

## **Maybe a Daisy Chain: My Version of the "Treatise on the Trigram Sequence"**

Qian and Kun wind their tails together; they moisten each other and strike sparks of fire that light up Heaven and Earth. From the chaos of their collision comes the birth throes of #3 Difficulty. Amid rapid growth and turmoil we need to learn fast, so we inquire into the results of things in #4 Youthful Folly. We need time to digest and extract principles from experience, so we settle back in #5 Waiting. Our grasp of ideal principle shifts according to self-interest, and thus comes #6 Conflict. When appeal to principle is exhausted, clashing groups arm themselves under #7 Army. Regional forces are vulnerable in times of internecine fighting, so they resort to alliances in #8 Holding Together. Local allies stay close to the people, thus containing rebelliousness and stabilizing livelihoods in #9 Lesser Taming. As livelihoods improve, we see the importance of propriety and ritual conduct in #10 Conduct. When proper social forms are established, we have hopes of lasting interchange in #11 Peace. The interchange of complimentary things is dogged by the spectre of failure in #12 Stagnation. When the structure of interchange collapses, people must look elsewhere for kindred souls in #13 Fellowship. The band of brothers embraces an ideal of non-exclusive possession in #14 Great Holdings. Men who believe in "all for one and one for all" work humbly for the common good in #15 Modesty. When people work together, each in their station, their communal spirit is roused by music and prophecy in #16 Rousing. When people are roused they follow the ones who represent their ideals in #17 Following. Their leader enacts rituals of submission, and they follow in his footsteps. When following continues for too long, cultural ossification sets in, and this needs to be addressed in #18, Work on What Has Been Spoiled. As people outgrow a dying legacy, natural leaders feel called to go among them and provide for the community in #19 Approach. Pressing issues extend beyond one locality, so inquiring minds seek a vantage point in #20 Viewing. A vantage point that deals with social realities tends to define the means needed for enforcement in #21 Biting Through. When people are contained and protected by social constraints, they may satisfy themselves with gracious living and aesthetic expression in #22 Grace. While people occupy themselves with ornamentation, underpinnings of the social structure crumble and elites tighten their grip on the superstructure in #23 Peeling Away. Out of the carapace of an *ancien regime*, a spark of new possibilities comes alive in #24

Renewal. The spark that feels so right in the moment will be tested against unforgiving reality in #25 Innocence. Accumulated history allows us to reflect on which beginnings are viable in Great Taming #26. To reflect on experience requires a certain level of cultivation; according to the level of cultivation we achieve, our appetites will express themselves variously in #27 the Corners of the Mouth. The scrimmage of appetite will either temper us or drag us down in #28 Preponderance of the Great. Having been exposed to the teeming excess of life, we can do nothing but plunge into the fluidity of our collective fate in #29 The Abysmal. Even as we involve ourselves in the turmoil, one part of us experiences it as an interplay of illuminated forms in #30 Cohesion.

If Qian and Kun had not come together, there would not have been any Changes. But most of the time we do not live against the backdrop of Heaven and Earth. Our changes are played out in a series of scenes, in a theater where nature is close and intimate. The fitting doorway to this theater is Feeling (#31) and Duration (#32), where the intimate grain of nature touches us in mountain, marsh, wind and thunder.

When firelight casts its circle, illumined forms are recognized in #30, and this paves the way for strong resonance among living things in Feeling. Such bonds of Feeling are tested by the challenges of Duration. Hopes for persistence (of identity) withdraw from the temporal flow in #33 Seclusion. A different kind of bid for persistence lies in asserting the will to power in #34 Great Force. When humans assert their will collectively, elites make progress and others serve them, as we see in #35 Advance. Much brilliant potential has been quashed by social inequity, as we see in #36 Darkening of the Light, but among humble folk there is something worth learning. Wounds of iniquity are healed and a circle of warm concern is provided in #37 The Family. Relationships are bedeviled by rifts and misunderstandings in # 38 Opposition. Amid the wear and tear of relationships, we worry at the loss of what sustains us and the road of life gets narrower all the time in #39 Obstruction. Brooding over our sorry state will only hold us back, but in a moment of insight we let go of it in #40 Release. From #31 through #40 we have tasted many flavors of feeling, from which we distill a choice about two possible paths in life---the way of Decrease (#41) and the way of Increase (#42). Decrease means letting go of accretions until we reach what is fundamental in our own nature. Increase means enhancing the expression of our nature through accumulation and improvement. We must make this choice when we are challenged to bring forth what is

within our nature, as symbolized by the "elements" of Heaven, Earth, Water and Fire in #43-#50. The decision in favor of Decrease or Increase will point to what kind of Breakthrough (#43) we can have---either to arrive at what is simple and essential, or to engage with instrumentalities of growing complexity. Of course, the thought-realm we break through to will determine what kind of Encounter (#44) we can have. The realm we reach and what we encounter there will have a bearing on what kind of Gathering (#45) we can be part of. Each gathering has its particular kind of communal observance, and corresponding to that is the vibratory level of our life-force's Ascension (#46). Where we gather and how far we ascend have a bearing on where we risk getting stuck. From the Impasse (#47) we fall into, if we dig deep, we can bring up something worth sharing like water from a Well (#48). What we bring out of our predicament decides what kind of Revolution (#49) is possible, and only if revolution happens will it be possible to re-cast our institutions at #50 Cauldron. When institutions are re-cast, our whole society reels with Shock (#51), and we cannot really predict the outcome. That is why we need to dampen the amplitude of the shock and find a quiet center in Keeping Still (#52). Only then can Gradual Development (#53) have time to bring back balance, like a tree that grows tenaciously after a landslide. It is good to anchor the slope, because impetuous growth will soon happen in Marrying Maiden (#54). Unleashed desire propels us into Abundance (#55), so it is time to live large. Among all the tangential visions, when the center does not hold, it is time to go off as a Traveler (#56). The hardships of travel toughen you; they demand powers of adjustment and balance that belong to the Gentle (#57). Because of gentle probing you will have good circulation and learn something about fitting in. This is good preparation to open up and enjoy the wild abandon that makes you Joyous (#58). But as the saying goes, "there are no banquets in life that do not scatter." Having reached the edge of your safe, comfortable world, you can choose to carry the process through and cast your fate to the winds in Dispersion (#59), or pull back and let your need for self-control take over in Moderation (#60). However you resolve the issue of holding back or expressing desire, you still have a choice: either you open yourself for heart-to-heart resonance in Inner Trust (#61) or keep your head low and bear down on things right around you in Preponderance of the Small (#62). Supposing you find your personal balance between pragmatic technique and the path with heart, you still have to ask yourself: is this the culmination that all your prior experiences were pointing

toward? Have you arrived at Already Aross (#63)? If you feel that life should be something more than this, you are one of the eternally questing souls who are Not-Yet-Across (#64). You will find experience unlike any you have known, and it will give new meaning to what has gone before. So push off toward the great crossing where Heaven and Earth, always and again, begin to come together.