


# 小過

## 62. *Hsiao Kuo / Preponderance of the Small*

	<i>above</i>	CHÊN	THE AROUSING, THUNDER
	<i>below</i>	KÊN	KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

While in the hexagram Ta Kuo, PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT (28), the strong lines preponderate and are within, inclosed between weak lines at the top and bottom, the present hexagram has weak lines preponderating, though here again

they are on the outside, the strong lines being within. This indeed is the basis of the exceptional situation indicated by the hexagram. When strong lines are outside, we have the hexagram I, PROVIDING NOURISHMENT (27), or Chung Fu, INNER TRUTH (61); neither represents an exceptional state. When strong elements within preponderate, they necessarily enforce their will. This creates struggle and exceptional conditions in general. But in the present hexagram it is the weak element that perforce must mediate with the outside world. If a man occupies a position of authority for which he is by nature really inadequate, extraordinary prudence is necessary.

#### THE JUDGMENT

PREPONDERANCE OF THE SMALL. Success.

Perseverance furthers.

Small things may be done; great things should not be done.

The flying bird brings the message:

It is not well to strive upward,

It is well to remain below.

Great good fortune.

Exceptional modesty and conscientiousness are sure to be rewarded with success; however, if a man is not to throw himself away, it is important that they should not become empty form and subservience but be combined always with a correct dignity in personal behavior. We must understand the demands of the time in order to find the necessary offset for its deficiencies and damages. In any event we must not count on great success, since the requisite strength is lacking. In this lies the importance of the message that one should not strive after lofty things but hold to lowly things.

The structure of the hexagram gives rise to the idea that this message is brought by a bird. In Ta Kuo, PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT (28), the four strong, heavy lines within, supported only by two weak lines without, give the image of a sagging ridgepole. Here the supporting weak lines are both outside and preponderant; this gives the image of a soaring bird. But a bird should not try to surpass itself and fly into the

sun; it should descend to the earth, where its nest is. In this way it gives the message conveyed by the hexagram.

#### THE IMAGE

Thunder on the mountain:

The image of PREPONDERANCE OF THE SMALL.

Thus in his conduct the superior man gives preponderance to reverence.

In bereavement he gives preponderance to grief.

In his expenditures he gives preponderance to thrift.

Thunder on the mountain is different from thunder on the plain. In the mountains, thunder seems much nearer; outside the mountains, it is less audible than the thunder of an ordinary storm. Thus the superior man derives an imperative from this image: he must always fix his eyes more closely and more directly on duty than does the ordinary man, even though this might make his behavior seem petty to the outside world. He is exceptionally conscientious in his actions. In bereavement emotion means more to him than ceremoniousness. In all his personal expenditures he is extremely simple and unpretentious. In comparison with the man of the masses, all this makes him stand out as exceptional. But the essential significance of his attitude lies in the fact that in external matters he is on the side of the lowly.

#### THE LINES

Six at the beginning means:

The bird meets with misfortune through flying.

A bird ought to remain in the nest until it is fledged. If it tries to fly before this, it invites misfortune. Extraordinary measures should be resorted to only when all else fails. At first we ought to put up with traditional ways as long as possible; otherwise we exhaust ourselves and our energy and still achieve nothing.

○ Six in the second place means:

She passes by her ancestor

And meets her ancestress.

He does not reach his prince  
And meets the official.  
No blame.

Two exceptional situations are instanced here. In the temple of ancestors, where alternation of generations prevails, the grandson stands on the same side as the grandfather. Hence his closest relations are with the grandfather. The present line designates the grandson's wife, who during the sacrifice passes by the ancestor and goes toward the ancestress. This unusual behavior is, however, an expression of her modesty. She ventures rather to approach the ancestress, for she feels related to her by their common sex. Hence here deviation from the rule is not a mistake.

Another image is that of the official who, in compliance with regulation, first seeks an audience with his prince. If he is not successful in this, he does not try to force anything but goes about conscientious fulfillment of his duty, taking his place among the other officials. This extraordinary restraint is likewise not a mistake in exceptional times. (The rule is that every official should first have an audience with the prince by whom he is appointed. Here the appointment is made by the minister.)

Nine in the third place means:  
If one is not extremely careful,  
Somebody may come up from behind and strike him.  
Misfortune.

At certain times extraordinary caution is absolutely necessary. But it is just in such life situations that we find upright and strong personalities who, conscious of being in the right, disdain to hold themselves on guard, because they consider it petty. Instead, they go their way proud and unconcerned. But this self-confidence deludes them. There are dangers lurking for which they are unprepared. Yet such danger is not unavoidable; one can escape it if he understands that the time demands that he pay especial attention to small and insignificant things.

Nine in the fourth place means:  
No blame. He meets him without passing by.



Going brings danger. One must be on guard.  
Do not act. Be constantly persevering.

Hardness of character is tempered by yielding position,<sup>1</sup> so that no mistakes are made. The situation here calls for extreme caution; one must make no attempt of one's own initiative to reach the desired end. And if one were to go on, endeavoring to force his way to the goal, he would be endangered. Therefore one must be on guard and not act but continue inwardly to persevere.

○ Six in the fifth place means:

Dense clouds,

No rain from our western territory.

The prince shoots and hits him who is in the cave.

As a high place is pictured here, the image of a flying bird has become that of flying clouds. But dense as the clouds are, they race across the sky and give no rain. Similarly, in exceptional times there may be a born ruler who is qualified to set the world in order, but who cannot achieve anything or confer blessing on the people because he stands alone and has no helpers. In such times a man must seek out helpers with whose aid he can carry out the task. But these helpers must be modestly sought out in the retirement to which they have withdrawn. It is not their fame nor their great names but their genuine achievements that are important. Through such modesty the right man is found, and the exceptional task is carried out in spite of all difficulties.

Six at the top means:

He passes him by, not meeting him.

The flying bird leaves him.

Misfortune.

This means bad luck and injury.

If one overshoots the goal, one cannot hit it. If a bird will not come to its nest but flies higher and higher, it eventually falls into the hunter's net. He who in times of extraordinary

1. [See pp. 360 f.]

salience of small things does not know how to call a halt, but restlessly seeks to press on and on, draws upon himself misfortune at the hands of gods and men, because he deviates from the order of nature.