

# 62 小過 ䷛

(xiǎo guò) Minor Surplus

Minor excess. Success. Persistence is effective. You can accomplish small goals but not great deeds. A flying bird leaves a song: "Rising is inappropriate, descending apropos: great good fortune!"

- Six in the first place: A flying bird: misfortune.
- Six in the second place: Surpassing your ancestor, meeting your ancestress. You do not near your leader, but meet a helper. No blame.
- Nine in the third place: No surplus for repelling others. If you follow and attack them, misfortune.
- Nine in the fourth place: No blame. Not outdoing but meeting them. To set forth is dangerous: there must be fighting. Do not persist forever.
- Six in the fifth place: Dense clouds but no rain from our western fields. A duke shoots and takes the prey in the cave.

- **Six at the top:** Not meeting but surpassing them. The flying bird is caught in a net: misfortune. This is what is known as the calamity of inadequacy.

### Image

Above the mountain, thunder: the image of a small superiority. Thus when you act, you should surpass others in respectfulness; in mourning, surpass others in sorrow; in using things, surpass others in thrift.

This hexagram describes a situation in which you have a slight advantage over those around you. The image suggests that this is similar to thunder above a mountain: not quite right, since early Chinese believed that thunder generally came from within the earth, not the sky. The older imagery here is that of a flying bird, bringing the cautionary message that it is safer not to rise too high.

The time is not yet ripe for a concerted advance, even though you may feel encouraged by some progress relative to those around you. Your strength is still only slightly superior, and thus you are too vulnerable to do much at this time. Moving ahead may seem natural, just as flying is natural to a bird. However, when hunters are near, birds are more likely to survive by remaining low to the ground, where they are camouflaged by their surroundings. If they take flight, they become visible against the sky, and attract hunters' attention with their rapid upward motion. So a time of a slight advantage is a time for restraint. Especially at such a time it is far wiser to outdo others in your respectful treatment of others, in the depth of your grief over any loss, and in your thrifty use of available resources of every kind. The situation is analogous to a time when clouds mass but have not yet produced needed rain.

In Chinese history, the situation is similar to the time when King Wu mustered his forces among his own people, before actually attacking the cruel last king of Shang. The time is one of great promise; the balance has begun to tip toward great progress. But the outcome is still in doubt. For those living under Shang at that time, little may have seemed to have changed. The king who had inherited the throne from a long line of ancestor-kings continued to reign. His army was far larger and better armed than that of Zhou, and he continued to offer royal sacrifices to the Lord on High who had sanctioned his family's rule for many generations. Wise King Wu bided his time and continued earning his reputation for honesty and keeping promises, a reputation which eventually brought decisive success to his smaller, less well-armed troops, and changed the Chinese view of the nature of real political power forever.

Shaughnessy, 92–93, 301–302.

Lynn, 530–537.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 239–244.