

## #9 LESSER TAMING\ *Xiao-xu*

Above: *xun*

Below: *qian*

First Yang: "In returning, one follows the path. How could there be blame in this? Good fortune."

This hexagram is one in which strength is tamed and applied. In this line we turn the first impulse, right when it is felt, to our (rightful) purpose. Thus it is natural for this line to point toward #57 The Gentle. The Gentle, with two *xun* trigrams, has to do with tempering and discipline. We tame the energy so something constructive can come. When tamed for use, energy becomes coherent, thus the consistency of the upper and lower trigrams.

2nd Yang: "One is drawn into returning. Good fortune."

This line is the center of its own strong cluster, so it tends to have refractory ideas and should be led back to a path. The theme is mastery of strength, expressed in various images. In this line, it is the taming of an animal. In Third Yang, it is marriage. Second Yang points us toward #37 Family. This makes sense, because tamed strength brings harmony of effort. Any harmony of effort brings our hearts together, so it is no exaggeration to say that people who work well together become a family.

3rd Yang: "The spokes burst out of the wagon wheels. Man and wife roll their eyes."

Three is often a tricky line. Here the taming dissipates energy through bungling and bickering. A husband may be tamed in a negative way by a nagging wife, and vice-versa. A wagon from which the crosstree slips loose is not well put together. The three yang lines below make a yang juggernaut that wants to move upward, and here a check is put upon them. This line moves us to #61 Inner Sincerity, which is one of life's caromings. A person with promise is worn down with much pushing and pulling in a relationship [or by the inefficiencies of a vehicle]. This is the way a system holds people in check. A person who remains true to his earlier intent, though he is worn down, will show his goodness. His sincerity will come through even more, because he has endured frustration.

4th Yin: "With faith the lifeblood goes forth; vigilance goes outward, no blame."

This is a good one. The taming here is a process of sublimation by which one's lifeblood (life energy) circulates in a wider sphere. Through sublimation, one's raw energies are harnessed. Thus it is natural that this line moves us toward #1 The Creative, which is a dance of creative energy.

Note that throughout the *Zhouyi*, the word "blood" always occurs at Line Four or Line Six. This goes back to Line Four's basic significance, in both The Creative and The Receptive, as a great experiment. The experimental idea of this position fits with sending forth one's lifeblood. The basic idea of Line Six is an impetus to go beyond the situation, or carrying it to an extreme. This is another way the lifeblood circulates, hence "blood" also occurs here.

5th Yang: "With faith to go hand in hand, one is rich in one's neighbor."

This has to do with mutual containment of energies by people bonded closely together. They are close, like a pair of twins, like a single fist. But they have something to spare. By their synergy they enrich their neighbors. This line moves us from Lesser Taming to #26 Great Taming. In #9 strength is objectified while being tamed; in #26 strength is internalized. It is interesting that in this ruling line, a close relationship is handled well. This builds up one's capacity to hold many resources inside.

Top Yang: "Rain comes and one takes shelter. May virtue be upheld! Constancy brings the woman into hardship. The moon is nearly full. If the superior man goes forth there will be good fortune."

This line seems to be all over the map. Shaughnessy interprets the word *shang* as "may it be..." Zhu Xi reads the whole line as a connected statement. The rain indicates that [at the extremity of containing strength] yin and yang are in harmony. He interprets *shang de zai* to mean that yin virtue has been honored and reaches fullness. He believes that female ascendance makes for a harsh situation, so since "the moon is nearly full," the superior man had best not be out and about. I think he is right to say that rain is harmony of yin and yang. This is an outcome of Four's closeness with Five, and of her presiding role. I think *shang de zai* expresses sympathy for the lone yin's difficult role. The superior man at Six is being told not to set forth against her nascent fullness. Because yin's power to check yang shows fully here, it is natural that this line moves us to #5 Waiting.

## #10 TREADING/ *Lu*

Above: *qian*

Below: *dui*

First Yang: "Simple-hearted treading. Go forward without blame."

We stride forth unencumbered by the historical tragedy, even though formidable circumstances of external yang exist. To conduct ourselves with *elan*, we need this ability to tread according to our own lights [our own nature]. However, if this is our defining mode, we are likely to get into trouble. This tripping gait needs to be seasoned to fit the overall theme of propriety in conduct. Thus it is natural that this line moves toward #6 Conflict.

2nd Yang: "Treading a smooth, level course. The constancy of a secluded man will have good fortune."

The secluded man walks his road with assurance. *Tan-tan* may not mean "broad and level," but instead describe the assurance of a man who walks according to his own lights. (How could it be level? The ideogram *you* [secluded] shows a difficult-to-reach place among the mountains.) It makes sense that one who walks this way will have innocent conviction. Hence this line takes us to #25 Innocence.

3rd Yin: "One-eyed yet able to see; lame yet able to tread. One treads after the tiger's tail; the tiger bites the person. Misfortune. Thus does a military man act on behalf of the superior man."

