

27

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BULGING CHEEKS

Bulging cheeks.
It is auspicious to stay as one is.
Those who see bulging cheeks
will want what fills them.

He has greedily consumed so much that his cheeks bulge. Now he must stop and digest it. If he went out after more, he would attract the attention of someone strong enough to take away from him even what he has — probably his ruler. By staying where he is, he will both be safe and gain nourishment.

Lines

first line/9 — “You cast aside your magic tortoise
And gaze upon my bulging cheeks.”
Inauspicious.

Someone powerful turns his attention on the speaker's greed. Only someone powerful would be rich enough to possess a magic tortoise for divination. Tortoise shell divination was the method used by the Shang kings and even in Zhou times took precedence over *Changes* divination. See Appendix B. The meat of the tortoise was eaten as a delicacy.

line two/6 — — He stuffs his cheeks.
He is struck on the neck
and his cheeks mound with food.
It is inauspicious to march forth.

Having stuffed his cheeks with food, he must stay where he is until it has been digested and his cheeks no longer bulge. Line two is the place of the subject, whose ruler will attack him if he is too ambitious.

line three/6 — — He is struck on the cheeks.
Keeping on brings misfortune.
Do not act for ten years.
Unfavorable.

His bulging cheeks draw a direct attack. As usual, line three is the hexagram's least auspicious line.

line four/6 — — He stuffs his cheeks.
Auspicious.
The tiger's gaze is steady,
but what it wants lies far away.
It does him no harm.

Now he may indulge his greed. The powerful lord symbolized by the tiger will not even notice him. Line four, the entry into the upper trigram, is often associated with movement that comes after a delay. It is also the place of the officer.

line five/6 — — He is struck on the neck.
It is auspicious for him to stay where he is.
He must not try to ford a great river.

Line five is the place of the ruler, who will strike him if he dares to act. If he stays where he is, however, he will be allowed to keep the gains he has already made.

top line/9 — From bulging cheeks
come danger and then good fortune.
It is favorable to ford a great river.

Stuffing one's cheeks with food may be dangerous, but it will bring good fortune in the end. This top line summarizes all the other lines and leads beyond them.

STRUCTURE ䷳ 艮 Gēn Keep Still (stopped, stop)
䷲ 震 Zhèn Thunderbolt (rush forward)

Someone small or in a low position rushes forward (lower trigram ䷲), then stops or is stopped (upper trigram ䷳). The solid lines at the top and bottom of the hexagram are like cheeks. The four broken lines between them are the food that stuffs them.

SEQUENCE The protagonist has grown to the point at which any further growth will invite retribution from his ruler. He must pause to assimilate the gains he has already made. In DÀ XÙ (26) **BIG IS TAMED**, he could advance only under his ruler's leadership. Now no advance is advisable.