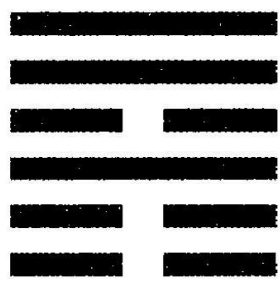


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# 漸



## (jiàn) Gradual Progress

Gradual progress. A woman reaches her marital home. Good fortune. Persistence is effective.

- Six in the first place: The wild geese reach the edge of deep waters. Their little one is endangered. There is talk, but no blame.
- Six in the second place: The wild geese reach a slope where food and good drink are ample. Good fortune.
- Nine in the third place: The wild geese reach the plateau. The husband, sent on a campaign, will not return. The wife is pregnant but does not give birth. Misfortunes. [Still,] resisting thieves is effective.
- Six in the fourth place: The wild geese reach the trees. Someone straightens their rafters [so that they no longer sag]. No blame.

- **Nine in the fifth place:** The wild geese reach the hill. For three years, the wife does not conceive a child. In the end, no one wins. [Nevertheless,] good fortune.
- **Nine at the top:** The wild geese attain the plateau. Their feathers may be used as emblems. Good fortune.

### Image

Above the mountain, a tree: the image of gradual progress. You should find places for the worthy and virtuous, and thus bring goodness to prevailing customs.

A tree on a hill or mountain may itself be stunted, but it stands taller than trees planted on lower surfaces. We need to be mindful of our resting places and true homes and how they sustain us in our journeys through our lives. Just as wild geese in migration must rest on their way, we too need to pause as we make progress, to rest, feed our bodies and souls, and reestablish closer communications with those who are flying with us. It makes no sense to try to travel thousands of miles without regular respites. We need to come to earth and refuel. But we also need to be aware of the different natures of our landing spots. Food and rest are more safely acquired on land, so it is wise to take a rest before crossing a deep chasm.

The human image here is of a bride who has found her true home but has not yet produced the son her husband's family wants from her. Her position is extremely insecure, since her name will not be recorded in the ancestral tablets of her marital family until she does produce a son. Virtually all adult women derived their powers through the successes of their adult sons. Another form

of insecurity comes from outside the family. If the nation goes to war, and sends the husband into battle, it is unlikely that her husband will ever return.

Both the childless wife and the migrating goose are in transit; they have not yet reached their safe havens. Nevertheless, both need to alight and take what comfort, sustenance, and rest they can while en route. Temporary havens are not to be despised; they are essential to successful migration.

When making analogies with a wife who is either childless or loses her husband to war, it is important to remember that in early China women remarried without incurring the social stigma typical of the last imperial dynasties. In addition, some childless elite women adopted children of their husbands' concubines or lesser wives and attained great power in this way. This was not the common or safest method of advancement for a woman, but it was done. In addition, women served functions other than childbearing. One Shang queen led several successful military campaigns, several advised on the significance of divinations, and in the Han dynasty at least one woman scholar spent most of her life teaching and writing history as an imperial official. These particular women did have children (and presumably child care), and an independent economic existence for an unmarried woman was still an extreme rarity, if it occurred at all. So it is important to remember that the childless woman in this hexagram is a symbol, just as the migrating goose is, not a reference to a particular childless woman in our modern world. Thus this image could represent a trainee in a company or a student in a school, an executive seeking to prove herself with demonstrable bottom line success. In all these cases, there are needed spots for respites from the struggle for progress. And in all these cases, the best sort of person seeks a home both for herself and her most worthwhile qualities and for others of worth and virtue, as a means of being part of a general

progress towards a better society. Even as we are in transit, we should try to move toward these goals wherever we alight, even if only for a while.

Shaughnessy, 156–157, 319–320.

Lynn, 473–479.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 204–208.