

The Language of I Ching

by

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Hexagram 4



Meng - The Student



Upper Trigram – Chen
Mountain

Keywords: Tranquility, meditation, immobility, intransigent; still, unyielding, stuck, stubborn



Lower Trigram – K'an
Water

Keywords: Mystery, danger, challenge, risk; profound, unfamiliar, perilous, existential

The Student refers to the questing, inquisitive part of your nature, the facet of your personality that wants to learn, and then wants to teach to others what you have discovered. The teacher, after all, is just a student who is further along on the path, and we all alternate between those two roles at different times and in different aspects of our lives. Learn, teach, expand your mind and you will achieve an eternal, youthful enthusiasm for life.

If no lines are changing, this hexagram is telling you that your needs will be met only if you can maintain a respectful attitude toward the student, the teacher, and the quest, itself. Are you open to learning from those whose paths transect your own? Do you offer encouragement to those less accomplished than yourself? Are you ever mindful that as much as you have to teach, you have just as much to learn? Eschew arrogance; cultivate humility. Reflect on how you can best further those around you because, in this situation, by doing so you will further your own goals, as well.

Hexagram 4



Meng - The Student

The Student wishes to learn; the mentor wishes to teach. A spring bubbles forth to refresh and the wise person drinks thankfully, deeply, asking for no more. If the student demands too much, the mentor will walk away. Drink deeply, but do not exhaust the spring. Success comes through sincerity and discipline.

Line 6: The wise teacher will allow a student to fall flat on his face sometimes. Only by failing do we learn how to succeed and if we are protected from all defeats we will never savor any victories.

Line 5: He is as trusting as a little child. Correct. Trust can earn valuable allies. Wise teachers rise to fulfill the student's needs.

Line 4: Bound with chains of fear. It is easy but unworthy to fear knowledge and worry where learning will lead. The wise person is open to the new.

Line 3: She mistakes a mortal man for a god; putting a teacher on a pedestal places barriers in the path of learning. The teacher is only a student who is further along on his journey. The wise teacher understands this; so does the wise student. Idolize no one; and do not seek veneration, either.

Line 2: The wise person teaches without arrogance, is gentle to those who are wrong and kindly toward those who fear him. Truly this is the path to success.

Line 1: The wise teacher disciplines with care. Taken too far, punishment speaks only of the teacher's insecurity.