

# **The White Crane Rises**

by

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## Introduction

The 'Great Conceit' is a peculiarity specific to Chinese culture. These fictional histories were added to the Imperial Library by unknown scholar officials. Often they were not discovered for centuries after they were written. When discovered they often caused consternation because it was not known if they were describing real events.

'The White Crane Rises' was first discovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is unusual in that it is possible to work out who wrote this 'Great Conceit'; one of the characters in the story.

This modern translation has set-out to capture the modernity of the time period it was set in; the end of the Song Dynasty. Joseph Needham, one of the most famous and knowledgeable sinologists of recent times, said of the Song period that 'it was the renaissance, the enlightenment and the industrial revolution, all rolled into one'. It has been suggested, because of the scientific, technological and industrial development that had the Song Dynasty lasted for another two centuries, then the Chinese would have been walking on the moon five centuries before the Americans. The Mongolian invasion of the Southern Song at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, however, put an end to that.

Whether the story is true or not is less important than the insight this 'Great Conceit' gives of the culture and times of one of the most important periods in human history.

It was written in the vernacular, a form of writing that had been developed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and could claim as exponents, two of the most important Neo-Confucian philosophers, the Cheng brothers. The use of the vernacular in 'The White Crane Rises' gives this story a potency that it would not have had if it had been confined to the formal writing of earlier times.

Therefore, this modern translation, with its modern style, is in keeping with the times it is describing. The Song stood on the brink of modernity and 'The White Crane Rises' reveals exactly how modern they were.

W.C.

## The Heavenly Chaos Reflected in the Story

(from page 3 to page 10)

### Heaven = Circle

Kublai Khan at the age of 26 is a man at his physical peak. He stands next to Kadai Khan his 36 year old cousin and ruler of the Eastern Province of Northern China. They watch, unseen, the Chinese Envoy through hanging drapes that divide up the tent. She stands in the doorway looking at her husband, Shao Yong, who is writing with firm concentration. A mixture of love and pride and concern and annoyance sparring for control of her thoughts. Until, finally, a winner of sorts. 'The track here separates. I assume the one to the left which moves north-west is the one that The sun, almost overhead, is a pale imitation of its self. The smoke from countless fires that keep the city alive in home and teahouse makes sure of that. The atmosphere, usually so sweet from the smells of spice and fresh flowers, is pungent with the oily fumes of coal and wood. North of the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors and on the east-west avenue known as The Thread are a series of merchant buildings that trade in pearls. Between two of these establishments is an alley barely wide enough for two men to pass. The eaves of their roofs meet providing welcome shade. The front Hall is full. It seats 300 in comfort so that all can see the raised stage and the daises without a restricted view. The chamber has gilded columns supporting the deep red ceiling. The carriage is covered with half open sides; four horses pull in banks of two. There are two men up front dressed in black with sleeves bound at the wrists and their leggings bound at the ankle, and with black headdress that hides their faces. They carry short swords strapped to their backs such that the handles protrude above their shoulders. Leaving the northern end of the Su Di they take the road to the right past the island of Gushan. The various pavilions that cover the island are lit by multi-coloured lanterns exaggerating the joviality of the celebrations taking place. The sounds of merry voices, sweet and

coarse with the lubrication of fine wine, drift into the carriage as they pass. The body is cut from throat to pelvis, the organs lined up along one side on the white marble slab. The stomach, intestines and bowls along the other. The bright light from the reflective oil lamps overhead lays stark this image. They leave the open courtyard and enter a large building through large double doors. The sound of children's voices surprises them. The sight of Zhao Yun on his hands and knees playing some game with 5 or 6 children surprises them even more. This disturbing thought is immediately cast adrift on seeing the Ink Stone teahouse. He thinks of her. Then like an iron filing drawn to a loadstone he is drawn inexorably towards its welcoming confines. 'Having heard from the Night Watch we sent to the Palace for reinforcements, he said, he felt he was compelled. And that, by reason, that he knew where the Deputy Censor's city house was, and, he also knew that it was close to the address the Night Watch said *we* were going to on our investigation. He had simply put these things together and assumed the truth.' The Grand Canal that runs north to south through Kinsai lies to the east of the Imperial Way by 2 city blocks. It is wide enough to allow 2 of the largest barges to pass each other with room to spare. The Dragon Ford Bridge, that provides passage over the canal for one of the main east west roads, has a central support in the middle of the canal because of its size. The Minister of Rites, Kao Tzu, is a 60 year-old, tall and lean member of the bureaucracy. He has responsibility for what is the most important Ministry in Lizong's Government as it officiates over the state Rituals, Music and Sacrifices, the Palace functions, the entire Education system including the Examination board, Astronomical Observation and the weighty responsibility of Disasters both natural and man made. When Lizong, Shi and Bao arrived the previous evening it was decided the meeting should be scheduled for the following day. This was necessitated because the Abbott needed rest after attending to the affairs of the monastery during the day. It must be said, that this mundane work of the monastery affairs that he carried out, was against the advice of his physician and the senior monks. The Deputy Censor's partner in the antiques business, Chan Ze, the missing man, is now missing forever. Yet here he sits in front

of an original painting, *Early Spring*, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century Master, Gui Xi, reflecting the fate this painting has brought him. If the Deputy Censor had not offered him this original work as an inducement to enter the antiques business then he would not be in the terrible predicament that he is in now. The speed the small trading junk is going is truly amazing. Not only is the wind with them but also the estuary bore is in full retreat. Bao and Tai lean against the stern rail keeping out of the way of the sailors who seem to be on an endless quest to keep the small craft at maximum speed and at the right orientation to the widening channel. Shi, having been assigned the task of investigating the, Antiquities Society, the name of the guild for dealers in antiques, has taken the most direct route. He simply marches into the building where it is housed and has it placed under the control of his Magistrates Office. As his men set about their tasks he plays audience to the President and Vice President of the Guild. 'He has the eyes of an Albatross and that rarest of things a willingness to be totally honest with his friends.' Bao says this with conviction. 'They were on their way back to the, Purple Moon, after scouring the area, when they saw a commotion. Cao sits almost opposite the antique shop that had been the cause of his present predicament. He peers from under the brim of his hat looking first one way then the other. He wonders about the one-legged beggar hanging about the Golden Morning Arcade. He knows this man, or knew him when he was Chan Ze, the Deputy Censor's partner. Shi, Bao, Tai and a member of the Night Watch are on a roof hiding behind washing draped over the balustrade. They peer through the gaps between the washing to where they can see opposite to a building in a street of similar buildings. The street below is busy with commerce. The first thing Cao is aware of is the sound of a deep murmuring, like that of a large crowd before the start of an opera. When he opens his eyes to the twilight of the setting sun the sound is still there. He moves to the door that leads to the veranda and opens it. The Great Hall of the Prince of Heaven has been transformed. In between the giant gilded columns many low tables cover the floor. Scribes and scholar officials exercising their duties sit behind them while messengers stand in front or dash from one place to another.

He is short. His round head sits on his round body just like a child's snowman. The armour he wears accentuates this impression. The face is flat, the eyes just slits, the mouth just a larger slit beneath a snubbed nose. The view from above the trees is expansive. The West Lake lies like a black mirror with the lights on the Su De lying like a string of pearls stretched across it. The brazier fires on the city wall define the line of the lake's furthest edge. The,

avoids the bandit filled hills, and the one to the right and moves north by north-east through bandit country?' Ask Kublai of Asutai. Shao Tai and Shao Ling-Ling are both wearing their Buddhist sparring togs, with wrists, ankles and waists bound with cord. They face off against each other with short iron wood staffs. Their play is more like an elaborate dance than the practice of a lethal martial art. Their play is also being watched by the excited eyes of three of Wedding Island's farm children, Mol, Lol and Gol, aged nine, eight and seven respectively. Shi, with the honour of his position to protect, had bought one of the large glass lanterns produced in Suzhou. At over a metre in diameter and painted in exquisite detail with a scene depicting the butterfly that dreamt it was Chuang-tse dreaming he was a butterfly, it was an extravagance only an Envoy could afford. It had remained unsold for three years before Shi had finally purchased it to make the shop keeper happy.

Water Nymph's Pony, is more than a tea house; it is a theatre of men's fantasies. It had originally been a warehouse until the famous Madam, Clinging Fire, had bought it and turned it into a place of entertainment with several stages of varying size. It also had all of the usual facilities of a tea house in the pleasure district. Tai is stretched out on the seat behind the table. Dressed in white cotton and with her eyes closed she resembles a corpse waiting for burial. A corpse that now speaks. 'She is like her brother. Her mercurial mind cannot be focused by external means. The West Lake is covered in boats and craft of all kinds; the first signs of Kinsai returning to normal. Bao and Tai hear happy and excited voices as they walk along the path next to the lake. Many recounting tales of the fire, of acts of bravery, of how luck played its part and of how this disaster has changed their lives forever. Tai had always been a little afraid of Moti, the monk from the, Mountains of Snow. She had heard him called, a shape

changer, and a friend of the Demons that protect the Dharma. There was something of the demon about his Tibetan face; it is contorted into a permanent snarl; a childhood accident. Bao

The outriders protrude well beyond the main column, like the horns of a bull, when entering enemy territory. The late sun has real warmth and foretells of the approaching spring. The snow having melted away has revealed the new growth of grass shoots struggling through last years yellowed stalks. Much to the satisfaction of the horses. The soft swells of the landscape are more reminiscent of the ocean after a storm has spent itself than any other description. The nine farms, almost equally divided in size, have rich earth that will grow anything from wheat to barley and even rice. Vegetables of every kind flourish, flowers like forests splash colour on the valley floors. 'He has not the authority. It is a decision that must be made by the next Great Khan. Would you have Kublai act if he were the Great Khan? Propelled by duty, Kublai heads south to Mengyip. This is the nearest Mongolian garrison where he can warn of the Jürgen cavalry operating in the Tai Shan range. General Salkai must be informed. Lieutenant Caspintai had been sent to see his father to organize the entrapment of Gorogene in the mulberry groves. This would entail sending out search parties to bring news to Kublai's whereabouts. A system would then be employed by which Kublai would get advanced notice of Gorogene's arrival. General Salkai heads up the column with four despatch riders immediately behind him. Other despatch riders come and go at a gallop providing him with a continuous supply of information from the screening outriders of his army either side and out of sight.

'News from the garrison at Yantai. The fishing village came under sustained attack from Jürgen cavalry last evening. I was sent to bring reinforcements.' Yong had left Kaifeng through the eastern Qingming Ward where it ran alongside of the Bian River. The Bian River had been widened and made into a cana

leads the way having the authority of his Palace Official's robes to make people give way and surrender their position. With Tai bringing up the rear Ling-Ling is safely positioned between the two. They make their way out onto the Imperial Way and cross over the sand covered central avenue with the help of the palace guards. Tai, Shi and Bao sit on a low wall that runs into the West Lake. They sit



in silence I. This joined Kaifeng in the north to the Huai River and the Huai River joined the Grand Canal in the southeast near Lake Hongze. The sun sets over Phoenix Hill. Lizong stands at the open window looking at the open metaphor before him. Only when the dusk is more night than day does he turn and joins the others around a low table. Shao Yong, having walked alongside the Grand Canal on its east side, now ventures a detour to a vantage point he can see some way off to the north east. Having achieved his objective he takes his time to take in the landscape. All the while imagining he is Confucius, whom, he assumes, would have passed through this very landscape on his great journey. 'That's better. Now, who will tell me what is going on?' The men remain silent and bent to the horizontal. The journey west was far more leisurely than the Han had expected, covering only fifty kilometres a day. A good camp site was enough to call a halt, often well before sunset. This did, however, afford hunters amongst the Mongolians to bring fresh game to the evening meal. 'There is nothing to forgive. watching Ling-Ling fishing, a handful of paces further along the shore line. Bao had taken her fishing when she was small and after she had caught a fish, she had, quite literally, been hooked ever since. The head librarian, who is passing through this section of the library, stops on seeing Bao and allows an expression of curiosity to mould his face. After a moment of contemplation he makes a detour to where Bao is And you will not be the only one who will have unsettling dreams with that Image imprinted on my mind.' Says Yong also in a distant voice. Tai and Ling make their excuses and leave the men to drink the night away. They have a busy schedule ahead. Once in their rooms at the Golden Lu they quickly change into their martial arts attire, binding their wrists and ankles, and replacing their court shoes with the flat tightly fitting martial foot wear they use in their sessions with the Abbot. Snowdrop was consummate in her role as arbitrator of sexual desire. Bringing Yong to orgasm by placing the helmet of his penis in her mouth and holding it in position by placing her teeth behind the helmet and coaxing the orgasm to come forth by alternating strokes by her right hand both rapid and slow, she delivered the first orgasmic release quickly so that his penis was desensitized and hence able to fulfil long and fulfilling sexual pleasure for both. Men, it has been long observed, derive much of their sexual pleasure from

watching a woman in the full throes of sexual ecstasy, for which early ejaculation is anathema. A small group of riders appears far off to the left making

hard at work. 'Master Bao, what are you doing here? Is this not your wedding day?' attic of a derelict house near to the entrance of Qingdao. After he smuggled himself into the town, an easy task as the main protection is the usual stakes and barriers which is mainly a defence against attack by horse men, he immediately set about creating a hide out from where he can watch everything entering or leaving this mainly deserted port. Yong, Ki and the Tax Collector, Su Ch'ung, are on the jetty. They dodge in and out of the workers loading and unloading the large vessels tied up on the jetty, riding straight for the head of the column at full gallop. Kadai and Kublai slow their pace so Kublai's bodyguard can over take them. Kublai's body guard fan out into a leftward arc and rightward arc, until the five horsemen are encompassed then they fall in behind them completely enclosing the five riders in a ring of steel. Washing the dust from his mouth with water from the Rizhou River, Shao Yong casts his eye along the river towards the big town of Zhucheng in the distance. The region is famous all over China for the quality of its silk and many of the fine quality silk bolts carry the name of this town. Zhucheng is in ruins. It has never recovered from the Jürgen invasion when it was looted and in most part destroyed by fire. The roads in the form of a grid are still visible, just. Where the houses and shops stood are now a collection of copses. As Yong and Ki approach Qingdao the number of fellow travellers increases in both directions. When arriving at the outskirts of the town they notice camps on either side of the road. The side nearest the town has fairly sturdy wooden shacks. Ali is in the camp on the other side. The largest vessels are on the T that sits astride of the main jetty that sticks out into the ocean. 'Bao, Bao. Get up you lazy old Chinese monkey.' This and other Mongolian insults wake Tai, who thoughtfully wakes Bao. 'Your Mongolian friends want you to go out to play.' The journey home began the day Yong and Ki left Qingdao. Ki, of course, wanted to know where Yong had been for seven days. And Yong, not wanting to lie, had told him that he couldn't tell him because it was not his to tell. Captain Miko is first to break the silence. 'Perhaps Bao, or should I call you Yong' Bao

**indicates that it really doesn't matter 'perhaps you can help me with this recurring dream that I have. I am on the stern of a great ship on a sealess sea made of stars. Of crew there are none.**

## The White Crane Rises

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The sun, almost overhead, is a pale imitation of its self. The smoke from countless fires that keep the city alive in home and teahouse makes sure of that. The atmosphere, usually so sweet from the smells of spice and fresh flowers, is pungent with the oily fumes of coal and wood. The onshore breeze that normally sweeps up the Che River from the bountiful ocean is missing this day. Indeed, there is no breeze at all. It is early summer in the richest city on Earth, Kinsai.

As usual, the churning chaos of commercial zeal fills both avenues either side of the Imperial Way. Pack animals vie in number with porters and carts of every kind. The clatter on the stone slabs produces a background rhythm to the shouts and calls of traders, deafening, and deadening the senses.

The three, four and five storied wooden buildings with their richly carved multi-coloured facades have their shutters fully open in a vain attempt at ventilation. This provision happens above the height of the broad covered walkways that front the entire lengths of the buildings at ground level. Beneath the shading arches the merchants of the most sophisticated wares are playing host to a host of customers.

A million churning lives play out their destinies within this city's walls. Yet, there are none who see white feathers arc from twiggy nest on gilded roof. There are none that witness The White Crane Rise up to Heaven, saving one.

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# Chapter 1

## Progress (51)

The Song Dynasty

1237 C.E.

3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

Before The Midday Drum

\*

=====	
==    ==	Fire
=====	
==    ==	
==    ==	Earth
==    ==	

### THE IMAGE

The Sun rises over the Earth:

The Image of PROGRESS.

Thus the superior man fulfils his function

While adding to his own virtue.

\*

'The Emperor Renzong (1010 - 1063 C.E.) paid attention to serious scholarship and was devoted to the way of government. He severely censured frivolous and superficial writing. Originally Liu Sanbian, the advanced scholar, liked to compose licentious songs. His compositions were transmitted everywhere. He once composed a song titled "The Crane Rises Up in the Sky" that concluded as follows: "I may exchange my empty title for some drinking and soft singing." When the Emperor announced the results of the examinations in the Front Hall, he dropped him from the list on purpose. The Emperor said: "Just go and do some drinking and enjoy some soft singing! Why would you want an empty title?" Then in 1034 C.E. Liu succeeded in the advanced examinations. Later he changed his name to Liu Yong. Only then was he able to be promoted and serve in the bureaucracy.'

#### Wu Zeng – Historian to the Court of Renzong



North of the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors and on the east-west avenue known as The Thread are a series of merchant buildings that trade in pearls. Between two of these establishments is an alley barely wide enough for two men to pass. The eaves of their roofs meet providing welcome shade. Small children play on the clean stone slabs as their minders look on from doorways and windows.

A door with oiled paper panes slides open and out steps a scholar official, Zhen Shi, in his long black robe and high hat. He wears the purple belt of a second-degree holder in the Civil Service Examinations and the green sash of the Prefectural Magistrate's Department.

