

50 The Vessel/ Transformation DING



Sacred vessel; hold, contain and transform, imagine; meal with spirits, ancestors and noble people; establish, found, proclaim the divination.

MYTHS FOR CHANGE: THE STORY OF THE TIME

Charge to the Oracle: *Skinning means nothing other than transforming the Vessel. Accept this and use the energy of the Vessel.*

Ding is a ritual vessel that signifies connection with the spirit world and the ancestors as the foundation of a dynasty or noble house. It is divination, divinatory incantations and submitting a question to the oracle, as well as the right moment to act (*shi*). It is an emblem of power and an alchemical cauldron, suggesting cooking in a literal and spiritual sense. It offers nourishment to the warriors and sages and the sage-mind in all of us, brightening the eye and ear. It suggests a mandate, a fate conferred by Heaven that is also a duty or responsibility. It means becoming a true and responsible individual.

The *Ding* has roots in Neolithic worship of the dead. It is the ultimate symbol of a sacrifice and ritual meal, a symbol for the oracle itself, the Change. It is also a part of high culture, a skilfully and magically crafted ritual tool that releases or frees the spirit, nourishing the sage-mind, beauty, imagination, the world of myth and the omen animals. It is synonymous with the dragon of creative energy and transformation, with the act of divination through which the spirits speak and with the rite at the Ancestral Temple that calls down the spirits. The first bronze *Ding*-vessels were cast by the Yu the Great, offering communication with the spirit world as foundation of human culture.

In ancient times Yu the Great received the metals from the Nine Provinces and the magical animal symbols (*xiang*) from the Shepherds. He cast the Nine *Ding*-Vessels at the foot of *Jing-shan*, a sacred mountain, so we could penetrate the forests, valleys and swamps and none of the river or mountain spirits could harm us. The vessels showed which were the beneficent spirits and which

were the noxious spirits, what opened the Way and what closed it. They united all the provinces, connected the above and the below. Thus we enjoyed the Mandate of Heaven.



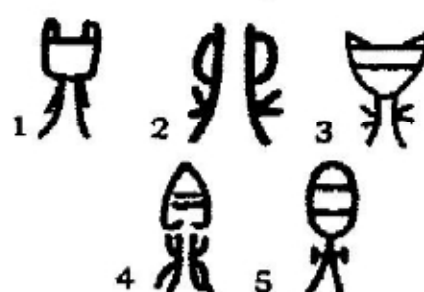
VESSEL

THE RESPONSE

The Vessel. Transformation. The Way to the Source is open. Wise Words!

Make an offering and you will succeed.

Vessel, DING: A cauldron with three feet and two ears, sacred vessel for cooking offerings, sacrifices and ritual meals; prepare meat in a Ding, sacrifice with a Ding, sacrifice animal and human victims; founding symbol of a family or dynasty, sign of royal blessing; receptacle; hold, contain and transform, transmute; consecrate, connect with the spirits; found, establish, secure; precious, well-grounded; *also:* proclaim the divination, submit to the words of the oracle; a name of Yu the Great who collected the metals of the Nine Provinces, cast the nine tripod vases at the foot of mount Jing and penetrated into the forests, the valleys and the swamps. He united all the provinces and received the blessing of Heaven. The old character shows a sacrificial vessel.



DING³ (10973/206) represents an ancient cooking pot, used for sacrifice to the gods or spirits and a sacred meal.

The Vessel describes your situation in terms of imagination and the transformative capacity of a sacred vessel. The way to deal with it is to contain and transform your problem through an image. You need to see deeply into what your problem means. Security and a new beginning will come from this awareness. It is a time for reflection, for slowly turning and examining things. This is the origin of great good fortune and meaningful events. It releases transformative energy. It is pleasing to the spirits. Through it they will give you success, effective power and the capacity to bring the situation to maturity.

