

The Heart of Change

The Rang Ritual of Giving Away

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The Offering (41) shows the beginning of the Rang Ritual of giving away. The old character shows two open hands, a reverential bow, a sacred vessel and a circle that indicates empty, hollow. It is an offering of and to emptiness and silence.

Jung once said that the world of Change (*Yijing*), the world's oldest and most sophisticated system of wisdom divination, is "our mirror". The mysterious doubling of experience this mirror offers is the place where we see exactly what we are and what we're not. Now, stepping into this mirror rather than constructing academic theories or elevating moral fantasies about it is a risky business, to be sure. It's the difference between meeting the animals on a hidden trail in the dark forest and studying them in the zoo. But, to my mind, it's where our real education starts – a journey into the deep structures of the imagination and a consequent "leading out" of the soul.

This journey to the heart of the mirror of Change begins with an old Chinese character – *rang/jang*. The character points at an ancient ritual that pervades and inspires the World of Change, a ritual of "acquiring something to give and giving it away in order to truly have it".



Rang, with the radical *yen*, words (left), means to cede the way to another, to abdicate yield place, efface yourself, offer, let go of, concede. It is the mark of the passive tense, an invitation to the Other. The ancient character shows a gesture with hands open and horizontal, yielding the way.

The Rang Ritual is embodied in the Pair of 41:42 The Offering and the Blessing:



41:42 the Offering and the Blessing portrays the Rang Ritual of giving away, a sacrifice of personal goals, desires and belongings that calls down a flow of blessing from the Ancestors. It is a conjunction of the Four Shamanic Forces, the Rouser and the Sacrificer, the Lady of Fates and the Joyous Dancer, that opens a Zone of Radical Transformation where we pass through the Tiger's Mouth (27) to Open the Heart anew (61).

Opening the Hands

The power and virtue of the Rang Ritual is embodied in an old gesture: two open hands, palms up, that cede the way to others. The character *rang* links

this ritual gesture to *rang*, rites of expulsion and exorcism and *rang*, rites of propitiation that, together, bring *rang* abundance, prosperity and happiness for all. In Change this magical gesture manifests as the word *shi*, with the radical *da* or Great:



Shi, let go, means lose, miss, let go of, let escape, disappear; neglect, break a promise, fail, get lost; mistake, mishap, defect. It is literally an image of letting something fall from the opened hand and is a synonym of *yi*, go and come freely, give license to, follow your wishes.

This paradoxical image of loss, lack and failure appears in several key places in the texts of the Change. It is at the center of the Royal Hunt emblematic of a military victory (8.5) when the animals who do not choose to enter the killing fields were “let go” (*shì*); it is the purpose of “passing the cup” to others at high drinking rituals in the Ancestral Temple (64.6) in order to “let go” (*shì*) of the ghosts of the past; and it is the emblem of the gifting or “giving away” of the Palace Jewels or Treasures (23.5), the Jade Maidens that created marriage alliances and made others kin.

The Rang spirit and its characteristic gesture opened the River-Mountain sacred sites at the Spring and Autumn Festivals (10, 31, 49, 57), the bedrock of the religious year. It was particularly important in the *Ba Zha*, the autumn “orgies” that gave away wealth and brought joy to all. It was central to the *Da No*, the great exorcism at the change of the year when all the old ghosts and demons, the fixed forms of corruption that would prevent the renewal of the flow of time were driven out of houses and palaces and “pushed over the edge of the world.” This spirit was the basis of all rituals practiced in the Mourning Hut, from the mourning and enshrining of a departed parent (19:20) to the ritual of “fixing the forms” of the coming

harvest as summer wanes (55). It was seen as the spirit motivating the *Chan* ritual, the great sacrifices that were made at the high point or apogee of a dynasty to “renew our virtue by giving it away” (11:12).

Lessons of the Rang

The main lesson of the Rang Ritual is that, according to Heaven, we actually receive or harvest things only in order to distribute them, to circulate wealth of all kinds. This “giving away” is what creates *De* – an actualizing power and inner virtue that is spontaneously recognized rather than forced on people. To hoard or amass wealth, keeping it out of circulation for reasons of personal power or prestige is the root of the *Gu*, the corruption that angers the Ancestors and brings their curses down in the form of hallucination, evil dreams, spiritual deformity, political disaster the loss of posterity.

Above all, Rang Ritual presides over the “goings and comings” (*wang lai*) across the River of Time, to and from the Land of the Dead. Its capacity for release and renewal, the deliverance from past sorrows by letting go of heroic striving and lust for power is best seen in 39:40 Difficulties that bring Deliverance.



Delivering the Ancestors (39:40) describes the ritual goings and comings (*wang lai*) on the river of time that release energy bound in past fixations, an archetypal site of deliverance that evokes the Limping God and culture founder, Yu the Great.

The inner drive of this Ritual of “goings and comings” (*wang lai*), giving away and giving back, is to pass the participant through 27 The Tiger’s Mouth.



Strange Attractor/Tiger’s Mouth (27) shows an initiation ordeal that renews the sources of literal and spiritual nourishment through the Tiger who devours the corruption of the past and secures ritual space.

This initiatory passage activates an inner circulation between the Ghost River and the Bright Omens of the Heart that turns unconscious fate into conscious destiny.



29:30 *Ghost River and Bright Omens* shows the fundamental powers of Fire and Water establishing the Inner Axis of Change. It is an Engine of Change that recharges our existence with meaning and energy by redeeming the Ancestral images.