He is accompanied by a man of the same age, around about 30 years, his name is Shao Bao, and he wears the black skirt and round cap of a student of the Imperial College. His red belt of a first-degree holder is just visible below the short tunic top. If Shi is the taller then Bao has the more robust build. Their natural swagger suggests men at their physical peak. They are laughing with abandon taking little notice of the stares of the alley's other inhabitants.

Bao recovers first. 'I declare you have captured my sister's heart that until just recently was all mine.'

'How would your father take to such a marriage?'

'With more joy than I am ever likely to bring him.'

'Give her a few years and she just might make me a fine wife.' He says this only half joking.

Bao looks at Shi with good humoured suspicion 'But I suspect, now you are Diانشi, you will be *courted* by the Court itself.'

As Shi turns and strolls along the alley, his demeanour turns to something more serious. 'Not for me the intrigues of the palace,' then as an after thought 'nor would I entertain those scoundrels in the aristocracy,' then lightening 'indeed, an educated merchant's daughter would suit me well.' He turns to Bao as he catches him up. Teasing him. 'You of course have little regard in this matter as you are already wed ... in all but name.'

Bao sighs. 'We will speak of this in turn for I have much to say to you before the ceremony.'

'I suspected as much' Shi counters 'when you invited me to your parents' house on *this* of all days.'

Before Bao can continue Shi exits the Alley. He immediately adopts a different mode of perambulation; the Walk of the Daoxue devotee. Beneath his robes his legs bend slightly at the knees. His hips take on an oscillating motion so that the top part of his body remains ridged with no vertical movement. Giving an overall appearance that he is gliding or floating. Bao follows suit as he falls in behind Shi so best to weave in and out of the milling crowds.

Soon they leave the covered archways to take an easterly direction along The Thread. Only when they enter the congested junction, where The Thread meets the Imperial Way, does their pace slacken.

Taking a diagonal route over the low wooden bridge, there to protect the single track of sand that makes up the Imperial Way, they come across an obstruction. A pack animal has thrown its load. Bao immediately stops and helps the drover pick up his load and reset it on the animal's back. Having suspected his friend's action, Shi stops and looks back, then takes up a position so best to direct traffic away from the loads recovery. Using the wide arms of his robe as signal flags he soon has the traffic moving again in both directions. With Bao and Shi receiving the gratitude of the drover they are soon on their way.

Making the east side of the Imperial Way they head south into the less congested area opposite The Temple of The Imperial Ancestors. Here there is only one avenue, as The Temple, set at the base of Phoenix Hill, takes up the space it would have occupied. The natural parkland south of the Temple is vibrant in its verdant glory despite the heat.

Shi slows his pace so Bao can catch up. 'Tell me then, what so plagues you that you must have my ear on this particular day?'

Bao's smile is weak as it fights through numerous openings but then he begins. 'Will you not be offered a high Prefectural position now you are Dianshi?'

'Indeed I will.'

'Will this position be in some far distant corner of the Empire?'

'Was I not fortunate to have been offered a position in the Northern Prefecture's Office here in Kinsai on becoming a second degree holder? And, as the general rule is to broaden an official's knowledge of the Empire on attaining the highest degree, I can surely expect placement in Guangnaxi or Guangnandong or some other distant province.'

'Excellent!' Bao grins.

'Now I see your cunning ploy! You wish well rid of me!'

'Indeed not, I wish to accompany you.' Bao's grin expands.

Shi pulls up and turns to his friend in seriousness. 'That is quite impossible. You have just failed the second-degree exam ... *again* ... and therefore must take it ... *again*.'

Bao awkwardly fidgets under Shi's gaze. 'Indeed, indeed, of course I will. That is the very point.' His tone changes from wheedling acquiescence to one of authority. 'You must take me as your indentured student. A man of your calibre, passing the third degree and becoming Dianshi on a first attempt, would be expected to have such a fortunate fellow. A dedicated student guaranteed



to hang on his every word and fawn over his every intellectual nuance. And who better to fill this role than one of your dearest of friends, but my good self.'

'Impossible!'

'Why are you being impossible?'

'If you had spent more time on your studies, instead of searching for hidden meaning in your ancestor's metaphysical meanderings, you would be standing alongside of me in the Front Hall today. Where, you could have expected to be posted to the further reaches of the Empire under your own exemplar.'

Frowning with annoyance. 'I resent your attack on my noble ancestor. Shao Yong was well respected by the noble Cheng brothers, as well you know.'

'Yet, he did not make it into Zhu Xi's core genealogy of Daoxue. Well, did he?'

'I will not argue with you on this subject as it would take far too much time and it is time we have so little of. You must take me, if only to make sure that I pass my exams.'

'That, is blackmail.'

Bao ignores this and continues. 'How would you ever forgive yourself if I was to die of old age still a student.' He grins in triumph.

'I know only too well the cleverness of your mind, and, the wicked ways in which you employ it.'

'All the more reason to take me in hand, surely you can see that?'

'What I can see is your scoundrel behaviour on display.'

Bao tries to look serious. 'Then let me take a different tack. You know it is your duty as a superior man, in *this culture of ours*, to correct the behaviour of a student and set his mind on the track of self-cultivation.'

'Indeed I do. But in your case, have I not already tried. And, without success, may I add.'

'You are too harsh. We have spent little time together since you became an Assistant Magistrate. Obviously, I need closer supervision.'

Shi sighs from his belly and frowns with as much force as he can muster, but the grinning monster before him has too much of the roguish child on display for him to hold onto angry thoughts. 'If, and I say if, if I was to acquiesce to such foolishness would you promise to apply yourself as I direct.'

'That is the very point.'

'Indeed, it is not! Why do you wish to travel to some backwater of the Empire? That, is the point.'

'The truth is that having spent my entire life here in Kinsai I feel the need to see for myself the wonders of the world. For once, when I have become a scholar official, then my life will not belong to me but to the service of my fellow man. This present time will be the only opportunity I have for free exploration. You know how we are confined once we go down that track. You know this is true because you have already gone down that track. Let me accompany you and I will share with you the wonders of whatever shores we wash up on. You will be far too busy with your duties to explore the very region that you will administer. I, on the other hand, will have plenty of time, in between my studies of course, to bring you word of the region from every level and view point. A perfect arrangement.'

Shi sighs from his bowls. 'If, I agree, there is something else you must promise me. You must give up your debauched ways.'

Bao is astounded, or least puts on a good show of being so. 'A little entertainment with the singing girls is a young man's prerogative.'

'A little entertainment' he mocks in sing-song parody 'with the singing girls.'

Bao bursts out laughing.

'And what of the Lotus of Kinsai?'

It is Bao's turn to sigh and a wistful expression to make its appearance. 'I do love her you know.'

'Then why don't you marry her?'

'I will, just as soon as I pass my second degree. That, is the arrangement with her father, if you remember? Which under your guidance will be in exactly 3-years time.'

Shi is unconvinced so Bao continues. 'Surely you see how not only my happiness, but hers, has been placed in your hands.'

Shi shakes his head but he can't help but be impressed at Bao's machinations. He also knows how much he would miss this intellectually wayward vagabond. So the idea of taking him on his assignment has an appeal all of its own.

'And do you think you will be able to give up the singing girls once you are married?'

'Of course!' Then seeing the unconvinced expression on Shi's face. 'Surely you can't take me for such a scoundrel?'

'That, remains to be seen.'

Bao feigns pain. 'What have I done to deserve this slight on my character?'

'You forget, I have partaken of many an adventure in the pleasure districts with you leading the way. I know how much you like *the* singing girls.'

They both come under the influence of pleasant memories, that is, before Bao's entire manner changes. He comes close to Shi looking around to see if anyone is listening. 'I was at the, Broken Branch of Celestial Grace, the other night.' Seeing Shi search his memory. 'You know, the one with the twin sisters?'

'Who could forget?' Shi remembers, half in regret.

'Well, they have a new singing girl, Meow Meow. And as you know, I like to try my hand at pleasuring those I have not yet had the pleasure of. It turns out that she had been previously employed at the, Water Nymph's Pony.'

'I don't believe it.' Shi says under his breath as he half turns away in a vain attempt to disguise his distress.

'Well, she had quite a story to tell. Meow Meow by name, Meow Meow by nature. She had entertained a visiting party of merchants from Fuzhou. Only they could not have been from Fuzhou, as Meow Meow is from Fuzhou and knows the accent as only a native can. Theirs wasn't even a good imitation. She was convinced they were from Kinsai, and what's more, they had the tinny tones of the aristocracy about them.'

'So where is this leading? Not to idle rumours I hope.'

Bao can see that Shi is disturbed and can also hear it in his voice. 'You know something? Don't you?'

'Finish what you have started.'

'Alerted to this deception she took particular interest but soon found her curiosity raising suspicions of their own. The Madam, Clinging Fire, called her in to her quarters and warned her off. Only, as she was making her way back to the main performance area, she passed one of the party in question leaving one of the private rooms used for exhibitions of the more sordid type, and ...' he waits to see the effect this is having on Shi, but *his* face has become like stone, so he continues 'she recognised Zhao Yun.'

'Silence!'

Bao quickly looks around to see if anyone has been alerted or is listening before turning back to his friend who is clearly disturbed.

'I'm only telling you what I heard.'

'And how many of your fellow students have you told?' He demands.

'None. I give you my word. I am telling you this now because I met the girl herself and heard it from her own lips. It is not the first time I have heard such rumours but I have said nothing.' He waits until Shi's reaction has spent its force before continuing. 'You obviously have heard these rumours. Not surprising, as this is happening in your Prefectural District.'

Shi sounds desperate. 'Soon all of Kinsai will be awash with this.'

'So it is true.'

'I do not know!' He almost shouts.

'But Shi, dear friend, this is not your problem if the Emperor has a taste for ...'

'Will you be quiet! Next you will be telling me he has desires of bestiality.'

'Well, now you come to mention it.' Bao hides the laughing fit fast rising.

'Tell me you are joking?' Shi demands in desperation.

'I'm ... joking.' He says this while bending over from laughter.

Shi can see he has been caught in one of Bao's tricks and so relaxes then after a while. 'You are right. What has this to do with me? Even if the Emperor Lizong were to enjoy congress with the ... beasts of the field,' he suddenly bursts out laughing 'it ... is ... his ... Princely prerogative.'

'Naaay.' Snorts Bao, imitating a mule. 'His Princely desire to satisfy his very own animal spirits, which in his case, would appear to be of the four legged variety.'

Bao keels over from the exertions of uncontrolled laughter and has to be supported by Shi who is himself in the throws of laughter.

Sobering up, Shi asks almost as an after thought. 'I suppose the Imperial College is full of such talk?'

'And yet, he is not judged unkindly, at least not on this account. Why should he not indulge his whims? What harm does it do? None. The singing girls who indulge in such practices are paid well for their labours. And, if the rumours are true, some may even enjoy the experience.'

Shi considers this before replying. 'Then what harm is there? None that I can see, at least from a passing observation.'

'Then let us leave this tainted subject and consider our fourth coming journey.'

Shi has fully sobered up and sets off with Bao catching him up.

'I will, of course, exact a price for this indulgence.'

'Name it.'

'First, you will study as I direct.'

'Agreed.'

'Second you will marry Wu Tai on your return. Whether you pass your exams or not.'

'Agreed.'

'And third, you will forego the metaphysical musings of your ancestor, Shao Yong.'

'But...'

'It is a condition that is inviolate.'

Bao blows through tightened lips. 'Agreed.'

'Then best we proceed directly to the Ministry of Rites. You must become indentured to me before I am posted or they will not allow this arrangement.'

'Surely we have time to call in at the, Ink Stone? The midday drum has not yet sounded'.

Shi can see the Ink Stone teahouse coming up on the left. It is the last building on the corner nearest, The Gate of Tranquillity, the entrance to the Palace Complex.

The building is set back some way from the line of the other buildings. This allows for a large area to protrude onto the street that is screened by a shoulder-high bamboo fence that is lacquered black. This L-shaped space is then divided off into different sized sitting arrangements that are also divided off by bamboo fencing to allow a degree of privacy. There is also a balcony area up a flight of 5-steps that is an extension of the seating area inside. The Ink Stone, is tasteful in style

using the symbols of the literati's tools as motifs and played out in low-key greys and blacks.

The proximity of the Ink Stone to the Palace complex has guaranteed that the clientele is mainly made up of scholar officials. It is on this day.

Shi and Bao slow their pace and change their gait as they pass through the black lacquered wooden entrance. This has been carved in relief with Phoenix holding in their beaks the scribes' brushes. Which in turn supports an ink stone wrapped in gold leaf with the illustrious name of the maker, Chan He, stamped upon it.

Approaching the break in the internal bamboo fence, Shi can see that all places are taken to both left and right of the L-shaped outside sitting area. He turns to Bao who directs his attention to the raised area by a nod of his head.

Turning once more he now sees at the top of the short flight of stairs, Wu Tai, the Lotus of Kinsai. Her soft beauty never fails to affect him and he smiles involuntarily without even knowing.

She bows in the old style, bending at the knee as well as at the waist. On raising she sweeps her arm up to the side showing the way. Shi takes her instruction and mounts the steps following her direction to the seats reserved for high-ranking officials. These have a view looking across the Imperial Way to Phoenix Hill on the other side.

Before he takes the seat proffered he notices that those gathered in the area below are now standing and facing him. This includes the serving girls who have joy writ large upon their faces. He looks about and sees that all, even those inside have risen.

'Welcome, Master Zhen, on this your day of triumph. All under Heaven praise your name.' Tai's words have hardly ended when a great cheer goes up from those gathered. Hats are thrown in the air and bottles banged on the tables. Shi is overcome and doesn't know what to do but gazes about in astonishment.

Eventually, Tai whispers in his ear. 'You must sit first before they will stop.' Her smile breaks the moment and he sits.

With order restored Tai again bows but this time from the waist. 'You may order what you wish. Only expect the same, no matter what you order.'

Shi is too emotional to say anything and simply raises his hands. As Tai turns, her bountiful smile changes to a look of anger as her gaze falls on Bao, now seated across the angle of the table from Shi. He cannot hold her angry eyes and so looks down at his fingers fiddling with the ends of his belt. She leans towards him and whispers in hardly suppressed anger. 'You, will get what you are given.'

As she leaves he reaches out to touch her but she snatches her arm away. Turning to Shi in sadness. 'I do love her you know.'

Tai's anger and Bao's reaction helps Shi to recover from the surprise that he has just received. He begins to see the workings of a plan well worked, and works the rest of it out as he speaks. 'It is you that has arranged all of this. Of course ... and taking for granted that I would go along with all of your machinations.' Then reflective. 'Am I so easily manipulated?' He shakes his head as if answering his own question. 'You really are a master tactician, I give you that.' Then he changes his tone to one of authority. 'Bao, I will agree to take you with me, but, you will do your duty, and, you will fulfil what we have agreed. I will make certain of it.'

Bao musters a weak smile as a reply.

Tai returns with a silver tray and places the contents on the table. Before Shi, she places a porcelain cup and wine bottle of such delicacy they are all but transparent. In front of Bao she places an ink holder and a tiny misshapen bottle. She smiles at Shi with such mischievous delicacy as she turns away, that he cannot hold his annoyance longer than it takes Bao to pick up the bottle and pore the contents into the ink holder. A few drops, barely a dribble.

'More than you deserve.' Shi quips.

She returns once more, this time bearing a small brooch of jade in the shape of a small branch. The multi-coloured flowers, with which the small brown and black striped branch is covered, have all been worked from the



same piece of jade as the branch. Gold clasps hold the stem onto the fastening device, which is also of gold.

'This is a gift from myself and my father. I hope you will accept it in remembrance of me. May I?' She gesticulates that she wishes to attach it to his robe.

Shi is more than moved. A pang of emotion travels the circles of his stomach. Her close proximity undoes an unknown guard, in regard to her as Bao's betrothed. Glancing at Bao he has a pang of jealousy but it is washed away by the smile she gives him on completion of her task.

Turning to Bao, Tai says with delicacy. 'I have a little something for your journey. A reminder of the sharp edge of my affections.'

With this she pulls out from her sleeve a slender assassins' dagger and drives it into the wooden table in front of him with force. Giving him a false smile, she retreats.

Shi can't help but enjoy the moment. 'A sharp reminder, I have little doubt, to remember what you have promised her.'

Bao's confusion propels his words. 'She knows I will fulfil my promise, because she knows how I feel about her. So why this extravagant gesture?'

He tries to pull the knife out but finds it too deeply imbedded and is forced to work it out by moving the slender handle back and forward. Finally freeing it, he examines the thin long blade closely. It is the real thing, having tiny channels that project the blood back into the body through the indentations of the blade's serrated edge. It even has the maker's mark alongside the craft guild he belongs to: a ghoulish grinning skull.

Shi pours Bao a drink. 'Help me finish this. If we are to have you indentured before the ceremony then we have little time left.'

Replacing the bottle on the table he detects movement from the corner of his eye. A Palace Official, who is wearing the white robe of the inner court over a gold edged purple robe. He is gliding at astonishing speed towards The Gate of Tranquillity. He suddenly veers off

so that he can pass close by the Ink Stone. His eyes fix Shi's and as they do so, so he slows to a normal walking pace, then slows to a pace as if he were walking through honey.

Someone whispers in Shi's ear. 'Welcome. Your entrance in the Celestial Game is eagerly awaited.'

Shi tries to turn his head to see who is speaking but can't take his eyes off the Palace Official.

The Palace Official finally let's go of Shi's eyes and continues at even greater speed towards the Gate of Tranquillity.

Shi turns, searching for whomever it was that spoke into his ear. But there is none even remotely close. He quickly turns his attention back to the Palace Official but he has already past in through the Palace Gate.

