



## (pǐ) Obstruction (Stagnation)

Others, who are evil, are obstructing you. You should not persist: it will not work out. The great depart; the petty gain. This is a time of great losses and small gains. Do not persist in this direction.

- Six in the first place: When you pull up the rushes, they come up clumped together. If you persist, you will find good fortune and success.
- Six in the second place: While accepting orders, inferior people prosper; great people do not. Success.
- Six in the third place: Accept the sadness.
- Nine in the fourth place: Under orders, blameless. The many depend on each other, then prosper.
- Nine in the fifth place: The stagnation ends. For a great one, good fortune. Lost? Lost? Tie it to a clump of mulberry shoots.

- **Nine at the top:** The stagnation collapses. First blockage, later joy.

### Image

Earth and sky are out of alignment: the image of stagnation. You should restrain your own strength to escape difficulties. You cannot accept honors or a salary under these conditions.

Here such stasis goes against the natural process of unceasing change. Obstructing the flow of change is stultifying. Even if we feel comfortable, as we have been, we need to move out of accustomed places and towards one another if we are to be creative. If we are to grow, like plants we need to move toward our suns with the support of those growing around us.

Sky rests above earth, and fails to interact with it. When the strong rule the weak, separation leads to stagnation. While such a situation may seem stable, it is dangerous. Growth comes when weak and strong interact, and change continues.

When many obstacles bar your progress, this may be due to external conditions rather than your own strengths or weaknesses. When the time is out of joint, or malevolent people are in power, even natural forces cannot interact creatively. You must accept orders; you may not be able to refuse them. In such conditions, there is no shame in doing so until good actions have a greater probability of success. You may need to watch nasty people prosper and avoid involvement (as well as promotion and the admiration of others.) Remember that no condition, however harsh, lasts forever. Preserve yourself and your integrity as well as you can, lying low and living simply until the obstruction or stagnation ceases,

as it will eventually. This hexagram is unclear as to whether you should act to hasten the end of wrongdoings or simply wait until they dissolve of themselves. Different lines provide different advice, suggesting that even in times of stagnation, some moments are more propitious than others.

Shaughnessy, 40–41, 288.

Lynn, 211–215.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 52–55.