

27 yi/molars



Augury AUSPICIOUS.

Observe the molars.

Read the state of the jaws for yourself.

Base (9): Put your sacred tortoise-shells away:
observe our molars hanging in display.

DISASTROUS.

(6) 2: Crowns of wisdom molars not worn down.

Expeditions DISASTROUS.

(6) 3: Worn-down molars.

Augury DISASTROUS.

Avoid use for ten years.

Nothing favourable.

(6) 4: Wisdom molars.

AUSPICIOUS.

*A tiger staring, glaring;
it wants so much and so much.*

NO MISFORTUNE.

(6) 5: Well worn teeth.

*Auspicious augury for a dwelling.
The big river cannot be forded.*

Top (9): Extracted molars.

DANGEROUS.

AUSPICIOUS.

Favourable for fording a big river.

(27) molars

(Tag) This seems to refer to jawbones of sacrificed animals hung in a temple and examined for divination in preference to tortoise-shells. Kunst (R94) points to some evidence for this practice in primitive China. Waley (A134) translated the word as 'pendulous jaw' and explained it as meaning 'dewlap' – presumably of a live sacrificial bull under observation before being slaughtered. Wen Yiduo makes best sense by letting the text concentrate on the condition of the teeth (W60). Molars are conspicuous in old jawbones and their condition may have had mantic significance.

(2) If the crowns ('hillocks') of the wisdom teeth are not worn down, the individual is young.

(4) For 'wants so much and so much' Schuessler gives 'its desire is persistent' (D787).