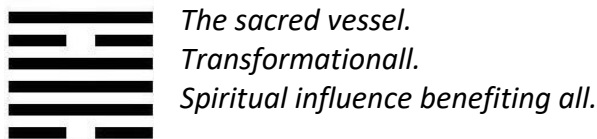


Hexagram 50 Sacred Vessel



Structure:

- Wood below ☵, and fire above ☲. Nourishing and penetration below, clarity and wisdom above.
- Flame kindled by wood and wind. Wood nourishes the flame.

The ancients used a ceremonial vessel to serve food and to make offerings to their ancestors. While the Well (Hexagram 48) represents the nourishing of all people, this hexagram describes nourishing those who further the ways of the sacred Earth Interbeing.¹

Cooking changes food into what we can digest. Sages cook their lives within the sacred fire of the ways of Earth Interbeing to serve as an offering of caring for the Earth Interbeing. The ways of Earth Interbeing transforms people into sages, who then bring forth the sacred ways within themselves and in the world.

Through its interconnected practices, the spiritual path cooks our lives and overcomes what keeps us apart from each other and the sacred. The fire above depends upon a constant supply of wood below. Likewise, transforming our willingness to harm into caring for the Earth Interbeing renews and illumines our lives. Wisdom and compassion mutually reinforce each other and connect the visible to the invisible, being to interbeing. Our lives become the sacred offering.

Presence, the awareness of the sacred within our lives, serves as the container in which the sacred ways transform what harms into spiritual nourishment. Within a compassionate presence, we can penetrate our difficulties and obstacles with understanding so that we can nurture ourselves on what we had previously experienced as unwanted.

The wise offer their wisdom to those open to it. With compassionate understanding and use of their own lives as an example, the wise teach and create opportunities for others to practice the sacred ways.

The truly sacred does not manifest itself apart from life. Sages bring forth the ways of the spirit through how they live. We worship the sacred by caring for the Earth Interbeing. This brings liberation from what harms, true understanding, and great benefits for all and the Earth.

¹ **The Ways of the Sacred Earth Interbeing:** We worship the sacred through our care for Creation. We interbe with Creation, relating to all with equality, respect, and care so that life continues and thrives on Earth. We know the sacred ways for Creation to continue and thrive and to overcome what keeps us apart. We know and respond to the mutual neediness of life in ways that further the harmony of Earth Interbeing. We know and care for our place as the ground upon which we preserve the balance of Earth Interbeing by reciprocating for what we take through our stewardship of the Earth Interbeing. We live within interbeing's moral boundaries and Earth limits and learn from our life lessons how to overcome what keeps us apart. We live as unique beings in the ways of the Earth Interbeing to preserve Creation's harmony and balance and to overcome what keeps us apart. We respond to whatever we experience in the ways of the Earth Interbeing and hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
(12/23/24)

The sage transforms its life, and the sacred illumines it. Sages balance themselves between the sacred and the ten thousand things, the whole and the part, the ocean and the wave. From this place, the wise learn sacred wisdom and compassionately practice their understanding within the world. The sage roots itself within the sacred and bears its fruit within the world.

Line 1: Before using the vessel, the cook turns it over to empty it of unwanted remains. At the beginning of the spiritual path, we empty ourselves of our deluded beliefs and cultural conditioning. Thus, we free ourselves of what kept us apart from the sacred and the Earth Interbeing.

Line 2: When the selfless line limits itself to what benefits all, others will discourage and disapprove of its behavior. However, the line remains firm in its path, going its own way and freeing itself of entanglements. As it has aligned itself with the ways of the sacred Earth Interbeing, it frees itself of wanting the approval of others.

Line 3: In the midst of changing worldviews, others do not understand the line's sacred teachings. The line deepens its spiritual being and discerns how to effectively teach the sacred ways.

Line 4: The line represents those responsible for important affairs, but the line does not have the competence or wisdom to do the work. The effort fails, like a sacred vessel overturning and spoiling the prepared offering.

Line 5: The sacred vessel has handles for carrying so that the contents can be offered. The line balances firmness with yielding, which allows it to serve others without compromising its path. The line, without ambitions of its own, seeks the guidance and support of sacred wisdom for its actions.

Line 6: The sage has transformed its life into spiritual nourishment for others, fulfilling the purpose of the spiritual path. Firmness and yielding are like one, like jade.