

The Hexagrams

of

The Book of Changes

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of
The Book of Changes

by

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To the Spiritual Hitch Hiker

Introduction

I do not claim to write with any authority on the Book of Changes, and the best I can offer is yet another interpretation of the original, or to be more precise a combined interpretation of many other modern interpretations. What you will find here began as a series of notes taken during my early studentship of the book, and my attempts to make sense of the sometimes conflicting interpretations presented in the various editions I owned. What I tried to do was distil the essence of as many interpretations as I could find, and arrive at an “average” or “most likely” explanation, in words that meant something to me, in the context of my own experience.

Those original notes can be found on my website, The Rivendale Review. The electronic version of the text has the advantage of being easily searchable, but I’ve always felt there is no substitute for a paper book that requires no batteries and can be dropped on the floor without breaking. Partly then I wanted to make these notes available in book form, so I could purchase them in an attractive format that was convenient for my own use, but also to make it available as a possible aid to others who were perhaps finding their own way with the book and compiling their own collections of published interpretations.

This is a Westernised treatment of a revered Eastern text, as seen through the eyes of a Western man whose only qualification, beyond his impertinence, is his personal experience of working with it at a practical, psychological and spiritual level. I have no doubt purists will be horrified by it and I can only beg their forbearance. I am not a sinologist and this is not a translation. I make no reference to the original translated text and the following words should be viewed more as a guide to interpretation, a thing to be used perhaps in conjunction with other sources. Nor do I spend any time explaining the subtleties of the hexagrams’ line structure but cut straight to the method of arriving at each hexagram and then an explanation of what they mean in my own language, using metaphors that mean something to me. I also dispense with the traditional method of drawing the hexagrams line by line and their associated numerology.

Instead, I describe a binary representation, which amounts to the same thing.

These are personal methods that have evolved over a period of many years, and while I feel they adhere to the spirit of the original, I admit they do take certain short-cuts. I'm not saying my approach is any better or any easier, but simply that this is how I have come to use the book. Also while there may be wisdom to be had in contemplating the magic of the structure and the traditional numerology of the lines, I leave it to other authors, far more experienced than I, to explain such matters.

If we wish only to make the Book of Changes available and accessible to a wide audience, I don't believe there is anything wrong in this approach. It is like admiring the lines of a beautiful motor car and taking it for a spin, without bothering to concern oneself with what lies under the bonnet. If we wish to truly understand the Book of Changes, perhaps we must always turn our eyes to the East and to its origins in antiquity. However, if we wish only to use it, then all we need are three coins and the will, or the curiosity, to toss them.

My experience with the Book of Changes tells me that it is not really a book at all, it is not words, but an abstract concept that we as human beings try to describe in the only way we know how - by writing down an account of it. But any attempt must inevitably fall short due to the inadequacy of written language and also the parochial vision of the author who attempts it. While we can never truly capture it, all encounters with it are meaningful to the individual, but the meaning comes from inside the head of the diviner - not from the pages of the book. Others can point you in the right direction, but ultimately it falls to you, the reader, the diviner, to engage with whatever it is that underlies the Book of Changes, and take whatever meaning there seems to arise from it.

For millions of people, it has become a respected friend and guide in the quest to understand the meaning of their lives. To some it is a means of seeing into the future, for others a way of simply analysing the complexity of life in its many forms. Personally, I have come to value the book as a means of studying the present moment and understanding my

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place in it. When we begin to acquaint ourselves with the book, we find ourselves hungry for information, hungry for the perspectives of other interpreters, and we collect words, our notebooks become thick and verbose with possible meaning. As time goes on though, the experienced diviner seems to cut back to the barest essence, paring his notes down to simple lines of personal and often poetic meaning, lines perhaps as enigmatic as the ancient original. This particular work then, verbose as it is, betrays my early studentship, and perhaps therefore need not concern the expert diviner, whose mind is already caught upon the poetry of the book's more vital essence.

The journey of an individual through space and time is a matter of both free will and chance. We choose which road to take, but chance also dictates the encounters along the way and the outcomes that might influence our choices. There is also a third influence, like an invisible ocean current which, once we find it, will speed us more quickly towards our goal. So far as I can tell this goal is a state of viewing the world with a sharpness of vision that comes only from a profound inner stillness. This current is what the Taoist would call "The Way" or Tao. The best we can do is place ourselves in the current and let it take us, then it seems all other matters that are right for us will fall naturally into place.

Finding the current, finding Tao, is the purpose of the Book of Changes. It is also the purpose of our lives.

All other matters are trivial.

Michael Graeme

Studley

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Historical notes

The Book of Changes as we know it today dates from China's Bronze age, around 3000 years ago, though its origins certainly predate this. Tradition has it that the genesis of the Book of Changes, or I Ching, is owed to Fu Xi, some 5000 years ago. Fu Xi was a legendary ruler and sage to whom the secret of the oracular core was reputedly revealed by a pattern of dots upon the back of a dragon-horse rising from the Yellow-River. However, it is not until the Shang dynasty, around 1600 B.C. that we begin to see evidence of the oracle in a form we would recognise today. The Shang are also credited with the earliest written records which enable us to see some of the thinking behind the work.

Modern scholars now dismiss Fu Xi as a mythological figure, and the only reliable archeological data we have places the Book of Changes in the context of the overthrow of the Shang dynasty by the Zhou, around 1000 BC. Most scholars seem to agree that the original hexagram statements can be attributed to King Wen, founder of the Zhou, with the appended line statements being attributable to his son King Wu.

Although the Zhou originally began as the virtuous overthrowers of the corrupt Shang, the Zhou period itself dissolved into disharmony and despotism some 400 years later. China then entered the Warring States Period which lasted from 475 to 221 BC. It's around this time that the so called Ten Wings were added to the Book of Changes, these being a set of moral and metaphysical commentaries used to explain what had, throughout the Zhou period, been more of an esoteric, mystical and religious text. The Ten Wings transformed the Book of Changes into a philosophical treatise and made it accessible to everyone, rather than just a select band of specialist diviners. Traditionally, the Ten Wings were ascribed to Confucius, though scholars now dispute this.

Things become a little clearer in relatively modern times, following the invasion of China by France and Britain, in 1860. This opened the formerly insular nation up to Western trade and Christian missionaries. Sure enough, the

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Book of Changes was first introduced to the West in 1882 by the missionary and sinologist James Legge as part of a 50 volume series called: Sacred Books of the East, a vast work edited by Max Muller. Whilst Legge was a faithful scholar and his translation is still much respected, his aim in undertaking the work was primarily to educate other missionaries in the ideas and the culture of China, prior to their setting out on evangelical missions to convert the Chinese to Christianity. It was certainly not his intention to act as an ambassador for the promotion of oriental philosophy in the West and the Book of Changes aroused little interest outside of academic circles.

Then, in 1899, the German scholar and sinologist Richard Wilhelm arrived in China. This was the time of the Boxer Uprising and although the troubles were successfully quelled by China's colonial rulers, there was suddenly a greater desire among Westerners to understand the cultural and philosophical background of the Chinese people who had so fiercely rebelled against them. Wilhelm found himself naturally suited to this work and it was through his efforts that the Book of Changes was properly presented as a divinatory tool, and the full extent of its cultural, psychological and metaphysical implications revealed. Working in collaboration with the sage Lao Nai-hsuan, Wilhelm wrote a highly regarded German translation called the: "I Ching: Book of Changes" which appeared in 1923, then later in English, in 1950.

Though there are now many translations and interpretations of the Book of Changes, it is Wilhelm's English version, translated by Cary F. Baines that you are most likely to come across in Western bookshops today.

The translation's success was aided in no small measure by the preface, written by the renowned depth psychologist, Carl Jung. It was this preface, and Jung's learned endorsement of the Book of Changes as a psychological tool that helped to popularise its use among ordinary people in the West. In particular, it became a commonly consulted text among followers of the so called New-Age movement in the 1960's and 70's.

The Book of Changes can be said to exist in two parts. First there are the 64 hexagrams, and the method by which they

are arrived at. This is the divinatory core of the work and it has not changed for thousands of years. Then there is the interpretation of what each of those hexagrams and their appended lines, actually mean. Interpretations of the hexagrams tend to draw upon metaphorical illustrations of every day life that were current at the time of authorship, and will therefore change from one generation to the next, previous interpretations being seen as perhaps "politically incorrect" or overburdened with the cultural, social and moral baggage of the past.

Rightly or wrongly, each generation considers itself to be more enlightened than its predecessors and nowadays there are many interpretations, each with a slightly different take on the hexagrams, some more successful than others, the better among them maintaining a sincere psychological lineage with the original work and the Ten Wings, perhaps erroneously ascribed to Confucius. All of these modern interpretations are perfectly valid and reveal also something of the author's own experience of and approach to life. The Internet has further contributed to the explosion of contemporary knowledge of the work enabling interpretations to be compared, cross referenced and discussed by students all over the world. Far from trivialising the underlying core of the work, there is a growing sense of its profound importance for the individual, that the Book of Changes is above all a *personal* book, written for you, for the sole purpose of enabling *you* to understand *your* universe and your place within it.

Psycho-spiritual notes

Archeological evidence tells us that our ancient forebears possessed both a practical knowledge of the physical "outer" world, but that they also revered the inner, spiritual or psychological world, a world they explored and honoured within the context of their cultural and religious beliefs. The inner world balanced the outer, and both were considered valid tools in an exploration of reality. However the psycho-spiritual aspects of knowledge became increasingly devalued by the more rational approach, especially in the Western world, as it emerged from its

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early history and became organised into powerful civilisations. The rational approach proved to be very successful in furthering the aims of those civilisations, enabling great strides to be made in technologies that were applicable for use in both peace and war, and there grew a tendency to dismiss earlier shamanic or religious beliefs as pointless superstition.

Carl Jung, founder of the Zurich school of psychoanalysis, in the first half of the twentieth century, uncovered, or perhaps more accurately "rediscovered" the importance of a balance between the unconscious mind and the conscious, between a person's inner sense and their outer experience. He concluded that the spiritual function, far from being redundant, was actually of vital importance and that, whatever the truth of its underlying nature, to devalue it, or indeed any other aspect of the unconscious mind, can result in an incomplete, unfulfilled and at best a very unhappy human being - at worst a very sick one.

The spiritual life was suddenly seen in a new light, as something potentially separate from religion, that indeed conventional religions contained dogmatic and philosophical contradictions that restricted or even negated mankind's natural spiritual development. Jung's approach towards healing then was to discover first of all the state of a person's psycho-spiritual disposition, and then to provide the means for that person to develop naturally, at a pace and via a means that was largely dictated by their own unconscious minds. Jung called this process "Individuation" - a phenomenon that has parallels in Eastern philosophy and the idea of an individual's path being integral with a greater universal path known as Tao or simply "The Way".

If we are in balance, then, following our own intuitions, we find ourselves drawn naturally into Tao. When we are out of balance, we respond more to delusions concerning the nature of reality, and we lose our way. Delusions tend to be the result of a dominant ego, or one-sided conscious thinking, which is easily distorted when we are emotionally aroused. Listening to intuitions however, or by seeking subtle insights through our dreams, creative writing, painting, meditation, or the Book of Changes - though irrational - softens the ego, which lessens the

emotional distortion, and brings us back on course. Our personal circumstances might not change, but we become happier and more appreciative of life, because elements of our unconscious that desire to be made conscious, are granted the opportunity to do so.

The work of Jung went further however, suggesting that the human mind, consciously or unconsciously was not isolated in its operation to within the confines of the skull, that it could also influence events in the world through a process most of us have experienced from time to time - one that Jung called synchronicity. Synchronicity is the occurrence of any unspecified event, seemingly against chance, that has emotional "meaning" for the person who experiences that event. We think of something happening, and then it happens. While most of us will dismiss such things as meaningless, if we can submit ourselves instead to an open-minded exploration of their potential personal significance, we suddenly find ourselves on the age-old path of inner exploration and psychological development. We find ourselves in search of Tao.

Jung suggested that it was synchronicity at work at the heart of the Book of Changes and introduced it into his psycho-analytical practice, encouraging people to explore themselves through its use. It is in this context that I have come to know and value the book.

The psycho-spiritual approach to the Book of Changes then is one that relies on the right answer being revealed to us by virtue of the fact that in asking the question, we "bend" the probabilities and somehow shuffle the right answer up to the top of the pile. My own statistical studies, however, show that the hexagrams given by the Book of Changes, even over thousands of enquiries, seem perfectly random, so if we *are* able to bend the probabilities, it does not seem to be in a way that contravenes the mathematical rules that hold sway in the rational physical world. From the rational perspective there's nothing to take issue with then, except the rational view would go on to say the answers the book gives us are meaningless, that any apparent relevance to our question is

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coincidental - that some answers might appear meaningful, while others will not.

The fact remains however, that the answers *are* relevant to our query, to a degree that is at once disturbing to the beginning student. The rationally minded commentator might then suggest the wording of the book is so vague we can find meaning in it regardless of where we look. But even the beginning student who has not lost his sense of critical reason, knows that while it *is* true that more than one hexagram *could* be read as being significant to our enquiry - all of them most certainly could not.

Divining the moment

Life is change, it is the seemingly bewildering movement of events and circumstances in time. Yet, for all its apparent complexity, the universe has a pattern and that pattern is reflected in the dark mirror that is the Book of Changes. In divining the moment, one freezes time, one slices through the pattern of the moment, peels it open, and studies its traces.

The pattern reveals itself symbolically in a series of hexagrams or *Gua*. There are 64 Hexagrams, each describing a particular situation or a mood or a quality, and each hexagram, in addition to a general description can have up to six appended sub-texts. The subtexts determine the dynamics of the situation and point to a second hexagram, a dynamic pairing with another situation, either arising out of the first, or being the precursor to it. It can be a warning of what might happen if you do not heed the advice of the primary hexagram, or it can show you what will happen if you do.

Already there is a vagueness here. Is the secondary hexagram a future unfolding or a past precursor? Is it a warning, or a promise of better things to come? It depends. Only you can say, and clarity will only come by engaging your mind with the enigma.

This is our first glimpse of the subtle nature of the Book of Changes, the first hint that the process of divination involves something more than simply reading what someone else has written down and taking it literally.

The Book of Changes indicates the nature of the situation we find ourselves in and grants us a view of our position either in or out of Tao. If we are fortunate and find our position correct, we are granted wisdom regarding how not to lose our way. If we are unfortunate and the book indicates we have already lost our way, then we will be granted the insight that will allow us to find our path again. The book is never judgmental, and indicates that there is hope in any situation, no matter how dark.

Stages in approaching divination

The first stage in divination has already been taken in that we have picked up this book and decided, for whatever reason, that we wish to consult it. If we are new to the Book of Changes, we may be approaching it with a degree of curiosity. If we are familiar with other interpretations, again we might be curious to see how this one fits in with our own psyche. Whatever our reasons, the only thing that is asked is that we approach it with an open mind.

The next stage is to decide what it is we wish to ask. This might seem obvious but it is all too easy to rush in with a fuzzy, ambiguous jumble of words. The Book of Changes then responds in kind with a fuzzy, jumbled answer. If we want a clear answer, we must formulate a precise enquiry: write it down and think upon it for a moment. Consider your question. Above all, remember, when formulating the question the Book of Changes cannot answer “yes” or “no”. Instead, it will the answer with something more akin to a picture, so one must avoid closed questions like: *Is there life after death?* It is better to ask: *Can you describe what happens when we die?* Similarly, on a less profound note do not ask: *Should I accept the job offer?* But ask instead: *What do I need to be aware of in considering this job offer?* An open question allows the Book of Changes room to develop an answer that is thorough and meaningful.

Very well, having defined our query, the next stage is to arrive at an answer. This is the moment of divination.

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There are various ways to consult the Book of Changes, each one being simply a method of arriving at a random number between 1 and 64. If you browse the Internet you'll find sites in which each of these methods is described in detail - The Yarrow Stalks, Three Coins and Sixteen Tokens seem the most popular. However, it's better not to get too hung up about the method you use, only that you find one you're comfortable with and that you have a good idea in your own mind what's going on when you use it.

The Yarrow Stalks provide the most traditional, if somewhat complicated, method and involves the ritual dividing of a bundle of 50 stalks. This is quite a lengthy process and can take anything up to 30 minutes. Purists will use no other technique, claiming, not without merit, that the time taken ensures one maintains a proper state of mind. However, by far the simplest way, and the way I'll describe here, is to use three coins. This takes no more than a minute. It's better if all the coins are the same, but it doesn't really matter. The conventional wisdom on this is that the heads side of the coin will represent Yang, and the tails side will represent Yin - don't worry too much about what these words mean. If you don't know, it doesn't stop you from using the Book of Changes.

Basically Yin and Yang are the primal pair. They are opposites: low and high, weak and strong, down and up, inner and outer. In binary mathematics they are zero and one. The interaction of Yin and Yang determines how things change - and everything changes. How things change for us personally depends on the balance of opposites at any given time, and where we stand, in psychological terms, in relation to everything else. Don't worry if this sounds odd. Just toss the coins.

Build the Primary Hexagram

So, tails is Yin, heads is Yang. We let the coins fall and then observe the balance of Yin and Yang. How do we do this? We simply count the heads and the tails. If there are more heads than tails, Yang is dominant. If there are more tails than heads, Yin is dominant.

We take a piece of paper and we note down our observation with a 1 for dominant Yang and a 0 for dominant

Yin. If *all* the coins are tails, or *all* the coins are heads this denotes a special case. Here there is an excess of Yin or Yang respectively. It has become too strong and when this happens it is said to be on the verge of changing into its opposite - Yin into Yang, Yang into Yin. In such a case as this the number we write down, the 1 or the 0, is identified as "changing" and we denote this by putting a little dot underneath it. It's important to remember which lines are changing as this determines the secondary hexagram, of which more later.

We repeat this process, tossing the coins a further 5 times, each time noting down our observation with either 1 or a 0, eventually attaining a six digit binary number, a number consisting only of 1's and 0's. For example 110100 or 111000 or 010101. In fact there are sixty four possible variations of 1's and 0's, 64 possible numbers, each one denoting a hexagram in the Book of Changes, and our next task is to look it up.

This is where I depart, if only slightly, from the traditional method of drawing the hexagrams. Traditionally, the hexagrams are drawn by layering six horizontal lines on top of one another, broken lines to represent Yin, solid to represent Yang. So for example where I would write 110100, the traditional method is:



Notice how the hexagram figure is drawn from the bottom up. A common mistake is to draw it from the top down - i.e. to reverse it.

Now, in order to easily identify the hexagram in the text, we split our six digit sequence into two three digit numbers, for example if our hexagram was denoted by the binary number 110011, then the two three digit numbers would be 110 and 011, while 101001 would break down as 101 and 001. Then we consult the key diagram, either at the end of this introduction or again at the end of the book. Look up the first sequence in the left hand column and look up the second one in the upper row of the diagram. Where the columns and rows intersect, you will find your hexagram denoted as a

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number between 1 and 64. For example if your hexagram was 110011, this denotes hexagram 30, Clarity.

Generate the secondary hexagram

If your hexagram has changing lines, you will need to generate the secondary hexagram by changing the digits that were denoted as “changing” into their opposite - 1’s become 0’s and vice versa. So if your primary hexagram for example was 101100, with the first line changing, this would generate the secondary hexagram 001100. Similarly 111111 with all the lines changing would become 000000.

Turn to the text and look it up.

Read the title, or titles, and the keywords of the primary hexagram. In this interpretation, I use several titles for each hexagram, each covering the same general theme and which are in use in various other published interpretations. The fact that there is more than one title might seem strange, or ambiguous, but I find it actually helps to focus in on the key meaning. With experience you begin to realise all these titles actually mean the same thing. Not all the keywords will strike a chord but look out for the ones that do as these are your initial clues. Then read through the text of the interpretation, looking for anything that seems to ring a bell with your situation. If there are any changing lines in your hexagram, you should also read the relevant appended line, or lines, to the text because these offer advice or more detailed information that is specific to your enquiry, adding an extra layer of depth to the overall picture. Changing lines in the first and third position for example would mean you should read the first and third appended lines.

Interpret the answer

Easier said than done. Interpretation is a subjective art, and sometimes it appears as if the answer you receive simply isn't relevant to your query. My advice here is to stick with it, and think it over. It might be useful to look at the hexagram that immediately precedes the one you received, as this suggests a situation that might have given birth to the one you're in.

Another useful technique is to change every digit into its opposite, so for example 010110 would become 101001. If we then look this hexagram up we will find the situation that is diametrically opposed to the one we're in, casting some light on what our situation *is* by showing us what it is *not*.

Look up the Secondary Hexagram

The secondary hexagram gives us a picture of how the situation might unfold if we follow the advice in the primary hexagram, or it may be a warning of things to come, if we don't follow the advice. Then again the approached hexagram might be outlining where it is we stand in relation to the primary, or it might be illustrating the state of affairs that gave birth to the primary,... it all depends on the context. This sounds hopelessly vague, but it's useful to remember that the primary and the secondary hexagram form an intermeshing pair, indicating a tendency for change from one state into another and vice versa. This is where interpretation becomes rather fluid and uncertain, but we should see ourselves as sitting somewhere in the overall system represented by the two hexagrams. And if we think about it we can usually identify this position for ourselves. We will experience a flash of insight, a moment of clarity, and can then take it on trust that we have hit upon the correct interpretation. Remember, the interpretation comes through *us*. Others might interpret the same hexagrams differently when viewed from their own experience, but there is no right and wrong answer in technical terms, only a *personal* answer, and that is the correct one, for no other reason than we *believe* it to be correct.

If there are no changing lines

The existence of changing lines indicates an already dynamic situation - one circumstance flowing into another. However, sometimes we arrive at a hexagram where none of the lines are changing and this can be a very difficult one to interpret. It is as if we are being granted only half of the picture, and there is not enough information to judge how the situation will evolve. Here though, the Book of Changes is describing

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a situation in which the possible outcomes are not yet fixed. The hexagram grants us a view of our current situation, but how it will change depends entirely on our approach, clues to which can be found by reading all of the appended lines that might potentially change. We should then take particular notice of the lines that seem to hit closest to home.

Interpreting the Book of Changes can be a frustrating business and, sometimes, nothing makes sense. The basic idea is not to take the words at face value but to look at the picture they describe and to think of that picture as a metaphor or an abstract illustration, or an allegory of your own situation. The answer you are looking for will then be recognised as a rush of insight or a feeling of "aha!". That's the result you're looking for, and it's a feeling you can trust. It's as simple as that.

If it doesn't answer?

The Book of Changes will always answer. The question is more one of whether or not that answer will mean anything to us. Sometimes it doesn't. This may be due to a mental block on our part - the answer's there but we just can't see it: we can't see ourselves in the picture it describes. I don't believe the Book of Changes works every time but I'm persuaded that this is largely the result of psychological factors. Perhaps we're tired, we're not receptive, we're out of sorts,... we're confused by other things going on in our lives - like trying to dial up a connection when there's noise on the line.

I have noticed long periods when, time after time, the book will not answer and likewise long periods when, time after time, it answers with hair raising accuracy. These patterns draw out cycles which can last for days on end and I believe they are indicative of my own inner state. So if it doesn't answer, don't worry. Put your question to one side. Get some sleep. Go for a walk. Then, when you're feeling better, ask your question again.

Times like these seem to come more when our line of inquiry isn't desperate - we're merely curious to know what it has to say on a certain subject. That's fine. If we're sincere, it will answer, but at such times I think we're also vulnerable to the chatter of our ego as it breaks in upon our consciousness

and these are times when our connection can be more easily interrupted.

On the other hand, when we are deeply troubled, we tend to turn to the book only when our ego is subdued by the shock of our circumstances and it is at such time I find we can usually rely upon the connection to be a good one.

Importuning the Oracle

The Book of Changes requires an open mind. I really cannot stress this enough. It is not a parlour game, or a bit of fun. It should always be approached seriously and with a certain humility.

Naturally, if you ask the same question twice the chances are you'll get a different answer both times. This is called importuning. It is likened to disbelieving the Oracle and having the cheek to ask: are you sure? The first answer is the correct one. It might be that we don't like the answer. It might be that it is hinting at something we don't want to hear. Asking again is importuning and, in the etiquette of consulting oracles, we cannot expect subsequent answers to mean anything. It's like cheating ourselves at solitaire. We're looking for the result that suits us, rather than accepting the unadulterated truth. There's just no point in doing it.

However, as with most things, there is always an exception. It may be that we are genuinely confused. It may be that in our heart of hearts we think the Book of Changes has not answered us, that we've lost our "connection" to it. If we believe this is the case and we can maintain an attitude of humility and sincerity, then we might indeed ask again, perhaps rephrasing the question slightly, or thinking it through again and rooting out any possibility of ambiguity in our words. Then we might rely on the answer if it appears meaningful, but if it doesn't we'd be better leaving it alone for a while. Go for that walk and clear your mind. You've definitely lost your connection for now.

Testing the Oracle

Testing the oracle is when we don't believe it will work in the first place. Our mind is essentially closed. We ask if it will rain tomorrow. We ask if our lottery numbers are likely

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to win or lose and then we wait to see if the oracle was right. We reserve our judgment. We carry out a test before allowing ourselves to believe in it. But really we're just wasting our time. Anyone coming to the Book of Changes with this sort of attitude isn't looking for what the oracle can give and is consequently unlikely to ever find it.

An example

If we can see things clearly enough, then we will always make the right choices in life. This is perhaps easier said than done because seeing clearly comes down to having the right information and the right frame of mind at the moment we need to make a choice. Achieving clarity and an understanding of the particular dynamics at play in any given situation can be an elusive quality for all but the most intuitive individuals, but achieving clarity is exactly what the Book of Changes is all about. And if we use it wisely, we can sometimes see a little further than the end of our noses.

In spite of a lot of stuff that's been written about it, I have always shied away from approaching the book as a means of predicting the future. My personal belief is that the future is not fixed to a degree that is predictable in any great detail and that future outcomes depend entirely on our attitudes and our choice of action in the present. My own experience is that it does not tell fortunes. It is a way of understanding the present. But if we can understand the present in sufficient detail, then the likely course of events leading off into the future become clearer. The difference is subtle but crucial in adopting the right frame of mind.

If I were to ask: "Will I ever win a million pounds," the book would not answer yes or no. In fact, in the interests of experiment, I did ask it this question once and it was kind enough to oblige with hexagram 20 (View), changing to 27 (Nourishment).

"View" is about waiting in stillness for the right answer, possibly meaning I should wait for what I want, or "wait and see", but the changing lines offer more specific advice, telling me I'm viewing things somewhat childishly and I'm not likely to get anywhere this way, that I need to look inwards and contemplate my deeper nature for a clearer understanding of what's really important.

The Book of Changes will guide our path in the best way to bring about psychological wholeness and harmony. Of course, thinking about whether I'll win a million pounds or not isn't going to help me in this respect, and is really rather missing the point. Why? Well hexagram 27 is about nourishment and is basically telling me that if I want to be happy I should look to my higher nature, that if I feed upon things of inferior virtue then I cannot expect to become virtuous myself. Winning a million pounds isn't the most crucial thing in my life right now. There are other things I need to sort out first. It's the old cliché about money not being everything, I suppose.

Now, if you were simply trying to read your fortune from the Book in this example you'd probably think it hadn't answered at all. But if you were trying to understand what was the correct attitude for you to adopt in this regard right now, then you would have to admit that the answer was a pretty good one.

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Conversion chart

	111	100	010	001	000	011	101	110
111	1	34	5	26	11	9	14	43
100	25	51	3	27	25	42	21	17
010	6	40	29	4	7	59	64	47
001	33	62	39	52	15	53	56	31
000	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
011	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
101	13	55	63	22	36	37	30	49
110	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

Read the first 3 digits of the sequence in the left hand column and match them with the last three digits in the upper row. The intersection gives the number of the hexagram as it appears in the Book of Changes.

For example hexagram 110110 = 58, while 011001 = 18

The hexagrams are now listed in numerical order:

Michael Graeme



Interpretations of the Hexagrams

of the

Book of Changes

1

11111

The Creative

Keywords: Power, Action, Dynamic Energy, The Cosmic Viewpoint, Self-determination, Command, Taking Control, Taking the initiative, Destiny, Vocation, Calling, Energy, Drive, Persistence in time, Inspiration, Channelling, Endurance, Force, Overdone, Overheated, Burnt, Parched.

Interpretation: The Creative represents one half of the fundamental equation that governs the bringing into existence of all things. The Creative is the energising principle. It is active, searching, electrifying, galvanising, and enlightening. It is the potential to create, it is strong, masculine, the prime mover. It is inspiration, it is the urge to sit down and paint, to write, to express oneself, to achieve something. It is positive, it is lightness, it is Spring and Summer, it is life, it is Yang.

The genesis of all things, be they worlds, creatures or ideas, lies in a place beyond time. It is a creative potential - what in religious teachings might be described as the will of God, or a divine plan. Only the Creative can impart energy to the formless and so bring forth shape, or life, or thought. The Creative is not an end in itself. Without the formless, without the Receptive, it cannot act.

Every sentient being that exists is born poised between the Creative and the Receptive, between heaven and earth so to speak. This means we cannot live our lives by concentrating on the material world alone. We must look also to what is good inside ourselves, for therein lies our only clue as to the divine nature of our being. Our ideal path lies in realising this higher nature, the nature that exists as a formless plan in the creative void.

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We have free choice in whether we accept or reject our path, but if we can identify and follow the path that flows out of the Creative, we receive the help of the unknown through the mysterious way in which all things generally turn out for the best if you leave them alone. Rejecting this path, we reject also the idea of our reliance upon the unknown, we reject the notion of its protection, and so invite misfortune.

The Creative refers to the way that everything that now exists in the material world exists also as a potential, as a defining principle like a cosmic mould into which the material world is continually poured. If we go with the flow, if we model our actions and our thoughts upon our higher nature, then we will further our own potential as well as the potential of everything and everyone else in the universe. However, resisting the flow, seeking to assert our own direction, we run counter to the Creative, to what is naturally intended. This way we subvert our own path and the path of others.

Similarly, looking to force matters beyond what is natural, or before the time is ripe, also misses the point. When the seed lies dormant, no amount of exposure to the sun's energy can force it into being, and when the seed has sprouted, too much sun will cause it to become parched and withered.

Appended Lines

11111 1) At times when the creative principle lies dormant it can have no effect on what already exists. Things cannot be forced into being. Similarly, if we have a desire to influence the matters we contemplate, we must learn to sit back when the time is not ripe. Trying to force an advance when there is not the underlying energy, the creative focus to do so will lead to mistakes and exhaustion.

11111 2) There are times when we feel the presence of the Creative, in Spring for example after the stagnation and decay of Winter when the material world seems to pulsate with the potential for renewal. Similarly we might feel ourselves carried along with an idea that we know in our hearts is

correct: this is the Creative at work. There is a purpose in its awakening and an unconscious ease with which it begins to change things. If we are wise we recognise this for what it is, and follow where it leads.

11111 3) There comes a time when the Creative finds a definite channel through which its energy may begin to flow forcefully. However, we must be aware that in the sheer exuberance of the moment there is a danger that the energy may be misdirected. This can be equated to our distraction by worldly values. We must remain in touch with the true path of the Creative and follow it wisely, never going beyond the point that is naturally intended. As soon as we begin to anticipate what we might gain for ourselves, we lose our way.

11111 4) There comes a point in creation where energy can safely be directed to fulfil our will. It may be used to enable us to further ourselves in an open and visible way, or it may be directed inwards towards deepening our awareness and our understanding of things. But whatever our course, having set out, now is not the time to be wondering about the choice of direction. Having decided upon the way of the Creative, having chosen to explore the potential of our higher nature, there is no going back.

We should also check ourselves for any rigid plans we might have made, any preconceptions regarding the course our life might follow. There is no set formula that can be applied. The correct way through life, one's Tao, is a mystery tour that makes sense only in retrospect. It is the way of the Creative to act indirectly, and sometimes apparently at odds with logic and reason. If things do not appear to be going in the direction we expected, we must resist the temptation to veer off course. If we are in tune with the way, with Tao, the right path is always the right path, no matter where it takes us.

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111111 5) The touch of the Creative makes itself felt in all things. It's influence is sensed in everything we do, in everything we think and everything we see. We are carried along by it.

111111 6) There is a limit to the energy that may be imparted. It can achieve only so much before it becomes exhausted. In following the path of the Creative to further our own ends, we must remain mindful of the limits of its potential and judge correctly to what heights of worldly experience or depths of inner understanding it can lead. Going too far, flying too high, diving too deep we might find ourselves stranded, we might find ourselves carried away by the exuberance of the moment without pausing to consider the limits of what it is we are dealing with.

111111 7) Here the Creative principle is in flux and at the point of changing into its opposite, The Receptive. Here we must accept the inner strength of vision that flows from the Creative, yet remain entirely yielding and ready to follow its impulse wherever it directs. There should be no trace of human thought or ambition to corrupt the moment or to subvert the natural course of things.*

* Only two hexagrams, The Creative and The Receptive (see next) have what are called a "seventh" appended line. This is an extremely rare occurrence, when all six of the hexagrams' lines are changing.

01-090707

2

00000

The Receptive

Keywords: Yielding, Openness, Compliance, Opening oneself, Service to a higher cause, Self-denial, Tolerance, Acceptance, Assent, Patience, Potential, Matter, The Earth, Material, Building blocks.

Interpretation: The Receptive represents the second half of the fundamental equation that results in the bringing into being of all things. The receptive is what receives the energising principle of the Creative, of Yang. It is dormant and docile. It is the earth, the soil and formless matter. It is the potential to be brought into form. It is yielding, it is weak, it is feminine. It is the mood of opening oneself to inspiration, it is the invitation to receive, to channel the Creative energy into words or pictures. It is resisting the urge to plan ahead. It is the willingness to go with the flow of things as we find them. It is negative, it is darkness, it is Autumn and Winter, it is death, sleep, hibernation. It is the complement of Yang. It is Yin.

The Receptive principle stands not in opposition to the Creative, but in harmony with it. Its place is to be acted upon and not to take the initiative. Only when they work in harmony does the interaction of Yin and Yang produce something that is good. The Receptive alone is not indicative of evil, as the Creative alone is not indicative of good, but if the Receptive does not work in harmony with the Creative, then the results of their interaction might indeed turn out to be corrupt, or wrong or evil.

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The way of the receptive is to be open and persevering. It is to be adaptable to situations as we find them, it is to be guided by things as they unfold and not by rigid plans of how we anticipate or hope things might be. Sometimes the way is very subtle as it turns, and if we are too rigid, too energetic, too structured in our approach, this might render us insensitive to the essential openings, and we can lose our way.

Appended Lines

000000 1) The receptive makes its presence felt. The light sinks, the days shorten, the first frosts touch the ground. The way is leading to decay, to sleep, to the withering of what was once in full bloom. In human affairs one here may be starting to doubt the ability of things to work themselves out. We feel the first touch of second thoughts like Autumn's chill breath upon the landscape of our mind, a presage of the Winter days to come when we take back control of our lives. But a life directed purely by conscious will, by Ego, is a life for ever locked in challenge and desire and all manner of negative emotion, like a ship locked in ice. Only by remaining open to the Creative can the path be cleared and kept open.

000000 2) The shape of all things, the nature of all thoughts, lies dormant in the Creative. Without the creative, the material world is without form, without purpose, and yet without effort all things turn out as they should.

Whatever materials or potential a situation contains, the Creative will bring about the right combination of components and the correct sequence of events in order to achieve the best possible outcome. In human affairs, we attain the height of wisdom or achievement when we act without artifice and remain in harmony with the idea of relying upon the Creative to bring all things to their correct conclusion.

000000 3) Here potential thoughts or things take fledgling form. Tentative actions, first steps, are undertaken. But as yet

things are still in a formative state and as such can be ruined by premature exposure to the sun, by shouting from the rooftops, by attracting attention.

In human affairs, completion is not the goal at this time - it is the undertaking, the investment in a future potential, like the planting of seeds so things may grow and bear fruit when the season is right. When things begin to move and the benefits of following the way of the Creative are felt we must not forget the modesty and the compliance by which we brought all of this about! Sensing we might be onto something, ego is always eager to join in, seizing the rewards we have thus far earned, parading them for all to see as if it were responsible all along. But by such behaviour we lose the way.

000000 4) Trying too hard to bring forth life, or thought, or things can result in a narrowing of the mind, a stifling of the potential for things to flow naturally into their forms. In human affairs it can lead to the death of the very thing we seek, the withering of seedlings by prematurely forcing them. We must keep low, keep quiet, stop thinking and be content to observe. We disturb the flow by our mere presence if we stand too close.

000000 5) In flowing into form, the Receptive subordinates itself to the Creative. It works in a subtle and discrete manner so that it is barely noticeable and yet in this subordinate position it is supremely effective.

In following the way, we are for ever in a subordinate position to the Creative, to the unknown. We are always sensitive to the subtle openings and closings, and for ever ready to bend to its will. If we can accept this position and live in harmony with the Creative, our inner worth cannot help but penetrate the hearts of others. However, if we seek to take credit for our achievements, if we wear them like a crown and parade ourselves as being in some way superior,

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we invite only resentment and conflict. Trying to shine brighter than the sun, we lose the way.

000000 6) Should the Receptive gain too much power and influence, it might resist the principle that it must yield to the Creative. It might seek instead to rule, to dominate and determine for itself the creation of things, of thoughts. This goes against the way of nature and will cause conflict. What was coming into being will suffer. It will be stillborn, or corrupt or wrong. In human affairs it bodes ill to fight that which is meant to be.

000000 7) The receptive principle is in flux and is changing into its opposite, the Creative. It has achieved this state by holding fast to the way. In human affairs there is no need to do anything. This is the way. Follow it.*

*See also line 7 for The Creative

02-090707

3

100010

The Beginning

Keywords: First Steps, Perseverance Frustration, Struggle, Birth, Assistance, Coherence, Focus, Retreat, Pausing to Consider, Regroup, Cutting One's Losses, Consolidating One's Position.

Interpretation: The Receptive and the Creative meet. In respect of this enquiry, the energising spark of the Creative has touched the chaotic profusion of the formless. Even in chaos order is already implicit, though as yet hidden from rational analysis, from our everyday view. Following this first contact with the Creative, there begins a process of flux which governs the bringing into being of life, or things, or thoughts. It is a process that cannot be hurried, only held safe, sheltered, the spark nurtured, the germ of life given its chance, given time to work out.

In human affairs, only by not looking to impose our will can we hope to benefit from this first spark of life, from this moment of germination. Only by carefully feeling our way can we find our place in the order of things. We must be patient and persevering.

This is a new direction, the first steps along a fresh turn in the course of our life. This fledgling of fate, this thought, this act brings us up against many unknowns but we can rest assured that our direction is correct. With patience and an unstructured frame of mind we can deal with matters as they arise and not become unbalanced by fearing what may or

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may not be up ahead. Losing our faith in the way of fate, we tempt misfortune.

We might be in the thick of things, at the outset of a new venture, a new direction in life. The situation is complex and changing, the myriad possibilities and potentialities swirl in chaotic profusion. In a situation like this we feel bound to step in and wrestle with every aspect, to take control, to assert some order, to define a clear direction into calmer waters. But it is at such times as this that we lack the necessary harmony, the necessary balance in order to correctly divine the way. If we try to move when we are not balanced, then we are likely to fall.

The correct way to act at such times is to take a step back, to trust the right direction will reveal itself when the time is right. Then all things will happen as they should and what is meant will follow through into the world. Only in retrospect is the purpose of the Creative ever revealed.

Appended Lines

100010 1) At the beginning, in the chaotic swirl as things take form, all does not flow easily. Wrong turns might be taken, permutations might be changed again and again until the natural way, the intended way, is found. Therefore, at the beginning, it is important not to persist with a particular solution to a problem or a goal, or a particular line of thought, or reasoning, if, following the outset, our original ideas appear flawed. We have to start somewhere, but equally we must also proceed in a spirit of modesty and humility, keeping the goal in mind, but being prepared to alter our approach until the natural direction for growth can be found.

100010 2) As the flux of potentialities intensifies within the formless we may feel ourselves weighed down by difficulties, false starts and hindrances. At such times we must be wary of grasping too eagerly the opportunities that present themselves. At first glance they may appear to offer a way through, but growth is not yet well enough established, and

even with the best of intentions our course can be subverted in directions where our independence would be sacrificed, thus limiting our potential. We must take our time. Think. Breathe. Persevere.

