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## 41. *Sun / Decrease*



above KÊN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN  
below TUI THE JOYOUS, LAKE

This hexagram represents a decrease of the lower trigram in favor of the upper, because the third line, originally strong, has moved up to the top, and the top line, originally weak, has replaced it.<sup>1</sup> What is below is decreased to the benefit of what is above. This is out-and-out decrease. If the foundations of a building are decreased in strength and the upper walls are strengthened, the whole structure loses its stability. Likewise, a decrease in the prosperity of the people in favor of the government is out-and-out decrease. And the entire theme of the hexagram is directed to showing how this shift of wealth can take place without causing the sources of wealth in the nation and its lower classes to fail.

### THE JUDGMENT

DECREASE combined with sincerity  
Brings about supreme good fortune  
Without blame.

One may be persevering in this.

It furthers one to undertake something.

How is this to be carried out?

One may use two small bowls for the sacrifice.

1. [The present hexagram and the following one, INCREASE, are regarded as formed by changes in T'ai, PEACE (11), and P'i, STAND-STILL (12), respectively. See p. 596.]

Decrease does not under all circumstances mean something bad. Increase and decrease come in their own time. What matters here is to understand the time and not to try to cover up poverty with empty pretense. If a time of scanty resources brings out an inner truth, one must not feel ashamed of simplicity. For simplicity is then the very thing needed to provide inner strength for further undertakings. Indeed, there need be no concern if the outward beauty of the civilization, even the elaboration of religious forms, should have to suffer because of simplicity. One must draw on the strength of the inner attitude to compensate for what is lacking in externals; then the power of the content makes up for the simplicity of form. There is no need of presenting false appearances to God. Even with slender means, the sentiment of the heart can be expressed.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE IMAGE

At the foot of the mountain, the lake:

The image of DECREASE.

Thus the superior man controls his anger

And restrains his instincts.

The lake at the foot of the mountain evaporates. In this way it decreases to the benefit of the mountain, which is enriched by its moisture. The mountain stands as the symbol of a stubborn strength that can harden into anger. The lake is the symbol of unchecked gaiety that can develop into passionate drives at the expense of the life forces. Therefore decrease is necessary; anger must be decreased by keeping still, the instincts must be curbed by restriction. By this decrease of the lower powers of the psyche, the higher aspects of the soul are enriched.

#### THE LINES

Nine at the beginning means:

Going quickly when one's tasks are finished

Is without blame.

But one must reflect on how much one may decrease  
others.

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2. Cf. the story of the widow's mite in the Gospel of Luke.

It is unselfish and good when a man, after completing his own urgent tasks, uses his strength in the service of others, and without bragging or making much of it, helps quickly where help is needed. But the man in a superior position who is thus aided must weigh carefully how much he can accept without doing the helpful servant or friend real harm. Only where such delicacy of feeling exists can one give oneself unconditionally and without hesitation.

Nine in the second place means:

Perseverance furthers.

To undertake something brings misfortune.

Without decreasing oneself,

One is able to bring increase to others.

A high-minded self-awareness and a consistent seriousness with no forfeit of dignity are necessary if a man wants to be of service to others. He who throws himself away in order to do the bidding of a superior diminishes his own position without thereby giving lasting benefit to the other. This is wrong. To render true service of lasting value to another, one must serve him without relinquishing oneself.

□ Six in the third place means:

When three people journey together,

Their number decreases by one.

When one man journeys alone,

He finds a companion.

When there are three people together, jealousy arises. One of them will have to go. A very close bond is possible only between two people. But when one man is lonely, he is certain to find a companion who complements him.

Six in the fourth place means:

If a man decreases his faults,

It makes the other hasten to come and rejoice.

No blame.

A man's faults often prevent even well-disposed people from coming closer to him. His faults are sometimes reinforced by

the environment in which he lives. But if in humility he can bring himself to the point of giving them up, he frees his well-disposed friends from an inner pressure and causes them to approach the more quickly, and there is mutual joy.

○ Six in the fifth place means:

Someone does indeed increase him.

Ten pairs of tortoises cannot oppose it.

Supreme good fortune.

If someone is marked out by fate for good fortune, it comes without fail. All oracles—as for instance those that are read from the shells of tortoises—are bound to concur in giving him favorable signs. He need fear nothing, because his luck is ordained from on high.

□ Nine at the top means:

If one is increased without depriving others,

There is no blame.

Perseverance brings good fortune.

It furthers one to undertake something.

One obtains servants

But no longer has a separate home.

There are people who dispense blessings to the whole world. Every increase in power that comes to them benefits the whole of mankind and therefore does not bring decrease to others. Through perseverance and zealous work a man wins success and finds helpers as they are needed. But what he accomplishes is not a limited private advantage; it is a public good and available to everyone.