If the Judgment says "the tiger does not bite the person," then why does this key line say "the tiger bites the person"? Zhu Xi thinks this is a caution against the weak man---the half-blind man who thinks he can see, the lame man who thinks he can walk. If a man hides his weakness and presumes or courts trouble, he will be bitten. This caroms us back to #1 The Creative. I don't see why, except that being bitten may teach us a lesson. Realizing our weakness and using what strength we have without presumption, we find ways to be creative. This reminds me of a line by the modern poet Yan Li: "As I run along in the stream of marathon runners, at last I find my halting leg can run." He does not presume that he will survive, but trusts that someone will finish the race. Maybe being bitten by a tiger is a necessary sacrifice for a creative cause. Maybe sometimes it is proper conduct for the weak to go up against the tiger.

4th Yang: "One treads after the tiger's tail, with trepidation but in the end having good fortune."

The adverbial binome *shuo-shuo* is hard to nail down. In later times it meant "pulsating, ready to leap to life." In *A Dream of Red Mansions* it described the dreadful blood in Dai-yu's tubercular sputum. Here it conveys the sense of being near a tiger. When you deal with beasts in homburg hats, you are always on edge. This line speaks of the hair trigger of bestiality that lies under the surface of proper conduct. Somehow it moves us to #61, Inner Sincerity. To recognize the tricky interpersonal edge and handle it with proper behavior is certainly a test of sincerity. There is always a thorn of ego near the rose of love. If we are sincere about civil behavior, we must work gingerly around the thorns.

5th Yang: "Resolute treading. Constancy in the face of hardship."

Headstrong, resolute conduct. Or perhaps "butting as one treads." If constancy in this brings good fortune, why does it carom us over to #38 Opposition [Kui]? Well, according to Cheng Yi, Kui is the principle of individuation. This resolve defines our sometimes lonely individuality.

Top Yang: "Examine your treading and consider the wonders. Coming back around. Sublime good fortune."

What does it mean that examination of conduct has sublime good fortune when it comes back around? And what is this phrase *kao-xiang*? "Weigh the signs" or "consider the wonders"? Examining conduct and considering wonders. Interesting that these things are parallel. We are at the high point of treading, and if it comes back around, that is supposed to be the highest good. I guess that from this we naturally go to #58 The Joyful. The high point of treading, by coming back around, can bring us joy.

## #11 PEACE/ Tai

Above: *kun*

Below: *qian*

First Yang: "The ribbon grass comes up quickly [being in sod]. Each according to his kind. Undertakings bring good fortune."

We are lifting everyone up together by getting down beneath. It all hangs together, and we pull together. This action is fitting at the beginning of Peace, when Heaven and earth are starting to interact. Besides meaning "pull up," the word *ba* can mean "shoot up," as in rapid, luxuriant growth. It is fitting that this line moves us to #46 Rising.

2nd Yang: "Bearing with the uncultured in gentleness, fording the river with resolution, not neglecting what is distant, not regarding one's companions: thus one finds value by walking in the middle."

Wonderful line---something uncouth being brought within the pale; crossing a river on foot; remembering those who are far away; cliques disappearing; finding a higher value along a central course. All this sense of tolerance for what ventures out of sight moves us to #35 Darkening of the Light. Darkening of the Light (Ming-yi) must endure ordeals in hidden places. To truly carry out the spirit of this line, we may be tested with such an ordeal.

3rd Yang: "No plain not followed by a slope; no going not followed by a return. He who remains constant in hardship is without blame. Do not rue your faithfulness; enjoy the good fortune you still possess."

Nothing moves toward an absolute or extreme without coming back around. The trials we suffer to live in peace bring no blame. Let us not despair over what is lost or suffered, but let our hearts reach out. Do not rue the losses while learning how one heart may touch another. [The true meaning of *fu* is not just Wilhelm's "sincerity." It is one heart touching another. It can also be understanding, a bond that crosses a gulf, a spiritual resonance.] It is natural that a line that talks about this will lead us to #19 Approach. Approach means getting down among people. It means taking one's natural talents to the people and giving of oneself when you are among them.

4th Yin: "He flutters down, not wealthy yet together with his neighbor, not arming oneself, yet acting with sincere intent."

According to Zhu Xi, *bu fu yi qi lin* means "not wealthy, yet able to influence his neighbors." So this line moves lightly, yet its effect on others goes beyond its means. This line's powerful will to serve is self-initiated, not due to generous compensation. Perhaps this is what makes it change to the *zhen* trigram, to become the stimulating circumstance of #34.

5th Yin: "The sovereign Yi gives a maiden in marriage. If one is true to oneself, there will be sublime good fortune."

Lord Yi marries off his sister. This a marriage from the center to the periphery, a diplomatic union. Why does the change move toward #5 Waiting? Maybe because cementing alliances takes time. We cannot get what we want, and the border tribe cannot get what it wants. Both must give the relationship time.

Top Yin: "The wall falls back into the moat. Use no army now. Make your commands known within your own town. Constancy meets hard going."

The city wall crumbles into the moat. Is this an end to militarism, or a cause for concern? If the former, then it seems right for this line to move toward #26 Great Taming.

