

Yijing

Comprehensive, Traditional I Ching for English Speakers

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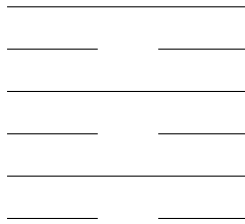
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Test

Foofoo baz.

64 - 未濟 (wei ji) Before Completion



周易卦辭 - Zhou Yi Judgement

未濟，亨。小狐汔濟，濡其尾，無攸利。

Before Completion (Not Yet Across): Success is indicated, yet the small fox, about to cross (nearing the ford), wets its tail (soaks its tail), with no benefit (bringing no advantage).

The Judgment implies that while there is potential for success, one must act with vigilance. The image of the small fox nearly completing a crossing but wetting its tail serves as a caution against premature confidence or minor lapses that can undermine the entire effort.

彖傳 (Tuàn Zhuàn) - Ten Wings Commentary

未濟，亨。柔得中也。小狐汔濟，濡其尾，無攸利。剛柔之際未定也。雖不利，必有功。時未至，故未濟。

Before Completion (Not Yet Across): Success is indicated because the yielding (soft) element attains the central (middle) balance. The small fox, about to cross (nearly crossing/almost across), wets its tail (soaks its tail), with no benefit (gains no advantage). The interplay of firm and yielding (firm and soft) is not yet settled (stabilized). Though unfavorable, achievement (merit) still arises; the time (moment) is not ripe, and thus completion remains unrealized. The Tuàn Zhuàn expands upon the notion that the current balance between firmness and yielding is in flux. Despite apparent setbacks, there is still forward motion toward eventual success. The cautionary note is that conditions are not yet fully aligned for perfect completion.

大象傳 (Dà Xiàng Zhuàn) —Ten Wings Commentary on the Image

象曰：火在水上，未濟。君子以慎終如始。

Image (Symbol): Fire sits above water—this is Before Completion (Not Yet Across). The noble one (superior man) remains as careful at the end as at the beginning (in the final steps as at the outset).

The Dà Xiàng Zhuàn uses the image of fire over water to illustrate the precarious nature of partial success. It urges the noble one to maintain initial caution throughout, ensuring that small oversights do not spoil the entire effort.

文言傳 (Wényán Zhuàn)

未濟之時，蓋示有終未終之象，故曰小狐汔濟，濡其尾。以慎微之心，而後可成。

At the time of Before Completion (Not Yet Across): The affair is near its end yet not fully ended—hence, the little fox nearly crosses (almost crosses) but wets its tail (dampens its tail). Only by exercising utmost caution (meticulous vigilance) can one achieve fulfillment (success).

The Wényán Zhuàn clarifies that “before completion” entails a transitional stage—close to the goal but not quite there. Constant attentiveness to small details can prevent minor missteps from sabotaging the larger objective.

Wang Bi Commentary

王弼曰：未濟，事將成而未成也。小狐汔濟，猶有危險也。故濡其尾，示慎終之道也。

Before Completion (Not Yet Across): It signifies that an affair is on the verge of success yet remains unfinished (approaching completion without being fully accomplished). The small fox, nearly crossing (close to the crossing), still faces danger; thus, it wets its tail (soaks its tail), exemplifying the necessity of caution until the very end (remaining vigilant until all is finished).

Wang Bi underscores the precarious state of affairs in 未濟. Even when success is near, one must remain alert, as the final steps can make or break the entire undertaking.

Later Editorial Traditions (Song Dynasty Onward)

宋人云：未濟之卦，示人於臨終之際猶需敬慎，所謂‘慎終如始’，則大功可成也。小失或潰全局，宜戒之。

Not Yet Across (Before Completion): It teaches that even as one nears the end, reverence and caution remain imperative—“being as careful at the end as at the beginning” secures the great work’s completion (achievement of major goals). A small misstep (minor error) can ruin the entire endeavor, so heed caution.

Later Scholastic Additions

或謂‘小狐汔濟’乃心志未定，猶欠臨門一腳；若能以誠敬自持，則雖濡尾亦可轉禍為福。

Interpretation: ‘The small fox nearly crosses’ suggests an unsettled intention, lacking that final step at the threshold (the last push); if one maintains sincerity and reverence (earnest respect), even a wet tail can turn misfortune into blessing (transform ill into favor).

Song-era commentators emphasize the psychological dimension of 未濟: the mind must remain resolute, or else small lapses in diligence can produce disproportionately large consequences. Nonetheless, sincerity and reverence can mitigate even these missteps.

Overall Summary

Hexagram 64 (未濟, wei ji) conveys a state in which success is tantalizingly close but not yet fully realized. The imagery of a small fox almost crossing a stream but wetting its tail warns against complacency. Ancient texts (Zhou Yi, Ten Wings) emphasize vigilance until the very end; Wang Bi highlights the danger of assuming victory prematurely; and Song-era editors underscore how sincerity and cautious attention to minor details can determine whether one transforms a near-miss into ultimate success. The final takeaway is that the last steps, though seemingly small, are crucial to genuine completion.

Changing Line 1

周易 Zhou Yi

初六：濡其尾，吝。

At the first line (chu liu), the tail is wetted, bringing distress.

This line from Hexagram 64 (Before Completion) indicates a premature or overly hasty movement. By entering the water too soon, the fox (or traveler) ends up wetting its tail, signifying an error that leads to regret or discomfort. The Zhou Yi core text warns that even at the beginning, vigilance is crucial.

Ten Wings

《十翼》曰：初涉未穩，濡尾示其輕進；宜審時度勢，方免後悔。

The Ten Wings state: At the first step, when one's footing is not secure, wetting the tail illustrates rash advance. One should carefully assess the situation in order to avoid future remorse

In the Ten Wings commentary, the emphasis is on “lightness of step” —the line cautions that moving too quickly, without firm footing, can sabotage the broader process of crossing. The text urges calm deliberation rather than impulsive action.

Wang Bi

王弼曰：初六濡尾，示其心未定而先行，易陷險境，宜戒之。

Wang Bi remarks: The wet tail at the first line shows that the mind is not yet settled, and one acts prematurely, risking peril. Caution is advised.

Wang Bi's reading highlights the psychological aspect of the line: an unsettled mindset drives hasty action, which leads to difficulties. His commentary underscores the need for mental clarity and composure before taking steps toward completion.

Later Editorial Traditions

宋人云：初爻之濡尾，蓋小失而生隱患，若能以誠敬自省，則可轉危為安。

A Song-era note: The wet tail at the first line is a small misstep that can breed hidden dangers. Yet if one reflects sincerely and reverently, the threat can be turned into safety.

Later commentaries from the Song dynasty and beyond view the wet tail as a minor but revealing mistake. They stress the importance of sincere self-examination at the earliest stage, so that small errors do not grow into larger crises. This process of reflection can avert potential harm and realign the journey toward eventual success.