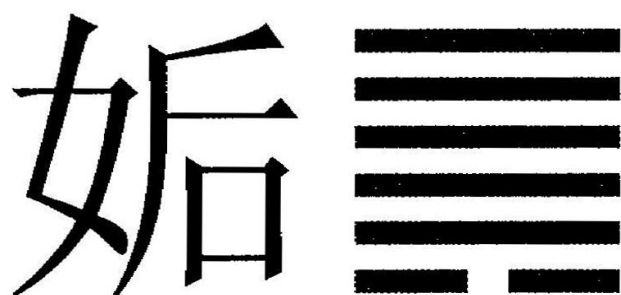


44



(gòu) The Royal Bride

The woman is great. Do not grab the woman.
A royal bride [was met with great ceremony,] not taken by force.

- Six in the first place: Bound together with a golden spindle. Persevering brings good fortune. Though [you] have a place to go, you face misfortune. With a scrawny piglet to sacrifice, you hesitate.
- Nine in the second place: A fish is in wrappings (conception). No blame. Do not entertain guests.
- Nine in the third place: Buttocks without skin. Her actions halt repeatedly. She hesitates before proceeding. Danger but not much blame.
- Nine in the fourth place: Wrappings but no fish (fetus). True misfortune.

- **Nine in the fifth place:** She protects the babe within, just as a gourd is protected by being wrapped in flexible willow twigs. You hold great beauty within you. If you miscarry, this is Heaven's will.
- **Nine at the top:** The royal bride's horns. Danger but no blame.

Image

Below the sky, a wind: the image of the royal bride. [*As gentle and persistent as the wind,*] the queen spreads her influence and makes proclamations which reach the four corners of the world.

The influence of a person in a position like that of a royal bride is like that of a wind: above the people, yet below the dictates of the Highest Power. The celebration of her arrival is impressive, and her eventual influence may be profound. Despite the great hopes raised at her marriage, her initial position is tenuous, since it is based on the hope for a son not yet conceived.

Just as the winds sweep over the whole world, her influence may transform her new country if her son becomes the next ruler. However, first she must conceive and bear a healthy son. Therefore most of the lines refer to conception and the stages of pregnancy, and to the risks surrounding the gestation period. The image describes the gentle power of the wind, which can shape a landscape if it continues to blow in the same direction for many years.

This hexagram may celebrate the royal marriage that resulted in the birth of the founder of the Zhou dynasty, King Wu. According to the Classic of Poetry (*Shijing*), his father honored the

princess who was his bride by going to meet her. In emulation of this example, later kings sent their highest officials to welcome a royal bride before she reached her new home. For a description of another ceremonious greeting of a royal bride, see *Shijing* 261.

Shaughnessy, 52–53, 291–292.

Lynn, 410–416.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 170–174.