100010 3) There arrives a stage when the shape of things to come may be glimpsed, the shape of the tree anticipated by knowledge of its seed. But one must not prejudge, nor move towards an imagined outcome too soon in case the heat and the noise cause that desired outcome to evaporate.

Like a shy cat, it will not be encouraged to approach by making a fuss of it. Instead, we must be patient, crouch low, and pretend not to be too interested. Then, in its own time, the cat will come.

100010 4) The stage arrives when we can impose a direction on things, but we lack the power to do so directly. Instead we must wait for the moment when an opportunity offers itself and then avail ourselves of it. In choosing that opportunity, we judge for ourselves if the direction it will take us is correct.

100010 5) We know what we want to do, we have given shape to our ideas but cannot bring them into being, cannot give voice to our inner thoughts. But neither can we rush things, for something forced goes against nature. It cuts across the natural flow. Instead we must remain true to our ideas and proceed with caution, conscientiously and unobtrusively.

100010 6) Not all things can be brought into being. In human affairs, the best we can do is nurture the spark, the seed of life, but we should not allow ourselves to depend upon success for our sense of well being. Success and failure come in equal measure. What is right for success will succeed and what is right for failure will fail. We must have

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faith in the way of fate, that the unknown will bring things to fruition only if it is right. Whatever the reason, if things cannot be, then we must learn to let them go and move on.

03-150707

4

010001

Youth

Inexperience

Keywords: Education, Tuition, Guidance, Asking questions, Searching, Seeking one's Tao, Seeking one's Destiny, Self realisation, Understanding, Fulfilment, Important lessons, Ability, Aptitude, Foolishness, Inability, Blindness.

Interpretation: After the Beginning, there follows a period of immaturity in which the ways of being and the true nature of things are learned. The youth, the child, the baby, the first line of thought, the opening enquiry, the germ of an idea - all have flowed through into tangible form, but the possibilities are as yet unlimited, the end undefined, the direction tentative.

Contact with reality, with what already exists restrains the exuberant flow of youth. Youth becomes channelled and directed. The void of inexperience is slowly filled by contact with what exists, and all that's gone before. Thus a natural direction evolves from contact with the tangible world, from instruction by those wiser than ourselves, and from the example of what forms or thoughts were previously successful.

When encountering inexperience we should be persevering in our guidance. When inexperienced ourselves we must be mindful of the need to learn, and sensitive to the path as it turns. This means approaching a new and unfamiliar situation with an open mind and a view for what it might teach us. Arrogantly assuming we already know the truth

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concerning something, blinds us towards its potential to teach us something new and important.

For many newcomers to the Book of Changes, consulting the oracle is in itself an unfamiliar situation. There is much to be gained from its advice in terms of how we see ourselves, the universe and our places in it. However, the manner in which we approach the book will determine the degree to which we are able to learn from it. Those who approached their school years cynically, with little regard for authority and with an arrogant belief in their own superiority are unlikely to have learned very much. So it is with the Book of Changes.

It is not necessary to believe wholeheartedly in the Book of Changes in order for it to instruct us. The way is there for anyone with an eye to see and this requires only a willing suspension of disbelief. Then the book will engage with us in a meaningful way.

The way of the world, like the way of the Book of Changes simply "is". It has no need to impress its lessons on anyone. But the wisdom is there for whoever comes looking for it. It is the same with any situation in which there is a potential for learning - like two men who travel the world, only the one who keeps his eyes and his mind open is likely to gain anything from the experience.

Receiving this hexagram we are counselled first of all to check our attitude and to look closely at the situation for its hidden meaning. Somewhere in the details of our enquiry there exists the potential for achieving a sudden shift in our understanding of things. This will more likely be brought about by attaining a philosophical, rather than a materialistic perspective of the problem.

In life we are often presented with situations that we find baffling, or even challenging to our faith in the existence of a benign influence, or a divine current that guides our path. We bear witness to natural disasters, to acts of violence, to

wars and famine in which there is a catastrophic loss of innocent life. We lose friends and family to sickness and to meaningless accidents. And the love we seek to share with others can sometimes seem like a power intent only on crushing us. How then can there be such a thing as a divine plan? This is the hardest thing for any of us to accept, and go on believing.

In a similar way the responses of the Book of Changes might seem totally inappropriate to our enquiry, but, and especially if Youth features as a secondary hexagram, we must accept that even though we do not yet understand what we see or hear, this is the real nature of things. Our lack of understanding is not our fault. We simply have not attained the higher perspective necessary for us to see the truth of the matter.

Appended Lines

010001 1) In the beginning, youth looks upon life as a game, playing like a new-born lamb in the field. This freedom to explore allows the fledgling form to make its own mistakes, and mistakes are powerful lessons. Too much control or rigid instruction at an early stage will stifle natural development. When just starting out the stakes are not so high that we need fear the cost of making a mistake, and it is better to be free and easy in our exploration of what works and what does not.

010001 2) There can be no set pattern for instruction. Different situations require a unique approach. Every individual human being is an exception to the rule. For one to embark upon the care and instruction of youth is an investment in the future. To act with firmness and magnanimity is to invite good fortune and thus one's virtues may be passed on to one's child.

If things do not go according to plan, if things go wrong, we must remain sufficiently detached in order to avoid thinking

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negatively about the situation, blaming ourselves or others for our misfortune. This way we remain balanced and are able to learn from the situation, whether things go well or not. If our emotions become inflamed and we lose our balance then of course it does not further us to attempt anything.

010001 3) In seeking to learn, imitation of others can result in the loss of our unique identity. If we follow instruction we can learn in a manner of speaking, but, as one who paints a picture by colouring in the correct numbers, already predetermined, this is a far cry from setting out with a blank sheet of paper and creating our own picture. Painting by numbers, we arrive at a picture of a thing that is already well known. Only by going our own way do we infuse what we do with any personal meaning.

However, we should take care not to chase after everything that glitters along the way. Each has its path to follow. In seeking instruction we must not slavishly imitate, or we might miss the essential opening which would lift us to a higher plane of understanding.

010001 4) In times of youth, when feeling our way, sometimes what we imagine to be real is in fact only a fantasy. What we see are ghosts - not reality, but siren voices luring us aside, entangling us, locking us in a world of our own, a prison of our own making.

The way to judge if this is so is to ask: "Who is in control of my direction? Who is it inside of me that makes me see things this way?"

Even if we are sincere in our desire to improve ourselves, we must guard against the egotistical impulse to direct our course by the might of our intellect, by the rules we learned from past encounters with the material world. These are uncharted waters we are journeying now and no almanac ever contained the names of stars that stud these mysterious skies. Yet in these waters there runs a vital current. We need only have the

courage to let go of the wheel and our vessel will guide itself.

010001 5) At the time of youth, openness is the channel to proper learning. Pre-judgement, arrogance, prejudice - all of these things narrow the channel through which learning might be gained, restricting its flow. Acceptance of the need to learn opens the way.

010001 6) Ignorance is not a sin at the time of youth and harsh treatment is not the way to eradicate it. This is not the technique of a wise master, nor is it the way of the cosmos. At the time of youth all things are soft, and impressionable. Big impressions can easily be made, altering the course of life, of form, of thought. Therefore at a time of instruction we must be guarded in what impressions we convey on those we teach, or how we react when we appear to receive a rebuff when seeking to learn.

We will know in short measure if we have made a mistake but if we suffer misfortune as a result we must not take this to mean we are being punished. Misfortune should be taken as a lesson in itself, for it will never be any more nor any less than what is required to pull us up sharp and bring us back onto the correct path.

04-150707

5

111010

Waiting for nourishment

Anticipating

Keywords: Making Ready, Waiting, Anticipation, Patience, Forbearance, Hopefulness, Purposeful inaction, Deferred reward, Nourishment, Chances of success.

Interpretation: In times of youth, times of inexperience, or at the outset of anything new there is a need for nourishment. There is a craving for that which will enable growth. But nourishment cannot be demanded. Just as when we plant the seed, we cannot then command the rain to fall. Instead, we must wait in expectation and quiet hope. The rain will come in its own time. Impatience will achieve nothing. The situation demands forbearance.

Another way of looking at this is that we cannot shape the future by interfering with things before the time is right. Nothing happens without purpose and this all depends upon the progress we have made along our path. There is a sequence of events, and each must be fulfilled before we can move on to the next stage.

Lack of patience, or modesty and an irresistible desire to interfere, to take a short cut to our imagined destination, are all sufficient to delay the very things we are so anxious should happen, even though we cannot see the direct connection between our emotional state and that which we desire. However, modesty, humility and a humble detachment from our goal empowers the Creative to turn around even the most unlikely of circumstances to our advantage.

Appended Lines

111010 1) At the outset, there is a need to remain calm and inactive. Even though we might sense something impending, it is unwise to make a move before the time is right for action. If we are too greedy in our search for nourishment we will exhaust what few morsels of nourishment we have thus far obtained.

110010 2) Things might be moving now but the situation is still uncertain and shifting. There are chattering voices calling us this way and that. This implies we doubt the power of the unknown, the way of fate, to bring about what it is we want. We are unbalanced by conflicting emotions and this means we absolutely must not act. Instead, we must remain quite still and respond only to events as they present themselves. If we can do this, from a position of balance and centred calm, then the way will open.

100010 3) There come times when we are mired in doubt. We are assailed by voices undermining our resolve. At such times we must think through what it is that's most important. We must clarify what it is that we believe. If we abandon our trust in the benign nature of the cosmos, if we relinquish control to our inferior self, to our ego, then we invite misfortune. If on the other hand we can define and hold to what we truly believe, the doubting voices will grow quiet.

111010 4) Here we seem intent on forcing our way. A powerful emotion fills our vision and we feel that acting under the influence of such potent energy cannot fail to bring the results we seek. But we are caught in a trap and going nowhere. We cannot tackle this head on and it is far better to yield, to allow fate to take its course.. We must back down, submit willingly, and do nothing to aggravate things further. Heed this warning and disengage.

111010 5) Here we can wait in a calm and unhurried manner. There may have been considerable progress in this matter but we should not deceive ourselves that the journey is over. There is harmony but only if we can maintain an open and

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trusting attitude we will avoid forfeiting the gains we have already made.

111010 6) The time of nourishment is coming to a close. We have waited patiently and still it seems we have not achieved anything. But this is not a calamity. Even through apparent misfortune we may glimpse the insight required to correct ourselves. So, with a positive outlook, all manner of difficulties may be overcome and the end will always be good.

05-150707

6

010111

Conflict

Keywords: One-sidedness, Partiality, Partisanship, Closed Mind, Challenging the Nature of Reality, Combative, Narrow View, Conflict, Argument, Friction, Grievance, Challenge, Competition, Confrontation, Arbitration, Diplomacy, Reconciliation, Seeking Common Ground, Tactfulness.

Interpretation: When things, or people, or a profusion of thoughts, ideas, or ambitions all scramble for nourishment in order that they might grow, there will inevitably arise a state of contention. Like the first green shoots bursting from the earth, the leaves take nourishment and spread themselves out in search of light, each jostling and blocking the other in order that they may receive the life-giving light of the sun. But in human affairs conflict is a waste of energy and it's better to avoid it altogether. Conflict arises when there is self-willed conduct that is insensitive to the situations or the beliefs of others.

From the cosmic perspective all beings are of equal worth, all deserving of the opportunity to realise their fate, or their higher selves by following their proper path through life. Contention arises when we become so intent on following our own path, we either consciously or unconsciously subvert the paths of those around us. The correct attitude to adopt in times of conflict is to seek always the middle ground, to be accepting when the path of others coincides with our own and to be tolerant when it does not. If through intolerance or conflict we subvert the path of others, we

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automatically subvert our own. The true way always tends towards a state of mutual harmony, and this cannot be brought about by supporting one thing at the expense of another.

Conflict need not imply arguing or other forms of open hostility against others. It can equally be taken to mean we are locked in a state of inner turmoil. This happens when we doubt the ability of things to work themselves out. We may even view the cosmos as overtly hostile to our aims, or we may feel alienated through misunderstanding the real nature of things. This suggests we have lost our way, lost our sense of inner truth and we should therefore withdraw from this enquiry, because any meaningful answer we receive is unlikely to be understood.

Appended Lines

010111 1) The conflict is in the opening phase. The matter is as yet trivial but we must not allow things to escalate because we cannot win against the inner truth of the situation. If we cannot back away from this, if taking a conscious decision to leave this alone causes us any irritation, it is a sure sign that our ego is seeking to assert itself.

010111 2) Ego draws on many resources to support its case - logic, reason, probing, questioning, arguing, presenting ideas that are pure fantasies, like a child holding a gaily coloured kite aloft in the hope that a favourable wind might take it and so prove its case. But when there is no wind, a kite will not fly, no matter how beautifully it is painted. Similarly, when one's position is weak, seeking contention is not wise. Being self willed does not mean being right.

010111 3) Seeking to follow the way is to seek the most ancient of virtues, that which lies in the unconscious depths of every human being, and is a mirror image of what lies at the very heart of the cosmos. When we involve ourselves with the power of such inner truth we by necessity are obligated to

conduct ourselves in a certain manner. This means we work in the background, unknown and unsung. For every book you have ever read, there are ten thousand more, equally deserving of attention, but which shall remain for ever unknown to you. We must be modest and persevering, otherwise we will subvert our path.

For one in this position, there is an ever present danger that our inferior self, our ego, will seek some form of recognition or praise for what our higher self has achieved through its quiet modesty. And if we fail, our ego might persuade us to give up, telling us we can't possibly get anywhere from such a position of apparent obscurity. We should always avoid seeking prestige and honour and should simply be content that the work gets done, without bothering to announce the fact with a fanfare.

010111 4) Whenever we desire something, we can no longer approach it from a balanced position. We look for shortcuts by which we hope to attain our goal tomorrow instead of waiting the proper period as determined by fate. Thus we engage in and open conflict against the situation. However, there is nothing to be gained because right is not on our side and our situation is made none the surer for our machinations. If however we can return to a position of modesty and humility, if we can recognise that learning how to wait in a position of centred calm is more important than any goal we could attain right now, then we can regain the path and the essential truth of the matter will be revealed.

010111 5) One here is counselled that turning the matter over to fate, to the ability of the cosmos to bring all things to their proper conclusion is the only way to ensure the right outcome. We must turn away from contemplating this matter and trust that things will work out for the best if we leave them alone. The right thought, the right solution, the correct path will reveal itself through insight, but only if we do not deliberately seek it. Desire shall blind us so we cannot tell

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what is right from what is wrong, from what is genuine insight, and what is fantasy.

010111 6) One who is firm and strong might carry a conflict on to the bitter end. One might even enjoy contention in the spirit of a skilful gladiator, toying endlessly with the logic of the situation. But in such circumstances as these there is nothing to be gained, for we lack an essential grasp of the inner truth of the matter. Thus our only reward is a state of perpetual conflict and doubt.

06-157207

7

010000

The Army

The Multitude

Marshalling Our Resources

Keywords: Making Ready, Marshalling resources, Solidarity, Interdependence, Working together, Thinking ahead, Preparedness.

Interpretation: When there is contention, a multitude of thoughts and things will gather as inner resources are marshalled to further our position. If contention is not resolved properly, there will be a rush to test our strength forcibly, as an army will enter into battle if conflict between states cannot be resolved by diplomacy. This must be avoided.

There exists a confusion, a disorder in the resources which, in times of peace, lie hidden within us. So, when we encounter a trying situation, our resources, our skills, our wits, our intellect, all threaten to rise up in an undisciplined manner and rush to our aid. We must therefore take stock of what we are, what we know and believe. Then we must apply a certain discipline if our resources are to be brought to bear in a just and effective manner.

In ordering our resources we should always act from the highest principles, with a good heart and a sense of what is right. In this way, even a disorganised rabble can prove itself effective in battle if it comes under the command of a wise general.

In the inner world we can think of the army as being made up of all those facets of our nature that constitute our

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personality. How we behave in a given situation is determined by what part of ourselves our personality looks to for leadership. If we let the ego, our inferior self, take charge, the personality will behave in an emotional and an ineffective way because it lacks the vital piece of information, the critical intelligence which directs the army to act in a manner that ensures success.

If we look to our higher self for leadership, the intelligence is inherent in our understanding of what is right. This comes through trusting in the power of the unknown, trusting in fate and by trying always to divine the inner truth of things, trying to judge what it is that's meant to be. If we can do this, then our trust will be rewarded with the vital insight we require.

Our higher self can be defined as the side of us which can more easily trust in the unknown to bring things to their proper conclusion. Our higher self is more sensitive to the subtle twists and turns of the way, and so can direct our personality accordingly instead of having us persevere in a particular direction long after a common sense has told us we should withdraw.

Appended Lines

010000 1) We are setting out upon our course. The multitude of ideas, of thoughts, the assembly of our resources is fresh and energetic, and care is needed in order to keep things in check. Without discipline our ego will rush about and dissipate our energy in all directions. However, with caution and awareness we can keep everything pointing in a direction of our choosing.

At this stage it is important to test for signs of ego by asking who it is we serve. Do we act out of impatience to make way? Are there traces of envy or greed, or any other negative emotion? Are we full of our own self importance and insensitive to the right of others to make way also?

010000 2) We find ourselves at the centre of things. Our inner resources are well managed and well focused upon the

objective. The way opens and we may follow through confident that the effort will make a difference.

010000 3) The carrying of unnecessary burdens will ultimately defeat us. Old ideas, outmoded ways of thinking, mourning the past, clinging to it for no good reason - all are like corpses we carry on our backs, weighing us into the ground. Only if we can let them go can we avoid their dictating our path and subverting it.

Ego consciousness is the primary means of dictating action in one who has not yet realised the power of the superior self. Ego consciousness is most likely the way we dealt with things in the past. Such attitudes are an unnecessary burden and we should rid ourselves of them.

010000 4) Even when all we have at our command is directed towards a problem, there is no guarantee of victory if the problem is too great, the adversary is too strong, or the time is not right. We should be mindful of this and know when to retreat.

010000 5) When difficulties rear their heads, it is right to deal with them, to address matters and to focus upon things as they arise. However, what is not wise is to waste energy and resources by actively seeking trouble or bracing ourselves against problems that may never arise.

010000 6) By properly organising our resources, the conflict is overcome and a new era is ushered in, but we must guard against the adoption of unworthy ideas or motives, or foolish pride, for such things will ultimately corrupt us and subvert our path.

07-150707

8

000010

Seeking Union

Belonging

Becoming One

Keywords: Oneness, Association, Joining Forces, Commonality, Common ground, Union, Similarity, Mutual Interests, Common Cause, Mutual attraction, Membership, Merging, Becoming one, Like and like, Group interests.

Interpretation: Following the rising of a multitude of people, or ideas, or inner resources, there must be a bond of union if things are to remain in harmony. Union brings strength but there must also be a focus that is worthy. Whoever seeks union in a spirit of modesty and openness may do so without blame. Those in places not at peace then join with us.

We must look at how we think about things, scrutinise the things, or the people, or the ideas we associate ourselves with. We have to look at what it is we think we belong to or believe in.

Those who have not seek those who have. Those in danger seek security. Those who are troubled seek those who appear serene. Those who are already secure in heart and mind do not need to seek others. In the time of seeking union we are therefore asked to define where it is we think we sit in this hierarchy of seekers and providers.

The time of Holding Together does not mean gathering into groups willy-nilly and clinging to each other at all costs. Holding together is about Tao. It is about aligning our self with our higher nature, abandoning the single-minded pursuit of goals and the reckless pandering to our desires. It is a time for reiterating the importance of modesty and openness - for resisting the urge to follow everything that glitters in the

material world, and instead becoming one with the notion of Inner Truth.

If we can become one with Inner Truth then our attitude will be correct. In any successful grouping of people or things or thoughts or ideas, everything must be aligned with this sense of Inner Truth if it is to hold together, but first we must look to correct ourselves. If we are correct in ourselves then others will seek union with us without our having to look for them. If something is correct in itself, a theory, a notion, an idea then we will be drawn towards it instinctively without needing to question the details. If what we seek is correct, then the connections we require to guide our path will reveal themselves of their own accord without our needing to go out and look for them.

If we seek to act as a focus for others we must ask ourselves if we possess sufficient constancy and perseverance to remain balanced throughout the trials that such a role might entail.

Appended Lines

000010 1) In seeking union we must approach with sincerity. Similarly, we must be able to recognise sincerity and not be seduced by the outward appearance of a cause or an idea when seeking a direction for ourselves. The plainest of vessels can contain the most nourishing of food, just as the shallowest pretence can underlie the most ostentatious show.

000010 2) In seeking union we must always do so without thought of what we might gain personally. Our only thoughts must be regarding whether or not the connections we make are correct.

000010 3) Here, the ideas we hold to, the people we are drawn to provide no resonance and we should take steps to distance ourselves. We seek union but there is no one, no thought, no cause to which we might fruitfully align ourselves.

We must not enter into too close a union with what is before us but maintain a distance, then we will be ready to respond

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to more fruitful associations should they reveal themselves later on.

Even if the thing we behold seems worthy, it could be that our own attitude towards it is incorrect and we therefore have little to gain by pursuing it.

000010 4) Our focus is clearly defined. This is correct and we should continue to move gently in this direction.

000010 5) When seeking union, when seeking to connect with ideas or a cause with which to align ourselves, we must not try too hard. Forcefulness does not work at such a time. If we cultivate the right inner attitude, then the way that is right will reveal itself. Also, one should deal only with the matters that reveal themselves, and not to go actively seeking them.

000010 6) The time of seeking union is coming to an end. We do not clearly comprehend the principles of Inner Truth and so the way closes. This is no longer a direction we can follow. By hesitation we miss the mark. By lack of inner conviction we lack the power to share in the potential of this avenue.

08-150707

9

111011

Taming Power of the Small

Keywords: Held in Check, In abeyance, Potential, Thwarted efforts, Frustrated aims, Lacking influence, Irritation, Nuisance, Complication, Trifles, Nit-picking, Erosion of potential, Worn down by details, Devil in the detail, Diminishing returns, Fine-tuning, Tweaking.

Interpretation: When a multitude of formerly disparate elements come together in harmonious union, there will be an accumulation, a building up of potential, but this in itself is not enough to yield a harvest. There is promise of much to follow but the potential is held in check by one small thing and for this to occur the way must first open. Thus, following a time of Seeking Union, potential is held in check by the Taming Power of the Small.

The clouds rise. They grow dark and heavy, but still no rain falls, holding everything in check. For want of this one small thing, a thing entirely beyond the power of mankind, our affairs come to a standstill. When we can produce no great effect in the outer world, there is nothing we can do but wait and accept the slow way that fate sometimes unwinds. Content with making small gains, this slow time gives us the opportunity to discover the true direction of our Tao.

Appended Lines

111011 1) In striving to press forward, obstructions may be encountered. Pressing ahead too forcibly we make mistakes and lose our way. We feel impatient to make progress. Ego measures our performance against an imaginary standard and finds us wanting. It drives us on when there is really nowhere to go, then drags us down into feelings of frustration and alienation when nothing is gained.

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If we can only recognise that this is the real nature of things, it will empower us to abandon Ego's foolish ways and regain our path.

111011 2) Here we seem uncertain of the way, or we are tempted to give up on what we know to be right simply because things are not moving fast enough. If we can recognise such feelings inside of ourselves this should be sufficient warning that we need to watch our direction. If we react correctly to the manifestation of such negative emotions, they can be helpful in keeping us on course.

111011 3) One here attempts to advance forcibly through a feeling of impatience or alienation. Perhaps we expect the restraining power to be slight and so score some easy points. However, in this way we risk feelings of even further alienation should the forces ranged against us prove to be overwhelming. This is not a wise basis on which to take action, especially considering how small the likely gains will be compared with the potential damage to our inner self of a further rebuff - should things go against us.

Risk it if you must but don't take it to heart if things don't work out as you desire!

111011 4) Sincerity eliminates all negative influences. If we are sincere in everything we do, then we avoid mistakes, we remain on the path or we recover quickly if we should momentarily lose our way. If we can remain sincere when others behave badly towards us, then we shall have nothing to reproach ourselves for, and through our sincerity we come to meet them in the only way that is correct. All influences that come to us from the Creative are sincere and therefore to be trusted because a genuine truth remains true whether it is what we want to hear or not.

111011 5) With a sense of inner sincerity we are able to reach out to others in harmony with ourselves and share with them what we have stored up. One in touch with way does not consider himself to be any better than even the humblest in society. If we make the mistake of thinking we are superior to any other sentient being, we hoard what blessings we have thus far received and therefore risk losing them.

Considering others to be less deserving than we are shuts us off from the power of the unknown, but if we can remain modest and sincere then we can be assured that people, things and the creative forces in nature will respond, shaping our fate in a positive way.

111011 6) The rain falls and, through our perseverance in what is right, we achieve the harvest, but it does not do to rely on such a bounty to last for ever. That which is full but keeps on advancing is sure burst, to subvert its own path. Only by remaining modest and sincere can we hope to secure a lasting position.

09-150707

10

110111

Treading

Proper conduct

Keywords: Conduct, Care, Manners, Tact, Circumspection, Treading Cautiously, Respect, Boldness, Audacity, Stalking, Hunting, Testing, Challenging fate, Forcing one's way.

Interpretation: After things have accumulated we must adopt the proper conduct if we hope to advance in a way that brings lasting benefit. So, following a time of the Taming Power of the Small, there comes the time of Proper Conduct.

The way is opening but if we are to follow where it leads without mistakes then we must read the signs carefully. This means understanding the laws of the universe. Following our Tao, our destiny, can be likened to following in the footprints of a tiger - a beautiful, powerful and potentially dangerous manifestation of the natural world. If we are careful, the power of the tiger can be used to our benefit, to protect our path and further our aims.

William Blake describes the tiger as “burning bright in the forest of the night”. The forest of the night can be read as a metaphor of our unconscious minds, and the “tyger” as the flame that guides us through the dense undergrowth that might otherwise obscure our life’s path. Such a flame can be a source of warmth and wisdom, a beacon to light our way. But the flame that gives warmth can also burn. In treading the way therefore, we must proceed softly.

Appended Lines

110111 1) The way is sensitive to extravagance and ostentation so we must be modest in all we do and accepting of our position. One who is dissatisfied with his position will

try to advance in order to escape what he sees as his lowly circumstances, rather than use the opportunity to achieve something worthwhile. One pursuing this direction is sure to lose his way.

True progress only comes if we can remain detached from any definite goal. True progress only comes if we can resist the urge to measure ourselves against some imaginary standard, because we shall always find ourselves wanting. Taking action under pressure such as this, we are unbalanced and will fall if we try to move.

110111 2) If we can remain withdrawn, if we are not seduced by the imagined luxuries and the prestige afforded by a more sophisticated walk of life, then we remain true to ourselves and travel a path through life that is without hardship. Remaining content with our place and not challenging fate, we keep ourselves free from entanglements, we keep ourselves perfectly in balance, and so all that we do cannot fail but to succeed.

110111 3) If we imagine ourselves to be more powerful than we really are we can appear to make a certain progress in challenging our fate, but ultimately we only succeed in exposing ourselves to danger. We are like the hunter who stalks his prey too closely, instead of conducting himself more circumspectly. If the tiger should suddenly turn, the careless hunter is less able to escape its claws.

This is not to say we are mistaken in the course we follow. One who is wise enough may accurately recognise the marks of the tiger, but there is always a danger in seeking to make way too forcefully. Therefore it is here we are specifically counselled to ease back a little, to follow the tiger from a distance instead of trying to touch its tail.

110111 4) Seeking to follow the way, we are at once granted a certain intangible wisdom. We know when we have pressed ahead too far. We know the signs of Ego's presence. It leads us to doubt the path we are taking, it urges us to interfere in the course we steer, but such actions run contrary to the natural flow of things. Only by pressing on in a manner of halting caution and the utmost circumspection can we hope to succeed.

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110111 5) The way is adverse to worldly success, and proceeding boldly invites the tiger to turn and bite. It is correct to be resolute, but this is not to be confused with feelings of ambition, with the will to make way at all costs. To be properly resolute is to be unswervingly committed to being uncommitted, to make one's only ambition the abandonment of all ambition .

Also we must be resolute in avoiding the dangerous turns that sometimes come our way - the temptation to take unfair advantage, the temptation to pander to other people's shortcomings - if we think it might be to our advantage.

Such actions, even if they secure us great wealth, will ultimately compromise our principles, and then sooner or later the tiger will bite us.

110111 6) It is always wise to look back upon the way we've come in order to judge whether the outcome of our actions has led to the advancement, or the losing of our path. Reflection allows us to take stock of what has been learned. We can look for meaning in our encounters and, being sensitive to such things, remain in harmony.

Looking back, we recognise the times when we gave in to feelings of ambition or desire were the times we lost the way and were unhappy. We recognise the times when we regained our trust in the power of the unknown were the times that things improved. So, in following the tiger, the attitude of the tiger itself is our best guide in positioning ourselves in order to assure us of its warmth and its wisdom.

10-150707

11

111000

Peace

Pervading Energy

Advance

Riding the Great Wave

Keywords: Agreement, Reconciliation, Synergy, Harmony, Being in Tune, Oneness, Affirmation, Interaction, Fruitful Involvement, Intercourse, Inclusiveness, Openness.

Interpretation: By observing proper conduct while following our path, we remain safe and therefore at peace in our selves. So, after the time of Proper Conduct there comes a time of Peace, during which we can advance.

There is an influx, a flowering. Heaven and earth unite. An energy, like a powerful river current, runs through our lives, pervading everything we do and everything we think. Dreams and hopes bear fruit. There is no longer a need to walk small. Here we may ride the current but also we may use this energy to impose a direction on things and further our ideas.

One here might sense the gains that have been made. We might feel the energy sparking from our fingertips, and we might rejoice in the power and the correctness of our direction. But we are also reminded that it is at such times we are apt to forget how these conditions were brought about.

Ego might seek to persuade us that it was responsible for the harvest we now enjoy. So we lower our guard and everything is threatened. Only by persevering in modesty and sincerity do we correct ourselves sufficiently to attain a condition of

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profound inner peace, a condition in which the floodgates are opened and the energy of the Creative flows through us.

Under the protection afforded by such auspicious circumstances we might safely advance. But if we do not consciously practice the process of continual self correction when times are good, then we shall eventually lose the way again.

Appended Lines

111000 1) If we are in a state of peace we are intimately connected both with the cosmos and with others who are similarly at peace within themselves. Therefore, by virtue of this interconnectedness, when we try to do something it is as if we are charmed for then all things resonate to our needs, the impossible connections are made and circumstances bend to our will. Under such favourable circumstances, how could one not benefit from taking action?

Conversely then, if we are not at peace, if we have in any way a negative view of the situation before us, then the intimate connections are severed. Everything then becomes a struggle. There is no resonance and all things turn to stone.

111000 2) One here might advance, but in a state of watchfulness, remaining open to all the possibilities that circumstances have to offer, even bearing with what is imperfect for its potential to come good in the future. We should favour nothing to the exclusion of the other and thus walk the middle path, free of extremes.

Also the path we walk must be our own path. We must not deviate from side to side in order to suit the moods or the opinions of others, nor thoughts of how others might be of benefit to us, either by protecting us with their influence or with promises of material gain.

We follow our own path because it brings us peace. We follow it even if it means going on alone.

111000 3) Everything is subject to change. Prosperity is followed by decline. Here the way between heaven and earth

begins to close and a reversal of fortunes is set to come upon us. It is important therefore to be mindful of the impending change and remain inwardly persevering. As long as our inner nature remains stronger and richer than anything offered by the tangible world, our fortune cannot be lost.

Trying to maintain a situation in opposition to fate is like trying to hold back the tide. We must not allow ourselves to become hooked on maintaining the status quo, no matter how beneficial the circumstances have been for us. The right path is always the right path no matter where it leads.

111000 4) At a time of peace we should not be afraid to advance into the world provided we hold firmly to our principles of modesty and sincerity. By such a positive attitude we cannot fail to make progress.

If this enquiry is one in which we seek to test the correctness of our direction, and we feel genuinely free of blame, we can rest assured we are heading the right way. Conversely if we test ourselves for signs of ego and fail, if we suspect ourselves of guile or conceit in any sense, then we can in no way rely upon our direction to be correct.

111000 5) It is not for us to decide when the time is right for things to come together. This is entirely in the hands of fate and cannot be forced, but we must also be capable of relating to things in the correct manner, when the right conditions do come along. If we cannot, then even the most generous turn of fate is unlikely to make us happy for very long.

111000 6) A change is upon us and circumstances take a turn for the worst. We cannot resist this and the best we can do is submit to fate. If we can remain persevering and put our trust in the power of the unknown, better times will return.

11-150707

12

000111

Stagnation

Obstruction

Divergence

Keywords: Being wrong, Divergence, Alienation, Wrong path, Wrong turn, Stagnation, Going Nowhere, Disengagement, Discord, Division, Disintegration, Falseness, Ignorance, Blindness, Denial, Apathy, Narrow-mindedness, Dissolving into noise.

Interpretation: A time of peace allows us to advance unhindered, but nothing lasts for ever, so in due course the way closes and there follows a time of stagnation.

Heaven and earth are out of communion. Consequently, all things are benumbed. The way is closed. We are obstructed. We are wrong. Our proposals are rejected. Our ideas are out of accord with the true nature of things. The people we look to for support are not the right ones in relation to this enquiry. We must not persevere in this direction any longer.

One who seeks the Way will not find it here, for there is a scarcity of anything worthwhile, of anything truly important to us in this regard. Indeed all that lies ahead is barrenness, sterility,... stagnation. The winds cease, the currents do not flow and we find our vessel becalmed.

There is nothing we can do. All those who make life's important voyages will encounter times such as these, and we must guard against our impatience to make way. Only by returning to an attitude of centred calm and balance can we hope to correct the situation and eventually see our way through. The best course is to stop thinking about the subject

of this enquiry, because at a time of stagnation this only arouses our emotions and throws us even further off balance.

There is no sense in looking towards the subject of this enquiry to assist in enabling our hopes and dreams to bear fruit - no sense in putting ourselves out, or seeking distinction here. A man who seeks honour from fools in foolish times is but a fool himself. Instead we must withdraw into our shell, curl ourselves up and turn away from the world. It cannot help us now.

One here misunderstands the real nature of things, the real laws underpinning the workings of the cosmos. We need to look at our life in a different way, because until we can alter our viewpoint we can hardly expect to make any further progress. So long as we rely on our inferior nature, our ego, to thrash about in unfamiliar territory, actively seeking the right path, then the right path will elude us even if it's right under our nose.

Only when we quieten the ego can we reliably discern the correct way when it is revealed. This is not our fault. We must be patient and await a change in the times.

Appended Lines

000111 1) One here must pull back from the problem. It cannot be solved while our ego has a free hand. Just as the faintest stars only reveal themselves when we do not look directly at them, so the solution to this situation will only be revealed by not actively seeking it.

000111 2) Inferior ideas prevail and the whole world is talking rubbish. But that is no reason for us to have anything to do with it. Even the most inferior ideas sometimes find favour, if only for a little while, but they are still inferior and their popularity is a reflection of the times we are living in. Still, we should not allow ourselves to be seduced. We must remain true to ourselves. We must accept that the way is impeded for now and be patient: it will open again.

000111 3) The inferior ideas that hold sway, either in ourselves or in the wider world, are losing their credibility.

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There is at last a modicum of doubt, and this marks a turn for the better - but this is not the time for us to press forward in seeking a solution. We are indeed a little warmer in our search for a way through the morass, but for now we must hold back and allow things to correct themselves. Then we shall see the right way in which to advance.

000111 4) Only if we maintain an attitude of centred calm and balance can we expect to make any progress. If we are not balanced, if we are emotional, or if we are desirous of something, then all we can expect is that we will go on blundering from one closed door to another.

Regaining balance, fate will lead us in a particular direction and we will sense a shift in things for the better like a draught of clean air entering a stuffy room. Only by studying ourselves, the state of our emotional balance, can we measure the wisdom of the direction we are moving in.

000111 5) The obstruction is in the process of clearing. The way is opening, but we must remain cautious for when a man feels himself to be most secure, he is at his most vulnerable. Remember how it is we have brought about this change and remember too that continued progress in this direction requires us to remain persevering and sincere.

000111 6) By properly correcting ourselves, by altering the way we see things, we have brought about an end to the time of stagnation. One here, by virtue of pureness of heart, has the ability to bend fate to his will. The time of stagnation is over.

The way is open.

12-150707

13

101111

Fellowship

Seeking Harmony

Keywords: Fellowship, Common ground, Consensus, Belonging, Openness, Brotherhood, Faith, Trust, Inclusiveness, Multi-Denominational, Interracial, Diversity, Exclusiveness, Clique, Self-interest, Prejudice, Bigotry.

Interpretation: A time of stagnation comes to a close once we begin to seek harmony.

If harmony is to be found there must be a central idea of universal appeal: the pursuit of harmony, harmony among people and all things. But only complete openness will succeed in bringing about this kind of harmony. No corner of our hearts can be hidden from others, and all others must be looked upon as equal. We must recognise that everyone and everything is seeking ways to become what it was created to be, that each has a path to follow.

Without this open attitude and the consideration of one's position in the context of the whole of creation, there will be conflict and obstruction. Essentially then this hexagram is about how we relate to others, to the world around us and our places in it, and to the Book of Changes itself.

Here we might be stuck in some way and are being asked to examine our attitude in order to understand why we should feel obstructed. Or, we might feel that we have something we wish to share with others, something we want to contribute to the wider world and are uncertain about the best way of going about our task.

In either instance we are counselled that we can only expect to make progress if we are sincere. Only if we relate with complete openness can we expect a similarly open and

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fruitful response from whomever or whatever it is we seek harmony with.

If in receiving this hexagram we are puzzled about what it is we are supposed to be seeking harmony with, then it is probably more a question of our relationship with the Book of Changes. Only by approaching it with an attitude of complete openness can we expect the answers it gives us to actually mean anything.

Reserving judgement over the Book of Changes is insufficient, but that is not to say we need to wholeheartedly believe in it. What is required, however, is that we must at least be prepared to suspend our disbelief at the moment we turn to it, like one torn by grief who abandons his fate to the wind. Only by a gesture of such openness at the moment we turn to the Book of Changes can we expect it to be open with us and give us the guidance we require. If we approach it with a guarded or sceptical attitude its counsel will be meaningless.

We tend to seek harmony with others by sharing a part of ourselves, by opening ourselves up, making ourselves vulnerable to a possible rebuff. Others likewise do the same with us. Therefore, only if there is a sense of mutual sincerity do we avoid the risk of such contact proving negative in its consequences.

Appended Lines

101111 1) One begins to seek harmony. At this point the conditions for a universal interconnection need to be understood by all. There can be no secret agendas, no selfish motives - or there can be no real harmony. We must look inside ourselves and ask if we are being totally honest and open. Have we for example entered into a secret agreement with our ego only to go so far in testing for harmony? Perhaps we plan to pull back if we do not achieve any visible benefits for ourselves?

A man cannot serve two masters. We follow our inferior self or we follow that which is great in all of us.

101111 2) When seeking genuine harmony, there can be no distinctions drawn along family, or clan lines, or other selfish, personal considerations. The formation of cliques serves not the wider harmony and only obstructs it.

We form a clique with our self if we secretly believe we are better, wiser or somehow more worthy than others. We form a clique with others if we know they do not act from the best of motives, yet we allow ourselves to be carried along with them anyway.

101111 3) Although seeking harmony, there is mistrust of someone or something, and one here reserves his attitude. Encounters may have proved hostile and have caused us to withdraw, but we must not harbour resentment when we experience such rebuffs, or we shall sink into feelings of isolation.

Perhaps we doubt ourselves, our ability to hold to what is superior in ourselves to see us through, and so we hold our ego in reserve, ready to hand over control. We hear it whispering in the background, agitating for a change of direction, for action.

We should not force our way here but hold back a while until Ego's whisperings are silenced by a growing faith in the power of inner truth.

101111 4) Obstructions to harmony stand like battlements dividing things and people. We have a sense of our own purpose, yet, though our motives are sincere, we find there is no one willing to respond because their paths diverge from our own. Thus instead of harmony, things sink back into mutual isolation. We cannot change this situation by argument or by forcing a way through to others, but things can be eased by having faith in what it is we believe, and by persevering in a spirit of openness and humility.