THE SCHOLAR SPEAKS

The hexagram figure shows inner penetration feeding a spreading radiance and clarity. Above wood there is fire. Be resolute and break through inner obstacles. Once the old has been eliminated, there is nothing that can take the place of the Vessel and its transformative power. Through the Vessel you can grasp renewal. Correct the situation in order to give your fate a solid base. The Vessel means making and using symbols, like fire uses wood. Offer something to the spirits through cooking it. The sage uses this kind of offering to present things to the supreme spirits above and to nourish wise and worthy people. This brightens the understanding of the ear and the eye and lets you see invisible things. What is flexible and adaptable advances and moves to the higher position. Through it you can acquire the centre and connect with what is solid and strong. This is pleasing to the spirits. It is the origin of success, effective power and the capacity to bring the situation to maturity.

THE SHAMAN SPEAKS

Above Wood, Fire. The Vessel.

This is a time when Noble One corrects his situation to solidify his fate.

Spirit works in those who lay out the offerings, revealing itself in the Bright Omens. The Lady of Fates is working with the Bright Omens. Fire above radiates light and warmth and people experience the Bright Presence of things, while Wind and Wood enter subtly from below, penetrating, pervading and coupling. This is Fire over Wood: an inner penetration that feeds the spreading outer light, cooking and transforming what is held in the vessel. The ideal Realising Person reflects this by correcting his stance and situation through inner work, thus stabilizing the fate given him by Heaven. Work through subtle penetration. This involves fate. Stabilise the dwelling.

INITIAL SIX



VESSEL

The Vessel. Transform it. The Vessel's overturned foot.

Advantageous for clearing the obstruction. Harvesting.

Acquire a concubine for the sake of a son.

This is not a mistake.

This is not rebelling, but adhering to value. Do something out of the ordinary to establish a connection with the spirit world. Turn things on their head. Get rid of the obstruction. This is not a mistake. It will bring you happiness.

Direction: A great and flourishing time is coming. Be resolute. You are connected to a creative force.

NINE AT SECOND

The Vessel. Transform it. 'There is food in the Vessel.'

My companion is afflicted but cannot approach me.

Wise Words! The Way is open.

Consider the place and complete this without being excessive. You have something real cooking inside you, a spiritual transformation. Those around you now are afflicted with negative emotions. Stay with the transformation. Don't fear. It is substantial and secure. The Way is open. Proceed on your own.

Direction: Search outside the norms. Don't be afraid to act alone. You are connected to a creative force.

NINE AT THIRD

The Vessel. Transform it.

The Vessel's ears are skinned and movement hindered.

The pheasant fat not eaten.

'We are changing the Mandates of Heaven.'

Rain comes on all sides and lessens the cause of sorrow.

Wise Words! Completing this change opens the Way.

Letting go of your righteousness. Everything feels clogged up now. Don't worry about it. This is a transformation of the way you

experience life in the widest and most fundamental sense. The rain will come and wash away your sorrows. Keep going. The Way is open.

Direction: Gather energy for a decisive new move.

NINE AT FOURTH

The Vessel's stand is severed.

The prince's meal is overthrown and his form soiled.

The penalty will be death in chambers.

Trap! The Way closes.

Is this being trustworthy? Disaster. Whatever you are contemplating, don't do it. You will betray a trust and soil your higher principles. The Way is closed.

Direction: Renovate a corrupt situation. If you let yourself be led, you can realise hidden potential. The situation is already changing.

SIX AT FIFTH

The Vessel has golden ears and bronze rings.

Advantageous Trial. Harvesting.

Centring using a real activation. A beautiful vision and a loving plan. This is the casting of the precious metals. You have found a way to bring it into the world. This is a great joy. Act on it. It will bring you profit and insight.

Direction: This couples you with a creative force.

NINE ABOVE

The Vessel has jade rings.

Wise Words! The Great Way opens.

There is nothing for which this is not advantageous.

Harvesting.

The strong and the supple are articulated. This is something truly precious. It can transform your life. The Great Way is open to you now. This can be of benefit to all. It will open a whole new world.

Direction: Continue on. Be resolute. You are connected with a creative force.