

Hexagram 52 Keeping Still



Keeping still: stopping self-centeredness.

Not aware of one's self.

Changing one's perspective.

Not viewing from self-centeredness.

Without fault.

Structure: The outer ☶ and the inner trigrams ☶ stop inwardly and outwardly. **Image of ideogram:** a mountain, a mountain range. **Meaning of ideogram:** A foot stops walking.

In the Chinese calendar, the trigram Mountain ☶ marks the beginning of winter (October – November), the end of the annual cycle of growth. Life rests in winter to conserve the food supply and renew their energies for another year of growth. The season marks the sacred time in which life ends and begins, where death and birth pass one into the other.

The harmful culture has conditioned us to view our lives and experience from a self-centered point of view. We move toward whatever in our experience will benefit or pleasure us and resist what decreases our benefit or comfort. Indulging harmful urges locks us into the ways of a dangerous culture and life direction. We live in an interdependent reality and are not separate from what we observe.

Willpower initiates a response to what we experience by exerting some force upon experience and causing some change. Our inner desires, ambitions, prejudices influence how the will chooses to respond, as do outer conditions and cultural pressures. When we lack awareness of harmful influences, we remain vulnerable to them. We will do whatever has the strongest influence over us.

The sacred also influences us to live our sacredness. On the sacred path, we expand our consciousness to bring into awareness what influences the choices we make, a gradual learning process. We become aware of wrong views that a harmful culture has conditioned us to hold as truth and distance ourselves from them. We strengthen our forbearance to endure the emotional turmoil that drive us to harmfully react and an inner calm to stop ourselves from giving way to harmful impulses and influences. When harmful conditioning urges us to act, we calmly respond by not acting upon them and then let it go.

Nonaction becomes noble when we persist in keeping still. Not only do we refrain from acting compulsively and persist in stilling ourselves, but we discern the roots of the compulsion and bring them to a standstill as well. The true power of keeping still comes out of a confident inner calm that underlies the continuum of acting and resting. We abide within our sacredness, knowing how to manage self-centeredness and compulsions which will inevitably arise and yielding to the sacred knowing of what to do. Our inner sacredness encourages and cultivates our capacities to persistently do the harder but right thing to do.

On the sacred path we learn what harms or furthers life on Earth and make choices that further life on Earth, even if they should cause us personal difficulties and hardships. We change our point of view from self-centeredness to interdependence. By doing so, we have moved away from harming to caring for life and the Earth. We may have no control over what influences us, but we have

absolute responsibility for how we respond. By not habitually responding to harmful urges, we set ourselves moving in a different direction.

On the path we deepen our awareness of the sacredness of experience to discern the source of outer influences and inner impulses. If the influence urges us to harm others, the Earth, and ourselves, we do not act, but if the influence opens an opportunity to respond in the ways of sacredness, we act.¹

We know the sacred time has come for us to still ourselves when we experience resistance from others, when inner and outer obstacles make it difficult to do our inner and outer holy work, when we have reached the limit of knowing what to do. Not acting does not mean we give up or turn away, but rather we rest and deepen our awareness of our sacredness and equality and that of others. Eventually, the times will change, and we will once again not only have the will but the sacred knowing of our unique way to further life on Earth.

Line 1: The cautious and aware line halts even before it has begun to move, thus avoiding harming others, the Earth, and itself. It will not err in acting if it remains firm and correct.

Line 2: The line wants to rescue others but cannot as it has no influence over them. The others do not heed the line's persistent warnings, which causes it sorrow. The line needs to listen to the sacred warning to attend to its path rather than those of others. The line has surrendered to external circumstances controlling it.

Line 3: The line resents forcefully stopping itself from not doing what it wanted to do. Noble nonaction serves as a spiritual response to a compulsive willingness to harm for self-benefit. It comes from calmly resting within sacred awareness and having the sacred knowing of what to do. Otherwise, forcefully stopping ourselves from reacting harmfully causes emotional turmoil and anger, which smother sacred awareness.

Line 4: The line stills its self-centeredness and willingness to harm others for self-benefit. It achieves this stage of nonaction by stilling its thoughts, emotions, and movements, transforming their energies into sacred awareness. The line perceives experience as a manifestation of the sacred.

Line 5: The line chooses its speech carefully to avoid harming others, the Earth, and itself. Its speech furthers life on Earth in the ways of sacredness, extinguishing the need to repent for what it says.

Line 6: The line has consummated the path of keeping still. The line calmly rests within the small details of life and with life as a whole. The line stays quietly within the place where the sacred has planted it and responds to whatever arises in experience in the ways of sacredness.

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 living within a world of change and our sacredness; willingness to make the effort to do the harder but right thing to do.