

Hexagram 9 – The Small Shaping



The small shaping.

Spiritual influence nourishing all.

Shrouding clouds, not raining.

Caused by human obstructions.

Structure:

- The Creative ☰ below, the image of great strength. Wind ☱ above, the image of the gentle. Inner strength coupled with outer gentleness.
- One weak line holds five strong lines in check.

Image: The wind blows across the sky, restraining the clouds and making them dense. Although the clouds promise needed rain, the wind alone cannot make it rain.

Creative forces surge outward into experience. At a turning point in history, the weak have the task to concentrate and shape cultural forces into forms of wholeness, restraining and shaping the emerging creative flux. While we have this critical responsibility, we lack the cumulative power needed to manifest the new era.

In our time, we have the responsibility and know the necessity of the task, yet no great leader appears to lead us all into the creative era of wholeness. The ways of wholeness¹ become visible only through the cooperative efforts of many who share the way of living that cares for the Earth Interbeing and who work together to bring it forth.

We have yet to realize a definitive cultural form that will have the integrity to hold the powerful energies of the Creative. Chaos has not ceased. Many seek the final shape of things to come. First one vision emerges, then another. A great strong movement rises firing enthusiasm and hope, but then it collapses, and new shapes emerge from the chaos. The wise continue to learn and share their lessons learned with others also engaged in making wholeness visible.

Collectively, we still need to restrain and shape more creative forces and substance. We have the task to build a broad large form in which all beings have a place and the means to meet their needs. Those excluded from active participation in this work would sabotage the process if the shaping prematurely concluded without them. We must continue to shape conditions until they reach the maximum point of expansion in a form so comprehensive and inclusive that within the surging chaos all life finds belonging therein. Only within such inclusivity can we finally know wholeness within the world.

The belief in human exceptionalism still has the power to harm and oppress the wholeness of Earth Interbeing. The wise do not have the strength and capacity on their own to transform the situation and prevail against the destructive forces. However, we can work to curb the harm until the beneficial forces strengthen and take hold.

¹ **Ways of Wholeness:** Sages relate to all their sacred Earth Interbeing relations with love and care, serving the well-being of all. Sages know the sacred within all their interactions and situations and open to the loving path through problems and dangers. Sages live within Earth and moral limits to sustain the sacred balance and harmony, reciprocate for the gifts they receive from the Earth Interbeing, and hold themselves accountable for their actions. Sages take responsibility for their own wholeness and fulfill their responsibilities to the wholeness of Earth Interbeing, creating opportunities for others to do the same.

This unresolved chaotic situation demands. Challenged by the urgent search for the great all-encompassing form in which everything has a place, the wise remain patient. No benefit comes from forcing a resolution and harvesting prematurely the unripe fruits of our efforts. Our faith in the ways of wholeness alone prevents despair, giving us courage and the inner certainty that our efforts will help shape the new era. With a glad mind, we persist.

We wait, but waiting does not mean inactivity. While the time has not come to conclude or perfect, we must continue to pour our energy into the small efforts of shaping, which in themselves never reach greatness on their own. The accumulated efforts of many will lead to the world we seek.

Freedom from privileges and the culture's emphasis on self-cherishing and hostility for others while cultivating the ways of wholeness shape the chaotic powerful creative forces. Nurturing our wholeness prepares the ground for the new beginning and serves as the fulcrum to move the world. We must do this inner work by ourselves to prepare for the new era ourselves as nobody can do it for us.

This inner work begins with exercising our power to freely choose to respond in the ways of wholeness to whatever arises in our lives. This daily work within this thin zone of freedom may not move the world, but it has a large influence in increasing our capacities to extend this creative shaping into ever greater complexities of experience.

Within our community, we can take small steps on our own and with others to move it toward wholeness. The situation does not call for sweeping measures, but even within constricted circumstances, we can find ways to collectively act to shape the flux of creative energies. Firm determination within and gentle adaptability to whatever arises in experience will bring forth the world we want to see.

In this way, we prepare the new era. The collective vision of the sacred possibilities comes into clearer focus, enabling us to manifest wholeness with the Earth Interbeing in ever deeper, more inclusive ways. Eventually the time comes when the shape of the new era will suddenly appear complete. We cannot just hope for that day but satiate the time with possibilities so that the spark of creativity will penetrate and ignite the new era's completion, the fruit of the slow preparatory work of small shaping. Great changes begin within the smallest parts.

The shapers of the new era have this thankless duty, an effort that seemingly never succeeds but just tames. We may never see the harvest but only from afar the promise of our efforts. While others may gather the fruit, the vanguard plants the orchard. We prepare for the success of the harvest through turning away from what harms and toward wholeness in the time of small battles of restraining and taming.

A great and difficult task challenges us. No sphere of activity proves too small. We accept whatever duty life gives us and mature with it, embracing it as the ground of our work, where the small concentrates the creative and fulfills our being, what the spirit has called us to do. Eventually the winds change, and the rain comes.

Line 1: The strong line wants to advance, but in so doing it goes too far and encounters obstructions. The line willingly returns to the way suited to its situation, where it can freely advance or retreat. The wise always return to the path.

Line 2: The line wants to press forward but recognizes conditions block it. When advancing does not harmonize with the time, the reasonable and resolute do not expose themselves to a setback. They follow the wise and retreat without a struggle. Such an attitude keeps to the path and avoids throwing ourselves away as would happen if we offered ourselves despite the situation.

Line 3: This line images the loss of integrity and usefulness. The line experiences an inner turmoil caused by a dissonance between what it believes it values and its action, proving the line's inconstancy and lack of will. Under the influence of fear and urgency, the line ignorantly advances solutions for situations over what it has no control, a path the wise would never choose.

Line 4: The line, empty within and in the midst of strong lines, opens to the spirit's guidance and follows the ways of wholeness, taking responsibility for its actions. The line transforms its fears and anxieties into guardians of the spiritual path. Others of like kind respond and move toward the influence of this weak force, which strengthens them and gives them relief.

Line 5: When people have a common understanding of the inner and outer wholeness, they have strong connecting bonds. They enrich each other by sharing their resources, talents and blessings. Their mutual support overcomes the dangers of isolation.

Line 6: The rain has come. The line has reached a critical standpoint from the cumulative small effects of taming. Success secured bit by bit calls for great caution. The line abides with wholeness and does not advance further as the time to do so has not come.

The tamed line, at the extreme of docile obedience, yields to restraint and stabilizes. Once the harmonious situation has settled, the times change to allow the wise to bring forth the ways of wholeness within the world.