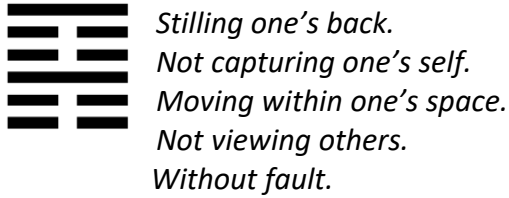


Hexagram 52 Stilling



Structure: The top ☶ has stopped, and the bottom ☶ remains still. Inwardly and outwardly still.

Image: Mountain, mountain range.

Ideogram: A foot stops walking.

In the Chinese calendar, the trigram Mountain ☶ marks the beginning of winter (October – November) and the end of a cycle, the mysterious place and time where all things end and begin, where death and birth pass one into the other. Activity ceases, and beings come to rest, a rest that allows the accumulated experiences and potentialities of one cycle to concentrate into the seed of the next one.

Over hundreds of thousands of years, people learned how to live on Earth with other beings to meet their needs and urges in ways that all benefit, the Ways of Wholeness with Earth Interbeing.¹ Yet cultures arise that distort natural tendencies into harmful ways of living. They deny the sacred, take from the Earth Interbeing without gratitude or reciprocity, treat others and all beings as objects for personal use, impose their will upon others, and destroy community through self-centeredness.

When people become aware of the harmful ways of our culture and our complicity in harming life and the Earth, the need to heal our rupture with Earth Interbeings arises. To heal, we must change ourselves.

Changing deeply rooted culturally conditioned beliefs and patterns of behavior challenges us. We need to bring our conditioned thinking to a standstill and stop acting upon conditioned patterns of self-centered behaviors. The Mountain hexagram points to two transformative practices: meditation and non-action. Both practices depend upon a strong will to survive and the willingness to follow the ways of wholeness. Much of the healing work consists of nothing more than not acting.

Meditation slows down the processing of our thoughts and feeling, which allows us to observe and study them before we act upon them. When practiced over time, meditation strengthens our capacity to stay focused on our values even when distractions clamor for our attention. Meditation strengthens our will to live the ways of wholeness. Those wanting to start meditating have access to many methods and instructional resources. The fundamental practice teaches us to follow our breath.

¹ **Ways of Wholeness with Earth Interbeing:** We interbe with all our sacred Earth Interbeing relations with love, equality, respect, and care. We know the sacred within all our interactions and open to the loving path through problems and dangers. We live within Earth limits and moral bounds to sustain the sacred balance and harmony of the Earth Interbeing. We gift back what we have taken and share the gifts we receive. We lovingly fulfill our own responsibilities to the Earth Interbeing as whole beings, encouraging others to do the same. We accept responsibility for the consequences of our actions. (Rev. 10-6-24)

Another non-action practice develops our skills to not behave in ways contrary to our best interest but to choose the ways of wholeness. Harmful cultural conditioning powerfully urges us to act in ways that override our wisdom. Deep within we know the harm such behavior causes, as we likely have experienced the consequences of this behavior pattern before. Yet the moment's urge to rashly act blinds us to other ways to respond to a situation that align with wholeness. If we have a shred of presence left, we can introduce a pause of non-action between our emotional urge to act and rashly acting, giving us time to choose to respond in the ways of wholeness. We cultivate this pause of non-action so that we can earlier catch urges to rashly act, before a growing emotionally charged urge makes it difficult to stop ourselves.

Non-action also implies patience. Once we have completed an action step that changes our relationship within wholeness, we must patiently wait for the consequences of that action to unfold on their own without pivoting to the next challenge. Each step toward wholeness involves changing ourselves, and we need to absorb and digest these changes before we can wisely discern the next step. As we change, we change our experience of the world. Each step comes out of the last. We need to fully settle one change before taking another step of change.

Not acting to change another or to not interfere in a situation that does not involve us keeps us whole. Not acting until the time for action has ripened shows great wisdom.

When keeping still through non-action, the wise know how to gently come to rest within the sacred. In this way, stillness does not become empty inactivity, and action does not cause regret or remorse.

Line 1: To avoid self-centeredness and impatience, the line stops itself from acting unwisely. The line only acts when it discerns how to act in the ways of wholeness.

Line 2: When strong others press forward into wrongdoing, the weak line cannot influence the situation despite its good intentions. Even though the line does not itself do wrong, it gets swept along by the forces of the adverse situation.

Line 3: When we forcefully stop the natural movements of emotions to obtain a quiet heart, they move wildly and overwhelm us, causing a great distress and unwholesome results. Fire when smothered changes into acrid smoke that suffocates as it spreads.

Line 4: We obtain the highest stage of rest within the spirit when we forget self-centeredness. Here, the line has not yet achieved selflessness. It can rest its thoughts and impulses, but it has not released itself from the roots of I-ness, that which keeps it apart. Yet keeping the heart at rest with the spirit marks an important step on the path that leads to the return of being to the sacred interbeing.

Line 5: The wise speak to benefit the world and to teach others the path. When we can remain reserved in speech and refrain from talking without a beneficial purpose, then regret vanishes. Silence is the most difficult non-action.

Line 6: The line has achieved stillness within and in the world yet remains careful and earnest to the end of stopping, an image of tranquil non-action. When they stop, many do not persist in stopping to the end and yield to the urge to act, losing control of their discipline.