But this line is double-edged: either the bulwark of Peace is crumbling, or Peace goes into a steady state. If we "issue orders within our own town," this may mark an end to the town's prosperity. Cheng Yi thinks this is a sign of anarchy, for a town is not a center from which to issue commands. Since the bulwark of Peace will crumble for whatever reason, we will need a person with inner resources to cope. Among the resources that a person stores, we hope he carries love of peace with him. What better reason is there to "acquaint oneself with many sayings and deeds of the past."

## #12 STAGNATION/ Pi

Above: *qian*

Below: *kun*

First Yin: "The ribbon grass comes up quickly [, being in sod]. Each according to his kind. Constancy brings good fortune and will prevail.

In a time of standstill, we are stuck right from the start, clumped together with our own kind. Our roots are entangled in the soil with theirs. Nevertheless, a distant sympathy is drawing us upward. We can feel confident that our neighbor will feel the same pull: she should share our aspiration. Hence it is fitting to move toward the impulse of #25 Innocence. We feel an upward resonance that gives us innocent conviction.

6/2 They bear and undertake; this means good fortune for inferior people. The standstill serves to help the great man to attain success.

Bear and undertake. In this stagnated situation, the lowly man shows his ability to serve and endure, while the great man is not recognized for what he could be. This is a testing ground for both of them. This line leads toward #6 Conflict if the lowly man does not accept his place, or if the great man compares his lot with others.

6/3 Bear the shame.

Being able to bear the shame, whatever it may be, lets us move beneath the notice of others (to work toward our own purposes). This lets us Retreat (#33) to our own space of freedom.

9/4 He who acts with a mission is without blame. Those of like mind will meet with blessings.

We are not sure what the blessing is. But we are close to the ruling line, so perhaps we are fated to throw into our lot with the leader who makes the best of Standstill. This sense of purpose naturally leads to the vantage point of #20 Contemplation. .

We know from the "Treatise on Trigrams" that "fate/mission" is associated with *xun*. Note that the upper trigram turns to *xun* when this line changes.

9/5 Make the best of Standstill---this means good fortune for a great man. What if it should all be lost, what if it should be lost! Tie [our hopes for continuing] it to a cluster of mulberry saplings.

Who would not want to make the best of standstill? The word *xiu* is richer than just "make the best of," since it can also mean "beautify" or "take a rest from." What counts

here is the great man's scope of concern. The threat of lost continuity (in what he values) worries him more than present discomfort. He senses that in stagnant times a fragile thread of transmission may be broken; he puts himself in a position of leadership by caring and raising a cry. He actually tries to do something. It is natural that this line leads us to the collective advance of #35 Advance.

The image of the mulberry saplings is fascinating in its own right, because it carries echoes of ancient fertility practices. Deng Mangwen (a Ming commentator) tells us that in archaic times the earth altar was often situated in a grove of mulberry trees. This was the site of courtship rites and dances, where young people could mingle more freely than at other times. It was also the site of offerings to Lord Millet and other deities.

In this line he voices a concern, then answers with a note of hope: "Let us tie it to a cluster of mulberry trees." The word tie has a metaphorical meaning of "entrust our hopes." Cheng Yi is being too literal when he says that mulberry saplings make a strong tethering post. The only thing I can imagine tethered to a sapling is a donkey! When Deng Mangwen imagines mulberries around an earth altar, he finds a plausible place to tie our hopes. These are young mulberry trees, which carries an added association: we are entrusting hope for continuance to the younger generation.

The significance of mulberry groves for courtship persisted into medieval literature: the mulberry grove was often a place where a strolling young man was smitten by the sight of a maiden picking mulberry leaves. (One rarely reads of a young man being smitten at the sight of a girl in a rice paddy!) It was also a place to arrange a rendezvous with one's lover.

The philosophical *Yijing* is built upon fertility magic, and this line is a gnomic utterance alluding to the combinatorial dance of Qian and Kun. We know that Qian and Kun are curiously intertwined right from the start. (See my essay "The Marriage of Qian and Kun.") Now in #11 comes a moment of perfect interchange: the peace of #11 happens because *qian's* expansiveness is contained within *kun's* coalescence. Of course any good dance has movements and counter-movements, and here #12 makes a counter-movement which is a negation of their perfect interchange. This gives a special status to Line Five. All the hexagrams from #3 to #64 express *qian* and *kun's* fertility, but here in Line Five of #12 we are nearing the extreme of non-interchange. In the enactment of this symbol dance, it is natural for concern to be voiced here: What if the continuity be broken? This is one of the few lines in the *Zhouyi* that is an emotive interjection, rather than being an objective statement. In other words, there are structural and expressive reasons for "What if it be lost" to occur here. And by the same token, tying hopes to mulberry saplings says something about the compilers' hopes for the continuance of what they were symbolizing. Thus I believe this line gives strong evidence for sympathetic magic as a principle underlying the *Zhouyi's* compilation.

9/6 Overturn the standstill. First standstill, then good fortune.

We have reached the extreme of stagnation. The word overturn is quite suggestive: it hints that there has been an artificial distortion of the natural order, which is now ready to crumble. This line points toward #45 Gathering, because collective action is called for.