

55



FĒNG

# ABUNDANCE

Abundance.

Blessed.

A king calls down blessings.

Do not grieve.

It is good to be in the light of the noon sun.

One enters the service of a shining king, who calls down the blessings of his ancestors upon his subjects. His abundant wealth and power allow him to look after his subjects and to provide them with opportunities to display their talents.<sup>1</sup>

## *Lines*

first line/9 ——— He meets his true lord.  
There will be a week without harm.  
Going forward, he will rise.

This lowest line shows someone in a low position entering into an association that will bring him a period of safety and allow him to rise. The “week” referred to is the ancient ten-day week.<sup>2</sup>

line two/6 — — So great a canopy  
That a lamp can be seen at noon.  
Going forward, he is met with suspicion,  
But expressing allegiance brings good fortune.

The king provides such shelter that even the little subject’s weak light can be seen. At first those around the king are suspicious of the

newcomer, but his clear declaration of allegiance wins their acceptance.<sup>3, 4</sup>

line three/9 — So many banners  
That there is darkness at noon.  
Though his right arm is broken,  
He comes to no harm.

The canopy's welcome shade becomes the oppressive darkness of a host of battle flags. He does not join the ruler freely, but is made to join him by force. The harm he suffers is not permanent, but while his right arm is broken he is unable to serve the ruler properly and rise in his service.<sup>3, 5</sup>

line four/9 — So great a canopy  
That a lamp can be seen at noon.  
He meets his true lord.  
Auspicious.

The powerful lord provides a shelter under which his subjects can display their talents. Line four is the place of the officer. As the first line of the upper trigram, it represents entry into high position.<sup>3, 4</sup>

line five/6 — — His inner brilliance  
Wins honor and praise.  
Auspicious.

The subject's talents are recognized and rewarded by his ruler. Line five is the place of the ruler. The passive line (— —) suggests the ruler's acceptance of his subject.

top line/6 — — Enormous palace,  
Shaded home.  
Peek in at the gate—  
It is silent, unpeopled.  
No one is seen there for three years.

This is the only line in which the king's palace is a really inauspicious place. The week of safety promised in the first line comes to an end. The strength of the upper trigram Zhèn ䷲ Thunderbolt peters out in this second weak line. Since the top line of a hexagram often involves conflict, perhaps the palace's inhabitants have gone to war.<sup>3</sup>

STRUCTURE    ䷲ 震 Zhèn      Thunderbolt (rush forward)  
                  ䷴ 離 Luó      Shining Light (shining, shone upon)

The bright lower trigram represents someone both brilliant in his own right and shone upon by a ruler who is like the sun. He rushes forward into high position (upper trigram ䷲).

SEQUENCE      This hexagram is paired with its inverse Lǚ (56) THE WANDERER. In ABUNDANCE, the protagonist finds his “true lord” right away. In THE WANDERER, he is forced to wander on until he finds him.

### Notes

1. “Do not grieve.” (opening text) — I am not certain what one is not to grieve over. Perhaps it is the possibility that this good fortune will not last. More likely it is the demise of one’s previous ruler.

2. “a week without harm” (first line) — Shang Dynasty oracle bone divination records indicate that the Shang kings divined the auspiciousness of each week on the last day of the one before it. The phrase used here is very similar to that used in the oracle bone inscriptions. This suggests either an early Zhou (or earlier) date for this hexagram or else the carryover of Shang divination traditions into Zhou.

3. ABUNDANCE, “great” (lines two and four), “many” (line three), “enormous” (top line) — All these translate the same word 豐 *fēng*.

4. “lamp” (lines two and four) — The transmitted text has 斗 *dǒu* “dipper,” referring to the constellation. One Han Dynasty version of the text has 主, which Gao (1947) says should be read *zhǔ* “wick,” “lamp.” This would have been an oil lamp or tallow candle.

5. “darkness” (line three) — The transmitted text has 沫 *mèi* “weak light,” which most traditional commentators say refers to the minor stars of the dipper (see note 2). Several ancient versions of the text have 昧 *mèi* “dim,” “dark,” which is the reading I use here.