The *Kan-Li* Axis works through a continual making and breaking of symmetries or certainties within the individual. It connects the light of our awareness with the violent and unlived passions of the shadows of the past. Created by hidden Zones of Radical Transformation in the Matrix of Change, it expresses itself through the Sacred Sickness Pathways that connect personal and cultural suffering. We can see it as something like a double ladder, a stairway for spirit beings, and the ritual process of ascent and descent on this stairway or ladder. It expresses the purpose of our relation to the Ancestors.

The Characters of Rang

The character *rang* in modern Chinese means to cede your rights in a matter, to let go or concede, to abdicate or efface yourself before someone or something. Grammatically it is the sign of the passive tense, signifying that you voluntarily place yourself in an inferior and receptive position, a position that can be acted upon. By taking this position, you indicate your willingness to become a vessel of something greater than yourself. Technically, the character *rang* is made up of a “radical” or category – here *yen*, words coming from the mouth that link to the words spoken at a ritual – and a “phonetic” or seed syllable called *xiang*. The literal meanings of this *xiang* phonetic are interesting: to assist or be of service by removing something, pulling something up or making something disappear, a measure of time during which “a given star passes through 30 degrees of the heavens”. The hidden root of the term specifically points at waters springing from a source that mount and completely cover something in order to complete or perfect it. In its oldest appearance on the Oracle Bones this *xiang* meant modest or humble – a kind of humility seen in the omen-animal the Great Grey Rat who opens the hidden animal powers of the psyche by re-balancing the primal powers within the individual.

Phonetic associations to this seed syllable include *xiang* presenting victims to an ancestor; *xiang* offering a banquet to the “venerable dead”; *xiang* the form or image; *xiang* to observe or contemplate something in order to “see” its meaning; *xiang* to adorn and make beautiful; *xiang* the sweet smell of fragrant plants like the *orchis* used in the River-Mountain Festivals; *xiang*, an omen of good fortune; and *xiang* symbol, the symbols of Change and the Elephant Mind of Figure 16. All of this is embodied in the words of a fundamental Rang mantra or formula from 2 Earth/ Dark Animal Goddess:

First lose it, then acquire it.
Xian mi: Hou de

In this mantra the “waters springing from a source” flow backwards and forwards (*wanglai*) on the enigmatic river of time. They surge up to dissolve the oppositions of then and now and produce the magical *De*.

Xian, first, means both the first, to take the lead, to take command and “go” (*wang*) to the front *and* what really “comes” first (*lai*) and therefore should lead us – the Ancestors and the ancients.

Mi, lose, means to lose your way or path, to be disoriented or confused, to faint or lose consciousness *and* to be seduced, ensorcelled or possessed by the illusions and hallucinations that rise from *Gu* or corruption. It points at both the necessary confusion involved when the waters surge up in the ritual to cover the earth and the sort of disease they are attempting to cure.

Hou, last or later, is the opposite of *xian*, first. It means to go behind, to draw back, to be behind or last, in the rear, the baggage train *and* the great flow of those who come from the ancestors - us, their descendants or posterity.

These terms represent the step back in the ritual when desires and goals are “given away”. In the midst of the confusion that results from this offering something rises up:

The Way-Power Classic says: The Valley Spirit never dies. It is named Dark Animal Goddess. The door of the Dark Animal Goddess is called the Root of Heaven and Earth. Like an endless thread she endures. You can call upon her easily. He who has found this mother understands he is a child. When he understands he is her child and clings to her, he will be without danger when the body dies. This Dark Animal Goddess or Mother of the World (*Tianxia Mu*), so quiet and so empty, carries an ancient heritage of symbols (*xiang*), acting through them to

give security and refuge to all creatures. This is the divine, clairvoyant something of the Woman's Way.

This opening of the symbolic world leads to “acquiring” *De*:

De, acquire, a recognized cognate of *De*, power and virtue or actualizing-dao, is the result of the submission to the ritual, a step (*ji*, the radical) on the transformed Earth of the Way. It means to obtain, arrive at, acquire the essential and find yourself. It brings satisfaction, perfection, bounty, good health, harmony and accord with others and the innate power of a “Master of Change.”

Through all this we are forced to make a basic realization. We think the Ancestors are behind us; they are actually what goes before us, a carrying wave of spirit and blessing (*fu*) that pulls us along. We go into the body of the past to ensure the future, seeking initiation and searching the darkness for the light, the Bright Omen that is hidden by and in time. Indeed, until we ourselves give birth to the Ancestors our culture and the earth itself cannot be redeemed.

Words of Change

In a way all the Pairs in Change, the sets of two interconnected six-line figures, embody or double the Rang Ritual, reflecting the creative power of the mythological imagination to produce dynamic models of complex realities. Each is an example of holding the opposites in one thought, a meditative practice of “giving away” our lust for action that allows the *shen ming* or “enlightening spirit” to enter and inform the heart-mind.

The Pair 41:42 Diminishing and Augmenting (*zhi-yi*) offers a precise paradigm of sacrifice and its results at a unique place in the educational system of the Decades - a Gate to the stage or Decade of life when we emerge into higher levels of spirit and empowerment in society. The Contrasted Definitions of the Pair unite key qualities of the two hexagrams involved in a classic example of a Rang Mantra.

Sheng-shuai (zhi): shi ye!

Increase decrease (belong to each other as): the beginning (of all things)
indeed!

Sheng, increase means flourishing, abundant, intense, dense, luxuriant, robust, glorious, sumptuous, impressive and glorious, at the summit, the highest degree, to praise or exalt, to succeed. It is a sacrifice made with a full vessel. The seed syllable suggests *sheng* the process through which Heaven and Earth are born and all living beings develop; *sheng* the generative cycle of the *Wuxing* or Five Processes; and *sheng*, a Sage or *bodhi* being who has attained enlightenment.

