

7 師 ䷆

(shī) With a Multitude of Followers

The army [or multitude] persists. With a forceful commander, no blame.

- Six in the first place: The army moves out in cadence [in step with one another, to the beating of the drums marshalling them]. They are not slaves: disaster.
- Nine in the second place: In the center of the multitude lies good fortune without blame. The ruler issues directives three times.
- Six in the third place: The army has wagons full of corpses. Disaster.
- Six in the fourth place: The multitude camps on the left without blame.
- Six in the fifth place: When your crop fields are full of game, shooting them is effective and blameless. [However,] if the elder son leads the troops into battle so that the younger son

must take charge of carts full of the dead, persevering brings disaster.

- **Six at the top:** A great leader has directives to open up sub-kingdoms and nourish families. But a petty man does not.

Image

The earth holds water within itself: the image of an army of followers. You should cherish and support the people entrusted to you.

'This is the opposite of the preceding hexagram, contention, a time when there is so much squabbling and litigation that even apparent victories result in multiple losses. In this situation, there is unity among a multitude numerous enough and united enough in aims and in mutual trust to be able to take major effective actions. It is only with a vast multitude of followers and with full unity among them that effective political action is possible. For this reason, King Wu delayed his conquest of the Shang until he knew that his forces were fully sufficient. Even then, the Shang army was many times larger than his. But cruel and unpredictable Shang tyrants had made loyalty to them so costly by this time that the outnumbered Zhou forces triumphed. Still the memory of being outnumbered must have haunted later Zhou leaders and led to the comments here.

Shaughnessy, 110–111, 305–306.

Lynn, 177–183.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 31–35.