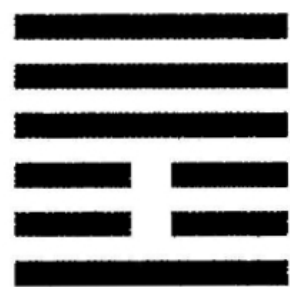


25

# 无妄



(wú wàng) Not False

If you are without falsity, then your persistence will be effective. But if someone is not as they should be, you will have disasters. If you have a goal, it will not prosper.

- Nine in the first place: If you can proceed without falsity, you will have good fortune.
- Six in the second place: If you reap without plowing, or plant without preparing the earth, then you ought to have somewhere else to go.
- Six in the third place: An unexpected calamity. Since someone has tethered the ox. A traveler's gain; a city dweller's disaster.
- Nine in the fourth place: If you can persist, no blame.
- Nine in the fifth place: An unexpected illness: yet without medicine there will be joy.

- **Nine at the top:** When the unexpected prevails, there are disasters. Nothing done under these circumstances will prosper.

### Image

Everywhere under the sky, thunder rolls: the image of all beings with the unexpected. Thus the rulers of the past brought prosperity by a timely nurturing of all things.

All things have their seasons, the appropriate times for each to grow, mature, and decline. Wise rulers and managers observe these seasons and work within them, nurturing, weeding, and pruning only at the seasons when these actions are appropriate. For example, pruning is best done in late autumn or winter, when it is least likely to do harm to the health of the tree or shrub. Water is best given when it is most needed, and for some plants need be applied to roots only. Timeliness in actions requires knowledge of the growth cycles of each type of plant, animal, or person. Yet this preparatory knowledge, constantly refined, repays the investment by leading to an unforced long-term flourishing impossible in any other way.

There are times, however, when the world is filled with unexpected events as startling as the crashes of thunder. This hexagram describes such a time. When thunder rolls, animals and humans instinctively stop whatever they are doing. We consider seeking shelter for the duration of the storm. Often we recognize that we are safer where we are than we would be going somewhere else.

In this hexagram thunder is not paired with lightning, so perhaps actual life-threatening danger is not present, only a signal that a change may be coming. While the thunder rolls, it is timely to pause to see what comes next: a downpour and a possible flood,

a gentle rain ideal for nurturing new plants, or even continuing drought. Since we do not know yet what the thunder implies, we cannot start any project wisely. To act at a time of such uncertainty is to invite disaster. Yet we should remember that in early China thunder was a welcome sign of possible rain, a scarce resource essential to continuing life.

Shaughnessy, 50–51, 291.

Lynn, 293–298.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 100–103.