Bao finishes examining the knife, and having fought off his initial reaction, he slips it up his sleeve to the pocket that holds his student's brushes and into which it fits perfectly. 'I will treasure it always as a token of her love.' He beams at Shi.

This is enough to reengage his friend who says quietly. 'I suspect that was not the intention.'

The friends share a moment then finish their drinks and make their way to the top of the stairs.

Tai comes to say goodbye but only to Shi. 'I trust you to be successful in whatever position they give you. So I will not wish you luck, but instead will ask one small favour, and that is, to make your new servant,' here she glances at Bao 'be careful to all of his duties.'

'Have no fear on that account. He will return to pass his exams and to marry you. This I promise you, Wu Tai.'

They both look at Bao who wilts under their gaze. 'You know I love you.' Is all he can muster, but this is still too much for Tai and her tears flow like wine.

The two men bow and leave Tai standing looking after them from the top of the stairs.

They are half way across to the Gate of Tranquillity, when Shi pulls up sharp. Forcing Bao to swing around to where he stands.

'And what does Tai's father think of all this?'

Bao looks for a way out but there is none.

'Unfortunately, he is at the new teahouse. The Ink Well, that is under construction near the Buddhist Monastery of Lingyan.'

'In other words, he does not know what has transpired in his absence.' Shi is incensed. 'You have left Tai to face her father's wrath alone. What a despicable act of cowardice.'

Bao remonstrates. 'It is not like that. Tai does not want me there as her father has a temper. She can handle him with ease having had a full life practising. And, she has him around her...' He raises his little finger and wiggles it.

'It has not crossed your mind, that where she may be willing to wait, that he may not?'

'It has not, as it is does not apply. If you remember, we are to marry once I have passed my 2<sup>nd</sup> degree exams.' He says with some force. 'Besides, her father likes me.' This he says with pride.

'Heaven knows why.'

'I could list my good qualities at this point but I thought we were in a hurry?'

'Indeed we are.'

Shi holds out part of his robe at the rear 'Here, grasp onto this. If you are to gain access to the Imperial Palace you must be seen to be with me.'

Just then, as Bao grasps hold of Shi's robe, *cat's paws*, make their way across the treetops on Phoenix Hill. The breeze comes in a gust and they are forced to hold onto their hats. They look at each other, each knowing the other's thoughts. This is an Omen: One that binds.

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**The obstacle to progress is here in relation to an individual.**

**Patience is more than mere waiting.**

**To cultivate one's self brings recognition from the ruler.**

**Then all obstacles are removed.**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**When a man wants to make progress,**

**He may be forced to depend on others.**

**He must not allow arrogance to cloud his vision**

**When he cannot achieve this alone.**

**Perseverance with gratitude brings**

**Success.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**Many will benefit in times of progress.**

**The superior man caring little for material wealth**

**Contents himself with facilitating others.**

**Undertaking great projects under such a man brings**

**Success.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

## Coming to Meet (1)

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===== Heaven
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===== Wind
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### THE IMAGE

**The Gentle Wind penetrates Heaven:**

**The Image of COMING TO MEET.**

**The superior man notes the arrival of a young girl**

**And realizes her power for transformation.**

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## Chapter 2

### Approach (56)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

3rd Day of the 6th Moon

After The Evening Drum

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== == Earth

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===== Lake

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#### THE IMAGE

The Lake rises up shaping the Earth:

The Image of APPROACH.

Thus the superior man

Has the depth of a Lake

In his endeavours

To teach and protect the people.

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“Don’t suspect that the King lacks wisdom. Even in the case of the things that grow most easily in the world, they would never grow up if they were exposed to sunshine for one day and then to cold for ten days. It is seldom I have an audience with him, and when I leave, others who expose him to cold arrive. Even if what I am saying to him is taking root, what good does it do? Now chess playing is but a minor art. One cannot learn it unless he concentrates his mind and devotes his whole heart to it. Chess expert Ch’iu is the best chess player in the whole country. Suppose he is teaching two men to play. One man will concentrate his mind and whole heart to it, doing nothing but listening to Chess Expert Ch’iu’s instructions. Although the other man listens to him, his whole mind is thinking that a wild white goose is about to pass by and he wants to bend his bow, adjust the string to the arrow, and shoot. Although he is learning along with the other man, he will never be equal to him. Is that because his intelligence is inferior? No, it is not.

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Mencius (G): Book 6 Part 1

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The front Hall is full. It seats 300 in comfort so that all can see the raised stage and the daises without a restricted view. The chamber has gilded columns supporting the deep red ceiling. The walls have insets that are decorated with Imperial motifs. The floor is natural yellow wood, oiled to perfection so it shimmers beneath the many lamps. It is a regal setting but not on the scale or opulent magnificence of the Great Hall of the Prince of Heaven. In comparison it is sober and workman like, a fitting venue for the Emperor Lizong to present the 15 successful Dianshi candidates with their diplomas and their placements in bureaucratic roles throughout the Empire.

There is only one left, Zhen Shi. He has pride of place as he has passed on a first attempt. Lizong surprises all present, even those in the government who stand to his right, by coming down from the daises to greet Shi as he mounts the stage.

After Lizong hands Shi his diploma he addresses those gathered in a clear strong voice ‘This exceptional young man has reminded me that we live in exceptional times. Even with the Empire divided, we who are still free under Heaven have achieved greatness never before achieved. Our people flourish in all their endeavours and make their mark in every creative area that civilization brings. *This culture of ours, that we celebrate here today, binds*

us together by providing the framework so all under Heaven can exercise their full potential.' He turns to Shi. 'You are the finest example of what *this culture of ours* can produce, and as such, I have a special appointment for you. You will wait behind and I will discuss this with you shortly.'

After Shi leaves the stage and takes his place, all bow. Lizong leaves the stage to his left passing the Palace dignitaries bent double. Only one man follows him out. Once the doors have closed behind them, those gathered on stage leave in ritual turn. The Palace dignitaries exit through the door below the stage on the left, the government through the one on the right.

An eruption of talk engulfs the Hall. Congratulations flow from fathers and brothers, from teachers and scholar officials in the direction of the successful Dianshi candidates.

Bao, who has been sitting at the back of the Hall, is the last to engage. He is in shock. He drifts through the clumped gatherings of joy; oblivious to the happiness he is surrounded by. His mercurial mind plays out a thousand scenarios in as many moments; none are in accord with his plans. He finds himself on the periphery of Shi's group and only half listens to the praise that Shi's family and teachers are heaping on his friend.

It is Shi's father, Zhen Ying-ta, a scholar official employed in the Ministry of Rites, who eventually spots him. 'Bao, Bao, come and join us. Why are you standing alone, as if a stranger?'

Shi's brothers, also scholar officials, join in their father's entreaty. Seeing their happiness lifts his spirits and he breaks free from the condition his mind has been placed in and over which he has no control.

He bows low to Shi's father. 'I salute you, Ying-ta, for how could your son's success have been possible without a father such as you.'

Ying-ta, half turns to his family. 'Listen to these silvery words. When did a father receive such praise from his own children?'

The banter engendered by this encounter results in mock praise and slanderous accusations of the humorous kind.



Shi's youngest brother, Yen, a boy of 12 years, can contain himself no longer and pushing his way through takes Bao by the arm and drags him into their midst. 'Have you not words of praise for Shi?'

Bao looks from Yen to Shi. 'Please forgive me, I forget myself. It is only that I have come to expect such success from you as routine in such matters. So let me sing your praise in the old style.' He clears his throat and recites the Poem of Departure:

'Forget not your family and friends,  
Nor ignore your common humanity.  
Forget not the place you have come from,  
Nor ignore those things we all hold dear.  
Forget not these words nor ignore their joy.  
And, return!'

Ignoring protocol the friends embrace giving Shi the chance to whisper in Bao's ear 'Has the arrogant dragon cause to repent?'

Bao gives Shi a disparaging look before allowing Yen to embrace his brother in kind.

A Palace official in his white robes descends from the stage and addresses them. 'Lizong awaits.'

The family bow and leave with Bao tagging along behind.

'He also awaits you, Shao Bao.'

The family turn as one and look with surprise at Bao but his eyes are only for the Palace official. So stunned is he, he forgets his manners not bidding his friends farewell.

'Follow me.'

Shi follows with Bao falling in behind. They leave the Hall through the doors on the left of the stage and mount stairs that eventually brings them to a large open balcony overlooking Kinsai.

'Wait here.' The official instructs as he exits through the lone door set in the long wall.

Shi stays in the centre of the space and watches as Bao drifts restlessly towards the view. They exchange a

glance, mirroring the nervous apprehension plainly on view in each other's faces.

The door behind them slides open at speed and Lizong enters at pace. He is followed in by the Palace Official that Shi had seen on the Imperial Way. The doors are shut from the inside by Imperial guards, leaving the four men alone.

Shi and Bao drop to their knees with their foreheads on the floor. Lizong looks amused. He is a man not much older than Shi and Bao. His face is certainly Han but the eyes have a roundness that is quite distinctive. Both Shi and Bao have classically shaped almond eyes; only the Palace scholar official has the slits that originate from the Wei and the western provinces.

The rounded eyes engage the slits in good-humoured intercourse before revisiting the two supine figures before them. 'We cannot have formal protocol under the circumstance that we now find ourselves in. From now on you will bow in the normal manner as is befitting between scholar officials. And you will address me as Zhao Yun. Now, get up.'

Bao and Shi having regained their feet find Lizong is almost within touching distance. He looks from one to the other. A smile seems to play just below the surface of a face that is both handsome and strong.

'Shao Bao.' He says Bao's name as if it held a mystique. 'Tell me, is it true you are a direct descendent of the philosopher and metaphysician, Shao Yong?'

Bao is still trying to recover from being in the Prince of Heaven's presence that all he can manage is. 'Indeed.'

'Indeed?' As Bao ignores this prompt, Zhao Yun is forced to continue. 'How do you find his scholarship?'

Bao, finding no help for direction from his friend, falls back on his own opinion and in so doing relaxes. 'I find his work fascinating and intellectually challenging.'

Lizong beams a smile first at Bao then back to the Palace Official who is standing a little behind him. 'What particular aspects of his work do you enjoy most?'

'His system of logic that has the ability to derive all the natural numbers from black and white squares. And in the reverse, to produce a pattern of black and white squares from the natural numbers.'

'You know your subject well, Shao Bao, I'm impressed. You have before you a student of your illustrious ancestor. We will no doubt discuss this further when times are not so pressing.' He goes to turn to Shi but then stops after a glance at the Palace Official. He returns to Bao. 'Is it usual for you to carry an assassin's dagger concealed about your person?'

Bao almost chokes and tries to pull the dagger from inside his sleeve, only entangling it in the material of his tunic as he does. Finally freeing it he presents it to Zhao Yun with almost a thrust. It is, however, handle first. 'Forgive me. It was a present from Tai. That is, Wu Tai, my betrothed.'

'Ah, the Lotus of Kinsai.' Zhao Yun says this as if it answered everything. Then he takes the dagger and examines it. 'She obviously has a sense of humour.'

This time Bao does choke, and on a nervous laugh he is not in control of. 'One could say that, if one were being kind.'

This amuses Yun and he shares another moment with the Palace Official.

A light-headedness seeps through the confusion of Bao's thoughts replacing it with the single clarity of wellbeing. His eyes are instinctively drawn to the Palace Official who is looking at him with amused benevolence. He feels he might faint and looks to Shi for support but *his* eyes are on the dagger. To prevent his imminent collapse he feels compelled to continue and blurts out. 'I have come to look upon it as a symbol of her love ... that she has bestowed on me. I have promised to cherish it always.'

'An assassin's dagger as a symbol of love?' Zhao Yun ponders theatrically, then after a while. 'Perhaps it is not so misplaced a symbol after all. Is not the assassin's dagger designed to pierce the heart without leaving a trace? Surely love does the same.'

Bao swallows with relief and bows.

As the Palace Official turns his attention to Zhao Yun, Bao's light-headedness passes.

Yun smiles as he hands the dagger back to Bao. 'I would not wish to deprive you of such a special gift. I will accept its presence on your person in the manner that you have accepted it, as a token of love.' Then with just a little humour. 'But keep it out of sight of the Palace guards for they would cut you to pieces if they ever saw it, not knowing, its true meaning.' Bao bows low.

Zhao Yun turns to Shi and in doing so he turns serious. 'Now, to the business at hand. Did you notice anything amiss with my Ministers at the ceremony?'

Shi takes but a moment to remember 'The Deputy Censor was not in his place.'

'Well done, you are indeed a keen observer.' He now fires off his questions. 'In your position as assistant Magistrate, did you investigate two murders to their successful conclusion?'

'Indeed.'

'So you are well versed in the procedures that are required in such investigations?'

'I have studied the relevant manuals and received instruction from the Chief of Police on these matters.' Then remembering his time with the cadavers. 'Also, the doctor who carried out the examinations on the victim's bodies was most informative. He had a detailed knowledge of autopsy.'

'Excellent. You are the very person for the job at hand.' He glances at Bao then back to Shi 'What I now have to say must remain secret. Nothing must ever be revealed.'

Bao and Shi bow in acknowledgement of their sincere intentions.

A further glance at the Palace Official before Zhao Yun pronounces in stern tones. 'The deputy Censor has been murdered.'

Shi, whose brilliant mind has already worked out this as a possibility, is, however, not prepared for the fullness

of the responsibility that now falls on his person as if it was a physical object. Bao can hardly believe what he is hearing and has to gasp for air that he has involuntarily expelled.

Zhao Yun and the Palace Official note their reaction and both seem pleased.

Zhao Yun turns and presents the Palace Official. 'This is Wang Chi,' he hesitates just a moment before continuing 'he is my special councillor on ... special situations. A man of special talents. Perhaps Chi you would present the details, as you are in possession of them more than myself?'

His voice is mellow, his delivery relaxed and his pace even. 'Sometime last night the deputy Censor was murdered on a pleasure boat on the West Lake. When his body was discovered the Captain of the vessel put in at a small jetty that is near a police post on the Su di. The Officer in charge of the police recognised the deputy Censor as he had previously worked near the deputy's home in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canton. He had the good sense to send word to the Palace by one of his trusted men and so the situation was saved. Those on board, the singing girls, their clients and the crew had no idea who he was. I visited the pleasure craft myself after being summoned by Zhao Yun and secured the situation with the help of the Police Officer and his men. The body has not been moved. It awaits your arrival so that the investigation can begin.'

Shi can see a problem immediately. 'Have the passenger's and crew been allowed to leave?'

'All those except the Captain of the vessel and his crew. We do have a list of those onboard at the time and their places of residence.' He takes out a scroll of paper from inside his sleeve. 'The singing girls have returned to their place of abode, the Police Officer has the details. The rest you will find here.'

Wang Chi steps forward. In passing the scroll to Shi a physical shock is sent up Shi's arm transferring itself to the rest of his body and focusing his entire attention.

'Concentrate your mind and whole heart.'

For a moment all he can see is Wang Chi's face, it fills his entire vision as if though he was standing but a hand's distance away.

His vision disappears as soon as Wang Chi lets go of the scroll but *his* words do not, echoing throughout his mind.

He can now see a thousand problems with all needing two solutions. He turns to Zhao Yun. 'What is the most important, to secure the murderer, or, to protect the Dynasty?'

'They are both of equal importance but you must concentrate on finding the murderer.' Zhao Yun ponders his next statement with care. 'There has not been a murder of a member of a Song government in over 200 years. I will not have my reign besmirched with this abomination! We,' indicating Chi 'will make sure that this murder never took place. However, I will not allow members of my government to be murdered!' He says this in anger. 'You must find out who did this wicked deed, and I, will destroy them!'

Such is the power of his displeasure that Bao and Shi, and even Chi, bow.

'All means will be put at your disposal. All you need do is ask. A carriage waits in the courtyard of the Front Hall. Report to me personally, day or night, when you have established anything significant. Now go.'

Bao and Shi bow and leave, retracing their steps back to the Front Hall. Going down the stairs Bao turns towards Shi and is about to say something but is cut off before the words even reach the air by Shi flicking his hand close to his mouth.

Entering the Front Hall, deserted but for the men extinguishing the lamps, Shi waits until they are in the centre before he whispers. 'Take care with what you say until we are free of the Palace. I have been a scholar official long enough to know that all walls have ears. This, Bao, is going to be difficult. We will not have the fellowship of our scholar officials to depend on. Nor can we entirely trust the Palace. We are alone in this and should proceed accordingly.'

Bao doesn't like what he is hearing and looks about him with suspicion as his active imagination sees spies

behind every golden column and assassins in every dark shadow.

\*

## The Changing Lines

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Her beauty defies the bag of bones that give her form.**

**Her beauty defies the putrid flesh she wears.**

**Her beauty lasts forever in the mind of the sage.**

**Nature is always approachable.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**So it is said by our ancient ancestors:**

**The sage understands the Approach of fate and destiny.**

**Only the sage knows how to Approach nature.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**Those of high rank and those of low rank,**

**Those who are rich and those who are poor,**

**They all experience the same joy**

**When Approaching or being Approached.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**The superior man Approaches all things**

**Through sincerity and righteousness**

**In all situations.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**The singular moment that lasts forever**

**Is experienced as beauty as it Approaches.**

**Thus the superior man gains insight into**

**Heaven and Earth.**

**These Changing Lines Produce:**

**Fellowship of Men (2)**

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=====
===== Heaven
=====
=====
==  == Fire
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**The Image**

**Fire rising with Heaven:**

**The Image of FELLOWSHIP OF MEN.**

**The superior man organizes the people,**

**Each according to his ability.**

**\***



## Chapter 3

### The Army (61)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

After The Coming Night Drum

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== == Earth

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===== Water

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**The Image**

**Beneath the Earth, Water:**

**The Image of THE ARMY.**

**Thus the superior man organizes the people**

**With their consent.**

\*

“What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Tao or Dao) (G). Cultivating the Way is called education. The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment. What can be separated from us is not the Way. Therefore the superior man is cautious over what he does not see and apprehensive over what he does not hear. There is nothing more visible than what is hidden and nothing more manifest than what is subtle. Therefore the superior man is watchful over himself when he is alone.”