We cannot remain for ever isolated from our true path. If it is right for us to join with others, if it is right for them to respond to what it is we are trying to say or do or be, then they will. If it is right that we shall find our way through to inner harmony, then we will.

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101111 5) Elements seeking harmony resonate with the potential for coming together as one, but are kept apart by circumstances. When two people resonate with each other but are kept apart, their hearts are still united and cannot be held apart for ever. Eventually the difficulties separating them will be removed and they will be together.

One here is counselled to persevere in this direction. We must have faith that what we hold in our hearts and seek to share is correct.

101111 6) The time of harmony is drawing to a close, forestalling the chance to bring fulfilment. Elements settle for union with those in nearest proximity. Cliques are formed and self interest predominates. All is not lost, but the warm attachment that springs from the heart is lacking and unions formed at such a time as this do not include everything or everyone. Vision is narrowed. Potential is limited.

We remain mindful of the desire to seek genuine harmony with all, but there is no one to respond. Like seeking company in a wilderness, we do not have the luxury of choosing our companions but must settle for those few we might find along the way. This is the reality of the times and it calls for a certain pragmatism. Our will cannot be fulfilled, our ambition cannot be realised. We can only wait for more propitious circumstances.

13-150707

14

111101

Possession in Great Measure

Great Harvest

Keywords: Attainment, Possessing greatness, Abundance, Resonance, Enrichment, Insight, Power, Understanding, Reaping the harvest, Controlling the assets, Hoarding the Treasure, Counting of Blessings, Appreciation, Gratitude, Distribution of wealth, Benefit of experience.

Interpretation: After successfully seeking harmony, things respond. Things resonate. So, after successfully seeking harmony, there follows an outpouring, a bounty, a great harvest.

There is possession of something in great measure, a brilliant idea, an inspiration, a long awaited insight. The way is open. Following one's own path, being what one is, invites such greatness. Suddenly, after a period of uncertainty, we have achieved the right viewpoint and things have begun to change for the better. Here our power expresses itself, but we must take care to remain humble, and mindful of the need to go on seeking harmony. It is not wise to become too full. As in all things, we lose by pride and gain by modesty.

A great harvest is like the sun rising and illuminating the earth: both good and bad are brought into the light of day. Mankind must deal with each according to the measure of his own wisdom and reap his rewards accordingly. When the harvest is bountiful, we can use it to gain a higher plane of understanding and union with the power of inner truth, or we can misuse it and lose our way.

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Appended Lines

111101 1) At a time of great harvest, we must remain free of arrogance if we are to avoid mistakes. But the time is in its earliest beginnings and there have been no opportunities to make such serious mistakes. Remaining mindful of this and treading lightly enables us to stay on course.

111101 2) A great harvest is all the more valuable if it is easily transportable, for then it might be utilised wherever one wishes. Being possessed of such a wealth of wisdom, or such a valuable idea we can impose a direction on things if we remains free in our minds and do not become too opinionated, too dogmatic and structured in our views. If our brightness remains without structure or conviction we always find the way open, and can travel far without becoming bogged down in a morass of dogma, or petty preconceptions.

111101 3) A great harvest brings with it its own risks. One here should guard against becoming intoxicated by the feelings of power and confidence that a great harvest bestows. If we are small minded we can be harmed by great possessions because we let them go to our head. We might be tempted to think we are better than anyone else and somehow deserve special attention. In this sense we are like a rich but miserly person who keeps everything to himself. Instead, we should take what we have and seek to share it, offer it to the highest principles we hold, or in other words, seek always the cosmic perspective in everything we do.

111101 4) One in possession of a great harvest may find himself in the company of others who on the surface of things appear to possess an equal wealth. But here one must tread lightly and seek neither to dominate nor polarise. What we possess is far more powerful than what others might have attained through worldly means, but if we turn away from the power of inner truth, if we begin measuring what we do in terms of how others see us, or how they might judge us, then we shall lose everything we have.

The correct path is to possess a great harvest as if we possessed nothing at all. Boasting of our abilities diminishes

our self, diminishes our ability to read the signs and recognise our path.

111101 5) One here has found the correct position with regards to a great harvest. Others are won over by our sincerity. We may act with confidence, without danger of mistakes, and without fear of being misunderstood.

111101 6) In the final stages of a great harvest we might reasonably be cautious, fearing that there is bound to be a danger of spilling over, of allowing the power to go to our heads. However, that we can remain mindful of such things indicates an attitude that is not ruined by proximity to wealth, whatever its nature. We dwell in a world of rich holdings, but do not count the pennies and remain fixed on loftier goals, seeking and longing only for worthiness. Thus we naturally invite the protection of the Way and blessings will come as a matter of course.

14-150707

15

001000

Modesty

Humbleness

Authenticity

Keywords: Respect for Others, Genuine, Unpretentious, Modest, Proper, Honest, Unassuming, Lack of Aims, Accuracy, Authenticity, Grounded in Fact, Pomposity, Over-inflated, Immodest, Pretentious, Superficial, Vanity.

Interpretation: After reaping the benefits of a great harvest, we should be careful to avoid feelings of self satisfaction. Thus after a time of Great Harvest, Modesty follows.

It is the way of mankind to dislike the full and favour the modest, to seek always to undermine the bully and encourage the weak to triumph over their adversity, to mistrust the boastful and favour the humble. Modesty is thus seen as the more noble path and unerringly guides us to our proper end. Similarly, it is a universal law that what is full shall be made empty and what is empty shall be filled up. This is the principle of the reduction of extremes, and the tendency always towards a middle path.

In human terms this means we should always root out pride and complication. We should always keep our words, our thoughts, our deeds simple. This may not in itself bring about a conclusion to things but it will open other doors, other directions that we may fruitfully follow to a proper conclusion .

Modesty is understanding one's position in relation to the workings of the universe, the weaving of one's own path in relation to that of others. Having a mind for the validity of the paths of others in seeking one's own direction is a sure method for not losing our way. When something is said to be

right - an idea, a direction, an action - yet it denies the path of others, it is not right. It is a mistake. Only if something universally affirms the whole of creation can it be said to be true.

One here should be wary of becoming too self important, for self importance is like the mountain, proud and jutting and time will wear us down if we do not take steps to correct ourselves. The mountain mirrors deficiencies in our character which can be likened to the emptiness of the valleys at the mountain's base. By wearing down the mountain, we fill up our character. The aim is to achieve a featureless plain, in a metaphorical sense, a character that is void of all ostentation.

Immodesty can take many forms besides that of self importance. It could mean that we are not being strictly sincere in following what is right. We might be hoping that by going through the motions of proper behaviour and self development we might attain some sort of special recognition or a material reward. But true modesty is doing what is right for its own sake, whether it leads to reward or not.

Appended Lines

001000 1) One should not allow a proud and blustering attitude to make things more complicated than they really are. Making a lot of fuss, not approaching a task or a problem with quiet modesty, but declaring everything with a fanfare can only invite unnecessary attention and possible contention. Our direction here is correct, but a task is more easily accomplished if it is approached from a simple and unassuming point of view. It is modesty that gives rise to such a frame of mind.

True modesty brings its own rewards and one should never seek nor expect recognition for one's actions. Neither does true modesty rush forward to offer its services.

001000 2) When innate modesty expresses itself in our outer nature, it creates a sympathetic resonance in our surroundings and those people or things in harmony with us

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will respond - though they might remain hidden from our view. Conversely, being immodest arouses only enmity and false calls will remain unanswered. Only by remaining modest in our nature do we enable the way to open.

001000 3) Great achievements give rise to prominence. This can test us dearly, for if we become dazzled by our own prominence, by our own prowess in a chosen field, then criticism will surely follow and difficulties arise thereafter. The aim is to remain modest, in spite of one's merit.

Even though much might have been gained, this is not the time to sit back and relax our guard. Further progress can be halted by luxuriating in our gains.

001000 4) Modest action means working without selfishness. We should reach out to those below and carry those above in equal measure. Modest action is seeking always the less complicated solution and not holding on to one's own ideas out of selfish pride. If this can be achieved everything will benefit and the way will remain open.

Regarding the inner world, this can be interpreted as meaning that one should seek the middle path, neither indulging one's inferior side and luxuriating in one's achievements, nor pursuing the correct path too energetically out of a desire to reach some imagined goal of inner perfection.

001000 5) Modesty should not be carried so far that one's merits are deliberately hidden. Things do not always find their best course while remaining too tightly in check. Having the confidence to impose a direction can open the way, but in stating our position, we must not overstep the mark and appear immodest. There is a world of difference between someone who is quietly assertive in establishing the boundaries of what they are and are not willing to do, and someone who is openly aggressive.

001000 6) A person who is sincere and modest is not afraid to let it show, for only through displaying genuine openness and sincerity can others eventually gain confidence and move with you. If we are genuinely modest we are not afraid to examine ourselves for signs of inner opposition to our path.

Michael Graeme

Then, with modesty we might discipline our ego, marshalling our inner resources against our selves.

Proceeding with such energy might be fitting, but here we are at the outer extremity of what is attainable and should not be too ambitious in our objectives.

15-150707

16

000100

Delight

**Enthusiasm
Being Ready**

Keywords: Enthusiasm, Readiness, Exuberance, Zest, Joy, Happiness, Spontaneity, Harmony, Resonance, Preparedness, Divining the Way, Line of Least Resistance, Auspicious moment, Inspiration, Self-indulgence, Delusion.

Interpretation: Possession of a great harvest while remaining humble enables us to divine the Way. Possession of a great harvest while remaining humble enables us to follow the way with enthusiasm, and in safety.

Here we may be in the position of following a line of thought or a particular path because we have been granted a special insight which allows us to sense that it is correct - or we may be deluded, following a path dictated by our ego. If this hexagram appears without appended lines, it may be read as general counsel on how we can go about deciding on the truth of the matter. In order to see clearly, we must begin with a careful examination of our own motives.

Delight or enthusiasm needs to come from a strong inner sense of what is right if we are to avoid being waylaid by the perils of delusion. If our enthusiasm for something springs from an egotistical desire to overcome a problem at all costs, or merely in order to be seen to be successful, or prosperous, or clever, then naturally our satisfaction cannot last.

Only by understanding what is in harmony with nature can we have confidence that our delight, our enthusiasm, is not misplaced. To tread the path of true delight and proper enthusiasm, we must be capable of divining the path of least resistance and be naturally able to avoid entanglement with extremes. Only those ideas or thoughts, or laws that are

founded in natural harmony can be driven through. Anything violating this principle will meet with resistance and fail.

An enthusiastic and delighted mood is helpful in carrying us through to success, but over-enthusiasm can cause self satisfaction which in turn leads to misfortune. Move smoothly with the flow of things. Beware of forcing a direction, of letting the ego bear too great an influence.

Inspiration can carry us through to a deeper understanding of the true nature of things, but the source should have the feeling of coming from somewhere else, something slipped in and strangely plausible, rather than something beaten and wrestled into shape by force of reason.

Appended Lines

000100 1) Ego should never be allowed a free hand in driving our enthusiasm. It is a powerful source, but over reliance upon it will lead to an exhaustion of our inner strength. In the generation of ideas or the search for inspiration we should be wary of the source and strive always to remain in harmony with nature.

000100 2) We safely pursue a particular path, a particular line of thought or reasoning only up to the point when we sense in ourselves the first stirrings of emotional involvement. Suddenly we find we are no longer detached and willing to flow with the times. We experience feelings of doubt, restlessness and excessive enthusiasm to make way, to show some visible signs of progress.

Then we must withdraw.

000100 3) In failing to divine that our inspiration is misguided, we can easily wallow in inappropriate delight, or waste time following a line of thought with inappropriate enthusiasm. Only through timely recognition can we avoid misfortune. Equally, scepticism of an idea or inspiration from a reliable source can lead one to delay. Either way, our inferior self is in control here, perhaps even looking to fate to provide us with the solution to our spiral of doubt and conflict.

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The only way to end this is to disengage, to accept that we cannot solve things by force of reason.

000100 4) When the way to the source of true inspiration opens, things seem heaven sent and a wise man knows they may be relied upon. But suspicion or scepticism will cause the way to close.

Sometimes it does not do to hesitate.

5) The way to the source is obstructed. There is disquiet, anxiety, isolation. We may seek the source but lack the tranquillity of mind to divine the way. Ego runs wild and knocks us off balance. In such circumstances, there is no alternative other than to disengage and remain persevering in our faith that things will work out best if we leave them alone.

We should look upon our troubled heart as a warning that we are not on the right lines, that we should look to correct ourselves by trying to adopt the cosmic perspective.

6) A delusion must sometimes run its course before a man can see it for what it is. An awakening from such false enthusiasm then enables a fresh approach.

16-150707

17

100110

Following The Quest

Keywords: Searching, Seeking, Sensing, Stalking, Attraction, Being Drawn, Adhering, Complying, Following, Submitting.

Interpretation: When we are humble and full of delight, and our enthusiasm is not misplaced, we invoke a following. All things resonate in harmony and we know the path that reveals itself can be relied upon. So after Enthusiasm comes Following.

Following describes our situation as a natural state of being drawn forward. One in this position should yield to the path that is opening. In a situation as full of potential as this we must also be mindful of the need to remain receptive and be humble enough to adapt to the needs of the time. This way we remain in harmony and achieve an ongoing resonance in the world as something new emerges. Resistance to the way as it unfolds will only lead to exhaustion.

Following what we believe is correct within ourselves, we align ourselves with an inner truth. In this sense we serve the cosmos and rely upon it to guide us, like one navigating unknown waters, but who does so in confidence using the inner stars to plot a course, since their positions remain constant and true no matter what the circumstances.

Equally, losing sight of the inner stars, no longer considering the inner truth of the matter, we lose our way.

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Appended Lines

100110 1) What is emerging calls for changes in our expectations, our attitudes, our ideas. In order to benefit from the new we must jettison the past. This means remaining open to new things, it means remaining tolerant of other people even though they might not be guided by the highest of principles themselves. However, maintaining an open attitude does not require us to abandon our own sense of what is right. We must be receptive to situations without being pulled from our course.

100110 2) Not following what is best and highest in ourselves we cannot expect to realise our highest potential. If we allow the inner child to dominate our affairs we cannot expect to make our way in an adult world. If the way ahead seems to promise only modest gains, holding out for bigger opportunities will lead nowhere, if this is not an option that is open to us. Choosing what at first sight appears to be the lesser path may yield unexpected benefits and allow us to journey further than we think.

100110 3) There comes a time when we can no longer look to the old ways by which we obtained our pleasures and satisfactions. If we follow what is inferior and superficial, our satisfaction is likely to be of only fleeting duration. Thus when we are presented with a potent connection, it is proper to take this path and to sever ties with past roads that have yielded little. Making the right choice means breaking with the past and letting it die. Here we should not resist the path that is opening for it leads us to our destiny.

100110 4) Following the right path invites success and with it also the danger that we might be waylaid by inferior motives. Only when we are free from the influence of our ego can we keep an eye on what is right, and stay on the path. Harmony with the way is all that is required, while conscious effort will blind us to its subtleties.

Trying too hard, turning the search for what is right into a hunt, will cause the way to close.

Michael Graeme

100110 5) One here is sincere in following the principles of inner truth. We have made the essential connection and the way is open. There is a resonance with higher things.

100110 6) Here we are firmly rooted in the principles we follows so in tune with the way we leave behind the turmoil of the world. At such times there is a feeling of great peace and oneness. Here the way speaks through our heart and following it we need never fear going astray.

The right path, the right deed, the right thing to say comes to us precisely at the time we need it, as if there is someone watching over us, or as if we are acting as a conduit for something greater than ourselves that dwells within us.

17-150707

18

011001

Decay

Poison

Renovation

Work on what has been spoiled

Keywords: Obsession, Narrow minded, Dogmatism, Degeneration, Old Fashioned, Outmoded, Rotten, Decaying, Spoiled, Poisonous, Corrupt, Renovation, Breath of Fresh Air, Cleaning Out, Bringing up to Date, Responding to change, Cutting Back to the Core, Purging.

Interpretation: When we follow something with a sense of enthusiasm, we may sometimes forget to ask what is right, or we may become careless and allow corrupt influences to assert themselves. So, after Following comes Renovation.

Here we are counselled that we have reached a stage where our ideas or beliefs or our assumptions about the way things work are no longer suitable for the prevailing situation. This is not our fault. We have not wilfully adopted false ideas, nor been neglectful in our approach, but the times have changed. If we are engaged in worldly affairs this is only to be expected for things change and what was once an accepted practice or course to follow eventually becomes outmoded or corrupt. The best we can do is realise this when the time comes, understand the source of corruption and allow it to rot away, to disintegrate, to shed back to the barest of essentials. Only then can we put things right.

In essence what we must understand here is that the approach we were previously accustomed to adopting, though perfectly adequate before, is no longer appropriate for dealing with the

circumstances that now prevail. Times change and we must move with them.

When something is no longer useful, we have to let it go. When the fruit is spoiled, it can no longer be relied upon to provide nourishment,... more likely it will cause us some discomfort. It is better, therefore, to discard it.

Now is the time to rid ourselves of all that was wrong, to let go of the past. If we cannot accept this, we cannot follow our true path. It is necessary to lead our own life, to follow our own fate and in this respect, even the way of life laid down by our own family may no longer be valid for the times we find ourselves in.

When renewing our approach to life, we must begin with the proper attitude. Jumping in and changing things without forethought is as likely to lead to disaster as doing nothing at all. Before starting therefore we must think carefully about what we are going to do, and after taking action we must reflect.

It takes time to feel the effects of a change of course, and still more time to understand if the course is true or false. We have to be decisive and energetic in dealing with decay, in contrast to the indifference that has allowed the decay to begin in the first place.

Appended Lines

011001 1) Following too rigidly the way of life laid down by our forebears, or clinging to outmoded ideas of tradition or corrupt authority has resulted in decay, but this can be put right. In bringing about a remedy we must not take too easy an attitude, but act with energy. There is no sense in apportioning blame. This is just a waste of energy. Times change. What was deemed right before may no longer be fitting for the present moment. One here must have the courage to move on.

011001 2) What has provided us with nourishment and care in the past has ultimately proved itself to be misguided or corrupt. But we must take care in rejecting what has nurtured

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us. In rejecting it too forcefully, we reject also a part of ourselves and such wounds as these cut unnecessarily deep. In setting things right therefore, we must not be too forthright, but keep to the middle path, being neither too assertive nor too weak in bringing about change.

The way we were brought up and cared for makes a deep impression and changes can be painful. It can do more harm than good if we react too harshly.

011001 3) At this stage, when resolving a corrupt situation, it is better to act with more energy than is perhaps truly necessary - better to exaggerate the problem and act in view of this, even though one might overshoot the mark and cause resentment.

011001 4) One here is too weak to undertake the measures necessary in overcoming what has been spoiled. The decay that has its roots in the past may only just be making its presence felt. Change is possible, but through weakness things are being allowed to run their course. Old traditions are rigidly adhered to, corrupt authority is tolerated.

The way will close.

011001 5) Tackling the cause of corruption head on may prove futile or even damaging if the source is too powerful. It may also prove to be unbalancing if the threads of what is corrupt are too intimately entwined with our lives. What is corrupt might be limiting our potential but it may also be providing us with support, say in the case of a job or a government. Here therefore, we must be gentle. We must give due credit for what is good, while identifying what is bad. We must also be realistic about our position and pragmatic in our approach. The branch of the tree upon which we are sitting might well be rotten, but it currently supports our weight and it would be unwise to cut it off while we are still sitting on it.

A subtle manner will yield better results than aggressive and open confrontation - not that we should resort to subterfuge. It is incumbent upon each of us to recognise when something is incorrect and withdraw our support, for we should never

feel obliged to partake of something that runs contrary to our nature.

Failure to turn away when we know something is wrong reveals an inner weakness. If we can recognise the truth of this within ourselves and act accordingly then we are most likely on the correct path.

011001 6) It is not everyone's place to get involved in righting the wrongs of the world by direct involvement in the fray. One here is better placed to steer clear of the situation altogether and instead to rise above it. Whenever we serve another, we lack the independence to be completely true to ourselves but we must nevertheless withdraw sufficiently in order to protect what is good in ourselves from the reach of others who would seek to tarnish it.

Our task here is to listen to the inner voice, to seek a meeting with our self, to connect with our own higher nature. This might not bring about any visible changes in our circumstances, and our inner worth might never be visible to those around us, or to those we serve. However, by such actions we honour both ourselves and the cosmos by simply holding to what is correct, by nurturing what is good and noble in the human spirit.

18-150707

19

110000

Approaching Greatness

Nearing

Taking Command

Keywords: Progress, Advance, Move Forward, Engage, Assume the Initiative, Approach, Get on, Seek Involvement, Set to Work, Auspicious Moment, Strike While The Iron is Hot, Anticipating reward, Snatching, Labouring our advantage.

Interpretation: When many things have happened, when there has been a great harvest and enthusiasm, when wrong turns have been taken, and righted again, when things have gone wrong and been put right again, when we have allowed decay to set in and yet successfully managed a renovation - only then might we begin to approach greatness. So, after Remedying, or Renovation, Approaching Greatness follows.

Approaching Greatness describes a time of progress, a time of nearing greatness, a time like spring when there is joy at the thought of Summer's richness to come. There is the potential to gain much from what approaches, or from what we are nearing. We should move forward to embrace the spirit of the times, but without thought for what we might immediately gain.

Trying to rush things, aiming to snatch what we believe we need will be to cut ourselves off from the spirit of the times, to deviate from the way. Also Spring does not last forever. Because we have come this far it does not mean that we have earned the right to such good times for ever. We must always look to the process of inner development and this includes appreciating that all things change and that the time to take advantage of the season will eventually pass. Therefore we

should be prepared for a closing of the way and not labour our advantage for too long.

In relationships between people the time of Approaching Greatness refers to the selfless provision of what is needed. It is the giving of care, the nourishing, the interest in seeing others grow and develop in their own way. In showing compassion and concern for humanity, we practice the way of overseeing, of caring for those who approach us.

Appended Lines

110000 1) In the beginning of the time of Approach, the parts that belong together, but were previously separated, now approach one another to form a whole once more. We find stimulation and inspiration in such a union, but we must be cautious and for ever caring or the fragility of the beginning will be our undoing.

110000 2) Understanding the transience of the times, knowing that the way of Approach will eventually close, we may be tempted to hold back. However, this would be a mistake and provided we approach with the right attitude of openness and caring, there is nothing that would not benefit from this connection.

What is sent to meet with us from the Creative at this time does so with a purpose and to keep ourselves in reserve would be to miss a vital connection.

110000 3) What is approaching may seem attractive, yet even so we feel anxious. What we contemplate might seem to fit comfortably with our ideas, yet we harbour doubts. Perhaps we know instinctively it is not right. If this is so, there is still a chance we might realise our mistake in time and not come to any harm.

Another way of seeing this is that things are already established and faring well, but in this there lies the danger that we may relax our guard and become careless, allowing misguided thoughts to creep in. Again if we suspect this is the case and we are already anxious about it, we can take

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steps to put things right in time before the thoughts or words or actions we are contemplating cause any damage.

Above all the message here is to be wary of assuming too casual an approach to something. We must be careful and not let the ease with which the perceived solution seems to fit the circumstances render us blind to its shortcomings

110000 4) When the time of approach reaches a climax, we should not hold back because the potential rewards are too great to be ignored. Recognising that our path lies in this direction, we should proceed with vigour. But, as always, in dealing with things or people we should keep an open mind, and maintain an attitude of care, in particular understanding the freedom of others to realise their own path. We should not attempt to subvert anyone else's path in order to serve our own. If we do, we will surely lose the way.

110000 5) Here there is wisdom in the way we deal with what or who it is that approaches us, a knowledge at play in what we seek, or in those we encourage to approach. One here is happy to trust in the unknown and allow things to develop of their own accord instead of seeking to dominate by forcing or blocking the natural dynamics of the situation. Be assured this attitude is correct.

110000 6) Generosity, and the power of wisdom enters one's life through connection with what approaches. When this happens, we should safeguard our way by likewise maintaining a spirit of generosity and magnanimity which we demonstrate by an utter lack of impatience for the shortcomings of others.

19-150707

20

000011

Contemplation

Discerning the hidden meaning

Gaining the right perspective

Keywords: Contemplate, Study, Seeing the Wood for the Trees, Detachment, Examine, Watching, Gain a Perspective, Paradigm, Mind-set, Understanding, Viewpoint.

Interpretation: After benefiting from the time of Approach and things have become great, there is a need for careful attention, a need for contemplating the roads that have brought us this far. Thus after Approach there follows the time of Contemplation.

Contemplation describes a situation of looking, of observing without acting in order to acquire the right perspective. It is seeing the big picture with a sense of detachment, waiting in perfect stillness like the heron in the lakeside reeds, waiting for things to emerge. It is divining the essential meaning in what we see. Careful contemplation and examination will bring the required insight. Then the way will open and carry us through.

From the detached perspective of the mountain top, we can clearly see the routes we followed to reach this point. Also the future directions we can take become visible.

The suggestion is that of a moment of crucial insight that we might learn from if only we can grasp its meaning. We must remain open and free of blinding emotion and ambition. The way that is right may not be the one we want to see and so it will remain hidden from us like the lesser trodden way that falls into disuse, while the more frequented paths stand out.

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Fate is at work here. If we are properly receptive, then there is much we can learn from this situation that will ultimately guide us further along our path.

Appended Lines

000011 1) One looks, one observes, but one does not see nor yet understand. If we were wiser we might discern the early signs of trouble ahead. However, viewing things as we do, through the eyes of a child, we see no cause for concern.

If we are content to go on living in a child's world, such a lack of insight might not be of much importance. However, we cannot hope to discern the crucial wisdom underlying any given situation until we begin viewing it through the eyes of someone older and wiser.

000011 2) When our breadth of vision is limited by a subjective attitude, by relating everything back to ourselves, our understanding is likewise narrowed. Perhaps because we have been conscientious in improving ourselves we feel we should be making faster progress. But here we are reminded that work on self improvement is never wasted and while visible progress might be lacking we must have faith in the value of our progress so far, even though that progress might remain largely hidden from view.

Here we must remain open and receptive if we hope to clearly discern the way.

000011 3) If we can overcome the egotism of relating our vision entirely to our selves, we may safely turn inward and truly contemplate our self and our life. This is not to become preoccupied with our thoughts, our dreams, or our selves but to examine the effect we have in the wider world and on the lives of others. Through this we might gain an understanding of what our life is and what steps we should take to improve it.

We should look back at the paths we have taken and try to discern the effect they have had on our life thus far, whether they be good or bad, and choose the way ahead accordingly.

The path we take, whether it be to advance towards new horizons or retreat back towards safer ground should be chosen in accordance with the needs of our own life, not through convention, the coercion of others, nor the pressure to conform.

We should be able to see our purpose and follow our heart, without worrying about the time it takes to make progress, confident in the fact that all things will turn out exactly as they should, if we put our faith in the unknown.

000011 4) In recognising the opening of the way, we might anticipate the richness of the rewards to follow, but it is wise to remain cautious, like a traveller in a foreign land. If our instincts are to be trusted, the way might indeed prove rewarding, but its direction and purpose are not yet clear enough to be followed boldly.

Remember, we are in this for the long term. We must mind our manners, or the way will close.

000011 5) In examining ourselves, it is wise to view with some detachment the effect our deeds and our words have on others, or to contemplate the ideas we generate and what effects these have in the wider world. By viewing such effects, by contemplating the waves we make, we can judge the correctness of our approach.

000011 6) Only when our life is liberated from the effects of the ego can we truly contemplate the laws of life. It is a wise person who looks to the results of their actions in order to steer their path, but it is a noble person who considers whether or not their actions are correct and free from evil.

The wise who seek to prosper may look to make their mark upon the world, while the noble concern themselves more with the correctness of their actions and the avoidance of injury to others, rather than with the completion of great and visible works.

20-150707

21

100101

Closing Together

Biting Through

Eradicating an Obstruction

Keywords: Force, Bite, Cut through, Tear apart, Tear down, Decisive action, Break open, Stop mucking about.

Interpretation: When things are worth looking at more closely, we contemplate them and as we do so the various elements comprising the focus of our attention are gradually drawn together. Only when things can be seen in their entirety is there a possibility of making sense of a situation, only when the true nature of a problem is revealed is there a chance of overcoming it.

Before things can come together, obstructions must be surmounted. These obstructions take the form of gaps or discontinuities in what we see and they prevent things from coming together as a coherent whole. Creative inspiration requires the bringing together of ideas and energy, but hidden discontinuities prevent a union of these various elements and this prevents us from expressing ourselves properly. By focusing upon matters, they are brought together and consolidated. Then things can work in harmony and go smoothly.

Obstructions, or the gaps we seek, hide under obsolete matter, under the ordinariness of life. So, we must bite away what is no longer essential and work towards the vital core of things. This can be an uncomfortable process because, through such an undertaking, we are forced to look more closely at our selves. What appears real and necessary to

life may, on closer inspection, turn out to be an illusion. Old ways followed out of habit can hide the vital link we need in order to advance.

If we are seeking to come together with the powers of the cosmos in order to attain unity, yet feel ourselves hindered in some way, then the obstruction is likely to be something in our selves - an attitude, a belief, a prejudice that is hindering our understanding. Only by recognising that the problem lies inside of us do we stand a chance of overcoming it.

Generally speaking in order to advance we need a source of nourishment - the power of the unknown - but it is as if we have an obstruction between our jaws, preventing us from biting down on the source. Because we cannot bite down upon it, we do not receive its nourishment and are therefore prevented from seeing a vision of the truth.

The obstruction is some part of our nature - an attitude that is not correct, a view that is distorted. But once we recognise the problem we must resist the urge to forcefully eradicate it, for this will only make matters worse. Instead we must regain our sense of trust in the ability of things to work themselves out for the best, and we demonstrate this trust by withdrawing from the problem altogether.

There is a suggestion that we may have been engaged in contemplating the subject of this enquiry for a long time, as if searching for the essential piece of information, the last piece of the puzzle in order that everything might be revealed. But everything we need to know has already been revealed to us. The time for contemplation is over. So long as we remain actively engaged in seeking a solution here, we will not find it.

There are times when we seek something so avidly, we cannot see it, even if it is right under our nose. We become blind to it. Here we must allow the mystery of the unknown the time and freedom to act, then we might eventually gain a higher perspective and transcend matters.

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Like a box of treasures bound by rope and secured with a fiendish knot, the surest way to see the contents of the box is not by persevering stubbornly with the knot, for the knot is not the issue and may simply be cut off.

Appended Lines

100101 1) Adherence to the prevailing view or to the whims of fashion serve only to restrict our freedom - freedom to move and to think. If we hope to advance, we must find our own way, think our own thoughts. It does not matter at this time if we follow a course that leads us into a dead end. The most important thing is that we learn from making our own mistakes.

100101 2) In seeking the core of things, we must bite deep, penetrating below the surface of the every day and the commonplace. In doing this, there is no harm if we are overcome by enthusiasm and look at things too deeply. The important thing is to shatter our preconceptions, to free our mind.

100101 3) When biting through obstacles, we sometimes encounter issues from the past that may be difficult to deal with. But once exposed, such things cannot be brushed back under the carpet. Ignoring them will only perpetuate the problem. They must be dealt with head on, for only then might they be transcended. Now is the time to do this.

100101 4) When the obstacles that prevent things coming together are stubborn, or when we discover there is more to a situation than we first supposed, great effort is required in overcoming things. The road may seem unrelentingly hard but we must be tenacious, firm and straight - not doubting our purpose. Then the way will open.

100101 5) Tenaciously biting through to the very core of matters, we can unlock secrets and release ghosts from the past. Confronting our shadow can bring the root of our difficulties into the light of day. Only by facing such

dangers can we put things right. Only by taking action can we make a difference.

100101 6) When we are seriously stuck in old ways, it can be difficult to face up to things, or even to recognise the impasse we are in. Following tired routines without remembering why is an ineffective way of conducting our life. We see only what we expect to see, hear only what we expect to hear. How then can there be any progress? The knot defeats us. It renders us tired and confused. We have not yet realised that easiest way to deal with the knot is to cut it off.

One here should try looking at things another way.

21-150707

22

101001

Elegance

Adorning

Grace

Coming into bloom

Bringing home the bride

Keywords: Decoration, Enhancement, Adorning, Honouring, Refinement, Public show, Pomp, Ceremony, Beauty, Reflecting inner worth, Embellish, Elaborate, Fussiness, Superficiality, Overdone, Putting on airs, Illusion.

Interpretation: Following the successful eradication of an obstruction, things are brought together, but the matter cannot simply be left at that. The elimination of obstruction enables what is right to prosper and advance. Obstruction is eliminated when we understand the underlying truth of the matter. What follows is right, and this must be adorned in some way if it is to remain well ordered and pleasing.

Proper adornment enables the underlying order to shine through and helps it to resist the natural tendency of things to fall back into a state of chaos. But form and essence should always complement one another. Thus beauty of form becomes an expression of the deeper order and the underlying value of things.

Beauty is an expression of life's essential energy. True adornment is not the putting on of appearances, nor intervening in matters out of a sense of our self importance. Adornment that lacks any genuine foundation is vanity and

then the more ornament that is put on serves only to make more obvious the ugliness that lies within.

To let our worth be visible, we should be brilliant, we should beautify and embellish for only through the beauty of our works can others glimpse the value of our thoughts and the pureness of our hearts. But adornment is not the essential thing and we have to guard against covering shallowness with a glittering façade. Adornment must be driven by essence and it is the essence that is the underlying power. We cannot change the essence by merely altering the way it is decorated.

True grace is simplicity, it is acceptance of the mystery of the unknown to bring about the right conclusion to things. Therefore finding ourselves here indicates we may be thinking of intervening in a situation out of an inflated sense of our own importance, or as a result of external pressures from circumstances or people to which or to whom we might feel obligated - therefore the hexagram can be read as a warning because it indicates our emotions are engaged and this renders us incapable of acting in a balanced manner. Conversely, we may have stepped back from the brink and accepted the need to allow events to unfold without our interference or emotional involvement, in which case the hexagram can be read as an affirmation of our actions.

If the enquiry concerns our contemplating the words or the achievements of others, the hexagram can be read as a warning that all may not be quite as it seems and we should therefore tread carefully.

In a general sense, the hexagram can refer to the opening of a new phase in our lives. It suggests a vital connection, a contact, an encounter with something that has the power to transform our view of things and transform our lives. In this sense, adorning can be likened to the decoration and the ritual splendour of a wedding procession where adornment is used to underline the importance of the occasion.

If on reflection it is believed that the latter is the context of the enquiry, then one here has made an important

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connection. If we can celebrate it, if we can ritualise the occasion, paint it's picture, describe it's essence in prose or poetry, if we can show our prize to the world with pride, then such effort can only help in bringing things into focus or to fruition. The wise groom honours his bride by the marriage ceremony, and takes care over the quality and the detail of the decoration and ritual forms. This way he is more certain of bringing her home in a frame of mind that is conducive towards intimacy.

Appended Lines

101001 1) What comes from the depths of our own mind - our own thoughts, our own feelings, our own work - is an expression of our inner worth, an illustration of the state of our being. It is the adornment that expresses our personal essence. Therefore we should be wary of relying too much on the thoughts or the works of others in order to assist in the adorning of our self. Adornment should borrow nothing from others especially if we seek to speed our way by associating ourselves with their perceived brilliance.

The bride will not be impressed if all the decorations for her procession are second-hand - no matter how impressive they might otherwise seem

The hexagram also refers to the employment of immodest means in order to make more progress than would normally be feasible. This can mean believing ourselves to be brilliant in the analysis of a problem when instead we should accept that we simply don't know the answer and should be more trusting that time will reveal what we need, when we need it.

Trusting in the mystery of the unknown to bring about a required solution is to adopt a position of humility with regard to the cosmos. It is to walk the way like a humble pilgrim, rather than to adopt the airs of a prince speeding along in his carriage.

If this connection is the right one for us, if our bride is noble and true, then she will respect us all the more for

maintaining our independence, no matter how humble our means, than for putting on a pretentious show.

101001 2) The outward appearance of something should be an attribute of its inner content. Lavishing care on adornment for its own sake without considering the essential content betrays a concern more for what others might think of us - what we do or say, or how we appear - rather than for the essential truth of things.

Likewise one here might be viewing someone else with due regard only to their appearances, without pausing to consider their genuine nature. This would certainly be the case if we were aroused for example by the sight of an attractive person while being blinded to the fact that their actions have been less than worthy.

Yet another way of looking at this is that we might be more concerned about attaining a particular goal without due regard for how we go about it. To the Book of Changes, it is far more important that we maintain a correct attitude while we go about matters than it is to actually achieve anything.

Our achievements are not to be regarded as milestones along the way, for if we neglect the business of maintaining a correct attitude, we shall not remain on the way for very long. It is our attitude that is the essential matter here, not the goal we have in mind.

101001 3) We do not allow ourselves to become drunk on the sweet wine of beautiful form, but maintain a middle path, attending to both inner essence and outer adornment. This enables us to take advantage of the time without losing our way.

The subject of this enquiry is an important connection, be it a person, a thought, an event or an idea. We should not be suspicious. We should not try to hold ourselves in reserve. Instead, if we can close with it, if we can bring home our bride, we can expect a fruitful union.

101001 4) Sincerity reveals our true nature more than a false show. We should always be our self in word and deed.

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Only then can those we seek to influence respond. What seems modest and sincere is more believable than an ostentatious show. If we pretend to be something we are not, we may attract the wrong kind of attention.

When we are open, what we encounter at such a time as this is not to be mistrusted. Even though the bride be dark eyed and sultry, she sees our worth and seeks not to corrupt us. If we can only have the trust to embrace her, she will bring us happiness and insight.

101001 5) We must always be ourselves, do the things, follow the patterns that we each find pleasing without thought for what we might immediately gain. Even when we feel we have little to offer, provided we act sincerely, there is no harm. If we can decrease the influence of the ego in what we do and say, then things are more likely to respond.

In a similar way we can view this connection as something that can be relied upon, even though we cannot immediately see what the future potential might be. If we can proceed in the direction that seems to be calling us, then the way will open.

101001 6) When in doubt, we should always err on the side of simplicity in adornment because the true value of something can be hidden by lavish decoration. Therefore we should stick to the essentials and let form bring out the authentic value of the essence in full. Perfect elegance consists not in lavish ornamentation but in the essential fitness of its form.

22-150707

23

000001

Splitting Apart

Stripping

Falling Away

Keywords: Cut back, Rethink, Strip away, See through the veneer, Back to basics, Remove the trimmings. Be yourself.

Interpretation: When elegance is overdone, things are no longer beautiful. Outer appearance no longer reflects the truth of what lies within. There is ostentation. What was once beautiful falls away and becomes ugly.

Inferior elements, bad ideas or low motives gain strength and there is a decline of fortune, a subversion of our potential to advance. Thoughts become old fashioned or tired. Habits no longer carry any meaning.

Finding ourselves here means we must look hard at things and cut back to the essential truth underlying matters. We must seek the core where we might still find value. The base on which we stand is worn too thin and in danger of collapse. The way has been lost for now.

Do not pursue answers in this direction any longer and instead remain quiet. Try to embrace once more the eternal mystery, the inner truth of matters and time for what is corrupt, for what is passed, for what is dead, to fall away. We have lost our direction. Peel back what is not essential, without thinking about what we might immediately gain.

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Falling Away is the function of a natural waxing and waning, an alternation between fullness and emptiness. Finding ourselves here is therefore not a judgement on our character, but all the same we must submit ourselves to fate and await more favourable circumstance.

We often find ourselves here when we lose our faith in the ability of things to work themselves out. We feel we have to intervene in order to avoid an outcome that we believe will disadvantage us in some way. Thus we are lured from our path, and we must accept our error, if we ever hope to regain our proper direction. If we set out to take action, or if we seriously contemplate what we might do in order to change things for our own benefit, then we lose our trust and we lose our path - we split off in another direction, a direction that is not correct.

We need not always read this to mean that it is we who have lost our way. Depending on the nature of the enquiry, the hexagram can also mean that we have regained our path having previously split from it some time ago, or it can refer to others we may be thinking of - the suggestion being that it is they who have split from their path.