Shuai, decrease is its opposite: to weaken, decline, regress, grow old and perish. It is the white mourning clothes worn for a departed father or mother. Its seed syllable invokes *shuai* to guide or command and *shuai* caught in the net of fate.

Shi, begin, is a key term in the philosophy of change – the ceaseless origin or beginning of things, the genesis operated through the feminine that gives life. It is the moment when something emerges from the primal chaos, the first “primordial breath” and the beginning of a moon-month - first, alone and always.

Ye is an intensifier of the previous statement meaning: Indeed! Truly! It also indicates that the first term of the statement “is” or “means” the second statement. It is the closest old Chinese comes to the verb “to be”.

This is the lesson taught by 41:42 Diminishing and Augmenting, a paradigm of all greater ritual as a sacrifice to emptiness that brings the beginnings of the new.

The Rang in Action

41 Diminishing is the offering that begins the Rang Ritual. It is the moment when “what is Below gives to what is Above.”



41 Diminishing/The Offering SUN



Decrease your involvements and emotional entanglements. Ask yourself why you are doing things. Use the two vessels, augmenting the yin and diminishing the yang to present your results to the spirits. Act this way with confidence. This is the origin of great good fortune and meaningful events. Let Diminishing be your inner guide. It will turn abstract awareness into real inner enlightenment.

At first (*xian*), this surrender is *nan*, heavy:

Nan, heavy: arduous, grievous, prickly, difficult, hardship, distress, catastrophe, calamity; to feel harassed or embarrassed, to look at something with fear. Its image is an omen bird with a clipped tail, caught in drying, sticky earth. It is cognate with *nan*, the name of the South and the Demon or barbarian country. It signifies both dense luxuriant growth and an ancient ritual that exorcized or expelled pernicious influences and noxious influxes.

Later (*hou*), it becomes *yi*, easy, the name of the Classic of Change:

Philosophically, *Yi* is primordial change, the mutations or transformations that initiate the process of generation and transformation in all the Myriad Beings, the *Wanwu*. It is inscribed in the actual order of things, the on-going process of the Real. It offers the symbols according to which Change occurs in all phenomena, through which life and spirit transmit and extend themselves. *Yi* suggests a fluid personal identity and a variety of imaginative stances, a mobility that reconnects us with the deep flow of the Dao or Way.

Opening Words

The Response of 41 Diminishing opens the Ritual Space in which the Rang occurs.

**Diminishing. A connection to the spirits will carry you through.
Wise Words! The Way to the Source is open. This is not a mistake.
This is an Enabling Trial.
It is Advantageous to have a direction to go. Harvesting.
You ask how to make use of this?
The Two Vessels allow you to make the presentation.**

The Ritual connects a loss or offering directly to an increase through the quality of giving away. It is tied to 50 *Ding*/Vessel and high divination through the formula “Way to the Source is open” (*yuan ji*) which occurs in the Response of both figures and through the deliberate and unique connection with sacrificial vessels. There is no historical allusion in either Figure; both point exclusively at a high ritual process.

However, the kind of vessel (*ding*) described in 50 *always* occurs in uneven or *yang* numbers, reflecting a kind of spiritual sublimation that is the goal of the ritual process. The kind of vessels described in 41 Diminishing (*gui*) *always* occur in even or *yin* numbers, reflecting the inner decantation or pouring out that is the goal of its ritual process. The Nuclear Figures of the two hexagrams amplify this contrast: in 50 Vessel it is time for a 43 Breakthrough; here it is a time to create or open an inner space in which the spirit can 24 Return. Diminishing displays a specific ritual of bringing the two primal forces back into balance through a return to and of the yin.

Here the Invocation has been given. The spirits have indicated that they are present and will open the Way to the Source. We are now called to the task. Then the Ritual Question is posed:

He (zhi) yong

Asking how (belonging to) accomplishing.

He, ask (why) is an interrogative with the image of a larva at its core. It means What? How? Which? When? and, perhaps most important here – Why? It links the demand for information with an inquiry into personal motives.

Yong, accomplish is a very old and important character that means to use something to effect a ritual offering and thus successfully activate and make use of the spirit or energy invoked. Philosophically it is the functional aspect of reality, the manifest effects of the inner nature of a being. It means efficacy, utility, capacity, to apply and put in action, a utensil or instrument, a sacrifice made and eaten, to put into action the universal operation of the virtue (*de*) of the Way (*dao*) founded on the absence of personal motive.

We receive an answer to our question that can open the ritual space within us:

Er Gui ke yong xiang.

The Two (Paired) Vessels permit accomplishing these Rites.

Er Gui, the Two or Paired Vessels were used to offer libations to the “household spirits of the ancestors” (*manes, lares and penates* in the Roman tradition) – our “inner household”. They both contain the inner spirit of the ritual and let us take hold of it. The *gui* sacrifice involved drowning a victim, specific to sacrifices at the Earth Altar to the Dark Animal Goddess. The term *gui* has the radical or category “bamboo”: the branches of bamboo presented as offerings (the nodes of which form the Name of 60 Articulating). It is the name of the bamboo shamans who worked with the Change. This bamboo was thought to signify a “firmness of character and fidelity connected with inner emptiness” that is characteristic of a sacred vessel. The literal *gui* referred to here were round bronze ritual vases that held dark millet wine, from which it was poured out in libation.

This brings up the image of another sacrificial vessel, the *Bi Chang* or Wine Ladle seen in 51.0 that was used at the Spring Offerings to rouse or wake the Dead. The first term *bi* (also a radical) that means a bronze ladle or spoon is literally the name for the *spouses* of departed royal ancestors. It is a synonym of *pin* (as in *pin ma*, the Mare, Horse Mother or “female horse” of Figure 2) which is the generic term for female and the female sexual organ in the most animal sense, thought of as a hollow ladle. The character *bi* was seen as the image of a man turned upside down – an important theme here where we are “augmenting the yin to diminish the yang”.