From the Book of Rites (G):

The beginning of the Chapter on the Doctrine of the Mean (G)

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The lights of the Palace hide the stars. It is moonless, a night full of dark portent.

A Palace Official waits for Bao and Shi at the bottom of the steps from the Front Hall. He opens the door to their carriage and ushers them in without a word.

The carriage is covered with half open sides; four horses pull in banks of two. There are two men up front dressed in black with sleeves bound at the wrists and their leggings bound at the ankle, and with black headdress that hides their faces. They carry short swords strapped to their backs such that the handles protrude above their shoulders. Shi and Bao are fully aware with whom they now travel for these are men of legend, the Night Watch. An elite unit of the army that carry out operations behind enemy lines they are always at the Emperor's disposal.

As soon as they are sat, as soon as they are gone.

They exit the courtyard through a side entrance avoiding the one that leads to the Imperial Way. This leads into another courtyard where they are joined by another carriage that falls in behind. This is fully enclosed, with two men of the Night Watch up front and two standing on a running board on the back.

The convoy exits from this courtyard, crosses a short stretch of ground and out through the fortified Palace wall via the entrance known as The Emperor's Gate. Palace guards have watched them all the way but none impede their progress.

Passing through a natural gap on Phoenix Hill the galloping horses make swift their journey to the city wall. High and mighty are the battlements. The fortresses that line its length like armed giants stand in silence; a salute to peace.

As they approach, so the gates to the Phoenix Gate are swung open. Hardly slackening their pace they pass through.

The smooth road turns into a track as it travels west along the south side of the West Lake. Passing through manicured countryside more reminiscent of a park.

Shi and Bao have remained silent on their journey so far but now, buffeted from the carriage's furious pace on an uneven surface, they soon complain.

Shi feels for the small hatch on the carriage's roof and lifting it, commands. 'Slow your pace.' The driver obeys instantly and they progress at a light trot.

Bao turns from the dark shapes of the countryside to look at the dark shape that is all he can make of Shi sitting but an arm's distance away. 'What are to be our strategy and tactics?' He asks in a straightforward and serious manner.

'Our strategy is to fulfil the mission given to us by Lizong, our tactics the procedures to be followed by an investigating Magistrate. What else could they be?' Shi's reply is as flat as it is uncompromising.

'A chess game to be played out on the landscape of life.' Bao observes with just a little sarcasm. When he does not solicit a response he softens his tone. 'How little you have changed. I remember when we first met. You stood aloof from the other children watching their antics play out in the grounds of the Imperial School. As I approached you I thought to myself. 'I bet he plays chess.'

'It was the first thing you ever asked of me.' Shi replies with affection. 'Do you still have your ability to read people?'

'You know I have.'

'What then do you make of the Palace Official, Wang Chi?'

Bao, lowers his voice. 'I caught him reading me as I was reading him. Only he has the wisdom to close me out. He has developed his ability far beyond mine.'

'People have such wisdom?'

'I have long suspected it, but never have I met someone with such wisdom before. He was reading me like a book, I could feel it.'

'He spoke to me without speaking.'

This interests Bao immensely and he turns more directly to Shi, trying to see his face in the gloom. 'Well? You cannot finish there.'

'He welcomed me to the Celestial Game.'

'Which Celestial Game?'

'How would I know?' Shi says with exasperation. 'Did you not see into his heart and mind?'

'Unfortunately not, as I said, he closed me out. My abilities are small compared to his.'

'Then Wang Chi must remain a mystery.'

'Possibly, then again, possibly not.'

'Bao, you speak in riddles.' Shi says in exasperation.

'If its riddles you want then Lizong is the best I have to offer. It was not that I could detect anything bad let alone wicked in his person. It was that I could not detect anything at all. He was like an empty vessel, a magnificent empty vessel.' Bao's words trail off as he remembers, then he picks up the thread. 'All his words seemed like decoration on this vessel's surface. Words transforming into deeds that formed a story.' He stops and then laughs at his own foolishness. 'Excuse me, this is my imagination making fun with words. Although it is useful sometimes to allow it free reign, it can easily develop a life of its own.'

Shi, with humour. 'I know of your imagination, only too well.' As he changes direction so he changes tone. 'we

must put this aside for now and concentrate on the work at hand. Although it was not said, I doubt they wish for us to record this investigation or they would have provided us with a scribe.'

'Fear not, I have my student's tools with me, just in case we need to make notes.'

'Excellent. Now when we arrive we must speak first to the police Officer. He alone can tell us what and why Wang Chi acted the way he did.'

'I don't understand.'

'Why did he let those onboard leave? Surely it would have been better to have kept them at the scene of the crime.'

Bao ponders this before answering. 'If they didn't know the man had been murdered, and, they didn't know who he was, then perhaps it would have seemed strange to have kept them.'

'Even to the point of letting the murderer go free? I find this difficult to believe.'

'Then perhaps we are not in possession of all the facts. Our audience with Lizong and Wang Chi was at best perfunctory.' Then as an afterthought. 'I can understand the need for speed but ... we could have been better prepared.'

'Indeed!'

Light suddenly falls on Shi's face. Bao follows the direction of his friend's eyes and sees the lamps on the Thunder Point Pagoda. Pure white they shine from every turn of each curved roof on each of its 10 storeys, a column of stars pointing to Heaven. As a counter the lamps on the Su Di causeway, stretching north across the West Lake, comes into view, a reminder of Earth's mundanity. These soon replace the illumination of the Pagoda in their attention as it slips by in their wake.

'We will soon be there, so let us finish this. First, we will interview the Police Officer, then the Captain of the vessel, then the scene of the crime, then,' he pauses 'I will interview the policeman that took the message to the Palace while you interview the crew. Agreed?' Shi

says this without taking his eyes off the lights on the Su Di.

Bao agrees, his attention as transfixed as Shi's by the approaching presence of the scene of the crime.

The carriage slows and then turns a sharp right pulling up in front of the entrance to the Su Di. Two policemen gaze in from either side before bowing in recognition of their status.

The carriage pulls onto the causeway, which is barely wide enough to accommodate its width. The carriage proceeds at a slow pace, as there are people out walking, taking in the magnificent view of Kinsai and the surrounding lantern lit countryside.

People look in, curious. Shi and Bao look out in anticipation until the vessel comes into view. The carved effigy of a little egret spreading its wings on the bowsprit is their first impression.

The vessel is some 20 metres long and in the form of an ocean going junk replete with imitation masts and imitation bamboo sails. Its shape, however, is deformed, the forecastle and aft accommodation have been extended, overhanging the bow and stern and raised by two storeys. These extensions are crafted in exquisite workmanship and painted in gold and blue. A platform passes over the deck from between the two raised storeys and from where the pole-men work their trade. Beneath, the deck has been transformed into a luxurious area reminiscent of the finest of teahouses. The very finest fabrics cover the low divans. These are arranged in Ls and Us in such a way that they all face a small stage still littered with musical instruments. Lit with numerous lamps, the tasteful glowing Image the pleasure craft presents, disguises this place of murder with an air of luxurious normality.

There are shutters but these are all open. Allowing small groups of people, who have gathered in passing, a view of the interior of one of the finest pleasure crafts that ply the West Lake's dark waters.

Those gathered turn as the carriages arrive and a few even give a perfunctory bow as Shi and Bao step out. They return the courtesy before descending the few steps down

to the jetty. Where policemen make way allowing them uninterrupted access to the, Little Egret.

To say the situation is bizarre is to say nothing at all. Only that, the subtle power of emptiness can be felt in its vacuous splendour. As they arrive on deck this bizarre emptiness fills their minds with an eerie isolation. There are none present, not even one.

'Perhaps the body got tired of waiting and carried off the crew to a place more fitting for its new found status.'

Before Shi can reply. 'Psst, psst ... psst, psst ...' Encroaches on their strained hearing.

They both look around; trying to find the persistent sound that grows louder with every passing cycle. At the stern a man in a policeman's dark blue jacket beckons them from the well on the right side of the stairs that lead to the poop deck.

As they approach so he retreats. They descend in time to see him enter a door on the right. Shi enters first, having to remove his hat because of the low ceiling. He comes up sharp in front of a low bed where the body lies face down. The Police Officer stands to the right almost against the wall of what is a very small room. Bao needs to swing around Shi to enter and in so doing he is almost at the bed before he realizes that the body lying before him is a corpse.

Shi turns to the police Officer. 'And you are?'

'Officer Chou, Magistrate Zhen.' He bows to the horizontal with a nervous haste.

'Are you the Officer that recognized the Deputy Censor?'

'Indeed.'

'Well done, your quick thinking will find reward soon enough.'

He bows again but before he returns to the vertical Shi's attention is taken up with Bao.

'He's dead.' Bao says this involuntarily as if he's just discovered the fact. His face is as ashen as the corpse

and he retreats from its presence in short uneven steps until he backs into the windowed wall behind.

'Perhaps your Assistant would like to wait outside.'

Shi questions Bao with his eyebrows.

'My apologies.' He turns to the Officer. 'I have not been in the presence of death before and was not expecting such a strong reaction.' He visits Shi's face with an expression of disquiet before turning away and looking out of the door.

'Do you know how he died?' Shi asks the Officer.

The Officer moves to the bed while licking his forefinger. He leans over the body as Shi joins him then pointing out a small cut in the fabric of the man's robes he rubs his wetted finger back and forwards along the short length of the cut. His finger slowly turns a dirty reddish brown.

'An assassin's blade between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> ribs. He would have died instantaneously.'

Shi lifts the man's robe, which is lying bunched up either side of his body, revealing the man's naked body beneath.

'It would be fair to say he was enjoying the sexual act when he died?'

'That is my opinion.' The Officer replies.

'The bar on this lock is broken.' Bao's voice has both of them swing around to where he is pointing at the door.

The Officer fills in with speed. 'It was forced by the Captain. There was no choice as it was locked from the inside.'

'Yet the dead man was alone when they entered.'

'Apparently so.'

Shi is mystified. 'The Captain said this?'

'Indeed.'



'Where is the Captain now?'

Officer Chou seems reluctant to answer. 'I'm afraid he is incapacitated.' Shi holds his gaze forcing him to continue. 'He is in the cabin across the way, drunk. He took his meeting with Palace Official, Wang Chi, badly. I don't know what was said but as soon as Wang Chi left, he started drinking. I was unable to prevent him. For this I apologise.' He bows low.

Bao and Shi exchange a look before Shi gives Bao direction. 'Revive the Captain.' Then, as Bao does as he is bid, Shi returns to Officer Chou. 'The room was locked from the inside. The man was involved in sexual intercourse. Where ... is ... the woman?'

'This is hard to fathom.' He twists under Shi's hard gaze. 'The woman was not a singing girl. I assume she came on board by arrangement with the Madam. This part of the story is very confused.'

Shi is aware of the man's nervousness so addresses him in a friendly tone. 'Just tell me what you know. Just don't leave out any details.'

Officer Chou composes himself then proceeds at an even pace. 'The Little Egret collected three guests from the island we all know as Gushan. This, apparently, is a normal occurrence. Those enjoying the various banqueting functions the island is so famous for, often use the facilities of the pleasure craft for more carnal entertainment when the functions are finished. The woman came on board, first, with one man and was shown to this cabin. The Deputy Censor was already on board, apparently from the jetty at the north east corner. The two men were dressed as merchants and had presented themselves to the Madam as merchants.' The Officer can see Shi's scepticism 'You will have to talk to the Madam for those details.'

'Who is the Madam?'

'She is known as the, Crimson Ribbon, owner of the, Reels of Splendour Teahouse.'

Shi turns away and shouts through to Bao. 'Did you hear that?'

'A splendid piece of good fortune.' Comes Bao's reply. He then appears in the doorway of the cabin opposite to exchange a meaningful glance filled with mirth.

'How is the *good* Captain?'

'Disturbed beyond reason. Drunk beyond hope.'

'Can you bring him to his senses?'

'I could throw him in the Lake.'

Shi takes out a small bottle from inside his sleeve and throws it to Bao. 'Try this.' He turns back to Officer Chou. 'Tell me the situation regarding your initial involvement.'

'I saw from the police post the Little Egret making for the jetty. It was obvious there were things amiss as this is not a usual occurrence.' He stops as Shi makes his way between the bed and the windows on the corner, a space just wide enough for a person to walk around.

'You need not stop. I am quite capable of listening as I work.'

'As I made my way towards the vessel, only a matter of 100 metres, I could see there was a commotion onboard.'

Shi examines each window as he passes, opening those that will open.

'By the time the vessel was tied I was already at the entrance to the jetty.'

'So you were able to stop those onboard from leaving.'

'I'm afraid it was not as simple as that.'

Shi opens a window on the portside, that is, the Lake side of the vessel. It swivels on a central axis. After carefully examining the frame at its base he tries to force himself through the opening. It is far too small restricting his body at the top of his chest. On retrieving himself he turns to Officer Chou. 'Exactly how complex was it?'

'I met the Captain halfway down the jetty and he informed me there was a dead man onboard. I told him..'

'A dead man or a murdered man?'

'A dead man. But I could tell by his manner and the agitated state of those onboard that all was not well.'

Shi places his hat on the bed next to the dead man's head before dropping down to the base of the bed and examining the carved leg at its centre. It is directly opposite the window Shi had opened. 'So naturally you informed the good Captain to hold all those onboard?'

'This I did. Then I went back to the police post to rouse the two men taking their shift break.'

'The other four were where?'

'Two patrolling the south side of our run and two the north side as far as the next police post. It is the normal practice on the Su Di.'

'I see.' Shi says this as much to himself as to Officer Chou, for he has found a small quantity of powdered lacquer behind the lacquered leg of the bed. Its colour glints on his fingertip. He rubs the length of his fingers behind the leg and examines the fine fractured particles of lacquer displaced. He stands up dusting his hands before retrieving his hat.

'Then you returned to the Little Egret?'

'After I signalled the central police post.'

'By flag or by bell?'

'By bell.' Officer Chou is nervous. 'It was dark.'

'Of course.' Shi makes his way back around the bed to face Officer Chou. 'And when you returned to the vessel things were amiss? Am I correct?'

'Indeed. Some of the clients ... the guests ... had forced their way past the Captain and crew and were already on the Su Di.'

'You and your men then forced them back onboard.'

'We did.'

'Only you can't guarantee that you caught them all. Can you?'

Officer Chou sweats. 'I'm afraid not.'

'An unfortunate but understandable occurrence.'

Officer Chou bows and Shi notes it is propelled by relief.

A crash and the sound of vomiting now distracts Shi and he turns to see the Captain on his knees and with his head out of a window. Bao appears in the doorway hunching his shoulders as a sign of frustration.

'The potion will be of little use if it is consumed by the fish of the Lake.' Shi lets a moment of frustration pass. 'Leave him. Officer Chou will make sure he sobers up, so when we return he is fit for questioning.'

Shi turns back. 'You will secure this room and this vessel. And you will remain on duty here until I personally relieve you of that duty.' Officer Chou bows. 'We must now remove the body. I will send the Night Guard onboard shortly to fulfil this task.'

Shi exits the cabin and before replacing his hat he nods to Bao to follow. Bao exits the cabin but before following Shi he stops to have a word with Officer Chou. 'Tell me, which one of your men did you send to the Palace?'

'His name is Zhu Feng but he did not return. They sent another policeman to replace him.'

Bao looks him in the eye before commenting. 'Obviously, after running such a distance, he would be in need of a rest.'

Officer Chou's uncertainty delays his words. 'I can only assume you are right.'

'Indeed.' Then Bao plays a smile 'Take *good* care of the Captain. We will have need of what resides in his ... or should I say, what is left of his mind, on our return.'

Officer Chou bows and Bao returns the courtesy before joining Shi on deck.

Shi is lingering at the top of the stairs but turns away once he sees Bao approach. Bao catches him up at the gangplank where Shi turns to greet him. 'And what of Officer Chou?'

'Seems genuine enough. Out of his depth of course. But then ... so are we.'

'Unfortunately, this is true. Does it show do you think?'

'My reaction to the dead man was hardly one of a practiced investigator. You, however, would have won plaudits in the, Theatre of Life.'

'In the role of a bumbling official in a black comedy and with you as his simple assistant.'

This is the limit that Bao can hold his solemn composure. Heaving, he almost breaks into laughter. Shi observes those watching from the Su Di and turns away no longer able to control his own nervous reaction to the passing events. He allows himself a moment of release, covering his mouth with one hand to stem the laughter taking flight and gripping his side with the other to restrict its movement.

Once they have calmed and made sure that no one is paying close attention, Shi questions Bao in a relaxed manner. 'What ails the good Captain?'

'Not what, but who.'

'Wang Chi?'

'Who else.'

'Did you get anything, anything at all?'

'Only that Wang Chi appeared on deck with the hems of his robe wet. And that, *he mysteriously appeared* with the first rays of the dawn. His words. Just the memory sent him into a state of panic. All he said after that was gibberish.'

Shi questions Bao with his eyes prompting Bao to say. 'We can but trust that Wang Chi is operating in accordance with the *Way of Heaven*.'

'And that is *exactly* how we must proceed.' Shi replies with a heartfelt sincerity.

'Indeed.' Bao replies in kind.

Shi now quickly leaves the Little Egret with Bao following in his wake. Mounting the steps onto the Su Di they are greeted by the instant presence of the Night Watch.

