



## 19. *Overseeing*

Overseeing is creative and developmental, beneficial if correct. In the eighth month there is misfortune.

### EXPLANATION

*Overseeing* is watching over. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is earth ☷☷, following, and below is lake ☱☱, joyful: joyfully following truth, acting in accord with that joy, it is therefore called *overseeing*.

This hexagram represents watching over the furnace, culling the elixir; it follows on the previous hexagram *following*. In *following*, thunder seeks lake, lake returns to thunder; this means that when feeling returns to essence, it can be called restored elixir. Once positive energy has been restored, it becomes increasingly manifest, gradually expanding; at this point you watch over the furnace and get to work, fostering the positive and repressing the negative. Then positive energy grows and negative energy wanes; this is why *overseeing* has creativity and development. Creativity is the first return of one yang; development is the increase and rise of the second yang. Watching over the furnace and getting to work, one culls these two yangs.

But even though the two yangs are growing, yin energy is still abundant and yang energy is still weak; it is necessary to be careful to ward off danger. Don't be negligent, but don't be eager either. Take harmony for substance and accord for function; acting in accord with the time, to take from the other without losing from the self, it is beneficial to be correct. Correct means right; overseeing correctly, before the proper time arrives one does not seek forcibly, and when the time has arrived one does not let it slip by. When process and measure are right, the original creative energy does not leak away, and the mechanism of life does not stop; that practice is creative and developmental, without obstruction.

Otherwise, if one does not know when the medicinal substances are too dense or too feeble, and does not understand when to intensify the work and when to relax it, but starts out impatiently, eager for quick success, then the medicinal substances will not be genuine and the firing process will not be correctly tuned; those who spurt ahead quickly will fall back rapidly. What will happen then is that once the two yangs have grown smoothly they will soon dissipate—the positive energy that has developed will disperse—and *overseeing* will turn into *observing* (next hexagram); “in the eighth month there is misfortune.”

If one's effort is not correct, it will not bear fruit; if it doesn't bear fruit, what is begun will not develop—one loses what one has gained, and the great affair is gone. Therefore the path of overseeing requires harmonious accord with the time; it is important not to miss in the firing process.

- **First yang:** Sensitive overseeing leads to good results when correct.

## EXPLANATION

In the beginning of watching over the furnace, when positive energy has just arisen, and one can handle it firmly, all at once the attention is purely on reality, and when there is any sensing one watches over it—one senses correctly and is not influenced by aberration; as long as it is correct, it is good. This is overseeing being careful in the beginning.

- **2 yang:** Sensitive overseeing is good, of unfailing benefit.

## EXPLANATION

When the positive energy grows and strength and flexibility unite, one is tranquil and undisturbed yet sensitive and effective: yang and yin are attached to each other, great and small are not injured, and the mechanism of life goes on unceasing, vague at first then becoming clearly manifest, eventually to reach the state of pure wholeness of positive energy. This is overseeing in which strong energy is good and beneficial.

- **3 yin:** Presumptuous overseeing is of no benefit. If one is troubled over this, there is no blame.

## EXPLANATION

Being weak and ignorant, saying the right things but not being right at heart, working on externals and losing the inner, is called presumptuous overseeing. When overseeing gets to be presumptuous, and one can talk but not act, there is no benefit at all. Since there is no benefit, presumption turns into bitterness, and there is sure to be grief. But once one is troubled by this, becomes humble, sets oneself at naught and seeks the guidance of others, the goal is not far off. One then turns away from presumption, and even one who was blameworthy can thereby become blameless. This is overseeing that rejects the false and returns to the true.

- **4 yin:** Consummate overseeing is blameless.

## EXPLANATION

Being weak yet preserving rectitude, refining oneself and mastering the mind, thereby awaiting the newborn positive energy, is called consummate overseeing. Watching over the quintessential, when the great medicine appears one naturally does not make the mistake of missing it. This is overseeing that takes advantage of the opportunity to cull the medicine.



- **5 yin:** Knowing overseeing is appropriate for a great lord, and is auspicious.

## EXPLANATION

Flexible receptivity in balance and correctly oriented, seeking being by nonbeing, seeking fulfillment by emptiness, is called knowing the overseeing. When able to know its overseeing, the mind-lord is clear and peaceful; spiritual light shines within: When the other comes the self awaits it, when yang comes yin receives it. Intensity, relaxation, and stopping at sufficiency are all as they should be, and the primordial energy congeals out of nothingness. This is overseeing merging yin and yang.

- **Top yin:** Attentive overseeing is good and blameless.

## EXPLANATION

At the end of overseeing, from striving entering into nonstriving, returning to pristine purity, totally good, without evil, unconsciously following the laws of God, this is called attentive overseeing. When overseeing reaches ultimate attention, it is at peace with suchness as is; neither being nor nonbeing can be established, others and self are void of absoluteness, and the "original face" becomes completely manifest. This is overseeing that completes the beginning and completes the end, auspicious and impeccable.

Looking over the six lines, we find a way of overseeing in each of them; only the third, presumptuous overseeing, is not beneficial. The other five, when put into practice according to the proper timing, advancing and withdrawing as appropriate, with urgency and relaxation as necessary, all have marvelous functions. This is really a guide to the firing process as one watches over the furnace; if students study and find out the facts in the hexagram *overseeing*, then they can grasp most of the process of firing the gold elixir.



## 19. Overseeing

earth above,  
lake below

**Above the lake there is earth, overseeing. Superior people use inexhaustibility of education and thought to embrace and protect the people without bound.**

Overseeing means overseeing below from above. Below is *lake* ☱, above is *earth* ☷; there is earth above the lake. Lakes make things wet, earth supports things; widely providing water and support for the many—this is the image of *overseeing*.

What superior people see in this is that education should be promoted and the life of the people should be stabilized; therefore they educate the people tirelessly, thinking of them and teaching them, guiding them with virtue, equalizing them with etiquette, gradually influencing them.

Education is endless, and thought is also endless; the purpose is to improve the morals and customs of the populace. The ground of ethics gives abundant life, embracing the people without cruelty, protecting and embracing them, minimizing criminal law, making taxes light, seeing to sufficiency of food and clothing, like taking care of an infant, embracing and protecting without bound.

When education and protection are done properly, there is harmony between the leaders and the followers, a unity of will, resulting in an atmosphere of light and peace. This is the way it is when superior people are in positions of authority; but superior people who have no position also teach and protect people in the same way. When superior people instruct others tirelessly, making speeches and writing books, they hope that everyone will become a sage, that every person will attain the Way. This too is teaching and thinking inexhaustibly.

The mind of superior people embraces the whole universe, viewing others and self as equals, accepting every being, loving every being; this too is embracing and protecting without bound. Regardless of whether superior people have positions or not, they all aspire to foster life.