

Fixing the Omen Giving Change a Place in your Life

Using Change is the art of finding and empowering the great symbolic images in our lives. Through them our actions can resonate with the spirit and connect with its hidden transformative power. This symbolic approach helps us live our lives fully and freely by keeping us in touch with the on-going process of the Real, what the Old Sages called the Way.

In Dreams Begin Responsibilities

A reading engenders a circle of awareness that moves through us like ripples through still water. It then becomes our job to give it an enduring form, connecting in deeper and deeper ways over time so that it can influence our life and the lives of others. There are many ways to do this: keep a diary, make a collage or picture, create a short phrase, little poem, even a movement phrase that calls the reading to mind, find or make an object to symbolize the reading and put it on your Dwelling Altar where it connects with the power of your personal ancestors.

The tradition calls this *heng* or Fixing the Omen. It is how the images from Change become a part of our life, where we take responsibility for the gift of the spirit. The Pair 31:32 describes the overall process. We might consider the Myths for Change section of Figure 32 to better understand it.

Heng, Persevering or Fixing the Omen, refers to creating rituals and symbols that fix a spirit influence so that it endures in your life. This symbolic activity is similar to writing down a dream, perceiving its “message” and making a symbol of it that recalls the influence and acts as a guide to action. This gives form and enduring influence to the message from the spirits, making their power and virtue (*de*) endure in the heart. It extends to fixity of purpose, constancy and faith in the images as a personal characteristic. This is particularly important for diviners and spirit-workers. It is what makes their power firm. It is what keeps harm away. Confucius said: “It is said in *Change*: A man without *heng* will not succeed as a Wu-Intermediary.

How true! Not fixing the *de*, the power and virtue of an omen, leads to failure. Just reading it is not enough.” Such fixings range from literal rituals through meditations that “fix” the heart to ceremonies of marriage that “fix” the attraction. The word is related to *keng*, which suggests the Moon Cult that read the Changes, the oldest form of Yi divination. The character also suggests the regular movement of a boat between two shores, the faithful heart, laws and habits, continuity in development. It implies the continued interaction of spirits and humans and delivers a warning: one who does not fix the realizing power of the omen given by the spirit faces disaster.

The stabilizing rite (*heng*) may be a rite first performed at the appearance of the new moon to make things endure through the lunar month. It involved drawing circles or spirals around the omen-objects. These circles and spirals, seen in the character, are symbols of endurance in time, in the endless succession of moments. They point at sanctifying a centre so it will endure, like the circular furrow plowed around a new city, the rings that lovers share, the circle a shaman draws around a patient. This fixes the insight or experience of the spirit firmly in the mind so that it comes back every time the situation arises. This circular repetition and dedication changes the very shape of the heart-mind, becoming a paradigm through which we habitually act.

Fixing the Omen is a very potent practice. Each time we use symbols this way we generate *shen* or spirit and over time a quantum change occurs in the empty centre we create by getting our ambitious ego out of the way. We acquire a powerful helping spirit and access to a higher personality called the Sage-Mind. We become aware of the way or Dao and set foot on the path of the *Junzi* or Realizing Person. This effects a transformation of character and a liberation from compulsion and fear that can have profound effects on everything we encounter.

Look, there is a spirit (*shen*) within your person.
Now it goes, now it comes.
No one can imagine it. ...

But if you reverently clean its abode
It will return of itself.
You will recover your own true nature,
Fixed in you once for all.