



未濟

Wei ji [Ferrying Incomplete]
(*Kan* Below *Li* Above)

Judgment

Ferrying Incomplete is such that prevalence may be had. The young fox uses dry conditions to ferry itself across, but it still gets its tail wet. There is nothing at all fitting here.

COMMENTARY ON THE JUDGMENTS

“Ferrying Incomplete is such that prevalence may be had,” that is, if the soft and weak achieves centrality [i.e., can practice the Mean]. {As the soft and weak [Fifth Yin] abides in centrality, it does not oppose itself to the hard and strong [Second Yang]. It draws upon the strength of the hard and strong and thereby achieves prevalence.²} “The young fox uses dry conditions to ferry itself across,” but does not come farther out than the middle. {The young fox is incapable of crossing a large stream, so it must have dry conditions³ before it is able to cross it. Here one is at a time of Ferrying Incomplete, so one must have access to the strength of the hard and strong—which can extract one from danger and trouble—before one is able to cross it [danger and trouble]. With dry conditions, it may be possible to ferry oneself across, but one is never able to escape from the midst of such danger.} “It still gets its tail wet,” and “there is nothing at all fitting here,” for such a one cannot carry on to the end. {Although the young fox is able to cross, it has no surplus strength, so when it tries to cross, it gets its tail wet. It exhausts its strength in this attempt and is unable to carry on to the end. That is, this one still lacks the wherewithal to ferry himself across such danger and trouble. One who can ferry himself across a time of Ferrying Incomplete must have surplus strength.} Although they are not in their rightful positions, the hard and strong and the soft and weak all form resonate relationships. {It is because the lines are all out of position that Ferrying Incomplete

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occurs. However, the hard and strong and the soft and weak all form resonate relationships, thus Ferrying becomes possible.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

Fire positioned above Water: this constitutes the image of Ferrying Complete.⁴ In the same way, the noble man carefully distinguishes among things and situates them in their correct places. {"Distinguishes among things and situates them in their correct places" means that he has each thing find the place that is right for it.⁵}

PROVIDING THE SEQUENCE OF THE HEXAGRAMS

Creatures [the masses, "subjects"] must never be hard-pressed. This is why *Jiji* [Ferrying Complete, Hexagram 63] is followed by *Weiji* [Ferrying Incomplete], with which the hexagrams come to an end.

THE HEXAGRAMS IN IRREGULAR ORDER

Weiji [Ferrying Incomplete] signifies man hard-pressed.

First Yin

This one gets his tail wet, which means humiliation. {First Yin is located at the beginning of Ferrying Incomplete, abiding at the very bottom of danger [*Kan* (Sink Hole)], and represents one who thus cannot ferry himself across. However, this one desires to go to his resonate partner [Fourth Yang], so when it tries to advance, it gets its body soaked. Ferrying Incomplete begins in such a way that it starts where Ferrying Complete [Hexagram 63] leaves off with Top Yin, which, though it gets its head wet, will not turn back. Here it [Top Yin of Ferrying Complete now become First Yin of Ferrying Incomplete] goes so far as to get its tail wet. It represents someone who does not know that he has reached his own limits. However, as a yin that occupies this lowly position, First Yin is not one to advance to the point of overreaching but merely tries to fulfill its innate sense of purpose [in joining with Fourth Yang]. When such a one encounters difficulty, it is capable of turning back. This is why the text does not say "misfortune." One at First Yin finds the scope of his actions already determined, yet he only turns back when he

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encounters the inevitable difficulties involved. This is indeed the height of stupid obstinacy! Thus the text says "humiliation."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"This one gets his tail wet," for he does not know that he has reached his limits.

Second Yang

This one drags his wheels. Such constancy means good fortune. {The character of Second Yang is hard and strong, and it treads the middle path [practices the Mean]. Moreover, it is in a resonate relationship with Fifth Yin. Although the character of Fifth Yin is yin and weak, Second Yang identifies its interests with Fifth Yin and does not try to usurp responsibilities on its own. Here at this time of Ferrying Incomplete such a one finds himself in the midst of danger and difficulty. Imbued with strength and centrality, he is invested with responsibilities. As such, Second Yang represents someone who can rescue the times from danger and difficulty, someone who can put things in order and make them go smoothly again. One may use strength to save the world from trouble, but the way to deal with that trouble lies in rectifying things while at the same time avoiding any violation of the Mean. This is why the text says: "This one drags his wheels. Such constancy means good fortune."⁶}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

That the constancy of Second Yang results in good fortune is because he adheres to the Mean in carrying out the rectification of things.

Third Yin

Ferrying Incomplete is such that to set out to do something here would mean misfortune, but it is fitting to cross the great river. {Because of its yin character and because it is out of its rightful place [it is a yin line in a yang position] and so abiding in danger, Third Yin cannot ferry itself across. If such a one, with his incorrect character and lacking sufficient strength to ferry himself across, were

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to try to advance here, he would lose his life. Thus the text says: "To set out to do something here would mean misfortune." However, Second Yang can save others from danger and difficulty, so one at Third Yin pairs up with Second Yang, discards his own chances, and entrusts himself to Second Yang. If he rides atop Second Yang in this way, how could he ever drown? And why would he ever find Ferrying Incomplete a source of grief? Thus the text says: "It is fitting to cross the great river."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"Ferrying Incomplete is such that to set out to do something here would mean misfortune," for this one is not in his rightful position.

