



6		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
5		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
4		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
3		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
2		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
1		H	H	T		3	3	2		8

### HEXAGRAM 04 - Meng - Youthful Folly

Above KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

Below K'AN THE ABYSMAL, WATER

In this hexagram we are reminded of **youth and folly**, in **two** different ways.

- The **image** of the upper trigram, Ken, is the mountain, that of the lower, K'an, is water;
  - the spring rising at the foot of the mountain is the **image** of inexperienced youth.
- **Keeping still** is the attribute of the upper trigram; that of the lower is the **abyss**, danger.
  - **Stopping** in perplexity on the brink of a dangerous abyss is a symbol of the folly of youth.

However, the two trigrams also show the way of **overcoming** the follies of youth. Water is something that of necessity flows on.

When the spring gushes forth, it does **not know** at first where it will go. But **its steady flow** fills up the deep place blocking its progress, and success is attained.

## THE JUDGMENT

YOUTHFUL FOLLY has success.

It is not I who seek the young fool;

The young fool seeks me.

At the first oracle I inform him.

If he asks two or three times, it is importunity.

If he importunes, I give him no information.

Perseverance furthers.

In the time of youth, folly is **not** an evil.

One may succeed in spite of it, **provided** one

- finds an **experienced** teacher and
- has the right **attitude** toward him.

This means, first of all, that the youth himself

- must be **conscious** of his lack of experience and
- must **seek** out the teacher.

Without this **modesty** and this **interest** there is no guarantee that he has the necessary **receptivity**,

which should express itself in **respectful acceptance** of the teacher.

This is the reason why the teacher must **wait** to be sought out instead of offering himself.

Only thus can the **instruction** take place

- **at the right time and**
- **in the right way.**

A teacher's **answer** to the question of a pupil ought to be **clear and definite**

like that expected from an **oracle**;

thereupon it ought to be **accepted** as

- a key for resolution of **doubts** and
- a basis for **decision**.

If **mistrustful or unintelligent** questioning is kept up,

it serves only to **annoy** the teacher.

He does well to **ignore it in silence**,

just as the oracle

- gives one answer **only** and
- refuses to be **tempted** by questions implying doubt.

Given in addition a **perseverance** that never slackens

until the points are mastered one by one,

real success is sure to follow.

Thus the hexagram counsels

- **the teacher as well as**
- **the pupil.**

## THE IMAGE

A spring wells up at the foot of the mountain: The image of YOUTH.  
Thus the superior man fosters his character  
By thoroughness in all that he does.

A spring

- succeeds in flowing on and
- escapes stagnation by filling up all the hollow places in its path.

In the same way character is developed by thoroughness that skips nothing but, like water, gradually and steadily fills up all gaps and so flows onward.