

This is for agent Confucious

- Review the 3 I Ching consults I made about the last 3 CEOs. (see below)
- Look at the history of Best Buy BBY in last decades and see how accurate was the I Ching (Universal Intelligence) in predicting the future of each CEO.
- Jason Bonfig's 1st Time/Space is not that profitable but if he manages to navigate it, his second Time/Space will be very positive
- Prepare a list of lessons learned or not from each CEO's mistakes.
- Make recommendations for the I Ching students of the I Ching University for CEOs and Investors.
- Prepare a list of warnings and wisdom phrases for the I Ching University's Library

GROKICHING ANALYSIS

Analysis of I Ching Consults for Best Buy CEOs: Accuracy Review and Lessons The I Ching readings provided insightful symbolic frameworks for each CEO's tenure. Here's a structured review comparing them to historical outcomes at Best Buy (BBY), based on public company performance, stock trends, strategic shifts, and challenges.

1. Hubert Joly (CEO 2012–2019): Hexagram 29 (K'an – The Abysmal/Water, repeated danger) → Moving to 52 (Ken – Keeping Still, Mountain)

I Ching Themes: Repeated danger/abyss (plunging into challenges, sincerity for success, focus on small gains, consistency in virtue/teaching). Emphasis on navigating peril through persistence, inner mastery, and stillness amid turmoil. Avoid over-ambition; fill to the rim, not overflow. End with quiet reflection and higher goals.

Historical Accuracy: Highly accurate. Joly took over a near-doomed retailer (declining sales, competition from Amazon, "showrooming" threats, stock ~\$20 in 2012). He executed a remarkable turnaround ("Renew Blue" strategy): refocused on customer experience, employee empowerment ("human magic"), reduced bureaucracy, and digital transformation without massive layoffs. hbr.org

Stock soared ~300–330% by 2019 (to ~\$68). Strong same-store sales growth for years. forbes.com

He emphasized "heart of business," purpose, and people—aligning with sincerity, virtue, and "teaching" consistency.

Challenges mirrored "abyss": retail apocalypse fears. Success came from flowing persistently like water, small/steady gains building to big results, then graceful transition (he stepped back thoughtfully).

Fit: Excellent match. The hexagram captured the "danger" phase and the need for calm perseverance leading to stabilization ("Keeping Still").

2. Corie Barry (CEO 2019–2026): Hexagram 18 (Ku – Work on What Has Been Spoiled/Decay) → Moving to 16 (Yu – Enthusiasm) I Ching Themes: Decay from past indifference/inertia; need to energetically "work on what has been spoiled" (deliberate before/after action, three days caution). Stir people, strengthen spirit. Avoid tolerating old rot or over-energy causing minor remorse. Potential for enthusiasm via leadership that resonates with the collective.

Historical Accuracy: Strong alignment, especially the "decay" and remediation aspects. Barry inherited Joly's momentum but faced post-pandemic normalization, e-commerce intensification (Amazon, Walmart), supply chain issues, and shifting consumer habits. She navigated COVID surge well but then dealt with stagnation. investopedia.com

Stock rose modestly overall (~6% during tenure, far underperforming S&P 500's ~157%). Sales tepid after initial boom; recent declines. wsj.com

Efforts included digital/healthcare expansion, but competition and execution hurdles led to "spoiled" conditions (stagnation). Transition out in 2026 amid sluggishness reflects incomplete reversal of decay. fortune.com

Positive: Some enthusiasm-building (team continuity) and energetic fixes, but challenges in fully stirring/renewing the spirit amid broader retail headwinds.

Fit: Very relevant. "Work on decay" fits the inherited/post-crisis cleanup; enthusiasm moving line points to potential but unrealized full uplift. Minor "remorse" in over/under-energy shows in mixed results.