Appended Lines

000001 1) Falling away has begun. We sense the onset of less favourable times and begin to doubt even those elements that are worthy. The fundamental thing we stand for, the foundations on which we base our ideas needs to be exposed, our underpinning definitions rethought for they no longer support our aims. We need to shift our ground.

The situation promises nothing, and we can only wait to see how things develop from here. Awareness of the waning of fortune is our only advantage for then we can begin the path of self correction which involves returning to a state of perseverance, simplicity and trust in the ability of things to work themselves out.

000001 2) The weakness of the situation grows, threatening the very foundation of our ideas. There is nothing to be done but submit. One here lacks wise counsel and is

isolated. Pressing on stubbornly with this path, as if there was nothing wrong can lead only to our downfall. Maintaining an awareness of the situation is our only advantage. We must absolutely disengage from the matter and not seek further counsel for now. Persistence in trying to understand matters in this direction will only serve to make things worse.

000001 3) One here recognises the source of weakness and moves to distance himself from it, seeing instead the virtue of that which is right, or true. One is thus in a position to impose a direction on things, to cut to the core of what is right.

101001 4) The situation worsens. The very essence of our thoughts, our position, our motives, is overcome by the weakness that now pervades things. There is nothing to be done, no meaning, no purpose in pursuing this course any longer. We need to look beyond our present situation, seek new ideas, fresh inspiration, fresh meaning.

101001 5) Here, through returning to an attitude of modesty, innocence and sincerity, the inferior elements within us become pliable. They may be shaped to our will, brought into submission, arranged in such a way that they support, rather than undermine our position.

101001 6) The time of weakness is passing. All seems to have decayed away to nothing. If we are weak in spirit we might be forgiven for only seeing the destruction of what once existed, but if we can be strong it is possible to grasp the remaining seed, to embrace the imperishable core from which can spring new growth.

23-150707

24

100000

Return

Turning Back

Keywords: Coming home, Fresh hope, Fresh start, Power restored, Reunion, Recovery, Finding one's way, Natural cycles, Rebirth.

Interpretation: Things cannot exceed a natural limit, and all things have limits. Therefore, when this limit is reached, as in the waning of the moon, or in the disintegrative process of falling away, things turn back to their origins. The moon waxes bright, and the decay of winter gives way to the promise of fresh growth, of new opportunity and hope. Thus after a time of Falling Away comes Return.

The light returns but its coming is determined by natural principles alone and it cannot be forced by the desires of mankind. Though the brightness is anticipated, like the promise of springtime, it is better not to take advantage of the moment too soon, or the energy that is renewing itself may become exhausted by the premature demands placed upon it.

This returning energy allows us to reconnect with the source of our true path, for we have either left our path some time ago. Conversely, we might be contemplating something that threatens to take us away from our path and make us lose our way.

Receiving this hexagram may be read as the sudden realisation of our error, like the dawning light of day. The light returns and with it comes the power to advance. Hindrance is slipping away and, with gentleness, we can make way again. New opportunities present themselves and

enable a fresh direction to be taken - a way out of the darkness. Or it may be read a warning, that we are contemplating something that threatens our position.

Following blindly the same course can lead to a dead end, and we have to remain sensitive to the opportunities that present themselves. Sometimes we lose our way through blindness, through arrogance, the pressure to conform to the will of others, or through an emotional desire for something or someone.

Either way the time of Return is indicative of a period of transition, when our course changes, either back towards our proper path, or away from it.

Appended Lines

100000 1) Small diversions, or errors in following the way cannot be avoided. Even the most sure-footed will stumble from time to time. But we must be willing to return to the path without delay. Small errors in navigation, if left unchecked compound themselves and lead to a complete subversion of our course.

How do we know a mistake has been made? If we are sensitive and cautious then we can rely on our own intuition to guide us. In human affairs, waiting for the guidance of others is too late, as is the moment of regret, for by then we are hopelessly lost. Only by our intuition can the path be divined.

100000 2) A proud heart and a strong head are symptomatic of acute blindness and resistance to change. Turning back always requires a moment of decision, but here true strength comes through recognising the need to let go, by relinquishing our grip on things and appreciating the wisdom of what approaches.

100000 3) Restlessness and over-sensitivity results in a chopping and changing of direction, constantly turning from the way then sensing peril and turning back. Repeating errors like this tempts an adverse fate, but no harm will come if we can always turn back in time.

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100000 4) We must never be misled into following the ways of the world. The path of the multitude may not be the right one for us. Only by following our own judgement can we reliably avoid being led astray.

Not running with the herd can be a lonely position to adopt, but there are times when being alone is the only thing that can return us to ourselves.

100000 5) Through honesty and sincerity, we recognise our own faults and our mistakes. This makes it possible to take advantage of a new beginning. The gravity of our mistakes is not important, only our acceptance of them and our willingness to return. This opens the way.

100000 6) The opportunity to turn back, to regain our proper path has been missed. A poor attitude towards the world and a lack of sensitivity to the twists and turns of fate has allowed a mistaken way of thinking to persist. Labouring under such misconceptions, it does not further us to make any plans because whatever direction we choose now is unlikely to be the right one.

Delusions take many forms. Even if our reasons for not turning back seem rational, ignoring our feelings and our instincts inevitably leads to misfortune. Better to do nothing until the light and the certainty afforded by our higher nature returns.

24-150707

25

100111

Innocence Without Falsehood Disentangling

Keywords: Innocence, Disentangling, Sincerity, Good faith, Neutrality, Without guile, Open Mind, Openness, Hidden agendas, Falsehood, Deceit.

Interpretation: When a turning point has been reached and the way swings back towards its origins, there can be no falsehood, no lack of sincerity, no proceeding with guile for this at once entangles us in the myriad snares of the world, and as soon as the way has been found it will be lost again.

Without innocence our actions are caught up in a cycle of continuous mistakes and misdirection. We become short sighted and then every direction chosen is likely to be a mistake, leading us further and further from our goal. Without innocence we lose the protection of the unknown and risk an adverse fate.

Innocence is a natural state, free of guile, free of vanity, free of any egotistical emotion. To achieve a state of innocence our aims, our motivation, must always reflect an abiding trust in the unknown, in the ability of all things to work out for the best if we leave them alone.

Our aims cannot be directed in accordance with thoughts of what we might immediately gain, but on whether or not the outcome is likely to be correct, when viewed from the cosmic perspective - the perspective that affirms the rights of every being to become whatever it was created to be.

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That which is true is an affirmation of life in all its forms and colours and creeds. That which is true takes account of the myriad paths that interweave our own. Only through innocence do we further ourselves while subverting none.

To be innocent, we must take our direction from the heart, not the ways of the world, the whims of fashion, nor any emotional desire for gain or to be in control. Understanding all of this, we become disentangled from the confusion of the world and we glide more easily along our path.

Like a rabbit caught in a snare, the harder we strain, the tighter the noose shall bite. Yet if we only had the sense to relax, to try to gain a different perspective on the situation, we might more easily disentangle ourselves, slip the bonds that hold us fast, and run free.

Appended Lines

100111 1) Our will here is fulfilled provided we can maintain a balanced outlook and resist the temptation to contemplate taking defensive measures against what may not even happen. If we can do this, we remain true to our original innocence and the way that opens may be followed with confidence.

100111 2) If we can proceed without thoughts for what we might immediately gain, then we have adopted the correct attitude - that is concentrating on the immediate task and the business of keeping ourselves correct, rather than counting on a particular outcome.

This can also mean acting without worrying about a negative outcome. Provided we concentrate on keeping our actions innocent, the right outcome will follow as a matter of course. However, if we think ahead to the possible results we risk being pulled off balance by an emotional response, either good or bad. Then innocence is lost and with it our ability to act correctly.

Here we are counselled specifically that we should remain focused on the needs of the moment and on keeping our

actions correct, rather than contemplating the likely outcome.

100111 3) Even when we adopt a correct attitude, we might still fall foul of undeserved misfortune. We should not anticipate good or bad fortune, but merely do the best we can at any given time. Nor should we rely on the rules and conventions of man as guides for what is right because nature follows its own rules. If we are wise we are sensitive to this fact, and adapt ourselves according to the times.

If we are mired in convention, entangled in the perceived reality of the world then misfortune can weigh heavily upon us. But if we can view things from a cosmic perspective then even the most outrageous misfortune can become a vehicle for delivering renewed wisdom and strength.

100111 4) Here one remains without guile, regardless of the situation. Remaining true to our own nature, there is no danger of becoming entangled and losing our way. What we seek will come about.

100111 5) Here we enjoy the power of innocence and sincerity. However, we may be experiencing negative feelings that cause us to doubt the sureness of our course. We contemplate our life, our frailty when compared with the immensity of the cosmos. Perhaps, in a more tangible sense, we fear the onset of physical sickness, infirmity, or a debilitating malaise of the spirit. Perhaps we fear death.

Whatever the root of our fears, it is better not to deal with it directly, better not to try to understand or to analyse, but instead take strength in the sureness and the absolute certainty of our direction. If we can remain true to ourselves in this way, these feelings will pass and we will be left strengthened by the experience.

100111 6) One here is not needlessly entangled in the world. We act out of innocence and sincerity in all we do. However, there inevitably comes a time when, no matter what the strength of our virtue, we find the way is blocked and there is nothing we can do but wait.

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The time to act is not ripe. The way is closed for now and we have no choice but to await a new cycle. Pushing ahead in opposition to our fate only invites misfortune.

25-150707

26

111001

Great Accumulation

Keywords: Shepherd, Domesticate, Tame, Putting to good use, Restraint, Acting Wisely, Long term goals, Thinking ahead, Investing for the future, Banking gains, Disciplined approach.

Interpretation: Only when there is truthfulness and innocence is it possible to accumulate greatness. So, after a time of Innocence comes a time of Great Accumulation.

Successfully disentangling ourselves from the snares of the world, we find we have been granted certain insights into the real nature of things. Thus Great Accumulation describes a situation of possessing an idea, an inspiration or a creative energy of great value. There is also tremendous strength and potential but only when such energy is focused does it produce great power.

Possessing energy and strength, we might not appreciate the virtue of restraint and might be tempted into acting indiscriminately. This would be a mistake and would lead to a premature squandering of the potential now at hand. Instead, we should adopt an attitude of wise restraint. Conscious of our powers, we should pause and think how best they might be directed.

We must take this idea, this concept and use it as a means of imposing a certain direction on our life. What we have been granted is a view of the way ahead, as if the mists had parted from the mountain path and revealed the direction our life might take from here. Trust in this view for the long term rather than thinking of cashing it all in now for a moment of fame and glory.

Do not anticipate what short term gains there might be had, for insight such as this is too valuable a treasure to be measured in a narrow minded way. This is more an avenue

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to be nurtured, to be tended with care, like the rearing of small children or innocent beasts. Harnessing our life to it in this way will enable us to be drawn forwards with great power into an era of abundant nourishment.

It is correct to study and to trust in the words of those who have preceded us along this path. This sheds more light upon our situation and furthers our progress towards whatever it is we seek. Take what has been written down in past ages, what has been recorded and passed down the generations, and build upon it.

Appended Lines

111001 1) Do not make any premature advances in this regard. It might be tempting to forge ahead, encouraged by feelings of power and strength. However, we are more likely to meet with an immovable obstruction. Therefore we are better advised to wait. Matters are beyond the reasoning of the rational mind. Things must be allowed to become clearer before we can safely move on.

111001 2) One here appreciates the dangers of forging an advance too soon. Mindful of the obstruction ahead we are content to submit to fate and wait. Such waiting enables the accumulation of energy for a more decisive advance when the time is right. This is correct. By acting in harmony with the way we empower the cosmos to intervene on our behalf and to bring about what it is we want.

111001 3) We are bound on the right path, pursuing what is true but we must not be anxious to forge too great an advance. Instead we must be cautious, for the road ahead is hard and beset with difficulty. We should think about what might be useful in carrying us forward, and what might yet render us vulnerable to attack.

We must clarify what it is we want and where we want to go. It is right to be patient and persevering in our quest but we must be wary of holding to ideas beyond the point at which our passions or our emotions become engaged, for then it is right that we should let them go.

111001 4) In nurturing a great accumulation one is raising a powerful and potentially dangerous beast. It is better to think now about what damage its power might inflict and to forestall it, than leave things too late. Great power such as this must be used only for what is true. We must remain mindful of this at all times for it can all too easily fall foul of negative influences, in which case its potential will be misdirected. Used to negative effect, the energy gathered at a time of Great Accumulation will corrupt our direction and the way will be lost.

111001 5) In nurturing Great Accumulation, one is raising a powerful and potentially dangerous beast. It's horns and its teeth may be sharp and bode ill if aroused by negative influences. But one in this place walks the middle path and, by indirect means, neutralises all dangers by altering the very nature of the beast.

The boar's tusks may be lethal, but if the boar is castrated, this alters its nature in such a way as to render the beast harmless. You have addressed what might be dangerous in this regard and neutralised it, harnessing only what is good.

The way opens from here.

111001 6) There has already been a storing up of great potential, but now this is accompanied by the deployment of great wisdom and virtue in managing the situation. Thus the floodgates open and the energy flows. The potential explodes, lifting us to a higher plane. One here advances grandly and there can be no doubt about our success!

26-150707

27

100001

Nourishment

Keywords: Drive, Hunger, Nourishment, Seeking wisdom, Discernment, Decency, Proper, Shallowness, Base desires, Degeneracy, We are what we eat, Taking what we need, Providing.

Interpretation: Nourishment takes many forms. It enters our minds, our bodies, our selves from all directions. Without care, it is indiscriminate. Anything we allow to enter our being, our mind, be they images or ideas or the attitudes of others they begin at once to influence the way we think, the way we perceive the world around us.

If we willingly digest inferior ideas or corrupt images, then how can we not avoid behaving or living in a corrupt and inferior way? Beware then what you accept as nourishment, so that it might guide your path rather than subvert it. This way you will preserve the value of your life rather than discard it.

In a similar way, we should think about what we give out that others might use as nourishment. If we are sincere we ought not to willingly give out nourishment that might corrupt the path of others. Take care then of what you say or write that others might hear or read. If we go too far in what we say there is always a risk of corrupting others, whether we intend to or not. Also, in accordance with this principle, if we want to understand at what level of consciousness someone operates, we need only observe what they take in as nourishment.

Essentially, we are counselled to look at what it is we seek to nurture within ourselves. If we seek to nurture our own

character or if we work unselfishly towards the enlightenment or in any other way for the benefit others then we serve our higher nature and this is correct. However, if we seek to indulge our ego or our lower instincts, our base desires, our shallow cravings, if we seek glory or adulation or any other form of self-aggrandisement, then we serve our lower nature and this is not correct.

Appended Lines

100001 1) One here, though naturally able to live his life independently of the world, turns away from self-reliance, from satisfaction with his innate capacities, and looks instead to others, perhaps thinking that they seem better off than he is, or better able to provide the nourishment he needs, than he is capable of providing for himself. He is dazzled by their powers, and ignores his own. This is a mistake. One who is sincere should never disregard the importance of his own instincts, nor lose faith in the ability of the way to reveal itself at the time that is right.

The truest form of self reliance is a calm inner independence and an innate trust in the ability of the unknown to bring all things to their proper conclusion, without the need for intervention. One here has lost this self reliance and too often seeks clues to the direction he should take by studying the words and the deeds of others.

Trusting in the irrational world, the world of the imagination and the unknown is the highest source of nourishment one can find, yet we turn away from it and so the way closes.

100001 2) One here has not the inner resources to be self sustaining and must rely on others in this matter for guidance, for support, for wisdom,... for nourishment. However, we turn away from those sources closest to us, from those who are most naturally able to support us - i.e. the power of the unknown. We shun the mysteries of the inner world, the world of imagination, the world of the psyche and instead seeks our support from places in the material world that are quite beyond our reach. We are

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being unrealistic. Proper nourishment does not come this way.

100001 3) The source of nourishment is corrupt. We waste our time on things that do not nourish - too many trivialities, too much pandering to base desires, too much emphasis on things that do not enrich our life. We waste time on things that provide only temporary respite from an inner craving, numbing pain instead of curing it.

But equally, sticking too rigidly to what we believe to be correct and suitable nourishment also misses the point, for there comes a time when this might also be seen as an addiction, or a mask that shields us from the one true source of nourishment. Nourishment should give pleasure as well as sustaining the spirit. Don't spend all your life doggedly reading Dickens because you think he's good for the soul, when what you really need is to relax sometimes with a light romance. Persistence in this direction leads nowhere.

100001 4) Here we are able and looking to nourish others by letting our light shine out upon the world, but this not something we can manage without making the right connections. For now we must trust in the power of the unknown to work quietly on our behalf, and we must trust the counsel of the Book of Changes.

With the attitude of a predatory tiger we are actively seeking these connections in order to make things happen. In such a situation as this nothing need be overlooked and nourishment may be drawn from many sources, even those that might otherwise be considered improper or unwise. Since our motivation is not selfish, there is no blame in such a passion and we may rely on our instincts to draw whatever is good from whatever material we encounter.

100001 5) We might willingly seek to nourish others but do not possess the strength to do so and turn instead towards another, more capable, for assistance in carrying out our aims. Depending on the nature of the enquiry, this can mean a more able friend, a teacher, a deeper part of our unconscious mind, or the Book of changes itself.

However, one so placed becomes like a boat, strong outside but essentially empty within, without ballast, so to speak, and thus vulnerable to storms. One in this position should not seek to overshadow the abilities of a stronger ally or there will be misfortune. Rather one should remain aware of his dependence upon the higher authority, the superior wisdom, remain quiet and still, and subordinate himself to it.

In a similar way, we might feel unable to follow the desires or the ways of others. We may reject the ideals that are commonly accepted. In this situation we turn instead inside ourselves and seek wisdom from the depths of our own soul, or we abandon our fate to the mystery of the unknown.

This is not a mistake, but in deviating from the common path we become vulnerable and should not seek to impose these high ideas on others or force a direction on things. Our instincts to force a direction cannot be trusted here beyond seeking devotion to our inner self, and drawing from our inner well. We should seek to live a small life for now, while exploring the greater landscape within.

100001 6) Here one does not neglect the spirit when seeking nourishment. Thus our instincts remain in tune with what is correct and the way opens. Rising above pride, selfishness and other excesses of our inferior nature, we avoid all danger and misfortune as if under the influence of a charm.

One here might safely impose a direction on things. for when the soul is properly nourished we avoid all manner of misfortune that might otherwise befall us.

27-240205

28

011110

Preponderance of the Great

Great Exceeding

Taking Action

Crisis Point

Keywords: Excess, Inundation, Bursting, Breakpoint, Overloaded, Reacting to events, Crisis point, Creative Transformation, Unpredictable outcomes, Avoiding injury, Adapting.

Interpretation: If our situation can no longer provide us with the nourishment we need in order to further ourselves, or in order to progress along the way, then something has to give. A crisis point is reached and the structure underpinning our lives undergoes a sudden and not entirely predictable transformation. This is not necessarily a bad thing, for the process carries with it a creative potential which, if acted upon wisely, can renew our purpose and direction.

Taking Action describes a situation where it has become necessary to act on account of a certain excess having accumulated, like floodwaters pressing against a dam. The situation is untenable and something is going to happen. Things have risen to the point of crisis, and one here needs to take precautions in order to avoid injury. This is not as a result of errors, or losing the way. It is a condition of the times.

If we act wisely, we will profit by the adjustments we make in adapting to this new situation. The essential thing to understand however is that a direction cannot be imposed entirely at will. We can only act in accordance with the

underlying nature of the situation as it evolves. What is happening possesses a life and a momentum of its own and we may view our position as one of shifting our ground in order to avoid being swept away.

This is not our fault. There has been a building up of creative or spiritual energy, or some other influx of potential, yet through the static nature of our circumstances, we find it has nowhere to go. There is no direction in which it might usefully be channelled. In this sense the time of Great Exceeding carries with it a creative imperative and should not be feared. The crisis might bring uncertainty, but it also brings much needed nourishment and direction to our lives.

We should not look back at the way things were and lament their passing, nor try to hold onto them, but embrace what is coming.

Appended Lines

011110 1) The time is beginning and one here must take care that any corresponding actions are carried out with care. If we sense the way opening a little then we might fruitfully advance, but also we must be prepared to retreat. Like one catching fish from the seashore, we must learn to move with the tide.

011110 2) As things unfold a new and promising direction emerges, like a fresh young sapling sprouting from the root of an old tree. Such opportunities may not be the most obvious ones, but it pays to keep an open mind. Like an old man taking a young wife, the situation is unusual but mutually beneficial and enables the seeds of a new generation to be sown - a new era ushered in.

We should not become so burdened with thoughts of the old that we neglect the potential of the new.

011110 3) One here presses ahead too far, intent on forging a way without paying heed to the way things are unfolding. We are led by our inferior nature which is not a reliable guide in times like these. This puts further pressure on the

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structure underpinning things so any moves we try to make now will only worsen the situation. There is nothing to do but pause and wait, and think about the way things are unfolding.

The way is closed for now. In order that we do not become isolated by the times we must let go of the old, accept that things are changing and change with them.

011110 4) Here we see a way through as things unfold and we are able to cope with the situation. However, it is not wise to count on the outcome, nor to anticipate what we might immediately gain from it, but remain cautious until the changes taking place have attained their equilibrium. Only after the avalanche has passed may we count on the stability of the landscape with sufficient confidence to walk upon it.

011110 5) When taking action, we should be wary of seeking only to settle things back into as close an order as they were before. In re-establishing relations with the old order we might avoid a collapse of the original structure, but the potential for growth in a new direction will be lost.

Like a young man taking an older wife, the situation might bode well and be a cause for happiness in the shorter term, but the potential for sowing the seeds of a new generation, a new age, has been wasted.

011110 6) Here we act with the best of intentions, but due to a lack of understanding, or by not fully appreciating the magnitude of the difficulties, we risk getting in over our head. We must have the courage to try, but equally we must recognise that it is impossible to avoid every danger and that not everyone has the strength to gain from such extraordinary times. But when we aim as high as this, there is no shame in failure.

28-150707

29

010010

The Abyss

The Formless

Darkness

Danger

Keywords: Hazard, Immersion, Taking the plunge, Repeated trial, Filling up from within, Navigating in the dark, The inner stars, Patience, Painstaking, Faith, Trust, Time to work it out.

Interpretation: After coping with an excessive situation by taking action, a new order emerges which is unfamiliar, dark and formless. Therefore after the time of Taking Action there follows the time of Darkness.

It is not always possible to avoid difficult situations and it is necessary we learn how to deal with them so that we do not remain mired for very long. Similarly, the situation facing us here is one that could not have been avoided. It is not a question of fault but merely of the path our life has taken. A new landscape unfolds that is at first sight dark and dangerous, with none of the familiar features of the former time by which we used to navigate our way.

Holding back will not overcome these difficulties. We must deal with them, but cautiously, feeling our way, like water filling up a ravine. Water is very simple in its behaviour and holds to its true nature filling up every nook and crevice, regardless of the time it takes, until it finds a way through and flows on.

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Our course is correct, but here the way plunges into the depths of our nature, filling us out from within - no longer skipping lightly over the pebbles, but taking in the penetrating chasms of our being, surging through the subterranean caverns of our unconscious mind.

Like the water we too must hold to what is simple and true inside ourselves. This means we cannot force our way in a direction of our own volition, but read what is in front of us. If we do not know the right combination in order to open a lock, we must painstakingly work through all the potential solutions one after the other. This may take some time but eventually we shall find our way through and move on towards our destiny.

We must think carefully about how we relate to the inner world. Only by trusting the power of the unknown to reveal the solution, by working things out slowly over time, can we expect to rise from the darkness of the abyss.

Restlessness and ambition lead us to expect that our efforts should generate some visible sign of progress. When such signs are lacking, our emotions become aroused and we lose our balance, then any solutions we employ are unlikely to be the right ones.

One here may also have tarried long in difficulty, unable or unwilling to trust in the unknown. Persevering under such circumstances, we can become accustomed to them. We adapt and lose our sense of discomfort, believing things have always been this way, but the absence of any true direction in our lives is not a course that brings eventual liberation, only a perpetuation of adversity that will ultimately lead to exhaustion. We must therefore not linger in the formless any longer than we have to. We must move on, relying upon an inner sense of direction to guide our path across the featureless terrain. We keep ourselves free of predetermined ideas about our future course and we avoid seeking to measure our progress.

Difficulties are overcome as they are encountered, when the time is right for us to do so. Sincerity and listening to our heart enables the meaning of any situation to be understood,

and following this path we remain true to ourselves. So, like water filling up the hollows, one after another, we eventually find a way through and flow on.

Appended Lines

010010 1) Here we have lost our way by lingering too long in danger, wanting things to happen, pushing for progress in a direction of our own desiring, instead of one that is natural. Allowing our ego to make measurements and comparisons with imaginary standards we tread the same false path over and over.

With the passage of time this problem has become so familiar to us it appears normal and so it has not been dealt with. There is a weariness and a negative acceptance of our situation. But this is a mistake. Here, we are as much a part of the problem as external circumstances. There is no way through in this direction. It is a dead end. We must look to correcting our attitude. We must return to a condition of trust, and a willingness to be led.

010010 2) Venturing into the darkness, feeling our way through the formless, it does not do to think beyond what we can see and touch. We must take the way as we find it, remain flexible enough to change our course if we need to, and be content with small gains.

010010 3) Here we are not in a position to make moves to extricate ourselves. Darkness enfolds us and the landscape is beset with deep chasms. The situation is more difficult than we imagine. Any moves forwards or backwards will lead us only further into danger. We must wait until the darkness lifts and a way reveals itself. Sometimes, to find the light in situations such as these, we need only look inside ourselves.

010010 4) In a difficult situation it can be hard to separate what is true from what is false. But if we approach with an attitude of sincerity and are able to drop all false forms, all pretentiousness, we can usually fix upon one small thing in our hearts that we know is true.

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The ego is not the best navigator in unfamiliar terrain and in such foul weather as this, but by turning inwards we can sometimes catch a glimmer of the inner stars from which we might safely steer a course. We must search our heart, for here we have been granted such an insight and possess sufficient sincerity in order to reliably follow our instincts.

010010 5) In difficulties such as these, we should do no more than is necessary to overcome each obstacle as it arises. When our feeling for the terrain is obscured by darkness and storms, it is not wise to put down roots in anticipation of achieving something significant, like the building of a city. Our aim should be to navigate a way through, and this is best achieved by simply keeping to the middle path, the line of least resistance.

010010 6) Repeatedly failing to understand the nature of the terrain, tackling obstacles without due care, actively seeking solutions and insisting on striving to determine outcomes leads us only deeper into trouble. Here the way has been lost, the inner light ignored. Blindness such as this offers little hope of escape. Stop! Think!

29-150707

30

101101

Brightness

Clarity

Clinging Fire

Radiance

Keywords: Enlightenment, Vision, Blinding Light, Flash of Inspiration, Distinguish, Radiance, Beauty, Needing Fuel for sustenance, Flame of Life, Sentience, Dependence, Reliance on Fuel to Burn.

Interpretation: After falling into the darkness of an abyss, or when we are benighted in a formless terrain, it is necessary to have something to cling to for guidance. We must catch hold of something bright within ourselves, then its light may shine upon what is true and guide us on our way. So, after a time of Darkness, there follows a time in which we must cling to what is bright.

The dark pit represents unresolved problems that assail us, while Brightness indicates the light that shines upon the solution. It is the germ of wisdom that indicates our path in the face of many difficulties, and only one in tune with the way can reliably recognise it for what it is.

What gives light must have something lasting to which it clings, like the candle-flame relies upon the wax, otherwise it will burn itself out in short measure. What generates the light of our consciousness depends in turn on something else for its brightness. Without it, we cannot shine for long. What we cling to is the energy of the spiritual life. Without it our light is dulled and lost in the maelstrom.

Human existence does not come without limitations and the flame of our consciousness cannot shine in isolation.

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We rely on our innate connection with the universe, with the physical world, with other beings,... indeed all that is around us in order that it might support and define our existence, as we support and define the existence of everything else.

With effort and education, we may learn the shape of the world and the laws underpinning its visible workings, but this does not necessarily grant us the essential brightness of universal wisdom. We cannot manufacture our own brightness from a knowledge of mathematics and a handful of physical ingredients, nor can brightness be learned by sheer force of intellect. But brightness comes easily if we know how to maintain an harmonious relationship with the world.

Understanding our place in the scheme of things, and being a compliant participant in the workings of the universe, an independent flame in a creative whole, grants us this brightness, this power of insight, this ability to cling unerringly to the way, even in times of darkness and storm. Such a thing is a manifestation of universal principles, the invisible making itself visible through the life and mind of an individual.

One in tune with this can follow the way safely and in harmony.

Appended Lines

101101 1) One here is at the beginning, eagerly seeking the way, and becomes confused by the bewildering array of directions, all of them seeming to conflict. But treading with caution enables gradual progress to be made. In the beginning clarity requires a cautious and gradual approach.

Here, when seeking the illumination of the way, even an imperfect truth gleaned with patience and sincerity is better than a falsehood snatched with haste from the wayside. Perfection is not necessary here, only sincerity of effort.

101101 2) Here we have found the essential connection and demonstrate our wisdom by exercising moderation. Avoiding going too far, talking too much, thinking too deep,

climbing too high, we stay on the central path and can therefore trust our instincts. Only when we abandon moderation does it become impossible to differentiate between instinct and ego.

101101 3) One here contemplates the setting of the sun, the ending of days, of life, of tangible existence. When faced with things that are by nature transitory a man's thoughts may either sink into a state of melancholy as he laments memories of glory days gone by, or he may drown out such thoughts by indulging in worldly pleasures, up to the end.

Neither of these attitudes is correct, and causes one to miss the essential meaning of existence, or indeed of any temporal experience. Ego stands by ever ready to measure our progress, and in its presence we are apt to forget that things will always work out for the best in their own good time, if we can only leave them alone.

Man's path is the search for what is right and true, wherever that leads, be his life short or long. He must root out the pleasure and the truth in even the smallest of things, the most fleeting of moments, the most trivial of exchanges with his fellow man. Thus, when one in tune with the way faces the setting of the sun he can still marvel in the glory of it all, from first till last, without wasting a single moment.

In a more general sense this line can be about the moody contemplation of any course where we are preoccupied with thoughts of the time it is taking for us to see visible signs of progress. But we forget that life is not a destination - it is a journey and our individual experience provides us with the opportunity to mould our character by staying in tune with what is right.

101101 4) The light that burns twice as bright, burns half as long. A fire caught by the wind will flare up, creating a tremendous brightness and heat, but it will consume its fuel quickly, then fade into embers and ash.

Here we should take care not to expend ourselves on affairs of a transitory nature, for what is put up in haste rarely

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stands the test of time. Only that which is approached in a cautious manner, with attention to its essential content will have a lasting effect. We may be consumed with worry that events are not working out quickly enough and this spurs us into a flurry of activity, but worry and impatience are our inferior voices. We should not listen to them.

101101 5) We show ourselves most clearly when caught in grief for the passing of someone dear, or the loss of some connection, or even a material possession we valued highly. It is not possible to avoid all such difficulties or loss just as it is impossible to avoid old age and death, but acceptance of loss and a recognition of its potential in enabling us to grow beyond our current state, marks a change of heart in which the ego is forced into the background.

Inner clarity at such a time as this enables us to see how change enables a renewal of life and a fresh beginning. Here one walks the middle path, remains open to the possibilities such a change might entail and therefore keeps to the way.

101101 6) Here we are at the height of our powers. Brightness shines on all our endeavours and guides our way. If there are problems, we understand the importance of cutting to the underlying cause, rather than attacking uselessly the manifest symptoms. If there are important ideas to be conveyed, then we understand the importance of drama in conveying them, for a truth may otherwise be too subtle for others to grasp, when a convincing show might be more effective in capturing hearts and minds.

30-150707

31

001110

Influence

Keywords: Coming together, Chemistry, Embrace, Entwining, Symbiosis, Converging, Combining, Mutual attraction, Mutual harmony, Magnetism, Arousal, Affinity.

Interpretation: When separate elements that belong together come together, there is resonance. This is something that cannot be induced artificially. It is a natural property, the one element influencing the other and giving rise to a state of mutual harmony.

Here we feel the presence of such an influence. Someone or something has touched us and we feel their presence like a tingling in our bones, like a spirit moving in our heart, exciting us, stimulating us.

While it is right that we should remain open to such influences and allow ourselves to be moved by them, we should also be careful to avoid taking any deliberate steps towards the source beyond meeting it half way, otherwise we risk becoming unbalanced by the potency of the encounter.

In order to attract what we require to complete ourselves, we must first of all adopt an attitude of openness and sincerity. The influence that brings a state of harmony into being is unconscious and involuntary. It is not willed. What is willed is short lived, while what arises spontaneously will achieve the goal of duration. In human relationships, a deliberate and skilfully executed seduction will give rise to a union that is of less duration and significance than one based upon mutual attraction. The former is a self willed act, the latter a natural harmony arising from mutual influences.

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We must be free of ulterior motives, not actively seeking nor anticipating what we might immediately gain from this situation. We should maintain an attitude of innocence and independence. This will invite those elements that might provide a mutually beneficial influence to draw near, and those that are not in true harmony to hold their distance.

We must always be what we are, present the face that is most sincere, then whatever is truly meant will make its presence known to us.

Appended Lines

001110 1) We sense the presence of an influence, a time of some potential but at this stage the outcome is uncertain and depends entirely on our adopting the correct attitude. Here we should remember the importance of sincerity and how we must always present an honest and open face. If we start anticipating the benefits that might be gained in closing with this source, we poison the chances of attaining whatever it is we're looking for.

001110 2) It is important to understand the element of timing in judging the rightness of any encounter or influence. We must be careful not to take any premature steps towards the source. We must hold back until we understand its nature and the measure of its sincerity.

001110 3) What the heart desires the weak will always pursue. But following the heart in such a manner, falling prey to every obsession without regard to our inner sense of what is right will lead only to humiliation. In the heat of the chase we are less likely to question the nature of the source and instead project upon it an image of our own unconscious needs, rather than truly see it for what it is.

001110 4) Here we doubt in the ability of the natural order to bring about what we want. There is a temptation to force matters by consciously projecting our desires, but desires must be checked. We must remain persevering, our thoughts innocent and open. Only then will what we seek have the confidence to make its presence known.

001110 5) Here we present a strong defence, suspecting or anticipating the dark seductive prowess of what approaches. But in bracing ourselves so severely that we might weed out all element of risk, we also render ourselves insensitive to voices that are sincere. We allow the fear of making a mistake to dull our wits and we risk becoming unreceptive to the potential.

001110 6) We should be careful of words when trying to win influence. Words are only acceptable if they are based upon what we sincerely feel to be true and can be backed up by the evidence of our deeds if needs be.

Influence that is not meant cannot be won by mere words. Similarly, influence that is truly meant cannot be put off by words spoken in haste.

31-150707

32

011100

Duration

Persevering

Lasting Union

Persistence in Time

Holding a Steady Course

Keywords: Enduring, Persistence, Longevity, Long term, Steady as she goes, Surviving, Adapting, Duration.

Interpretation: Elements that are successfully brought together in harmony will produce an effect that is long lasting. Therefore after a time of Influence, there follows a time of Duration, or Lasting Union.

Here we are in the fortunate position of following the way, of having found our way and the only advice is to keep going, to turn neither left nor right, but to face whatever is ahead and to deal with it in a way that is open and correct.

Essentially we are advised to go on as before, regardless of whether the situation we face appears to represent a change in circumstances or not. The most important thing to consider is not the situation, not the circumstances, but rather that we remain mindful of the correct attitude we have adopted through past experience in dealing with life. We must not deviate in this approach, but hold to what we feel is right, keep always to the middle path, adapt to circumstances if necessary, but without losing our aim, without being drawn from our course.

We might have a sense in all of this that something has changed. We might be wondering what attitude to adopt in response to things. Should we welcome what has happened

or should we take steps to distance ourselves? In fact we are advised to go on as if nothing had happened at all because once we start wondering we risk becoming unbalanced by the situation regardless of whether it bodes well or ill.

Appended Lines

011100 1) Here we expect too much too soon. Entering a situation from the outset with such expectations gives us cause to suspect the involvement of our ego. This always leads to regrets at some point.

The way is not defined by expectation, but by what feels right. When presented with a junction in the way, the correct course can be reliably divined by following the less complicated route, the route that requires less reasoning and calculation. The way is a boat following the current of life, the will of the Creative. The proper attitude is to let our boat steer itself and to avoid the temptation to engage in any form of conscious navigation.

Here we possess the necessary insight, but seek to press ahead too soon. We must be patient and allow time for the situation to mature.

011100 2) Here we recognise the way does not flow smoothly and that the circumstances now presenting themselves might exceed our abilities. Understanding this to be the case, our ego is forced to let go and so we avoid the risk of it leading us astray. Our vessel picks up once more the natural current. We keep to the central path and do not lose our way, even in the midst of difficulties.

011100 3) Here we fall prey to the capriciousness of our moods, the intoxication of great expectation, the melancholy of hopes dashed, the fears induced by the imagined malevolence that stalks the outer world. Such feelings come when we allow ourselves to be distracted from our goal. We compare ourselves with others, measure our progress against illusory standards and find ourselves wanting. This is not the way forward, this is the road to nowhere.

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011100 4) Here we seek a goal too avidly, when in life the real goal ought not to be a destination but the correct experience of our journey. Seeking things too keenly, with too much effort, can lead us to deviate from our proper course into areas where we are unlikely to find what we are looking for.

At this point it is better to withdraw, to relinquish our goal, be it an ambition or an object of desire and to consider instead our attitude - the means by which we might return to the way.

Only by following the way will we eventually attain what we seek. The hunter does not crash wildly through the forest in search of game, for then he will surely find nothing. Instead, he follows the trails, moves in sympathy with the forest, is guided by his knowledge of tracks and traces, and in this way the game reveals itself to him.

011100 5) In following the way, there is a need for flexibility in our expectations. What is right in one situation is not necessarily right in another. Even what is right in one situation at a given point in time may not be right in a similar situation at a different point in time. There can be no fixed rules in determining what is right, only the consideration of each circumstance as it arises.

Nor can we dictate what is right for others. Every being must have room to learn from its own mistakes, its own experience. Each being has its path and must be allowed to follow it unhindered. Following the progress of others and seeking to influence them by warnings, even when genuinely concerned for their well being only serves to undermine their path, and thereby also our own.

We must be prepared to bend with the needs of the time, rather than seek to exert an influence.

011100 6) Here we are restless. Restlessness is a symptom of allowing others to determine our course rather than adapting to the situation we are presented with. We follow

Michael Graeme

fashions and the prevailing views of the world, but this is a betrayal of our inner values and a deviation from the way.

Nothing will be achieved by listening to a restless spirit.

32-150707

33

001111

Retreat

Withdrawal

Keywords: Reconsider, Pause, Step back, Retreat, Seek sanctuary, Take refuge, Detach, Disengage, Cut losses, Regroup, Live to fight another day.

Interpretation: One cannot follow the same path for ever. The time of Duration does not last indefinitely, therefore after a time of Duration there must eventually come a time of Withdrawal, a time of Retreat.

The time of Retreat indicates that we have encountered a situation in which we feel hindered. Hindrances or obstructions to progress tempt us into launching all the forces of our ego in order to find a solution and to precipitate an advance, a way through. But such a response only adds to the problem, and serves to further undermine our position.

We might be observing a situation too closely, measuring ourselves too severely against imaginary standards, or allowing our actions to be influenced by the behaviour, or the opinions of others. This is how we lose our sense of balance. The way becomes complex, confused. Our instincts for what is right desert us and we imagine reasoned analysis is the only thing that can help us press ahead. When this does not work, our emotions become engaged and a thick fog descends, obscuring the way. Recognising the signs of such a situation in its early stages is essential in ensuring our eventual safe passage. For now, our only course is to withdraw.

Pressing on to the summit when the way is obscured we tempt misfortune. Better to retreat, to keep to the paths at

lower altitudes where the land is still visible. We must be content, for now, with smaller gains. Sacrificing our ambition we allow time for the mists to clear, for the path to the summit to reveal itself again. By such wisdom all things might be conquered safely, and without the risk of stumbling into a pit.

