

III THE EMPRESS

Key Words: Venus; beauty; love; motherliness; femininity; wisdom; connection between spirit and matter; inner and outer wealth.

The Empress embodies and commands the feminine in all its forms. Her form and surroundings are marked by beauty and wholeness. You feel a sense of well-being in her presence, taking part in the harmony of her being. Her beauty is not restricted only to the externally visible. Her femininity is fully evolved on all levels of her being, given her a special radiance. She is mother and lover, ruler and seer at the same time. Her strength rests in the unifying of the highest spiritual values in their fully perceivable forms, with the lowest material qualities.

The essential characteristics of her dominion are love in its giving and its receptive aspects (white and red), creativity and fruitfulness (green), understanding and wisdom (blue). Her right hand holds the phallus-like stem of the lotus which unfolds its petals in front of her heart chakra. Her left hand is open receptively. The creativity of male procreative power unifies itself with female surrender. After she has integrated the male aspects of herself, a woman will be internally and externally in harmony.

The pink-white pelican which feeds its brood with its own blood signifies unconditional mother-love, nourishing the young with its whole being. The Empress also represents the Great Mother, Mother Earth, who gives birth to and nourishes all living beings.

The double-headed white eagle on the shield (corresponding with the red eagle of The Emperor) symbolizes the transformation which arises through the unification of the diverse aspects of your being.

Moon and Earth are united and surrounded by a magnetic energy field. When the emotional depths of the unconscious (Moon) manifest visibly (Earth), they become available for consciousness to use (blue flames to the right and left). When the powers from within are integrated, you will radiate wholeness and completeness which attracts other people magnetically because it gives them a feeling of security and protection to be in your presence. The union of Moon and Earth appears once again on the crown. The Maltese Cross emphasizes the significance of the union between spiritual and material.

Her face is turned toward the dove, she is oriented toward the future. In her wisdom, she has turned from the past, the sparrow.

The opening in the arch behind her can be seen as a gateway to heaven. This beautiful physical form merely hints at something more beautiful, much greater, which is hidden in it. Hermann Hesse described «every phenomenon on earth as an image, saying that all images are open gates through which the soul can enter the inner world when it is ready. Here you and I and everything else are all one. Every person comes to such an open gate at some time in life, but few go through the gate or give up the pretty illusions on this side for what we may sense lies within the reality of the inner.»*

Indications: The beauty you see in others which attracts you to them is a beauty you carry within yourself. You are in the process of unfolding and evolving your femininity. This may be the right time to work through and clarify unresolved mother-conflicts.

Question: In your life is there a beautiful, strong woman from whom you would like to learn?

Suggestion: Visualize your ideal woman! Write down her most important qualities. Try to find these in others and yourself. Surround yourself with beauty and abundance.

Affirmation: I am filled with power and beauty.

Love is the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.

- Scott Peck, *The Road Less Travelled*

THE EMPRESS is the principle of love with wisdom. She is a symbol of humankind's ability to extend love and to receive love. The Greeks referred to this symbol as Demeter, the Earth Mother. Mythically, this archetype is also seen as Venus, the Goddess of Love, Beauty, and Creative Power. In Jungian psychology, she is the anima, the feminine nature. Behind the Empress, the Moon shines through the veils that fall from her crown. The Moon is the Western symbol for feminine, magnetic nature. She is the Goddess principle, or what the Orientals would refer to as the power of yin energy.

