

Hexagram 48 The Well



The well.
Changing cultures, not changing the well.
Without losing, without acquiring.
Going, coming: welling, welling.
Muddy water. The well-rope not reaching the water.
Ruining one's pitcher: calamity.

Image Tradition

Root reaching stream and-also stream above. The well.
The well: nourishing and-also not exhausted indeed.

Amending the culture, not changing the well.
Thereupon using the solid in the center indeed.

Muddy culmination: the well-rope not reaching the water.
Not-yet possessing achievement indeed.
Ruining one's pitcher: calamity.

Structure: Wood ☰ is below, water ☵ above. The wood goes down into the Earth to bring up water.



Ideogram: Two vertical lines cross two horizontal ones, representing eight fields with equal access to a central well.

In traditional rural communities, a central common well provided the life-necessity of water. Anyone could come to the well and bring water up from its source. Cultures may change, but the need for a well and its structure does not. Wells meet one of the deepest needs of life.

All life is sacred and has the innate capacity to know our common sacredness. Just as life cannot survive without a dependable source of water, we also need access to the sacred for us to know our sacredness and sacred ways. All life draws from the unchanging sacred wellspring sourced from the depths of our being. Knowing our sacredness empowers us to further life on Earth.

While all beings have access to their sacred nature, cultural conditioning obstructs us. The sacred path to further life on Earth dismantles cultural conditioning through self-discipline for us to fathom our sacredness and to align with the sacred ways and aspects of our nature.¹

Understanding and applying sacred ways deepen as we move away from what harms and toward knowing our sacredness and sacred nature. Drawing upon the sacred ways and living them meets a deep necessity of life to further life on Earth. Just as stone cases a well to keep the water clear, the sacred path frees us of conditioning and provides a lasting connection with the sacred.

¹**Ways of the sacred path to further life on Earth (work in progress):** Joyfully surrendering to the sacred and sacredness of all, humbly yielding in gratitude for all we experience, awakening to a sacred knowing of how to lovingly further life on Earth, discerning how to live in balance with the Earth Interbeing, disciplining ourselves to remove the ways we separate ourselves from the sacred and sacredness, compassionately responding to suffering, harmoniously interacting with all life, communing with all life the blessings of the sacred Earth.

Many wander in a muddy life without meaning or purpose, ignorant about their sacred nature or path and disparaging of the efforts of others. Some may fail in their sacred path to penetrate the roots of life and remain fixed in their conditioning, a failure as complete as not having a sacred path. Others may abandon the sacred path or do not go all the way, achieving nothing.

For the path to reach knowing our sacredness, we penetrate deluded beliefs and bring to life the sacred ways. This yearning for the sacred remains alive, always in motion, always aspiring. Hardships, even misfortune, become a source of strength in this quest as through our faults we come to know the sacred.

The value of a well depends upon people drawing its water. Likewise, we must draw upon our sacred nature to live as sacred beings. Knowing the sacred and our sacredness has no meaning unless we apply what we know to our lives.

When we bring to the world the sacred ways that well up from the sacred depths, we become an inexhaustible source of sacred knowing from which others can quench their thirst. Vigilantly, we keep a clear access to our sacredness and apply what we know to the common purpose of furthering life on Earth. We have the moral obligation to share what we have learned with others. The more others take from us, the more we have. A clear overflowing spring nourishes all without hindrance.

We do not permit the difficulties of the sacred path to vex us. When we find that others do not want union with the sacred, we compassionately turn inward to understand the disharmony. Rather than despair, we persevere in removing the causes of the disharmony. No matter how often we feel disappointed by what happens, we start again. The sacred life transforms us to become the means through which the sacred transforms the world.

Line 1: The line depicts a muddy well. Nobody draws from the well; thus, it remains outside the flow of life, and time passes it by.

Line 2: The clear water within the well seeps downward into a gap. The line possesses good qualities but neglects them. The line associates with those who shun the path and can no longer accomplish anything worthwhile.

Line 3: The well has good clean water but no one comes to draw from it, a loss to its potential users.

Line 4: While workers line the well with stone, others cannot use it to draw water. However, the effort results in an enduring source of clean water. The line deepens its sacred being so that others may benefit from it.

Line 5: The clear, cold spring water of the well has risen to the well's rim, and others come to its refreshing water to quench their thirst. Sages have an inexhaustible source of inner wealth, the ways of the spirit. The more people draw from the sage, the greater its treasure. The rising of the water to the top of the well makes its spiritual blessings available to all, fulfilling its function and purpose.

Line 6: All come to the well for water without restriction. No matter how many come, all find what they need. The dependable well has a spring that never runs dry, and it serves as a blessing for the whole community. The line aligns its behaviors with its sacred natures, representing the supreme fulfillment of the sacred path. The sage now has the responsibility to further life on Earth within the world.