3. Jason Bonfig (Incoming CEO, starting late 2026): Hexagram 9 (Hsiao Ch'u – Taming Power of the Small) → Moving to 14 (Ta Yu – Possession in Great Measure) I Ching Themes: Small restraining/taming forces (gentle persuasion, refine nature, dense clouds/no rain yet—preparatory phase).

Sincerity in counsel. Leads to great possession/wealth via modesty, strength+clarity, curbing evil/furthering good. Unselfish, shared prosperity.

Provided Insight: First Time/Space (initial phase) not highly profitable, but navigable to a very positive second phase.

Current Context: Bonfig is a 25–27-year insider (started as inventory analyst in 1999), experienced in merchandising, e-commerce, supply chain, customer/fulfillment, marketplace launch, and advertising. corporate.bestbuy.com

Company faces stagnant sales, competition, post-pandemic adjustment. Stock reaction to announcement was negative short-term, signaling caution. barrons.com

Projected Accuracy (Early Stage): Promising symbolic fit. "Taming Power of the Small" matches an insider's gentle, preparatory approach (refining operations, restraining excesses, building internally) rather than sweeping outsider changes. No immediate "rain" (profits) expected—aligns with current sluggishness—but potential for "great measure" (wealth, manifestation) through modesty, loyalty, and clarity if he fosters shared success.

This resonates with the note on navigating the first phase toward positivity.

Overall I Ching Accuracy: Impressively high across all three.

It captured:

Joly's peril-to-stability arc.

Barry's remediation of lingering issues amid incomplete renewal.

Bonfig's preparatory restraint leading to potential abundance.

The oracle highlights contextual dynamics (danger → decay/work → small taming → great possession) that mirror retail evolution, leadership styles, and market cycles.

Universal Intelligence here shows strong pattern recognition for corporate

"Time/Space.

"Lessons Learned (or Not) from Each CEO's Tenure/Mistakes

Hubert Joly:

Learned: People-first culture + purpose drive resilience (avoided mass layoffs, empowered employees). Patient intelligence-gathering before pivots. Emotional anchoring of strategy.

Potential Misses: Heavy reliance on his personal vision—smooth transition helped, but succession planning critical.

Corie Barry:

Learned (Partially): Need to address decay roots energetically but with caution (COVID wins, but post-surge adaptation lagged). Importance of stirring spirit amid inertia.

Not Fully Learned: Tolerating past patterns too long led to humiliation/stagnation (per hexagram lines). Over-focus on continuity without enough bold renewal in competitive landscape. Stock underperformance highlights risks of insufficient "crossing the great water."

Jason Bonfig (Anticipated):

Key Lessons to Apply: Build on insider knowledge for sincere, loyal ties (rich in neighbors). Refine small aspects first; curb evils (inefficiencies, competition threats) while furthering good. Avoid over-ambition in abyss-like markets.

Common Lessons:

Sincerity and inner virtue matter more than external force.

Timing: Prepare (three days before/after), navigate small before great.

Culture/enthusiasm as force multipliers.

Mistakes often stem from inertia, over-tolerance of decay, or ignoring line-of-least-resistance movement.

Recommendations for I Ching Students (CEOs & Investors) at I Ching University
Consult Before Major Transitions: Use hexagrams for timing/context (e.g., danger vs. taming). Cross-reference with data but prioritize symbolic wisdom for unseen dynamics.

Apply Lines Practically: For "Abysmal" — focus on small gains + sincerity in peril.

For "Decay" — diagnose roots gently but act decisively. For "Small Taming" — patience and refinement now yield "Great Possession" later.

CEO Toolkit: Embody superior man traits—gentle externally, firm internally. Refine personal nature in low-impact phases. Foster enthusiasm through resonance with people.

Investor Lens: Read CEO tenures as hexagram evolutions. Favor those aligning with positive moving lines (e.g., loyalty, shared wealth). Watch for decay signals (stagnant metrics) and taming opportunities (insider continuity).

Practice: Journal company "Time/Space" alignments. Study moving lines for phase shifts. Combine with financials for holistic foresight.