The second term *Chang* (also a radical or category of thought) was a wine made of black millet deeply aromatized with *orchis*, the “love-flower” of the Spring and Autumn Festivals. It was offered to the household spirits of the ancestors and indicated a kind of sacrifice that involved immolating a victim at the Earth Altar. There is no doubt that we are engaged here with a ritual process that diminishes or inverts the yang or masculine drives (whatever our biological gender might be) by making a fragrant offering of spirit that calls up the darkness of our “inner household” – the place of both corruption and blessings. The Two Vessels indicate that this dark wine is both poured out in libation and taken in to induce an altered state of consciousness.

Ke, enable (with the radical person, people) is a term of personal empowerment: able, enable, prepared to, support, tame, master, take charge of, be responsible for.

Xiang, rites is a very old character used ritually to mean present offerings to the high ancestors, the acceptance of those offerings and the Sacred Meal (symbolized by the *Ding*) that results. It is doubled as *xiang* to offer a banquet, to enjoy and profit from, to agree and come into harmony with; as *peng* to cook (literally and metaphorically); and as *heng*, to penetrate and exercise a profound influence, ripening and bringing things to maturity. *Xiang/heng* is the place where we nourish the ancestors within so that they will extend their blessings. It is part of the magical formula *yuan heng li zhen* that expresses the working of the Change and the vital rhythm of the Four Seasons that generates and constitutes all beings.

The Shaman Speaks

This section of the Ten Wings describes the hidden agents at work in a situation from the perspective of the magical tradition of the Eight Spirit Helpers and suggests an effective stance that might align us with their inner power. Here we find advice on how to handle ourselves as the dark wine begins to alter our consciousness and open our inner household. The key phrase is:

Junzi yi cheng fen zhi yu

The Realizing Person uses curbing anger to block appetites.

This advice is an interiorizing mantra that reflects the basic process of the ritual into the inner world of the *Junzi* or Realizing Person, the ideal user of the Oracle and, by extension, the ideal participant in the ritual. It shows how we can become a real participant in the “diminishing” phase of the Rang Ritual.

Junzi is the Realizing Person or Noble One, “the person who uses *Change* to follow the *Way* and thus accumulate the power and virtue (*De*) to become who he or she is intrinsically meant to be.”

Yi, use, make use of literally means to employ, by means of, consider as the means to, because of and thus a function of, think of something as, above, over, to be able to, at this time, this particular thing. It is an old word used in a divinatory sense to mean effect a ritual offering in order to access to a particular spirit, energy or ancestor. It is a cognate of *yi*, the name of the Change and points directly at using high divination.

Cheng, curb is an old word literally meaning to bridle a horse, particularly to harness a four horse team to a bronze (war) chariot and mount it, thus to harness, master and profit from, to seize the time and attack, to evaluate and expel. It is a term used in Buddhist thought to mean making something a vehicle for spiritual development and implies being the heir or assuming the succession.

Fen, anger points at sorrow, anger, hatred, melancholy, indignation and the desire for revenge and indicates being disordered, troubled and confused by these negative emotions. A synonym means fecal material, something soiled and contaminated, and to sweep or clean it away by dividing and distinguishing yourself from it.

Zhi, block means to obstruct, stop up a hole or passage, restrain and suggests limiting or obscuring intelligence. It is the gallery covering and leading to a Royal Tomb, the threshold of the Emperor’s sleeping chamber and the 7th celestial Stem (seventh month), the image of which is a tool for threshing grain.

Yu, appetites is a key ritual term, the target of the rituals of exorcism and purification. In *Change*, the precise term *yu* is used only here and at 27.4, the major appearance of the Tiger, but it acts as the center of a wide circle of “corruption” words. *Yu*, appetites, literally means burning passions, envy, carnal appetites and voluptuous desires, sensuality in general. Made up of the graphs for *yu* valley or ravine and the graph for lack or gasp – a dying breath – it points at natural desires that have become artificial, compulsions that agitate the heart and trouble the judgment, throwing the being into compulsive exteriority, separating him or her from original nature and blocking enlightenment or illumination.

The *yu* valley graph describes a shady ravine or gully full of dark water that combines a strong sexual component – the flesh, the feminine and the lips of the mouth and of the vagina – with an allusion to the Valley Spirit or Dark Animal Goddess. It is phonetically linked to the Name of 18 *Gu* Corruption and Renovation. This is what we are confronting, what must be blocked or curbed: perversion, decay, plague and pestilence, something rotten, poisonous, and defiled. It specifically describes the corruption in our inner Parental and Ancestral images, the negative effects of parents on children that include sexual infatuation, rage, pain, hallucination and mania. It also means to renew or renovate and is the name of the first day of a ritual period when decay is removed to support new growth. This connects the term with *Gu* cereals or grain to suggest the rot in the grain on the ancestral altar seen

also as the ghosts of executed criminals who become noxious worms that symbolizes “corruption”.

All of this flows from a central term found on the Magic Square of Initiations or Thresholds in the Primal Pair: *Li* /adversity, the angry ghosts and hungry souls.

***Li* adversity, angry ghosts and hungry souls** shows a sheer cliff and a hoard or swarm of stinging insects. It means danger, peril, something cruel, violent, brutal, terrible and terrifying – a calamity or infectious illness that has epidemic proportions, a gulf or abyss in which you can be lost. It specifically refers to menacing phantoms, demons and ghosts that return to haunt the living and spread psychic miasma. It signifies the Lost Souls, spirits of the dead who have no posterity - the “hateful or evil people” of 38.1 (*e ren*) whom you must not allow to poison our heart. It also connects specifically to two other important characters: *Li* stones placed in the water or to cross the water by walking on stones; and *Li* a whetstone, to grind away, polish, refine. From this connection comes the sense of a grave danger (the angry ghost that can spread contagion) that must be faced by grinding away whatever would allow them to infect us from within.