The Empress holds the blue lotus blossom of wisdom as a reminder that when we approach life from an attitude of love combined with wisdom, we will resist the need to over-give or push to make things happen emotionally; nor will we protect, or hold ourselves back emotionally. The Empress represents the trusting, balanced heart rather than the controlling, protective heart. She gives in equal proportion to her capacity to receive and is as comfortable in receiving love as she is in extending love. In her right hand, she holds the lotus blossom with its four points which indicate her capacity to give mentally, emotion- ally, physically, and spiritually as appropriate; and she holds her left arm in a curved position The Empress

as a symbol of her willingness to receive that which is extended toward her in a loving and wise way. The Empress illustrates the healing power of love that is nurturing, comforting, and supportive. She reminds us that love with wisdom is the capacity to nurture and support ourselves in equal proportion to how we nurture and support others.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE WITH WISDOM: THE EARTH MOTHER

The large crystalline bubbles touching each other on the card represent the unity of mind and heart. This is the only symbol in the deck which shows heart and mind having equal balance and proportion. Another way that the Empress symbolizes the unity and strength of heart and mind integration is in the color of her burgundy robe (the depth of emotional expression) combined with all the birds which represent the mental realms of consciousness. Cross-culturally, birds are seen as spiritual messengers in the majority of myths. Birds are creatures of the air, and in alchemy, birds and air are associated with the mind, or the mental realms of consciousness. Birds represent spiritual messages that have been cognized or brought into conscious awareness.

The Empress faces the dove or kiwi bird, both are prophetic birds or birds that remind us that wisdom is within and remind us, therefore, to listen to inner guidance. She brings with her the precious memories of the past (the small sparrow or bluebird that sits to the back of her head). Her commitment to change and to become even more of who she is is represented by the swan with her four baby swans. The swan is a Western symbol for transformation; "from the ugly duckling to the beautiful swan" is a metaphor for transforming our own underdeveloped parts (the four baby swans) into awakened and expressive parts of who we are. The double phoenix on the Empress's shield is the Eastern bird that, like the Western swan, is associated with change and transformation. The mythical double phoenix facing each other reminds us that we are simultaneously changing internally as well as externally. Universally, every winged creature is symbolic of spiritualization. The Empress reminds us through all the birds on this symbol that love with wisdom is a way in which we can practice, as well as listen to, our own divine natures within.

Bumble bees are found on the robes of the Empress, Emperor and Art/ - Temperance symbols. They represent ways of seeing, or varied forms of perception. According to the Greek Delphic tradition, the second of the temples built in Delphi was erected by bees to assist the oracular vision of the Delphic Oracles (Cirlot, 1962).

The globe in the Empress's crown represents the ability to explore internal and external worlds with equal agility and personal confidence.

The fleur-de-lis, the three-petaled flowers located at the bottom of the Empress symbol is also found at the bottom of the Emperor symbol. In the West, the fleur-de-lis is associated with royalty and leadership. In Tibet and some Eastern cultures, this same symbol is often referred to as the "three-pronged flame" representing the union of mind, heart, and spirit.

The crescent moons interfacing with the Earth on the Empress symbol illustrates the magnetic pull of the feminine nature and its necessity to offer love with wisdom. Just as the Earth is pulled toward the Moon magnetically, so are we pulled to people and situations that offer love with wisdom.

The Empress as Life-Time Symbol

For those individuals whose birthday adds up to the number 3, the Empress represents their life-time spiritual symbol. If one is born with the number 3 one is like the Empress in one's capacity to love, nurture, comfort, support and heal others. It is through one's own mother that one defines who one would be and who one would not be.

For both men and women, this archetype reveals their deep love nature. This archetype reveals their power to receive and to give love with wisdom. For a man, the Empress is his golden lady within, Or what in Jungian psychology is referred to as the man's anima. With the Empress as their spiritual essence, both genders have an extraordinary capacity to heal, comfort, and nurture others. With this gift they would do well in any of the professions concerned with nurturing others like the medical profession or the healing arts; animal husbandry, farming, and veterinarian work, architecture, design, landscaping or any of the arts that contribute to beautification like being a fashion designer, gardener, artist or superb chef.

Their greatest challenge is to nurture, comfort and support themselves in equal proportion to how they support and nurture others. They have an enormous capacity to model to others the beauty of what it is like to have a balanced, wise, and trusting emotional nature. Because love with wisdom is their greatest gift, they may need to monitor a tendency to over-give or push to make things happen that are emotionally important to them or, because they feel so deeply, they may protect themselves or hold back emotionally for fear of being hurt. These tendencies may surface in times of stress or may announce that they are not nurturing themselves in equal proportions to how they are nurturing others.

