

#21 **Shihe** Biting Together

Progression:

First Yang is kept immobile by social enforcement. In Second Yin, the social apparatus cuts readily through human softness. In Third Yang, the poisonous hidden effects of social enforcement come to light. In Fourth Yang, some problems are seen as too convoluted for simplistic exercise of legal sanctions. To a certain kind of mentality, as it gnaws through these tangles in the social matrix, the alternative of pinpoint, ‘surgical’ death-dealing may suggest itself at any time. [One runs into an arrowhead while biting through meat.] At Fifth Yin, the tangled problems reach a point where commodity exchanges (economics) suggest themselves as a means of social control. In Top Yin, control is exerted by punishments that cut off information. It is an environment where the mechanism of control, in and of itself, becomes the main content of social education.

Xingqing:

A rousing impulse (in the lower trigram) is governed by conditions of group cohesion. Or to put it another way, the code of group cohesion is driven by insistent (perhaps instinctive or repressed) drives.

We can see the ‘softness’ in Second Yin as a tangle of arrangements under which socially endorsed actions are (karmically) connected to prohibited actions. When prohibitions are being strictly enforced, even socially endorsed practices will be found to be implicated. Hence, enforcement requires a biting action to cut through the tangle of the social fabric. This is especially true in a society where legal rulings are based on the magistrate’s personal judgment. The image of biting through meat here is oddly fitting: in a context of social enforcement, it is quite insightful.

Centrality:...

Second Yin’s social enforcement is still on a human scale. In First Yang the enforcer negates an individual’s freedom. In Third Yin, enforcement gets out of individual control. Fifth Yin controls by commodity exchanges [economic means], which has an influence on a) control based on raw violence (Fourth Yang) and b) access to information (Sixth Yang).