

34



大壯

DÀ QIÁNG

# BIG USES FORCE

Big uses force.

It is favorable to continue.

A charging ram breaks out of its enclosure: The person symbolized has grown strong enough to break free of restrictions. This is “favorable,” but it is only the beginning of a movement toward real good fortune.<sup>1</sup>

## *Lines*

first line/9 — Wounded in the foot.  
Marching forth leads to misfortune.

Not yet strong enough to get free, he is wounded on his first step forward.

line two/9 — He is faithful.  
Keeping on brings good fortune.

As long as he continues to bear allegiance to his ruler, he may keep on. The ruler's strength will make up for the strength he lacks. Line two is the place of the faithful subject.<sup>2</sup>

line three/9 — A little man uses force  
And a lord entraps him.  
It is dangerous to keep on.  
The ram butts a fence  
and gets his horns caught.

The ram/little man is not strong enough to break free. He fails to get through the “fence” that separates a low or nearer place (the lower trigram) from a high or farther place (the upper trigram).

line four/9 ——— Keeping on brings good fortune,  
regrets pass away.  
The fence breaks, the ram gets free.  
He attacks at the spokes of a great carriage.

He breaks free by attacking at the right place and time. Line four is the place where one enters the upper trigram.

line five/6 — — He loses a sheep from his fields.  
No regrets.

For the shepherd, to lose an intractable ram is no great disaster. For the ram itself, the freedom is auspicious.<sup>3</sup>

top line/6 — — The ram butts a fence.  
He cannot pull back  
And he cannot go on.  
Unfavorable.  
Adversity and then good fortune.

His impulsiveness leads to a period of adversity, but one which will be followed by good fortune. This top line is associated with going too far. In it, the ram has apparently waited too long and is no longer strong enough to get free. The broken last line of the trigram Zhèn 震 Thunderbolt represents a weakening of the trigram’s strong initial impulse.

STRUCTURE 震 Zhèn Thunderbolt (rush forward, a burst of motion)

乾 Qián Strong Action (strong, active)

The hexagram looks like a ram: Its four solid lines ( ䷊ ) are the ram’s body, its two broken lines ( ䷋ ) are the ram’s horns. The ram is strong (lower trigram ䷊) and bursts forward (upper trigram ䷊), crossing over from the lower to the upper trigram, which is to say from inside to outside.

SEQUENCE The “piglet” of the previous and inverse hexagram TÚN (33) THE PIGLET was held in one place, where he grew stronger. Now he has grown strong enough to burst his bonds.

## Notes

1. DÀ QIÁNG — The transmitted text has 壯 *zhuàng* “strong.” Most commentators take the 壯 *zhuàng* that appears in the first line of this hexagram and in the first and third lines of JUÉ (43) FLIGHT to mean “wounded.” I follow Gao (1947) in reading those occurrences as 戕 *qiáng* “stab,” “wound,” but go farther than he does in reading the name of the hexagram as 戕 *qiáng*, as well.

2. “He is faithful.” (line two) — In the transmitted text, this comes at the end of the first line, not in line two. The earliest quotations from the *Changes* do not include the words “first line/9,” “line five/6,” etc., that divide the text into lines. It appears that when they were put in, some of them may have been put in the wrong places. For another example, see XIÈ (40) GETTING FREE, first line.

3. “loses a sheep” (line five) — Compare with the top line of Lǚ (56) THE WANDERER, where the wanderer suffers the greater disaster of losing an ox. The text has also been interpreted: “He loses a sheep in Youyi.” This refers to the story of the Shang ancestor King Hai, a story which has been reconstructed from various ancient references (Gu, 1931). King Hai ( 王亥 Wáng Hài) was probably a herdsman who crossed over with his sheep and oxen from his own land to the neighboring territory of Yǒuyì 有易. He lived there happily for several years until he made the mistake of committing a serious crime, perhaps adultery with one of the ruler’s women. His herds were confiscated and he was put to death. He gained his royal title only much later, when his descendants founded the Shang Dynasty.