

#3 Difficulty at the Beginning/ *Zhun*

above: *kan*

below: *zhen*

First Yang: "Solidly planted [Hesitation and hindrance...]. It furthers one to dwell in constancy. It furthers to establish power-holders."

At the beginning of this chaotic time, people must dig in and set up spheres of authority or influence. This naturally takes us to a situation of #8 Holding Together. Holding Together is all about distributing power across the land and throwing your lot in with others.

Note that this changing line leads to the trigram *kun* (the land), which fits with "it furthers one to dwell in constancy."

2nd Yin: "Moving ahead with difficulty, mounted on a horse in the ranks. He is no robber, he comes to marry. The maiden is steadfast and does not agree to union, only after ten years will she agree to union."

In these scary times, a person needs to commit to close ties, such as a marriage. At the same time, we must watch how people turn out, to make sure we don't get stuck with a scoundrel. It makes sense that this sort of carefulness would lead to #60 Moderation.

3rd Yin: "Whoever hunts deer without forethought will go deep into the forest. The superior man understands the signs of the time and prefers to let it go. To go on would mean hard going."

Holding back from the chaotic thicket means not being swept along by the animalistic chase. There are seeds of coming danger, and we have to watch them. But why should holding back here take us to #63 Already Across? This change seems like a random caroming. Could it be that Already Across derives its meaning from the discrimination of the *li* trigram? Recognizing the danger this line faces, one holds back. Knowing when to hold back is an achievement. One gives up the thoughtless impulse to charge ahead (*zhen*) and stops here. This is an accomplishment for those who tend toward rootlessness. Any time we arrive somewhere we are "already across," because it is good to settle and belong to a place.

4th Yin: "Horse and wagon part. One seeks to marry. To go brings good fortune. Nothing that does not further."

When it's time to bond with our soon-to-be closest ally we must get moving and seek the right chance. Of course this takes a knack for being in the right place. We will need to act with intuition. We need to be Following (#17) our heart's promptings.

5th Yang: "Buildup of rich reserves. In small matters, constancy brings good fortune. In great matters, despite constancy one will have misfortune."

Though the fat of the land is accumulating, a leader who is weathering the chaos still finds it difficult to share. In this context going to #24 Renewal will mean a positive but minor development. The renewal will mean we begin to learn how to share. We do not want to upset the apple cart with excessive actions. But danger should not keep us from

sharing by degrees. We will always feel ourselves in danger, and distributing the fat of the land must start sometime.

This change leads to the trigram *kun*, which fits with sharing the fat of the land.

Top Yin: "Horse and wagon part. Bloody tears flow."

This is a good one. At the extremity of chaos, we are disheartened to see that it will go on and on and on. In this line we are looking at "just more stuff," which is a dreary prospect of increasingly convoluted chaos. This fits with the irreversible march of "progress" in #43 Increase. We are paradoxically mounted on a horse that should carry us, but is getting us nowhere.

#4 YOUTHFUL FOLLY/ *Meng*

above: *gen*

below: *kan*

First Yin: "To make the unknowing person develop, it furthers one to apply discipline. The fetters should be removed. To go on this way brings humiliation."

Seems like a random caroming, but that happens in life, especially in a learning situation where we are chastised right away at the beginning. We are taught a painful lesson that we must let go. We were innocent and we had no motive to do wrong, but we must let go of any supposition that our naivete will be recognized and allowed for. We must give up the freedom of experimenting with a carefree heart. To go from here to #41 Decrease is sad, but it is part of life.

2nd Yang: "To bear with fools in kindness brings good fortune. [To know how to] take a woman brings good fortune. The son is capable of taking charge of the household."

From here we go to #23 Splitting Away. What a waste of a strong teacher from among the lower ranks. But that is the characteristic of an *ancien regime*: they stay in their enclave and forget how much is to be learned from the people. Fortunately this teacher is tolerant. As long as his student does not break relations he'll do his best. Also, this teacher can make his own way, even when things head toward splitting apart.

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3rd Yin: "Take not a woman who, when she sees a man of metal, loses possession of herself. Nothing furthers."

