

Ideal and Shadow

The Ideal and the Shadow form a pair of figures that let you grasp the ideal potential of the situation and a necessary transformative potential that is, for the moment, shadowed and unavailable but will manifest spontaneously if you do not seek it out. This focuses you on the sort of motivations and activities that the Primary Figure seeks to inspire and those it asks you to let go of.

The Ideal gives you a hexagram that represents the most effective way to think about your entire situation, the ideal way to visualize it and act on it. It will further the emergence of the bright spirit and idealizing energies that the situation contains.

This is a quite effective perspective that I developed over the last few years after I came in contact with the students of an old Chinese master in South Africa. It works by reflecting the positions of the trigrams of a Figure in the King Wen or Later Heaven Sequence of Trigrams back into the Fuxi or Early Heaven Sequence. It is a brilliant move that has a solid foundation in Daoist thinking about the relation of these two primal trigram sequences.

The Shadow gives you a hexagram that represents what is, at the moment, counter-indicated in your situation, covered by a sort of negative screen that can contain often painful memories. This screen or shadow is blocking transformative energy. If you completely release your awareness from these configurations by focusing on the Ideal, the necessary energy the Shadow Site contains will manifest itself spontaneously.

I had been pondering the possible meanings of what I call the Shadow Site, the reflection of a given hexagram in the Reverse Sequence of the 64 hexagrams, for quite a while. One of its functions made immediate sense to me when it was paired with the Ideal as a sort of negative mirror. This is the way Change seems to work, tactically pairing opposites with a situational rather than an abstract judgment on their innate qualities. Another realization came as I was working in depth with the Reverse Sequence in deep divinations as representing a kind of mystical re-birth, a union that can only be achieved through indirection or not-

acting (*wu-wei*). From this came the awareness that whatever is shadowed is necessary for the completion of the transformative possibilities of the moment but cannot be reached through conscious action. It can and will manifest synchronistically, however, when there is no conscious effort directed towards it. This sort of indirection frees the quality in question from the linear flow of time and the karmic chain of cause and effect.

I have tried these out in quite a few divinations and, to my mind, they add a special and quite effective way to see what we should and should not be doing, practically rather than morally, at a given moment along with what we might achieve directly and what we can achieve only by renouncing our desires for it.

Working with the Ideal and Shadow

Here is a quick example of how the Ideal Form and Shadow Site can help clarify which conscious attitudes are effective in a reading and which are not, giving an idea of the hidden potential that can manifest spontaneously if we do not focus on it. I asked a question to Change about how we can best read the answers it gives us.

Question: What would you (Change) like to say to us about reading your answers to our questions?

Response: 3, 9/1 > 8: Hexagram 3 Sprouting with a Transforming Line in the first position, producing the Relating Figure 8 Grouping.

This is the basic situation:



3 Sprouting/The World Tree ZHUN

Begin, establish, found, cause to grow; difficulties at the beginning, birth pains, arduous, demanding; gather your strength to surmount obstacles; seeking a bride, massing soldiers, establishing a base; vitality, the inner river of strength, thunder in the waters, the spark of life; the World Tree, beginning of a new time. *Core theme:* 23 Strip away the past.

We are at the beginning of a process of Inspiration and are enjoined to act in this manner in order “to create a world in which to discover a self”:

Step 1 Beginnings: This return of the spirit attracts a new fate.

A stone pillar. The riders wheel and turn.

Trial: Advantageous for a residence.

Advantageous to install lords as helpers.

Your purpose is moving correctly. Value what is below. The Great acquires support of the common people. This is the standing stone in front of an ancestral temple, sprouted from the earth. Stop and establish your foundations. Connect to your own deep roots. Empower others to help you. You are on the right track.

If we do so, Change is capable of regrouping the way we think and completely changing our sense of spiritual kinship with the world around us.



8 Grouping/Calling the Spirits BI

Mutual support; join together, ally with, align; change the basic way you think and who you are grouped with; coordinate, approach, accord with what is good; work together, work towards; finding true spiritual kin and spiritual connection; the new group of Lords and Protecting Spirits that emerges after a conflict. *Core theme:* 23 Strip away the past.

I used the Ideal and Shadow to see what overall stance we could best take towards the act of reading and what the hidden potential could be.

- *Ideal and Shadow:* Think of this as a time to hide your light and begin the difficult journey that leads to deliverance (36). Your message to future generations (62) will then arise of itself.

The Ideal in our Reading is 36 Brightness Hiding.



36 Brightness Hiding/Calling Bird MING YI

Hide your light, protect yourself; injury, proscription, oppression by hidden influences, barbarians and vulgar uncultured people; accept the difficult journey and the mandate you have been given; an omen bird calling from the darkness; the setting sun and the west wind that blows from the Realm of the Dead. *Core theme:* 40 Deliverance from past suffering.

This tells us that it is the right time to step outside the established rules, to dim the light of our usual awareness, to let ourselves be wounded. We must journey through the demon's country our way of thought has created for itself, acting from hiding to brighten what must be brightened and darken what must be darkened. This is what brings deliverance from the past, inculcating a deep faith

in the feminine processes of life. It is directly connected to our Relating Figure (8) and the “new grouping” of thoughts or categories that can emerge. This “night-sea journey” can make it real for us.

The Shadow for our reading, what is counter-indicated but can appear spontaneously if we do not focus on it, is 62 Small Traverses/The Flying Bird.



62 Small Traverses/The Flying Bird XIAO GUO

A dangerous transition; stay in the process, adapt to each thing, be very careful, very small; cross the threshold, surmount the difficulties, transgress the norms, go outside the limits; words and deep feelings that carry the spirit of a life fully lived across the River of Life and Death to a new generation; the undifferentiated flow of life. *Core theme:* 28 the Great Transition.

This tells us that when we read the answers from Change we are not at the end of something, but the beginning. We must not proceed through the Small, adapting to what already exists, but through our sense of a great new purpose, the message of the Primary Figure, 3 Sprouting. We are not preparing a legacy for future generations here, but concentrating the work at hand - our own birth into the tradition and the help we might give to others in the present moment. When I personally looked at the Karmic Nodes attached to this Figure (9:10, 15:16, 31:32, 41:42, 55:56 and 59:60) I found that each represented a quite difficult and dangerous situation, emotionally and intellectually, where I was forced to adapt and be very careful in order to survive and carry something out of the dangerous situation as a Gate to the birth into the life of the spirit.

This is what I should NOT remember or use when I encounter an answer from Change. If I free myself from these memories, not letting them color my sense of the answers it might offer but rather stay in the difficult journey of the present moment, the hidden language of Change will be released spontaneously for all to use and I myself might emerge as a Great Individual (28) able, as the Daoists say, to tell for myself whether the water is hot or cold.