In Retreat, we are not giving in or giving up, but merely turning away for a while in order to gather our reserves for a fresh advance later on. If pulling away causes us to feel frustrated, this is a sure sign Ego is steering our course and it's time we let go for a while. Having the strength to let go is the crucial thing. It's like making a sacrifice in ancient times, encouraging the gods to intervene on our behalf. So we sacrifice our ego, our immediate ambition. We fall back upon a condition of trust in the mystery of the unknown and we encourage things or events to conspire on our behalf and show us the way.

Appended Lines

001111 1) Already the way is lost and we are overtaken by inferior ideas. Our enthusiasm has run away with us. Ego has been given free rein without pausing to ask what is right. Now, our only course is to cease from all action and remain perfectly still. Beyond this our judgement cannot be trusted and will only lead us further astray.

Letting go might be difficult if, in losing our way, we have established certain connections or feel obligated towards particular things or ideas or people. We must do what we can to honour these obligations but letting go should be our ultimate aim.

A way out of this cannot be found by rational analysis,.. by logic, by calculation. We can only retreat and wait for better times.

001111 2) One here reacts not to outward circumstances, but in accordance with an inner wisdom, a vision of what is true. By retreat and contemplation we are granted insight. The mists clear and we are able to yield to the way as it turns.

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We must beware of Ego in all things. If we can bind it to our inner vision, make it serve the insight of our higher nature, our direction will always remain true.

001111 3) Binding ourselves to the values of others we limit our capacity to retreat and gain the insight that we need in order to restore our sense of direction. This might be on account of our being a member of a larger group, a partnership, a marriage or a clique,... or by having listened to or read about the opinions, the exploits, or the theories of others and in doing so absorbed their prejudices.

When associating ourselves with others, by whatever means, we must identify those values we truly hold as our own and jettison the rest as they may be hindering our ability to pull back in this instance.

001111 4) To yield when the way is blocked is not an humiliation, but a necessity - a time in which success can be brought about by temporarily withdrawing and considering our position. Feelings of frustration at having to withdraw are signs that our ego is engaged. This is not helpful. In retreat, it is only Ego that suffers defeat.

If in retreat we are guided by our higher nature, we are already anticipating our eventual return and victory. This might be difficult if what we have become involved with holds a particular attraction. Here, only one who is not bound by the ego can withdraw, discarding superficial pleasures with an eye for the longer term good, while one who is led by the ego is trapped by them.

001111 5) Here we sense that it is timely to pull back, to retreat, and therefore we do so before becoming attached to that which has waylaid us. Pulling back for now into a safe harbour, to what we know is true, even though it might seem small and insignificant, is better than pursuing a lofty goal in seas that may be too heavy for our vessel to navigate. Pulling away voluntarily, we maintain control and therefore retain a position of strength.

Our attitude is correct. Through our sacrifice the way is encouraged to reveal itself. If we follow the path that leads from here our direction will be renewed.

001111 6) One here remains free of any doubts as to the wisdom of withdrawal and so avoids disaster or entanglement. There is a sense of non-attachment and an easy disengagement from what is not correct. So, by trusting our instincts, we can quickly regain the way.

33-120305

34

111100

Power of the Great

Great Strength

Invigorating

Keywords: Potency, Energy, Force, Moving ahead, Great Strides, Cashing in, Reaping the Harvest, Taking Advantage, Going too far, Obsession, Egotistical, Demanding.

Interpretation: A situation of retreat does not last for ever. Eventually we are granted the insight, the strength, the sense of purpose or the direction we require in order to make an advance. Retreat indicates a time when we have to step backwards, but with a view to eventually attaining a positive outcome, while Great Strength describes a time when we can advance in order to further our position.

There exists a tremendous potential, a force capable of terrific brightness and the gates of success are beginning to open. Here we possess an inner strength or we have been granted a vital insight that can be used to good effect in furthering our aims. However, without pausing to consider what is correct, such power can equally be wielded in ways that cause as much harm as good.

We may be aware of the strength mounting within us and so there is a risk this might inflate the ego. Wisdom lies in aligning our strength with the natural harmony underlying things. Using our gifts for the purposes of self aggrandisement is a negative course and the way will close.

Great care must be exercised but if we tread the way well and with an eye for the continuing harmony of things, then strength such as this will carry us far.

Appended Lines

111100 1) Here we find ourselves setting out on the right path but as yet we are still in the early stages of receiving the power or the insight we need. Only a tentative foothold has been gained so far and it is insufficient to bear the weight of our entire body. We need other connections, other footholds before we can safely propel ourselves in the direction we desire. We must wait for these connections to reveal themselves. Too much ambition now will cause the way to close.

Also, making a show of our abilities at this early stage, trying to gather others around us, to lead them or to guide them, is a little premature and only invites misfortune. The greatest strength is sometimes that which is realised in isolation.

Alone and isolated, we are vulnerable to being rendered ineffective by external circumstances or the negative actions of others. But moving against such forces while we are still in such a vulnerable and tentative position as this will only tempt misfortune. Hold back for now while the strength and wisdom matures inside.

111100 2) The way is opening. Great strength and success come flooding through. We might sense resistance giving way and we forge ahead, carried along by our renewed confidence. However we should always be mindful of the fact that it is at such times as these that we are most vulnerable to losing our sense of balance by forgetting to ask what is right.

Such a gift as this must be used sparingly. We have much to gain, but only if we can remain modest and persevering. Follow the path that is opening but beware of the ego reasserting itself.

111100 3) Beware the ego! Great power can be easily misused. Like a goat butting its horns against a hedge, it is likely to make little headway. Instead it will become uselessly entangled, and exhausted by its stupidity. Displays of force or prowess are vulgar and counter

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productive. With wisdom we should understand this and remain modest at all times, even though we possess great strength.

111100 4) The greatest virtue is to possess great strength and not make any conscious show of our prowess. Working quietly, we free ourselves from entanglements. We proceed quietly and with an attitude of perseverance. The way opens.

111100 5) Here we encounter no resistance and therefore should find it easy to refrain from trying too hard, from directing ourselves too forcefully against a problem. Perhaps we can sense the gates are already opening and are encouraged by the omens to slow down, to take our time. So, by the benign nature of the circumstances, we avoid misfortune by not feeling the need to wheel out the big guns in the first place.

When we encounter benign conditions, it is never wise to take undue advantage and rush forward. Like a vessel used to driving itself against a head-wind, should the head-wind disappear, we can quickly run ourselves upon the rocks if we try to continue our way as energetically as before.

111100 6) Pressing on too far, buoyed along by a feeling of invincibility, or wilfully anticipating the rewards of our endeavour, we can all too easily lose our way. Like a belligerent goat, we butt against a hedge once too often and find ourselves unable to advance or retreat.

We may have expected too much too soon or anticipated results that were not subsequently forthcoming. At this point any exertion results in exhaustion and a worsening of the situation. Ego becomes engaged and whatever we try is likely to result only in deeper entanglement.

Here we are advised that the only solution is to do nothing for now. We must remain perfectly still and await the turn of fate. By such composure we invite eventual deliverance from an eclipse of fortune when the time is right. If we can accept this, then we can be sure the way will be regained.

34-120305

35

000101

Progress

Insight

Proceeding Forward

The Rising of the Sun

Keywords: Advancing, Making progress, Improvement, Broadening of understanding, Learning, Truth dawning, Growing, Emerging into the light.

Interpretation: We cannot possess Great Strength without at some stage making progress. Therefore after a time of Great Strength there naturally follows a time of Progress.

He we emerge into the light, borne upon a wave of insight. There is an idea, an opening, an encounter, or an inspiration that is natural and true. By such a vital connection, the path is gained and things become clearer,.. they become easier. All of this is due to attaining the right frame of mind, the right attitude.

We should observe how such an attitude is not one of focusing upon a personal goal, but that of a serving or seeking connection with a higher principle, of striving to attain what is ultimately correct above what we might desire. When we act in harmony with the nature of things in this way, without thought for what we might immediately gain, there is progress. Here we have learned to trust in fate, rather than solely in the power of our own abilities.

Our true path is always correct, regardless of how unlikely it twists and turns, sometimes heading directly towards what we might perceive to be our natural goal, but also sometimes apparently leading us away from it. Adopting an attitude that is too focused on the goal can tempt us into plotting too straight a course, with the risk that our natural

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destiny might be missed through single minded pursuit of something we imagine to be ours by right.

The moment of deviating from our path in this way can be anticipated by the sudden flowering of our impatience, by the sudden feeling of time passing, a frustration that we still have not achieved what it is that we desire. We begin to measure ourselves against illusory standards and find ourselves lacking.

When the ego objects in this way, be sure there is a risk we are about to miss a subtle twist in the path and, listening to the ego, plough on into oblivion. Knowing this to be the case we might realise we are acting too forcefully, or that we are being too firm in our character, that we should slow down and be mindful of maintaining our sense of balance.

The way that is right for us cannot be described or shaped by mortal hands. The way that is right is taken up only when we stop trying to define it, and instead submit ourselves willingly to its mystery.

Appended Lines

000101 1) Here, we have behaved correctly, remained modest and unhurried, yet we cannot help but think that no visible progress is being made. We should therefore beware of the dangers of becoming frustrated. Perhaps we doubt our path and fear failure if we press any further forward.

Modest perseverance in our present direction is the best course. It will lead to a consolidation of our position and, though visible progress might be lacking, it will surely follow in good time.

000101 2) Here, we feel our way uncertainly. Progress is not forthcoming, but rest assured it is better to remain unfulfilled, even if this means enduring sadness and loneliness, than to make progress in the wrong direction where happiness might be gained but be short lived. We lack a vital connection for now, but if we persevere in this direction the way will eventually open.

000101 3) When progress or success is lacking, it is essential we do not adopt a negative frame of mind, for if we become convinced of our bad fate, then such a fate is precisely what we will attract.

Maintaining a positive outlook is a prerequisite for bringing about good fortune. If we radiate optimism, then all things positive will resonate accordingly and guide us towards our path. Thus even if we lack the inner strength to bring about our own deliverance, or lack an essential intuition regarding the direction of the way ahead, merely nurturing the positive within ourselves will carry us through, and the way will open.

000101 4) Here we are cautioned against making progress in a ramshackle fashion. We might be intent on gobbling up as much of life as we can without obtaining or even desiring a complete knowledge of anything. We might be intent on experiencing a thing without really knowing what it is we want. How then are we to know if we have obtained it?

In a situation such as this our attitude is likely to be incorrect. Even if on the surface we maintain the appearance of a correct attitude, we may lack sufficient humility and modesty within. We may be expecting or anticipating some sort of reward. These are flimsy foundations on which to build, riddled with cracks and cavities. Proceeding in this manner, we cannot hope to hold the way for long.

000101 5) Here we are cautioned about seeking to control or measure our progress. We may regret having missed what we believe to be a golden opportunity, something that was sure to speed us on our way. But we must remain detached from such things, just as we must avoid becoming too excited about the potential opportunities we have not missed and that might be waiting for us a little way up the road.

Such are the twists and turns of fate. We contemplate neither gain nor loss, for both are merely events and we have no control over either. By remaining detached, we

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remain free, we allow life to flow like a river, we pick up our natural current and then all things will turn out as they should.

000101 6) By seeking to advance too energetically, we become mired in difficulties. Frustration rears its head and progress is halted. Energy, through frustration, turns to anger and this can bring no benefits at all. Frustrated energy is better employed when it is turned inwards and vented upon our own inferior traits. By taking hold of ourselves in this way we regain our self control. Then all might proceed well and the way will open. Ignoring this, the way will be lost.

35-120305

36

101000

Darkening of the Light

Brilliance Injured

Keywords: Conceal your brightness, Head down, Shield your flame, Save your energy, Illness, Sickness, Withdraw your support for this, Nurture yourself for the longer term, Bank your assets, Take no risks, Take care of yourself.

Interpretation: Proceeding forward too quickly, making progress without due restraint, there is always a danger we will overreach ourselves. When this happens we encounter a set back and our brilliance suffers injury or humiliation. So, after a time of Progress there follows counsel regarding a time of Brilliance Injured.

Striving to maintain our course against hardships we can all too easily hand over responsibility for navigation to the ego which would have us press on regardless of the damage we might do to our inner light if only to save face. This is like wrecking the ship in a storm out of determination to proudly make way, instead of putting into a safe harbour for a while in order to ride the storm out.

Detachment from goals, or the rise and fall of events, enables us to retain a clear view. But here we risk injury to what is important within ourselves and the way to deal with it is to hide our light, like cupping our hands around a candle flame to protect it from the wind - the light does not shine as brightly into the world, but it does continue to shine.

Similarly, in daily life there are times when it does not do to shine too brightly, circumstances where we risk attracting the wrong kind of attention to ourselves, though we mean no harm. Shining too brightly in adverse circumstances can attract opposition, obstruction, insult or

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injury. It is better then to hide our brightness, to remain modest and unassuming, to create a neutral, passive mask that we might present to the world, while nurturing our brightness within.

Whatever the situation at the root of this enquiry, we need to be cautious of engaging with it too eagerly, while not going so far as to disengage completely. In holding back we must also guard against the negative emotions of wounded pride and vanity. We cannot measure our progress against imaginary standards, nor the standards of others. Fate comes when it will. For now we must be humble and hide our brilliance within.

To be clear, at a time of Darkening of the Light, we do not seek to deliberately isolate ourselves, lock all the doors and refuse to answer calls, for this in itself indicates a deliberate intent. Hiding our brightness means we accept only those connections that present themselves to us, without going out to deliberately search for more. These connections may not seem to offer much by way of progress. They might seem to offer only drudgery and difficulty and little by way of thanks or reward but, and especially if our enquiry relates to our ambitions of truly understanding something, then such situations can be useful in giving us the time to test the water without the risk of getting in too deep.

By not flying too high or too fast, the pilot tests the stability of his craft while minimising the risk of injury to himself. He does not put on much of a show, but nevertheless gains confidence in the worthiness of his machine so that when the time is right he can put it through its paces without the risk of disaster.

In ancient China, King Wen's brightness was curtailed by imprisonment at the hands of a tyrant. He did not fall into a state of despair and inner collapse, but was able to put the time of darkness and isolation to good use by arranging the Book of Changes into the order we recognise today.

At this time we should seek not the grand, the bold, the ambitious. We should be small for now and use the time, the connections that present themselves, no matter how

insignificant, to improve ourselves and our understanding of what is correct.

Appended Lines

101000 1) Here we have genuinely followed what we believe to be the right course. We have remained modest and small and sincere, but lately harbour doubts about the wisdom of maintaining this direction. Perhaps we are disappointed at how little progress we seem to have made.

These first doubts are evidence of an awakening ego. We are beginning to measure our progress against illusory standards. In such situations Ego always finding us lacking. We have to resist the temptation to look aside at others, for each has his path to follow and what is right for one is not necessarily right for another. If we can look to our inner light, remain steadfast and persevering, then we shall stay on course and reach our destination at a time that is right for us.

101000 2) After sensing we have failed to reach our imagined destination, or attain our goal soon enough, we are tempted to concede defeat and give up. However, understanding the nature of things, we manage to cling to the path. We are wise not to ignore the dangers of giving the ego full rein.

It is not necessary to have all the answers to the questions we pose, only to trust in fate that all things will be met and dealt with at the right time.

101000 3) Here we see the problem lies within our selves. However, it is important to be gentle with our selves in rooting out our faults, as we should be gentle in dealing with the faults of others. Blindness caused by strong emotion cannot be cured overnight, but by a process of persistently challenging our ego, it can be persuaded to let go.

If we can gain a position, or respond to a connection, where we act sincerely, without a thought for what we might

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immediately gain, then our hearts will be open and the outcome will be correct.

101000 4) Understanding the difficulties and dangers in following a certain path, we are persuaded to abandon it. There is nothing about this connection that can further our progress or increase our understanding of what is correct. Only by shutting it out and reverting to our former position, our former thoughts, do we retain a proper sense of direction.

101000 5) Here we might attain success if we can remain persevering in our trust of the unknown. While the difficulties might appear to be insurmountable, they can be dealt with by adopting a position of humility, of riding the darkness out and hiding one's own light so as to avoid attracting unwanted attention.

Like a good man who finds himself in the service of a tyrant, survival may be a question of pretending to go along with things while hiding our integrity inside. So long as we do not lose sight of what is correct, we will be in a good position when the time comes for things to improve.

101000 6) Here the darkness on earth reaches all the way up to heaven. It is the very worst of a bad situation. The only way to deal with it is to be correct in our conduct and to persevere in our trust of the unknown. It appears as if everything we have done and worked for has been for nothing. However, by persevering in what is right, that is by remaining modest and humble, by trusting in the mystery of the unknown, this darkness can be ridden out.

It is a fact of nature that just as things are reaching their extreme, their opposite is born and we can emerge into the light stronger than before for having survived the darkness with our virtue intact. In the darkest of times, if all we have left is our virtue and the will to carry on, the darkness cannot defeat us. Only by succumbing to negative thoughts and emotions do we ever become its victims.

36 - 270105

37

(101011)

The Family

Household

Going home

The Way of the Woman

Keywords: Relationships, People we know, People we love, Propriety, Appropriateness, Subordinate position, Morality, Harmony, Balance, Structure, Security, Warmth, Home ground, Home patch, Back to basics, Basic needs.

Interpretation: When we have overreached ourselves and suffered injury, we are naturally inclined to return home, or to whatever it is that grounds us in reality. So, after a time of Darkening of the Light, there follows The Household or The Family. After suffering injury or humiliation in the greater world, the family is the one place we can turn to where we might expect to be received unconditionally for who we are, rather than for who we are trying to be.

In ancient China the relationships, the order and the discipline within a household, among family members, was seen as a model for governing the state. In order to correct problems of state, first everything in the household needed to be correct. If society irretrievably breaks down at the family level, then the state is doomed to fail regardless of the policies it adopts.

In personal terms this means that by returning to the key values of openness, love and sincerity, it is possible to create harmony in any situation, as a woman creates harmony in a well run household by exercising gentleness and an ability to nurture those around her.

The message is that we must look to the inner woman, regardless of our physical gender, and cultivate the

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feminine qualities of receptivity and perseverance in our trust of the unknown, rather than pursue external goals by force or in an otherwise masculine manner. We may have recently suffered injury or humiliation and we are not presently possessed of sufficient wisdom and clarity in order to impose a proper direction on things. Instead, we must seek to ensure that the truths we adhere to, or the foundation of our being, is correct.

Only by nurturing our ability to trust in the unknown can we hope to win any lasting external influence. The writer who does not know what he is talking about will have less influence than the one who does. Before we can achieve such a position, our words must be based upon something solid, as a flame depends for light upon its fuel. Words must be supported by our conduct, by our inner conviction, otherwise how are we to be believed?

Here we must be content to take the back seat for a while and seek to reconnect, to nurture once more our sense of inner truth. The ego might grow impatient but we must resist the nagging temptation to get on and achieve something. Holding to the sense of inner truth is sufficient for it to penetrate to others and then our words will carry meaning.

Realising inner truth is not the same as understanding it. The way of inner truth cannot be named or described - only trusted. And it can only be trusted when we believe it to be there, when we have faith that all things will be revealed at the right time, that all things will work out as they should without our manipulating events to our own advantage.

Appended Lines

101011 1) Here we should confine ourselves to the immediate situation and deal with the tangible issues impressing themselves upon our peace of mind, rather than occupy ourselves with remote or abstract issues that have no direct bearing on our circumstances.

101011 2) Here we should not seek anything by means of force, but look instead towards nurturing our sense of inner

truth. Nor should we assume a position of superiority in relation to other people, or events in the world at large, observing critically and passing judgement. All things and all beings must be given sufficient room to follow their own course.

Stepping aside from directing affairs we might feel weak and inconsequential, but it is not our fate to control everything, only to play our part as directed by the underlying currents of our life. In thinking of ways to govern the outcome of events we indulge our whims when we should be looking to correct our selves.

101011 3) Here we must exercise greater patience in our view of things. Anger or frustration at a perceived lack of progress will lead only to further isolation from the inner truth we seek.

101011 4) Self examination can reveal whether we are doing things for the right reasons. If we harbour hidden motives, or seek to profit unreasonably from our actions it can cause us to lose our sense of balance. However, one here enjoys harmony. Being modest and nurturing our sense of inner truth, we succeed in walking the middle path. There is substance to our being and the way opens from here.

101011 5) To be chastised or disciplined for our transgressions, or for losing our way, has a less profound effect than if we are granted a wise guide whose actions may be followed as an example. If we are able to follow such a guide, then we can achieve inner harmony.

For one in a position to act as a guide, this might mean letting others go their own way, even though we fear the likelihood of their going astray. And should they go astray, we should not give up on their potential to find their own path once more.

101011 6) Here we cultivate our higher nature and set an example for those around us. All is well with the inner household. By following the correct path, others might follow it also. By dealing with others according to what is

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correct, those around us might also learn how to deal correctly with others.

In following what is right, we are happy for others to follow too, but we are also willing to let those who do not want to follow go their own way. All we do and say commands respect. In such a position we cannot fail. The way is open.

37-020105

38

110101

Opposition

Obstruction

Misunderstanding

Divergence

Keywords: Obstruction, Discord, Divergence, Misunderstandings, Parting of the Ways, Estrangement, Odd one out, Jarring, Going it alone, Individuality, Agreeing to Differ, Dynamic interplay of opposites.

Interpretation: The time of the Household counsels us to look towards inner harmony by observing the proper relation between all things. When the time of the Household reaches its natural conclusion, inner harmony reverts to disarray, to diversity and opposition. So, following the time of the Household, there comes the time of Opposition.

Here we either harbour a misunderstanding of the way things really are, or our position diverges widely from that of others and there is a mutual misunderstanding as individual elements go their separate ways.

At a time of opposition, we should recognise that advancement cannot come by focusing on something specific. Fixing our thoughts on a particular goal, we cannot see the greater picture and without such a broad view of things we cannot properly divine the way. Our views, diverge too far from those of others for complete harmony to be a realistic goal. Attempts at persuasion or argument, either in the outer world, or the inner will serve only to intensify the divergence.

Yet opposition is a natural state. It is the polarisation of things, of positive and negative, of man and woman, of

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high and low, of light and dark, of yin and yang through whose dynamic interplay order is created from the formless chaos.

In a situation where views diverge, harmony may be sought in small ways only, by turning back from our desired course and testing for the middle ground, by establishing those areas where there is agreement. From these points the seeds of harmony can then take root.

Even though our will is not fulfilled, the time should not be seen as negative or oppressive. Our position is not necessarily misguided - it simply finds no immediate resonance. We have become like an outcast, moving in a land where our beliefs find no favour and so cannot be used to further our position. Instead we must define what it is that connects us and what causes us to diverge. The situation is one of creative potential in which our thoughts play their part in determining the overall dynamics of a broader picture that we cannot yet perceive. Seeing ourselves in the context of this greater process is the first stage in attaining a state of harmony once more.

Appended Lines

110101 1) Here we encounter the first hint of misunderstanding. Harmony is lost and cannot be regained by force, by running after it. We must let it go, for that which truly belongs to us cannot be lost for ever.

Likewise when we harbour misconceptions or hold a position that is not truly ours, or we occupy a ground that is alien to us we must not deal with things too harshly when we realise our mistake, but keep to the middle ground. We must maintain a positive and open attitude, while bearing in mind that rectifying misunderstandings requires the passage of time.

If we maintain the proper attitude of openness and sincerity, dealing with positions that diverge widely from our own need give no cause for concern. Only by adopting a passive, waiting attitude can we gain the clarity of mind necessary in order to regain the path of harmony.

110101 2) A lack of harmony, a state of inner discord, like turbulent waters thick with mud, will prevent us from seeing things clearly. However, even under such circumstances, a momentary insight, no matter how or where it is glimpsed will provide sufficient clarity for us to grasp, in the transience of the moment, an image of a greater truth.

110101 3) There are times when we seem to be opposed on all sides, our progress hindered at every turn. It is at such times we can all too easily fall prey to our ego, to our inferior emotions. We can give way to negative thoughts and then, mired in difficulties and imagined insults, nothing can ever come to fruition. However, if instead we can bring ourselves to view the times as a test of our nature, we at once regain our sense of inner balance.

With patience then, the way reveals itself.

110101 4) Here we feel isolated by negative thoughts and feelings. There is discord, a lack of inner harmony. Perhaps we feel hindered by an adverse or even hostile fate. But fate is never hostile. Only by isolating ourselves from the sense of an inner truth do we lose its protection. Rejecting the negative view of life, of fate, we regain our sense of balance and allow the unknown to intervene on our behalf, to bring our vessel back onto its natural course.

110101 5) Here we recognise the nature of the misunderstandings separating us from the power of inner truth and, in coming to terms with such opposition, we begin to perceive the true nature of things. Similarly, those elements held at a distance by their misunderstanding of us now see things more clearly and the distance is narrowing.

The way begins to open from here.

110101 6) Here we find ourselves mired in difficulties and estrangement on account of having adopted a poor attitude of mind. We have abandoned our higher self, and thus cannot recognise what is right even when it is under nose.

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We mistrust that which we should trust because we cannot see things clearly. We can only deal with things by turning back to our higher nature, by regaining our trust in the mystery of the unknown to see us through.

That which is great inside each of us knows best how to plot a course back into the essential current of life.

38-250305

39

001010

Hardship

Impasse

Difficulty

Keywords: Barrier, Blockage, Impediment to progress, Setback, Discouragement, No through road, Path closed, Not labouring one's advantage, waiting for things to clear, Reconsider direction, Think again, Find another way round.

Interpretation: If opposition and misunderstandings persist in a household, in that which grounds us in reality, then hardship will result. So following the time of Opposition, there follows the time of Hardship.

Here we are surrounded by obstacles. The impression is of an inaccessible mountain rising at our backs and a dangerous abyss yawning open at our feet. But this is an illusion and the implication is that we suffer from a distorted view of things, that our inner attitude is preventing us from making the change necessary for overcoming an obstruction to our progress, from seeing things clearly enough to extricate ourselves from hardship.

Hardship is not the same thing as calamity. Calamity, with wisdom, can always be avoided whereas sometimes hardship cannot. But hardship can always be overcome.

Here we suffer from an impairment of vision - an emotion that obstructs our view, that prevents us from seeing things clearly enough to make the break from hardship. We need to understand that deliverance from such circumstances is not possible without seeking the help of our higher nature - that which is beyond reason. We cannot engage directly

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with that which we perceive to be opposing us, for the ego is not the best navigator in such circumstances. We need to let go, we need to take heed of the difficulties facing us and pause a while.

Obstruction should not be viewed in an entirely negative way, nor should we seek to apportion blame, either upon ourselves or others, or even upon an adverse fate. A time of obstruction should be viewed as an opportunity for self examination, for self improvement, for consolidating our gains thus far and rethinking our direction.

A change of view is all we require before action may safely be taken.

Appended Lines

001010 1) Hardship is beginning. One here would be wise to understand things in more depth before taking action to overcome the circumstances. Gaining the correct perspective, we will see there is much to be gained, but things must be given a chance to work themselves out. Give fate a hand. Open your heart. Have faith in the power of inner truth.

Trying feverishly to work things out, to calculate, to reason our way through will come to nothing. But if we retreat from this, if we remain patient and persevering, the solution will reveal itself.

001010 2) There is most certainly obstruction and hardship, but we are assured that none of it is our fault, rather it is a manifestation of the times. Such hardship is unavoidable. It is part of life, so we must make what use of it we can. We must use it as an opportunity to obtain a higher perspective.

In life certain problems cannot be solved by working them out in a logical manner, by cool analysis. They may only be overcome by rising above them, by obtaining a higher viewpoint, so that the original problem seems insignificant from our renewed perspective.

001010 3) Here we might feel compelled to act, but forging ahead would be to bring hardship upon ourselves and our

dependants - either family or friends in the outer world, or in the sense of our inner family, the harmony of our inner self - those elements within us that depend on our higher nature being able to steer a safe course, for they are incapable of doing this for themselves.

If we can resist the urge to act, if we can return to a state of equilibrium, all will right itself. Forging ahead might mean actively interfering in the path of others, or seeking to subvert things for our own benefit. Expecting things of others in this regard, we do not allow them the freedom to act in accordance with their own destiny. We subvert their path and in doing so subvert our own.

001010 4) Here we feel isolated, the victim of an adverse fate and this colours our judgement so that our rational abilities may not be relied upon as a guide. Attempts to bring about progress will reveal the fragility of our position too late for calamity to be avoided.

We must therefore hold back and invite the co-operation of those forces within us that are beyond reason. Then the way will surely reveal itself.

001010 5) We regain the protection of the unknown when even in the midst of obstacles we cling to what is right. Such an attitude is sufficient to generate a sympathetic resonance and thus we are well placed to take advantage as the obstructions dissolve.

The way opens from here.

001010 6) The situation is ripe for change, and the way is set to open but we have abandoned our higher self and so cannot recognise what is right. We can only deal with things by turning back to our higher nature, by regaining our trust in the ability of matters to right themselves. Then the seeds of our deliverance will flourish.

39-270105

40

010100

Deliverance

Relief

Bindings untied

Keywords: Set free, Loosen, Disentangle, Liberation, Problems solved, Relief, Moving on, Mystery solved, Things explained, Cleared up, Resolved, Forgiveness, Bygones be bygones, Absolution,

Interpretation: A state of hardship cannot last for ever. Eventually it must end and we are delivered from our difficulties. Therefore after a time of Hardship, there comes a time of Deliverance.

When difficulties evaporate, when hardship is overcome, when we are delivered from those things that trouble us, it is better not to dwell upon past events, but to move on and greet the new conditions as quickly and cleanly as possible. This is a new time, a new dawn. It is a liberation from the fetters of misfortune, the confusion of a misguided way of thinking.

The dissolving of tension releases pent-up energy, allowing things to flourish anew, but in taking advantage of the situation we must be careful not to press on further than is necessary or the emerging potential will be prematurely exhausted.

Appended Lines

010100 1) By adjusting our inner viewpoint, we gain a fresh perspective and problems are overcome. We should not dwell on the reasons in case they still contain old poisons. These might enter our hearts and the cycle of obstruction begin anew.

Move on quickly and cleanly,

010100 2) Here we come to recognise the source of our difficulties. Ideas that might seem logical or reasonable remain plausible only because they suit our distorted view of things. Gaining a proper perspective, the cracks are revealed and the way opens.

010100 3) One here is not presenting a face that is altogether sincere. Our attitude is flawed in some respect and this prevents us from making progress. There is a need to look within and examine ourselves. We may be assuming the high ground in an immodest show of our prowess, or we may be latching on to ideas that suit our ego's view of the world, a view that may present life, or things, or thoughts in ways that seem altogether more comfortable, ways that require less effort on our part, less need to make changes in our self.

010100 4) Here we are holding on to old values, following old ways of thinking. We are trying to force a direction instead of waiting for insight and trusting in it. We try too hard to maintain control instead of relinquishing power and allowing ourselves to be led by the unknown, by fate. We cannot relax and let the wind and the natural currents of life take us, so we lose our way. Unless we can attain a state of mind in which we learn to trust the unknown, how can we enable that which is within us to provide the guidance we need?

If a man, no matter how good his heart, continues to consort with unsuitable friends (delusions), those who might truly be in a position to give wise counsel (the Book of Changes or our higher nature) will not be encouraged to draw near. Also, if we present a face that is not sincere, others will likewise respond with a face that is not sincere. Only by being truly open, can we expect others to feel they might draw near with equal openness. We reap what we sow in this respect.

010100 5) Release from old ways of thinking is by no means guaranteed even when we understand the nature of the problem. Old habits may be difficult to break and here

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we would do well to make a particular effort to distance ourselves from the past. If this can be done then the way will open. We need to look within and test our thoughts or our motives for signs of a protective ego, for a desire to force a direction.

We must ask ourselves if we are sincere in what we believe and in what we hold to.

010100 6) A fragment of our old way of thinking still remains, but we can see it. Here we know well enough what the problem is and are able to let it go. In letting go, in trusting completely the power of the unknown we become one with the cosmos. All obstacles are eliminated and we are guided back onto our proper path.

In ancient times the finest archers were those who did not merely aim at their prey, but those who became one with them. Then, no matter how small their quarry, no matter how agile, the archer could not miss. The outcome was predetermined long before the arrow was released.

The receptive mind responds to reality not only by observing its physical manifestation, but also by reading the spaces in-between.

For one here, the sense of Tao is strong.

40-270105

41

110001

Decrease

Diminishing

Making an offering

Keywords: Reducing, Diminishing, Prostrating oneself before God, Empty one's cup, Making an offering, Sacrifice, Offering up, Cut to the essentials, Lighten the load, Excess baggage, Hoarding, Full of one's self, Cup running over.

Interpretation: If in times of deliverance we still fail to find our path, it can only be because we persist in clinging to emotions of an excessive and damaging nature: to passion, a desire to control, the need to win at all costs, to anger, lust, self importance or even fervent self-derogation.

The way to deal with such a situation as this is to back away, to empty ourselves of emotion, to decrease what is already full so we might receive something more wholesome. Therefore, following time of Deliverance when, through the persistence of inferior habits, deliverance is not achieved, there must follow a time of Decrease.

Times of Increase and Decrease come in cycles. We suddenly find ourselves locked in a particular way of thinking. We become like a dog chasing its tail, unable to latch on to anything and yet also unable to let go of the chase. The only certain outcome here is our eventual exhaustion. Decrease therefore offers advice on ways of altering our inner selves so we might be more open to the power of the unknown, and therefore benefit from the times, instead of being further drained by them.

It is the way of nature that what is too great is reduced and what is too little is increased. Thus over time the mountains are worn down and the valleys are filled up. There is no

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excess in nature. All things tend of themselves towards a middle path.

One might imagine a cup used for making an offering in ancient times, but the cup is already filled to the brim, so how can we expect to receive blessings? The energy we need to tap into is blocked, dammed up and prevented from flowing. It is necessary to back away, to let go, to empty our cup because it is already filled with a bitter brew.

Decrease is making an offering, it is acting without a thought for what we might personally gain. It is an act of charity, it is giving a part of ourselves away. Such an act can be thought of as a means of releasing blocked energy and this reconnects us with the way.

In a similar sense, disengaging the ego and placing our trust in the unknown may also be likened to making an offering, to making ourselves empty, so that we might be filled up with the sweeter certainty and the nourishment of the Creative. If we wish to be filled, the first stage is to decrease ourselves, to reduce ourselves to the essential.

At a time of Decrease, anything that engages our emotions should be avoided. This means turning away from whatever it is that obsesses us, be it thoughts or our relationships with others, or indeed any entanglement that might be arousing our feelings, filling the cup of our emotion to the brim. Turning away, we tip out the cup. Then by returning to an attitude of trust we offer it up to the cosmos and invite the mystery of the unknown to begin working on our behalf.

Perhaps we measure ourselves too strictly against imaginary standards, or we could be under the influence of worldly delusions, of false values, things the tangible world treasures dearly, but which are of little real value when seen from the cosmic or the spiritual perspective.

Appended Lines

110001 1) Here we are in a position to benefit from a return of essential energy, from an opening of the way, but nothing will be gained without first diminishing ourselves. Progress has been made, but it does not do to dwell on matters, nor to linger in self congratulation. Move on, be

magnanimous. Do not let the ego capitalise on gains made by your higher self. Concentrate on relinquishing the desire to control the outcome of things, and things will come out all right.

Affairs have a way of taking over and dominating our lives. If this cannot be avoided then we must pay them only the attention that is necessary to bring about their conclusion. Happiness gained through following our affairs is not as lasting as that gained by focusing more on our life, on freeing up our inner self.

110001 2) When encountering others, or serving others, it is not correct to act in such a way that diminishing ourselves would serve to increase their ego. Nor is it correct that we should cater to the needs of others if this means sacrificing our own principles. This is not the way to think of Diminishing. It is one thing to give increase to others, to the disadvantage of ourselves but this must not be achieved at the cost of our virtue, for all things must serve to guide our path, and not subvert it.

Similarly we should hold firm to what is right and resist the temptation to do the bidding of our inferior nature. We can only do justice to ourselves and others by not relinquishing control to the ego. Sincere diminishing is that which alone can bring increase. If we can diminish Ego's control, if we can trust that things will work out, then even miracles might happen.

Here we are counselled to trust in the direction that is unfolding. If we truly understand the nature of diminishing, the way is open. Then our words will have a clarity and a potency such that the unknown cannot but fail to respond on our behalf and create a sympathetic harmony in the wider world.

110001 3) If we cling to false ideas, this prevents the good ideas from entering our heads. Letting go of our delusions we open ourselves to the power of inner truth, and to the inspiration of the Creative. We cannot lean both ways, looking both to fate and to our rational senses to provide a solution. These two friends are pulling in opposite directions and trying to associate with them both at the same time will lead only to discord.

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If we are serious in our quest, we should understand this will involve working with psychological forces that are by their very nature irrational, we are inviting occurrences that are by their very nature acausal. This requires a suspension of disbelief, and a faith in the unknown to bring these things about. The rational, the calculating, the controlling powers of the ego, none of these are of any use to us here.

110001 4) Focusing too much on what others are doing, or gauging progress by measuring ourselves against illusory standards will give rise to a perpetual desire to make changes, to alter our course, then alter it again and again. This is unsettling, unbalancing, and will surely lead us astray. Time is never of the essence when following the way. Completion comes in its own time, the time that is right. Feelings of anxiety at the passing of time or at the shortage of time are a certain sign of the involvement of our ego.

Understanding our faults, our cravings, our desire to control outcomes allows us more quickly to distance our higher self from our inferior self. This reduces a tension both in us and in our surrounding environment so that beneficial elements, internal or external, might more easily approach and carry us through.

110001 5) Here we are able to maintain the correct attitude of modesty and sincerity. Therefore things resonate in harmony in both the inner and the outer world, and events conspire to smooth our path.

The way opens from here.

110001 6) One here appreciates that it is not correct to seek an increase of ourselves at the cost of diminishing others. To seek always to tread the path that does not negate that of others is the surest way to navigate our course through the unknown. By such humility and consideration, we may rest all the more assured in the unflinching accuracy of our direction.

41-060605

42

100011

Increase Receiving Blessings

Keywords: Empowerment, Advance, Enhancement, Lifted up, Good Fortune, Enrichment, Just rewards, Blessings, Back on course, Inviting resonance, Counting our blessings.

Interpretation: If we have made a sincere offering, we can expect blessings to follow. Increase and Decrease are opposite sides of the same coin, cycles of time in which each contains the seed of the other's beginning. So, when the time of Decrease reaches its end, Increase will follow and vice versa.

When we are bound on a course back towards our correct path, we become increasingly open to the power of inner truth and so invite all things to resonate in harmony. This is a time when we are receiving the assistance of the unknown, when events conspire to further our aims and speed us on the way to realising our destiny. Therefore we should take care not to mistrust the motives of others who approach at this time, nor should we doubt the connections that present themselves, be they thoughts, dreams, ideas, or things that attract our attention. Nor should we doubt the way our fate appears to be unfolding, because it is a condition of the time of Increase that all things that come together do so in order to conspire for the greater good.

We might sense this as being an auspicious time. We might feel invigorated by it, we might experience a feeling of power and invincibility as our way is smoothed and we overtake those around us who are less fortunate. It seems that everything we do cannot fail.

At such times, when everything is going well, it is easy to fall back into old ways of thinking and forget where the energy we now enjoy actually comes from. Be aware also

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that the time of Increase is part of a natural cycle and so will eventually undergo a reversal. The energy will become dissipated. Knowing this, we should take proper advantage of the times, make use of the energy in order to advance while we can, but at the same time remain on the lookout for signs that suggest a closing of the way. Thus with caution we guard against the dangers of pushing ahead too far.

Ego can take advantage of feelings of power in order to usurp control, making us believe that we alone are responsible for our positive turn in fortune. This might render us intolerant or impatient with the development or the attitudes of others who might still be mired in cycles of obstruction and decrease. This, of course, is a mistake.

Appended Lines

100011 1) At times of Increase, it is wise to take advantage of our enhanced strength and sureness of direction by setting out to achieve something. The way is beginning to open but in order to make use of it we need to identify and align ourselves with a worthy purpose. Also, we must be certain before imposing a direction on things that nothing in our path, either physical or spiritual, in the inner or the outer world, relating to ourselves, or to others will be diminished on account it.

