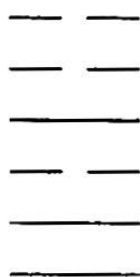


## guimei/marriage 54



*For an expedition: DISASTROUS.*  
*Nothing favourable.*

Base (9): A cousin given in marriage with companion-brides.  
 Stepping out for feet that ail.

*For expeditions: AUSPICIOUS.*

(9) 2: Sight returns for eyes that fail.

*Favourable augury for a prisoner.*

(6) 3: A cousin given in marriage with her elder sister.

*Yet she marries with companion-brides.*

(9) 4: A cousin given in marriage overruns her time:

*time for a delayed marriage.*

(6) 5: Diyi gives his cousin in marriage.

*The sleeves of the bride are not so fine  
 as the splendid sleeves of the concubine.*

*The moon waxes full.*  
 AUSPICIOUS.

Top (6): The bride bears a skip,  
 but it holds no fruit.  
 The groom stabs a sheep,  
 but no blood will shoot.

*Nothing favourable.*

(54) **marriage**

Gu Jiegang and Li Jingchi, referring to Ode 236.4–6, argued that Diyi, king of Shang, gave one of his own younger cousins to be King Wen's principal wife while Wen was still Earl of Zhou. When that marriage produced no son, Wen raised the rank of one of the 'sororal' brides, the Lady Shen, who became his principal wife and the mother of King Wu. As one of the sororal brides, the Lady Shen too would have been a cousin of Diyi. This story accounts for obscurities in the line statements, including the excellence of the inferior lady's dress and the infertility images in the top line. (See G194 and S240–4, where Edward Shaughnessy makes his own detailed application of the story to the hexagram.) The Ode is not absolutely clear, but the relevant parts can be understood in this way:

He (Wen) had a bride from Shang,  
a young cousin of Heaven.  
Wen chose a lucky day  
and met her at the River Wei,  
building a bridge of boats –  
it was a splendid sight.

Again a command from heaven,  
orders for King Wen:  
in Zhou, in the capital,  
to make Lady Shen his next queen.  
This eldest daughter played her part  
and boldly bore King Wu.

'Cousin of Heaven' would mean 'cousin of the monarch' in Zhou usage, even though it here refers to a member of the Shang royal family.

(Tag) *Guimei* 'A younger female cousin given in marriage'. The word for marriage from the bride's point of view is *gui* 'to come back', because the bridegroom went to fetch her and bring her back to his own home. The word *mei*, often translated as 'younger sister', can also mean cousin, since it is applied to younger female cousins of the same generation.

(Base) According to the practice of sororal polygyny by Zhou kings, two or three younger sisters or cousins of the same generation would accompany the bride to her new home as secondary wives or concubines. There is a description of this in Ode 261.4:

A hundred carriages rumbled,  
the eight bridle-bells jingled.  
Incomparable was the splendour.  
All her younger cousins accompanied her,  
thick as clouds.

The Zuo Commentary contains a number of references to the practice, including: Yin year 1 (Legge p3); Zhuang year 19 (p99); Cheng year 8 (p368); Cheng year 10 (p374); and Ai year 12 (p826). See also Marcel Granet 'La polygyny sororale et le sororat dans la Chine féodale' (1920), reprinted in *Etudes sociologiques sur la Chine* (1953).

The sentence about the lame one who steps out is probably out of place and has nothing to do with the wedding story.

(2) The oracle belongs with the second part of the Base Line oracle: the two together are the same as 10:3.

The omen for a prisoner also occurs in Hexagram 10 (10:2).

(3) This line can be variously understood, largely because of doubt about the meaning of *xu*, here translated as 'elder sister' implying 'senior wife'. This meaning is allowed by Karlgren's 'elder sister' (including elder female cousin; K133e), and gives agreement with Gu Jiegang's preferred story, mentioned above. The word can also be understood to mean 'lady-in-waiting' (D694), which perhaps means 'secondary (or sororal) wife'. Kunst, invoking a loan character *ru*, says the bride went with her bondmaids (R 347).

'Yet she marries . . .' may mean 'she made a visit to her mother's house after the wedding.'

(4) 'Missing her time' most obviously means failing to bear a son, which would explain the promotion of the secondary bride by King Wen; but Gao (G316) interprets this as 'postponing the wedding'.

(5) The finer sleeves represent the lady of Shen's eventual advantage. Gao (G319) claims that the sentence means the second wife was more beautiful.

(Top) The two ritual offerings turned into bad omens. They are also dramatic symbols of an infertile union, referring to the first wife. This couplet has an internal rhyme, or is an alternately rhymed quatrain. Either way it is the only one found in *Zhouyi*.

In the Zuo Commentary (Duke Xi year 15, see also page 180), this couplet has a variant reading, giving the same meaning, but with different order of verses and different rhymes. The differences, which by their slightness bear witness to the integrity of the textual tradition, are illustrated by the following romanization and literal translation. The rhymes are repeated in Old Chinese transcription. The connective *yi* in B<sup>1</sup> and D<sup>1</sup> is possibly not to be regarded as part of the quoted text.

Received Text	Zuo Commentary
A <i>nu cheng kuang</i> (* <i>khjwang</i> ) woman bearing basket	C <i>shi hui yang</i> (* <i>jiang</i> ) man stabbing sheep
B <i>wu shi</i> (* <i>dzjet</i> ) no fruit/content	D <sup>1</sup> ( <i>yi</i> ) <i>wu huang</i> (* <i>xwang</i> ) no blood

C *shi hui yang* (\*jiang)  
man stabbing sheep

D *wu xue* (\*xwet)  
no blood

A *nu cheng kuang* (\*khjwang)  
woman bearing basket

B<sup>1</sup> *(yi) wu kuang* (\*xjwang)  
no gift