



# ESTRANGEMENT

Estrangement.

It is auspicious to do only small things.

A subject becomes estranged from his ruler, like a wife from her husband. Even if he leaves his ruler, he must do the “small thing” of subordinating himself to a new one. He is not strong enough to remain long on his own.<sup>1</sup>

## *Lines*

first line/9 ——— Regrets will pass.  
 The runaway horse will come back on its own.  
 Do not chase it.  
 It will see someone horrible and return.  
 No harm.

The estranged subject discovers the dangers of leaving this ruler. This first line comes too early in the hexagram for a successful escape to be possible. The person whom it represents is still too weak.

line two/9 ——— He meets his ruler in the lane.  
 No harm.

The estranged subject decides to leave his ruler, but comes upon him just as he is leaving and they are reconciled. Line two is the place of the loyal subject, within the inner trigram.

line three/6 — — He sees a carriage drag in the mud,  
 its oxen taken in hand,

its men mutilated.  
This bad beginning brings a good end.

The good end is that he is frightened into staying where he is. He takes a warning from others who try to leave and are caught and punished for rebellion. The two words translated “mutilated” (天 *tiān* and 劓 *yì*) refer respectively to the punishments of cutting off the nose and carving a mark into the forehead.

line four/9 ——— Estranged and alone, he meets a great man.  
He gives his allegiance  
and danger passes without harm.

The estranged subject leaves his ruler then meets a greater one, whom he wisely joins. Because line four is the first line of the outer trigram, it is the place where he breaks free into the outer world.

line five/6 — — — Regrets will pass.  
In that clan’s temple, they eat meat.  
What harm could come from going there?

The estranged subject becomes the retainer of a great clan, one wealthy enough to serve large amounts of meat at its offering feasts. When important sacrifices were offered in ancient China, most of the food prepared for the offering was actually eaten in a great feast by the lord and his retainers. Line five is the place of the ruler.

top line/9 ——— Estranged and alone, he sees a pig covered in mud:  
A carriage full of men of Gui.  
First he draws his bow, then he puts it by:  
Not plunder but marriage.  
Going forward, one encounters rain  
and then good fortune.

The estranged subject meets a band of his erstwhile ruler’s enemies. At first he feels revulsion and hatred but then realizes that they can be friends and the moment of danger passes. The top line of a hexagram often speaks of conflict.<sup>2</sup>

STRUCTURE ䷡ 離 Luó Shining Light (shone upon, within)  
䷡ 兌 Duì Stand Straight (break free, step forward)

A subject stands up and breaks free (lower trigram ䷡ ) from his

ruler, then enters the sphere of a new lord's radiance (upper trigram ☰ ).

**SEQUENCE** The protagonist of the previous and inverse hexagram JIĀ RÉN (37) THE HOUSEHOLD accepted the restrictions placed on him and remained a loyal member of his ruler's household. The protagonist of ESTRANGEMENT is more frustrated by these restrictions and leaves his ruler.

## Notes

1. ESTRANGEMENT — The word 睽 *kuí* "estrangement" originally referred to having eyes that look in different directions. When a subject becomes estranged from his ruler, he begins to look in another direction.

2. "men of Gui" (top line) — Guǐ 鬼 was a principality near the Zhou homeland in western China. When the Zhou were vassals of Shang, they fought and conquered Gui, making it a part of the Shang empire. See JÌ JÌ (63) ALREADY ACROSS, line three, and WÈI JÌ (64) NOT YET ACROSS, line four. Later, when Zhou led a rebellion against Shang, the men of Gui became allies of Zhou. The modern character 鬼 *guǐ* also means "ghost" or "demon."