



21 *Biting Through/ The Sacred Meal* SHI HE

Confront the problem, bite through the obstacle; tenacious, determined, enduring; a time for action and punishment; shared meal in the Tower, 'eating ancient virtue'; site of creative transformation; beginning of initiation ordeal.

MYTHS FOR CHANGE: THE STORY OF THE TIME

Charge to the Oracle: *When you view the omens you have a place to unite. The sacred meal. Eating ancient virtue. Accept this and use the energy of Biting Through. This means uniting the nobles.*

Biting Through connects eating and biting through an obstacle with words and questions. The root is mouth, speech and language. It suggests posing a question to an oracle and getting a response, the bird dances of the *wu*-Intermediaries and the pulses taken at the wrist in medical diagnosis. It means to Bite Through to something hidden, to invade or annex territory, to eliminate obstacles to harmony and thus to the beauty and union with spirits suggested in the following figure.

Biting Through portrays the shared ritual meal that unites spirits and humans, held in an Ancestral Temple. It was metaphorically, and sometimes literally, eating the ancestor's flesh. It is also the punishment and sacrifice of criminals and prisoners who were 'eaten by the ancestor'. It deals with the act of judging and punishing, imaged as two dogs that stand guard, and portrays three of the significant punishments, foot-cutting, nose-cutting and the cangue, a heavy wooden yoke strapped across the shoulders that immobilized the hands. It further suggests executions, human sacrifice and reading omens in the remains of sacrifices and bodies that had been ritually exposed.

The characters also share a root with *shi*, the book diviners or book-Intermediaries who hold the *te* or virtue of the ancestors in the oracle books and records. It suggests the *shi* or 'corpse', the embodiments who were possessed by ancestor spirits at the shared meals, and the statues and images in the temples that 'held the



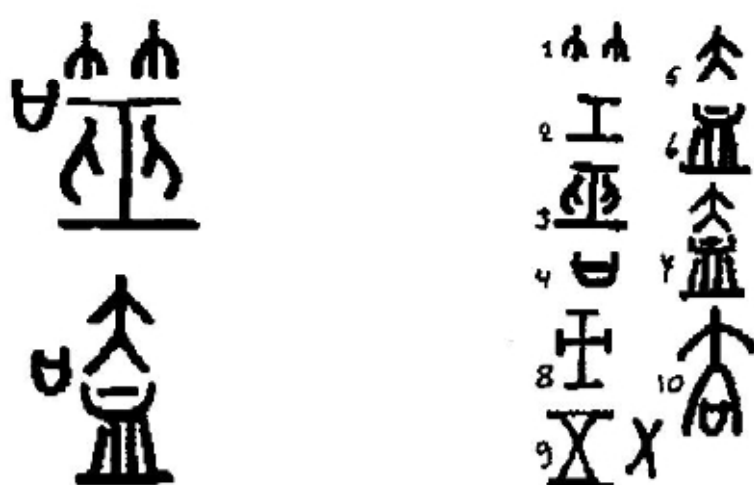
spirits'. The ritual meal is doubled in the picture of the diviners 'eating the ancient virtue' of the ancestors through the spirit-books, Biting Through the words to the bright omens they hide.

THE RESPONSE

Biting Through. Make an offering and you will succeed.

Advantageous to judge and punish. Harvesting.

Bite, SHI: gnaw, chew, nibble away, bite by bite; arrive at the truth, attain the goal, remove what is extraneous and reveal what is necessary; annex, take in invade, reach, come to; question, ask why. The old character shows an open mouth, the pillar of an ancestral hall with two people facing each other, diviner and inquirer, and the yarrow stalks or spirit plants growing from the roof. It suggests the *WU* or spirit-mediums associated with the Four Hidden Lands **Through/unite, HE:** close the jaws, crush; destroy an obstacle; unite, bring together; sound of spirit voices, recipient with cover filled with food; drink, laugh, laughter. The old character shows an open mouth, a sacrificial vessel with a charge to Heaven inside it, and the lid being lowered to seal the vessel for cooking. Both suggest the shared meal and divination as contact with the spirit. Through this ordeal, an inner voice speaks until it is clear.



SHI⁴ (9723/30) is composed of bamboo **ZHU**² (1), shaman or wizard **WU**¹ (3) and mouth **KOU**³ (4). It indicates oracle consulting with yarrow stalks. The element **WU** is made up of work (2) and two people **REN**². Another character, (8), is a picture of a female shaman or **WU** dancing with long sleeves. These Four **WU** were the assistants of the great ancestor **Di**, each associated with one of the four Hidden Lands. **KE**⁴, (3855/30) or, without the mouth, **HE**^{2,5} (3871) is composed of mouth **KOU**³ (4), a vessel **MIN**³ (6) and a lid or a 'closer' (5). The lid (10) was originally a drawing of a man with a ball between his legs and suggests an initiation ordeal.