'We must remove the body to the mortuary at Police Headquarters in the Northern Prefecture. This must be done with those present in mind.' Shi nods towards the small groups of people gathered along the causeway.

'It has all been arranged. Step this way.'

Shi follows the Night Guard who spoke. The other members of the Night Guard swarm past and open the rear of the closed carriage two of them getting into the back at double quick speed. Shi and Bao stand back as a wooden box, a coffin, is pushed out and stood on its end. It has a large ornate Christian Cross in silver attached to the lid.

The Night Watch standing next to them comments. 'There is nothing more visible than what is hidden.'

Shi and Bao look at the man in surprise before Bao adds. 'There is nothing more manifest than what is subtle.'

The Night Watch bows before continuing. 'We are nameless and without rank.' He points to a small red enamelled broach in the form of a Phoenix pinned on his chest. 'You will know me by this, as it is my turn to be spokesman for this duty we now perform. We are here to protect you against whatever enemy lurks in the shadows of this most foul deed.'

Bao is delighted. 'We will entrust our lives to you gladly, devotee of the, Doctrine of the Mean.'

'What are your orders?'

Shi assumes command. 'We will visit the Reels of Splendour Teahouse and in haste.'

'Then let us be gone, but let us remain in caution over of what we do not see and apprehensive over what we do not hear.'

Shi and Bao exchange a knowing smile before following the Night Watch back to their carriage.

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### **The Changing Lines**

Changing Line at the beginning means:  
The army in setting off should be  
Positive, dynamic and with direction.

Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
The Army retreats in the face of a superior enemy.  
No blame.

Changing Line in the fifth place means:  
Victory brings the spoils of war.  
The ruler dispenses favours to all.  
Good fortune.

Changing Line at the top means:  
The battle is lost but not the war.  
Those that survive live to fight another day.  
Misfortune.  
No blame.

**These Changing Lines Produce:**

### **Treading on a Tiger's Tail (3)**

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=====
===== Heaven
=====
==  ==
===== Lake
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#### **THE IMAGE**

**The Lake rises to Heaven:**

**The Image of TREADING ON A TIGER'S TAIL.**

**It is a young girl that treads on the tiger's tail.**

**Laughter.**

**Thus the Ruler by correctly allowing familiarity in the situation,**

**Has the acquiescence of the people.**

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# Chapter 4

## Return (62)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 On The Midnight Drum

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==  ==
==  ==  Earth
==  ==
==  ==
==  ==  Thunder
=====
  
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### THE IMAGE

Thunder sleeps within the Earth:

The Image of RETURN.

Thus the Kings of old

Attained union with the source of all things

So they could deliver to humanity

THE GREAT I.

\*

“On understanding the Nature of Jen (Humanity)

The student must first of all understand the nature of jen. The man of jen forms one body with all things without any differentiation. Righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faithfulness are all expressions of jen.

One's duty is to understand this principle (li) and preserve jen with sincerity (ching), that is all. There is no need for caution and control. Nor is there any need for exhaustive search. Caution is necessary when one is mentally negligent, but if one is not negligent what is the necessity for caution? Exhaustive search is necessary when one has not understood principle, but if one preserves jen long enough, it will automatically dawn on him. Why should he have to depend on exhaustive search?

Nothing can be equal to this Way (Tao, that is, jen). It is so vast that nothing can adequately explain it. All operations of the universe are our operations. Mencius said that 'all things are already complete in oneself' and that one must 'examine oneself and be sincere' and only then will there be great joy. If one examines himself and finds himself not sincere, it means there is still an opposition between the two (the self and the non-self). Even if one tries to identify the self with the non-self, one still does not achieve unity. How can one have joy?"

Cheng Hao (G) (1253-1306 I.A. [1032-1085 C.E.]

From the I-shu (conversations in the vernacular - The Cheng brothers (G). I-shu, 2A: 3A-b

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Leaving the northern end of the Su Di they take the road to the right past the island of Gushan. The various pavilions that cover the island are lit by multi-coloured lanterns exaggerating the joviality of the celebrations taking place. The sounds of merry voices, sweet and coarse with the lubrication of fine wine, drift into the carriage as they pass.

They are entering the world of Kinsai at play.

Numerous carriages full of pleasure seekers can be seen up ahead, waiting their turn to enter the carriage-park. This covers a large area at the end of the causeway that joins the lake's waterfront to Gushan. It is so busy that it takes the full complement of the police post, set in its midst, to organize the arrivals and departures.

The atmosphere of excitement is redolent with a glorious anticipation.

Bao, however, is deep in thought his mind playing with the events of the past day: How his brilliant plan had come adrift on the ocean of life because there were stronger currents at play than he could possibly have realized; How his meeting with Lizong had taken an unexpected direction that led directly to his eccentric genius of an ancestor, Shao Yong; How Wang Chi, a man he suspects of following a very particular path of wisdom, had read *him* like a book; How the Deputy Censor would seem set to have a greater influence in death than he ever did in life; How the Night Watch, their protectors, were in coherence with the Doctrine of the Mean; Then there are the assassin's blades, one, a token of love, the other missing like the life it took; And how all of these things, every single one, are connected by ghost-like tentacles to *this culture of ours*.

His tongue visits individual teeth, his lips extend and skew, first to one side then the other as parts of the wraith's limbs are glimpsed in the rising mist of his mind's eye. 'It couldn't be ... impossible.' His thoughts can only find negative words.

As his attention returns to the outer world, the joyful chaos that he is now witnessing through the carriage window would also seem connected. Connected by the same glimpsed form that is now barely visible on the periphery of his inner perception.

He swings his head around to see Shi looking at him with that affectionate look he plays so well.

'What thought has sprung into that mercurial mind of yours, I wonder.'

'I swear you read me better than my meagre abilities are able to read you.'

'Bao, I have known you all of my adult life and most of my childhood. Would it not be strange if I could not? Tell me what it is.'

Bao launches himself in, hoping that the half-formed words themselves will deliver the explanation. He points outside at the joyful crowds. 'The bureaucracy, that you are so much a part of, never instructed any of this to

happen. It happens by itself. Yet, it could not happen without the bureaucracy.'

Shi is taken aback because this was not what he was expecting. 'What you say, of course, is true, if just a little obvious.'

'Obvious to you perhaps.' Bao states with just a little annoyance.

'Bao, there are only 20,000 scholar officials that have to administer to 65 million of our people. All we are able to do is provide a framework by which our people can organize themselves. This framework, thanks to *this culture of ours*, is strong and true. If it were not, would any of this,' he gesticulates, presenting the world outside, 'be possible. But there's more. We live in unprecedented times where *this culture of ours* is known and understood by the vast majority of our people. If not in its full glory as we know it, then in its spirit. You will understand once you have joined the bureaucracy how dependent we *all* are on this being true.'

Bao feels he is talking at cross-purposes with his friend but can't find the right words to describe what he means, nor the right place to start. His insight is emergent, like the insight itself, making it doubly hard to finger. All he really has is a holistic feeling and the tentacled form it makes in his imagination. But it is none the less true for that.

His thoughts are swept aside when two riders of the Night Watch sweep past their coach on Arabian steeds. They pass either side, holding up tall black banners with large white characters proclaiming their, Right of Progress. Bao and Shi stretch their heads out of their windows to watch them drive between the columns of carriages up ahead, forcing the drives to give way. Who would dare refuse?

Their constant progress assured, they are soon passing the harbour, where they see the chaos of lantern-lit boats coming and going from the West Lake. Boats of every size and description vie for landing space. Their occupants ignore the danger of being crushed or drowned by crossing between the boats before they have even landed.

Others try to navigate an exit from the narrow harbour mouth vying for space with those trying to enter. Some 100 metres out two columns of pleasure craft are lined up facing each other. At the sound of the Late Evening Drum two racing boats set off between them. Those in the harbour join the roars of the onboard crowds until it fills their carriage with loud fused sound.

Daring and folly in equal measure pass for normality on such a night of uproarious abandon, and to cap it all, it is just another night, another *ordinary* night, on the West Lake.

Bao has to raise his voice to be heard. 'I take it you will question your Crimson witch in private?'

Shi looks at Bao's grinning face and sighs. 'I doubt I will have a choice.'

'Then what am I to do in such a place?' Bao asks with as much innocence as he can muster.

'As little as possible.'

'Now you know that is asking a lot.'

'Then I will give you a task. Talk to Jade, the head-singing girl. You never know, she may provide a different story.'

As they round the Lake's end the sounds of the city now compete with the noise from the Lake. They pass into the city through the Six Wells Gate. Gate guards stopping the traffic so they can proceed uninterrupted.

The city streets have changed in character with few commercial loads on view. Sedans and rickshaws, litters and carriages, both open and closed, mix in competition.

Swinging immediately right into a southerly direction they travel a couple of city blocks before turning left into an easterly direction. After another city block they rise over, Rice Market Bridge, that spans the, Ten Bridges Canal. Descending the other side their driver, with exceptional skill, manages a 180-degree left hand turn passing down beside the bridge onto the quayside. Here, barges full of rice are being unloaded into the cavernous Warehouses on the other side of the road. Their

progress slows to allow the lines of workers time to cross.

Taking a right before the, Black Bridge, they enter the main pleasure district of the Northern Prefecture. Their pace finally slows to a walk, the streets solid with people. Theatres and opera houses are emptying, their clientele now seeking sustenance in the teahouses and eating-houses the area is so famous for.

Taking a first left into a side street they soon pull up in front of the covered entrance to the, Silver Thimble. An enclosed market specializing in all things tailoring during the day, it has long been an entertainment venue at night.

They quickly dismount and make their way through the passage to an open area some 100-metres square. At its centre is a small ornamental pond in the shape of an embroidery frame; the inner and outer frames cast at a slight angle to each other. Out of the middle sticks a silver thimble two metres in height distending a lattice of coloured ropes pulled tight over its top.

Three sides of the square have tables and chairs set outside the various establishments that provide refreshment in every guise. The fourth side has a stage with an orchestra playing beneath, while some foolish youth squeals out notes of a popular song. His audience, those gathered on the square's stone slabs and those watching from balcony and window of the surrounding buildings, hoot with laughter.

Bao and Shi walk down one-quarter length of one side, their Night Watch shadow casting silence as they pass. They turn into the, Reels of Splendour, past those already seated and those waiting for a place. They walk inside sending a servant girl scurrying. Pass the reception where all now stand and bow. Mount the broad stairs where they detach their guard. Arrive in the wide hall that would run the length of any normal building, and boasts rooms to both left and right. If the ground floor was sumptuous then this is magnificent.

Where silence now reigns. Where once the chatter of many voices filled. Where now, it is deserted.

Bao and Shi look at each other in anticipation, knowing their presence is expected. A double door at the very end

opens. Two singing girls appear and hold open the doors for the, Crimson Ribbon, to make her entrance. She appears in the distance emerging from low light. She appears as if a painted form made real, gliding on the silken surface it has been painted from.

Bowing low as Shi and Bao approach she holds her posture until they come to a stop. Righting herself, she is now welcome to receiving their salutations. Both bow.

'Welcome to my humble abode.' The forced nature of her courtesy smile beguiles her greeting with a touch too much formality. 'Will you stay here? When inside we may recline in comfort.'

The singing girls giggle, hiding their mouths behind their hands as if they were naughty children.

Shi enters, but as Bao is about to follow the two singing girls take him by the arms nestling their bodies into his. Then gently they force him back.

Shi turns to see Bao's laughing expression of hopelessness disappear behind a sliding door.

The Crimson Ribbon steps just inside her domain, and with her back to the doors, closes them in a single motion. All this without taking her eyes off Shi for a moment, or disturbing her painted face that is an artful mask to beauty.

The walls are covered in scarlet and gold silk, the low seats covered in the same chrysanthemum design only the gold background here is replaced by a deep blue.

Her outer robe is of the same blue that has a silvery sheen beneath the silvery lamps that shine with the light of the moon.

She passes him close enough to take her hand down his face. Her fingers, tipped with claws of razor sharp steel, brush his skin without leaving a mark.

'Please, state your business.' She says with formal rigour.

'I come in regard to the death...'

'The death?'

'The death of a merchant...'

'A *merchant*?'

'Onboard your vessel the Little Egret.'

'Ah, you mean the unfortunate occurrence of earlier this evening. Please, will you not join me in my quarters?' She opens up a way between the drapes that line the far end of the room. Holding the material out until he passes inside she follows him into her sleeping quarters.

The bed would sleep six and the three divans, two in L-shaped configuration, would sleep the same again. There seems no dimensions to this room as material is draped in multi-angular forms throughout. Mirrors stand as works of art, artfully placed to allow unexpected views of any residing within. The low light has a bluey cast heightening the whiteness of the skin.

'You will excuse me, I am sure, if I remove my outer garment.' She does not wait for an answer but lets it slip from an outstretched arm onto a divan. The garment beneath has baggy leggings in the Arabian style and a parallel neckline that descends to a high waist. The band around the high waist, the only thing of substance, is made of four folds of the material. This material is of the finest gossamer silk and translucent to the point of transparency. Her entire form is on display and Shi allows his eyes to wander over its curvaceous perfection, while she only allows her eyes to search out his.

'There are several things I need to know. First, the woman that came onboard at Gushan, who was she?'

'I do not know. The *merchant*, that booked the staterooms, only informed me that a Lady would join them.'

'What was she like?'

Crimson having walked around Shi now sits delicately on the edge of a divan within arms distance of where he stands. He swivels and in so doing has entered her personal space.

'She was tiny, with tiny feet, so tiny were they she had to be assisted down the few steps onto the deck. She was



also carrying a small parcel, the kind bakers use for sweet meats.'

Crimson undoes the elaborate green jade buckle of Shi's belt and places it with great precision on the back of the divan.

'An adolescent girl?'

'A child-woman. I caught, not much more than a glance of her face, as she was helped down the steps. She was, up until that point, hiding it, with great success, behind her fan. However, it was enough to reveal a woman in her late twenties or early thirties.'

'There are men that enjoy such things?'

'They have usually progressed from enjoying the *innocent* pleasures the woman-child brings.'

Crimson now undoes Shi's sash of office and rolls it up as she slides it over his shoulder. Reaching up to achieve this delicate operation she allows her metal nails to dig into the material of his robe as they slide back down his chest, leaving scratch marks in the material.

'There was, however, something rather special.'

'About her face?'

Having turned away to place the sash on top of the belt she says while returning. 'Indeed not, it was about her fan.' Crimson stands up and holds up her left hand. Shi takes it in his right and starts removing her thimble daggers, one by one.

'Was it painted by a famous artist?'

'It was not. It was a double. I nearly missed it because it was so thin. As thin as a normal folding fan. Indeed, I would not have realized this, if she had not inadvertently changed from one fan to the other as she was helped down the steps.'

He takes her right hand removing the thimble daggers and places them in their holders sunk into a small table designed specifically for the purpose. As he turns. 'What then were the designs?'

She stretches out her other hand and he comes back and takes it before she replies. 'Of designs there were none. What made this fan unique was that one fan was made of blades of jet with just a blue tinged edge, and the other, so cunning concealed when the other was open, were of paper-thin ivory.'

They look into each other's eyes before Shi begins to remove the thimble daggers from her left hand.

'An expensive gift perhaps?'

'Possibly. Although its use may have greater importance.'

'In that?'

'It can be used as a signal. At the opera, or the theatre, or some other public place.'

'A signal to a lover, perhaps.'

'Perhaps.'

Having removed the last of her thimble daggers he places them with the others. He turns to find Crimson turning down the silk sheet on the bed. As he joins her so she turns and sits, her small feet barely making the ground.

'Such a device could be used to send quite sophisticated messages.' He thinks this out loud.

She starts undoing the catches on his robe 'I have heard of such things.'

'So she could be a Lady?'

'The rest of her attire would suggest not.'

'How is that?'

Crimson folds his robe over the shoulders and then lets it fall to the ground. 'The aristocracy have a sense of fashion all of their own. Elegant, if conservative.' She removes the catches on his tunic top. 'They have their own tailors, and, their own mills in which they have made their own designs.' She folds the tunic back to reveal his naked chest. Gently pushing the material it follows his robe to the ground. 'It is sometimes possible to tell

which family from the Imperial lineage they come from by this expediency alone.' Taking the cord in her teeth she pulls, undoing the knot of his leggings and lets their weight do the rest.

'But this was not such an occasion?'

'The material and design suggested new money. Lots of new money.'

His erection is staring her in the face. She takes it in her mouth and bites. He winces with pain but the effect is instantaneous for his erection stands to attention. She takes it in her left hand while standing up and kisses him on the lips. Thus embraced she removes his hat. Setting it on his erection as if his penis were a door peg, she retires to the bed.

He throws it away without care, throwing himself on her. Penetrating her through the designed slit in the leggings she cries out in pain as he makes little effort at foreplay other than biting her on the neck.

She sinks her fingers in his back and claws at the flesh. 'Why have you taken so long to come to me?'

\*

Bao, naked, is horizontal on a narrow divan with a naked singing girl sat astride. Her legs so wide apart she is almost doing the splits. She leans back supporting herself on his naked legs by her outstretched arms. Flicking her pelvis back and forth they are both near to climax when the second singing girl slides backwards over his head rubbing his face in her sex. This not only acts as a distraction, he is also forced to gasp for air. The young girl laughs finding Bao's expression a thing of amusement.

'Pearl, get off him! Can't you see he wants none of your foolishness?' Moon gives Pearl a vicious smack on her naked bottom.

'Ow! That hurt!'

This only makes things worse for Bao, as Pearl ends up sitting on his face with her full weight. With his hands having been engaged with Moon's breasts he's in a poor

position to remove the offending girl, but remove her he must.

