

## Hexagram 5 Nonaction



*Nonaction.*

*Possessing conformity of inner and outer being.*

*Sacred illumination. Sacred influence pervading and nourishing all. Furthering life on Earth.  
Benefit from subduing the impulse to harm.*

### Image Tradition

*Nonaction. Holding back indeed.*

*Responding to a severe challenge.*

*Strength persisting and-also not falling into danger.*

*One's righteousness is not disheartened nor exhausted.*

*Nonaction: possessing conformity of inner and outer being.*

*Sacred illumination. Sacred influence pervading and nourishing all. Furthering life on Earth.*

*The position achieves the sacred position.*

*Using the center's correctness indeed.*

*Benefit from subduing the impulse to harm.*

*Not acting possesses achievement indeed.*

**Ideogram:** Rain and stopped, compelled to wait.

**Structure:** Strength within, ☳. Danger above, ☰. Strength in the face of danger.

When experiencing an impulsive urgency to harm others for self-benefit, the wise stop themselves from acting. They do not act until they have discerned how to respond to a situation in the ways that further life on Earth. Intentionally holding back the impulse to act in dangerous situations requires great strength and patience to allow the situation to unfold on its own.

A sense of urgency and anxiety overcomes the weak. They cannot bear waiting and act impulsively to impose their will upon the situation, causing themselves even more dangers and difficulties. Whenever sages see that they have reached their limits in knowing how to respond well within a situation or relationship, they resolutely and confidently take a step back from what challenges them and refrain from acting impetuously. They calmly wait to discern how to respond to what challenges them in ways that align with the sacred values of the Earth Interbeing.<sup>1</sup>

While nonaction means not directly confronting difficulties and dangers, it does not mean abandoning our purpose to further life on Earth nor surrendering to what harms. The wise remain engaged even when not advancing by deepening their spiritual being. They stay connected with the situation without interfering in how it unfolds on its own.

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<sup>1</sup>**Sacred Values of the Earth Interbeing** (work in progress): sacred unity and equality of life on Earth, inner and outer balance, compassion, generosity, resolve, joyful community of place, acceptance of what we cannot change, and humbleness.

Most people do not like to wait. When circumstances force the weak to wait, they become anxious or resentful and meet everything critically and irritably. A burdened patience does not reflect the nonaction of the wise. Those who rashly use force against a challenge do not further life on Earth. We fail when we do not fully consider the situation, our limitations, and values before we act. The wise do not act when confused or anxious. They have the courage to remain in place even when pressed to act.

Nonaction does not rely upon empty hoping for a good outcome but rather upon an inner certainty that we will come to discern the sacred way forward. Such certainty supports perseverance and strengthens patience. Sacred guidance comes on its own time, and for this we must wait. The clouds give rain to refresh all life, but we cannot make it rain: we must wait for it.

We find it hard to do endure the stress of unresolved tensions that we impose upon ourselves from not acting. If we feel stress, the situation needs more waiting. To release their anxiety, the impatient want to impose their will to give the unfolding situation a direction, but they only deepen their danger through their rash actions. Nonaction nourishes our sacred path. It absorbs the energy of our impulses to immediately act and further powers the energy level of our attention.

Only when we have the courage to face challenges, without delusion or by yielding to what harms, will we clearly understand the difficult situation and see the path through the dangers in ways that care for the Earth Interbeing. Once we know how to act, we act. Then then we wait and refrain from further acting until we experience a response and the consequences of our action.

Because the wise know their great purpose to further life on Earth will succeed, they do not lose the serenity born of a glad mind. Such joy does not reflect a shallow hope for the better or depend upon supportive external conditions. This joy naturally comes from within, an enduring joy that will get us through dangerous times. We wait as if we have nothing else to do.

Once we discern the path through the danger and the way opens to act, we must act resolutely. We may come to know that not acting remains our best response. Only those who go to meet life fully prepared have the capacity to adequately deal with the dangers of self-cherishing and hostility within themselves and in the world. The sage confidently, resolutely, and effectively manifests the ways of the sacred within the world.

**Line 1:** The line recognizes an approaching danger. It continues with its regular life and does not go out to meet the danger, allowing the situation to unfold on its own.

**Line 2:** As the danger comes closer, the line feels more anxious and the temptation to blame others grows. The wise do not react to their impulsiveness or to that of others but calmly observe the unfolding situation.

**Line 3:** The strong but unbalanced line faces danger and plunges into it, eager for achievement; thus, it invites greater danger and brings on its own defeat. By not waiting for the proper time, the line falls behind, mired in fear and anxiety. Only caution and knowing the seriousness of a dangerous situation keeps us from creating more dangers for ourselves by blindly advancing into it

**Line 4:** The line moves toward the source of the danger and perceives the inner roots of what harms. It does not focus on the danger but upon the sacred to know how to overcome its willingness to harm for self-benefit.

**Line 5:** The line has done all it needs to do for now. It confidently waits and cultivates its sacred being and capacities to prepare itself for the next inevitable encounter with what harms.

**Line 6:** The line experiences its willingness to harm. Yet in this extremity, it does not let go of its sacred path and does not act. Without a move on one's part, the situation transforms in unexpected ways. The line keeps alert and does not withdraw into a sulky gesture of refusal but opens to the sacred guidance of how to move through the danger without harm or harming. A beneficial outcome often comes in a form that seems strange to us.