

# 62



小過

XIǎO GUÒ

## SMALL GETS BY

Small gets by.

Blessed.

It is favorable to continue.

One may do small things but not great.

The bird that flies will leave only a cry,

It should not be on high but down below.

Then it would have great good fortune.

Attempt only small things, do not strive too high. The bird that exposes itself in the air will be shot down. The bird that remains hidden in the bushes will be safe.<sup>1</sup>

### *Lines*

first line/6 — — The bird that flies  
Will suffer misfortune.

Stay in the low position represented by this lowest line. Do not take the beginning of the hexagram as the beginning of a high flight.

line two/6 — — He passes by his grandfather,  
But meets his grandmother.  
He does not reach the lord,  
But meets the servant.  
He comes to no harm.

In each of these two cases, he humbly seeks out the lesser of two partners, thereby avoiding harm. Line two is the place of the subordinate, the woman, the servant.<sup>1, 2</sup>

line three/9 — Be careful not to go too far  
Lest you be attacked.  
Inauspicious.

Line three is the place of danger. Here at the top of the lower trigram one is in danger of rising too high or going too far. The phrasing of the Chinese suggests that the attack may come from behind.

line four/9 — No harm.  
Not pass but encounter.  
There is danger ahead, be on guard.  
Do not keep right on as you are.

It is all right to keep on advancing as long as you prepare yourself for a dangerous encounter that lies ahead. In this fourth line, you successfully cross the barrier into the upper trigram, but not without difficulty.<sup>1, 2</sup>

line five/6 — — Dense clouds but no rain  
From our western lands.  
The duke shoots  
And takes the bird from its hole.

He pulls back in time from his dangerous ambitions, is plucked from obscurity by the ruler and given high rank. Line five is the place of the ruler. Rain symbolizes conflict. The clouds of excess ambition build, but dissipate before they bring a rain of conflict.<sup>3, 4</sup>

top line/6 — — He passes by without encounter.  
The bird that flies is netted.  
Misfortune.  
This means disaster.

He goes too far and is destroyed. Like other peoples, including North American Indians, the Chinese used to catch birds by stringing large nets across their flight paths.<sup>1, 2</sup>

STRUCTURE    ䷲ 震 Zhèn    Thunderbolt (rush forward)  
                  ䷳ 艮 Gēn    Keep Still (stopped)

One keeps still in a low position (lower trigram ䷳) rather than rushing forward into a high one (upper trigram ䷲). The two solid lines in the middle of the hexagram are seen as passing across the

gap between the lower and the upper trigram ( = ). In the hexagram DÀ GUÒ (28) BIG GETS BY, four solid lines pass that gap ( ≡ ).

**SEQUENCE** The last hexagram ZHŌNG FÚ (61) WHOLE-HEARTED ALLEGIANCE showed a loyal subject resisting the temptation to seek independence. SMALL GETS BY shows him having success by not trying to exceed his present position.

### Notes

1. GETS BY (title), “passes” (line two, line four, top line) — All these translate the same word 過 *guò*.

2. “meet” (line two), “encounter” (line four, top line) — These translate the same word 遇 *yù*.

3. “Dense clouds but no rain” (line five) — See also the opening text of XIǎO XÙ (9) SMALL IS TAMED.

4. “shoots” (line five) — The word 弋 *yì* “shoot” refers to shooting with an arrow to which a string has been attached, so that the arrow and the game it pierces can easily be retrieved.