

60



JÍE

RESTRAINT

Restraint.
Restraint is blessed.
But when restraint is bitter,
do not persevere in it.

Restraint is advisable under most circumstances, but not when it is painful or when it goes so far as to be total immobility.¹

Lines

first line/9 — He does not go out his door.
Avoids harm.

The first line is the doorway to the hexagram. As the lowest line, it represents someone weak and small, for whom entering the outside world would be dangerous.²

line two/9 — He does not go out his gate.
Inauspicious.

It is time for him to somewhat relax his restraint. Line two is the place of the subject, who cannot serve his ruler if he does not act.²

line three/6 — — Lack of restraint
Brings sad lamentation,
But no harm.

The consequences of not restraining oneself are bad but not disastrous. This top line of the lower trigram represents a subject who oversteps his bounds.

line four/6 — — Settled restraint.
Blessed.

He is used to restraining himself and therefore finds it easy. Such easy restraint is extremely auspicious. Line four is the place of the officer and the entry into the upper trigram. He rises to serve his ruler as an officer. The line's settled quality is related to its being passive (— —) and in the middle of a Gēn ䷎ Keep Still trigram formed by lines three through five.

line five/9 — Strict restraint.
Auspicious.
Going forward, he will rise.

Strict restraint permits him to rise. Line five is the place of the ruler; the solid line is a solid restraint. He restrains himself from offending against his ruler and is helped to rise to a position of eminence.³

top line/6 — — Bitter restraint.
To continue brings misfortune.
Regrets will pass.

Such strict restraint is not advisable and should be abandoned. The uneasiness one feels at first will later vanish. This top line passes beyond the restraint suggested by the rest of the hexagram.

STRUCTURE ䷎ 坎 Kǎn Pit (difficulties)
䷇ 兌 Duì Stand Straight

Standing up (lower trigram ䷇) will lead to difficulties (upper trigram ䷎), so restraint is best. Compare TÚN (3) GATHERING SUPPORT, in which rushing forward (䷎) leads to difficulties (䷎).

SEQUENCE Having been carried forward to comparatively high position in the previous hexagram HUÀN (59) THE FLOOD, the protagonist now wisely checks his advance, though without becoming completely immobile. A forward impetus remains, as was the case in TÚN (3) GATHERING SUPPORT.

Notes

1. RESTRAINT — The word 節 *jié* basically refers to a section of the trunk of a bamboo. Because each section is a closed cylinder, the word came to mean “limit” or “restraint.”

2. “door” (first line), “gate” (line two) — In a Chinese house compound, several buildings are contained within a wall. The “door” is the entrance to one of the buildings. The “gate” is the entrance to the compound as a whole.

3. “strict restraint” (line five) — See also LÍN (19) LEADERSHIP, line three.