The transformation of this inner adversity into a Bright Omen of Change and Destiny is what the Rang Ritual seeks to accomplish. With all this in mind, and with the dark wine working within us to open the inner household, let us enter the inner space of the Rang Ritual and set our feet on its Steps.

First Step: Beginnings

Here the dark wine begins to flow through us, taking us back through the hidden pathways into early childhood. It calls up memories of our first approach to the centers of religious and political power, memories that are conflated with the experience of our own inner Father and Mother. This is the origin of our inner *Gu* or corruption. The specific Pair that confronts us here on the hidden pathway from inspiration to realization is 3:4 The World Tree: Sprouting and Enveloping the New.



3:4 *Sprouting and Enveloping/Hidden Spirits* shows the emergence of the world we live in and the secret growth of a new being within it, hidden and nurtured by the “covered sky” and the hidden spirits of Change. Its center is the Fire-Water Axis that unites Heaven, Earth and the watery Underworld.

Something is hidden here and the initial image that guides us says we must:

**41.1 Bring this to an end and go swiftly.
This is not a mistake. Discussing Diminishes it.**

Two contrasting images come up that we must entertain. They tell us that this early protection and challenge has become fixated in our memory as a trap that cuts us off from the Way and leaves us open to our negative emotions.

The Inspiring Image of the first Step presents a stark image of a vital force from early childhood trapped in a dark net of mourning, sorrow, fear, pain and rage, need and helplessness.

**3.6 Riding the horses in full array,
while weeping blood courses down.**

This is a deeply disturbing picture of someone mounted on a four-horse bronze war chariot who is tangled up in the intricate net of the harnesses and cannot move while *qi xue lian*, “silent tears of blood course down all around like ripples on the surface of the waters” – an expression of extreme affliction that centers on mourning one’s departed parents. The operative

trigrams in the inner Crossline Pair (*Zhen* and *Gen*) show that both thinking and feeling functions are severely impaired by this affliction.

The Realizing Image of this Step is a strong injunction to free our youthful spirit from this deadly trap:

**4.1 Enveloping shooting forth.
Advantageous to punish people. Harvesting.
Loose the fettered, shackled youth or going on brings distress.**

The first Step in this ritual involves loosing or freeing ourselves from this entanglement of wood and water seen as fetters and shackles that imprison our youthful spirit, preventing it from *fa* “shooting forth” or taking the initiative. We must eliminate these parasitic inner fixations that inhabit our memories and feed on our soul. We are very strongly enjoined to give this message an enduring place in our heart or face real disaster.

**42.6 This absolutely does not Augment you.
If you try to order your heart without fixing this omen,
“Someone” will smite you. Trap! The Way will close for you.**

So this is our first and very important piece of ritual work. We are challenged to go back and eliminate emotional corruption. The returning spirit is carefully preparing the emergence of the new, working through a screen of painful memories of past encounters charged with sexual energy that involve our desperate need for recognition and approval. Make the sacrifice of these old ways and have no fear. The Way to the Source is open.

Second Step: At the Inner Center

When this is accomplished, the dark wine of the ritual is free to flow farther through the hidden pathways to the Inner Temple. It activates an inner Zone of Radical Transformation where what is heavy can become what is *yi*, easy. This gives us the power to relax or delay the compulsions we experience in order to let them go. The initial image tells us that by blocking our desire to project and punish others for what we have suffered, we will not be diminished but augmented.

**41.2 Diminishing. The Offering.
Advantageous Trial. Chastising closes the Way. Trap!
This Diminishes nothing, it Augments it.**

The specific figure on the hidden pathway that confronts us here is 27 Tiger's Mouth. It is an Engine of Change and a key site on the Sacred Sickness Pathway that connects personal disorders with cultural change. It is the Mission of the Decade when our adult Name is fixed and the search for the deeper Self begins.



Strange Attractor/Tiger's Mouth (27) shows an initiation ordeal that renews the sources of literal and spiritual nourishment through the Tiger who devours the corruption of the past and secures ritual space.

The Inspiring and Realizing Images join to portray the establishment of a permanent inner home for the Tiger spirit. This inner Tiger Shrine clears the foundations of the childhood traumas so that they will not be compulsively enacted on others. It takes us to the crucial transition into life as a mature adult, the archetypal site of initiation when we emerge as a true individual.

Inspiring Image: 27.2

Shaking the Jaws, clearing the channels, rejecting the rules.

Move to the hilltop shrine and make an offering.

Chastising closes the Way. Take this in!

Realizing Image: 27.5
Clearing the channels. Rejecting the rules.
Trial: Wise Words! Staying in your residence opens the Way.
This does not let you step into the Great Stream. Take it in!

These images link the inner idea of rejecting the rules, pushing away what has become stereotyped and compulsive, with an outer blocking of the impulse to project these rules and use them to chastise others. Here we must simply let go of any idea of stepping into the Great Stream of Life with a purpose and move towards a grave with an empty center where we make an offering and let the Tiger do his work. It is in this way we “take in the lessons of the past” and begin to hear the voices of the Ancestors within. The Crossline offers a beautiful image of what we can become through this initiation:

42.5 You have a connection to the spirits and a benevolent heart.
No question, the Way to the Source is open.
A connection to the spirits will carry you through.
Wise Words! Say it thus: “A benevolent heart is my power and virtue.”

