great effort on our part. To free ourselves of our harmful ways and views, we must have the willingness to make the effort to do that.

Any small way we can overcome our harmful ways and views breaks the lock they have upon us. Again, we ask the sacred for strength and guidance to know how to do that. Overcoming a harmful way or view strengthens our resistance to falling back into what harms.

Loving kindness prevails over both the beginning and the end. We avoid self-righteously correcting others as that only alienates them from us. Nor do we inflict a harsh discipline upon ourselves as we want to correct, not punish, ourselves. However, our moral weaknesses consider any restraint as harsh. Being too weak to correct ourselves imprisons us. Thus, we firmly act upon what we know to do. A little bit too much firmness is better than yielding to what harms.

We sacrifice our status and privileges the harmful culture has given us, along with our ambitions to have things turn out the ways we want them to be. When we give up our self-centeredness and wanting the approval of others, we no longer are the star of the show. Instead, we humbly accept whatever work the sacred gives us and do that work to the best of our abilities

Our harmful ways and view will resist our efforts to change them. Better the devil we know than learning something new. That the moral decay has persisted for such a long time only intensifies our passivity, our tolerance of living the ways of the harmful culture. We complacently ignore the true situation or the consequences of our harmful ways. This attitude leads to further decay and misery.

We cannot fulfill the meaning of our lives within the structure of a harmful society and culture. Nor can we further life on Earth by doing what a harmful culture wants us to do, to be. The harmful culture's immorality prevents us from recovering our sacredness. It may seem too difficult to end our entanglement with the generations harms of the culture, yet if done with humility and sacred guidance, we will learn how to interbe within our place on Earth.

Line 1: The line easily overcomes the harmful ways conditioned by generational harms that have not yet deeply rooted within the line.

Line 2: The line knows how generational harms of the culture have conditioned its views and ways and how deeply it depends on them. Yet, It knows its duty to oppose harmful ways and views. With sacred support, the line gradually disentangles itself from them step by step, focusing on the moral weaknesses that keep it shackled to harming others and the Earth.

Line 3: The line adamantly works to free itself from the ways and views of the generational harms, causing others to view its aggressiveness as inconsiderate. However, it takes a great effort to correct deep entanglements with harmful ways and views that moral weakness and indifference to the suffering of others have permitted. In this case, too much energy is better than too little.

Line 4: The line knows its responsibility to overcome the moral decay of generational harmful ways and views. Yet it resists acting upon what it knows because it depends upon the benefits and privileges it receives from going along with the dangerous ways and views of its culture. The line tolerates living with the devil it knows rather than to live sacredness.

Line 5: The line recognizes freeing itself from the moral weakness and indifference to suffering of the harmful culture as its holy work. It willingly bears the adversities it suffers in overcoming its entanglements with generational decay in the ways of sacredness with praise for the sacred and for the sacred path through them.

Line 6: The line has freed itself of moral weaknesses and indifference to suffering of others. It turns to living the ways of sacredness and yielding to the sacred will. The line becomes a living example of how to live on Earth with other beings in ways that further life on Earth.