

Hexagram 12 – Obstruction



To obstruction belongs immoral people.

Not fulfilling the sacred purpose to further life on Earth.

The great purpose going, the harmful coming.

Image Tradition

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Not fulfilling the sacred purpose to further life on Earth.

The great purpose going, the harmful coming.

*By consequence heaven and earth not coming together
and beings not interbeing indeed.*

Above and below not interacting and ways of sacredness ignored.

Inside weakness and outside force.

Inside yielding and outside harshness.

Inside the selfish and outside the sage.

The willingness to harm lasting.

The ways of the sage dissolving indeed.

Structure:

- Sacred ☰ above Earth ☷, sacred rising and Earth sinking deeper, moving apart.
- Darkness is within, light without.

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

The hexagram marks the 7th month in the Chinese calendar (August to September), when the encroaching forces of winter end growth. The Book of Changes holds that the union of the sacred and Earth grows life, but their disunion ends the life's growth. In autumn, the warmth and light of the sun wane, an unstoppable withdrawal of the conditions for growth.

Receiving this hexagram suggests an increasing separation between what we say we value and our behavior. To avoid the further dwindling of our commitment to further life on Earth, we need to vigorously reassert living the ways of sacredness.¹

The willingness to harm reasserts itself in an unguarded moment, especially when we feel overconfident that we have overcome it. We relax our vigilance against what harms and diminish the energy we have put into overcoming our harmful ways and views, believing that our sacred path needs less attention. Thus, we make ourselves vulnerable to a reversion to our harmful ways and views.

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.

When we become aware that we have reintroduced harmful ways and views back into our lives, that our views and behaviors no longer conform with the ways of sacredness, then we pour energy into the effort to bite through our harmful ways and come back into conformity with sacredness by overpowering our complacency. We persevere in firmly doing the harder but right thing to do by pouring our energy into our sacred path.

When we experienced the reversion to our harmful ways and views and had to work hard to return to the sacred path, we learned that we never rid ourselves of the willingness to harm once and for all. It has very deep roots. We now know our vulnerability and increase our vigilance against our harmful ways and views. The gap between our values and behavior grew because we idly stood by and allowed it to happen. We learned that we must strongly bind ourselves to the sacred ways without exception to not lose what we had gained. The sacred path offers no vacations to get away from it all.

Line 1: The line becomes aware that it has reverted to harmful behaviors that it had earlier overcome. It makes the effort to escape from the influence of its harmful views and behaviors and returns to the sacred path.

Line 2: The line does not have the strength to overcome a harmful view that it has come to depend upon as a support. Yet, the line recognizes its harmful entanglement with the danger and has enough strength to not act upon it. In this way, it minimizes further degrading its sacred path.

Line 3: The line feels shame for allowing its willingness to harm to restrengthen and weakens its commitment to further life on Earth.

Line 4: The line acts upon sacred knowing and finds satisfaction in living sacredness to further life on Earth.

Line 5: The line pours energy into its efforts to realign its behavior and views with those of the ways of sacredness. However, having experienced how easily it had reverted to harming for self-benefit, it worries that it might do so again, a justified worry as the willingness to harm will try to do so.

Line 6: The line has successfully realigned its behavior and views to the ways of sacredness and rejoices. It remains vigilant for the inevitability of the willingness to harm for self-benefit reasserting itself in an unguarded moment.