100011 2) The way opens to our ideas. Here we find ourselves in harmony with all things and all things resonate to bring about a true increase in our fortunes. What in less fortunate times we struggled to achieve now seems to come about of its own accord.

100011 3) Our thoughts, our ideas and our attitudes may not be perfect and in other times this might lead us astray. However, at a time of increase all things conspire to bring out the very best of outcomes, even from less than perfect beginnings. So, in spite of certain shortcomings we nevertheless gain ground.

100011 4) Treading the middle way one here mediates between the drive of the ego and the wise counsel of one's inner self at a time when things are changing and ground is shifting. Such a balance between action in striving towards a goal, and uncanny instinct for what is right ensures each step is firmly but correctly placed, and that in riding the

wave of the time of Increase we continue to head in the right direction.

100011 5) Here we prove ourselves sincere and true, therefore all things conspire to help us. Sincerity is when our actions are carried out through a desire to do what is correct and not merely as a vehicle in order to gain some sort of personal advantage, or to achieve recognition for our achievements. This way we retain a state of innocence.

The highest sincerity and truthfulness needs no audience but acts from an inner certainty of what is right. One who can act correctly and heroically without anyone knowing, or ever likely to find out, might well remain for ever unsung but shall none the less reap the rewards of supreme good fortune.

100011 6) Here we seem insincere in our attempts to benefit from the time of Increase. Perhaps we seek to increase ourselves at the expense of others. Or perhaps our actions subvert the path of others - and so our own path is likewise subverted.

If this is true then the cycle comes to an end and the way closes, shutting us off from the vital energy of the Creative.

42-060605

43

111110

Breakthrough

Resolution

Displacing

Severance

Eliminating Hesitation

Keywords: Enough is enough, Ready to burst, Break away, Turn away, Middle path, Break through, Going too far, Cut loose, Severance, Too much too soon, Ease off, Exaggeration, Excessiveness, Make a decision, Resolve, Reduce.

Nothing can continue in a state of increase for ever. Like a balloon that is gradually filled with air, a limit is reached and it will burst as the air breaks through the ruptured skin. Therefore after a time of Increase, there inevitably follows Breakthrough.

Following a time of increase we may have found our way through to better times and the hexagram counsels us on how to maintain our advantage in the face of difficulties in order that each may be dealt with in such a way as to prevent a reversal of our fortunes.

Breakthrough describes the process by which one cycle of time transforms into its opposite. For each cycle there is a phase of expansion, a growing domination of affairs, until a natural excess is reached. Then breakthrough occurs and conditions change into their opposite.

The duration of each cycle cannot be measured by our normal understanding of time. A complete cycle may last a fraction of a second, or a thousand years. It can be born out of a moment's profound insight, and lost again in the blink of an eye. It all depends on the prevailing circumstances, and one's inner state. The only certainty is that change will occur at some point.

Each hexagram in the Book of Changes deals with the specific details governing the navigation of our course, should we be pitched into that particular situation, while Breakthrough gives more general counsel on how to tread the middle path in order to maintain a course between limits and so remain safely in the vital current of life, in spite of any difficulties encountered along the way. Difficulties in this sense should be thought of in a positive way, as tests of our resolve and our desire to maintain a state of balance. Problems are impossible to avoid in our daily lives. What is important is the way we deal with them.

The limits by which we might safely navigate our course through life are defined by our inner attitude. A negative situation is generally broken by developing an attitude of modesty and sincerity, by trusting in the unknown to see us through. Conditions then improve.

A lake will gradually evaporate to form clouds which then fall back gently and harmlessly to the lake as rain. There is a natural balance, an harmonious relationship between the lake and the clouds. However, under certain circumstances, the rain does not fall. The clouds resist the formation of rain. They grow bigger and darker. It is inevitable that the rain must fall eventually, but it will do so with violence and storms. So it is with the psyche. Ego and self must work in balance like the clouds and the lake. Too much ego and the result is a damaging cloudburst, rather than a refreshing rain.

In a similar way, water contained in a closed vessel and subjected to sufficient heat will create steam. The resulting pressure will cause the vessel to rupture unless the steam is vented in some way, either by opening the safety valve, or directing the pressure towards carrying out useful work. Thus the system can be maintained in balance and not destroyed by negligence.

Appended Lines

111110 1) One here feels the need to alter course in order to prevent conditions breaking through into their antithesis. Attitudes prevail, internally or externally, that we judge to

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be incorrect or potentially dangerous and we fear a reversal. However, in taking action, there is a risk we might go too far. This happens when we allow the ego to rise to our defence.

Ego is protective of our self though in a misguided and somewhat simplistic sort of way. It has a tendency to overreact to situations where a subtle approach would yield more positive results. It is better therefore, under such circumstances, to do nothing.

111110 2) Here we are suspicious of events, or attitudes, or things encountered along the way and fear a deterioration in circumstances. Therefore we might be spurred into considering what actions are necessary. But it does not do to react to every disturbance like a cat twitching its ears at sounds in the night. This can be unbalancing and will cause us to stray beyond the limits, possibly precipitating the very thing we wish to avoid.

111110 3) One here feels absolutely compelled to act. Our ego tries to wrest the wheel from our grip in a desperate attempt to alter course. The way ahead might appear impassable or dangerous and it seems completely without reason that we should keep going in our present direction. But here we are counselled to listen to the wisdom of our higher self, to trust in the unknown and do nothing but await the turn of events.

Similarly, it might be that we find ourselves in a situation where we doubt the wisdom of others who appear intent on changing course in order to gain some sort of advantage for themselves, but that to challenge them would risk their indignation. We must trust our higher nature here and leave them to it, though it might mean pursuing our former course alone. To seek unfair advantage will isolate them from the way. Better then to remain in touch with the way and go on alone.

111110 4) One here is mired in a swamp of emotion. There is imbalance in our actions. We constantly veer from one obstruction to the next in a series of wild reactions instead of plotting a steady course between the hazards. We are unable to relinquish command, unable to allow our trust in the unknown to guide us through.

At such a time as this we should be guarded in what we say, and also wary of the guidance offered by others in looking for direction. Instead we should disengage, renew our trust in the mystery of the unknown, and let our instincts be our guide.

111110 5) Old habits die hard and old ways of dealing with problems are those that come most quickly to hand. But these are not best suited to the paths we tread these days and one here will do well to remember that in a formless and irrational world, we cannot rely on the traditional tools of navigation, on map and compass, and on the accounts of other travellers.

We will be tested day by day, presented with events, any one of which may cause us to veer off course. Only by resolutely trusting in fate, in the power of the unknown and resisting the urge to become emotionally involved can we hope to remain in balance,... and on course.

111110 6) One here suffers a turn of events. By not following our path with sufficient resolution, old ways of thinking creep back in. The cycle breaks through and places us on a negative course, away from our true path.

43-1906105

44

011111

Coming to Meet

Coupling

Significant Encounter

Keywords: Distraction, Interference, Chance encounter, Significant Encounter, Temptation, Promiscuity, Losing one's head, Indiscretion, Significant coincidence, Synchronicity, Self restraint, Self control, Overreaction, Deferring action.

Interpretation: If we are resolute in following the way and skilful in our judgement of what will cause a cycle of good fortune to break through into its antithesis, then the power of inner truth will radiate from our being. This will cause all manner of things, or people, or thoughts, or ideas that we might encounter thereafter to resonate in harmony with us. Things will be spontaneously attracted to us like moths to a flame and they will approach enthusiastically.

It is a potentially fruitful situation since encounters with fresh ideas, new circumstances or other people can guide or speed us along our path. However, when dealing with things that are powerfully drawn to us it is important not to allow them to knock us off balance. For this reason there is a rule that we should only go so far in meeting or engaging with what seeks to engage with us, at least until we are sure about what it is we are dealing with.

Whatever the nature of the encounter, whether it appears benevolent or not, we should take care to maintain an open mind, to be neither too defensive nor too enthusiastic in our reception. Also we must be careful to ensure that what approaches us does not approach too closely, in case its own energy subverts our path like a rhinoceros impacting on the side of a vehicle.

The danger might be clear if what comes to meet us has obviously malevolent intentions, but things are not always

so unambiguous and often our inferior self is unable to recognise the warnings, becoming too bound up with the novelty, or the attraction, or indeed the passion of the encounter to correctly judge the potential for harm in respect of one's inner balance.

A tame elephant might have no deliberately malevolent intent, yet it still possesses sufficient energy to overturn a car, without itself considering the damage it might be doing. Thinking the elephant harmless, we might come into too close a proximity, from where there is little opportunity to escape harm should retreat prove necessary.

As a rule therefore, we must be on our guard, in any encounter, not to abandon our sense of what is correct. We should under no circumstances be persuaded to abandon our personal values, our morals, our virtue. We must pause and think, and if in pausing we experience feelings of impatience, then we know we have already approached too closely.

A popular image used to describe this situation is that of a powerful man, a basically good man who, through a moment's weakness, allows himself to become involved with a prostitute. He might consider it a harmless dalliance at first since the encounter seems of little importance. So harmless and so gentle is the seductress in her approach that she flatters the man, playing on his vanity and his weakness for pleasure. If only he could pause and listen to the counsel of his inner voice he would see this is a liaison that threatens the very foundation of all he has built.

This may be read as a metaphor of other situations. For example, one might be entertaining thoughts that appeal to one's lower self in any number of ways; we are allowing ourselves to be seduced by an inferior idea that threatens to lead us astray; Perhaps we see something that attracts us and it arouses our emotions, our desires. In all cases we must be wary of what approaches, and go no further than half way in meeting it.

Appended Lines

011111 1) Even something that, on the face of it, appears quite small and harmless can do a lot of damage. The most gentle and unassuming of women can turn into the most

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fearsome harpy when secure in their marriage. The most playful little squirrel has teeth that can draw blood and pierce bone. Here we need to slow down and consider more carefully what it is we are contemplating.

011111 2) We all know there are times when we become the helpless victim of our emotions. Realising we ought to know better, there can be a temptation to be too severe in resisting whatever it is that arouses these feelings. We thrash about in desperation for an answer, a concrete solution, a form of action that might be decisive in answering our needs, but this only serves to make things worse and throws us even further off balance.

The way to deal with it is to disengage completely, to resist the urge to act, whether the pressure is internal: the nagging voice of one's ego, or external: the demands of others, or their machinations in which we feel caught, as if in a trap.

Step back, look inward, regain your sense of balance and let fate unwind of its own accord. We cannot really lose what belongs to us, even though we throw it away. Similarly, what does not belong to us we cannot keep, no matter how much we desire to hold on to it.

Locked in the grip of such emotion, how can we expect to move forwards? It is better to disengage before its effects are felt by everyone and everything around us, for otherwise how are we also to avoid our feelings having a negative effect on them?

011111 3) One here seems emotionally attached to something, to an idea or a person. We feel under pressure to do something, to make our presence felt, get ourselves noticed, either in a positive or a negative sense, if for example we are bent on proving something, or gaining recognition. Either way there is desire and its roots are in the ego. We should never do anything to make an impression on others, either favourable, or in order to hurt them. Through such action we lose our balance and are thrown off course.

011111 4) When we look down on others, what we are doing is responding to our own inferior traits which we see reflected in the actions or the attitudes of others. This is our shadow self and we must therefore be tolerant of it. The

faults we have identified and which jar upon our senses so much do so because they lie partly in ourselves - and it is in others that we see them reflected

We must always act towards others as we would have them act towards ourselves. Even when confronted with hostility and suspicion, we should always react in a magnanimous way.

011111 5) It is not proper to try to convince people about what is right. Argument and logic will always fail where emotions are concerned. We should never trouble ourselves about persuading others towards our own view. It is enough we state our position openly, then if it is right that others should come to this view then they will do so of their own accord and in their own time. The best we can do is disengage from action and persuasive argument. If we are sincere then others will close with us of their own accord.

What closes with us at this time does so out of a natural resonance, rather than having been won over by arguments or rooted out of obscurity by our analytical prowess. We did not actively seek this connection and so, at a time of gathering together, it is a connection that may be relied upon.

011111 6) When others close with us in an aggressive way, it is better to disengage than to join with them in conflict. This may not endear us to them, but it is the correct position to adopt if we are to remain in balance. Similarly, one here might be engaging too aggressively with someone else or with something in order to achieve a desired outcome, either to force a direction, or out of a fervent desire to grasp a concept that has thus far eluded one's understanding.

In either case, realising the truth of the matter we retain sufficient wisdom to withdraw. This might enable us to regain our sense of inner balance even though it does nothing to further our position in the outer world. But then one here values inner balance more highly than material gains or cheap popularity.

44-190605

45

000110

Gathering Together

Keywords: Gathering, Congregating, Collecting one's self, Gathering one's wits, Composure, Safety in numbers, Pooling resources, Saving up, Consolidation of gains, Storing one's resources.

Interpretation: When things, or people, or ideas come together and are successful in joining in mutual harmony, there is much to be gained from the combining or the gathering of their energies. Thus after the time of Coming to Meet, there follows the time of Gathering Together.

Amassing a profusion of ideas, or thoughts, or people, we must expect to encounter discord when things do not fit together as well as we might have wished. New wisdom may not quite gel from its building blocks of assembled knowledge. A crowd of individually worthy persons might bicker pointlessly instead of coming up with a mutually beneficial direction. Therefore this hexagram advises us on how we can achieve a unity of purpose, a clear sense of direction either in the outer world or the inner.

What is needed is an unambiguous focus and this means our ability to attain an unwavering stability in terms of our understanding of cosmic principles, and the way they influence nature and man. Nothing can be achieved without this stability, this acceptance of the power of the unknown. It lends direction and purpose to our lives.

There is a suggestion that we might have gathered much in terms of ideas and potential, yet remain impatient for signs of visible progress, a visible or physical manifestation of a profound improvement in our psyche or our worldly position. But it is not enough to gather such knowledge. We must apply it. We must live by the principles we study and claim to hold, if we are to truly understand them.

Appended Lines

000110 1) Here we are in possession of a great potential but as yet our direction is not clearly defined. We must look inward to our superior self and trust in the unknown. By this means we will know the right course when it reveals itself.

000110 2) Here we should avoid thinking that there might be better or quicker ways of doing things. Perhaps we fear the current of life moves too slowly and everything will be over by the time we get there. But where do we think we are we going? Life is not a destination. It is a journey. We must resist the temptation to take control of our vessel. If we can only leave it be, it will find its own way.

000110 3) Here we appreciate the power of the unknown. We are trying to connect with it, trying to align our life and our direction with its philosophy. However, in trying too hard to steer our vessel into the current, we are forcing a direction. We have become impatient, frustrated and so we remain excluded.

Striving like this makes the connection less likely and we must accept we are not quite ready to enter the mainstream. There is nothing essentially wrong in our direction other than an excess of zeal. If we continue to look inwards to our superior self we will surely recognise the way when it opens.

000110 4) Here we attain the right balance. We find ourselves borne along by the vital current of life. The way opens and by virtue of our inner light, our easy acceptance of the ways of fate and the power of the unknown, everything we do cannot help but succeed.

000110 5) Here we are struggling to connect with the power of the unknown. Perhaps we are not yet certain of its truth. We follow its philosophy but perhaps we secretly doubt it's power to bring about any real change. We consult the oracle, but do we really believe in what it says?

Perhaps we are sincere in wanting to believe, in wanting to connect because we sense that it is right for us to do so. But there are inner voices that have yet to be won round, for certainly there is resistance to our proposed direction. The

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way to deal with it is to persist, even if only a part of us believes and the ego continues to pour scorn from time to time. Slowly, sufficient truths will be revealed to silence the doubting voices, and we can then move on as an harmonious whole.

000110 6) One here is not at peace. We remain restless and desperate for change, bemoaning the fact that there are as yet few visible signs of progress, be they an inner calm or an outer improvement in our circumstances. Perhaps we seek to use the Book of changes as a magic wand to rapidly achieve such gains instead of as a means of steadily navigating our way along the correct path. Perhaps we bemoan what we think is our lack of meaningful progress and we blame fate, or bad luck. But such an attitude only displays a misunderstanding of the process. Fate is in never malevolent, purposefully singling us out for misfortune, but when we cannot see the fault in ourselves, when we reject the power of inner truth, we inevitably find ourselves excluded from its protection.

45-190605

46

011000

Pushing Upwards

Ascending

Keywords: Ascend, Rise, Lifted up, Carried aloft, Progression, Development, Improvement, Transcending, Getting on, Self improvement, Mastery, Skill, Betterment, Proficiency.

Interpretation: Correctly aligning our direction, as counselled in the time of Gathering Together, will connect us with a power of nature that will enable us to push upwards. Like a tree sprouting from its seed, new life and new direction emerges from humble beginnings. So, after the time of Gathering Together, there follows the time of Pushing Upwards or Ascending.

This is a favourable position, one that has come about by allowing ourselves to be led by the powers of the unknown. Correctly aligning ourselves with this philosophy has connected us to a source which grants us the potential for immediate growth.

Pushing upward describes such a period of growth. In its truest sense this is a natural process, like an oak tree sprouting from an acorn, a slow but sure progression. But inherent in our nature is a desire to proceed always one step further than where we are. To this end we seek to acquire knowledge, wealth, or material goods. However, if we are wise we also understand that such things grant only short term happiness. Similarly, we might seek short cuts to the improvement of our inner self, hungry for knowledge, for enlightenment, perhaps missing the point that real growth cannot be acquired this way.

Growth, like life is not a destination, but a journey, sometimes rapid, sometimes so slow as to be imperceptible. In climbing a mountain, we must first set ourselves a goal, then proceed towards it step by step. But only a fool

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presses on at breakneck speed, taking in the whole mountain in a single glance and seeing nothing but the summit the whole day long. If we are wise, we will bear the summit in mind as our ultimate destination but will consider more carefully the weather and the conditions of the terrain we encounter along the way - and measure our steps accordingly.

Appended Lines

011000 1) Remaining free of inferior thoughts, or a desire to be in control, we have become connected to the power of the unknown and are carried forward. We grow inside and might safely begin our advance to what it is we want.

011000 2) Here we are ambitious to achieve something and, though sincere in looking to correct our faults in order to connect with the power of inner truth, it is our ambition that is the biggest obstacle preventing the connection.

It is better to have no direction, no clear purpose when engaging with the power of the unknown. Better to be led by it than to try to use it to navigate towards a goal predefined by ourselves, because that goal may not be the one we are naturally destined to attain, the one our future has in store.

If we can sacrifice ambition, then this will be sufficient to enable a connection to be made. But even then we must not try to predict what direction our advance will take.

011000 3) One here meets with no resistance at all. If we wish to advance we may do so, even in a direction dictated by our ego. The ego is not always wrong, simply unreliable and too much of a blunt instrument for navigating something so subtle as one's path. Yet by chance it can sometimes send us off in a direction that is compatible with it.

If on reflection we should detect the workings of the ego in choosing our direction, we should not be put off by the discovery, beyond being aware of it and looking to work towards controlling its excesses in future. Nor should we act suspiciously at meeting no resistance, and begin to expect a fall any second, or this will cause us to stumble and lose

ground. We should keep going in this direction as far as we can.

011000 4) The way opens from here. We have proved ourselves to be sincere in the very deepest regard. We pick up the vital currents and are carried swiftly on our way.

011000 5) There is no bold advance here, no great capturing of ground but our direction is never the less correct. What we have is a slow but steady advance, step by step. It is for each of us to judge the timing of each step, relying upon our instincts to anticipate an opening of the way. We must also remember that each step is small and will not carry us very far. It is therefore also up to us to remain sensitive to a closing of the way and to withdraw in good time.

In proceeding in an incremental fashion, we should not expect each stage to bring about visible changes in our conditions. This is necessarily a slow process, but like the hands of a clock which move too slowly for the human eye to see, if we look away for a while and then back again some time later, we will see that progress has indeed been made.

011000 6) Moving into the unknown, we are unable to see very far ahead and, without care, it is easy to lose our way, or even to lose our footing and sustain injury. It is important therefore we navigate by the inner stars. Looking inwards, we know when the way is opening, when to advance, and how far before the way closes again. our progress might be slow but at least here we can rely on the sureness of our direction.

However, we should always be wary of the ego seizing control when entering unknown territory like this. It's appearance can be anticipated whenever we experience feelings of impatience to get on, whenever we desire to measure our progress against an imaginary standard.

When we experience these feelings, we need to recognise it as a warning to stand still, for the inner voice has been lost, the inner stars obscured by clouds and the dust kicked up by Ego's frantic scurrying. Standing still we prevent injury while awaiting the clearing of our inner night sky, so that

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once more we can set our course by the unchanging pattern
of its stars.

46-190605

47

010110

Oppression

Exhaustion

Restriction

Keywords: Exhausted, Depleted, Restricted, Constricted, Confined, Used up, Hampered, Big fish in a small pond, Too small a pot, Worn out, Drained, Depressed, Not appreciated, Overlooked, Passed over, Outgrown one's environment.

Interpretation: It is not possible to push upwards for ever. Eventually the energy that enabled us to enjoy a time of Pushing Upwards will become exhausted. This is not our fault. There is no suggestion that we have overreached ourselves. It is merely that the prevailing conditions are no longer sufficient to provide what it is we need to keep on growing. So, after a time of Pushing Upwards, there follows a time of Exhaustion when further growth becomes restricted.

The cause of this restriction may be internal, in the psychological sense of a restricted view, or it may be external, having its source in the wider world and the restrictive circumstances in which we find ourselves.

It might be that we are in a situation that can no longer sustain us in the direction we need to go. It could be an oppressive, or abusive relationship, or we might be working under some sort of authority that does not recognise, appreciate or care about what is really important to us.

Like a plant seeking to put down roots, if those roots are confined in too small a pot, there is a limit to how much the plant can grow and it may be that it will never succeed in reaching its full potential. Before this can happen, the plant must be removed from the pot and placed in a bigger one so its roots can grow without hindrance. Continuing to rely

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on an oppressive situation for nourishment, we will never realise our destiny.

What we need is no longer to be found in our immediate surroundings for, like the pot, they no longer sustain us. On account of this we should be wary of trusting the structure, the authority, or the system to which we have become accustomed for support, because that's the very thing that oppresses us. Continuing to look towards this system for value and meaning in our lives will exhaust us even further. We can no longer rely on what we see or hear emanating from this system, nor can we rely on what we say being appreciated or even believed because, like the pot-bound plant, we are no longer looked upon with an eye for our true potential.

These are dark times but the way to deal with them is not to engage in conflict and seek by force to break through the restrictive bounds of our confinement. This might seem illogical but overt action could easily precipitate events in which we might find it difficult to retain our balance, and this would be dangerous. Instead we must distance ourselves from contact with the authority that oppresses us. We need not believe in something in order to serve it. We say only what we need to say, do only what we need to do in order to get by, while seeking strength and meaning within.

The securest form of prison would be one in which all the inmates could be made to dream that they are free, for then they would never appreciate the necessity of escape. Only by awakening from the delusion and seeing the walls of our prison, are we then able to recognise what is truly great in life. Only by awakening from the delusion do we ever stand a chance of attaining our freedom. And for that we can only trust to fate and the mystery of the unknown.

If we do not recognise our situation as being oppressive, then it could be that we find ourselves oppressed instead by a negative view of the world and our place in it. Perhaps things are not going very well and we harbour thoughts that we have been badly served in some way, that the universe is unkind and unfeeling. Perhaps we feel that we are faced only by the pointlessness of our existence, that there is little we can do to change things and little purpose in even trying.

But a negative frame of mind has the effect of cutting us off from the Creative, from the source of energy that gives rise to all things, and so we become exhausted, depressed and despairing of our situation.

The way to deal with this is to recognise that our negative view of the universe and our place in it is mistaken. The tangible world, the material world only becomes pointless when there is no spiritual dimension to lend it any meaning, so it is foolish to seek answers in the material world without also addressing the inner self and the question of our trust in the mystery of the unknown - in the ability of things to come right by themselves.

It is not necessary to believe wholeheartedly, but merely to suspend our disbelief, to keep an open mind, to tread the middle path. This alone will be sufficient to end our isolation and restore our vital connection with the spiritual energy that emanates from the universal wellspring of the unknown.

Appended Lines

010110 1) Here we begin to feel the oppressive nature of things enclosing us. We doubt that things can ever work out and so we risk becoming isolated from the source of the Creative. Alternatively, even striving too hard, hoping too much for things to be the way we want them is enough to cause us to lose our sense of balance, and lose our way. We must have the patience to disengage and to trust that the solution we so desperately seek will reveal itself in time.

010110 2) Here we suffer from feelings of exhaustion. We feel ourselves oppressed or restricted in some way even though we might be quite fortunate in our material circumstances, so appearing from the outside to want for nothing. Perhaps then we doubt that there is any meaning to life, that we are faced only with the pointlessness of our existence.

The problem here lies in our selves, in our inability to trust that things will work out, that the way will reveal itself when the time is right. A negative frame of mind such as this has the effect of turning our circumstances, no matter how favourable on the outside into a kind of prison, where

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we feel the walls enclosing us and where escape from psychological confinement seems impossible.

A suspension of disbelief is all that is required here. If we can return to a neutral position, the spiritual power of the Creative will enter our lives and though our material circumstances may not change we will feel the walls of our prison melting away.

010110 3) Here we seek a solution to our problems by pressing ahead too far, by striving too hard to understand things. We doubt that matters can be relied upon to come out all right by themselves and so we seek to control the situation for our own advantage.

This implies that there is too much involvement of the ego, too much energy forced in a negative direction, either towards other people or things or ideas that we judge to be against us. So we harm ourselves by becoming isolated from the positive energy of the Creative and the natural protection afforded by the unknown.

Whatever the nature of the enquiry things here are not really so bad as we perceive them to be. There has been progress and understanding but before we can go any further, we need to seek a higher perspective. We need to disengage and trust that everything will work out for the best without the need for us to take control.

010110 4) Here we have adopted a negative outlook and a fixed idea regarding why things are the way they are. In this way we seek to protect ourselves from the perceived uncertainty of the situation, but this serves only as a temporary fix, a paper mask to disguise the truth that we have lost our vital connection, and thus our direction.

We need to disengage from whatever is oppressing us, and seek to renew our faith in the power of the unknown.

010110 5) Before we can correct our situation we must suspend our disbelief in the power of the unknown and return to a position of humility and trust. If we can become modest in our outlook, we can return to the way and all obstructions will be lifted of their own accord.

010110 6) It is sometimes easy to forget how far we have come under the protection and the guidance of the unknown.

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The progress we make at times is necessarily slow and doubting voices can creep up on us unawares like vines engulfing the structure of things and shutting out the light.

Trusting the unknown, accepting the way of fate will eliminate the enclosing vines and reveal the glory of what lies beneath.

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48

011010

The Well

Keywords: Centre, Source, Nourishment, Basic needs, Fundamental truths, Point of reference, Font of knowledge, Wisdom, Oracle.

Interpretation: In order that we might recover from a condition of exhaustion, or from feelings of oppression in which our growth has become restricted, we must have access to a source of proper nourishment. So, after a period of Exhaustion there follows The Well.

The Well describes a source from which we might draw the nourishment of universal truth. Generally speaking The Well can be thought of as the Book of Changes, whose use enables all of us, as diviners, to connect, via our inner selves, to the power of the unknown, to the formative principle of the Creative, or to God. More specifically, it is about viewing our situation from a higher perspective. It is like taking our eyes from the pavement and the squalor of the city, and lifting them up to the sky.

Our ability to draw nourishment from The Well depends entirely upon our state of mind, which in turn determines how we approach the Book of Changes. Receiving this hexagram suggests we may have become locked into a particular way of thinking, or we might harbour a view of the world that is incorrect. When seeking a deeper meaning to our lives it is our attitude that needs to be addressed first if any progress is to be made.

The material world changes at an alarming rate, but the source of universal truth is found always in the same place. No matter what the situation oppressing us, the solution always lies in our deeper nature.

Appended Lines

011010 1) Here we seem overly concerned with things that are not central to the real issue. We entertain ideas or busy ourselves with affairs that are trivial and somehow miss the point. And the point is how we might gain access to the source of inner truth, to the source of universal wisdom that underpins all things.

Do not dwell on issues that are irrelevant to what it is you are truly seeking. Try to look beyond your immediate situation,.. gain a cosmic perspective.

011010 2) Here we are missing the point completely. It is as if we have come to the well of universal truth, only to shoot fish instead of drawing upon its nourishment.

We are asking questions that are inappropriate, looking into things that do nothing to further our position at all. Due to this misguided attitude and ignorance we cannot draw the wisdom of the well even if we try. It is as if the vessel we use to hold the water is leaking or broken.

We take only the answers we want rather than sitting down and trying to understand those we have already received, but perhaps did not want to hear. We must always address the issues raised by those unpleasant truths within ourselves before we can ever hope to move on.

Here we cannot be guided until we have repaired ourselves.

011010 3) Here we are capable of drawing upon the power of inner truth and of comprehending it, but still insist on clinging to old ways of thinking. Similarly we might be in a position to be of assistance to others by acting as a guide to the source of inner wisdom, but how can we expect others to drink from this well if we do not drink from it ourselves?

011010 4) Here we seek answers in a spirit of sincerity and openness and there is every reason to expect we might be successful in our quest. However, this is not the correct time to press for a solution. The way to deal with the situation is to remain persevering, to look inward, to continue improving our understanding of our selves and our path. This way the solution will reveal itself when the time is right.

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011010 5) It is one thing to draw water from a well, but for it to be of any value we must drink it. There is only so much to be gained from reading about how the power of inner truth brings about changes in one's life. At some point we must begin following the teachings, make them part of our lives, if we are to truly fulfil ourselves.

011010 6) Here we draw from the well without any hindrance. Whatever obstacles there might have been in aligning ourselves with the power of inner truth have been overcome and the way is open. One here should not try to hide from this connection.

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101110

Revolution

Change

Keywords: Moving on, Change, Transformation, Preparation, Renewal, Reform, Renovation, Divestment, Clearing out, Spring Clean, Obsolescence, Outmoded forms, Outdated Institutions, Overturn, Overthrow, Rejuvenate, Revolution.

Interpretation: Correctly drawing upon a source of inner wisdom we are able to correct our attitude so that a revolution in our thinking becomes possible. Therefore, after The Well comes Revolution.

If we can achieve a state of inner balance, regardless of the circumstances, be they good or bad, then we have brought about a revolution in our outlook on life. Though our worldly circumstances do not necessarily change, the way we view things undergoes a fundamental transformation, and what we once considered to be troubling is no longer viewed as important. We can transcend our emotional attachment to a particular problem by simply letting it go.

The time of revolution is an auspicious one, ushering in a new paradigm. It is a time of transformation. Like an animal shedding last year's skin, it requires us to make a conscious effort to change our way of thinking, to let go of old habits, to disengage from striving to understand or control outcomes. Instead, we place our trust in the way of fate and its ability to work things out for the best. Establishing this attitude of trust, this absolute reliance on the workings of the unknown, is the first stage in bringing about the changes we require.

Appended Lines

101110 1) One here is advised to disengage and wait for things to reveal themselves. If we can keep an open mind we will know what is correct when we see it. We will know what course is the right one when we encounter it.

101110 2) A revolution in our outlook results in a state of inner balance. This means that we are not disturbed by events be they good or bad. Our emotions remain in check and do not carry us off in either direction. They do not render us giddy with joy, nor do they lock us in chains of misery.

If we can approach things with due caution, but without unnecessary foreboding, and on gaining ground if we can resist the temptation to relax our caution, then we set the right example and others will have the confidence to follow our lead.

This can be interpreted literally to mean people in the outer world, or it can be taken as a metaphor of those emotional elements within us that are currently jostling for predominance. They will see this way is a good way and align themselves towards it like iron filings influenced by the powerful and yet entirely invisible force of magnetism.

101110 3) The time of revolution implies great changes, a clean sweep, a fundamental transformation of one's outlook. But this cannot be achieved overnight and requires perseverance. It is a fundamental part of our journey, the backdrop against which we carry on our lives.

We meet the turns of the way one after the other, each time looking to correct our selves, to remain in balance. Thus, slowly, we revolutionise our outlook and begin to see that what was once a constant source of inner torment, is no longer important at all.

One here is advised against expecting to gain too much too soon and equally, on understanding the degree of perseverance required, one is advised against giving things up as hopeless.

101110 4) A revolution in our attitude does not come about under the command of our ego. The navigation of our course must be carried out under supervision of our higher

nature, which has no goal other than maintaining the faultless direction of our vessel through waters thick with hazard.

The ego is too easily tempted astray by short term destinations along the way. It favours a pleasure cruise that circles the small sea of familiar experience, regardless of the frequency with which it fetches us up on reefs and steers us into storms in pursuit of its capricious and hedonistic goals. But if we can trust in our higher nature we make no such mistakes and our vessel is guided to an ocean on the other side of the world, an ocean entirely without reefs and without storms, where the greatest pleasure in life is life itself.

By relinquishing our egocentric approach, by addressing the subject of this enquiry with humility and sincerity, we have made an important connection here and our perception of the true nature of things begins to change for the better. Our idea, our thoughts, our plan of action, our understanding of the way things work is essentially correct and we are advised to proceed on this basis, for the way is beginning to open.

101110 5) One here has gained an important understanding of the problem and this enables a fundamental shift in attitude to take place. The revolution begins, the changes in our outlook have effects that make themselves felt. Our vessel alters course for calmer waters. The way is open.

101110 6) Although changes have begun, one here is advised against proceeding too boldly. If a revolution is to be successful it is better brought about in small stages so that the inferior elements within us are hardly aware of the changes taking place. If we seek to gain too much, our inferior self sees what is happening and rises up in revolt. Thus we suffer a setback in our attitude and lose our way.

This can happen when we seek to measure our progress. Measurement implies the involvement of the ego which would seek to deride our efforts and take back control of the vessel.

The important thing is to address only the obstacle that is in front of us, to steer lightly away from the sharp rocks that threaten to pierce our hull as we make way. Focus on this

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alone and do not think about what might lie in wait beyond the horizon. Thinking ahead is the ego panicking, questioning doubting the wisdom of our course.

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50

011101

Ting

Cauldron

The Sacrificial Vessel

Keywords: Cauldron, Melting Pot, Ritual vessel, Offering, Sacrifice, Offer up, Empty one's cup, Purify one's soul, Noble, Alchemy, Spiritual transformation.

Interpretation: If we seek to bring about a revolution in our way of thinking, we must sacrifice what is inferior inside of us so what is superior might shine all the brighter. The cauldron can be thought of as a sacrificial vessel, as was used in ancient times in order to make offerings to a higher power, to God, or to the Creative. The Cauldron can also be seen as a metaphor of one's heart. In this way, the thoughts or attitudes we carry in our hearts become the offerings we make to our own higher power, not just on special occasions, but all the time.

When our attitude is correct, the offerings we make are good ones and they increase the higher power, which then bestows its blessings back upon us. However, when our heart labours under negative thoughts, under misconceptions, delusions or the emotional excesses of the ego, the offering is poor and the higher power is diminished. How can we expect any blessings in return if what we offer, if what we carry in our hearts is negative or corrupt?

The greatest sacrifice, the one that brings about the greatest increase, and consequently wins the greatest blessing is simply to accept that we are not in control. If we can accept the ability of all things to work themselves out through the power of the unknown, if we can sacrifice the ego and its ambition to control, to determine outcomes in order that we might directly benefit from them, then we shall establish a

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fundamental connection with the cosmos and blessings will flow down.

Appended Lines

011101 1) Here we should examine the contents of our heart, for there are things in it that we can do without. There may be pride, worldly ambition, negative views of life, or of other people. These are not worthy offerings and should be tipped out. Then something better might take its place.

011101 2) One here receives blessings and things around begin to resonate, though not always in a positive sense. Our balance is threatened and it is important therefore we should remain detached. We must not be drawn into the net of others who might be driven by motives inferior to our own.

Similarly an awareness of our own advance might subtly alter our attitude, heralding a return of the ego which lays false claim to the gains we have made by proper means. This altering of the composition of the contents of our heart will poison the perpetual offering we make, and shut us off from the cosmos.

011101 3) Something in our heart prevents the offering reaching the higher power. Perhaps one here has not yet attained a sufficient level of modesty and sincerity. There are doubts, a lack of genuine trust in the ability of things to work themselves out, a resistance to being led by powers beyond sense and reason.

011101 4) Here we have abandoned our path. We neglect our inner voice and our heart is open to thoughts that do not constitute a fit offering. Even if something good were to come along we would not know it, so blind we are, through carelessness and neglect of our inner self.

011101 5) By maintaining a sense of what is correct we truly serve what is highest in ourselves, and our vision of the world matches that of the Creative. One here receives the blessings of the Creative.

011101 6) Here we set an example for all to follow. Through an innate sense of modesty and sincerity, through inner strength and outer compliance we hold instinctively to

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the way, no matter how it twists and turns. Everything here is complete and the Time of the Cauldron reaches its Zenith.

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100100

The Arousing

Shock

Energising

Thunder

Keywords: Awakening, Surprise, Shock, Invigorating, Motivating, Life affirming, Stimulus, Cause for reflection, Challenge one's faith, Challenge one's conceptions, Pulled up sharply, Age and experience, Maturity, Resilience, Composure, Unsettling events.

Interpretation: Only if we have obtained blessings can we remain unflinching in the midst of events that might otherwise prove shocking or unsettling. So, after The Cauldron, The Arousing, or Shock follows.

When we are subjected to unsettling events, it is easy to lose our balance by reacting in a disproportionate manner. Shock can mean something bad, such as the loss of a loved one, crashing our car, suffering personal injury, losing our job, losing a cherished possession, being passed over for promotion, failing to get the pay rise we were counting on - or it can mean something which on the face of it appears to be good, such as winning a lot of money, passing an examination, gaining an interview, or some other long awaited success.

However, the event need not be so obvious as any of the above and can be said to include anything that causes us to pause and think. It can be something like the sudden realisation of our own mortality, it can be the contemplation of our place in the cosmos, or indeed anything that challenges our views. Shock, from the cosmic perspective then, is anything that causes us to reconsider the workings of the universe and our place in it.

The central message of the hexagram is that when we are faced with something unsettling, the essential course is to remain balanced and to view our changed or changing circumstances as an opportunity for growth, as an opportunity to learn something valuable about ourselves and the nature of the universe.

Shock serves as life's ultimate reminder that we are not in control. Shock is an event, a message, a turn of fate that directly challenges the ego's sense of security. The ego fails utterly in the face of a profoundly shocking experience and backs down for a while until it feels safe to return again. At such times, when the ego is subdued, we can feel a sense of calm and might more easily look to developing our higher selves. So, repeated unsettling events, experienced over a lifetime come to clearly delineate the difference between young and old.

The old sense more the hand of fate in things and are less easily disturbed by shocking events, while the young cling confidently to the leadership of their untarnished egos, and consequently can suffer badly from a sudden fall.

Receiving this hexagram, we are challenged to make sense of things and to attain a higher perspective. We are asked to re-examine the way we look at the world and to question why we hold the views that we do. Are our views valid? Are they reasonable? Do they conform to the true pattern of the cosmos, or do they follow conventional wisdom? The message is not to seek the mediocre truth of our rational senses, but the higher truth we each carry inside of us, to seek the insight that comes from attaining the cosmic perspective.

Without gaining this perspective, shock can only cause us to react in an emotional way. But if we search for the meaning, if we sense the hand of fate in every turn of the way, if we allow ourselves to be led by it, then nothing can disturb us from our course.

Appended Lines

100100 1) One here has been pulled up sharp by events. Perhaps we feel our hand was unfairly dealt, that we have suffered a bad fate. But time will reveal this to be the only way we could have learned what it was necessary for us to

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learn. We must sense in our self the turn of fate and learn from the experience what we can - for any situation, good or bad can yield valuable insights.

100100 2) Brooding darkly over a bad turn of fate can be profoundly unsettling and will do nothing but make what on the face of things is a bad situation even worse. It can cause us to doubt the existence of a higher truth, a guiding principle. We might feel the universe to be a cold and lonely place. Our emotions become engaged and we lose our balance, we lose our way.

If we have suffered a loss of any kind, we have to let it go. Nothing can be gained by plunging recklessly after it, besides we cannot really lose what is rightfully ours even if we throw it away. Similarly we cannot expect to hold onto something we were not meant to keep for ever, no matter how hard we try, or wish it to be otherwise.

