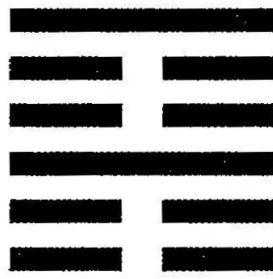


52



(gèn) Stillness

Still your back, don't move your body. You go into your courtyard without seeing others. No blame.

- Six in the first place: Still your feet. No blame. Long-lasting persistence is effective.
- Six in the second place: Still your calves, do not raise your legs. Your heart is unhappy.
- Nine in the third place: Still your midsection; scratch your spine. In danger of burning the heart. (or suffocating it with smoke)
- Six in the fourth place: Still your torso. No blame.
- Six in the fifth place: Still your cheeks. You speak in order. Regrets disappear.
- Nine at the top: Honest and still. Good fortune.

Image

Linked mountains: the image of stillness. You should beware if you depart from your own place.

The early Chinese lived among chains of mountains and must have been impressed by their solidity and immobility. They are very much rooted in and of the earth, heavy, and immovable.

In some situations, it is best to be still, to straighten your back, become aware of your location, and remain motionless. In periods of such stillness, we may also learn to still our minds and hearts, and to view the world with equanimity rather than through a storm of emotions.

This hexagram may refer to yoga-like physical postures and exercises used in early China, before any known contact with Indian culture. The word *stillness* is a homonym for *root*, the title used in the Mawangdui text. In a still posture, one endeavors to root oneself in place, to feel a part of where one is at that moment, as a preparation for detaching one's mind from the many places and problems tumbling through it. By focusing on one place, we are able to pay less attention to other places. We can then keep moving focus toward a stillness that moves from the body (and its involuntary twitches) to the mind and heart (and their involuntary twists and worries). This hexagram does not discuss what we may gain from stillness, only the stillness itself. And it reminds us, as do other hexagrams, that periods of stillness are part of the grand process of change, which rarely moves at a smooth, even pace. Even the busiest people may find that a short period of stillness, a redirection of focus, enables them to return to work refreshed and with greater clarity. To be still and aware of one's place is not a permanent condition, but it is one that can be beneficial for anyone.

Shaughnessy, 54–55, 292.

Lynn, 466–472.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 200–201.