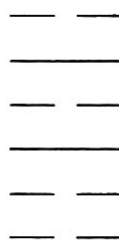


## 39 jian/stumbling



*Favourable west and south,  
unfavourable east and north.  
Favourable for seeing great men.  
Augury AUSPICIOUS.*

Base (6): Setting out stumbling, coming back renowned.

(6) 2: Royal servants stumbling  
and fumbling.

*Not because of their bodies.*

(9) 3: Setting out stumbling,  
coming back grumbling.

(6) 4: Setting out stumbling,  
coming back rumbling.

(9) 5: Severe stumbling.

*Friends come along.*

Top (6): Setting off stumbling, coming back in splendour.

AUSPICIOUS.

*Favourable for seeing great men.*

**(39) stumbling**

This hexagram is singularly short of prognostications.

(Tag) Most translators render the tag as 'obstruction' or 'trouble'. Legge pointed out that it meant 'incompetency in the feet and legs, involving difficulty in walking'. Waley (A123) notes that stumbling is widely thought of as an omen, either good or bad. This is still true in East Asia. Gao (G273), however, interpreted it as 'admonishing', so that the five oracles containing it had a regular pattern, admonishing and receiving: Base 'praise'; 3 'objections'; 4 'excuses'; 5 'a gift of cowries – or a friend'; and Top 'trust'. The second oracle then becomes non-thematic.

(Base) The return is described with *yu*, a character that now usually means 'honour'. Wen Yiduo gives reasons for regarding it as a loan for *yu* meaning 'slowly' or 'at ease'. (W26)

(2) 'Royal servants': alternatively, 'King and servants'.

(3) Gao gives reasons from the Book of Documents (Section Dagao 7) for his translation as 'grumbling' or 'objections'. Kunst says 'coming back wobbling.'

(4) 'Rumbling': literally 'in a wheeled vehicle'.

(5) The friends may be presumed to help the stumbling man.