Our imperative ritual task here is to go back and work with the Ghost River of the past to release the Radiance of the Source. You have a mandate. The energy is centered and correct. Work through the screen of painful memories of your own past failures to live up to the true images of your Ancestors and the ideals they represent. Let the distress you feel now simply return you to the Way. There is no need to repeat past mistakes.

Third Step: Approaching the Threshold

Here the dark wine of the ritual takes us into the mysterious zone between, the liminal space, to adjust the balance in our psyche between surplus and lack. The initial image gives us our primary orientation:

41.3 If there are three people moving, they will be Diminished by one.
When one person is moving, he/she acquires a friend.

This process is moving us from yang numbers that symbolize learning and acquiring things (1 and 3) to yin numbers that symbolize letting go of what we know (2):

In learning, every day a little more.
In the Way, every day a little less -
Less and less until non-acting.

The specific Pair that confronts us here is:



25:26 Disentangling and Accumulating the Spirit displays the process of disentangling from the ghosts that haunt old tombs and cultural fixations and nurturing the spirit of the new through contact with the old oracle books.

This step, which we can imagine as occurring in the Hilltop Shrine in the midst of our introversion, takes us back to the time in our lives when we were seeking initiation, an image of the Self and a real relation to culture. Two interconnected images come up that show the enabling power of the initial divination and its carrying wave of spirit energy moving backwards on the stream of time to break through institutional fixations – the tombs of the past within us. It calls up a surge of spirited strength from the oldest sources of culture, the oracle books that contain ancient wisdom and real actualizing power – our true inner companion.

Inspiring Image 26.3

Great Accumulates. Fine horses in pursuit.

Trial: Hardship is advantageous.

Advantageous to have a direction to go.

Realizing Image 25.4
Disentangling. The Enabling Trial.
This is not a mistake.

We have stripped away the silent tears of blood coursing down all around the old identity and the mental structures that produce them and are now in pursuit of a real experience of what power and maturity can be. This is the challenge faced by the Dragon in the Mountain of 26 Great Accumulates. It frees and focuses the Rousing Thunder of 25 Disentangling by the continual act of divining through the old oracle books. The trigram involved in both Line changes is the Inspiring Force of the Dragon. The Crossline says:

42.5 Augmenting. The Blessing.
The center is moving. Inform the prince and he will follow.
Advantageous to participate in shifting the capital city. Harvesting.

Our imperative ritual task is to work through a screen of painful memories of your failures to live up to the demands society has placed upon you and your own need for power you can never really achieve. If you can let go of your misplaced ambitions and toil on humbly you will bring everything you desire to completion.

Fourth Step: After the Crossing

Here the dark wine of the ritual reverses direction and flows out of the liminal transition zone towards the future and a re-engagement with the world. We move into the realm of *Li*, the Radiance or Bright Omens that emerge from the Ghost River. The initial image tells us how we connect with this Bright Omen or Mandate:

41.4 Diminish your affliction.
Commission someone to carry it swiftly. There will be rejoicing.
This is not a mistake.

The specific Pair that confronts us and embodies these concerns is 37:38 Managing the Ghosts that Haunt the Dwelling:



37:38 *Shaman of the Shadows* shows the conflict between the safety of the hearth fire and family and the dangers of the wilderness and the spirit world that surrounds it. It is the dangerous journey necessary to change this conflict to fertile tension through dealing with the shadow.

This Pair is the Mission of the stage or Decade of life when we struggle to found an individual dwelling, family and career and evokes the attempt of a young Zhou nobleman to found a house on the borders of the established world, surrounded by the ghosts of the past and the excluded. It takes us back to the time when we struggled heroically to found an identity, a career, a dwelling and a family. Two interconnected images come up here that show the afflictions we must swiftly diminish in order to rejoice. They revert what seems to us to be the personal conflict between a suffering child or victim and the oppressions of parental authority to a deeper cultural level.

Inspiring Image 38.4

Diverging alone. The Orphan and the Fox.

You meet the Primal Father, mingle and connect to the spirits.

Adversity, hungry souls and angry ghosts. This is not a mistake.

Realizing Image 37.3

Dwelling people, scolding, scolding.

Repent the past sorrow and adversity, hungry souls and angry ghosts.

Wise Words! The Way opens.

If wife and son are giggling, giggling, going on will bring distress.

Guideway to the Fourth Encounter

We are out into the real wilderness now. The night sky opens above us and two star clusters, the Orphan and the Fox, rise to guide our way. We feel solitary, cut off from family or friends, but now our isolation can become a source of real power. The Fox, the shape shifter who leads through the liminal ways arises to guide us. Here we meet a spirit or *shen* called the Primal Father or Husbandman (*yuan fu*) and are told specifically to connect and mingle with him.

Shan Hai Jing (Guideways to the Mountains and Rivers) portrays the spirit we meet as a winged and bird-footed *shen* or Mountain Lord who unlocks the treasures of the Mountain and give us permission to enter. I have seen him as a Black Father who holds the keys to the old ways or a figure like Yu the Great who clears the channels so that the water can flow once more. In any case, he is a strange, powerful and beneficent male spirit whom we are encouraged to let into our hearts.

We are further told that the danger associated with this redeemed father-figure actually comes from a flock of “hungry souls and angry ghosts” that swirl around him. If we look back across the divide to the Dwelling (37.3) we might see where they originate - in all the experiences we have had of bad fathers and their abuse and betraying mothers and their negligence. These ghosts must be confronted and eliminated, for entertaining them will cut us off from the ability to experience and express the hidden spirit. We must go back into our personal lives and accept the challenge of letting all this go, for “something significant is returning now.”

