



23 Stripping Bo

Strip away old ideas, eliminate what is outmoded or worn out;
first burial, 'stripping the corpse', site of creative
transformation; a seed figure.

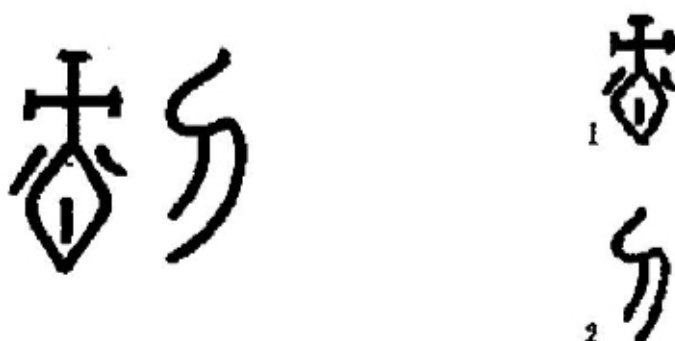
MYTHS FOR CHANGE: THE STORY OF THE TIME

Charge to the Oracle: *When you beautify things, the obligations of the old come to an end. Strip the corpse. Accept this and use the energy of Stripping. This means someone who strips away the old.*

The root of Stripping is knife. It represents stripping off skin and flesh, slicing into the body and revealing the bones, uncovering the meats offered in sacrifice. There is deprivation and loss of direction and focus, imaged as a period of time spent in the grave. The outmoded and decadent spirit is displaced in preparation for the return of the new. Literally, Stripping represents the first burial or exposure of the corpse to animals and elements, when the flesh is rotted and stripped away. During this period the soul would be fed and guided in the underworld, a job for the *wu*-Intermediaries that is not to be confused with an exorcism or driving out a negative influence. The bones were then gathered or disinterred, rubbed with red ochre and put into a vase or urn that served as the spirit-home, the equivalent of the spirit tablet in the Ancestral Temple. At this point, the soul would be ready to return, to re-enter the human community and, through the image, the spirit could begin to act as a guide, mediator and benefactor. The exposure is prepared by stripping the corpse of its clothing, changing the bed-mat and laying it out on a 'water-bed' made of three planks. The ceremony would also include talking to the newly deceased spirit, persuading it to return to the body and the tomb rather than exorcising it as a bad influence. The palace women referred to in the lines may be attendants on the Queen Mother of the West, Queen of the Dead, and the ripe fruit at the end an allusion to the achievements of a life truly lived. The character also suggests the knife used to carve the oracle bones, which had been stripped of flesh, to record the words of the spirit.

Stripping the corpse. Not advantageous to have a direction to go. **Harvesting.**

Strip, BO: flay, peel, skin, scrape away; remove, uncover, take off; reduce to essentials, diminish; prune trees, slaughter animals; deplume, deprive of, uncover, wound; divination through examining entrails or body. The old character shows an inscribed bone and the knife used by diviners to carve the characters that recorded the words of the spirit. It announces an oracle of change.



BO^{1.5} (9219/18) is made up of LÜ (1), which combines an inscribed oracle bone and the picture of a windlass or winch drawing water for irrigation. It is found carved in good luck charms and also suggests a wooded mountain slope for privileged hunting and heavenly blessing. It may also be a tree with chopped-off branches or a picture of a hanging sack, pierced by arrows, with drops falling from it. The other element (2) is a knife, which suggests divining by cutting away or cutting through.

Stripping describes your situation in terms of habits and ideas that are outmoded and worn out. The way to deal with it is to strip away what has become unusable. This brings renewal. Remove and uncover things. Cut into the problem and strip away the unessential without thought of immediate gain. If you can do that, then you can impose a direction on things or have a place to go.

THE SCHOLAR SPEAKS

The hexagram figure shows the end of a cycle and the preparation for the new. The mountain rests on the Earth. Be open to new ideas. Provide what is needed. Re-establish creative balance by stripping away outmoded embellishments. There is something rotten here. Take action. Give generously to what is below to stabilize your position. Stripping away the old implies someone to carry it out. You need a base. What is flexible and adaptable is transforming what is solid and firm, so it is not advantageous to

impose a direction on things. Those who adapt to what is coming will endure. Yield to the situation and stop what you have been doing. Concentrate on the symbolic value of things, their power to connect you with the world of the spirits. Use the oracle to stay in touch with the *Dao*. This is a time when old structure dissolves so new action can emerge. Fill the empty, fertile inner space to overflowing. Heaven is moving there.

THE SHAMAN SPEAKS

Mountain adjoins Earth. Stripping.

This is a time when Noble One acts as the person above, using munificence to quiet the people below.

Spirit words bind us and accomplish fate. Offer service at the Earth Altar. The Sacrificer is working with the Field. Mountain above limits and articulates what is complete to suggest what is beginning, while Earth below yields and sustains. This is the Earth Moment, stripping away the outworn products of the previous cycle. Noble One reflects this, giving care and concern freely to those below him. Offer sacrifice. A cycle is ending.

TRANSFORMING LINES: CHANGE AT WORK

INITIAL SIX

Stripping the corpse.

Change the bed, use the stand.

Ignoring the Trial: Trap! The Way closes.

This is not an exorcism.

This means what is below can disappear. You have to confront basic questions of support and intimacy, the place where you feel at home. It isn't working now. Strip the old away. Take a stand for change. This is important. If you simply ignore the message, the Way will close. Don't turn this into a ghost to be gotten rid of.

Direction: Take things in. Be open and provide what is needed.



SIX AT SECOND

Stripping the corpse.

Change the bed, mark things off.

Ignoring the Trial: Trap! The Way closes.

This is not an exorcism.

You do not have associates yet. You have to confront basic questions of support and intimacy, the place where you feel at home. It isn't working now. Strip away the old. Mark things off. Differentiate yourself from others. This is important. If you simply ignore the message, the Way will close. Don't turn this into a ghost to be gotten rid of.

Direction: Don't act out of ignorance. Wait and be sure. Something significant is returning. Be open and provide what is needed.

SIX AT THIRD

Stripping the corpse. Strip it away!

This is not a mistake.

This is letting go of both above and below. The time is now. Do it! Strip away the old. By taking decisive action you can renew yourself and your relations. This is not a mistake. Don't be sidetracked.

Direction: Articulate the limits. Release bound energy. The situation is already changing.

SIX AT FOURTH

Stripping the corpse.

Changing the bed, cutting close to the flesh.

Trap! The Way closes.

This is slicing close to calamity. You are getting carried away with the renovation of your life and are about to do serious harm. This is not what the time is about. Pull back, let go for now, or you may see yourself alone.

Direction: You will emerge and be recognized. Re-imagine the situation. Gather energy for a decisive new move.

SIX AT FIFTH

Stripping the corpse. Thread the fish by the gills.

You obtain the favour of the palace women.

Nothing not advantageous. Harvesting.

Complete this without being excessive. Pull things together now. A culmination is coming. There is profit and fertility hidden in the stream of events. The palace women confer their grace and favour. Use your connections and trust your imagination. Anything is possible. There is nothing that will not benefit from the connection you are making now.

Direction: Let things be seen. Strip away old ideas. Be open and provide what is needed.

NINE ABOVE

Stripping the corpse. A ripe fruit not eaten.

Noble One acquires a cart.

Small People merely strip their visage.

A place to carry the commoners. You are not allowed to end this. You have stripped away the outmoded and found the new. Now take in the fruits of your actions. Move on, carry it all away with you. Don't go back to your old ways. It would be like painting your house to avoid moving.

Direction: Be open and provide what is needed.