Here we need to look again at the situation with an eye for what we can learn. Then we will see that events were exactly what we required in order to gain a higher perspective on things, to dislodge old thoughts, old habits, old attitudes that were holding us back. From the ruins of this place, we can then move on.

100100 3) A bad turn of fate can seem completely overwhelming, plunging us into a situation from which there seems to be no way out. The temptation is to career blindly from one immovable obstacle to the next, imagining that movement, that struggling is somehow better than succumbing, that going down fighting is better than surrendering meekly.

But at such a time as this, our emotions are unbalanced and we see only the darker side of everything. The way to deal with it is to stop struggling, stop viewing things in a negative way, indeed to stop viewing the situation at all, for one here is under the influence of an unreliable emotion. If we can keep still, even for a moment, then the solutions will reveal themselves and we will be granted the insight we need. Only then will we know the path that we must follow.

100100 4) In a situation like this we feel ourselves mired in doubt. Circumstances have challenged the very foundation of what we believe and we may have lost the will to go on.

The existence of negative emotion should alert us to the fact that we are not seeing things correctly, that we need to take a step back and begin viewing things from a higher perspective.

This is not our fault. Circumstances have unfolded of their own accord, but they present us none the less with an important challenge. Whether we lose the way here or not is entirely down to how we react. If we can look at this as an opportunity to learn, to gain a higher perspective, then we shall not remain mired for very long. But if we continue to view things darkly then we shall remain mired for a very long time indeed.

100100 5) One here has been subjected to many unsettling events. Nothing seems to be going right. We suffer shock at every turn. On the face of it we seem cursed, but we can get through this testing time unscathed if we distance ourselves from our emotions.

We must keep still and do only what we feel is correct in every situation as we find it. We must observe our emotions as they run here and there and ask ourselves: who is it inside of me that runs around this way? Then Ego will realise its foolishness and allow our higher self to take charge.

Only then can we expect to be granted the insight necessary for seeing the connections. Only then will we know instinctively what has to be done.

100100 6) If we believe in the existence of a higher power, in God or the Creative, this can make us especially vulnerable when subjected to unsettling events. When faced with the loss of something or someone dear, it can cause us to view that higher power in a negative light. Similarly if we have placed great trust in someone and they have let us down at a crucial moment, we might be tempted to turn against them, to blame them for our situation.

But one here is advised to turn away from the negative effects of shock. We must not pick through the wreckage of what has happened and seek to apportion blame. Shock can bring a sudden end to things, but its effects can also give birth to what is new, or it can energise what was failing, lending renewed strength and direction.

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All things work out as they are meant to do, but only if we can disengage from emotions that cause us to lose our sense of inner balance. This applies equally whether on the face of it the effects of the shock are positive or negative. Either way, losing our balance, reacting like an emotional loose canon, will subvert our path and those paths that interweave our own. In all cases we must gain the higher perspective and move on.

51-020807

52

001001

Keeping Still

Stillness

Keywords: Pause, Reflect, Stillness, Calm down, Think, Meditate, Self-control, Balance, Equilibrium, One thing at a time, All in good time, Everything in its place, Resist the urge, Discipline, Control, Jumping the gun.

Interpretation: Before we can gain the higher perspective necessary for negotiating a period of shock or change, we must learn to disengage our emotions, to keep our inner thoughts calm and quiet. We must learn how to keep still. Therefore, after a time of Shock, if we are unable to respond properly, there comes a time when must learn the merits of Keeping Still.

There are times when we must act, but equally there are times when we must hold back, when we must positively resist the urge to act, to speak, to do something. These are times when we are ruled by our emotions and cannot see the way ahead clearly enough to navigate our path with any certainty. These are times when we risk making a situation worse by acting unwisely.

All that can be done to actively engage with the situation confronting us has been done. A critical limit has been reached, like a boundary beyond which it would not be wise for us to pass. Only if we can keep still will things follow their natural course, only by keeping still will what we need to complete ourselves emerge.

We are advised to disengage, to keep our mind and our emotions perfectly still. Like trying to see what lies beneath the waters of a lake, no matter how pure the water is by nature, things will be obscured when the surface is perturbed. But if we can be patient and wait for the ripples to die away, if we can bring calm to the surface, then all that lies beneath will be revealed.

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When our emotions are aroused they tend to rule our thinking. They react in a simple and straight forward way to fears and to worries. We must recognise what inferior motives might be working in the background here that give rise to these emotions, be they pride, conceit, pretentiousness, greed or envy. Nor do our motives need necessarily suggest a negative course. It might be that we have become too eager to correct our faults,.. that we are trying too hard. We must root these motives out and distance ourselves from them, not by action, but by stillness. We must return to neutrality. We must regain our sense of balance.

The ego, our inferior self, is always on the lookout for ways to preserve our persona, that is our sense of who we believe we are. It seeks to deliver us from imagined slights or external threats to what it sees as its right to control our destiny. It seeks to measure our progress against illusory standards and, finding us always wanting, it urges us into action. It sends us spinning wildly in search of solutions to problems that are in fact entirely beyond the grasp of reason.

The way to deal with it is to disengage, to distance our emotions from the situation and give things the space and the time to work themselves out. One who jumps into the lake and eagerly splashes about can expect to create ripples that will only obscure his view of the depths. Any subsequent movement, even a conscious and well meaning retreat will cause still more ripples. But by standing still for long enough, the ripples will subside and the tranquil clarity of the lake will be restored.

Keeping still might be translated simply as "calm down" or "don't panic". It implies a need to identify and empty ourselves of emotion. We can do this by counting to ten before we speak, or we can seriously empty our hearts of inferior offerings by a period of inner reflection. Then we might attain a profound state of keeping still through quiet meditation, and through stillness see what was previously invisible to us.

Appended Lines

001001 1) Here we feel anxious to make progress, to achieve what we see as an important goal for ourselves. We anticipate it, we long for it to be. But wanting in this way cannot make something happen. Indeed all it can do is subject us to a storm of emotion. We should distance ourselves from wanting, give things the space to work themselves out. Only then will things work out for the best.

001001 2) Here we feel under pressure to act. Ego has measured our progress and found us wanting. It urges us to do something, to achieve something. But to take action under the direction of our ego is never wise, for if we are caught up in a storm of emotion how can we expect to discern the correct path? How can we expect to act in a balanced manner?

001001 3) Here we recognise the need to disengage. Perhaps we seek to force ourselves into a state of quiet, but nothing forced is free of emotion and therefore cannot attain a state of true quiet. The way to deal with it is to reflect and to seek out those elements that might be at work in the background of our psyche, arousing our desire to act. Only by first calmly seeking the underlying cause can true quiet then be achieved.

If we want to align our course with the way of fate, it is not necessary to believe in it wholeheartedly, but merely to empty ourselves of what is inferior and to do nothing, to simply keep ourselves still.

001001 4) One here desires something. Perhaps we fear we shall not attain our goal, for if it were certain we would then surely we would not desire it so much as this. But desire furthers nothing. We must disengage from it and bring our heart to rest.

001001 5) When we labour at the behest of our emotions and feel compelled to act without yet being certain of our way, what we say or do and the choices we make are all bound to reflect our lack of inner calm. Therefore we would do well to measure our words carefully.

001001 6) Here we understand the merits of keeping still and can do so without arousing the opposition of our

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inferior self, our Ego. Thus we attain a sense of detachment and peace of mind. We resist the will to act and so allow all things the space and the time to develop themselves.

52-020807

53

001011

Gradual Development The Marrying Woman

Keywords: Easy does it, Steady pace, All in good time, Take your time, Being thorough, Reliability, Consistency, Proper foundations, Patience, Due process.

Interpretation: Keeping still, we allow things to right themselves of their own accord. Keeping still we grant the time and the space for things to develop gradually and in accordance with the underlying laws of nature, each according to its correct path. So after Keeping Still there follows a time of Gradual Development.

If we are unable to correct ourselves, if we hold on to inferior attitudes, we will lose our way. The time of Gradual Development then offers advice on how we might regain our sense of direction, how a bad turn of affairs might be resolved, how the problems we encounter can be righted, and how the challenges to our determination to walk the middle path can be overcome.

Change does not occur overnight. Genuine progress is a natural process and sometimes, like the hands of a clock, no movement can be perceived if we try to observe or measure it directly. Only by turning away, by accepting the need to wait can we look again at some point in the future and see that progress has indeed been made.

One here is advised to remain steady, to remain persevering and constant, to remain perfectly in balance. If we can resist the nagging voice of our ego, or our inferior self, then change will gradually be brought about like a tree putting down roots. So slowly, so patiently do the roots pervade every crevice that they form an indestructible base for the tree to grow from. So what is fresh and soft and new slowly establishes for itself a place in what already exists.

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Like in ancient times, when a woman was given in marriage, she would always defer to the wishes of the man, so too we should act with deference to the needs of the situation before us. Through deference and gentleness, the woman eventually became an integral part of the man's life, advancing herself gradually through association with her husband. So too, through gentleness we advance ourselves by moving with, rather than challenging our situation.

Whatever the nature of this enquiry, we are advised to take our time, to let things develop slowly and naturally. If we are impatient to get on and do something, we would be better to ask ourselves who it is inside of us that is so impatient, and what good can such impatience possibly achieve?

Appended Lines

001011 1) Here we find ourselves following the way. We are in the fortunate position of being in the Tao, yet we are vulnerable to feelings of doubt. We struggle with our impatience and look for short cuts to attain our goals. The path we are following is one that unfolds slowly.

There is no way to circumvent the workings of fate. All will unfold exactly as it should if we can only resist the temptation to interfere. We need to disengage and allow things the space and time to unfold naturally.

001011 2) Here we journey true to our course and progress is surely being made. Perhaps we sense it in our heart and take time to rejoice. But at such a moment as this we are just as prone to losing our way as we are when faced with danger. Self satisfaction can render us blind and insensible when the next turn in way comes along.

It is enough to sense the progress we have made and, remaining mindful of the fact that our journey is not over, move swiftly on. With great effort and perseverance the way can be realised, but with carelessness it can be lost in the blinking of an eye.

001011 3) Pressing on too far, we encounter difficulties. A situation unfolds which appears bad or hostile in some way. The temptation is to engage with it, to do battle, for how

else are we to save our skin? But this is not the right way of dealing with things.

We need to resist the voice of the ego, forever urging us to act. We need to disengage and allow things to work themselves out. If something is lost to us by adopting this approach, we should not run after it. We should let it go.

001011 4) Here we find ourselves in a situation that is not altogether ideal but we are advised to be accommodating, to adapt to things as we find them. If we can accept this with good grace and without resentment then we demonstrate our ability to yield to the way instead of resisting it.

Remember that the journey is not yet over. Think of this only as a place to rest, to take stock in our voyage along the way. Yielding to the situation enables us eventually to navigate beyond it.

The danger comes when we cannot accept things the way they are, when all we see are the imperfections, and we feel ourselves compelled to act, to put things right, to wriggle out of something we feel threatened by or uncomfortable with. Then we shall surely lose our way.

001011 5) One here moves steadily along his path. Gradually we have adopted the correct attitude. We resist the urge to get involved at every turn and we see the wisdom in allowing things to develop naturally.

Still we might not feel much in the way of progress has been gained and that our passive attitude only puts us at odds with others who do not understand our motives. It is unavoidable that in order to walk this path we must spend time in periods of introspection. This sets us apart, but if we can only persevere, our path will lead to what it is we seek.

001011 6) One here attains the heights of success. By adopting a correct, waiting attitude, we invite the protection of fate and the situation rights itself. The way opens. Our vessel picks up the vital current of life and we are carried along by it.

53-250605

54

110100

The Marrying Maiden

Keywords: Wanting, Being premature, Jumping to conclusions, Marry in haste repent at leisure, Impatience, Eagerness, Position of no influence, Short-sightedness, Transient phenomenon, Noise, Chatter, Whim, Fancy, Seduction, Great potential subverted by weakness.

Interpretation: If we are unable to allow things to work themselves out naturally, if we interfere in a situation before the proper time, we will compromise the gains we might have attained had we been more patient and accepting of our position. This hexagram illustrates the dangers of wanting or forcing things towards a predetermined goal, of trying to control an outcome purely to one's own advantage.

In China, in ancient times there was a strict code governing the marriage of a young woman. This involved an arranged match. Also, if the girl was a younger sister, she might be expected to become a second wife to the husband of the elder sister. In such a marriage, the younger sister remained in a subservient position to the elder, or more senior wife.

Interfering in the proper course of things by being too eager, by taking matters into her own hands for example was considered immoral and it was believed nothing good could come from a maiden seeking to control the outcome of things to her own advantage.

This hexagram need not be read exclusively as being about relationships between people. In a wider sense it can be read as a metaphor of any situation we find ourselves in that is not of our own choosing, a situation in which we have no power of self determination, but one in which we must never the less somehow make our way.

Life itself is such a situation. We have no control over our coming into being and no control over what follows during the course of our lives. The forces that control the

movement of events are more powerful than we are. We must therefore be accepting and allow ourselves to be led. Seeking to force our way at an inappropriate time, seeking to cut across fate we risk losing our direction - we risk losing the protection of the cosmos.

In such a situation, we must conduct ourselves with the manners of a maiden given in an arranged marriage, for such a one is not entirely without power, so long as the nature of that power is understood and used wisely. Seeking to dominate or to control can lead only to a loss of harmony. If, on the other hand, we can remain receptive and persevering, even powers infinitely greater than ourselves can be made to respond in harmony with our wishes.

If, on the other hand, we are a slave to our desires, then we will dispense with all notion of what constitutes proper behaviour. We will focus only on satisfying our immediate needs without consideration for what might follow in the future.

If we are hungry for sex we will try to seduce someone with no thought for what might follow in the morning. But if we are looking for marriage, for something more long lasting we understand that we must take our time, that we must allow time for things to run their proper course. This is the difference between seduction and courtship.

In courtship we feel our way. We hold to what we think is right, and if we are wise we let go whenever something feels wrong. The rules of courtship cannot be written down. They are irrational and one's success depends entirely on being able to follow the way correctly. Otherwise we marry for the wrong reasons and our happiness is curtailed.

Wanting anything too much, perhaps for fear of gaining nothing at all, will inevitably lead to compromises in our happiness, like someone who marries the first person to come along purely out of a fear of being left on the shelf. We marry in haste and repent at our leisure.

Ego measures our progress against an imaginary standard, and always finds us wanting. It urges us to act even though we may not be ready. We are panicked into making a move

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before we have had time to consider what it is we are getting into.

The very presence of such feelings should warn us that we are in danger of losing our balance. When we try to move without our sense of balance we will surely fall over. Any situation in which we sense our emotions are aroused, in which we feel we are being pulled off balance should be sufficient to cause us to withdraw at once and to consider very carefully what it is we are doing.

If such a situation is thrust upon us by others who perhaps seek deliberately to manipulate us into taking a course of action that feels wrong, then again we should withdraw and take time to understand the true nature of things. Only by preserving our neutrality, by remaining in a state of emotional balance can we hope to keep to our proper path.

In a still more subtle sense, this hexagram can also be related to our desire to improve ourselves, and to follow the correct path or to understand a situation over which we have no control, nor any chance of ever fully comprehending. Wanting something too much, even if we are sincere, can be sufficient to subvert our chances of ever finding it.

Bringing the ego round to the benefits of aligning ourselves with the way, with Tao, it can set off like a lusty bloodhound in search of it. But Tao has no scent that can be followed, at least not by the ego, and so it drags us here and there in wild chase of trails that are nothing but delusions. It makes a stab at understanding some grand concept and then seeks assurances, perhaps from the Book of changes, that it is on the right lines.

The overriding message then is that whatever the subject of the inquiry we should remember that we are not in control of the situation here and therefore we have no direct power to influence the outcome of things. But if we can remain receptive, if we can yield to the way as it unfolds and avoid the desire to cut across fate, to manipulate or challenge the outcome, then things will respond and we can achieve what it is we want.

Appended Lines

110100 1) Here we find ourselves in a position of no influence, like in ancient China when a young girl surrendered herself in marriage to a nobleman who was already married. This was considered acceptable, but tradition ruled she could only enter the household in a subordinate position to the first wife.

If the girl found herself unhappy in the role of second wife, change was unlikely to be brought about by agitating, or by competing with the one who held the power, the true mistress of the house, for this would only upset the harmony of the entire household. If instead the second wife could observe the proper conduct of gentle deference and quiet perseverance, this would be more likely to win the confidence of the first wife who would then respond in a more kindly way.

This can be read in a literal sense whenever we find ourselves in a subordinate position, yet wish to gain favour from some higher power. It can also be read in a more metaphysical sense, as one in a subordinate position to the cosmos. If we seek its protection, if we seek answers to the big questions, the big mysteries, then we must observe the proper conduct at all times. We must invite the confidence of that higher power and have the patience to wait for it. Such a thing cannot be demanded.

110100 2) Here we find ourselves in a situation where, on the face of it, there seems to be little that is worth clinging to. We feel ourselves surrounded by things of no value, that our path has led us into a spiritual or a moral vacuum. It may seem that what we have to offer is of no interest, that our qualities are not valued by those around us.

If this is the case we should not lose our sense of what is right and proper within ourselves, and we should not give up on what we value just because others do not share our vision of things. Externally we see so little we can relate to we may as well be blind, but turning inwards, relying on the inner eye, we can hold to our values, respect what is good inside ourselves and thus see well enough to navigate our way.

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110100 3) Being led always by our desire, not stopping to think what it is we are doing or allowing proper time for things to work themselves out we become a slave to our whims. We follow wherever Ego leads us and consequently do not find happiness or contentment in anything for very long.

110100 4) In early adulthood, unstable emotions can pressure us into seeking relationships or into making choices simply out of a fear of being left behind, or perhaps because everyone else seems to be getting on with life and we don't want to lose face by appearing backward or strange. Thus there is a danger of settling with someone or something for entirely the wrong reasons. We might be lucky, but more likely we will sacrifice our chances of long term happiness.

Here we are advised that it is better to wait for what is right, for the path that opens naturally to us, even if this means waiting well beyond what might be considered the usual time for such things.

110100 5) Here we are counselled on the issue of modesty and good grace. If in acting from a higher moral or spiritual perspective, our motives are misunderstood, we should not seek to bring others round to our way of thinking by attempting to impress them with our "superiority".

In a spiritual sense, no one person is better than any another. We are all born equal. In a spiritual sense, the humblest and the poorest in society are as valuable as a priest or a sage and thus worthy of the same consideration, the same respect.

No matter how well developed our inner self might be, we must take care not to conduct ourselves in a manner that could be interpreted as being in any way self righteous or superior. To reject others because we perceive them to be inferior serves only to highlight our own imperfections.

110100 6) Here we have learned our lines and speak well but do we really mean what we say? Like an actor we assume the role of a follower of inner truth, but could it be that our heart is actually empty? Could it be that sacrifice we offer is poor and so no blessings flow down?

Michael Graeme

Inwardly, perhaps, there is still desire. For all our words and noble study of what is true, there might be impatience at the slow way our fate unwinds, and so we fall. It's better we do nothing for not because until we can correct this weakness in ourselves, anything we do will only lead us further from whatever it is we seek.

54-020807

55

101100

Abundance

Fullness

Keywords: Richness, Abundance, Prosperity, Overflowing, Much to do, Multiple choices, Profusion, Complexity, Overloaded, Burning out, Calls for a decision, Executive action, Discernment.

Interpretation: If we can wait patiently for what we want, blessings flow from the Creative and we reap our harvest. But such a time of abundance does not last for ever and we must make what progress we can while remaining vigilant for signs the way is closing again. Then we must withdraw, or we risk the situation turning to stagnation.

We have made progress but receiving this hexagram warns us that the way might be closing and we must be prepared to withdraw. After successfully pursuing a certain avenue, there comes a time when it is unwise to go on taking advantage. Instead we must look to securing the longer term good by letting go and trusting in the power the unknown. Only this can bring an end to the eclipse and set us back once more on the path of progress.

In the course of any journey, the weather cannot be expected to remain pleasant for ever. When the clouds gather and the storm threatens, when the sun sets and darkness overtakes the land, the wise traveller seeks the sanctuary of the indoors. He holds to his thoughts and remains quiet by the fireside until the light of dawn brings calm once more. Only then might he expect to continue safely on his journey.

When we have reached a certain critical point in our travels, to forge ahead recklessly is to invite misfortune.

Appended Lines

101100 1) There is a limit to what might be achieved even when the times are favourable. Here we might advance but we must also be receptive for signs the way is closing. We may sense this moment in ourselves or in a sudden decline in the resonance of the people or the things we engage with. Then we must withdraw at once.

101100 2) Our advance has been blocked. We must withdraw and look to our inner selves. If the thought of breaking away causes us any feelings of regret or if we detect any signs of inner resistance, this is a sure sign our ego is engaged. Then we must look to repairing our attitude, for if we nurse wounds and seek to blame them on an adverse fate, this will close us off from the protection of the cosmos.

101100 3) The times in which we might have an influence on matters, or in which the power of inner truth can seek us out, are transient and sensitive to the ripples of emotion that break upon the surface of our psyche. At such times as these, though we might mean well, there is little we can do, like seeking to row a boat when we have a broken arm. The best we can do is withdraw and let things go their own way. Understanding this is all that is required for the times to change.

101100 4) Understanding the situation and looking to correct our attitude, the eclipse passes and we are able to make way. But we must guard against self satisfaction for it is at such times as these that we are most vulnerable. The slightest relapse in our thinking will cause the way to close again.

101100 5) We do not need to force matters here. Indeed looking too closely for signs of the trail ahead can blind us to its subtle turns. We have to trust that what we need to do, the way we need to go will reveal itself when the moment is right.

The way is opening.

101100 6) One here possesses an abundance of things but keeps himself apart and so is confined in his advance. He is

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like one who locks his treasures in a dark house and peers out at the world through a crack in the curtains.

When we receive an abundance of blessings, we should not try to keep such good fortune to ourselves out of a desire to remain in control of it. To do so would be to risk losing what we have. We must be selfless and recognise our position in relation to other people or things.

At a time when it is right for us to have a positive influence on the paths of others, to dismiss them as hopeless, or to hold ourselves aloof from the world out of pride or arrogance will be to lose our direction.

Still another way of reading this situation is that we might be in receipt of valuable insights that could easily change our lives for the better, and yet through holding on to old ways of thinking, or through a reluctance to let go, we waste the potential of acting at the critical moment.

Overall then there is the sense of our possessing something valuable that isn't being put to good use. This may be because we are unaware of it, or because we are in some sense deliberately holding back, or holding ourselves in reserve.

55-060705

56

001101

The Wanderer

Travelling

Keywords: Strangeness, Unfamiliar territory, Travelling, Lone voyage, Foreign lands, Insecurity, Exploration, Without influence, Newcomer, Foreigner, Guest, Tact, Diplomacy, Modesty, Honesty, Sincerity.

Interpretation: Dealing correctly with an abundance of blessings, of power, or good fortune should bring about a change of circumstances for the better. For example the sudden acquisition of material wealth may cause us to quit our lowly dwelling and seek to make our home elsewhere. But the theme of travelling applies also to the inner world where a time of abundance brings not material wealth but psychological insight which causes a shift of inner attitude which can be described as a form of transcendence, or enlightenment.

Either way the suggestion is one of moving away from the past, of being empowered to explore new territory. If we are in possession of an abundance of blessings or potential, yet cannot move on, then we will stagnate.

The hexagram describes the right attitude to adopt when taking a journey abroad. The idea is illustrated by the image of a voyager in a foreign land where things are strange to him and he is not known by anyone. Movement suggests change which must be dealt with wisely but also at such times there is a lack of stability in the voyager's life which renders him more vulnerable than usual.

In the inner world, we are all wanderers and we cannot rely on our previous position to gain us favours because here such things have no value. The best we can do to keep safely to the way is to remain modest and trust only in the power of the unknown. If we cannot do this then our progress will be halted. Seeking to force our way through

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strange lands relying only on the strengths of past experience, we lose the protection of the unknown and so invite misfortune.

Conversely, we invite the protection of the unknown when we act in accordance with what we feel is right, with what is universally true - that is a truth that transcends the petty distinctions men clothe themselves in. To the unknown such distinctions are worthless and all men are judged to be the same.

Appended Lines

001101 1) One here is overly concerned with matters that are not important. We are caught up with things we have no hope of ever changing, or we contemplates qualities in people or things that are irrelevant.

Whatever the situation, we are advised that we are entirely missing the point and should look closer if we wish to recognise what is truly important.

001101 2) If ,when we travel, we can be content with what we have thus far gained, we will attain a level of security free from the hazards of the open road, as if we had fetched up at a pleasant roadside inn and gained refuge in comfortable surroundings.

This is not to say we have reached our destination and we are advised that we should be careful to maintain a modest attitude, then people or things will continue to respond in a helpful way.

001101 3) When one is immodest in their demeanour, when there is also dissatisfaction and restlessness, this does not win favour from either the outer or the inner world and we expose ourselves to danger. Here we are advised that we will lose the way if we cannot adopt a position of humility and modesty.

001101 4) We find ourselves in a situation that, through our impatience to settle upon something, proves not to be ideal. We try to make the best of things but find ourselves irritated at every turn. Perhaps we doubt that by following the path of inner truth, by following Tao we shall ever attain what it is we want? Here we are advised that desire is blocking our

ability to divine the way and we should look to correct ourselves if we wishes to make progress.

001101 5) Here we are making progress and understand that we need to address issues of attitude within ourselves. We should be wary of becoming attached to unworthy aspects of our nature or they will prevent things or people from responding in harmony with our needs.

001101 6) One here seems to have grown careless in their approach, not paying enough heed to their inner attitude, so the way is lost and the protection of the cosmos withdrawn. An arrogant and self seeking manner is something of a liability when travelling abroad, for how can we expect other elements to respond in a positive way if we treat everything and everyone so shabbily?

56-020807

57

011011

The Gentle

Penetrating Wind

Gradual Influences

Adapting to One's Environment

Keywords: Insidious influence, Penetration, Infiltration, Changing over time, Fitting in, Gradual changes, Subliminal effect, Conforming, Morphing, Shape-shifting, Adaptation, Accommodation, Subjecting one's self, Exposure to influence.

Interpretation: Significant changes do not occur overnight but are brought about by persistent pressure over a long period of time, just as a wind blowing in the same direction over water can move a floating log great distances.

Both good and bad influences work this way. To be exposed briefly but overtly to a corrupting influence may not do much harm but if the exposure is prolonged and subliminal it can cause us to deviate from our path. Similarly we might not immediately respond to something that is obviously good for us if we are merely told about it. Only if we feel its presence over a period of time can we expect it to have any influence on our direction.

The influences we respond to and the influences we radiate are unconsciously perceived and projected. By far the greatest influence is that of the Creative which holds the invisible blueprint of our lives. The gentle wind blowing from the Creative may be thought of as the bringer and interweaver of fates to which we must yield if we are to realise our purpose.

If we seek insight from exploring the idea of an inner truth, nothing can be gained without first yielding to the gentle wind and allowing it to drive our vessel before it. This means correcting ourselves, it means adopting an attitude of

modesty and humility and trusting the unknown to bring all things to fruition.

If we lack understanding or a crucial insight, our want may be likened to an immovable boulder - unchanging and apparently impermeable, but if we allow the threads of wisdom to penetrate its fissures slowly over time, like a tree putting down roots, then eventually the boulder will split open and the inner truth will be revealed.

Depending upon the nature of the enquiry, receiving this hexagram can mean that the sudden insight we have gained is something that has come about through a gradual influence working upon us over a long period of time or it can mean we must hold to the power of inner truth if we seek to bring about the insight we require.

Holding to the power of inner truth gives us the wind and the direction we require in order to make the best of our lives. If we wish to make progress we must remain open like the sail of a ship, then the wind will take us wherever it is right that we should go.

The right course is always the right course no matter how it twists and turns and doubles back upon itself. But only if we can correctly discern the winds of fate can we navigate this course reliably.

Appended Lines

011011 1) We know where it is we want to go but do not quite trust the winds of fate to take us. Inferior elements, be they pride or Ego, seek to maintain control of our direction. In such a situation as this, we are advised to be resolute in identifying what it is that drives us and what it is that resists our willingness to be led.

011011 2) There are certainly inferior elements operating within us, be they pride, arrogance, self pity, jealousy, dissatisfaction with our lot - vestiges of the old way we used to deal with things. We must peel back the darker layers of our psyche in order to find them.

This is not necessarily a bad situation provided we are at least willing to look for what it is we must correct within ourselves. Identifying a need and putting our trust in the

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power of the unknown to bring things about is all that is required.

011011 3) Here we might be aware of negative influences within ourselves, but seem unwilling to correct them or even to accept them as being in need of correction. Perhaps we act the part of being humble and modest when it suits us, but revert to hardness when we are required to trust in the unknown. Perhaps we view the universe as cold and hard or even hostile to our plight.

011011 4) The multitude of dark issues confronting us may be as the result of a single fear or weakness lurking within, just as a minor ailment like a cold can manifest many symptoms such as aches and pains, headaches and fever. If we can locate the core weakness within us and deal with it effectively then all the other negative and seemingly unrelated issues will disappear.

011011 5) After considering what it is that we must correct in ourselves, then we are only likely to be successful in doing so if we are open and sincere. We should also remember that negative influence we expose is likely to have been present inside of us for a long time and we must therefore guard against its return. Old habits die hard, but with vigilance real change can be brought about and a fresh beginning ushered in.

011011 6) One here should not look too deeply for inferior traits in himself. Demonstrating a willingness to turn inwards in search of negative influences is itself sufficient to bring us back on the right path. If we are too zealous in our attempts to correct things we may end up doing more harm than good.

57-020807

58

110110

The Joyous
Being satisfied
The Lake

Keywords: Joy, Delight, Happiness, Satisfaction, Bliss, Appreciation of life's simple pleasures, Zest for life, Desire, Wanting, Needing, Lure, Pull, Incentive, Instant gratification, Payoff, Seeking reward, Hedonism, Enchantment, Obsession.

Interpretation: We can only experience true joy when our direction has been guided by positive influences gently penetrating our psyche over a long period of time.

Joy is like the surface of a lake that is perfectly still and reflective of all the glories of nature that surround it. Emotions then are like disturbances on the surface of the lake. When we allow emotions to dominate they act like capricious winds churning up the surface so the reflections are lost and all we see is the shimmering lake.

The joy suggested in this hexagram is not an emotion - it is a perfect reflection of the unknown, of the Creative, on the unruffled surface of our psyche. Only by touching the Creative in this way do we experience profound joy.

Thus one here is counselled that true happiness can never be purchased, but only realised when there is a total absence of emotion. Such inner harmony is brought about by adopting an attitude of modesty and detachment from the material world.

If we can accept the principle of being led, if we can trust in the unknown, regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in, then we will achieve such a state of detachment and harmony. This is true joy.

We have all experienced times such as these, but they are lost the moment our emotions reassert themselves. We

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experience the tiniest flicker of desire; we see something and we want it, believing it will bring us happiness. But "want" is an emotion disturbing the calm surface of our psyche, so we lose the reflection of the Creative and thus any sense of the nature of true joy.

We let our ego reassert itself, we doubt in the innate ability of things to work themselves out. And in so doubting we become the centre of a subtle storm of emotion that destroys the placid surface of our inner lake. We are aware of our selves only through our emotions as we are aware of the lake only by its shimmering surface. The reflection - the joy - is lost.

When a lake is perfectly reflective we are aware of it only as a vessel for the images it reflects. Is it then the lake or the reflection that is the true reality? Joy is an awareness of ourselves only as a vessel for the outpourings of the Creative. Is it then our selves, or that which shines through us that is the true reality?

In our dealings with people, our ability to pass on joy is a measure of how tranquil the surface of our lake is. If we are unhappy, if the surface of our psyche is churned up by a storm of emotion, others will sense this in us. They will see nothing reflected that brings them joy. Thus we become more and more isolated until we can correct ourselves.

The essential counsel here is that we should recognise the workings of the ego, of our inferior nature, in denying us the experience of joy. We should also understand that "wanting" is a veritable hurricane of emotion and that true joy can never be realised in the presence of anything so disturbing.

Appended Lines

110110 1) True joy can only be realised once we let go of desire - of any kind of wanting. No matter how difficult or how trying our circumstances, we must avoid wanting them to be any different. Once we empty ourselves of emotion, the surface of our psyche becomes still, and there we see reflected the insight or the right connections we need to guide us on our way - the way that is right for us.

In our relations with others, if we are not being given the respect nor the kindness we are due, wanting others to change will achieve nothing and indeed it will only increase the turmoil we feel inside. Again, we must let go of wanting - we must resist the desire to bring things about by flattery or seduction, by argument or by showing off.

This is not to say we give up on our right to be treated properly, only that we give up on our *desire* that it be so. Only then, once our emotions have been quelled, can the power of the unknown set to work and bring matters to the right conclusion - whatever conclusion that may be.

If we remain calm and detached from the material world, the Creative will engage with us and we will have an effect.

110110 2) One here should be wary of looking for a special formula. There is no set approach that can be adopted in order to deal with all circumstances. Set plans and old attitudes are easily fallen back upon, but they come from the part of us that is less able and so will yield the poorest of results. We must pull back, consider what it is we are contemplating and where it is these thoughts come from.

Only by remaining unstructured in our thinking can we allow the unknown to bring things to their correct conclusion.

110110 3) One here should take care to understand the nature of true joy. Joy comes from within and is not the result of external stimuli. One might be afforded a temporary diversion by pursuing worldly pleasures, or goods, or wealth but if there is nothing substantial within ourselves, then the true self becomes quickly lost in a game of diminishing returns.

110110 4) One here is caught between wanting something and their sincere desire to do the right thing. There will be no peace until a decision has been made. We listen to voices within ourselves that promise happiness if only we can do this or that. Here therefore we are counselled that the pursuit of pleasure does not bring happiness. For this we must look to our higher self, for only through tranquillity might we experience true joy.

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110110 5) One here is exposed to dangerously seductive elements. If we court them, their influence will have a disintegrating effect over time and the way will be lost. Understanding this to be the case, we can take steps to distance ourselves and so avoid harm.

These negative influences may be in the form of other people or material things. They may also be thoughts, or attitudes we've adopted. Perhaps we believe we are in a position to control matters to our own advantage. Perhaps we see something in another person that we desire and are weighing up the benefits of seducing them in order to obtain it for ourselves. Alternatively we may be allowing ourselves to be seduced by others, even though we know that succumbing would be to sacrifice our principles.

Whatever the subject of this enquiry, we are counselled to step back from it, to consider what it is we are doing, to let those who would seek to seduce us to go their own way, to let the objects we desire simply pass us by.

110110 6) Here we seem to lack the strength to resist the seductive power of worldly pleasures. Too often we listen to the voice of our inferior self and we are swept along in the mad pursuit of one transient pleasure after another, or we are beset by feelings of self importance and vanity. In this way our direction is entirely at the mercy of negative influences. How can we avoid not losing our way?

If, on the other hand, we can hold back then there is still a possibility of attaining true joy. If we can hold back, the moment in which we might find the right connection is prolonged. This gives the fates more time to intervene on our behalf. Giving in to our desires, we simply squander our chances.

58-020807

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010011

Dispersion

Dissolution

Scattering

Keywords: Dissolve, Evaporate, Disperse, Spread, Scatter, Disseminate, Diffuse, Widen one's horizons, Open oneself to wider influences, Diversify, Change is as good as a rest, Embracing universal truths, Attaining the higher perspective.

Interpretation: The way is best followed with an open and unstructured frame of mind. We should have no preconceptions, no firmly held beliefs or convictions, beyond a simple willingness to be led. Any rigid viewpoint serves merely to restrict our receptivity and should be avoided.

A rigidly held view is like a blockage damming up our vital source of energy, preventing the power of the unknown from reaching us. We become isolated in our attitude, and without the protection of the cosmos, we risk falling prey to all manner of misfortune.

A hardened attitude need not be something so obvious as a prejudice or a dogmatic point of view. No matter how reasonable an individual, when people or things or the world in general do not respond as we would like, then we fall prey to feelings of alienation. By holding to such feelings we become only further isolated, either from others or from the power of the unknown.

Such feelings must be dealt with, but not by forcibly rooting them out, for that would only worsen the situation. Instead we must think of ourselves as being washed gently by water which gradually dissolves the hardness. With gentleness and perseverance over time we dissolve all hardness and return to an attitude of openness and trust.

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Examples of hardened feelings include the urgent desire to act in order to bring something about. But acting under pressure from our inferior self we are not properly in balance and likely to fall if we make a sudden move.

We are counselled to examine our inner self for any sudden change or hardening of our feelings. Look for fear, doubt, anger, or impatience to make way, or any other emotion that might be blocking the vital flow of energy, impeding the very progress we seek.

Dispersing our preconceptions and prejudice and keeping an open mind is like opening the sail of a boat and readying it so that it might catch the wind and carry us on our way.

Appended Lines

010011 1) Here we feel alienated by what we perceive to be an adverse fate. Likening our journey to the ascent of a mountain, something suddenly looms out of the mist, like an outcrop of rock that bars further upward progress. We are tempted to give up, to curse our luck, to blame everyone else for our situation.

In the hardening of our attitude all we see is an impregnable wall of rock, but if only we could calm down and return to a position of inner harmony, then ways of scaling the rock would slowly reveal themselves. The situation is not hopeless. If we can dissolve our rigidity, what at first sight looks like a bad situation will later be seen as a stepping stone that was essential for us to gain a higher perspective on things.

010011 2) If the hardening of our attitude is the result of someone else's actions, then we only demonstrate our lack of understanding of what has driven them to behave the way they do. This is not to say their action is correct, nor to make excuses for it, only that our reaction is not correct and indeed is likely to be damaging to our selves.

If we are not to lose our way we must be patient and tolerant of others. No matter how testing their attitudes may be towards us, we must not allow their actions or words to be taken by our ego as challenges to its superiority. This means we must disengage and let others go their own way in the hope that they will learn to see things differently in time.

In a similar way, one here is required to react to a situation as he finds it, to be receptive, to be open and adaptable. Events may be challenging but the way to deal with them is not by approaching them in an emotionally negative way, or by being dogmatic.

010011 3) One here needs to dissolve certain aspects that over time have come to be viewed as essential parts of one's self. Defensiveness, selfishness, arrogance, habitually negative assumptions about ourselves or others - all have come to be woven into the fabric of the mask we call our persona. It's as if we are frightened even by our own shadow and so we make our way unbalanced in our outlook, for ever on our guard against the imagined harm that others might do to us.

But the persona is not who we really are. It is a construct and if we must make use of it to get by, then at least let us use a softer material in its manufacture.

Also, one here may be focusing too closely on the work in hand and therefore cannot see the bigger picture. Our personal goals, though viewed as important through the eyes of our ego, may actually render us blind to the real direction our work should take. We need to grow beyond the narrow view we have of ourselves if we endeavour to attain a truly higher perspective .

010011 4) We should always be wary of doing or saying or thinking something merely because it is what we believe is generally expected by family, friends, colleagues, or indeed any other group with whom we identify ourselves. Focusing ourselves too narrowly is to miss the essential truth that our words and deeds and thoughts should affirm the existence of every sentient being, because our paths are universally interwoven.

Similarly our "group" can be an inner attitude such as emotional elements that are bent on reaping short term gains at the expense of the longer term goal.

010011 5) One here attains a higher perspective. Perhaps we realise the best way of correcting a situation is to disengage from it, that the best way of bringing others with us is to let them go. Such an insight as this serves to

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accelerate the rate at which we dissolve our hardening attitude, and we begin to see things ever more clearly.

010011 6) Dwelling on the negative aspects of any situation, we stir up a black cloud of emotion which prevents us from relating to it correctly. Even if the situation seems overtly hostile to our aims if we allow it to arouse feelings of alienation in us such a hardening of our selves will cut us off from the protection of fate. If instead, we can remain in harmony, this will penetrate to others far more efficiently than if we panic or wallow in conflict and enmity.

59-020807

60

110010

Limitation

Gauging the Times

Auspicious Openings

Keywords: Restraint, Economy, Précis, Abridgement, Limitation, Constraint, Conditions, Rules, Regime, Operating parameters, Disciplined approach, Working to a budget, Within limits, Keeping a sense of proportion, Moderation, Balance, Keeping on track, Economy of words and action, Timely action, Circumspection.

