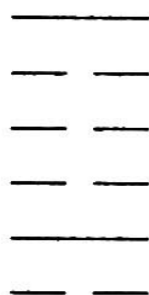


meng/dodder 4

*Offering.**'We do not seek the dodder; the dodder seeks us.'*

*When the first divination is auspicious,  
repeated divinations are confusing, and are not auspicious.  
Favourable augury.*

Base (6): Pulling dodder.

*Favourable for giving punishment,  
or for removing shackles and fetters.  
Distress in travel.*

(9) 2: Wrapping dodder.

*AUSPICIOUS.  
For bringing home a wife, AUSPICIOUS.  
A son may be betrothed.*

(6) 3: *Not for taking a wife.*

Seeing a bronze arrow, having no bow.

*Favourable for nothing.*

(6) 4: Dodder in bundles.

*Distress.*

(6) 5: Dodder.

*AUSPICIOUS.*

Top (9): Knocking down dodder.

*Unfavourable for raiding.  
Favourable against raiders.*

(4) **dodder**

(Tag) Waley (A130) explained *meng* as 'dodder', a parasitic flowering plant with no roots or leaves. Like other parasites, it attracts superstitious respect. Ode 48 tells of gathering dodder, apparently as a charm, though with another name: *tang*. Gao Heng (G173) understood *meng* as a short form for 'blindness', punning with the later Confucian interpretation: 'a youth'.

(Hexagram statement) The quotation may be a spell to avert misfortune after accidentally harming dodder.

The received text says 'The first divination gives a reply; further divinations are confusing (or impertinent), which means no reply.' In the Mawangdui text and the Han stone tablets *gao* 'reply' lacks one small stroke, and becomes *ji* 'auspicious'; *du* 'confusing' has a different radical, and becomes a rare character (not in Karlgren) meaning 'to draw out/extract'; and the connective *ze* 'then' is replaced by the closely similar particle *ji*. To accept *ji* for *gao* gives the best sense, but the correctness of the reading cannot be proved. For repeated divination see pages 128 and 150.

(Base) *Shuo* 'explain' is taken as a loan for *tuo* 'remove' (G174), here as also in 9:3, 26:2, 33:2, 38:top and 47:5.)

(2) Wrapping suggests preparation of a present or sacrifice. Wen Yiduo explains the indication as 'a son may be betrothed', rather than 'a son may assume control of the household' (W27).

(3) The words literally mean 'see-bronze-man-not-have-body'. Though they may refer to dodder being of shining reddish bronze colour and appearing to have no substance among its tangled-wire-like twisting stems, Wen Yiduo suggests (W588) that *fu* 'man' is a simple error for *shi* 'arrow' (see Diagram 14), while *gong* 'body' is an elaborated form for *gong* 'a bow' (see Diagram 11).

(4) *Kun* 'beset' is read as a short form; with the 'hand' radical it means 'to bind'.

(Top) Cutting is sometimes avoided in gathering weird parasitic plants. They are beaten or knocked from the host plant. A variant reading gives 'Binding dodder.'