



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

### HEXAGRAM 48 – Ching - The Well

Above K'AN THE ABYSMAL, WATER  
Below SUN THE GENTLE, WIND, WOOD

- Wood is below,
- water above.

The wood goes down into the earth to **bring up** water.

The image **derives** from the pole-and-bucket well of ancient China.

1. The wood **represents**
  - not the **buckets**, which in ancient times were made of clay,
  - but rather the **wooden poles** by which the water is hauled up from the well.
2. The image also **refers** to the world of plants,
  - which **lift** water out of the earth by means of their fibers.
3. The well from which water is drawn conveys the further idea of
  - an **inexhaustible dispensing of nourishment**.

### THE JUDGMENT

THE WELL.

- The **town** may be changed,
- But the **well** cannot be changed.

It

- neither decreases

- nor increases.

They come and go and draw from the well.

If

- one gets down almost to the water And
  - the rope does not go all the way, Or
  - the jug breaks,
- it brings misfortune.

In ancient China the capital cities were sometimes moved,

- partly for the sake of more favorable location,
- partly because of a change in dynasties.

- The style of architecture changed in the course of centuries,
- but the shape of the well has remained the same from ancient times to this day.

Thus the well is the symbol of that social structure which,

- evolved by mankind in meeting its most primitive needs,
- is independent of all political forms.

- Political structures change, as do nations,
- but

- the life of man with its needs remains eternally the same – this cannot be changed.
- Life is also inexhaustible.
  - It grows neither less nor more;
  - it exists for one and for all.

- The generations come and go, and
- all enjoy life in its inexhaustible abundance.

However, there are

two prerequisites for a satisfactory political or social organization of mankind.

- We must go down to the very foundations of life.

For any merely superficial ordering of life that leaves its deepest needs unsatisfied

is as ineffectual as if no attempt at order had ever been made.

- Carelessness - by which the jug is broken - is also disastrous.

If for instance

the military defense of a state is carried to such excess that it provokes wars by which the power of the state is annihilated, this is a breaking of the jug.

This hexagram applies also to the individual.

However men may differ in disposition and in education,

- the foundations of human nature are the same in everyone. And
- every human being can draw in the course of his education from the inexhaustible wellspring of the divine in man's nature.

But here likewise two dangers threaten:

a man

- may fail in his education to penetrate to the real roots of humanity and
- remain fixed in conventions partial education of this sort is as bad as none or he
- may suddenly collapse and neglect his self-development.

## THE IMAGE

Water over wood: the image of THE WELL.

Thus the superior man

- encourages the people at their work, And
- exhorts them to help one another.

- The trigram Sun, wood, is below, and

- the trigram K'an, water, is above it.

Wood sucks water upward.

Just as

- wood as an organism imitates the action of the well, which benefits all parts of the plant,
- the superior man organizes human society, so that, as in a plant organism, its parts cooperate for the benefit of the whole.