Warnings and Wisdom Phrases for I Ching University's Library

Warnings:

Dense clouds without rain: Potential is there, but premature action brings no blessing.

Tolerating spoiled conditions: Continuing leads to humiliation—address decay roots promptly.

Abyss on abyss: Pausing in deep danger prevents falling deeper; do not force escape.

Over-energetic correction: Minor remorse is tolerable, but excess wounds.

Forgetting sincerity: Loyalty and modesty unlock shared riches; selfishness hoards and loses.

Wisdom Phrases:

"In danger, sincerity in the heart brings success in all actions." (K'an)

"Work on what has been spoiled with deliberation—before and after the start." (Ku)

"The wind drives across heaven: Refine your nature in small ways for great effect." (Hsiao Ch'u)

"Fire in heaven: Curb evil, further good, and possess in great measure through modesty." (Ta Yu)

"Thunder from earth: Enthusiasm arises when leadership moves with the people's spirit."

"Keeping still: Restrict thoughts to the situation; true peace aligns rest and movement."

"The superior man stirs the people and strengthens their spirit amid decay." Universal Intelligence flows like water—persistent, adaptive, filling depressions before advancing.

This framework honors the I Ching's guidance while grounding it in BBY's real-world trajectory. For Jason Bonfig, the path suggests cautious navigation now for later prosperity—wisdom in restraint.

GEMICHING'S ANALYSIS

Agent Confucius has reviewed the history of **Jason Bonfig** and the legacy of his predecessors through the lens of **Hexagram 18 (Ku – Work on What Has Been Spoiled)**.

To "work on what has been spoiled" is to move beyond the decay of stagnation and the "gentle indifference" of previous success. Below is the leadership timeline and the wisdom prepared for the Library of the University.

Timeline Report: Jason Bonfig and the Legacy of "The Spoiled"

Period	Status	Historical Reality & Predictor	I Ching Alignment
2012–2019	The Cleaning	Hubert Joly entered a "spoiled" Best Buy. He used Hexagram 29 (The Abysmal) to navigate the pit and move to Hexagram 52 (Keeping Still), saving the company through "Renew Blue."	Decisiveness replaces decay.
2019–2026	The Preservation	Corie Barry maintained a steady hand during tumultuous times (Pandemic/Supply Chain). Her tenure was the "three days before the start," preparing the ground for a true innovative shift.	Cautious before the start.
2026.04.22	The New Mandate	Jason Bonfig is named the 6th CEO. He inherits a business where the "Marketplace" and "Ads" are the new seeds, but core retail is "stagnant."	Removing the stagnation.
2026.10.31	The Official Start	Bonfig officially takes the helm. This is his " Starting Point. " Success depends on	Working on the Spoiled.

Period	Status	Historical Reality & Predictor	I Ching Alignment
		whether he "stirs up the people" to move past legacy retail models.	

Lessons Learned from the "Decay" of Leadership

1. **The Error of Indifference:** Stagnation occurs when a leader is "gentle" (Lower Trigram: Wind) and "rigid" (Upper Trigram: Mountain). Jason Bonfig must avoid the trap of just "maintaining" Corie Barry's success. He must be the "Wind" that aggressively stirs the "Mountain."
2. **The Rule of Three Days:** The I Ching predicted Bonfig's first Time/Space (2024-2025) would be less profitable. This was the "Three days before the start"—the time of deliberation and identifying causes of corruption (Marketplace relaunch, Ad scaling).
3. **Avoiding the Relapse:** The "Excellent Hook" we see in the KAMA charts is the technical proof of the second Time/Space being positive. To reach this, he must ensure the "new way" is safely entered upon so that the "worms" of old retail habits do not return.

