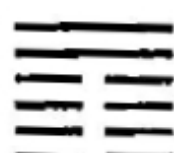


觀

20. *Kuan / Contemplation (View)*

	<i>above</i>	SUN	THE GENTLE, WIND
	<i>below</i>	K'UN	THE RECEPTIVE, EARTH

A slight variation of tonal stress gives the Chinese name for this hexagram a double meaning. It means both contemplating and being seen, in the sense of being an example. These ideas are suggested by the fact that the hexagram can be understood as picturing a type of tower characteristic of ancient China.



A tower of this kind commanded a wide view of the country; at the same time, when situated on a mountain, it became a landmark that could be seen for miles around. Thus the hexagram shows a ruler who contemplates the law of heaven above him and the ways of the people below, and who, by means of good government, sets a lofty example to the masses.

This hexagram is linked with the eighth month (September–October). The light-giving power retreats and the dark power is again on the increase. However, this aspect is not material in the interpretation of the hexagram as a whole.

THE JUDGMENT

CONTEMPLATION. The ablution has been made,
But not yet the offering.
Full of trust they look up to him.

The sacrificial ritual in China began with an ablution and a libation by which the Deity was invoked, after which the sacrifice was offered. The moment of time between these two

ceremonies is the most sacred of all, the moment of deepest inner concentration. If piety is sincere and expressive of real faith, the contemplation of it has a transforming and awe-inspiring effect on those who witness it.

Thus also in nature a holy seriousness is to be seen in the fact that natural occurrences are uniformly subject to law. Contemplation of the divine meaning underlying the workings of the universe gives to the man who is called upon to influence others the means of producing like effects. This requires that power of inner concentration which religious contemplation develops in great men strong in faith. It enables them to apprehend the mysterious and divine laws of life, and by means of profoundest inner concentration they give expression to these laws in their own persons. Thus a hidden spiritual power emanates from them, influencing and dominating others without their being aware of how it happens.

THE IMAGE

The wind blows over the earth:

The image of CONTEMPLATION.

Thus the kings of old visited the regions of the world,
Contemplated the people,
And gave them instruction.

When the wind blows over the earth it goes far and wide, and the grass must bend to its power. These two occurrences find confirmation in the hexagram. The two images are used to symbolize a practice of the kings of old; in making regular journeys the ruler could, in the first place, survey his realm and make certain that none of the existing usages of the people escaped notice; in the second, he could exert influence through which such customs as were unsuitable could be changed.

All of this points to the power possessed by a superior personality. On the one hand, such a man will have a view of the real sentiments of the great mass of humanity and therefore cannot be deceived; on the other, he will impress the people so profoundly, by his mere existence and by the impact of his personality, that they will be swayed by him as the grass by the wind.

THE LINES

Six at the beginning means:

Boylike contemplation.

For an inferior man, no blame.

For a superior man, humiliation.

This means contemplation from a distance, without comprehension. A man of influence is at hand, but his influence is not understood by the common people. This matters little in the case of the masses, for they benefit by the actions of the ruling sage whether they understand them or not. But for a superior man it is a disgrace. He must not content himself with a shallow, thoughtless view of prevailing forces; he must contemplate them as a connected whole and try to understand them.

Six in the second place means:

Contemplation through the crack of the door.

Furthering for the perseverance of a woman.

Through the crack of the door one has a limited outlook; one looks outward from within. Contemplation is subjectively limited. One tends to relate everything to oneself and cannot put oneself in another's place and understand his motives. This is appropriate for a good housewife. It is not necessary for her to be conversant with the affairs of the world. But for a man who must take active part in public life, such a narrow, egotistic way of contemplating things is of course harmful.

Six in the third place means:

Contemplation of my life

Decides the choice

Between advance and retreat.

This is the place of transition. We no longer look outward to receive pictures that are more or less limited and confused, but direct our contemplation upon ourselves in order to find a guideline for our decisions. This self-contemplation means the overcoming of naïve egotism in the person who sees every-

thing solely from his own standpoint. He begins to reflect and in this way acquires objectivity. However, self-knowledge does not mean preoccupation with one's own thoughts; rather, it means concern about the effects one creates. It is only the effects our lives produce that give us the right to judge whether what we have done means progress or regression.

Six in the fourth place means:
 Contemplation of the light of the kingdom.
 It furthers one to exert influence as the guest
 of a king.

This describes a man who understands the secrets by which a kingdom can be made to flourish. Such a man must be given an authoritative position, in which he can exert influence. He should be, so to speak, a guest—that is, he should be honored and allowed to act independently, and should not be used as a tool.

○ Nine in the fifth place means:
 Contemplation of my life.
 The superior man is without blame.

A man in an authoritative position to whom others look up must always be ready for self-examination. The right sort of self-examination, however, consists not in idle brooding over oneself but in examining the effects one produces. Only when these effects are good, and when one's influence on others is good, will the contemplation of one's own life bring the satisfaction of knowing oneself to be free of mistakes.

○ Nine at the top means:
 Contemplation of his life.
 The superior man is without blame.

While the preceding line represents a man who contemplates himself, here in the highest place everything that is personal, related to the ego, is excluded. The picture is that of a sage who stands outside the affairs of the world. Liberated from his ego, he contemplates the laws of life and so realizes that knowing how to become free of blame is the highest good.