Biting Through describes your situation in terms of confronting a tenacious obstacle. The way to deal with it is to gnaw away what is unnecessary and bite through the core of the problem. Something is keeping the jaws from coming together. Take decisive action. Gnaw away at the obstacles until you reach the hidden centre, then Bite Through what is keeping things apart. This is pleasing to the spirits and they will help you. Take things to court. That brings profit and insight. This is a time for legal action, punishment and a warning against criminal activity.

THE SCHOLAR SPEAKS

The hexagram figure shows inner determination breaking through obstacles and spreading clarity. Thunder and lightning. Gather your forces. Re-imagine the situation. You have contemplated long enough. Take resolute action. You have the opportunity to bring things together. Provide what is needed. This is a severe time. The early Kings used it to clarify criminal punishments and thus enforce the laws. There is something between the jaws. Say it this way: gnaw and Bite Through! This is pleasing to the spirits. Through it they will give you success, effective power and the capacity to bring the situation to maturity. Decide when to be adaptable and when to be firm. Stir things up and clarify them. Create a structure that unites thunder, the shock that comes from below, and lightning, the sudden clarity that comes from above. Keep your centre flexible and act from above. Even though the situation may not be appropriate, bringing things to judgement brings profit and insight.

THE SHAMAN SPEAKS

Thunder and Lightning. Biting Through. Eating ancient virtue.

A time when Early Kings used severe punishments to clarify and enforce the laws.

The spirit that manifests in quake and thunder reveals the Bright Omens. The Rouser is working with the Bright Omens. Fire and brightness above radiate light and warmth, while Thunder rouses and germinates new potential, sprouting energies that thrust up from below. This is Fire over Wood: inner rousing that breaks through obstacles to awareness. The ideal Realising Person reflects this by emulating the ancient Kings and their use of precise and severe punishments



to clarify what is right and what is harmful. Hold the heart fast and take the risk. The new King is emerging.

TRANSFORMING LINES: CHANGE AT WORK

INITIAL NINE

Biting Through. His shoes locked in a wooden stock.

His feet disappear.

This is not a mistake.

This means not moving. You are the prisoner this time. Trying to control the situation, you have been locked up and cannot move. Don't worry. This is for your own good. It is the right thing to do now. It will make you think.

Direction: You will emerge into the light and be recognized. Reimagine the situation. Gather your energy for an impressive new move.

SIX AT SECOND

Biting Through flesh at the sacred meal, his nose disappears.

This is not a mistake.

This is riding a strong line. The ritual meal in the Ancestor Temple. Enthusiastically Biting Through obstacles, you go a little overboard. Don't worry about your enthusiasm. Keep it up. This is not a mistake. You are on the right track.

Direction: Turn conflict into creative tension. The situation is already changing.

SIX AT THIRD

Biting Through dried meat at the sacred meal, meeting poison.

Small is distressed.

This is not a mistake.

Not an appropriate situation. The ritual meal in the Ancestor Temple. Biting Through the obstacles, you encounter something old and dangerous. Take it on. Don't try to hide it. If you simply adapt, you will be ashamed and confused. Bring it out into the open. This is not a mistake.

Direction: Clarify the situation. Be warm and insightful. Don't be afraid to act alone. You are connected to a creative force.

NINE AT FOURTH

Biting Through parched meat with bones at the sacred meal.

Acquiring a bronze arrow.

Trial: hardship is advantageous. Harvesting.

Wise Words! The Way opens.

This is not shining yet. The ritual meal in the Ancestor Temple. Getting through this is a long, arduous task, but you will find something of great value. The drudgery will definitely be worth it in the end. This will open the Way for you and everything you wish for. The effects will be lasting.

Direction: Take things in. Be open and provide what is needed.

SIX AT FIFTH

Biting Through parched meat at the sacred meal.

Acquiring bronze and gold.

Trial: going through adversity is advantageous.

Hungry souls and angry ghosts.

This is not a mistake. Harvesting.

You acquire what is appropriate. The ritual meal in the Ancestor Temple. Getting through this confrontation is a long, arduous task. In the end you acquire something of very great value, wealth and the possibility it gives to establish a line of descent. You are going to have to confront other people's ghosts and shadows in the process. Have no fear, this is not a mistake.

Direction: Disentangle yourself. Proceed step by step. Gather energy for a decisive new move.

Biting Through.

Why are you locked in a wooden stock so your ears disappear?

Trap! The Way closes.

Your understanding is not brightened. This means serious punishment. This time you have seriously cut yourself off. You can lose important relationships and goals. Why can't you hear this? You certainly won't accomplish anything this way!

Direction: A fertilizing shock is coming. Re-imagine your situation. Gather energy for a decisive new move.



BITING THROUGH