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謙

QIÀN

## MODESTY

Modesty.

Modesty is blessed.

The lord will achieve success.

He is strong enough to act boldly, but modesty and caution will lead to greater success.<sup>1</sup>

### *Lines*

first line/6 — — Modestly, modestly,  
The lord undertakes the crossing of a great river.  
Auspicious.

Modesty will bring success in a difficult undertaking. This line is doubly modest because it is both a weak line (— —) and the lowest line in the hexagram. It has to do with beginning something because it is the first line.

line two/6 — — His modesty is well known.  
It is auspicious for him to stay as he is.

Line two is the place of the subordinate.

line three/9 — — Modest despite his accomplishments,  
The lord will achieve success.  
Auspicious.

His achievements make modesty difficult, but modesty will make it possible for him to achieve even more. Line three is usually difficult or dangerous.

line four/6 — — He modestly gives the command.  
No longer unfavorable.

Line four is the entry into high position. It often involves movement after a delay.<sup>2</sup>

line five/6 — — Misfortunes descend on him from his neighbor.  
It is favorable to invade,  
No longer unfavorable.

A weak or immoral ruler is such a source of misfortune that the strong but modest subject is forced to invade and supplant him. Line five is the place of the ruler. Here both it (— —) and the upper trigram (☶) are weak.

top line/6 — — His modesty is well known.  
It is favorable for him to field an army  
and march against cities and states.

His modesty attracts people to his cause. They know that he would not be taking action unless it were necessary. The top line of a hexagram often shows a subject attacking a ruler.

STRUCTURE ☶ ☶ Kūn Acquiescent (passive, weak)  
☶ ☶ Gēn Keep Still (stopped, restraint)

A subject restrains himself in a low position (lower trigram ☶), even though his ruler is weak (upper trigram ☶). There is nothing to prevent the subject from advancing, but he stays where he is.

SEQUENCE The protagonist of the last two hexagrams sought ways of overcoming obstacles that his ruler placed in his way. Now he is strong enough to overcome them, but modestly refrains from going ahead.

## Notes

1. MODESTY — When the Zhou had finally defeated Shang, the prime minister, the Duke of Zhou, expounded the new dynasty's ideal of modesty in his address to an assembly of Shang knights: "It was not that our small nation on its own dared to seize power from Shang, but Heaven aided us, refusing to leave power in the hands of those who trusted in deceit and benefited from disorder. . . . That we underlings are now rulers is due entirely to Heaven's glorious power." (*Classic of Documents*, "Many Knights" chapter).

2. line four — The second line of the translation comes first in the transmitted text. I have followed Li (1969) in reversing them.