Fourth Yang

Constancy results in good fortune, and thus regret vanishes. As a burst of thunder, this one attacks the Demon Territory,⁷ for which after three years he is rewarded with a large state. {Fourth Yang may find itself at a time of Ferrying Incomplete, but one here has emerged out of danger and difficulty [i.e., he is out of the Kan (Sink Hole) trigram] and abides at the beginning of civility and enlightenment [the *Li* (Cohesion) trigram, representing fire, brightness, intelligence, etc.]. This one embodies hardness and strength and, as such, draws near to the exalted one [Fifth Yin, the ruler of the hexagram]. Although where he treads is not his rightful position [it is a yang line in a yin position], his will is fixed on righteousness, and this is why "constancy results in good fortune, and thus regret [at being in the wrong position] vanishes." Here one's will can be realized, for no one withstands his use of martial force. Thus the text says: "As a burst of thunder, this one attacks the Demon Territory." This attack on the Demon Territory is a campaign that determines whether the realm rises or falls. Thus each time the realm reaches such a life or death crisis, such a one should choose this course as the right thing to do. Fourth Yang is located at the beginning of civility and enlightenment and has just begun to emerge from danger and difficulty, thus his virtue has not yet reached the peak of its powers. Thus the text says "after three years" [i.e., the conquest takes three years, after which he gets his reward]. Fifth Yin occupies the exalted position with softness and weakness and in character

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embodies the height of civility and enlightenment, so one here does not grab credit for the achievements of others. Thus he rewards Fourth Yang with a large state.}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"Constancy results in good fortune, and thus regret vanishes," for this one's will is realized.

Fifth Yin

Constancy results in good fortune, and thus this one avoids regret. The glory of the noble man is due to the sincerity he has, which brings good fortune. {Fifth Yin occupies the exalted position with softness and weakness and is located at the height of civility and enlightenment, for this is the ruler of the Ferrying Incomplete hexagram. Thus it is that this one must behave with rectitude, for only then should he have good fortune. And only with such good fortune should he manage to avoid regret. Thanks to his character, which consists of softness and compliance, civility and enlightenment, this one occupies the exalted position in such a way that he entrusts responsibility to the capable and does not attempt to take charge of everything himself. He tempers military action with his civil virtues and modifies hardness and strength with his tenderness, all of which truly represents "the glory of the noble man." Such a one entrusts responsibility to another because of his ability and does not harbor suspicions about him. Thus that other [Fourth Yang] exerts himself to the utmost and achieves meritorious success in the conquest [over the Demon Territory, i.e., the world's troubles]. Thus the text says: "The sincerity he has . . . brings good fortune."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

"The glory of the noble man" casts such light that it brings good fortune.

Top Yang

This one has confidence and so engages in drinking wine, about which there is no blame, but he might get his head wet, for this

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one with his confidence could do violence to what is right. {Here at the very end of Ferrying Incomplete there is about to be a return to Ferrying Complete [Hexagram 63]. The Dao of Ferrying Complete is such that positions are filled only with people proper to them. As positions are to be filled then only with people proper to them, this one can have confidence in his own chances without the least doubt. Thus he can take his ease here [and wait for the times to change]. This is why the text says: "This one has confidence and so engages in drinking wine, about which there is no blame." As one at Top Yang can place his trust in others, he manages to achieve a happy, carefree state of mind and does not grieve about the way things decline. However, he may not grieve about the way things decline, but if he were to overindulge himself in the pursuit of pleasure, he would eventually come to violate the rules of propriety, that is, through having too much confidence, he would do violence to what is right. Thus the text says: "He might get his head wet [i.e., fall into the world's troubles], for this one with his confidence could do violence to what is right."}

COMMENTARY ON THE IMAGES

If this one were to get his head wet because of drinking wine, it would be because he does not know enough to keep to the rules of propriety.

NOTES

1. See Hexagram 63, *Jiji* (Ferrying Complete), note 1.
2. This and all subsequent text set off in this manner is commentary by Wang Bi.
3. "Dry conditions" translates *qi*. Cheng Yi glosses *qi* as *yi* (standing upright, i.e., bold and brave), that is, the young fox lacks the caution of a mature fox, so it dares to cross a stream that it should not—and so comes to grief. Cheng adds that prevalence can be had here at a time of Ferrying Incomplete only if one exercises appropriate caution. Zhu Xi differs from both Wang Bi and Cheng Yi and glosses *qi* as *ji* (almost), so his reading of the text seems to be: "The young fox almost manages to ferry itself across but gets its tail wet...." See *Zhouyi zhezhong*, 8: 42b–43a and 10: 49b.
4. The lower trigram is *Kan* (Sink Hole), signifying Water, and the upper trigram is *Li* (Cohesion), signifying Fire.

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5. Kong Yingda comments:

When Fire is above Water, it cannot be used to cook food and so ferry creatures [succor them]. . . . The noble man observes a time of Ferrying Incomplete, when the hard and strong and the soft and weak are all out of their proper positions, and, using the virtue of caution, carefully distinguishes among all creatures [subjects] and has each one take its [his] proper place. This allows them all to make their positions secure. In so doing, he achieves ferrying [saves the world].

See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 6: 24a.

6. Kong Yingda says that “drags his wheels” refers to “his struggle against difficulty,” i.e., his sincere devotion to the sovereign and to the fulfillment of his duty to save the world. See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 6: 24b.

7. For an explanation of “Demon Territory,” see Hexagram 63, *Jiji* (Ferrying Complete), Third Yang, and note 9 there.