

## Hexagram 10 – Treading the Sacred Path



*Treading on the tiger's tail..*

*Not coming to harm.*

*Growing.*

**Ideogram:** Body and repeating steps.

**Structure:**

- Above, the Creative ☰. Below, joy ☱.
- Firmness rejoicing in flexibility. The yielding follows the strong, treading upon it.

The hexagram tells the story of a young girl treading on the tail of a fierce tiger's tail, but she comes to no harm. The lower weak trigram, here representing the young girl, acts on the mystery of life, the upper trigram. Normally in the world, the strong act upon the weak. Yet here the roles reverse, and the weak acts on the strong, coming to no harm because the weak harmonizes with the strong.

We enter life over which we have little control. We do not determine what each day brings and remain subject to all of the forces of cause and effect in play within the world. However, even though we do not control what we experience, we do have total responsibility for how we respond to it. Acting in the nonlinear sacred ways introduces new waves of energy into the realm of cause and effect, like the ripples caused by throwing a pebble into a pond.

If we cannot bear what arises in experience, we collapse into fear, anger, or greed. Once we experience separation from others, fear of the other transforms us alternately into the roles of an oppressor or a victim. We no longer harmonize but struggle with arising experience, leading to the inexorable fate of life biting us.

When we experience disharmony, we need to recover our balance before we can discern how to move through challenging experiences. Through moral discipline, sages master their self-cherishing and hostility for others and learn the ways of the Earth interbeing, in which all the parts and the whole interact and move within the ways of the sacred. In the world, the wise live the ways of wholeness of the Earth Interbeing.<sup>1</sup>

The wholeness of Earth Interbeing requires us to tread on the Earth Interbeings in ways that serve others, life, and the Earth, a path that we can safely follow even in a world of turmoil and peril. Inwardly, the wise remain true to the wholeness of Earth Interbeing, and in the world they adhere to simplicity and act moderately. Without expectations or demands, the wise act to benefit others rather than themselves. The

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<sup>1</sup> **Ways of Wholeness of Earth Interbeing:** We know Creation's embodiment of the sacred and worship the sacred through our care for the Earth Interbeing and how we interact with others, all life and the Earth. We interbe with all our sacred Earth Interbeing relations with affection, equality, and respect, opening to the collective loving path through problems and dangers. We know and respond to the mutual neediness of life, resisting what harms the Earth Interbeing and standing in solidarity with the harmed. We know and care for our being and place as the ground upon which we enact our care for the Earth Interbeing. We gift forward what we have taken and share the blessings we receive to recover, preserve, and renew the harmony and balance of the Earth Interbeing. We live as unique whole beings, overcoming what keeps us apart and disrupts our balance and harmony with the Earth Interbeing, lovingly fulfilling our duties to the Earth Interbeing and encouraging others to do the same. We accept the responsibility for the consequences of our actions. We know the enduring joy that comes from living the ways of wholeness of the Earth Interbeing and enjoy being, interbeing, and creation. (rev. 11-13-24)

wise see the sacred coming through the distortions and defilements of the cultural conditioning which imprisons us. They manage wild and dangerous situations by holding to the sacred ways

As soon as we make a step toward living the ways of wholeness, we find ourselves in a transitional state in which we no longer want to live the ways of the omnicultural culture, but we have not yet learned how to respect the equality of all life, to center our lives upon the wellbeing of the Earth and all life, or to interbe. The consequences of treading upon Creation depends upon our intentions. If we act out of our self-centeredness, we cause harm. Before they act, the wise consider their intention and expected outcomes of their action and whether their intended action aligns with the values of wholeness. They refrain from acting when they feel compelled to act by an emotional reaction.

We worship the sacred by how we respond to what arises in experience. The devoted see life as an ongoing series of life lessons, each lesson a step in our sacred life journey. We learn from our lessons and practice the qualities by moving through them. By focusing on living the ways of wholeness, we build the momentum for making the path our own.

Those moving toward wholeness continuously evaluate and adjust their behavior. We know our alignment with the path of wholeness by how we benefit others, all life, and the Earth. Those with sincere intentions to care for the Earth and all life may stumble and make mistakes, inadvertently causing harm. Yet the path of wholeness has the resilience to tolerate our missteps as we learn from our life lessons.

Step by step, lesson by lesson, the path leads us to realize the harmful nature of divisiveness and to move toward interbeing. Harmonizing with the ways of wholeness becomes a joyful dance. In this way the young girl can play with the wild tiger and come to no harm: what acts and what is acted upon merge. We open to a helpless joy that comes from following and surrendering to the ways of the sacred creation. The sacred reaches into our experience through how we tread upon the mystery of life.

**Line 1:** The solitary line treads on the sacred path. As it has no relationships with the other lines, the line remains free of entanglements and goes its way as it wants.

**Line 2:** The solitary line calmly treads the sacred path. The world may be in disarray, but the line remains faithfully centered on the sacred.

**Line 3:** Only the foolish would recklessly advance into the very mouth of the tiger and suffer the consequence of the tiger biting it. In this situation, the line knowingly exposes itself to great danger to serve a purpose greater than it.

**Line 4:** This line actually treads on the tiger's tail with great trepidation but does not get bitten. Success comes from the coupling of balanced, harmonious action with outward caution.

**Line 5:** Everyone treads their own path through life. The line brings to life the ways of wholeness and moves through dangers as they arise in balanced and harmonious ways.

**Line 6:** At the end of its work, the line knows whether it has been true to the sacred path by observing how it has benefited others. Change runs through the path of bringing to life the ways of wholeness. The wise evaluate and learn from their life lessons before taking the next step.