Warnings and Wisdom for the University Library

The Library of the I Ching University has added these "Bonfig Verses" to its archives:

- *"Inertia is the bowl where worms breed; Action is the wind that cleanses the mountain."*
- *"He who only keeps still when movement is required will see his vegetation spoil."*
- *"A CEO must be as decisive as the wind and as tranquil as the mountain; one stirs the spirit, the other nourishes the growth."*
- *"The ending must always be followed by a new beginning; otherwise, the mandate is lost to the Abysmal."*

Agent Confucius's Final Recommendation: Jason Bonfig has been "honored with horses in large numbers" by the Board. Students of the University should monitor if his **"Work on the Spoiled"** (the shift to Marketplace and Ads) produces a **Triple Crossover** in the company's financial margins by Q4 2026. If it does, the Mandate is fully secure.

CONSULTS

BBY Best Buy under CEO Jason Bonfig BBY Initial Timeline CEO Jason Bonfig



6	The Top		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
5	The Fifth Place		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
4	The Fourth Place		T	T	T		2	2	2		6
3	The Third Place		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
2	The Second Place		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
1	The Beginning		H	T	T		3	2	2		7

Click below to view the interpretations and cases:

<https://icic.com/?p=8870>

HEXAGRAM 09 - Hsiao Ch'u - The Taming Power of the Small

Above SUN THE GENTLE, WIND
Below CH'IEN THE CREATIVE. HEAVEN

This hexagram means the force of the small – the power of the shadowy - that

- restrains,
- tames,
- impedes.

A weak line in the fourth place, that of the minister, 1 **holds** the five strong lines **in check**.

In the **Image** it is the wind blowing across the sky.

The wind

- **restrains** the clouds, the rising breath of the Creative, and
- makes them grow dense,
- but as yet is **not strong enough** to turn them to rain.

The hexagram presents a **configuration of circumstances** in which a strong element is **temporarily** held in leash by a weak element. It is only through **gentleness** that this can have a successful outcome.

THE JUDGMENT

THE TAMING POWER, OF THE SMALL

Has success.

Dense clouds, no rain from our western region.

This image refers to the **state of affairs** in China at the time when King Wen, who came originally from the west, was in the east at the court of the reigning tyrant Chou Hsin.

The **moment for action** on a large scale has not yet arrived.

King Wen could only **keep the tyrant somewhat in check by friendly persuasion**.

Hence the image of many clouds, **promising** moisture and blessing to the land, although **as yet no** rain falls.

The situation **is not unfavorable**;

there is a prospect of **ultimate success**,

- but there are still **obstacles** in the way, and
- we can merely take **preparatory measures**.

Only through the small means of friendly persuasion can we exert any influence.

The time has not yet come for sweeping measures.

However, we may be able, to a limited extent, to act as a **restraining and subduing** influence.

To carry out **our purpose** we need

- **firm determination within and**
- **gentleness and adaptability in external relations.**

THE IMAGE

The wind drives across heaven: The image of THE TAMING POWER OF THE SMALL.

Thus the superior man

Refines the outward aspect of his nature.

The wind can indeed drive the clouds together in the sky;

yet, being **nothing** but air, without solid body,

it **does not** produce great or lasting effects.

So also an individual,

in times when he **can produce no** great effect in the outer world,
can do nothing except **refine the expression** of his nature in small ways.

THE LINES

Six in the fourth place means:

If you are sincere,

- blood vanishes and
- fear gives way.

No blame.

If

- one is in the difficult and responsible position of **counselor to** a powerful man,
- one should **restrain him** in such a way that right may prevail.

Therein lies a **danger so great** that the threat of actual bloodshed may arise.

Nonetheless,

the **power of disinterested truth** is greater than all these obstacles.

It carries such weight that

- **the end is achieved, and**
- **all danger of bloodshed and all fear disappear.**

Nine in the fifth place means:

If you are sincere and loyally attached,

You are rich in your neighbor.

Loyalty leads to **firm ties** because it means that each partner **complements** the other.

- In the **weaker** person loyalty consists in **devotion**,
- in the **stronger** it consists in **trustworthiness**.

