

Hexagram 44 – Overcoming Temptation

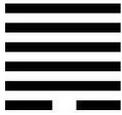
 *Overcoming temptation.*
Powerful attraction.
No benefit from grasping what powerfully attracts.

Image Tradition

Overcoming temptation. Unexpectedly encountering what harms.
A harmful attraction unexpectedly meets the strong.
No benefit from grasping harm that powerfully attracts.
Furthering what harms should not last.

Sacred and the Earth reciprocally meeting.
All beings harmoniously interbe indeed.

The strong hold to the correctness of the sacred center.
Transforming the ways of people indeed.
The sacred time of becoming one with the sacred always of benefit to all.

Structure: One weak line enters from the bottom, but the five top lines restrain it.

The hexagram marks the fifth month in the Chinese calendar, June-July. At summer solstice, the force of darkness reappears and ascends, which ultimately will overcome the forces of light.

We encounter a dangerous situation when we unexpectedly experience a powerfully urgent compulsion to harm others, life, or the Earth to have our self-centered way. This compulsion arises most often within an emotionally charged and confusing situation in which we do not know how to respond in ways that benefit all. Emotional reactions feel like an external forces pushing us to act to relieve our distress. However, our self-centeredness, conditioning, and lack of self-discipline cause them. The emotional reaction overwhelms our path and sacred values.¹ The heightened emotional charge of an emotional reaction focuses us on what we self-centeredly want rather than what would further life on Earth.

If we fail to tame our harmful emotional reactions, they become the way we live our lives. We willingly harm others for self-benefit and ignore the suffering we cause others. These reactions keep us in an emotional turmoil and prevent us from solving actual problems. Many of us come to the path strongly conditioned by our self-centered cultures and families to view the willingness to harm for self-benefit as appropriate, as normal.

Recognizing that we and others suffer from our harmful compulsive reactions, we compassionately want to overcome our willingness to harm for self-benefit, which keeps us apart from the sacred and

¹ **Sacred Values of the Earth Interbeing (work in progress):** respect and joy for the sacred unity and equality of life on Earth, patiently bearing the burdens of life on the sacred path, surrendering and yielding to the sacred to know how to compassionately respond to experience in ways that further life on Earth, humbleness, lovingly nurturing and caring for the Earth Interbeing, giving back for what we receive or take with gratitude, mutually beneficial and affectionate interactions, and self-discipline to remove the ways we harm life on Earth.

the Earth Interbeing. We first refrain from acting on the impulse and then work to change the underlying conditions which give rise to it.

Dismantling compulsive reactions requires our attention to have a higher energy level than the emotional energy of the reaction that binds with the conditioning. With a strong attention, we contain the reaction within the vessel of our presence so we can fully experience its uncomfortable feelings without acting upon them. Otherwise, the experienced urgency to act overwhelms our efforts to stop reacting to our distress. A breath meditation cultivates a strong, focused attention.

As soon as we recognize having a compulsive reaction, we immediately pause and refrain from acting upon it. Within a sacred presence, we repeatedly drop the story we tell ourselves about what we urgently must do and simply feel our distress, as uncomfortable as it makes us feel, until we no longer feel the urgency to act upon them. Once we have fully experienced the emotions, at least for now we have broken the bond between the conditioning and the emotion.

When calm, we turn to compassionately understanding the conditions that caused the emotional reaction. We identify and remove the wrong views and beliefs we have about ourselves and make the effort heal from our harmful conditioning. While we cannot change the past, others, or our culture, we can learn how to live our values and care for ourselves and others.

Emotional conditioning runs deep and wide. We will experience emotional reactions many times before we overcome them. Yet we have a way to manage them and undo our conditioning. Our mastery grows each time we use this dismantling process successfully. As we become more vigilant for the rising of an emotional reaction, we dismantle the reaction sooner so that eventually our emotions become waves rather than eruptions.

Within the sacred Earth Interbeing, beings have learned how to harmoniously interbe. We strongly hold to the sacred center of our lives and live the values of the sacred Earth Interbeing. In these ways we transform ourselves from self-centered and isolated individuals to an interdependent sacred Earth interbeings, a transformation that benefits all.

Those on the path seek to preserve our capacity to accept and compassionately respond to whatever we encounter in life. By avoiding inner emotional turmoil, we remain calmly centered on the sacred. When confused or emotionally charged, we do not act but allow ourselves and the situations to unfold without our interference until we know what to do in ways aligned with our values and purpose to further life on Earth. By viewing emotional reactions as patterned emotional waves that rise and then fall apart and cease, we know waves as ripples on the surface of the ocean. In the depths of the ocean, everything becomes law.

Line 1: When emotional reactions arise unchecked, they activate our willingness to harm and degrade the sacred path. The wise dismantle these reactions as soon as they become aware of them.

Line 2: If we indulge emotional reactions, they absorb the energy of our attention and take root, bringing out their true character. The wise hold reactive feelings as if guarding a dangerous prisoner, yet with gentle care.

Line 3: The line did not take seriously the dangers of an emotional reaction and delayed stopping it. As the reaction has strengthened, the line now finds it difficult to disentangle itself from it. The line must choose between acting upon an increasingly urgent imperative or not acting to preserve its path.

Line 4: The emotional reaction has overtaken the line, which acts out the harmful conditioned emotional pattern. The line does not make the effort to investigate the causes of the reaction to learn how to prevent future ones. Thus, it loses the opportunity to strengthen within its inner being what would support thwarting harming others for self-benefit.

Line 5: The line aligns its inner beings and actions with the sacred values. When confronted with a situation where it does not know how to respond compassionately, the line does not act. Rather, it allows the situation to unfold within sacred time until it has the sacred knowing of how to respond in ways that further life on Earth.

Line 6: The line nips in the bud the arising of an emotional reaction (line 1) and thus avoids regret and remorse.