The trigram involved in both the line changes (*Li* Bright Omens) shows that this situation is capable of releasing deep omens of what our real Name might be. Though the culture around us may seem to be trapped in old patterns of abuse, something is moving deep within, a wave of spirit energy that we can use to announce a new fate entering the world. The Crossline tells us:

**43. 4 You are Augmented through service when the Way is closed.
This is not a mistake.**

**There is a connection to the spirits that will carry you through.
The center is moving. Inform the prince. Use the jade baton.**

Our imperative ritual task is to let go of what you usually depend on and meet the new spirit. You are challenged to work through a screen of memories of discord, fear and bad blood between friends, families, clans and compatriots to call in all the projected parts of your soul. Have no doubts. This will open the mind of the great symbols and gather what belongs together like a hair clasp gathers the hair.

Fifth Step: At the Outer Center

The dark wine of the ritual flows on towards the high divination at the center of the Rang Ritual. This step takes us forward to the end of life, offering an image of a life fully lived that can be of inspiration to future generations. The specific figure that occupies this position is 61 The Opened Heart:



Carrying the Treasure (61) shows the Opened Heart and the Calling Crane who calls her children out of the entanglements of life. It is an Engine of Change that recharges existence with meaning and energy.

This is a Primary Site of Radical Transformation, an Engine of Change that recharges experience with meaning and energy. The Bright Omens and the Ghost Dancer act as Hidden Agents here to intensify its inner power and a conjunction of the Operators, The Rouser and the Sacrificer, and the Intermediaries, the Lady of Fates and the Joyous Dancer intensifies its ability to bring the hidden to expression to renew personal and cultural life. It acts as the Gate to the final stage of the symbolic life, birth into the life of the spirit and the link to the generations to come.

The initial image tells us that:

**41.5 “Someone” is Augmenting you.
Ten pairs of tortoise divinations cannot control or contradict this!
Wise Words! The Way to the Source is open.**

Two interconnected images come up here that express both the personal message offered by the divination at the center of the Rang Ritual and an historic doubling of that message, the passage between the old Shang system of Turtle Divination, a fire and bone system that relied on animal sacrifice and elaborate preparation, and the new yarrow divination method of Change used by the Zhou, a plant, number and word system that became the base of individual literacy and individual engagement with destiny. The shift from the Turtle to the Yarrow represents a major ontological shift in the basis of culture.

This profound shift, personal and cultural, is the message of the Calling Crane who says that that “ten pairs of turtle divinations cannot oppose or master” the new omen she is offering. This indicates a revolutionary paradigm shift from an old system of thought grown oppressive to a new one that gives easy access to *yi*, change, and binds people together in a new way. It doubles the substance of the divination at the Outer Center into the Inner Center of the new.

**Inspiring Image 61.5:
There is a connection that binds us together. This is not a mistake.**



Realizing Image 61.2
A Calling Crane hidden in the shade.
Its offspring respond in harmony.
"I have a winged wine vessel.
Come to me and I will simply pour it out."

The Crossline affirms that Change is indeed calling to each of us who goes through this ritual. The trigrams involved in the Line changes (*Sun* and *Dui*) show that this is a matter of deep soul connection and changes in the subtle body that connect with the workings of karma and the collective unconscious, a fundamental re-balancing of the yin and yang.

42.2 "Someone" (the hidden spirit) is Augmenting you now.
Ten pair of tortoise divinations cannot control or contradict this!
Wise Words! Trial: an ever-flowing Way.
The King makes presentations to the Supreme Power.
Wise Words: The Way opens.

Our imperative ritual task is to go back and work with the Ghost River of the past to release the Bright Omens it contains. Let your tears flow freely. Work through the screen of painful memories of all the times you sought to overpower others with the magnificence of your ideas and purposes. If you let go of your compulsive need to be the leader of the group, your true virtue will shine and attract those who belong with you. The Earth Spirit is already appeased.

Sixth Step: Culmination, Wisdom and Warning

Here the dark wine of the ritual emerges and flows out in a final blessing that mobilizes our blocked or fixated energies and lets us re-enter the world. The specific Pair that occupies this position is:



19:20 Making an Ancestor shows the rituals of mourning and praise that turn the spirit of a deceased parent into an ancestor and the careful observation of the omens of the new spirit's manifestation.

This Step takes us back to the crucial time in our lives when we struggled with the death of a parent and the need to grow up into their status and stature. It is a challenge to make Ancestors of our parents, assume our responsibilities in the world and watch over the manifestation of the new spirit born through the ritual.

**41.6 This sacrifice will not Diminish you, it Augments you.
 This is not a mistake. Wise Words! Trial: The Way is open.
 Advantageous to have a direction to go. Harvesting.
 You acquire servants, not dwellings.**

Two interconnected images come up here that connect the long ritual process of becoming a responsible adult in the deepest sense of the word with an expression of concern for the next generation - our imaginal children and what might be haunting or threatening them.

**Inspiring Image 19.6
 Chanting and keening without restraint.
 Generosity and wealth are Nearing. Release the spirit.
 Wise Words! The Way opens. This is not a mistake.**

This is the time to let the Joyous Words emerge from the Earth. We step out of the Mourning Hut and step into the status of the Father or Mother who has been left behind, released into the magic of the image.

Realizing Image 20.1
Viewing the children's omens.
For Small People this is not a mistake.
For the Realizing Person: Distress.

We then watch for and nurture the emergence of the new ancestor spirit in the world around us, in the omens of the children, the bright omen that each child is.

The Crossline shows us how we can take action on what we see:

42.1 Advantageous to arouse and activate the Great. Harvesting.
Wise Words! The Way to the Source is open. This is not a mistake.

Our imperative ritual task is to work through a screen of memories of the times when you failed to openly stand by what you knew was right. If you give way and return with the retreating energy you will be nourished at the source. If you step out into the dangerous waters rising all around you, you will be swept away. There is a ripe fruit not eaten that you must carry away. Take the chance. Do not just change your face.