Moon, seeing Bao's distress, pushes Pearl back over his head. Pearl then returns the favour by pushing Moon over as soon as she has recovered her feet. Bao is also on the receiving end of this encounter, a double blow, as his penis is bent viciously to one side and his gonads squashed by Moon's left cheek.

Having landed badly Moon is furious, she jumps up and chases after Pearl pulling her hair and making her squeal. Bao sags, in more ways than one. He sits up to watch as the two girls bite and claw at each other. He's about to intervene when Jade slips in from behind the drapes at the back of the room. She lays about both of them with a short whip driving them from the room.

'Get out! I will deal with you later.'

They flee leaving them alone.

'Excuse them Bao they are both young and high-spirited. I only allowed them to work together because I know you so well and know how you like a little fun with your pleasure.'

'That's reassuring. I thought they were trying to kill me. A new technique perhaps, for assassins.'

Jade laughs as she sits down next to him. She takes his penis in her hand and removes the pig-skin protector with her other hand before trying to resurrect his erection. 'Let me see what I can do to make things right.'

He leans back to rest his hands on the divan, only forgetting how narrow it is. He spills over the edge and ends in a heap on the floor. After Jade recovers from laughter she helps him up. 'Come over to the divan and lie with me.'

He allows himself to be led and while she slips out of her dress he makes himself comfortable resting his head on the bolster. 'Were you, by chance, on the Little Egret earlier this evening?'

She drops down to her knees and rests an arm on the divan leaning against it. Her demeanour has changed. 'I was hoping you would not ask this question.'

'I have to ask, I am under instruction.'

Changing her position she picks up Bao's limp penis but only plays with it. 'I was there, only please Bao, don't tell anyone.'

'You knew who he was, didn't you?'

She looks miserable.

'And, perhaps, how he died?'

She bursts into tears and sobs. 'I have been made the mouthpiece of my mistress. A sacrificial sheep to bleat what others will not. It is so unfair.'

He brushes the tears aside and helps her onto the divan taking her in his arms.

After a while she settles. 'Crimson will not say, wary of repercussions, and so it is I that will be sacrificed if anything goes wrong. I am meant to tell what she will not.'

'Ah. Then you have little choice. If you refuse, your mistress will surely destroy you.'

'I know.'

'So carry out her instruction in good heart. That way, things will be well between you. If things go badly then you will suffer no matter what happens. You will suffer simply because you were there.'

She turns her face towards him and gives him a weak smile. 'It was strange Bao. Strange from the beginning.'

'In what way?'

'The merchant that came here to book passage, requested the lower stateroom on the port side. He wanted a specific day, the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> moon, but not finding it free he waited until it was available on the exact same day the following lunar month. Seeing that both staterooms were free, on that day, he booked both.'

'That is interesting. Carry on.'

'We were instructed to pick up two passengers from the Gushan, not an unusual request in itself. But we were told that one would be a woman and that when she came onboard she was to be shown to the portside side stateroom where the other merchant was already waiting, having boarded at the jetty near the Six Bells Gate.'

'Is that what happened?'

'It was. Only I had already recognized the *man* that had bordered earlier. He was the man that took my virginity when I was a woman-child. He was Earl Zhao Yin, the Deputy Censor.'

'You, were a woman-child?'

'Eleven years old, but I cannot say he was cruel. He spent several sessions seducing me. So that I was quite willing in the end.'

'I see.' Then after a moment's thought. 'Did he recognize you?'

'I think not. He went straight to the stateroom after he came onboard and I was just part of a large company.'

'Did you tell Crimson?'

'I'm not supposed to say.'

'But by saying that, you already have.'

She bursts into tears again. 'See, I'm no good at this. I will surely pay a terrible price.'

'Take heart from the fact that both Shi and I will be grateful and where possible we will protect you. Now please Jade, continue.'

'I told Crimson who he was but only after it was found that he was dead. It was then that Crimson forced the Captain, and I mean forced, she took her blades to his throat and forced him to pull in at the police post on the Su Di.'

'The Captain wanted to do what?'

'Return to the Little Egret's berth near the Six-well Gate.'

'Now that *is* interesting.' Then in a casual manner 'How much of this you are telling me, is true?'

Jade is angry. 'It is all true! Don't you believe me?'

While he tries to quieten her. 'It is more what you are not telling me that is the lie. Lying by omission is still lying.'

She quickly gets up and lashes out at his penis in a fit of anger. This she regrets almost immediately clasping her hands between her naked breasts and biting her lip.

Buckled in pain. 'What is wrong with you tonight?'

She pleads with her mouth while cupping her hands around his face. But Bao is not to be distracted. 'Tell me?'

She sags, and sits back down on the divan letting her hands fall onto her lap. 'The other merchant that arrived with the child-woman got off as the police arrived.'

'This much we had already figured. But was he brought back onboard?'

'He was not.'

'Could he have killed the Deputy Censor?'

'Impossible. He never left the deck.'

Bao leans back and sighs, deep in thought.

Jade absently plays with Bao's limp penis. 'You are too distracted for these pleasures now.'

The sadness in her voice brings Bao back. He looks down and sees a shrivelled snail 'Those that pleasure seek, business should forsake, not keep, is not that the old saying?' He sighs again, gets up and starts dressing. 'Did you see the Palace Official, Wang Chi, come on board?'

'I did not as I was asleep on deck. I only knew of his presence after the Captain's ... cry of anguish. It woke everyone.'

Bao stops dressing, something in the tone of her voice alerts him to a different fear now rising.

Jade is looking at her hands but her eyes see only a memory of horror. 'When he descended from the deck above, the hems of his robes were wet. Wet with ...' she remembers the fear and trembles, continuing in barely a whisper. 'His presence changed everything. Even Crimson was in fear. He had an aura like death. It was almost impossible to look on him so dread was the experience.'

The door slowly slides open and they both turn.

Shi's smiling face rounds the door. 'It is time for us to go.' Then seeing Jade. 'I take it you have given everything to Bao as instructed.'

Jade flies from the room in tears.

\*

## The Changing Lines

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**All men have the choice of Return.**

**The superior man searches his**

**Inner Truth for the answer.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Returning from a path of wickedness brings**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**Returning to the source of all things**

**The sage attains union and all knowledge**

**Of all things.**

**There is nothing that will not further.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Returning to evil ways brings**

**Grave misfortune.**



**This Changing Line delivers:  
The Limited Power of the Small (4)**

=====

===== Wind

== ==

=====

===== Heaven

=====

**THE IMAGE**

**The Wind blows across Heaven:**

**The Image of the LIMITED POWER OF THE SMALL.**

**Thus the superior man refines the outer aspects of his nature,**

**So his trustworthiness and sincerity**

**Can eventually be brought to bear.**

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# Chapter 5

## Modesty (60)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Late Night Drum

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== ==

== == Earth

== ==

=====

== == Mountain

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### THE IMAGE

Earth covers the Mountain:

The Image of MODESTY.

Thus the superior man balances all things

\*

“When under siege in K’uang, the Master (Confucius) (G) said, ‘With King Wen (G) dead, is culture not here with me? Had Heaven intended that This Culture of Ours should perish, those who died later would not have been able to participate in This Culture of Ours. Heaven is not yet about to let This Culture of Ours perish, so what can the men laying siege to K’uang do to me?’”

Analects (G) 9.5

\*

The body is cut from throat to pelvis, the organs lined up along one side on the white marble slab. The stomach, intestines and bowls along the other. The bright light from the reflective oil lamps overhead lays stark this image. Yet above and beyond, dark shadows disguise the mortuary’s stony character.

Bao holds a cloth to his face and examines the entrails one piece at a time.

Shi is on the other side of the slab, he too holds a cloth to his face as he listens to the police Doctor.

The man is enormous. The coarse linen robe he wears over naked rolls of fat, further increases a girth that is already of monstrous proportions. The deerskin apron, with its smooth side facing out, adds a further layer like the shiny crackling on a glazed pig. The sweat rolls off him in waves due to his exertions with the cadaver. A small clay pipe hangs from the corner of his mouth. A thin ream of smoke passing up past his face from the glowing bowl adds substance to the thin mist above his steaming head. It also adds the pungent aroma of the sorcerer’s smoking mix of marijuana and opium to the already colourful smells of the mortuary.

He begins in rasping tones. ‘It was a perfect execution.’ He points out the slit in the heart he holds in his hand. ‘A single intrusion, here,’ he points ‘then a slice to here across both ventricles. He would have been dead before he even knew it.’

‘We believe it was a woman who carried out this crime while in sexual congress with the victim.’ Shi states, all the while expecting confirmation.

‘A perfect position if she were to be on her back and he on top. It would allow her to feel for the exact place

between the ribs with a lover's touch. The assassin's blade is so sharp it takes little effort to insert it through the muscle wall. So she would need little strength.'

'Where would you find such an assassin?' Shi asks, but more of himself.

The police Doctor putting the heart back on the slab looks across at Bao who has moved on to what looks like a lumpy pile of slime. 'Feeling hungry, Shao Bao?' He questions in sardonic jest.

'What is this?' Bao enquires with an intense interest.

'The contents of the Deputy Censor's stomach.' His guf-waff is a series of guttural sounds. 'Heh, heh, heh... his last meal and almost as fresh as when he ate it.'

Bao picks out a pair of chopsticks from a box of instruments further along the slab.

The Doctor turns to Shi. 'What's wrong, aren't you feeding your assistant.' Another guf-waff engulfs his frame as he turns away. He holds out his hands over a copper tub. 'Come; pour the water over my hands. As my help has been denied me, you must make do.'

Shi picks up a tall narrow bucket full of water and does as requested, the Doctor scrubbing his hands and arms with a horsehair brush. After a while and a quick glance at Shi, who is concentrating on pouring a steady stream, he surmises in the negative. 'Where could you find *such* a woman to carry out *such* an intimate crime?'

Shi's frustration can be plainly heard. 'Where indeed.'

'There are several guilds that specialize in assassination. This, I am sure, you already know. But those that train women in this foul art ...'

Bao, who has been delving into the contents of the stomach with the chopsticks, finds what he is looking for. 'There you are.' He pronounces with satisfaction.

Shi and the Doctor turn to see Bao trying to place a small piece of pastry onto a small angled portion of a dumpling that he has separated from the rest of the contents.

'What is that rascal of an assistant of yours up to now?'

Putting down the bucket Shi returns to the slab, the Doctor drying his hands on a large cloth, follows.

'What does the Lotus of Kinsai see in such a pipsqueak? When she could have a real man such as myself.'

Bao, though in the middle of a delicate operation, still has the wherewithal to banter in rhyme. 'Good Doctor, It is well known she has been driven mad by her own beauty, and thinks foolishly that I am both handsome and strong. So what was I to do for the sake of my dharma, but take pity and promise a wedding's song.'

'Listen to the dragon's tongue and weep.' The Doctor has a belly laugh that sends waves of sweat dropping from his eyebrows onto the quivering mountain below.

Bao triumphantly holds up his construction with its crown finally in place. 'There is only one man in the whole of Kinsai who makes dumplings with a crown made from the folded ends of the pastry, and his name is ... Chang Beng.'

The Doctor leans across the slab and examines the evidence. 'By all under Heaven, you are right!'

★

Shi and Bao emerge from the basement Mortuary via a side door. As they circumnavigate the Police Headquarters of the Northern Prefecture, a building part set into the city wall, they are in heated debate.

'That the Deputy Censor was supposed to be at some function on Gushan Island is certainly a factor. I can understand it may reveal a lot about him, but it cannot be the centre of our investigation. The assassin must take that place.'

The frustration in Bao's voice is laced in stress. 'He was dressed as a merchant. The other man was also dressed as a merchant. This missing man was attending, not just a function, but a regular function on Gushan Island. Jade specifically said...'

Shi cuts him off annoyed 'I know what Jade said. It makes not the slightest difference.'

'But Shi, the Deputy Censor was leading a double life. Not something members of the government are supposed to do. It could well be that it is his other life that will provide the motive for his murder.'

Shi shakes his head in disagreement.

Bao finds it hard to understand Shi's attitude so he points out the obvious. 'Surely, you can see, the motive behind his death will lead us to the murderer?'

'We are at odds on this Bao. You wish to find the motive to find the murderer, I, on the other hand, only wish to find the murderer.'

'Is this because we are not talking about, *the dragon in the sky?*' Bao points to the sky with jerking motions of his index finger.

Shi stops and turns into Bao bringing him up sharp. 'That dragon we are *not* talking about, may not exist. Until we have hard evidence that it *does* then it will remain just that, a figure of speech. Do I make myself clear?'

Bao can see his friend is disturbed beyond reasonable discourse and acquiesces. 'I bow to your superior knowledge in these matters.' He bows, then carries on regardless just taking a different tack. 'At least let us call upon the noble Chang Beng. His establishment is close by and he will already be preparing his noble wares for the coming day.'

'I hope I detect at least a secondary motive to this request.' Shi offers as a form of conciliation.

'Of course.' Bao grasps it with relish.

'Then I will admit to having a hunger myself. So we will do as you request, only noting, my previous objection.'

'What a stickler you are for protocol.'

They mount the steps to the street where the full complement of the Night Watch is waiting with both carriages.

Shi approaches their spokesman. 'What do you know of the Guild of Assassins?'

'There is not one guild but several, spread throughout the Empire.' Then he is adamant. 'None would dare set up in Kinsai. If that is what your question implies.'

'Yet they operate here. We now have proof. How is this possible?'

The red phoenix wearer turns to one of the others. 'Tell the Magistrate how it works.'

'If you need the services of an assassin then first you must approach the Guild of Beggars.'

'The Guild of Beggars?' Bao and Shi say together in equal surprise.

'A very large sum of money is required for them to make contact.'

Shi makes for progress. 'Do you know how this contact is made?'

'They are quite open about it and that is because of the system the Guild of Beggars use. I know this having made these exact enquiries myself some years ago. It was the, King of the Beggars, who told me, and may I add, without the need for any kind of inducement.'

Shi and Bao exchange surprised expressions but when they remain silent the Night Watch carries on. 'This is how it works. Having been approached by some wronged merchant or other malcontent, the King of the Beggars announces at the Guild's next meeting that he has received a *Resolution Donation* for the needy. Only this term '*Resolution Donation*' is a code. He tells the 7 Dukes, who represent the 7 branches of beggars and they then relate this to their own branches of the Guild, and so on down the line to the beggars on the street. So that in the end, all the beggars in Kinsai know that a *Resolution Donation* has been made, and, by whom. Whoever the beggar is, that is the contact for the assassins, then knows that an assassins' service is required. He then passes this information on, and it is the assassins who makes contact with those requiring their service.'

'Who gets the money?'

'The money is divided equally amongst all of the branches of the Beggars' Guild who then pass it on to their members.'

'So how much would each beggar get?'

'Some 2 strings of cash or thereabouts.'

'That's a lot of money.'

'And that money is only the fee to let the assassins know their service is required.'

Shi thinks out loud. 'As there are several thousand beggars in Kinsai it would be simply impossible to find out which one is the contact.' Then he asks with amazement. 'Is this really how it works?'

'Indeed.'

Bao hasn't quite caught up. 'The King of the Beggars doesn't know who the assassins' contact is, because ... because of what?'

Shi lightly taps Bao on the head with his knuckles making the Night Watch laugh. 'Pay attention. That is the beauty of this system. None know, none need ever know. Yet they all benefit. An ingenious and secure system for all concerned.' Shi's voice is laced with admiration. 'None but the King knows that an assassin is even required and only one beggar in several thousand knows how to contact them.'

Bao is mortified. 'And this is common knowledge amongst our fellow citizens?'

'It is common knowledge amongst the Guilds.' The Night Watch speaker answers pointedly.

'Ah, but, there is an obvious flaw in this system...'

Bao is cut off by Shi taking up the same thought. 'Surely the King of the Beggars, knowing the merchant who approached him, is the weak link in this system?'

The red phoenix wearer and the man that was talking find this amusing. 'They are not as naive as that. Wish that they were. The malcontent, using some false name, will



have set up a business front with some premises, somewhere the assassin can leave instructions so that they can meet at the assassins' convenience. You must keep remembering: assassination is expensive. Setting up some business front for such a purpose would be little in comparison to paying the Guild of Beggars, or, the cost of the assassination itself.'

'Still, we could find out where the business front is and then I could have the police make enquiries on some pretext.' A thought strikes Shi that makes him pointedly stress. 'We must keep the name of the Deputy Censor out of any dealings with our citizens, and that includes the King of the Beggars.'

'Indeed. And I am sure I will be able to acquire this information from the King of the Beggars without too much fuss.' A thought then crosses his mind 'Although there may have been other assassinations taking place around the same time, I doubt there would have been many.'

Bao's eyebrows visit his hairline he is so disturbed by what he is hearing.

Shi, however, continues in the same calm manner. 'It may not come to anything as this system would seem to have the benefit of long years of use. But you never know, someone might have become careless.'

'Indeed.' Says the Night Watch.

Bao is not happy and takes them all to task. 'You all treat this as if it was just a business. We are talking about the taking of life.'

The red phoenix wearer gives his judgement. 'It is ... only ... a business. Make sure you remember this. The assassin acts without favour. He is only providing a service. He knows nothing of the intricacies of the situation.'

His friend takes it up. 'The King of the Beggars said these thoughtful words: Someone who takes so much time and effort, not to mention the expense, would have to have a very good reason for ending that person's life. Whether it is for good or ill depends on your viewpoint. Many an evil man has been assassinated for the common good. And in the end, who can tell how things will play out in the Celestial game.'

Bao and Shi look at each other at the mention of the, Celestial game, as the man carries on, 'Is not our history replete with such cases. And in the King of the Beggars opinion, more evil men have departed this world than good ones, by the assassin's blade.'