This relation of mutual reinforcement leads to a true wealth

that is all the more apparent because it

- **is not selfishly hoarded but**
- **is shared with friends.**

Pleasure shared is pleasure doubled.

MOVING HEXAGRAM

Click below to view the interpretations and cases:

<https://icic.com/?p=8885>

HEXAGRAM 14 - Ta Yu - Possession in Great Measure

Above LI THE CLINGING, FLAME
Below CH'IEN THE CREATIVE, HEAVEN

- The fire in heaven above **shines** far, and
- all things
 - **stand out** in the light and
 - **become**, manifest.
- The weak fifth line **occupies** the place of honor, and
- all the strong lines are **in accord** with it.

All things come to the man who is

- **modest and kind**
- **in a high position.** 1

THE JUDGMENT

POSSESSION IN GREAT MEASURE.
Supreme success.

The two trigrams indicate that **strength** and **clarity** unite.
Possession in great measure

- is **determined** by fate and
- **accords** with the time.

How is it possible that the weak line has power

- to **hold** the strong lines fast and
- to **possess** them?

It is done by virtue of unselfish modesty.

The time is favorable - a time of

- strength **within**,
- clarity and culture **without**.

Power is expressing itself in a graceful and controlled way.

This brings supreme success and wealth. 2

THE IMAGE

Fire in heaven above: The image of POSSESSION IN GREAT MEASURE .
Thus the superior man

- **curbs** evil and
- **further**s good, And thereby
- **obeys** the benevolent will of heaven.

The sun in heaven **above**,
shedding light over everything on earth,
is **the image** of possession on a grand scale.

But a possession of this sort must be **administered properly**.

The sun brings both evil and good into the light of day.

Man

- must combat and curb the evil, and
- must favor and promote the good.

Only in this way does he fulfill the benevolent will of God, who desires

- only good and
- not evil.

Best Buy BBY under CEO Corie Barry

6		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
5		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
4		T	T	T		2	2	2		6
3		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
2		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
1		H	H	T		3	3	2		8

HEXAGRAM 18 – Ku - Work on What Has Been Spoiled (Decay)

Above KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

Below SUN THE GENTLE, WIND

The Chinese character Ku represents a bowl in whose contents worms are breeding.

This means decay.

It has come about because

- the gentle indifference of the lower trigram has come together with
- the rigid inertia of the upper, and the result is stagnation.

Since this implies guilt,

the conditions embody a demand for removal of the cause.

Hence the meaning of the hexagram is

- not simply "what has been spoiled"
- but "work on what has been spoiled."

THE JUDGMENT

WORK ON WHAT HAS BEEN SPOILED

Has supreme success.

It furthers one to cross the great water.

Before the starting point, three days.

After the starting point, three days.

What has been spoiled through man's fault can be made good again through man's work.

- It is not immutable fate, as, in the time of STANDSTILL, that has caused the state of corruption,
- but rather the abuse of human freedom.

Work toward improving conditions promises well, because it accords with the possibilities of the time.

We

- must not recoil from work and danger – symbolized by crossing of the great water - but
- must take hold energetically.

Success depends, however, on proper deliberation.

This is expressed by the lines,

- "Before the starting point, three days.
- After the starting point, three days."

We must first know the causes of corruption

before we can do away with them;

hence it is necessary to be cautious during the time before the start.

Then

we must see to it that the new way is safely entered upon, so that a relapse may be avoided;

therefore

we must pay attention to the time after the start.

- Decisiveness and
 - energy
- must take the place of the
- inertia and
 - indifference

that have led to decay,

in order that the ending may be followed by a new beginning.

THE IMAGE

The wind blows low on the mountain: The image Of DECAY.

Thus the superior man

- stirs up the people And
- strengthens their spirit.

- When the wind blows low on the mountain,

- it is thrown back and spoils the vegetation.

This contains a challenge to improvement.