Burning Water

There is a Rang Ritual and Omen inscribed on the very last Transforming Line of Change (64.6), a ritual specifically evoking the Burning Water or River of Life and Death that runs between the generations. It is located in a Realizing Figure that is a Primal Gate of Change, a site of intense mediating and ritual activity presided over by the Small Fox, a crafty shape-changing animal at home in the dream world. It acts as the Approach to the birth into the life of the spirit.



63:64 *Burning Water* shows the Crossings of the River of Life and Death, an image of the soul entering the Great Stream and its eternal return.

The specific site of this Rang Omen is a Drinking Ritual in a noble Ancestral Temple, the time when the “cup is passed round”. This is a world of potential, the season when the fruits ripen (*heng*), a crossing to the Spring Festival and the Paradise time, an image of the souls and spirits entering the Great Stream, a metaphor for the voyage of life.

When the times of mourning and violence are over,
 When all is calm and still,
 We set out the dishes and the meat-stands.
 Elder brothers and younger brothers, do not stay afar!
 Take this chance to drink the clear wine.
 If people lose the shining *De* that is in them,
 It is a dry throat that has led them astray.

Look, it is the descendant of the Ancestor who is presiding.
 Both his wine and his spirit are potent.
 He deals them out with a great jade-handled ladle
 That he may live till old age withers him,
 That he may secure the blessings for all.

The musicians go in and play.
 The fragrant meats pass round to all.
 No one is discontented, all are happy.
 Small and Great bow their heads together.
 We are drunk with the clear wine,
 Sated with the shining *De*,
 And the Skilful Celebrant conveys the message:

“The Wild Ducks are in the Ravine.
The Dead One is quietly drinking.
All the Spirits are drunk.”

The mysterious omen offered at the center of this ritual (64.6) is:

**There is a connection to the spirits through drinking liquor.
This is not a mistake. Soak your head.
There is a connection to the spirits in letting go of what is past.**

You fu: shi shi.

There is/you possess carrying wave let-go what is/was correct.

You, possess suggests an individual being, being as opposed to non-being; it literally means to have, own, possessions and goods, to have and hold, to enjoy, to dispose of; ritually it identifies someone present at a sacrifice, a witness at a ceremony.

Fu, connect, connection means accord between inner and outer; sincere, truthful, reliable, verified; have confidence; linked to and carried by the spirits; capture prisoners, take spoils; be successful; incubate, hatch. It is the luster of jade and being covered, protected and carried by a bird or bird spirit. The character shows the claws of the bird spirit or ancestor both clutching its prey and protecting its offspring. It is central to the Name and quality of 61 *Zhong Fu* Centering and Connecting to the Spirits.

Here in the context of the drinking ritual this can only point at a loss or giving away of normative reality, carried or possessed by the bird form of the Ancestor. The deep “carrying wave” that emerges from taking in this potent Burning Water points *shi*/letting-go (the trigger word of the Rang Ritual) directly at:

Shi, what is (past), a very old character meaning what is, what exists, what has been established as true, just, correct. It is a just judgment and the consequences of right action, made up of the graph for sun (and thus the normal passage of time, the Sun Tree and the Kings) and the graph for correct, correcting, at the center.

The Inquirer who is the center of this ritual may indeed be the “descendant of the Ancestor who is presiding”, a noble person facing the last great passage of life, the passage into death. But it could also be any one of us caught up in the *yi*-times and the Mourning Hut, the time of troubles between the great generations of life. Though often moralized by later commentators as “losing the sense of the real” or “failing to make the

transition”, this omen actually insists on a necessary loss of conventional reality and the judgments of the past to be “born into the life of the spirit”. This, it seems, is the culminating message of both the Rang Ritual and the Change, the gift of the Calling Crane through which *Li* Radiance and the Bright Omen, can flood and fill the hearts of all. It is an expression of the image from the Magic Square of Beginnings and Culmination that shows the Two Powers as Twin Dragons mating in the wilderness at the limits of the normal world, their intermingled essences flowing down to bless us (2.6).

The advice to the inquirer here might be seen as an injunction to call on the spirit to guide this great cultural transition, to give away the need for power and to accept the blessings the Bird Mother offers rather than assuming this is another lonely and heroic task.

Shi-de: wu xu

Let go - acquire: no cares!

There has been an answer from the heavens.
Swiftly they flit through the temple
Very bright, very glorious.
Ah the glorious Ancestors!
The happy omens, the rich and endless blessings come down.
To you, too, they must reach.
Here, then, I come.
I take myself to the Bright Ancestors and make my prayer:

“You that roam up and down in the Sacred Place
You that ascend and descend in the Sacred House.
Grant me a boon, August Elders!
Protect this my humble person, save it with your light.
I, a little child
am not wise or reverent.
But as the days pass, as the months go by
May I learn from those that the Bright Presence surrounds.
O Radiance, doubling and re-doubling!
Help these my strivings
Show me how to make real
the power and the virtue (*De*) of the Way.”

This prayer is the final gift of the Rang Ritual. Let us carry it with us like that Jade Talisman that lets the Dead speak into whatever changes we and the world around us may be facing. And our task is: Do not seek

dominance. The Dragons are mating in the wilderness outside of your awareness and their blood flows down like the rains to fertilize your heart-mind. You are challenged to let go of a screen of memories of the times when you failed to openly stand by what you knew was right. If you give way and return with the retreating energy you will be nourished at the source. If you step out into the dangerous waters rising all around you, you will be swept away. There is a ripe fruit not eaten that you must carry away. Take the chance. Do not just change your face.

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