'But then he would say that.' Bao says with strength.

Shi mediates. 'It is a long way from our understanding of ethical behaviour, Bao. Our Night Watch colleagues, and surprisingly, this King of the Beggars, speak from the holistic perspective not from a mundane one.'

'Well said Magistrate.' The red phoenix wearer says and is supported by the rest.

Bao sighs and mumbles. 'Only, the Deputy Censor was mundanely dead, the last time I saw him.'

The Night Watch and Shi find this humorous and as Bao rolls his eyes and tries shifting his perspective so Shi changes the subject. 'Now what was that you said earlier?' He aims this at Bao. 'Did you not say that you would treat our protectors to an early breakfast at Chang Beng's famous dumpling house?'

'Indeed, indeed. Indeed what terrible manners our colleagues would think we have, if we do not show our appreciation of a hard night's work well done.' His mercurial mind has already moved on. 'For those of you who have not participated in Chang Beng's great art then you are in for a delight of the senses that only the *mundane* world can deliver.'

They all laugh in appreciation.

'Come, let us be gone, this expense is on me so that it will not diminish your enjoyment.'

The Night Watch enjoys the sentiment diving deeper into their affectations in regard to him. They swing into action; the door of the carriage is opened and closed and they are in motion even as Bao gives directions.

The police headquarters is soon left behind as they quickly join the Imperial Way near its northerly end. Exiting the city through the enormous double-arched Yuhang gate they swing to the right leaving the Great North road they had only just joined.

Rounding the city wall until they come to White Ocean Lake; a long stretch of water with canals entering at both ends; it has a long island set in the middle where soldiers guard the state bonded warehouses. The great lanterns that illuminate the island burn with a fierce red light, the reflections dancing across the waters like paths of fire.

They pull down near the quayside opposite the island. The area is busy with men unloading barges into the quayside warehouse gathered along its edge. On the road side of the warehouses men are filling carts with baskets of fruit and vegetable, grains and beans, and crates of chicken, pheasant, partridge and duck.

Chang Beng's Dumpling House is squeezed between 2 of these warehouses. A large sign in the shape of a dumpling declares its name. Under Bao's instruction they pull in facing the half open front of the premises. They all dismount and follow Bao inside.

A large counter fronts the establishment and behind that a partition that shields the work area from the sales. A young man, Chang Yu-Lan, Chang Beng's son, greets Bao as he enters. 'Welcome dear friend. What disaster has sprung you from your bed so early in the morning?' He jests, until he sees Shi and the Night Watch follow in behind. Then he bows to the horizontal. 'Forgive me, Magistrate, I did not mean offence.'

'Has my position so clouded your eyes Yu-Lan that you do not recognize me?'

Yu-Lan takes a moment then a broad smile appears. 'Zhen Shi, it is too long. You must come and see my father he works in the accounting house through the back. But what am I saying, you know only too well where he is to be found.'

Yu-Lan opens up the counter to let them through and Shi walks in followed eventually by Bao after he presents the Night Watch. 'These are our friends whom I suspect you recognize?'

'Indeed.' He bows in respect 'Who would not recognize the Night Watch?' He turns to Bao looking for an answer to the question. 'What brings such heroes to our humble establishment?'

Bao is quick with the obvious answer. 'They are hungry, of course. And have I not sung your praises with such strength that they now demand to experience for themselves your culinary delights.'

Yu-Lan is delighted and dashes out from behind the counter and slides open a door set in the wall on the side. Bowing low, he shows them inside to an eating area more practical than luxurious 'Please, take a place and I will bring you what poor offerings that we make.'

The Night Watch enter and take up on benches around a big rough table.

'Give them a taste of everything including your excellent fermented black bean sauce.' Bao suggests before continuing at speed. 'And put it on my father's bill. He will be honoured to pay.'

Yu-Lan laughs as he comes back around the counter and says to Shi. 'Some things never change.'

'It is true, Bao was always a generous man with his father's wealth.' Shi adds to Yu-Lan's merriment.

But is Bao cowed or even fazed? He will have none of it. 'Make jest if you must, when one will enjoy, while the other will profit make.' He slides open the door to the bakery behind and they enter.

Long lines of tables run in front of them where 30 or 40 people are making the famous dumplings. Bao leads the way through workers all dressed in white linen. He can't resist and helps himself to a taste in passing making a girl complain in shrill tones.

Yu-Lan peels off to the side and slides open a door where the ovens are in full production. Shouting as he goes. 'A selection of our finest for the dining room and bring out a full range of sauces. We have honoured guests to entertain.' He disappears behind the screens.

Bao and Shi having made it to the end slide open a door to the accounting house.

A middle-aged man wearing a leather apron and a scowl sits waiting their entrance.

Bao is still licking his fingers as he bows. Shi bows in formal greeting. Chang Beng, who seeing the Magistrate's uniform jumps to his feet and bows to the horizontal.

'What privilege brings you here Magistrate?'

'Another who does not recognise an old friend, have your eyes grown so weak from counting money that your friends are now counted invisible?'

Chang Beng comes closer and screws up his eyes 'Is that you Zhen Shi?'

'None other.'

He turns to see Bao's grin. 'And is that you Shao Bao?'

'Who else would dare steal a taste from one of your cook's preparation bowls?'

'Who indeed.' He says in wonder before turning to an opening in the screen behind 'Cousin Peng, come and see who graces our humble establishment.'

But Peng is already in the opening and bowing and saying. 'Greetings to you Magistrate Zhen, may your life be long and happy. And greetings to you Shao Bao and that will be 10 copper cash for your sample.'

They all laugh.

'Sit, sit. Do not stand making the place look untidy.'

They pull up stools and sit opposite Beng while Peng remains standing in the opening.

'I have a feeling this is not a courtesy call.' Beng states in curiosity.

'Indeed not. You may well be able to help us in some enquiries that we are making in an official capacity. It concerns an order of dumplings you made on the 2<sup>nd</sup> night of this recent new moon. For a pavilion on Gushan Island, a convention, perhaps, that meets with cyclical regularity.' Shi looks hopefully at Beng who now turns to Peng.

'That would be the Antiquities Society.' Says Peng.

'Ah, so, those grave diggers that blight our filial sensibilities.' Says Beng with contempt then adds with sardonic hope. 'Did I manage to poison them with some tainted dish?'

'Fortunately not.' Shi replies.

'Pity.'

Bao, who is drying his fingers on his skirts, finally joins in. 'Is there much money in this strange sport?'

Peng barks a laugh. 'They spend fortunes on what they think is ancient. Little realizing what they take for age is only a man's skill in deception. Half of what passes for old comes out of Chang Sen's workshops as new.'

'That's our cousin Chang Sen from Chongching.' Beng adds with satisfaction.

'An entire family devoted to cooking up artful delights, it makes the heart sing.' Bao comments with the same satisfaction.

'We have little understanding of this strange pastime, perhaps you could enlighten us.'

Beng looks at Peng. 'What is there to say? Only that our culture lives on what is ancient.' He turns back to Shi 'Is it not true that ancient manuscripts are searched out by the bureaucracy?'

'But only for the knowledge they contain, not as objects of worth in their own right.'

Peng's laughter holds derision. 'And how do you know what knowledge is old, unless the object it is written on is old? And how do you know *that*, if men dig false graves to disguise the fact?'

'The whole sport is tainted from top to bottom.' Beng confirms. 'Just recently a grave was found dating supposedly from King Wen's time. Sealed clay vessels containing an early copy of the Classic of Changes. What nonsense. 2,000-year-old bamboo strips. Who ever heard of such a thing?'

'Where do you hear such rumours?' Shi is genuinely interested.

Peng cups his ears with his hands. 'Do we not provide a catering service that I myself do supervise? And was it not ever so that servants and domestic help were born deaf and dumb and without a brain'

'A well known fact.' Beng joins in.

'You would think by now they would have had a suspicion. That their desires once voiced is soon realized by yet another discovery.'

Bao turns to Shi. 'What rogues they are and by their own admission. Arrest them Magistrate and cast them in jail.'

Shi shakes his head in mock despair in front of three rogues enjoying their play. 'I will pretend I did not hear these foolish words.'

The three laugh at Shi's discomfit. He is only saved by the arrival of Yu-Lan carrying a large tray full of steaming dumplings. Beng and Peng quickly clear the table so that he can set it down. Then all dig in to a breakfast to remember.

★

Having said their goodbyes they return within the city's walls and run the full length of the Imperial Way. A decision quickly made for now it is discerned the Emperor himself must know of the night's work. In the hope that he may help in the direction the investigation must take.

Like a scene from one of the seven Buddhist Hells the streets are now filled with a black-clad army of sweepers freeing Kinsai of its pollution and sin. The night-soil carts with their stinking loads head for the countryside to fertilize the land anew. Rubbish carts trundle to the nearest canal to unload their mess in barges destined for the oceans great hunger. This process of reincarnation a tight schedule must keep, between Late Night drum and Dawn's waking temple bells all must be ready for the new cycle's great leap.

The dawn approaches and all make haste.

Bao is first to succumb to sleeps beckoning call and he curls up after stretching out on one of the seats.

Shi tries to stay alert by thinking of all that has just past but his mind wanders as sleep's strength overpowers his tired faculties. Rendering his thoughts in waking dreams he sees the Little Egret ablaze with light. The dead man walks its decks his organs in his hands, lost to which direction he should take. And behind, a giant face gazes down on his predicament, uncaring but not unkind. Only now those eyes refocus but before they shift in his direction Shi fights himself awake.

He sits up straight and wipes the sweat from his brow. Taking a deep breath he looks out of the window to see they are passing the Ink Stone still bathed in artificial light. His fellowship half fill its confines and their presence alone brings forth a joyful sensation he can't define.

Atop the balcony she stands in white and watches as they pass, unknown or unknowing. Shi drowns in warm darkness.

## **The Changing Lines**

Changing Line at the beginning means:  
The superior man is even modest about his modesty.  
Such a man is capable of  
Great success.

Changing Line in the second place means:  
The superior man's modesty  
Expresses itself in sincere piety towards  
Heaven and Earth.  
There is nothing that will not further.

Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
The superior man does not wear his modesty as a symbol,  
For this is false modesty.  
Sincere modesty stems from his Inner Truth which is  
Great Indeed.

Changing Line at the top means:  
Genuine modesty creates order out of chaos.  
It is as if a mirror is held up to Inner Truth;  
The strength of the Image alone,  
Is enough to set things in their rightful place.  
Supreme success.



**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

## **Possession in Great Measure (5)**

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== == Fire

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===== Heaven

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**The Image**

**Fire in Heaven above:**

**The Image of Possession in Great measure**

**The superior man blessed by illumination,**

**Acts by curbing evil and furthering good.**

**The Supreme Ultimate is made manifest by his actions.**

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# Chapter 6

## Enthusiasm (59)

The Song Dynasty  
1460 I.A.  
4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
On The Dawn Drum

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### THE IMAGE

**Thunder arouses the Earth:**

**The Image of ENTHUSIASM.**

**A burst of song,**

**The rhythmic movement of the body,**

**Inspired by this mysterious manifestation of spirit**

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“Nature is principle only. However, without the material force and concrete stuff of the universe (Qi or Chi and Ch’i) (G), principle would have nothing in which to inhere. When material force is received in its state of clearness, there will be no obscurity or obstruction and principle will express itself freely. If there is obscurity or obstruction, then in its operation of principle, the Principle of Heaven will dominate if the obstruction is small, and human selfish desires will dominate if the obstruction is great. From this we know that original Nature is perfectly good. This is the Nature described by Mencius as ‘good’, by Master Zhou Dun-I as ‘pure and perfectly good’, and by Master Cheng I as ‘the fundamental character of our Nature’ and ‘the Nature traced to the source of our being.’ However, it will be obstructed if physical nature contains impurity. Hence, as Zhang Zai said ‘In physical nature there is that which the superior man denies to be his original Nature’ and ‘If one learns to return to the original Nature endowed by Heaven and Earth, then it will be preserved.’ In our discussion of Nature, we must include physical nature before the discussion can be complete.”

Zhu Xi (G) (1351-1421 A.I. [1130-1200 C.E.])

From the Complete Works of Zhu Xi – 43:2b-3a

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They stretch and strain their ligaments trying to alleviate the stiffness in their bodies. Bao interlaces his fingers and then straightens his arms above his head cracking the joints and bringing groans from the Night Watch.

The red phoenix wearer approaches Shi who is swinging the top half of his body from side to side. ‘Excuse me Magistrate but will you be needing us after you have seen Lizong?’

‘I doubt it. A short nap is little substitute for proper sleep. I will stay here at the refectory of the bureaucracy,’ turning to Bao ‘what about you?’

‘I will seek out my own bed and the walk home will do me good, I feel like I need some exercise. Why don’t we all have a rest and start afresh after the Midday Drum.’

There is general approval followed by bowing after which the Night Watch leave.

Shi and Bao look at each other then up at the long flight of steps leading to the Inner Palace complex.

'Are you ready for this or have you anything to say?'

Bao shakes his head and yawns at the same time.

'By the time we have mounted these stairs we should be fully awake. I will race you to the top as a means to invigorate you.'

Shi sets off at pace but Bao only looks after him. Reluctantly he starts but then increases his pace finally taking 2 steps at a time he arrives just behind Shi.

An old Palace Official, Tang Jen, looks on with disapproval. 'Lizong awaits you in the Morning Hall. Follow me.'

Bao pulls a face behind the Official's back much to Shi's annoyance.

His is a leisurely walk compared to the usual pace for members of the bureaucracy. Bao looks about bored, then catching sight of Shi's expression, he sighs, and tries to adopt what he thinks is the correct mode of perambulation, taking as his example the shuffling gait of the man in front of him.

They leave the open courtyard and enter a large building through large double doors. The sound of children's voices surprises them. The sight of Zhao Yun on his hands and knees playing some game with 5 or 6 children surprises them even more. He is still in night apparel.

'The Magistrate and his ... *assistant*, are here.'

Zhao Yun looks around to find a Lady of the household. 'Come take my place.' Getting up, he throws out an arm in the direction of a man of about Shi and Bao's age. 'This is my nephew Zhao Tan and these are his children all except this one' he points 'she is mine, Princess of my Heart.' He beams goodwill.

Having bowed first to Zhao Yun then to Zhao Tan, Shi wastes little time. 'We have much to relate..'

'Let it wait until you have rested. I would rather hear it all from a fresh man than from a weary one.' He turns to Bao who is staring at Zhao Tan who in turn is grinning like a well fed cat. 'Is it that you recognize my nephew, Bao?'

'The face I recognize but for the life of me I can't remember where from.'

This tall good looking man soon puts him right. 'If I was wearing an Imperial College student's tunic, instead of night attire, would it help?'

It dawns on Bao. 'But, but. But surely you can't be...'

Tan laughs a gentle laugh at Bao's surprise. 'You must say nothing of my lineage to our fellow students. I have decided, and with my uncle's blessing, to take the Jinshi examinations in the same manner as any man who wishes to work in the bureaucracy.'

'He is much taken with the Learning of the Way, as I am myself. It is much to his credit that he wants to attend the Imperial College, don't you think?' Zhao Yun solicits a reply.

'Indeed. It is of noble merit.' Bao's smile mirrors the sentiment, and being of the infectious kind Shi's face also finds it has cause to celebrate.

Zhao Yun looks around at them all, well pleased. 'My nephew tells me that you are an inspiration to your fellow students.' He ignores the groan that has slipped involuntarily from Shi's throat. 'And that your brilliantly original comments on the Classic of Changes has earned you a bright following amongst your peers, if not with all of your teachers.'

Bao quickly glances at Shi's stony face, the smile long gone.

Zhao Yun, however, is finding these exchanges amusing. Then he laughs out loud when Bao replies. 'What can I say that modesty denies.'

Tan is impressed by this, as children are by their heroes. 'See uncle what he brings. A turn of phrase worthy of an original thinker in his noble ancestor's mould.'

'Ah, Shao Yong.' There is more than just a hint of reverence in Zhao Yun's pronouncement. He turns to Shi full on and in so doing turns the conversation. 'How well

has Shao Bao performed in his duties this night just past?’

‘Well indeed, if it wasn’t for his keen observation an entire line of enquiry would have been missed.’

‘Excellent.’ He turns to Bao. ‘We have a problem, Bao. We cannot have a mere student of the Imperial College carrying out investigations in my name. And as I respect the present examination system by which the bureaucracy chooses its members, I cannot promote you either. However, there may be another option.’ He ponders for a moment looking for a way in. ‘You carry out research into Shao Yong’s metaphysics on your own volition, is that correct?’

‘Indeed.’

‘What form does this take?’

‘My cousin, twice removed, inherited a room full of Shao Yong’s notes. He allows me the honour to take as much as I can carry at one time, so that I may scrutinize and record what is of use in their content. When I have finished with one set I return it to his safe keeping and pick up another.’

Zhao Yun is taken by surprise by this and turns to Tan, who can only shrug his shoulders having been taken by surprise as well. Then he swings to Shi who confirms his knowledge of this by a bow of the head. Then back to Bao. ‘Have you found much of merit?’

Bao almost squirms as he struggles with a suitable answer. ‘It may be. It might just be ... possible. I don’t know. Only when Shao Yong said he believed *pattern came before number*, as recorded by Cheng Yi himself, it may be that he had a different meaning in mind than the one that is usually accepted.’

Shi’s sigh is only partly masked by his turning head. Turning supposedly to look at something out of one of the window.

‘It may be what Shao Yong was referring to was in relation to Tsao Hua, The Continuing Process of Creation. The patterns of black and white squares he produced in such profusion may be the patterns of that very Process.’

There is complete silence in the room. Even the children have gone quiet. All look at Bao in amazement. Or, as in Shi's case, with extreme annoyance.