That's a good one. Of course the material girl shunts us into #18 Work on What Has Been Spoiled. Maybe she is a material girl because of how this society has pandered to people's desires (spoiled us). This is a risk we face when trying to make a living. Coming from our sad encounter with this spouse, we see that we are up against a whole situation, and we know the woman's situation is sad too.

4th Yin: "Entangled folly brings humiliation.."

This is similar to Three. We are stuck in learning because we are entangled with something and not able to bring forth our innocent self-nature. Hence it is natural that this

shifts us to #64 Not Yet Across. If we are stuck in a learning situation, we are nowhere near to getting across.

5th Yin: "Childlike unknowing brings good fortune."

This is a childlike learner. She has what it takes to cast herself into the unknown. She has no preconceived notions; she shapes herself to a chain of events that carries her forth. This line moves us to #59 Dispersion, where we trust in the vessel we have learned to shape.

Top Yang: "Folly is being punished. It does not further to be a bandit; it furthers to control bandits."

That's a good one. There is someone here who is beyond learning lessons. The only lesson he can learn is to attack or be attacked, so it is probably good if he finds military work. It is natural he will resort to #7 The Army.

#5 WAITING/ Xu

above: *kan*
below: *qian*

First Yang: "Waiting in the outskirts. It furthers to abide in what endures. No blame."

That's a good one. If you can wait when your strength is up against potential danger, your work can bring forth a resource that everyone can use. So it is natural that this line points toward #48 The Well.

2nd Yang: "Waiting in the sand. There is some argument. In the end comes good fortune."

Like Third Yin of #3, this changes to #63 Already Across. It basically looks like a caroming. But we can rescue a bit of significance: if one can hold back from thoughtless momentum, one will arrive where it is possible to make a living. One will be Already Across. This fits with the contrasting themes of #63 and #64. In those two hexagrams, #64 is all about forging onward, and #63 is about consolidating gains where one is.

3rd Yang: "Waiting in the mud brings on bandits."

This is a good one. Our waiting is indecisive. We want to cross yet don't want to cross. Our self-indulgence has put us in the mud at the edge of the crossing. We cannot maneuver here, and we are prey to bandits. If we get out of such a situation alive, we will have learned something about Moderation #60.

4th Yin: "Waiting in blood. Get out through a tunnel."

We just have to wait through this gruesome, grim situation. This carnage and misery may not be of our making, but we have to endure it until time heals some of the wounds. We find ourselves in a tunnel where we are pressed up against scenes of suffering. We can only hope the passage through suffering is some sort of birth canal. That is why we emerge at Breakthrough #43.

5th Yang: "Waiting at meat and drink. Constancy brings good fortune."

Our time of conviviality is not just waiting. We take time to enjoy togetherness. We indulge in dionysian revelry and glimpse a primal community. If this is done in good will, with the right motives, and we follow through, we end up at Peace #11. Otherwise, our banqueting is a treacherous business. We glimpse the unity, but our complicated motives undercut it, and we use it as a means. The danger of the *kan* trigram asserts itself in a wine-drinking situation. We get a leader like Shi Jicai, who routinely shot staff officers that he didn't trust after banquets. This goes to show that a changing line is double edged. It can take us to the new situation because of the line's character. Or maybe we cannot get through to Peace unless we keep to the right course, hence *zhen ji*: "constancy brings good fortune."

Top Yin: "One enters a pit. Three uninvited guests arrive. Honor them, and in the end there will be good fortune."

Seems to be a kind of caroming. At the extremity of waiting, we hole up in a ritual kiva. Since waiting to the nth degree hasn't gotten us beyond this situation, we are determined to get beyond it another way. In this situation, the three unannounced guests approach. To honor them can also mean to take them seriously. Their ascendant energies are somehow directed at Top Yin, or must pass through her. By dealing with them and respecting their strength, Top Yin is toughened, and they become assets to Top Yin. One could say that through this alliance, Top Yin learns to harness or tame her own strength. So it is natural to move toward the situation of Lesser Taming #13. It becomes Lesser Taming because Top Yin has begun in a position of danger, then transformed herself.

