

Hexagram 7 – Self-discipline

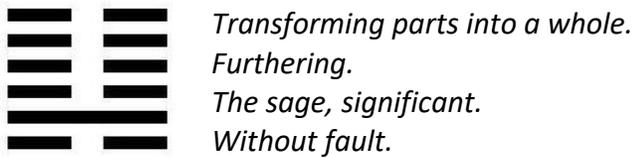


Image: Scattered elements brought together into a functional unit around a worthy center.

Structure: Earth above ☷☷, receptive, yielding. Water below ☵☵, dangerous. Danger inside and devotion outside. Devotion within danger.

Image Tradition

Transforming parts into a whole. Parts, indeed.

Furthering life on earth. Disciplining indeed.

Capable to discipline the parts.

Harmonizing with the sacred ways.

The firm obeys and centers on the sacred.

Moving to further life on earth, yielding to the sacred,

By adhering to the sacred ways.

All parts follow what they know as true.

Without fault.

In this hexagram, we have a strong line in the second place that brings together the other yielding line to serve the 5th line. The second line, which here represents the self, has the responsibility to discipline its being into a functional whole to fulfill the sacred purpose to further life on earth.

What we call the self feels, thinks, learns, and directs. Aware and conscious, it narrates the experience of our lives as our inner voice. It compares, chooses, sets goals, and then moves our being to fulfill our intentions. In other words, the self discerns our response to whatever experiences we encounter.

The self responds to what our being wants and does not want. As social beings, we want the attention, approval, and respect of others, to belong. We want our basic needs met: food, shelter, healing, children, and safety. We want things to go our way and to avoid putting forth an effort. We do not want to die or to suffer. As social creatures, we do not want the disapproval of others or their shunning us. We want to continue living.

Those who identify with the purpose of life being wealth accumulation and power over others respond in ways that harm themselves, others, and the earth. Harmful cultures center us on the willingness to harm others for self-benefit and then ignore the suffering we cause. We learn that only anger will achieve our goals and that our superiority justifies harms we cause. Our willingness to harm others, life, and the earth has given us many cultural benefits and privileges which lock in our adherence to the ways of the harmful culture.

On the sacred path we do not identify with furthering ourselves but rather with furthering the Earth Interbeing. We willingly choose to adhere to the sacred values. Through self-discipline, we remove the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to which our harmful culture has conditioned us. Discipline changes how we live. We learn how to meet our wants and don't wants in ways that further life on earth.

Most resist discipline as we suffer from the restrictions it places upon us. On the path, we endure it because it removes what keeps us apart from the sacred and the earth interbeing: our willingness to harm others for self-benefit. Self-discipline nourishes, educates and shapes our being. We impose our will upon ourselves with the deep resolve to recover our balance and harmony so that we can further life on earth. We practice the sacred ways that recover and preserve our balance and harmony, ways that include accepting realities we cannot change and the values that support and further life on earth.

Without a strong will, we would give up because of the path's great struggle with our reactivity and resistance to change. Yet the path offers supports to do the sacred work of disciplining ourselves to further life on earth, such as encouraging us to increase our attention through meditation and the joy we receive for living the path. A strong disciplined will opens to the sacred leading us to do the work that furthers life on earth within our being and in the world.

Line 1: The wise act in ways that adhere to the values of the sacred Earth Interbeing. Acting otherwise has harmful and dangerous consequences.

Line 2: The self that centers upon the sacred disciplines its will to further life on earth. The line receives spiritual blessings and supports for furthering the wellbeing of earth and all life.

Line 3: Acting in ways that do not align with the sacred values cause harm and even more danger.

Line 4: In the face of an overwhelming danger beyond our capacity to respond in ways that further life on earth, the line correctly retreats to avoid defeat and disarray. This blameless retreat does not reflect the qualities of the line but the situation. The retreat protects the greater effort.

Line 5: The opportunity arises to remove harms. The disciplined self, centered on the sacred, adheres to its mission to further life on earth and succeeds. The undisciplined fail and create more harm and dangers as they do not have the will to remove what harms.

Line 6: The struggle against what harms has ended successfully, and the line now knows how it can best serve to further life on earth. The line remains vigilant to the inevitable emergence of the willingness to harm and disrupts such harmful patterns immediately to preserve the balance and harmony it has recovered.