

Hexagram 3 – Beginning of the Path



Beginning of the path.

Wholeness.

No benefit from having your own purpose.

Benefit from establishing supports.

Structure: Danger above ☰. Movement below ☷. Movement within danger.

Image Tradition

Beginning of the path of wholeness.

Firmness and yielding beget interaction and difficulties.

The emergence of wholeness overcomes its obstacles and achieves the sacred center.

The purpose of Earth Interbeing. Blessings, the pearl of the oracle.

Arousing power of the Earth and the abundant distribution of benefits take action: fullness overfilled.

The sacred brings forth life's dawn.

Harmoniously establishing the ways of wholeness and challenges.

The ideogram of the hexagram depicts tender grass sprouting through hard soil. Within us we have the seed of wholeness. When we prepare the sacred ground of our being, becoming whole overcomes its obstacles, sprouts, and takes root within our lives. Becoming whole transforms us.

As we become whole, we experience both the joys of a life rediscovered and the hardships of bringing the sacred ways into our conditioned lives and world. Overcoming self-centeredness requires us to change ourselves in ways that we might have wanted to avoid. Difficulties arise within relationships with those who misunderstand our path of wholeness.

Yet the survival of life on Earth depends upon us becoming whole with the Earth Interbeing. Our determination for life to continue on Earth overcomes the self-cherishing, doubt, and other obstacles we have put in our way. Once free of our willingness to harm others for self-benefit, we come to know how to fulfill the purpose of life by caring for all, the sacred calling and path of the I Ching.

We have the responsibility, individually and collectively, to live the sacred ways of Earth Interbeing.¹ At the beginning of the path to wholeness, the wise refrain from imposing their will upon what they do not know. A wrong step may cause more harm. By carefully shaping our beliefs and behaviors, we gradually become interbeings through the ways of wholeness. We free ourselves of our self-centeredness and entanglements with what harms. Only we can heal ourselves and recover harmony within our interbeing relationships, knowing that ultimately all life and the Earth depend upon our doing so.

¹ **The Ways of the Sacred Earth Interbeing:** We worship the sacred through our care for the Earth Interbeing. We interbe with the Wholeness of the Earth Interbeing, interacting with all through equality, respect, and care so that life continues and thrives on Earth. We know and follow the sacred ways for all life may continue to interbe on Earth in ways that benefit all. 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 respond to whatever we experience in the ways of the Earth Interbeing and hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We honor and submit to the sacred ways. 04/9/25)

The wise calmly endure the tension between overcoming our conditioned ways and living the ways of wholeness. They accept and bear the challenges of uncertainty and the urgency to act. As we deepen our spiritual practice and wisdom, we increase our capacities to hold these tensions within presence to wisely discern the way forward. We patiently sort through the multitude of possibilities according to how they align with wholeness and our capacities to bring the sacred wholeness to life. In this way, we act intentionally and at the right time. The universe moves from within.

When we choose to recover wholeness of the Earth Interbeing within ourselves and then in the world, we knowingly put ourselves in the path of strong and dangerous forces. If the difficulties become too great, some seek rescue, but no leader appears. Within such a situation, some might give up in despair, the saddest of all things. The wise do not give up nor wait for others to rescue them. Instead, they overcome self-cherishing and divisiveness by deepening their spiritual being to discern how to move forward, to take the next step.

The I Ching offers a valued support in our path to wholeness as it teaches us its ways. Becoming familiar with the ancient wisdom of many cultures and the lives of our interbeing relations encourages us to perceive and live our lives in wholesome ways. We need only open to the majesty of the Earth Interbeing to know that we must persist. The power of the Earth and the overflowing abundance of life, even now when wounded, call us to interbe. Life always dawns on Earth. We harmoniously follow the ways of wholeness, surmounting every challenge.

At the heart of the turmoil and dangers of the becoming dwells the sacred. Every day invites us to begin anew. By overcoming our inertia to actualize our potential and face what separates us from the spirit and creation, we free ourselves of the conditions that bind us to what harms.

Eventually, the turmoil and uncertainties pass, releasing all from tensions, just as a thunderstorm comes with much fury, fills the air with rain, and then subsides. The ten thousand things take shape and unfold in the ways of wholeness.

Line 1: At the beginning, the line perceives the formidable obstacles it must overcome, yet it prepares what it needs to further wholeness and receives support from all who share the great purpose.

Line 2: The line finds itself surrounded by obstacles and difficulties. Unexpectedly, a way out presents itself, but the sage carefully avoids taking upon itself any obligation that might compromise its purpose or erode its resolve. The sage remains true to what it values and waits until it can discern the path of wholeness through the difficulties.

Line 3: The line, confused and uncertain about how to proceed against what harms, does not seek wise guidance. The line fails in achievement and feels shame for acting unwisely.

Line 4: The line has prepared itself to achieve what it seeks. The line acts with wisdom and benefits all.

Line 5: At the beginning, the wise line furthers its purpose in small ways. Taking bold steps toward its goal would cause even more difficulties. Small steps lead to wholeness.

Line 6: At the end of difficulties, the line gets stuck by its doubts and self-centeredness. Not knowing what to do, the line gives up the struggle to free itself. The line could resolve its difficulties but sadly yields to its conditioned ways.