

# 63

䷾ 既濟

JÌ JÌ

## ALREADY ACROSS

Already across the ford.  
Blessed.  
Small should remain as he is.  
Beginning: auspicious.  
Ending: disarray.

One series of events has finished and another series is about to begin. Only small actions or beginnings are auspicious. Greater actions and endings are beyond one's power. Fording a river symbolizes any uncertain and dangerous undertaking or chain of events.<sup>1</sup>

### *Lines*

first line/9 — The wheels of his carriage drag in the mud.  
The little fox gets his tail wet.  
No harm.

Such difficulties are not dangerous here at the beginning of the crossing. Later on in the deeper waters at midstream, they could be disastrous. There the weight of the fox's tail would pull him under and the immobilized carriage would be exposed to enemy arrows.<sup>2, 3</sup>

line two/6 — — A wife loses her carriage curtain.  
She must not chase after it.  
In seven days she will get it back.

As long as she remains passive (— —), someone will make good her loss. Line two is the place of the subject, who loses the protection of a ruler, then gains it back.<sup>4</sup>

line three/9 ——— When High Ancestor attacked the Land of Gui,  
It took him three years to conquer it.  
A little man must not take action.

Line three is associated with difficulty and danger. The task that presents itself here is beyond the ability of anyone less than a great lord.<sup>5, 6</sup>

line four/6 — — His padded jacket gets wet.  
He remains apprehensive all day.

Fording a river, he wades out into water deep enough to get his jacket wet, then either stops or proceeds only with great and sustained caution. In line four he has advanced into the upper trigram. This trigram Kǎn 坎 Pit sometimes represents a river. See RÚ (5) GETTING WET.<sup>7</sup>

line five/9 ——— The Eastern Neighbor slaughters an ox,  
But this does not bring as full a blessing  
As the Western Neighbor's modest offering.

One succeeds by doing only small things. The Zhou lived in the west and their Shang overlords lived in the east. Not only could the Zhou not afford such huge offerings to the spirits as were made by Shang, but they considered their frugality a virtue. Line five is the place of the ruler and of success.<sup>8</sup>

top line/6 — — He gets his head wet.  
Danger.

He wades out into water that is too deep for him. The top line of a hexagram is associated with going too far and with conflict.<sup>9</sup>

STRUCTURE 坎 Kǎn Pit (danger)  
離 Luó Shining Light (shining, shone upon)

One shines or is shone upon in a low or early position (lower trigram 離), but encounters danger in a high or more advanced one (upper trigram 坎). It is therefore better to remain low. The upper trigram Kǎn 坎 Pit represents a river to be forded.

SEQUENCE The protagonist of the hexagram has survived the change of regimes that took place in GÉ (49) REVOLUTION and DǐNG (50) THE RITUAL CALDRON and has found a place in the new regime. This is the river he has forded. Now a new river of

greater achievement lies before him—perhaps the achievement of high position in the new regime, perhaps a revolution and establishment of his own regime. For the moment, however, he is advised not to step too far into the stream, to attempt no great deeds.

## Notes

1. ALREADY ACROSS — See next hexagram WÈI JÌ (64) NOT YET ACROSS, especially the Sequence section.

2. “in the mud” (first line) — The original text says only: “His wheels drag.” “Carriage” and “mud” are supplied from context. See line three of both RÚ (5) GETTING WET and KUÍ (38) ESTRANGEMENT and line two of NOT YET ACROSS.

3. “fox” (first line) — The original text says only: “Gets his tail wet.” That this refers to a fox is inferred from the opening text of NOT YET ACROSS.

4. “carriage curtain” (line two) — This curtain may be above the rider for protection from the sun or around her for protection from the eyes of others.

5. “High Ancestor” (line three) — High Ancestor (高宗 Gāo Zōng) is a title of the great Shang king Wǔdīng 武丁, who reigned about two hundred years before the Zhou conquest of Shang. This reference to a great Shang king is one tenuous indication that the *Changes* may have its roots in Shang times. See also NOT YET ACROSS, line four, and ZHŌNG FÚ (61) WHOLEHEARTED ALLEGIANCE, note 2.

6. “Gui” (line three) — “The Land of Gui” (鬼方 Guǐfāng) was the home of a northwest border tribe that was attacked and defeated by Zhou warriors on behalf of Shang. To call a country a 方 fāng (“direction,” “place”) is characteristic of the language of Shang and is therefore another possible indication of an early date for at least this part of the *Changes*. See also KUÍ (38) ESTRANGEMENT, top line.

7. “padded jacket” (line four) — The words 衣絮 yī rú probably refer to a coat or jacket padded with silk or cotton wadding, similar to those worn in China today.

8. “modest offering” (line five) — The word 禴 yuè is said to refer to the summer offering, which was small because the grain in the fields was not yet high enough to harvest. The same word is translated “small offering” in the second lines of both CUI (45) GATHERING AROUND and SHÈNG (46) RISING.

9. “gets his head wet” (top line) — See also the top lines of both DÀ GUÒ (28) BIG GETS BY and NOT YET ACROSS.