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(bǐ) Closeness with Others

Closeness with others. Good fortune. Consult the oracle again. If you are steadfast from the beginning, no blame. When upsets come from every side, the one who arrives late will meet disaster.

- **Six in the first place:** If there is sincerity, keeping close to them will not bring blame. Having sincerity is like having a pot filled. Even if harm comes in the end, you will find good fortune.
- **Six in the second place:** A trusted ally from within. Persistence brings good fortune.
- **Six in the third place:** Close to the wrong person.
- **Six in the fourth place:** Close to someone from the outside. Persistence brings good fortune.
- **Nine in the fifth place:** Openly shown closeness. When rulers hunt, they drive the prey three times [into a narrow escape

route] but let the first wave of animals escape. Do not frighten the people of your own town. Good fortune.

- Six at the top: When your allies lack a leader, misfortune.

Image

Above the earth, water: the image of being close to allies. The first rulers established subsidiary realms and treated others as members of their own families.

When water lies on the earth, the two are so closely bound that they seep into one another. Because both meet so closely, plants can grow. This is how close true allies should be. The Zhou kings did not try to govern alone. Instead, they delegated the control of most of their realm to feudal lords, many of whom were relatives. Each of these had full autonomy within his fief and passed this leadership on to his descendants. This hexagram celebrates enduring and open alliances and the careful selection and later steadfastness that make them productive. It returns to a common theme in the book: the need to delegate effectively and in a timely manner; that is, when great projects are begun. Then those allies should be retained with the same trust and forbearance given to those allies we are given by the accidents of birth, our families.

Wise leaders avoid greed. They delegate to the leaders of groups beneath them, giving them quite a lot of autonomy, treating them as well as they would their own families, rewarding those who deserve continuing trust, and being extremely selective in reaping profits, down-sizing, and punishing errors. This apparently loose control is in fact more practical than constant surveillance and taking profits as quickly as possible. It fosters a flow in the

organization, enough control and harvesting to meet real needs. By avoiding rapid changes, sustainable prosperity and ongoing relationships are possible.

Shaughnessy, 74–75, 297.

Lynn, 184–190.

Wilhelm/Baynes, 35–39.