Interpretation: Things cannot undergo an indefinite state of dispersal. Without some limitation, some form described by measurement, then all would become dissipated and there would be no structure to the universe or to the world.

If things are not to become uselessly dissipated then we must understand the significance of limits. If no limits are set, such as in the case of a free flowing river, the water will pass us by, oblivious to our existence - its potential as a source of energy remaining untapped. But if we limit the flow, say with a dam, the water will rise to a certain level and can be released in a disciplined and structured way, in order to provide energy that is useful. But we must be careful for if such limitation is carried out to excess and there is no planned release, something will have to give. The water will overflow and the result will be a damaging inundation.

In the tangible world, if no limitations, no structures are placed on what we do, our lives will dissolve in a sea of endless possibility. Only by setting limits, as when one measures out the size and shape of things, do we gain any sense of the dimension and the direction of our lives. Without the determination of limits the potential for being cannot emerge from the formless void.

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If we look back we will recognise the distinct periods, the structure of our lives as lived thus far, between the crucial moments, the junctures in time when our path sheared off and a new chapter was begun.

If limits are lost or ignored, the shape of things dissolves into the background noise of the cosmos. If the limits become too rigid, if we cannot yield to circumstances as we find them, there is a spilling over of damaging intensity and we lose the way.

As with all things, the right balance must be struck in order to maintain a natural harmony.

Appended Lines

110010 1) One here would like to achieve something significant, but the limits on what might be undertaken are overwhelming for now. Understanding this, we should not exceed the natural limits that are set, or we invite misfortune.

Like a seedling lying dormant in the ground, there is much potential for growth, but in the depths of Winter we must not allow an hour or two of sunshine to tempt us into hurrying the process of germination. There is a time and a season for all things and this is not it. We are advised to keep our own counsel for now and not to venture any further in our ambition to advance.

110010 2) One here is on the cusp of new dawn, a fresh chapter of experience. The time is changing, but when the moment comes to act we have only a limited window of opportunity when we can expect to take advantage of the times. That time is now. If we hesitate, the moment passes and the way closes.

110010 3) Here we are advised to remember the necessity of placing limits on ourselves. Without limits all sense of pleasure is lost in extravagance. However, this line does not refer exclusively to the vice of hedonism, but to any form of personal excess such as self indulgence, self righteousness or ambition to make way. We are counselled to measure our steps more carefully lest we should lose ourselves in excess.

110010 4) The correct limits to be set, the correct methodologies to be adopted are those that accord naturally

with any given situation. Struggling to maintain a limitation on one's actions that goes against nature is exhausting and ultimately doomed to failure. If people are difficult and obstructive, we should avoid them, while remaining receptive to what small gains might be achieved when the moment is right. In undertaking a journey across the burning desert, it is better to rest by day and travel by night. Thus we adapt our actions to suit whatever situation we find ourselves in.

110010 5) If we are to demonstrate the benefit of living within limits, it is better to lead by example than to force limits on others while appearing to avoid them ourselves. If we can demonstrate the benefits of living within limits by applying them to ourselves while expecting nothing from others, they will close with us of their own accord.

This applies to both the outer and the inner world. In the inner world the limitation we live by is our acceptance that we are not in control. So if we wish to bring our inferior elements around, we must demonstrate to them that by placing our trust in the ability of things to work themselves out, we gradually lose our fears and anxieties more effectively than if we allow our ego to dominate and control things all the time. The only way to do this is by example. If we can do this then the way will open.

110010 6) If we set limits upon ourselves that are too restrictive or inappropriate to our nature, there will be a damming up of our vital selves and this can lead to inundation by all sorts of negative emotions.

We must recognise the damaging nature of the situation and seek ways to relax the demands that have been placed upon us, or that we have placed upon ourselves.

60-020807

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110011

**Inner Truth
Connecting
The Guiding Spirit**

Keywords: Insight, Instinct, Inner truth, Guiding light, Confidence, Intuition, Certainty of belief, The meaning of life, Outlook, Faith, Sense of higher purpose.

Interpretation: Inner truth is that feeling of knowing when something is right or wrong. However, our ability to experience and to trust this feeling of absolute truth depends entirely on the prevalence of our ego, our inferior nature. If we are patient in our following of the correct path, if we understand the need to for self correction at every turn then slowly, by imperceptible degrees, we accumulate a sense of inner truth that may be relied upon to see us through all sorts of situations.

Our knowledge of the power of inner truth is always limited by our personal experience, our attitude and indeed the very fact of our mortality, so there will always be aspects of it that we remain unaware of. But Inner truth, on the cosmic level, can be called upon if we keep ourselves open to it, when we demonstrate a willingness to be led by it, when we admit to ourselves that we do not know the solution and we step back in order to let things work out by themselves.

Such humility empowers the Creative to begin working on our behalf and then things turn out as they should, even though we may not immediately grasp the process as it unfolds before our eyes.

When we hold to the power of inner truth in this way it has the effect of infiltrating our being and radiating outwards so that all we say and do carries with it an intangible sense of correctness so that others who are themselves receptive can instinctively judge the credibility of our works and our words. However, if others are not receptive, if their own selves are ruled by ego-consciousness, the power of inner

truth will have to grow very large indeed in order to penetrate to them, since they have no concept of it in the first place.

Gaining a deepening sense of inner truth is the reward for correctly following our path through life, but it cannot be learned as a set of rules, or taught as a religious dogma, or as a formula for success. Inner Truth is by its very nature entirely irrational. We only become aware of it when we turn away from the outer world and look within. Then we sense it, not only in ourselves but in everyone, everything and every situation we encounter along the way as vibrations - feelings that give rise to tell-tale harmonics in every fibre of our being.

Reading the invisible starscape of the receptive mind we may navigate our way in the tangible world with confidence, simply by retreating from where we sense discord and advancing towards where we sense harmony.

Appended Lines

110011 1) One here seems willing only to go so far in trusting the power of the unknown. Perhaps we are waiting to see how things will turn out and if they do not appear to be going our way, we will abandon the correct path and hand power back to our inferior nature, to our ego, who we think might get us what we want.

But we cannot always see what is right for us and therefore cannot properly divine the way on the basis of our desires. Our only commitment must be to serve whatever is the correct course even in the absolute knowledge that this may involve going along with events that do not coincide with our desires.

One here should check their attitude for the presence of a stalking ego. If we consort with the wrong people, with those elements within us that are less than worthy, then we shall surely lose our friends - the power of inner truth.

110011 2) The power of inner truth will radiate outwards from our being so that others will be able to feel something of our sincerity even before we speak. However, before this can happen we must have been in some way successful in

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correcting ourselves, or in not losing our sincerity in the first place.

If we try to act as if we are sincere when we are not, this too will radiate from our being and others will know we are not genuine, in the way an experienced policeman always knows when someone is lying. When we try to divine what is correct, we can only rely upon our instincts when we are truly sincere, not when we are merely pretending.

Another way of seeing this is to put ourselves in the position of a young bird hiding in the lakeside reeds. Though we are not fully fledged, we are wise enough to recognise the call of our own kind by a simple resonance in our being.

Perhaps we are wondering about the correctness of a certain idea or opportunity. Perhaps it feels right to us but more rational voices are pulling us in another direction. This is an auspicious moment, an insight, the glimpse of a higher truth, the inner self calling us with a clarity that transcends all rational considerations.

Though there may be many plausible reasons for keeping our heads down right now, or in some way taking the rational, the reasonable course, it is the inner voice we must listen to, for only the inner voice can point us towards the connection that can be trusted and acted upon.

110011 3) The degree to which we are attuned to the power of inner truth depends on our own inner independence from the material world, from wanting, from desiring things, from desiring others.

As soon as we allow ourselves to become dependant on certain outcomes, for example on whether we are successful or not, or whether or not we can make a particular person like us, then we lose our sense of balance and we shut ourselves off from the power of inner truth.

Looking at others and modifying our own behaviour in order to fall in line with what we think they might be thinking, or in order to make them feel or think differently about us, is not the way to walk our own path.

The only proper way to relate to other people, or other things, or indeed to events, is first to ensure we relate properly to ourselves. We do this by self correction, by

opening our hearts to the power of inner truth and allowing ourselves to be led by it.

110011 4) Here we enjoy a special relationship with the cosmos and by maintaining a path that is correct in all respects we are blessed by the power of inner truth, which here reaches its zenith. But we should also take care not to forget how we came by this power.

It is at such times as these when the ego comes calling and tries to convince us that it was responsible for our gains, or that we are merely experiencing a run of good luck. The moment we listen to its arguments, the power within us is lost.

110011 5) Here we project an attitude such that others cannot help but feel assured of our sincerity. If we can hold to what is correct within ourselves, this will carry to others and will have a more convincing effect than any amount of rational argument.

Conversely, relying solely on our inferior nature, our ego to drive and push and bully things through, we lack the essential power of inner truth which ensures a smooth passage for all we set out to do. It is as if things, events or people we encounter along the way withdraw their full co-operation, or are openly obstructive, as if they sense no measure of sincerity within us.

110011 6) There is a limit to what we can achieve by persuasive argument, even if we are sincere in wanting to bring about the right conclusion. Also, when dealing with others, we cannot always rely on them to perceive the inner truth of the situation the way we do. At such times we have no choice but to withdraw, for unless someone is ready, we cannot truly influence them, just as a lesson is quickly forgotten if the student's mind is not receptive.

Even when we possess the power of inner truth to such a degree that others are receptive to us, we must take great care in what we say for then we may not be aware of the influence that our words possess. If what we say and do is taken so seriously, then we have a duty to measure our words very carefully before we open our mouths.

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Altogether there is a sense here of eagerness exceeding one's innate capacity, or a vision of things that exceeds the innate capacity of others to comprehend it.

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001100

Preponderance of the Small

Keywords: Mediocre, Insignificant, Bland, Trivial, Anonymity, Unknown, Unsung, Satisfaction in obscurity, The every day, Expecting less, Flying low, Lowering of ambition, Lowering of expectation, Pragmatism, Realism, Not standing out, Humility.

Interpretation: Here we find ourselves at a critical moment, a moment of transition when the way takes a turn so subtle that it can easily be missed. There is an opportunity to change course for the better but the precise opening we require can only be realised by keeping ourselves small.

Our connection is indicated by the subtlest fluctuation in the way, and we shall miss it if we seek to hurry along, if we look for it too closely, if we try to fly too high, or think too big. Only by keeping ourselves open and receptive, only by keeping our hearts small and neutral with regard to outcomes, will this shy opening reveal itself to us.

The suggestion is one of crossing delicate ground, perhaps dangerous ground in which there are many factors we feel we have to deal with. There is also the suggestion that we do this while labouring under the influence of a strong emotion. Consequently we feel as if we positively must act or intervene in things in order to bring about a satisfactory conclusion, or in order to avoid potentially negative consequences for ourselves.

In a similar way, we might be seeking a comprehensive explanation of something in the belief that this is crucial to our well being. Perhaps there is an overwhelming array of details or factors we feel we must grapple with in order to make sense of things. But what we need to know right now

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will only be revealed if we can step back and cease struggling with the object of our attentions. Sometimes, the journey, or the mountain we must climb can defeat us at the very first step if we try to take it all in at once. We must think small, consider each detail only when we come to it, and by keeping ourselves small eventually move beyond it. Thus by modest steps, taken one after the other we finally conquer the whole.

It is like planting a seed. It needs time to grow and if we are for ever disturbing the soil to check its progress, the seed will fail because it is not left in peace to put down roots in the way that time demands. This is an auspicious moment, a moment of great potential, but the right outcome will only be attained if we can cease from contemplating it all at once.

Any given situation might indeed be very important to us, as individuals, and represent a crucial stage, a threshold of change, in our lives. But it is as well not to depend on the outcome for our emotional well being. Indeed we would do better not to think beyond the immediate situation at all. The day to day business of life goes on as before. If we are to sit examinations or a job interview we can't very well decide not to turn up, but we can at least avoid staking our future happiness on the outcome.

Keeping ourselves neutral with regard to outcomes, keeping our heart small, empowers the unknown to intervene on our behalf. Then fate will bring about what is right for us, at the time that is right.

Appended Lines

001100 1) Here we seem unable to go with the flow of events, or move with the demands of the time. We feel pressured to act before it is proper for us to do so. Only a bird that is fully fledged might safely fly and it does so, not out of an ambition to spread its wings, but, merely because it feels right at the time. A bird that is not fully fledged, yet through ambition is determined to fly prematurely, is asking only for a fall.

We are tempting an adverse fate, and must withdraw from the subject of this enquiry. The time is not yet right for us to take action or make plans beyond what we see in front of us.

001100 2) Here we might be mature enough to make a move, but the correct direction, the subtle turn in the way, has yet to reveal itself. If we can remain open and receptive, if we can avoid thinking too much about what it is that we want, then the way will reveal itself, when the time is right.

001100 3) Here we seem drawn too much in a particular direction. Straying too far from the neutral path in this way will cause us to lose our balance. If we are wise we will take this as a warning to reel ourselves in.

001100 4) Here there is a sense of having waited for a long time with an attitude of patience and forbearance yet still not made any visible progress towards our goal. Such forbearance can sometimes lead to a negative view of life, a feeling that the world is cold and uncaring, that the fates conspire against us. We become embittered like a warrior who has survived one campaign too many.

This indicates a hardening of our attitude. This is a severe test of our resolve, for in spite of our best efforts we begin to lose our balance due to our weariness and our desire to move on. But forcing things now will isolate us from the power of the unknown, and eliminate our chance of rescue precisely at the hour of most need.

One here is counselled to hold on. Fate is never hostile unless we tempt it. If we can hold on to our faith in the mystery of the unknown then it will bring about the right outcome at the right time.

001100 5) Unless we can trust in a higher power to guide us through the ambiguities of our lives, be it God or fate or the Creative, we become like travellers on vague mountain

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trails when the clouds hug the ground. In such conditions, a distance of a few paces can resemble a whole day's trek over the highest pass and, conversely, what we think are mere undulations in the path, to be lightly stepped upon, are in fact mountains glowering darkly, many miles away.

Without an instinct finely honed, rooted in the power and the mystery of the unknown, the truth of everything remains hidden or is revealed too late. Trusting in the unknown, we adopt a position of humble perseverance, a modest willingness to be led, and then we see the truth in everything.

001100 6) Here we cannot help but challenge fate. In doubting the correctness of holding back, in failing to trust in the mystery of the moment, we lose the protection of the cosmos, the protection of fate. Pride always comes before a fall. Having confidence in the sureness of our action flies in the face of the unknown and tempts adversity.

62-020807

63

101010

After Completion
Fording the River
Navigating the Stream of Life

Keywords: Completeness, Conclusion, Endgame, Death, Attaining perfection, Finalising, Keeping things going, Maintenance, Maintaining momentum, Afterthoughts, Hindsight, Change for change's sake.

Interpretation: After benefiting from a crucial insight and, by keeping ourselves small, we discover our opening, it follows then that we shall find ourselves on the right path. So, After Completion describes a time when we find ourselves proceeding in a direction that is right for us. It also, describes the potential pitfalls we might encounter along the way.

Difficulties have been resolved. What we are doing, the direction we are moving in, is correct. We have entered the stream of our life, picked up the vital current and can feel it carrying us along. It is as if things take care of themselves without the need for our constant intervention.

Or we can liken the times to our crossing a swiftly flowing river. Having decided on our course we are fording it from one side to the other. We find ourselves in balance and on the correct course. This is right and we should go on. Now is not the time to look around for other options.

But also, at times when things are going well, when we are pursuing the correct course, we should take care not to forget the possibility of a reversion to chaos, to confusion and losing the way. Only our awareness of danger keeps us safe and here we should take care not to lower our guard or

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take the good times for granted. Nor we should we fall prey to debilitating doubts about our ability to sustain our course. Rather, all that is needed is a return to neutrality and acceptance of our direction. We must neither ignore things, nor regard them too closely.

Equally we have to understand that nothing lasts for ever. What has come to fruition and is at its peak now can only be sustained so far before a natural process of change leads to decay, through which a new direction will reveal itself. If we have maintained our sense of balance in sustaining things this far, then we will recognise the new direction for its potential, when it arises, and we must then work towards it.

If, in making the crossing we suddenly find the water too deep or the current too strong, deliverance does not come by ploughing on blindly, but by reading the situation as we come to it and allowing ourselves to be guided by the opportunities that present themselves.

Appended Lines

101010 1) Here we have been going in the right direction. Our affairs, our words, our mind - all are in balance, but suddenly we draw up as if plagued by a moment of doubt. Perhaps we are wondering if there might not be an easier way to our goal.

These are signs that our ego may be seeking to reassert itself, perhaps by tempting us into forging too great an advance. However, if we can take this as a timely warning to check our inner balance, nothing will be lost because our direction is still correct. By returning to a position of neutrality progress can still be made. We take the circumstances as we find them, we allow events to guide us naturally, rather than take bold steps in order to forcibly capture ground.

The correct manner is always to be receptive and open to influences, rather than active and closed to suggestion.

101010 2) One here has strayed from the way while believing things to be going well. There is a certain excess, a lack of modesty perhaps in stating our position, a subtle return to old egocentric ways of thinking. This has unseated us. Only by a return to modesty and an acceptance of the power of the unknown can we hope to regain our path.

In trying to correct the situation, we should avoid actively going back over lost ground or looking to hasten our return to grace in any way. We must look to our inner selves with a view to correcting our faults and we must be patient. Then things will right themselves.

101010 3) Any system will tend to return to chaos if it is not checked. Having perfected our selves we cannot then afford to sit back and luxuriate in the smoothness and perfection of things because it is at such moments as these we become careless. We allow inferior attitudes to creep back in. We become lazy, and suddenly things are no longer running as smoothly as they were.

Alternatively we may be so impressed by the way things are going we are looking to capitalise on them in some way, perhaps even seeking praise or reward. Then the harmony is lost and a return to chaos is inevitable unless we can correct ourselves. One here should be looking to return to position of modesty and perseverance.

101010 4) The harmony we have brought about is not beyond the reach of adversity. The way we tread can be lost in a moment's carelessness and, as if in a dream, we can find ourselves back in the chaos from where we started. Here we are right to question our circumstances because unless we are careful, things might easily turn against us.

Another way of looking at it is that we might be running the risk of spoiling things by luxuriating in our position, by seeking to make personal capital, forgetting that the essence of the matter, of life, is always to relate properly to the mystery of the unknown and to keep ourselves correct.

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101010 5) Here there is a sense that we are trying to gain favour in some way by an immodest display of our worth or our prowess. We have lost our sense of place but carry on as before as if unable to recognise that what we do or say no longer carries any meaning. We do and say the right things but without the essential sincerity that is required. A reversal of fortune is therefore either looming or has already overtaken us.

Here we must stop and look to regain our path from a position of decreased influence, for what we receive can only be measured in proportion to the degree of sincerity that we offer up. Sincerity is doing what we believe is right for its own sake without first pausing to wonder if anyone is likely to notice our worthiness. When presented with the lives of two different individuals, it is possible to measure the depth of their sincerity by observing the measure of their good fortune.

Sometime the only witness for good works, or good deeds is the cosmos itself, but for one who is truly sincere, this is the only witness we require.

101010 6) Here there is a sense of pausing in our advance. In the swiftest part of the river, when we should be concentrating on keeping to the way, we take the time to look over our shoulder, perhaps doubting that allowing ourselves to be led in this direction is the proper thing to do. Alternatively, we may have succumbed to feelings of overconfidence, of genius perhaps at the beauty and perfection of all that we do. In either instance there is a departure from the path, as we fall back into old ways of thinking.

This is a mistake. Failing to keep ourselves correct is like taking our eye off the route ahead. We pause carelessly and lose our balance. We prove ourselves unworthy and risk being swept away by an adverse fate, by our own unhappiness.

63-020807

64

010101

Before Completion

Not yet Fording

Keywords: Beginnings, Uncertainty, Choosing a direction, Imposing a direction, Jumping in, Premature action, Discernment, Making assumptions with little to go on, Unfinished journey, To travel is better than to arrive, Letting things emerge of their own accord.

Interpretation: The sequence of events flowing from the Creative never comes to an end. The completion of one thing heralds the beginning of another, so after a time of Completion, Before Completion follows.

Here we find ourselves on the brink of a new phase of our journey. Things are just beginning and the directions that might be taken are as yet only half glimpsed, as if in the early light of dawn. The mist is still thick upon the ground, obscuring the many trails that lead off into the distance.

At such times as these we sense the freshness of the morning and we are anxious to set out. We are poised to act, to rush off in the first direction that takes our fancy. But we should understand that at this stage we cannot formulate an accurate idea about the best route because we do not yet know all the facts. We have to wait for the light of day, for the mists to dissolve, before we can gain a more accurate picture of exactly what it is that lies before us.

Like a sculptor chiselling out a few tentative lines on his block of stone, he knows that not all things are possible and that the ultimate direction of his work will be guided by the form of the stone itself, by what is revealed once the first steps are taken. Indeed the finest form lies hidden, and is

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only uncovered when the sculptor does not seek to impose his will.

In the outset of any formative period everything we think and do influences our eventual direction, so we must take care to keep ourselves correct. We must allow ourselves to be led by natural influences, rather than look to force a direction.

If our path involves relationships with others, we must take care not to approach beyond the half way mark, and we must ensure others do not encroach before we are ready to receive them. Ill advised encounters at the time of setting out can leave us in a state of emotional unbalance which quickly subverts our path.

Here the essential thing is to take care not to jump to hasty conclusions. Keep to the middle way, and trust in the power of the unknown to reveal the things we need to know when we need to know them.

Appended Lines

010101 1) One here is too eager to make way. Rushing in, we do not take the time to judge clearly the right direction. Not all avenues are right for us and the ones that are may still be hidden from view. Only after we come to accept that we are not ultimately in control of events, and that premature action only causes confusion, will we be granted the insight to recognise the direction that is right for us.

010101 2) We do not know what we are looking for. By neglecting what is correct we allow ourselves to indulge in fantasies and delusions. Our ego is involved stirring up emotions, either good or bad - it makes no difference - for any sort of emotion serves to unbalance us. Therefore we risk setting off in the wrong direction from the outset.

Here we need to look more to our higher nature, for only there will we find the right direction. Proceeding too forcefully towards a goal our path is subverted. But when

we give ourselves over to our higher instincts, our course is steadied and the compass needle begins to settle more reliably in the general direction we should take.

010101 3) If we possessed any will at all to refrain from taking action or prejudging the situation, that will is weakening. One here must at all costs avoid intervention. We must refrain from forcing our way and instead allow ourselves to be guided by the moment.

010101 4) Here we must be sure of our balance and sacrifice the will to heroically strike out on our own course. Looking neither left nor right, we must absolutely resist the urge to seek active involvement in this matter until the way ahead become clearer. Our vessel is already riding the vital current, taking us slowly in the right direction, but the current can easily be lost if, thinking we know best, we let our ego take control.

010101 5) Here we find the right attitude. Persevering against our inferior self, our higher nature shines through. By demonstrating a humble willingness to be led by the mood of the moment, by the mystery of the unknown, we empower the unknown to conspire on our behalf.

010101 6) If we follow the way wisely, there will be times when we cannot help but notice a change in our circumstance for the better. There will be times when insight comes flooding through, lighting up the path before us. These things are to be expected, but we must also look upon such times as a test of our character for it is also at such times as these that we are most vulnerable to feelings of our own superiority.

The ego comes stalking, seeking to claim responsibility that things have now improved, that the insight we have gained was won by force of intellect rather than our simple humility in the face of the unknown. Desire reasserts itself and the way is quickly lost.

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At such times it is as if we are drunk on wine. We feel relaxed, we feel good about ourselves, we feel superior, not realising our mind is dulled to the subtle messages we get from the Creative.

How then can we hope to maintain our way?

64-020807

Michael Graeme



End Notes

The philosophy of the Book of Changes

Following on from the hexagrams of the Book of Changes, I'd like to present here, a few paragraphs that underline the main philosophical, psychological and spiritual points that come out of the book, as I see them.

The central themes are “interconnectedness” and “change” with each individual human being, as well as every bird, beast, plant and piece of rock, described as an integral part of the overall workings of the Universe. I use the word Universe here in its broadest sense as being everything there is: the material stuff that things are made of, but also energy - the stuff that forms itself into the illusion of material, and thereby granting tangible shape to the visible universe. Then there's an underlying guiding principle, a creative imperative if you like that channels the energy, or condenses it into material form. This is known as Tao, and the essence of Tao is Qi.

The Universe therefore comprises what we can see, know, or work out for ourselves, but also what we cannot see, and what we can never know. It comprises that which has already been brought into being and that which has yet to be created.

What has yet to be created exists in a non-material sense, as a potential for being, the blueprint of a life and a

life's path, rather than the manifestation of that life. When something comes into being it is on account of the creative principle inherent in the Universe forming itself into a pattern of energy that we perceive as matter, bringing it together and binding it in a way that results in a physical manifestation, an object, an event, a being, or a life that conforms to the cosmological blueprint.

The purpose of any physical manifestation is simply to be whatever it was meant to be, to follow whatever path is necessary in order for it to arrive at the best possible outcome for itself and the cosmos as an integrated whole, be it a human life, an animal, a plant, an insect or a piece of rock. And the best possible outcome is for it to conform in every particular to the cosmological intent.

This is not to say that the cosmological intent marks out for us an unavoidable fate. A sculpture can take on many forms, once the work has begun. While the sculptor retains a general idea of his intentions, he must also be sensitive to the direction that seems right at the time, a direction that must be appropriate given the nature of the material. Proper development can be undermined by making poor choices, and under such circumstances we will not realise our intended path, or our purpose. The sculpture turns out bad, it does not achieve its potential and the sculptor is disappointed with it.

In the great scheme of things it is human life that struggles most to attain its intended direction, by virtue of its consciousness and its ability to make choices. A piece of rock is formed and simply 'is' until the forces of nature grind it to dust. An insect or an animal enters the world in a state of innocence, in that it is amoral, so finds no difficulty in taking up and following its true path in life. When all things are allowed to follow their natural calling, the outcome is good. It is an affirmation of life in all its variety. However, when things are interfered with, when the aims of the cosmological intent are substantially thwarted, the result will be bad and life will not flourish in the way that nature intended, in all its richness and variety. There will be decay, oppression, extinction, unhappiness and suffering.

Only the human life is troubled by the business of having to navigate itself towards its proper end. If we make

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the right choices in life, then the outcome will be good - we will be happy and we will make others happy. If however we make choices that go against what is right, then the outcome will be bad. We will be unhappy, and we will make others unhappy, either by having led them astray or by directly and deliberately hurting them.

But life is complex, the choices endless. And the solutions are not always obvious to us. What works at one point in time, may not necessarily work at a different point in time, even though the circumstances might seem the same. This brings us to the idea of Change.

All that 'is', every thing, every thought, every event is subject to change. Nothing remains the same, but is the outcome of a dynamic interplay of underlying forces: that which energises and that which receives, the yang and the yin, swirling together in the dance of perpetual creation. It is the subtlety of this dance that is described in the Hexagrams of the Book of Changes, or I Ching.

Our success in any given situation depends upon our ability to remain in step with "change". If we are in tune with it, we can feel our way, relying on intuition to provide the insights we need in order to make the right assessment at the right time, or we can use the Book of Changes as a diagnostic tool to read the situation for us and to point us in the right direction.

The difference between Eastern and Western belief systems is that in the West our religious traditions tend to externalise the spiritual experience. We look outside of ourselves for contact with the divine. When we imagine God, we look up into the sky. God is up there or out there "somewhere". In Eastern traditions however, the view is very different and in order to experience the divine, it is believed we must direct our thoughts inwards, that the divine is manifest in all of us, at the deepest levels of the unconscious mind. This is not to say that we are all gods endowed with grace and goodness, and ought therefore to be bursting with our own self importance - only that the path to understanding whatever it is that underlies our being, leads inwards rather than outwards. Outwards we find more and more magnificent manifestations of the physical world, but if we wish to comprehend the energy and the underlying creative

imperative, the nature of Inner Truth, we have to connect with our own unconscious selves.

Both Eastern and Western theologies describe paths that lead to a divine state of being, and many individuals find peace and meaning without thinking too much about the details of the path, but by simply having faith in what they are taught. However, many in the West are falling away from their religious traditions, or they pay it only lip service while not really benefiting spiritually. Some are beginning to see that the psychological aspects of religion have been neglected and that this provides a path back to their own private sense of the spiritual. Some Westerners convert to Eastern traditions, but one need not go that far, because in some respects it is possible to create one's own spiritual mythology, outside of a mainstream tradition, while perhaps borrowing shamelessly from them all, and yet still walk a path towards inner well-being and union with a personal God, or the Self, or Tao, or the Great Spirit, however *it* is defined. All you need is an open mind and a copy of the Book of Changes.

Definitions

In my text I've quoted certain phrases that might benefit from further explanation:

1) Inner Truth.

Inner Truth is described in hexagram 62 and is a key element running through the Book of Changes. It is intimately bound up with the notion of "Tao" and in its simplest form, it is our innate ability to "know" when something is right. Like Zen, it is seeing a little bit of heaven reflected in what we are looking at. It is the thought that comes to us from nowhere, but the one we instinctively know is correct, even though it might go against logic or intellectual reason.

In a grander sense it is like a glimpse behind the curtain that separates the physical world from the nonphysical. It is like reading the pages of the cosmological blueprint, seeing the drawings of what will be before they have flowed through into the world.

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Much of our success in finding happiness and contentment depends on whether we can accept the idea of Inner Truth as being valid or not. If we cannot, if we reject it as pure fancy or a delusion, then we fall back on ego consciousness in order to steer our lives. Then our happiness, in whatever direction will be sporadic, our contentment short-lived,.. a series of quick fixes, followed quickly by dissatisfaction, then always on to the next thing.

Having faith in the existence of an inner truth is the same thing, in religious terms as having faith in the will of God. However, Inner Truth is not concerned with intervening in man's affairs. It is a passive phenomenon, neither benign nor vengeful in the Old Testament sense. Inner truth is more like an ocean current. If we position ourselves in its stream, we can expect to make our way in a certain direction without any effort at all. If we reject it and position ourselves outside of its influence, if we pursue our own course through life without regard to its direction, we can find ourselves exhausted by the sheer effort, or becalmed in the doldrums of our seemingly mundane experience.

This is not to say that the current of Inner Truth will naturally lead us towards material wealth and worldly success. Indeed following the current of Inner Truth, our material circumstances may not change at all. If we begin as a king or a peasant, we might end our lives the same. But the king who passes his life in ignorance of Inner Truth will lead a far shallower existence, than the peasant who embraces it.

2) Tao or The Way.

The idea of Tao is central to the Taoist view of the cosmos and it is impossible to describe in anything but the most notional terms. Tao is an abstract concept and any attempt to pin it down limits our understanding - this is the gist of the opening lines of the Tao Te Ching, one of the key texts of Taoist philosophy. Essentially, it concerns the flowing through of the cosmic design into the world we see. Tao and Inner Truth are one and the same. It is like a river, or a strong current reaching across the ocean. We can paddle our canoe in the stagnant waters on either side of the current or

whole lives and not get very far, or we can stop paddling and let the current draw us in naturally. Then we will be swept along and shall realise our purpose, our destiny, according to the cosmological blueprint of our life, our personal Tao.

Tao is like a red line on an infinite road map. It does not reveal our origins or our destination, for these lie off the bottom and the top of the map respectively. It suggests only the directions we might take, and we can only see the map if we close our eyes and let ourselves believe that it is there.

3) The Power of Inner Truth.

Having described Inner truth and Tao, we can move on to contemplate how we might position ourselves in order to benefit from them. This is very simple. It involves adopting a philosophy where we accept that things will always turn out exactly as they should, so long as we don't interfere with them with a specific view to securing our own advantage. Perpetually concerning ourselves with controlling events to our own advantage we lose touch with what is right from the broader perspective. If what we believe is right for us involves something that is clearly disadvantageous for others, we are deluded in our beliefs. Actions undertaken at the cost of others might seem to be to our obvious advantage at the time, but in the broad scheme of things, these are only short term gains and ultimately we risk being harmed by them because we will no longer be in the stream of life, in Tao.

If we are wise, we understand that we can follow a particular direction in life only for so long before we have to withdraw. We also understand that certain directions are not open to us and that it does not do to plan ahead too far, because the way we see our lives developing might bear no resemblance at all to what is actually right for us. If we are forever challenging our fate and plotting our own course too far into the future, then we will always be fate's victim, for ever having our plans swept away.

When we trust in the power of inner truth we are simply happier, we are more at ease with ourselves, and with the world. We take the paths that open themselves to

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us instead of struggling to open the paths that perhaps should remain closed. Taking the routes that are not intended, we go against nature and so every step will require deliberate effort. A strong ego-driven personality might take pleasure in the challenge of such a direction, but eventually we will become exhausted by it. By contrast, following the way that is right for us, we are energised by it and our progress comes naturally.

4) Modesty.

The normal dictionary definition of modesty suffices here, except that in the Book of Changes, particular emphasis is placed upon the business of doing something only because it is right and not because we want to make an impression on someone else.

In our 24 hour media, fly on the wall docudrama culture, there is a tendency to dismiss any action as being irrelevant unless it is witnessed by a television camera - that there's no point in doing a good deed unless everybody knows about it and considers you to be a good egg for doing it. This of course is not correct. If something is right, it is right, whether anybody knows about it or not. Through modesty we accept that sometimes the noblest deeds are those witnessed only by ourselves and the abstract cosmos.

5) Innocence.

Innocence in this sense is the innocence of the simplest of creatures. A beast is amoral. It has no emotional responses, only instinctive, and so remains true to its nature from the moment it is born. Mankind's innocence however is gradually eroded from birth. The nature we are born with undergoes a change as a result of emotional responses to the situations life throws at us, so we react from a potent and rather confusing mixture of emotional and instinctive triggers. These become like hooks or snares, tying us into a particular pattern of behaviour or thought. Innocence therefore is about dissolving our emotional responses. If we can withdraw all the hooks and barbs of our nature, if we can clear the meadow of snares and gin-traps, then we might

more easily pass through without becoming tangled up in what is not correct, or bogged down in affairs that represent a stagnation of our potential.

Innocence is being unstructured in thought and deed. As soon as we begin to look at situations based upon the structures we have learned from our past experience, we at once begin to limit our understanding of the real nature of things. Innocence is the absence of conviction. It is an open paradigm where all things are accepted as being of equal value, and if we have any conviction at all in life it should be not to have any convictions at all.

6) Perseverance.

In the Book of Changes, perseverance does not mean the dogged pursuit of goals, for there will always come a time when things change and it is no longer correct to pursue a particular course. If we do, we run against Tao and invite misfortune. The only things we are safe to persevere in are the virtues of modesty and innocence. We persevere in our trust of the power of Inner truth. When the Book of Changes counsels us to remain persevering, this is what it means.

7) The Way of the Book of Changes

The way of the Book of Changes is Tao. Tao is the current we must each follow if we are to realise our fullest potential in human form. Our fullest potential is that of an enlightened being. An enlightened being is one who sees the world as it really is and not as the illusion most of us accept as being our only reality. If we ask questions of ourselves, if we ponder the advice of the Book of Changes, and especially if we seek to alter our path in accordance with its advice, then we are following Tao.

To the rational western mind this makes no sense at all. It is like basing every decision literally on the toss of a coin. However, once we begin to use the Book of Changes, we see there's considerably more to it than that. What the book gives us is a framework for testing our assumptions about life and reality. It gives us a frame of reference and a set of key-points to be considered. Also, running through

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this framework is a psychology that sits very well with the mind and the innate sense that is born in each of us.

8) Reality

There are some commentators who would have us reject our tangible, every day experience as being completely illusory, and therefore of no value. However, since the creative potential of the Universe seems geared towards a tangible expression of itself, it's perhaps unreasonable to conclude that such expression has no meaning or importance. The flowing through of potential into being is part of the overall mystery of the Universe, and therefore life, in all its diversity, is something to be valued as highly as an eventual return to oneness with the cosmos.

Similarly, the Book of Changes is not a manual for the rejection of life, rather it is a manual for living. In the Taoist view, reality is not an illusion. It is very real. What is illusory, however, is sometimes the way many of us view or approach it.

When we feel unhappy, lost, or despairing, when we feel ourselves to be nothing, that we are stuck, going nowhere, it is because we are viewing reality incorrectly. We do not see reality as it truly is, or we would not feel the way we do. What we see and perceive at such times *is* an illusion, and the solution to our problems cannot come from engaging with such a view of reality. Instead we overcome our problems by turning inwards and questioning the way we view things, by refocusing ourselves, by searching for those qualities within ourselves, and in reality, that are not illusions. Strong emotion either of the negative, or the positive variety has the same effect as an optical lens distorting the way things really are. The Book of Changes is a useful guide at such times, enabling us to regain the correct perspective, drawing us back into the stream of life, back into Tao.

9) The Mystery of the Unknown

In a sense, there is nothing complicated about the nature of reality. It simply *is*. And most of what there is, we'll never be able to consciously comprehend. Nor is there anything

particularly complicated about the meaning of our lives. It is simply that we must solve the problem of finding personal happiness, our personal Tao, in the context of our own lives as we find them. It is to manifest and experience love (metaphysical as well as romantic) in the context of what, for many of us is the seemingly mundane.

The metaphysical dimension *is* a reality, but its existence cannot be experienced through the physical senses or interpreted through our normal powers of reason. To the contemplative traditions, the metaphysical realm can be experienced through meditation. With sufficient practice, insights are gleaned and the Unknown might be experienced in ways that can be verified by comparison with the experiences of others. But to experience something is not the same thing as describing it. It is without words or names. To the lay-person, who is simply about the business of living life, the Unknown will always remain a mystery. Among those well versed in the contemplative traditions, there is a belief that all speculation on the ultimate nature of the unknown is pointless and that such speculation in fact limits our ability to experience it fully. It is there, but its nature must, by the very fact of our humanness, remain a mystery.

Having faith then in the Mystery of the Unknown, is the same as trusting in the power of Inner Truth - in Western traditions this equates loosely with the will of God. There are forces at play that we cannot grasp, but the Universe is considered to be of generally good intent, never evil. If we are in Tao, and we can trust in the Mystery of the Unknown, then we share in its protection, we pick up the current and our lives progress more easily. If we cannot trust in it, then we lose the protection of the Unknown and risk misfortune. At such times is easy to think of ourselves as victims of a hostile fate - a state of mind that feeds upon itself and this can be a difficult trap to break out of. It is always better to assume the best in something than the worst, and that includes the Mystery of the Unknown.

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And Finally:

In preparing this manuscript I have drawn upon many published sources. The most frequently consulted texts in my collection, that I particularly wish to acknowledge, are as follows:

The I Ching: Richard Wilhelm and Cary F Baynes.

Total I Ching - Myths for Change: Stephen Karcher.

The I Ching - The Classic Oracle of Change: Stephen Karcher.

The I Ching - The Classic of Changes: Wang Bi.

The Complete I Ching: Alfred Huang.

A Guide to the I Ching: Carol Anthony.

The Idiot's Guide to the I Ching: Elizabeth Moran and Master Joseph Yu.

The I Ching a guide for life: Will Adcock.

Also Online:

LiSe Heyboer: I Ching. Book of the sun and moon

Robert Eyley Coates Snr. The Wisdom of the I Ching.

Clarity Online

Bradford Hatcher's Hermetica Website.

Further valuable guidance on selected hexagrams came from the monthly newsletter of Clarity Online, Editor: Hillary Barrett.

For what it's worth, I did ask the Book of Changes to what extent it would be able to speak to others through my words and it suggested that, provided a person approaches it with an open, unstructured frame of mind and is prepared to listen to what they might not want to hear, the words are okay.

Conversion chart

	111	100	010	001	000	011	101	110
111	1	34	5	26	11	9	14	43
100	25	51	3	27	25	42	21	17
010	6	40	29	4	7	59	64	47
001	33	62	39	52	15	53	56	31
000	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
011	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
101	13	55	63	22	36	37	30	49
110	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

Read the first 3 digits of the sequence in the left hand column and match them with the last three digits in the upper row. The intersection gives the number of the hexagram as it appears in the Book of Changes.

For example hexagram 110110 = 58, while 011001 = 18

