

Hexagram 12 – Obstruction



To obstruction belongs immoral people.

The efforts of the sage to influence others blocked.

The great going, the harmful coming.

Structure: Sacred ☷ above Earth ☷, sacred rising and Earth sinking deeper.

Ideogram: mouth and not, blocked communication. **Meanings of ideogram:** obstruct, closed, stopped; bar the way; obstacle; unfortunate, wicked; refuse, disapprove, deny.

The hexagram depicts the seventh month in the Chinese calendar (August to September), when the encroaching forces of darkness end the time of growth. The Yi Ching holds that the union of the sacred and Earth brings about and grows life, and their disunion causes the end of growth. Natural changes bring about an unstoppable withdrawal of the conditions for growth. When the times block the conditions for growth, mutually beneficial interactions diminish. What should be united separates.

The turning of the seasons reflects a natural cycle. However, people obstructing the ways of sacredness cause the stagnation and corruption of a culture. Increasing disharmony precludes beneficial mutual interactions. Within the culture's center, ignorance rules and wisdom retreats. Inwardly, people ignore their moral responsibilities to alleviate suffering, but outwardly they willingly harm for self-benefit. Divisiveness prevails. People destroy for self-benefit the very conditions required for life to continue on Earth. In such a disadvantaged time, the power of the immoral, selfish, and indulgent increase and block efforts to further life on Earth. Confusion and chaos prevail.

When surrounded by those who use force to get what they want and ignore what furthers the wellbeing of life on Earth, the wise retreat rather than futilely throw their lives into harm's way. They know in such times they cannot influence others to further the Earth Interbeing nor singlehandedly overcome the harmful culture.

Sages do not allow the rising power of the amoral to erode their path, even when conditions foreclose the possibility of an influence within the world. They remain faithful to the ways of sacredness and retreat from what would harm them.¹ By not yielding to what harms and finding small ways to alleviate the suffering of others, those on the sacred path succeed.

Maintaining a harmonious balance between living within the world and our maturing capacities to live our sacredness requires a continuous effort. Left to itself, stagnation and disintegration would ensue. We must put forth the effort to recover our balance. Rebalancing further uncovers our sacredness and our

¹ **Ways of sacredness to further the wellbeing of life on Earth (work in progress):** devotion to the sacred by furthering the wellbeing of life on Earth; living the sacredness and moral interdependence of life and Earth; compassionately responding to the moral obligation of interdependence to respond to suffering of life; surrendering to the sacred will to know how to respond to suffering of life; equality of mutually beneficial and harmonious interactions; equality of equitable sharing of Earth's abundance; preserving a balance within being and with the whole Earth Interbeing; willingness to make the effort to do the harder but right thing to do.

awareness of the sacredness of all and experience. We challenge ourselves to creatively live our sacredness and open to more deeply knowing the sacred flowing through our lives.

Line 1: The line pulls out by the roots its entangled harmful ways and views. By removing one harm, others come with it. Perseveringly doing so opens the line to its sacredness.

Line 2: Harmful conditions obstruct the line from moving forward with its holy work. It patiently endures the situation as it does yet know how to respond in ways that further the wellbeing of life on Earth. The line refrains from correcting others.

Line 3: The line feels shame for its participation in obstructing the wellbeing of life on Earth. To remove a harmful behavior or view, we must first feel shame for entangling ourselves in it.

Line 4: The line furthers the wellbeing of life on Earth, the sacred command, which cultivates the radiant satisfaction of living sacredness.

Line 5: Obstructions give way, opening to opportunities to bringing sacredness to life and further the wellbeing of life on Earth. The line safeguards its effort by knowing it remains vulnerable to self-centeredness and the willingness to harm for self-benefit.

Line 6: The line has overcome what obstructed it from removing its harmful ways. The line experiences joy as its distress has come to an end. According to natural law, when things come to an extreme, they inevitably reverse. Oppression weakens, and the sacred ways strengthen. The line turns its efforts from overcoming what obstructed it toward furthering life on Earth, bringing great joy to all.