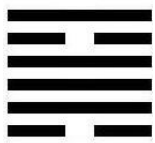


Hexagram 50 Sacred Vessel



Sacred vessel

Sacred wisdom.

Living sacredness.

Image of ideogram: a sacred vessel used to cook food for sacrifice to gods and ancestors. **Meaning of ideogram:** hide, contain, transform.

The ancients used a ceremonial vessel to make food to offer ancestral spirits and then to share with the gathered. The Well (Hexagram 48) represents penetrating the depths of sacredness with understanding to bring back what we have learned to nourish all. This hexagram describes transforming our lives into an offering to the sacred and to furthering life on Earth, the sacred purpose of all life.

Cooking changes food into what can nourish. Our lives serve as the transformative vessel in which we extinguish our willingness to harm for self-benefit and its associated harmful views and ways. The more we stop harming life and Earth, the greater the knowing of our sacredness. The sacred path offers a process through which the refinement of living sacredness occurs.

Many of us come to the sacred path because we do not know how to overcome the harmful view and ways that increasingly threaten to destroy life and Earth for self-benefit. We desperately want to receive the sacred guidance of how we can do the holy work of furthering life on Earth. Our yearning for sacred direction lights the spiritual fire within us.

Yet this transformative fire depends upon a constant supply of fuel to burn, the faults that we willingly throw onto it. Within this transformational spiritual fire, we part from what separates us from our living sacredness. As we burn off our harmful views and ways, our understanding of how to live our sacredness sharpens and our willingness to respond to the needs of others strengthens. Through our faults, we transform ourselves into interbeings.

Make no mistake, the sacred path to further life on Earth challenges us. Yet this path only has meaning if we apply what we have learned by resisting harmful ways and views and practicing sacredness in real time within the daily interactions of our lives. If we only correct ourselves in solitude and avoid practicing sacredness within our interactions, we have learned nothing.

Applying sacred guidance to our lives reveals to us what yet obstructs living sacredness, which we then throw on the sacred transformative fire. Practicing the ways of sacredness within our interactions transforms the experience of our world into the one in which we long to live.¹ Once we have refined ourselves of our harmful ways and views, our sacredness freely illuminates the path to furthering life on Earth.

¹ **Ways of the sacred and sacredness:** We live within the reality caused by the sacred, a reality marked by the sacred ways: interdependence, change, equality, and sacredness. The ways of sacredness guide us to living sacredness to further life on Earth, the sacred purpose of all life: awakening to sacred knowing; wisdom of living sacredness; harmonious and respectful interactions; devotion to the sacred; humble submission to sacred ways and direction; responding to the suffering of others; restoring and preserving a balanced life; manifesting the sacred purpose to further life on Earth.

In the beginning, we yield to the sacred knowing how to rid ourselves of what harms. Yet the path does not just focus on overcoming our faults. Once we have an established practice of correcting ourselves, the path turns to practicing living sacredness in the ways of sacredness. We practice sacredness within our daily interactions and with whatever rises in experience. We root ourselves within the sacred and manifest the fruits of sacredness within the world. The sacred knowing of what to do and responding to the needs of others serve as the two wings of sacredness, connecting the visible to the invisible, the sacred to the mystery of living in the world.

Within the fire of sacred knowing, we cook our lives and become a sacred offering. The sacred process opens to everyone wanting to further life on Earth and willing to do so by first ridding ourselves of our willingness to harm others for self-benefit and our harmful ways and views. What we surrender to the sacred fire cannot compare to living sacredness in ways that further life on Earth.

The sacred blesses us with living sacredness, and we offer the sacred our living sacredness.

Line 1: Before using the vessel, the cook turns it over to get rid of unwanted remains. At the beginning of the sacred path, we empty ourselves of our self-centeredness and willingness to harm others, life, and the Earth.

Line 2: The line has entered the sacred path. It has distanced itself from what harms and has come to understand and practice the ways of sacredness. The line further dismantles its harmful ways and views and learns how to live sacredness, the means to further life on Earth. It firmly resists indulging its willingness to harm for self-benefit and remains humbly devoted to the sacred path.

Line 3: The line feels that it has prepared itself for the sacred calling to its holy work to further life on Earth, but the line does not receive such a call. The line lacks the humbleness it needs to recognize what the sacred calls it to do. It looks for something large and grand while the sacred asks us to live our sacredness within our ordinary lives by simply responding to the needs of others in the ways of sacredness, no matter how menial it may appear to us. The line turns to sacred guidance to learn how to humbly respond to the needs of others, which unfolds its holy work.

Line 4: Despite its efforts to rid itself of its harmful ways and views, the line impatiently imposes its will upon others and situations and ignorantly chooses on its own what it will do to further life on Earth. The line does not have the wisdom and capacities to do the work it chose and fails, like a sacred vessel overturning and spoiling the prepared offering.

Line 5: The sacred depends upon the humble to do the holy work of furthering life on Earth. The humble line perseveringly manifests sacredness through the work the sacred has given it to do.

Line 6: The line lives its sacredness. Whatever it does, it manifests sacredness strengthened by sacred knowing of what to do to further life on Earth through the gentle ways of sacredness.