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23. *Po / Splitting Apart*



above KÊN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN
below K'UN THE RECEPTIVE, EARTH

The dark lines are about to mount upward and overthrow the last firm, light line by exerting a disintegrating influence on it. The inferior, dark forces overcome what is superior and strong, not by direct means, but by undermining it gradually and imperceptibly, so that it finally collapses.

The lines of the hexagram present the image of a house, the top line being the roof, and because the roof is being shattered the house collapses. The hexagram belongs to the ninth month (October–November). The yin power pushes up ever more powerfully and is about to supplant the yang power altogether.

THE JUDGMENT

SPLITTING APART. It does not further one
To go anywhere.

This pictures a time when inferior people are pushing forward and are about to crowd out the few remaining strong and superior men. Under these circumstances, which are due to the time, it is not favorable for the superior man to undertake anything.

The right behavior in such adverse times is to be deduced from the images and their attributes. The lower trigram stands for the earth, whose attributes are docility and devotion. The upper trigram stands for the mountain, whose attribute is stillness. This suggests that one should submit to the bad time and remain quiet. For it is a question not of man's doing but of time conditions, which, according to the laws of heaven, show an alternation of increase and decrease, fullness and emptiness. It is impossible to counteract these conditions of the time. Hence it is not cowardice but wisdom to submit and avoid action.

THE IMAGE

The mountain rests on the earth:

The image of SPLITTING APART.

Thus those above can ensure their position

Only by giving generously to those below.

The mountain rests on the earth. When it is steep and narrow, lacking a broad base, it must topple over. Its position is strong only when it rises out of the earth broad and great, not proud and steep. So likewise those who rule rest on the broad foundation of the people. They too should be generous and benevolent, like the earth that carries all. Then they will make their position as secure as a mountain is in its tranquillity.

THE LINES

Six at the beginning means:
 The leg of the bed is split.
 Those who persevere are destroyed.
 Misfortune.

Inferior people are on the rise and stealthily begin their destructive burrowing from below in order to undermine the place where the superior man rests. Those followers of the ruler who remain loyal are destroyed by slander and intrigue. The situation bodes disaster, yet there is nothing to do but wait.

Six in the second place means:
 The bed is split at the edge.
 Those who persevere are destroyed.
 Misfortune.

The power of the inferior people is growing. The danger draws close to one's person; already there are clear indications, and rest is disturbed. Moreover, in this dangerous situation one is as yet without help or friendly advances from above or below. Extreme caution is necessary in this isolation. One must adjust to the time and promptly avoid the danger. Stubborn perseverance in maintaining one's standpoint would lead to downfall.

Six in the third place means:
 He splits with them. No blame.

An individual finds himself in an evil environment to which he is committed by external ties. But he has an inner relationship with a superior man, and through this he attains the stability to free himself from the way of the inferior people around him. This brings him into opposition to them of course, but that is not wrong.

Six in the fourth place means:
 The bed is split up to the skin.
 Misfortune.

Here the disaster affects not only the resting place but even the occupant. No warning or other comment is added. Misfortune has reached its peak: it can no longer be warded off.

Six in the fifth place means:

A shoal of fishes. Favor comes through the court ladies.

Everything acts to further.

Here, in immediate proximity to the strong, light-giving principle at the top, the nature of the dark force undergoes a change. It no longer opposes the strong principle by means of intrigues but submits to its guidance. Indeed, as the head of the other weak lines, it leads all of these to the strong line, just as a princess leads her maids-in-waiting like a shoal of fishes to her husband and thus gains his favor. Inasmuch as the lower element thus voluntarily places itself under the higher, it attains happiness and the higher also receives its due. Therefore all goes well.

○ Nine at the top means:

There is a large fruit still uneaten.

The superior man receives a carriage.

The house of the inferior man is split apart.

Here the splitting apart reaches its end. When misfortune has spent itself, better times return. The seed of the good remains, and it is just when the fruit falls to the ground that good sprouts anew from its seed. The superior man again attains influence and effectiveness. He is supported by public opinion as if in a carriage. But the inferior man's wickedness is visited upon himself. His house is split apart. A law of nature is at work here. Evil is not destructive to the good alone but inevitably destroys itself as well. For evil, which lives solely by negation, cannot continue to exist on its own strength alone. The inferior man himself fares best when held under control by a superior man.