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明夷 ䷣

(míng yí) Wounded Light

The light is wounded. In difficulties, it is effective to persevere.

- **Nine in the first place:** Light wounded in flight. You fold your wings. When those worthy of power travel, for three days they do not eat. You have a destination, and a host with words.
- **Six in the second place:** The light is wounded in the left thigh. You use the strength of a horse to hold yourself aloft. For the great, good fortune.
- **Nine in the third place:** The light is wounded in the southern hunt. She gains her great leader but cannot be hasty in [promising] constancy.
- **Six in the fourth place:** The light is wounded in the left of her belly. Spearing the heart of the wounded light, going out of the gates of one's courtyard.

- Six in the fifth place: Like the wounded brilliance of the Prince of Ji. Persistence is effective.
- Six at the top: Not light but darkness [literally, as little light as the last night of the old moon]. First [light] rises into the sky, afterwards it enters the earth.

Image

The light enters into the earth: the light [of the moon] darkens. Within, cultivate the light; outwardly yield gently. By bearing great difficulties, King Wen used them [to benefit himself and others]. [*While imprisoned, he is said to have arranged the Book of Changes*].

This hexagram describes the many dark times in history and human lives, when the sources of light seem wounded, struck down as fatally as a bird shot in flight. When the Zhou *Changes* were being assembled, China was recovering from such a time, when the last legitimate Shang king had beset the nation with greed, cruelty, and unpredictability. (They drank copiously from vessels which leached lead into warmed liquors, so there is both textual and archeological evidence for this selfish and irrational behavior.) Two among those who dared to “speak truth to power” were the Prince of Ji, mentioned here, and “King” Wen. The Prince of Ji was a noble advisor to the Shang king. Because he remonstrated with his king, he was thrown into prison. After this evil regime was replaced by the Zhou, the prince was consulted and heeded by the new King Wu of Zhou. The prince then retired, choosing to live in modest circumstances. Words attributed to Prince Ji appear in the Classic of History (*Shujing*). Thus they were memorized

by Confucius, his students, and all who studied for the civil service exams which led to government careers. Clearly the prince's advice, shunned at first, was valued later, and he did not suffer lasting harm. He responded well to a dark time.

When light seems to dive below the earth, as pictured here, darkness reigns. At such times, we need to look to the inner light and nourish that. Meanwhile, we may need to yield (or seem to yield) to harsh external conditions for a time. Both Prince Ji and "King" Wen accepted imprisonment under a despotic regime, as Gandhi did. Ji and Wen used their time in jail productively. Ji wrote instructive history. Wen organized divinatory fragments into the *Book of Changes*. Later, their words were used to instruct rulers, managers, and the entire educated elite for millennia. In the long run, they were far more influential than the sycophants who seemed more successful at the Shang court.

Times of pain and suffering do occur and recur, but they also pass and are succeeded by better days, just as a full moon returns after waning.

Shaughnessy, 112–113, 306.

Lynn, 357–362.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 139–142.