

7 shi/troops



*Augury auspicious for a great man.*  
NO MISFORTUNE.

Base (6): The troops move off to battle bound,  
encouraged by the pitchpipes' sound.

*Not good.*  
DISASTROUS.

(9) 2: Being among the troops.

AUSPICIOUS.  
NO MISFORTUNE.

*The king gives orders several times.*

(6) 3: Some of the troops  
will cart the corpse.

DISASTROUS.

(6) 4: Encamped the troops stay  
to the left hand away.

NO MISFORTUNE.

(6) 5: *There will be game for the hunt.*

*Favourable for interrogating captives.*  
NO MISFORTUNE.

'An elder son commands the troops,  
a younger son will cart the corpse.'

Augury of DISASTER.

Top (6): A great prince has a mandate  
to found a state and a lineage.

*Not for use with small men.*

(7) **troops**

(Hexagram statement) *Zhangren* as written in the text means ‘elder’, rather than the expected ‘great man’. Several commentators have thought *zhang* was a mistake for *da* ‘great’. The two characters are almost the same. See Diagram 14.

(Base) *Yi lü*, in this oracle, may mean ‘in ordered ranks’, or it may mean ‘with pitchpipes’. Wen Yiduo favoured the pitchpipes, which were used to convey signals and to encourage the soldiers, much as trumpets were in western warfare, though we do not know much

about their use at the time of the battle described here. The indication seems to imply that if there is anything wrong with the music of the pitchpipes when an army sets out, that is a bad omen for the battle. (W39)

Gao (G180) takes the whole sentence to mean 'An army must set off in good order, or, even if it is strong, there will be a disaster.'

(2) Gao says the orders were rewards and promotions.

(3 and 5) Carting or carrying corpses could mean clearing the field at the end of a battle, but the expression used here also appears in *Chuci* (poems probably written in the 4th century BC) where it is said that at the battle of Mu, where the Zhou army finally defeated Shang, King Wu had the corpse of King Wen (his father and the forefather of the Zhou dynasty; see page 6) borne into the battle. Some commentators have thought that it was not the corpse, but the spirit tablet that was carried (W584; H55).

(4) The left hand may mean the east, or the left bank of a river.

(5) There was a custom of conducting a hunt after victory in battle. Otherwise there may be reference here to collecting prisoners and cutting off ears. W16 and 590 are relevant.

Prisoners due to be executed were first interrogated in a semblance of judicial procedure or 'war trial' before they were sentenced. This is mentioned in Ode 168.6:

we have brought prisoners for questioning,  
caught the chieftains.

Also Ode 178.4:

Fangshu was in command.

He brought many prisoners for questioning.

*Tian* meaning 'hunt' is also used in 32:4, 40:2 and 57:4. Ode 180 gives a lively description of hunting on auspicious days for deer, boar and rhinoceros, with a subsequent banquet for guests. See also page 13 and the Note on Hexagram Statement 13 (page 307).

(Top) No doubt this oracle is a reference to the establishment of the Zhou dynasty after victory at the field of Mu.