#6 CONFLICT/ *Song*

above: *qian*

below: *kan*

First Yin: "If one does not perpetuate the affair, there will be less argument. In the end, good fortune comes."

At the outset of a dispute is a good time to look for ways around it. This yielding line in a yang place is perfect for this. It is natural under these conditions for First Yin to lead us toward Moderation #60.

2nd Yang: "One cannot engage in conflict. One flees homeward. The people of his town, 300 households, will not suffer deprivation."

Conflict presents itself but the odds are stacked against you. You flee the conflict so your social circle won't get drawn into it. Or you hide out in your own small town. Since the conditions of conflict remain after you flee, this movement goes to Stagnation #12.

3rd Yin: "Nourishing oneself on ancient virtue. Constancy in hardship. In the end, good fortune comes. If by chance you are in the service of a king, do not claim accomplishments."

You would rather live off accumulated virtue of ancestors than engage in conflict. But how long can that last? This line offers two possibilities: you live off an accumulation, or you go into public service. In public service, it may be your duty to deal with conflict, but you do not treat it as your own. If things work out, you do not treat the success as your own. Whether you live on patronage, off to the side of conflict, or whether you face conflict for your ruler's sake, you are sure to meet with a source of support. In fact, both of these courses lead to Encounter #44 (with a patron or a ruler). Viewed as a temptation, patronage may soften your ability to act, and public service occupies you with conflict to no result.

4th Yang: "One cannot engage in conflict. One turns back and submits to fate, shifts one's orientation, and finds peace in constancy. Good fortune."

In 2nd Yang it was not promising to flee an unworkable conflict, because that led to Standstill. Presumably one sometimes needs to be like Confucius who "undertook what could not be done." But here at 4th Yang, acknowledgement that conflict is fruitless leads to renewal of one's personal mission. One learns to shift and flow. The water radical in *yu* ("change course") fits this movement. Through Dispersion #59 you will get out of this conflict, to where your work and self-discipline take you.

The change of this line turns the upper trigram to *xun*, which is fitting because this line contains the word *ming*. In the "Treatise on Trigrams," *xun* is associated with the word *ming* (fate, life-force, personal mission).

5th Yang: "To contend [before such a person] brings great good fortune."

To pursue the conflict is promising. Hence the movement here is to Not-Yet-Across #64, in which one is ready to go on to other things.

Top Yang: "Even if a belt with medallion are bestowed, by the end of the morning it will have been snatched away three times."

From the terminal squabbling over favors granted and withdrawn at court, it is natural to move toward Impasse #47.

#7 The ARMY/ *Shi*

above: *kun*

below: *kan*

First Yin: "An army is sent forth in proper order. If the order is not good, misfortune threatens."

The army is sent into the field in well-regulated fashion. That is, it is sent out for justifiable reasons, and it maintains good order. The trigram interaction in Army shows a containment of armed force among the people. Soldiers recruited from the people are not set up against the people. Hence it is natural that this line would lead to Approach #19. Approach means being down among the people.

2nd Yang: "In the midst of the army. Good fortune. No blame. Three times the king sends down his command."

The true leader must be among his men, and the king should entrust authority to him. Hence it is natural that this line points to The Receptive #2. The general leads by being serviceable, and his work demonstrates the true strength of the people.

3rd Yin: "Perhaps the army will cart off corpses. Misfortune"

The army may have to haul away wagonloads of corpses. The army may suffer heavy losses. Why does this lead us to Rising #46? The word "may" is cautionary, and a brush with danger may lead to a reassessment of strategy before losses get serious. If the army hauls corpses, it has not been totally scattered. The heavy loss can strengthen the army, make it more resolute. We have to rise out of this butchery. Be chastened by butchery and rise out of it, along with the people.

4th Yin: "The army is stationed off to the side. No blame."

The army is garrisoned off to the side, out of the way for a time. Excellent. This leads to Release #40. The army can turn to planting fields and taking wives. If they are garrisoned long enough, they are released from war.

5th Yin: "There is game in the field. It furthers to hold fast to what one says. No blame. The eldest son would command the army; the younger son would cart off corpses. Constancy in misfortune."

