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# 歸妹 ䷵

(guī mèi) Coming Home

A woman enters her marital home. Starting a campaign: misfortune. Not leaving is effective.

- Nine in the first place: A woman comes to her new family as though a younger sister. The lame can walk. With such a start, good fortune.
- Nine in the second place: The one-eyed can see. For a person in the shadows, persistence is effective.
- Six in the third place: Coming home as though low in rank [literally, a concubine]. Return for a maiden marrying as though a younger sister.
- Nine in the fourth place: The marriage is postponed. The delay is timely.
- Six in the fifth place: Lord Yi sent a maiden [his daughter?] in marriage, with lordly sleeves less impressive than those of a younger sister. After several months, hope for good fortune.

- **Six at the top:** A woman holds a basket without fruit. A man stabs a sheep, but no blood. Not acting is effective.

### Image

Thunder over the lake: the image of a woman coming home. Thus you should understand things that wear out in the context of the eternity of the soul.

Thunder sounds dangerous, but it presages the arrival of the rain bringing the water essential to the life of the lake. When the thunder brings the rain, the lake will be filled, most fully itself.

The hexagram describes the moment when a newly married bride reaches the home where she will belong for the rest of her life. While this should be the most joyous and auspicious moment of her life, such a moment also arouses justifiable fears, since her future will depend on the relationships she builds with two complete strangers: her husband and her mother-in-law.

For the mother of the groom, this may be the first time she has outranked anyone in the household, and finally has made the transition out of the effective servitude of a new bride herself. Since she has mothered an adult son, she cannot be divorced. Even if her husband's eyes (and heart) wander, any woman he chooses will be only a concubine, never the legal wife and controller of the household, which she has become.

For many older women in families without servants, their son's bride was the first subordinate they had ever had. It was all too common for the older woman to remember her own ill-treatment at the hands of her mother-in-law and the decades of silently endured suffering, and to inflict the remembered pain on the new bride. The bride had no legal recourse if she was mistreated. And on her arrival, she had no allies within the household.

This signifies the beginning of what may be a fulfilled and fulfilling life, which gives her a home, food and security for the rest of her life. But this is usually her only chance at success as a woman, so the fears at first may seem even greater than her hopes. Like hexagram 53, this applies not only to a bride, but to a new career, undertaking, or phase.

Shaughnessy, 94–95, 302–303.

Lynn, 480–487.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 208–212.