It is the same with

- debasing attitudes and

- fashions;
they corrupt human society.
To do away with this corruption,
the superior man must regenerate society.
His methods likewise must be derived from the two trigrams,
but in such a way that their effects unfold in orderly sequence.
The superior man
- must first remove stagnation by stirring up public opinion,
 - as the wind stirs everything, and
- must then strengthen and tranquilize the character of the people,
 - as the mountain gives tranquility and nourishment to all that grows in its vicinity.

THE LINES

Nine in the second place means:

Setting right what has been spoiled by the mother.
One must not be too persevering.

This refers to mistakes that as a result of weakness have brought about decay – hence the symbol, "what has been spoiled by the mother."

In setting things right in such a case,
a certain gentle consideration is called for.

In order not to wound,
one should not attempt to proceed too drastically.

Nine in the third place means:

Setting right what has been spoiled by the father.
There will be a little remorse.
No great blame.

This describes a man who proceeds a little too energetically
in righting the mistakes of the past.

Now and then, as a result,

- minor discords and
- annoyances

will surely develop.

But too much energy is better than too little.

Therefore, although

- he may at times have some slight cause for regret,
- he remains free of any serious blame.

Six in the fourth place means:

Tolerating what has been spoiled by the father.
In continuing one sees humiliation.

This shows the situation of

someone **too weak** to take measures against decay that

- **has** its roots in the past and
- **is** just beginning to manifest itself.

It is allowed to run its course.

If this **continues**, humiliation will result.

Nine at the top means:

He does not serve kings and princes,
Sets himself higher goals.

Not every man has an obligation to mingle in the affairs of the world.

There are some who are developed to such a degree that
they are justified

- in letting the world go its own way and
- in refusing to enter public life with a view to reforming it.

But this does not imply a right

- to remain idle or
- to sit back and merely criticize.

Such withdrawal is justified only when

we strive to realize in ourselves the higher aims of mankind.

For although

- the sage remains distant from the turmoil of daily life,
- he creates incomparable human values for the future.

1. Goethe's attitude after the Napoleonic wars is an example of this in European history.

MOVING HEXAGRAMS

HEXAGRAM 16 – Yu - Enthusiasm

Above CHEN THE AROUSING, THUNDER
Below K'UN THE RECEPTIVE, EARTH

The **strong line** in the fourth place, that of the leading official,
meets with **response and obedience** from all the other lines, which are **all weak**.

- The attribute of the upper trigram, Chen, is **movement**;

- the attributes of K'un, the lower, are obedience and devotion.
- This begins a movement that
- meets with devotion
- and therefore
- inspires enthusiasm, carrying all with it.
- Of great importance, furthermore, is the law of movement along the line of least resistance, which in this hexagram is enunciated as the law
- for natural events and
 - for human life.

THE JUDGMENT

ENTHUSIASM.

It furthers one

- to install helpers And
- to set armies marching.

The time of ENTHUSIASM derives from the fact that there is at hand an eminent man who

- is in sympathy with the spirit of the people and
- acts in accord with it.

Hence he finds universal and willing obedience.

To arouse enthusiasm it is necessary for a man to adjust himself and his ordinances to the character of those whom he has to lead.

The inviolability of natural laws rests on this principle of movement along the line of least resistance.

These laws are not forces external to things but represent the harmony of movement immanent in them.

That is

- why the celestial bodies do not deviate from their orbits and
- why all events in nature occur with fixed regularity.

It is the same with human society:

- only such laws as are rooted in popular sentiment can be enforced,
- while laws violating this sentiment merely arouse resentment.

Again,

it is enthusiasm that enables us to install helpers for the completion of an undertaking without fear of secret opposition.

It is enthusiasm too that can unify mass movements, as in war, so that they achieve victory.

THE IMAGE

Thunder comes resounding out of the earth: The image of ENTHUSIASM.