There is game in the field---i.e. there is a fight to be fought. Naturally the king would think this way, giving orders to produce results. It is good for everyone to make their arguments known clearly, so the king is aware of all considerations. Otherwise, while the elders order around the troops, the young men are left to pick up corpses. This is an image for the split between generations in a war. It is natural that this line would lead to The Abysmal #29.

Top Yin: "The great leader issues commands. Found a state and assume duties from the clans. Inferior people should not be employed."

This is about leadership levels in a regimented body of men. So the top of this hexagram is also some kind of leader. He is a leader even higher than the duke of a small state. He issues orders representing a state which is only now emerging. If the feudal state is truly ready to develop into a nation, it will absorb clan loyalties into its own power structure. To fight for this is the largest project an army can undertake. Nobody knows what will come of fighting indefinitely for this goal; nobody knows what will be unleashed by the larger-than-human-scale institutions of a nation. Hence we are at the extremity of Army. There will be organizational forces beyond any individual's control. How can these forces be harnessed for the common good? The building of a nation is a learning project on a level not previously known. As the people in the state learn, they must monitor the changes with respect to history, to make sure the learning is not just some kind of institutional brainwashing. Given these considerations, it is natural that this line would point toward Unknowing #4. It would be good to think of nation-building as first of all a learning problem.

#8 Holding Together/ *Bi*

above: *kan*

below: *kun*

First Yin: "Hold to him in good faith. No blame. Good faith [enough] to fill an earthen bowl. In the end something unexpected comes. Good fortune."

At first there are two related ways of holding together. One is to get close to someone in all sincerity, right at the beginning. The other is to fill an earthenware vessel, keeping a sincere intention. At some point one's simple act of devotion will move some person or spirit to connect with you. This line naturally leads to Difficulty at the Beginning #3, because of all the problems that enter in after we make these naive, sincere overtures. At least we have made a beginning. And even if we look at the vicissitudes in store for First Yin within its own hexagram, they all reflect the difficult conditions it began under. We cannot have Holding Together unless we lay ourselves open to these difficulties and intentionally make this beginning. Thus the field of meaning in one hexagram interacts with another, through the path of a changing line.

2nd Yin: "Holding to someone from within. Constancy brings good fortune."

We continue the process from First Yin. From deep inside ourselves we try to hold together with that person. We bring out the best things to give to that person. Naturally there will be danger in this; the interpersonal currents are tricky once we commit ourselves. No wonder this line points toward The Abysmal #29.

3rd Yin: "Holding together with the wrong person."

Certainly when you get close to the wrong person (one who is not as he should be), it is natural you will go through adversity times. No wonder this line takes us to Hardship #39.

4th Yin: "Hold to someone outwardly. Constancy brings good fortune."

Trying to get close together "on the outside." This is building community with someone you may not know well. This moves naturally to Gathering #45. "Gathering" groups people together through some sort of observance.

Fifth Yang: "Holding together for all to see. In the hunt the king gallops three times, and forgoes game that runs off in front. The citizens do not put up their guard against him. Good fortune."

This hexagram's Image speaks of setting up small states, so that fief-holders will be close to the people. Zhang Huang says that power distributed across the land is like a good system of waterways. (Good waterways do not erode the land.) The king is close to his people through his liegemen, so he can go out hunting, and the townsmen do not feel alarmed. The prey that runs out ahead gets away; the king does not send beaters to corner the game, for that would trample the grain. He gallops three times, which means the land is open enough for him to pass through. The townsmen are relieved that he does not use overkill. He is close to the local fief-holder (who are his hosts), and they are close to the people. This ruling line gives many signs of a ruling class which is at home with its subjects. It is natural for this line to move toward The Receptive #2. This change emphasizes the leaders' serviceability and the people they are at close to.

Top Yin: "Holding together with none at the head. Good fortune."

Holding together with none at the head. If *wu-shou* means "mindless," then how can this line lead to Viewing #20? Maybe the bad results of thoughtless joining remind us to be more observant in the future! If *wu-shou* means joining together with no leader forcing us to, this will certainly requires us to have our own vantage point. We don't need to be told who to join with, and our free joining sets a good example.