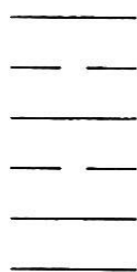


kui/espy 38



Auspicious for small matters.

Base (9): *Troubles disappear.*

Losing horses.

*Don't follow their track:
they'll soon come back.*

Seeing a disfigured man.

NO MISFORTUNE.

(9) 2: Meeting the master in an alley.

NO MISFORTUNE.

(6) 3: See: here comes a wagon drawn
by an ox with a crumpled horn.
The branded carter's nose is torn.

No beginning. There will be an end.

(9) 4: The Fox espy;
meet a footless guy.

Crosswise-moving captives. DANGEROUS.
NO MISFORTUNE.

(6) 5: *Troubles disappear.*

The ancestors are eating meat.

In travelling, what misfortune can there be?

Top (9): The fox espy.

See muddy pigs come nigh,
a car of ghosts pass by.

First drawing the bow with eager eye,
he lets it slacken and lays it by.

*(Not with raiders allied,
but fetching a bride.)*

Going, meet a rainy sky . . . then AUSPICIOUS.

(38) **espy**

Edward Shaughnessy, acting on a suggestion from Wen Yiduo, suggests, plausibly, that the line statements are about astronomical omens in the stars of the lunar mansion Yugui, which was thought to preside over executions and other dire fates. (S211–20; W48–50.) See the notes on Lines base, 3 and top. Ode 203.5–6 has a similar catalogue of constellations, including the Ox mentioned in Line 3.

The first four oracles describe chance meetings or sightings treated as omens.

The verb ‘meeting’ also occurs in the top line, where the constellations may be linked in as another kind of sighting omens. Five of the six are sighting omens. It is likely that juridically maimed men, mentioned in these oracles, were not uncommon in Western Zhou.

(Tag) Waley (A138) points out that the tag *kui* (**gwjed*), which is a rough pun on *gui* (**kwjed*), the ‘ghosts’ in the top line, means observation of omens, in this case specifically omens for *gui* (**kwjed*), the last day of the ten-day week. In Shang at least, divinations were regularly performed on that day. *Gui* was also the name of the enemies of Shang and Zhou mentioned in 63:3. Waley’s whole treatment of the hexagram seems over-ingenious, perhaps because he did not identify the constellation names in the top line; but he may be right about the last day of the ten-day week.

(Base) The lost horse may refer to Tianma ‘Heavenly Horse’, a constellation north of the Heavenly Swine mansion that rose at the same time as Yugui, the Ghost Cart. (For these asterisms, see the note for the top line.) The ‘Heavenly Horse’ was invisible at regular intervals, and so might be described as lost and found again.

Lost horses also figure in Ode 31.3, a song of a soldier who had been long delayed by the loss of horses, and came home to find his wife had given up hope of his return and remarried. Lost horses were probably a common image of distress:

There we lived, there we stayed,
there we lost the horses,
and found them again
in the woods below.

The disfigured man may have been mutilated as a punishment: the implication is that there is no bad luck in seeing such a man.

(2) The omen appears to lie in meeting an important person in an unlikely place.

(3) Niu ‘The Ox’ or Qianniu ‘Man Leading an Ox’ or ‘Led Ox’ is the lunar mansion diametrically opposite Yugui (see the top line). This Ox sets just as a star in Yugui called the ‘Cart’ is rising, so that the Ox might said to be pulling the Cart. Yugui was also called Tiansong ‘Heavenly Punisher’ and presided over punishments and executions.

Tian 'branded' may mean black-branded or tattooed, but may be a copyist's error for the similar character *er* 'shaven-headed' (Z *yingji* 21: see Diagram 12). Wen Yiduo thought it could be an error for *wu* 'cutting off the feet'. (See Diagram 14.) All three interpretations suggest the man has been juridically punished. Since there is no evidence about a legal code in early Zhou, the matter cannot be confirmed.

(4) The received text has *yu yuan fu* 'meet the original husband'. Wen Yiduo believed *yuan* 'original' was an error for *wu* 'cutting off the feet' (W38). This too would imply a punishment. The phrase rhymes with 'The Fox espy', which recurs in the top line, where it rhymes with other oracles. 'The Fox espy' may have been repeated by mistake. The text has *gu* 'orphan', which is taken as a miscopying for *hu* 'fox' (see Diagram 13). The Fox may mean Sirius, the Dog Star.

Gao Heng (G271), taking 'orphan' at face value and *yuan* as 'great', relates this to the Xia story mentioned in note 5:4. Shaokang, the posthumously born prince in that tale, was an orphan.

For 'crosswise' see note 14:base.

(Top) In this line statement, omens about constellations are mingled with indications. All six verses have the same rhyme, but the couplet about an archer may be a later insertion.

Yugui 'Carting Ghosts' is a lunar mansion containing the constellation western astronomy calls Cancer. South of this, in Canis Major and Puppis, is a bow and arrow, pointed at the star Sirius, which may be what is meant by the Fox. Tianshi 'Heavenly Swine' (otherwise known as Kui) is another lunar mansion, connected with rain. The Heavenly Swine constellation appeared in early autumn, when pigs were let loose in the muddy stubble, after the harvest. This may explain the oracle about pigs in mud. (For the connection of pigs with rain omens see also the notes for Hexagram 33.) A mythical archer, the Great Yi, was described in *Chuci* as shooting at both swine and fox. (H 50 and 27)

'Meet a rainy sky' should probably be understood as 'If rain is met on the way': an omen for the auspicious prognostication.

The couplet about bride-snatching has its own rhyme, different from the other rhyme in this statement, and seems out of place here, unless bride-snatching was an autumn activity, seasonally related to the constellations mentioned. The same formula appears in 3:2 and 22:4, where its relevance is easier to recognize. See Note 22:4.