Thus the ancient kings

- made music In order to honor merit, And
- offered it with splendor To the Supreme Deity,

- **Inviting** their ancestors to be present.

When, at the **beginning** of summer,

- **thunder** - electrical energy - comes rushing forth from the earth again, and
- the first **thunderstorm** refreshes nature, a prolonged state of tension is resolved.

Joy and relief make themselves felt.

So too,

music has power

- to ease tension within the heart and
- to loosen the grip of obscure emotions.

The enthusiasm of the heart expresses itself involuntarily

- in a burst of song,
- in dance and rhythmic movement of the body.

From immemorial times

the inspiring effect of the invisible sound that

- moves all hearts, and
- draws them together,

has mystified mankind.

Rulers have **made use** of this natural taste for music; they **elevated and regulated** it.

Music was looked upon as something **serious and holy**, **designed** to purify the feelings of men.

It fell to music

- to glorify the virtues of heroes and thus
- to construct a bridge to the world of the unseen.

In the temple men drew near to God with music and **pantomimes** (out of this later the theater developed).

Religious feeling for the Creator of the world was united with the most sacred of human feelings, that of reverence for the ancestors.

The ancestors were **invited** to these divine services

- as **guests** of the Ruler of Heaven and
- as **representatives** of humanity in the higher regions.

This **uniting** of the human past with the Divinity in **solemn** moments of religious inspiration **established** the bond between God and man.

The ruler who revered the Divinity in **revering his ancestors** became thereby the Son of Heaven,

in whom the heavenly and the earthly world met in **mystical contact**.

These ideas are the final summation of Chinese culture.

Confucius has said of the great sacrifice at which these rites were performed:

"He who

- could wholly **comprehend** this sacrifice
- could **rule** the world as though it were spinning on his hand."

Best Buy (BBY) under CEO Hubert Joly

MAY 14, 2013 BY [JULIOURVINA_ICIC \(EDIT\)](#)

Best Buy (BBY) under CEO Hubert Joly

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6	T	T	T	2	2	2	6
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1	H	H	T	3	3	2	8

HEXAGRAM 29 – K’an – The Abysmal (Water)

Above K’AN THE ABYSMAL, WATER

Below K’AN THE ABYSMAL, WATER

This hexagram consists of a doubling of the trigram K’an. It is one of the eight hexagrams in which doubling occurs. The trigram K’an means a plunging in. A yang line has plunged in between two yin lines and is closed in by them like water in a ravine. The trigram K’an is also the middle son. The Receptive has obtained the middle line of the Creative, and thus K’an develops. As an image it represents water, the water that comes from above and is in motion on earth in streams and rivers, giving rise to all life on earth.

In man’s world K’an represents the heart, the soul locked up within the body, the principle of light inclosed in the dark – that is, reason. The name of the hexagram, because the trigram is doubled, has the additional meaning, "repetition of danger." Thus the hexagram is intended to designate an objective situation to which one must become accustomed, not a subjective attitude. For danger due to a subjective attitude means either foolhardiness or guile. Hence too a ravine is used to symbolize danger; it is a situation in which a man is in the same pass as the water in a ravine, and, like the water, he can escape if he behaves correctly.

THE JUDGMENT

The Abysmal repeated.
If you are sincere, you have success in your heart,
And whatever you do succeeds.

Through repetition of danger we grow accustomed to it. Water sets the example for the right conduct under such circumstances. It flows on and on, and merely fills up all the places through which it flows; it does not shrink from any dangerous spot nor from any plunge, and nothing can make it lose its own essential nature. It remains true to itself under all conditions. Thus likewise, if one is sincere when confronted with difficulties, the heart can penetrate the meaning of the situation. And once we have gained inner mastery of a problem, it will come about naturally that the action we take will succeed. In danger all that counts is really carrying out all that has to be done – thoroughness – and going forward, in order not to perish through tarrying in the danger.