The Empress as a Growth Symbol

During Empress years (see Section VIII), individuals experience a need to clarify what is emotionally important and what is not. There will be people in their life during this year who will show them what is emotionally important to them and what is not. This is one of the best years to do the following: 1) break patterns of over-giving or over-protecting oneself emotionally; 2) resolve motherhood issues, or heal issues surrounding one's own mother or maternal figures in one's life; 3) excel in professions and in leadership positions where one can model the power of the mind and heart working in tandem; and 4) bring more beauty, harmony, nature, and receptivity into one's life.

When the Empress begins a growth cycle (see Section VIII), this begins a nine year cycle that is one's Creative/Venus Cycle or the Path of the Heart. It is nine years ruled by Venus, the Empress or Earth Mother archetype. This is the best cycle during which to follow whatever has one's passion and heart. Shoulds of any kind will not work in this cycle. It is a cycle where the heart is saying "it is my turn." The Empress cycle is a time where some kind of creativity becomes a passion. It is also a time where one connects with deep emotional relationships; and is the best time to heal relationships with important women in one's life.

The Empress as a Visual Affirmation and Meditative Symbol

The Empress is an excellent symbol to use as a visual affirmation to enhance emotional balance, wisdom, and trust. For all women in motherhood roles or for others who are in positions of nurturing and comforting others, this is an important symbol to use as a visual reminder of giving and receiving love in balanced and appropriate ways.

Sample Affirmations To Use While Looking at The Empress

I give wisely and I receive wisely.
I enjoy leadership positions where I can model ideas and feelings that are equally honored and respected
I value the healing power of beauty, harmony and love.
I realize that the capacity to receive is equally as powerful as the capacity to give.

The Empress As an Outer Mirror

Whenever one is drawn to the Empress symbol or pulls her from the deck, she represents one's capacity to extend and receive love. She reminds one that one's emotional nature is currently in balance and that one is bringing into balance issues surrounding important women in one's life: one's mother, maternal figures, female authority figures, colleagues, friends, or deep emotional relationships. Regardless what form one's outer mirrors take, this symbol represents the power of one's owning one's own maternal and loving nature within.

Other Symbols that Are Aspects of The Empress

The Empress is the internal motivating energy for expressing love in the world (the Universe, as the number 21, adds up to 3) and for breaking destructive patterns which bind and hold back our self-love and expression of love toward others (The Hanged Man, as the number 12, adds up to the number 3). The major challenge toward expressing love is sorrow held in the mind (the Three of Swords). The Three of Swords is the tendency of the mind to rework old wounds or sorrows tied with the past or with unhappy triangular relationships one has experienced in the past. The threes in the decks are the Empress's tools. Everyone experiences sorrow in his or her life-time. It is by using the Empress's tools that we are given ways in which to overcome past sorrows or ways of preventing unexpected sorrows in our lives. For example, if we are clear in our priorities (the Three of Disks), we will be able to communicate the abundance of feelings that we have (the Three of Cups) from a place of honesty and integrity (the Three of Wands). The experience of sorrow is often the result of having abandoned ourselves, or from not communicating our feelings accurately, or from being unclear about where and with whom our priorities and commitments lie.

Once we break patterns that bind us (The Hanged Man) we are able to contribute to our community and to the world (The Universe) from a place of love with wisdom (The Empress). NOTE: See The Empress constellation in Section VI.

The Gifts and Challenges for Persons whose Life-Time Personality Symbol Is The Empress

Gifts:

The Three of Disks (The Works; Priorities)
The Three of Cups (Abundance of Feelings)
The Three of Wands (Virtue; Integrity)
The Hanged Man (Breaking Limiting Patterns)
The Universe (Expression of Love in the World)
The Empress (Love with Wisdom)

Challenge:

Three of Swords (Sorrow)