

59

䷺ 渙

HUÀN

# THE FLOOD

The flood.

Being swept by a flood is blessed.

A king calls down blessings to his temple.

It is favorable to cross a great river.

It is favorable to keep on.

What seems like disaster proves to be a blessing. The protagonist is inundated by a rush of water, an irresistible and apparently destructive force. But this destructive force proves beneficial, sweeping him up to a height he could not have reached on his own. A great king uses his power to benefit his subjects. "To cross a great river" is to undertake some difficult and/or dangerous task or ordeal.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Lines

first line/6 — — He can be rescued if his horse is strong.  
Auspicious.

He is in difficulties and needs help. This bottom line of the trigram Kǎn ䷲ Pit (difficulties) shows someone in the depths of difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

line two/9 — The flood sweeps his boat ahead.  
Regrets will pass.

The apparent disaster of the flood is really a blessing. He is well placed to make the most of the situation. Line two is the place of the subject, who is aided by his ruler.<sup>4</sup>

line three/6 — — Swept away by the flood.  
No regrets.

He is swept away, but not to disaster. Line three is usually inauspicious, but here the inauspiciousness is only apparent.

line four/6 — — The flood sweeps him from the herd.  
Supreme good fortune.  
It sweeps him up onto a hilltop,  
High beyond expectation.

Line four is the place of the high officer and the entry into the higher world represented by the upper trigram.

line five/9 ——— Flooded with sweat  
at the Great Command,  
He is swept up to the residence of the king,  
but comes to no harm.

When the king commands his presence at the palace, he is terrified. But he need not be, for his submissiveness will please the king. Line five is the place of the ruler.

top line/9 ——— The flood sweeps sorrow far away.  
He comes to no harm.

The flood at first seems terrible, but as it recedes his fear subsides with the water level.<sup>5</sup>

STRUCTURE    ☶ 巽 Xùn    Kneel in Submission  
                  ☵ 坎 Kǎn    Pit (difficulties)

Someone small is in difficulties (lower trigram ☵), but submits to someone greater (upper trigram ☶) and is borne ahead (into the upper trigram). Lines two through four form the trigram Zhèn 震 Thunderbolt (rush forward). This helps to move the small person ahead.

SEQUENCE    From the abject submission of XÙN (57) KNEELING IN SUBMISSION, the protagonist rose to his feet in DUÌ (58) STAND STRAIGHT, seeking higher rank. This exposes him to the direct interest of the king and therefore to danger. A flood of royal power sweeps him off his feet, but deposits him in the high place he sought.

## Notes

1. THE FLOOD — The word 渙 *huàn* means “flood” in the sense of a great rush of water. It also means to sweep apart or disperse.

2. “calls down blessings” (opening text) — The king calls on the powerful spirits of his ancestors to aid his cause and that of his followers. The text reads literally: “King calls to temple.” This refers directly to the spirits’ coming to the temple and only indirectly to the blessings they bring. See also JĪA RÉN (37) THE HOUSEHOLD, line five, CUÌ (45) GATHERING AROUND, FÈNG (55) ABUNDANCE.

3. “rescued” (first line) — See also MÍNG ZHÌ (36) THE BRIGHT PHEASANT.

4. “boat” (line two) — With Li (1969) I read 杭 *háng* “boat” for 机 *jī* “table.”

5. “sweeps sorrow far away” (top line) — See also XIǎO XÙ (9) SMALL IS TAMED. With Li (1969) I read 恤 *xù* “sorrow” for 血 *xuè* “blood.”