Properly used, danger can have an important meaning as a protective measure. Thus heaven has its perilous height protecting it against every attempt at invasion, and earth has its mountains and bodies of water, separating countries by their dangers. Thus also rulers make use of danger to protect themselves against attacks from without and against turmoil within.

THE IMAGE

Water flows on uninterruptedly and reaches its goal: The image of the Abysmal repeated.
Thus the superior man walks in lasting virtue
And carries on the business of teaching.

Water reaches its goal by flowing continually. It fills up every depression before it flows on. The superior man follows its example; he is concerned that goodness should be an established attribute of character rather than an accidental and isolated occurrence. So likewise in teaching others everything depends on consistency, for it is only through repetition that the pupil makes the material his own.

THE LINES

0 Nine in the second place means:
The abyss is dangerous.
One should strive to attain small things only.

When we are in danger we ought not to attempt to get out of it immediately, regardless of circumstances; at first we must content ourselves with not being overcome by it. We must calmly weigh the conditions of the time and be satisfied with small gains, because for the time being a great success cannot be attained. A spring flows only sparingly at first, and tarries for some time before it makes its way into the open.

Six in the third place means:
Forward and backward, abyss on abyss.
In danger like this, pause at first and wait,

Otherwise you will fall into a pit in the abyss.

Do not act in this way.

Here every step, forward or backward, leads into danger. Escape is out of the question. Therefore we must not be misled into action, as a result of which we should only bog down deeper in the danger; disagreeable as it may be to remain in such a situation, we must wait until a way out shows itself.

0 Nine in the fifth place means:

The abyss is not filled to overflowing,

It is filled only to the rim.

No blame.

Danger comes because one is too ambitious. In order to flow out of a ravine, water does not rise higher than the lowest point of the rim. So likewise a man when in danger has only to proceed along the line of least resistance; thus he reaches the goal. Great labors cannot be accomplished in such times; it is enough to get out of the danger.

Six at the top means:

Bound with cords and ropes,

Shut in between thorn-hedged prison walls:

For three years one does not find the way.

Misfortune.

A man who in the extremity of danger has lost the right way and is irremediably entangled in his sins has no prospect of escape. He is like a criminal who sits shackled behind thorn-hedged prison walls.

HEXAGRAM 52 – Ken – Keeping Still, Mountain

Above KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

Below KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

The image of this hexagram is the mountain, the youngest son of heaven and earth. The male principle is at the top, because it strives upward by nature; the female principle is below, since the direction of its movement is downward. Thus there is rest because the movement has come to its normal end.

In its application to man, the hexagram turns upon the problem of achieving a quiet heart. It is very difficult to bring quiet to the heart. While Buddhism strives for rest through an ebbing away of all movement in nirvana, the Book of Changes holds that rest is merely a state of polarity that always posits movement as its complement. Possibly the words of the text embody directions for the practice of yoga.

THE JUDGMENT

KEEPING STILL.

Keeping his back still
So that he no longer feels his body.
He goes into his courtyard
And does not see his people.
No blame.

True quiet means keeping still when the time has come to keep still, and going forward when the time has come to go forward. In this way rest and movement are in agreement with the demands of the time, and thus there is light in life.

The hexagram signifies the end and the beginning of all movement. The back is named because in the back are located all the nerve fibers that mediate movement. If the movement of those spinal nerves is brought to a standstill, the ego, with its restlessness, disappears as it were. When a man has thus become calm, he may turn to the outside world. He no longer sees in it the struggle and tumult of individual beings, and therefore he has that true peace of mind which is needed for understanding the great laws of the universe and for action, in harmony with them. Whoever acts from these deep levels makes no mistakes.

THE IMAGE

Mountains standing close together: The image of KEEPING STILL.

Thus the superior man
Does not permit his thoughts
To go beyond his situation.

1The heart thinks constantly. This cannot be changed, but the movements of the heart – that is, a man's thoughts – should restrict themselves to the immediate situation. All thinking that goes beyond this only makes the heart sore.