'Excuse my clumsy rendition. I am not certain of any of this and have little time to carry out the work required to prove that this is true.' It is now his turn to shrug his shoulders.

Zhao Yun almost whispers. 'There are such patterns in these notes?'

'Indeed. And I suspect, hidden amongst them, an entire system by which these patterns can be revealed.'

Zhao Yun pales with shock. 'You do realize what you are saying? That the very process by which the world comes into being may have been found?'

'Unfortunately I cannot say this. It is only an intuition. I will carry on with my research and if I find, or can prove, that this is true then I will share this with you all.'

Zhao Yun turns to Shi. 'Did you know about this?'

'Only that it takes up far too much of his time.'

'But you do know of that which he speaks?'

Shi looks disapprovingly at Bao. 'I am conversant with Shao Yong's metaphysics. I have also been forced to endure Bao's obsession over many years. My own view on these matters is this: if such a system exists that can reveal how The Continuing Process of Creation works, and hence, can reveal how the world continually comes into being.' He pauses. 'Then it has as much potential for ill, as it does for good.'

'The same that it ever was, my dear Shi' Zhao Yun sympathizes.

'Indeed.' Shi turns to Bao. 'The Classic of Changes was such a work but what good did it ever do. Even when the original was available, did it sustain the Zhou? Only ethics, right action and self cultivation can sustain man.'

'Well said.' Bao and Tan join Zhao Yun in the sentiment.

The silence that follows is one of anticipation. Zhao Yun and Tan are both looking at Shi, only he is still looking at Bao. Bao glances at Shi and gets the prompt he is waiting for by means of raised eyebrows.

'And yet.' Bao lets the words linger as he glances at Shi once more.

Shi presents the floor with a sweep of his arm. 'What are you waiting for. You know you will have your say on this matter, whatever I think.'

Bao takes a deep breath. 'Was it not Master Cheng I who said: The perfection of knowledge depends on the, Investigation of Things. If we wish to extend our knowledge, we must investigate the principle of *all* things. The intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing that man's mind cannot comprehend. It is only because all principles are not investigated that man's knowledge is incomplete. Limiting ourselves in what things we should investigate denies us our birthright. If we have a mind that can understand all things then all things should be investigated. How will we ever know the fullness of Nature if we do not? And if we do not know the fullness of Nature how can we say that we know ourselves, when we are a part of Nature, just as Nature is part of us.'

'Equally well said.' Zhao Yun turns to his nephew. 'If I were a Buddhist and believed in reincarnation I would now be under the impression that Shao Yong has been reincarnated in the person of his ancestor and that Cheng I is with us today in the person of Zhen Shi.'

Zhao Tan adds. 'Perhaps the Buddhists are right. For our friends' reasoning here today perfectly reflects those two great friends from the past. Those giants that are the very foundation of, *this culture of ours.*'

'And well said nephew.' Lizong enjoys the moment before turning the conversation. 'We have come a long way from where we started, enjoyable as it has been. I must now bring us back to the problem at hand, and that is, what to do about Shao Bao's status. Perhaps I can kill 2 birds with 1 arrow in this matter.' He then addresses Bao directly. 'As you are already engaged in philosophical research of a very high order it would seem to me that your talents would best be served in the Imperial



Library. You would have access to all the knowledge it contains and that may be useful in your research into Shao Yong's metaphysics. And, as a researcher, you would have unparalleled freedom to pursue your, Investigation of Things. How would you receive such an offer?'

Bao is so overjoyed he bows to the horizontal. 'My gratitude would be unbounded.'

'Then let it be so.' He signals the Palace official, Tang Jen. 'Fetch the apparel of a Librarian from the Imperial Library and then make arrangements to have the official documents drawn up.'

Tang Jen's look of disapproval is countered by Zhao Yun's dismissive wave of his hand and a fierce scowl. The official does as he is bid.

'Your post has the status of a Palace Official. As such, you carry out *all* investigations in my name.' He turns to Shi. 'There is an added advantage to this, in that, if you have more than one line of enquiry then there are now 2 of you able to pursue separate lines.'

'This will be a great advantage.'

'Excellent.'

He turns back to Bao 'Not only has your new position status but it also comes with a not inconsiderable salary. So you will be able to enjoy the benefits that wealth brings, such as marriage.'

Bao detects just a little humour in Zhao Yun's words and so replies in kind. 'Domestic bliss has always been high on my list of priorities in life.'

Shi shuffles, Zhao Yun laughs and Tan enjoys the moment.

Tang Jen comes back and presents a large white ceremonial hat, a silver girdle and a white robe with the insignia of the Imperial Library woven into it: a 2 headed phoenix above 4 crossed calligraphy brushes below which are 8 ink wells in a diamond shape.

As Zhao Yun takes it from the Palace Official the man comments with a certain satisfaction. 'It belonged to Chou Te. It is the only one that I could find.'

Zhao Yun looks with displeasure at Tang Jen. 'This will have to do for now. But *you personally*, will make sure that Shao Bao is presented with a full compliment of everything he requires. Do I make myself understood?'

Loosing face, the Palace official deflates into the shell of old age. He hands the objects over and shuffles back to his position against the wall.

Zhao Yun engages Shi and Tan by handing over the hat and girdle while he holds out the robe so that Bao can slip into it. 'What the old fool has just related with spite is that this robe belonged to a Librarian who died just yesterday. So I hope you are not superstitious?'

'Superstition is ignorance cloaked only in the words of a false understanding of Nature.'

Bao's words please everyone.

He slips into the out-held garment and as he does so Zhao Yun intones. 'As Prince of Heaven, I Lizong, The Principled Ancestor, invest you with this robe into the service of the Song Dynasty.'

Zhao Yun then helps Bao adjust the robe. Tan waits until Bao is comfortable before placing the girdle around his waist. Finally Shi steps forward and places the hat on his head. It drops over his eyes, as it is far too big, forcing everyone to restrain from laughing. He takes it off and adjusts the inner lining before replacing it. As he drops his arms 2 thinly carved oblong pieces of ivory fall out.

Tan is quick to pick them up. 'Tickets for the opera, The Bower of Minor Bird Tranquillity, no less.' He turns them over to reveal their ends and takes out a slice of ivory from a purpose made slit with practised ease. He reads the characters brushed on with a delicate hand. 'They are for this very night.' He hands them to Bao 'What better way to celebrate your appointment in the service of the Emperor Lizong.'

'What better way indeed.' Seeing Bao's puzzled reaction Zhao Yun continues in a reassuring manner. 'Come Bao, have they not come to you as a gift from Heaven.'

'As a gift from Heaven I accept them with gratitude.' But he doesn't sound convincing.

'Make of them what you will, but you would have received a gift from the Palace if we would have had time for proper formalities.'

'I will accept them as such, a gift from the Palace.' He bows low.

'Now you may go and I will see you after you have rested.'

Bao and Shi bow low and leave.

As they walk back through the courtyard Bao tries moving his arms out to the side as a means of adjusting the garment. 'Either he was malformed or I have the shoulders of an ox. How do I look?'

'Ridiculous.'

'Do I detect a hint of jealousy?'

'You only say that to annoy me.'

'It is true, forgive me.'

Shi stops. 'Come here.' He tries adjusting the garment. 'The arms are too short and the chest too narrow. At least the length is right. There, that is the best I can do.' His smile breaks into a muffled laugh before adding. 'It will look better once you have removed your student's tunic. Wear a thin white undergarment and you should pass muster.' Then as he sets off. 'The girdle is a thing of wonder. I should imagine you will be able to use it as a weapon at a push.'

'Do I really have to wear it all the time?'

'It will give you the gravitas that your persona so lacks.'

'Such cruel words, yet true never the less.' Bao sighs 'I'm not the right shape to hold a lofty stance in elegance. You, on the other hand, were probably born to attention.'

'We can't all be perfect.'

'True, true. I feel that I am somehow out of kilter. Or perhaps it has all just happened with too much speed. I feel I am in a dream. Only yesterday I was an indentured student. Today, I'm a Palace Official.'

They come to the steps and descend.

At the bottom Shi faces Bao. 'I will pick you up from your parent's abode. Make sure you are ready.'

'The walk home will do me good. I can practise holding myself aloof. Will you not watch me as I cross the square to see how I perform?'

'Goodnight, or should it be good day, whatever.' He shouts back without turning around. 'Make sure you are ready.'

Bao watches his friend go then crosses the square in the other direction. Standing on tiptoes he swings his shoulders in exaggerated motion while twisting his hips in the opposite direction, in imitation of the gait of a Palace official. Or at least, how he imagines it to be.

Half way across he stops throws his hat into the air then jumps up to catch it. He hits the ground already in motion and for the first time in 200 years a Palace Official is seen exiting the Inner Palace Gate running at speed.

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## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
Enthusiasm is not a singular occupation.  
Only when it abounds in the many will  
Success follow.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
The superior man looks on  
With detachment,  
As others express Enthusiasm.  
It soon comes it soon goes.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:  
Enthusiasm pleases the ruler at the right time.  
At the wrong time he wonders what folly abounds.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:  
What mysterious thing is this Enthusiasm?  
The sage knows its source but not its expression.  
Only children are possessed of it in its full completeness.**

## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Resoluteness (6)

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==  ==
===== Lake
=====
=====
===== Heaven
=====

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#### THE IMAGE

**The Lake has risen to Heaven:**

**The Image of RESOLUTENESS.**

**Thus the superior man showers riches on his fellows,**

**While promoting his virtue by self-cultivation.**

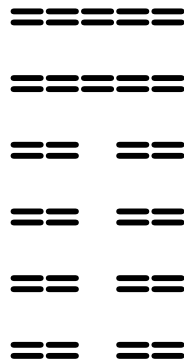
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# Chapter 7

## Contemplation (52)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 Before The Morning Drum

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### THE IMAGE

**The Wind penetrates the Earth:**

**The Image of CONTEMPLATION.**

**Thus the superior man penetrates**

**The great mysteries of reality by Contemplating**

**The perfect order of Earth.**

★

“Based on the root consciousness,  
the five consciousnesses of the senses manifest themselves in accordance with the  
conditioning factors.

Sometimes the senses manifest themselves together and sometimes not,  
just as waves manifest themselves depending on water conditions.  
The sense-centre consciousness always arises and manifests itself,  
except when born in the realm of the absence of thought,  
in the state of unconsciousness,  
in the two forms of concentration,  
in sleep,  
and in the state where the spirit is depressed or absent.

Thus the various consciousnesses are but transformations [constructions of the mind].  
That which discriminates and that which is discriminated are,  
because of this,  
both unreal [illusions].  
For this reason,  
everything is mind only.”

From the Cheng Weishi Lun - The most important philosophical work of the  
Consciousness Only School (G) of Chinese Buddhism (G).

TD 31, no.1585: 7

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Bao's thoughts are taken back to what Shi had said about  
all of the walls of the Palace having ears, because on  
exiting from the Gate of Tranquillity the Gate Captain  
had bowed to him. How could the Gate Captain possibly  
have known that he had just been invested otherwise?

This disturbing thought is immediately cast adrift on  
seeing the Ink Stone teahouse. He thinks of her. Then  
like an iron filing drawn to a loadstone he is drawn  
inexorably towards its welcoming confines.

Entering, he mounts the 5 steps to the balcony and goes  
inside. He looks for her everywhere amongst the early  
morning crowd.

Poppy, one of the Ink Stone's serving girls, is carrying  
a tray of steaming rice cakes and Bao enquires of her as  
she passes. 'Have you seen your mistress?'

Poppy bows on seeing the Palace robe. 'She has retired  
having been up all night.' Recognition dawns. 'Is that  
you Bao? Why are you in disguise?'



'I am not in disguise.' He says, a little miffed. 'And I don't have time to explain.'

The girl is soon left behind as he makes his way through to the back where stairs ascend to the floor above. He undoes the rope that bars the way quickly replacing it on achieving the other side. Mounting the stairs he arrives on the 2<sup>st</sup> floor's wide balcony. This is covered by the floor above but open to the side except for an ornate rail.

Moving along he quickly arrives at Tai's rooms. The 2 door-length latticed windows are both half open and he peeps inside the first. There she lies fast asleep.

He slips inside making little sound and stands looking at her from near the end of the bed. She looks so peaceful he hardly dares breath for fear of waking her. But then, what should he do?

Unconsciously he sits on the stool that is in front of the dressing table that itself is between the windows. His uncertainty lost in her beauty.

Drawing out his writing things from inside the sleeve of his student's tunic, he places these on the dressing table. In so doing he realizes he can see her perfectly in the reflection of the large oval mirror at the dressing table's back.

He removes his hat placing it on an alabaster head used for combing out Tai's wigs before rolling out his paper and holding down the edges with things from her toilet. Shakes his squat thick-glass ink bottle and removes its top. Removes the cover from a fine brush and moistens the hair from between his lips. All with the quietness of a mouse cleaning its whiskers.

His intention is to write her a poem so that she knows of their good fortune. But as he looks at her reflection a thought strikes him that her face is exactly the same on both sides.

He looks at his own reflection and can see immediately that his rough face is perfectly asymmetric. He smiles at himself and notes how one end of his mouth curls up and the other down lending him a roguish look. In this expression his almond eyes now squint, their ends turning up into what his eldest sister called his, pirate eyes;

oh how he had loved her for that as a child. His nose is too squat for refined elegance, unlike Shi, whose nose is both strait and long. And *his* were housed between high cheekbones atop sunken gullies that made for a handsome sternness that suited his position. Bao on the other hand has cheekbones somewhere beneath the pock mocked skin, but where, is impossible to define. Until, that is, he laughs and then they seem to stick out too far in impish measure. He loves his face but not for its beauty.

Looking past his reflection he again sees hers. He turns and confirms that she has indeed perfect symmetry.

This sets off a sequence of thoughts: her features on one side of her face is a mirror image of the other; it had been her mirror image that had made him aware of this; that this reflection is an illusion; yet it is exactly the same as the image he sees directly; and did this not confirm what Tai herself believed, as a Buddhist, that all is an illusion; and even more, as she has a fondness for that branch of Buddhism known as Consciousness Only, where everything we experience through the senses is a product of our own minds; did this not confirm this philosophic perspective.

In their many discussions, this Buddhist notion that we do not know what is outside of our own minds, fascinated him.

Now he can see that it is true, it sets off another sequence: her face existed in the form it had, only in his mind; therefore her beauty was as much a part of him as it was of her; this pleased him immeasurably as she was part of him in a very real sense; and this confirmed the feeling he had always had with her, that they were entwined as one.

He chokes on a rising emotion, before setting to work on the poem with these thoughts in mind. First he would describe her face, which in fact was as much his face as hers.

Having finished he reads it through underneath his breath. 'A perfect mirror image, their strong black lines begin at wells of shadow. Rising up and away they recline in perspective's sharp points as they narrow.

They frame a face, though oval in design is blessed with shapes in relief divine.  
Dark gullies of cheek a perfect arc describe in vertical descent point out the chin supine.

Tangerine segments moon-like rising from behind the silvery clouds of firm fleshed bone.  
These eyes of the richest violet glimpsed from lids framed with delicate lines of the darkest tone.

Between these, the slow curved line descends rounding in celandine bulbs to left and right.  
Covering oval vents for breath's perfumed escape, recoiling on intake they flare into sight.

And then the mouth that parts in perfection, the fullest lips makes little difference here.  
Tombstones of alabaster are revealed in curved evenness that have few for a peer.

My love, this face, mirrored perfection in pure mind's eye embrace.'

Not bad for a first draft he thinks. Then looking at her reflection he notices a tear descending. He gets up and comes close to examine this manifestation. Dropping down to his knees beside the bed he leans forward until he can feel her breath.

With incomparable speed he is flung back onto the floor as she springs out of bed and has him by the throat in a painful pressure hold.

'It's me, it's me, it's Bao.'

'I know it's you! What other idiot would sit grinning at his own reflection in a mirror!'

She throttles him some more before. 'Why have you come back when I am just getting used to the idea that you have gone.' These words are accompanied with tears of rage.

'Desist and I will explain.' He manages to scrape out. 'I swear I am not gone nor am I likely to be.'

She relaxes her hold. 'Be good, it had better be, Bao, for you try my patience sorely.'

'See my intention and read the poem I was leaving you. I wished you to know that I had returned but could not bring myself to wake you.'

As she gets up. 'It better be better than better. Or surely I will suffer the executioner's axe.'

She picks up the poem sending her things flying and reads in silence until. 'Tombstones of alabaster are revealed in curved evenness that have no peer.' She reads these words with a sneer. 'What! I have tombstones for teeth.'

She looks at him in anger then to her reflection in the mirror and grins without humour swinging her head from side to side.

'I must admit I have not found the right expression. How would you describe your teeth?' He sits up and leans against the bed happy that he has deflected her anger.

She produces a forced smile that turns into a snarl as she swings from her own image to his in the mirror.

After examining her teeth from several angles for sometime she sits down and takes up his brush and strikes out his characters then writes her own. 'Rounded shards of opal bright alabaster curved in evenness that are peerless. Now that is much better.'

'Now read on.'

She reads out loud. 'My love, this face, mirrored perfection in pure mind's eye embrace.' Her words trail off.

After a moment of deep concentration, a smile makes an appearance. 'Is it that you mean Pure Mind? The old name for Consciousness Only Buddhism?'

He smiles his very best smile. 'My love, this face. What else could it mean?'

'Oh Bao, that's quite wonderful.' Her smile, a thing of wonder in itself, springs forth fully on her face, and, in his mind.

She gets up only to drop down on her knees facing him. She leans in and kisses him gently on the lips. Only her

hand rests upon his new girdle and she springs back on feeling its cold metal.

'What is this you are wearing?'

'You are as observant as a cat with a full belly. Have we not been in conversation for sometime and only now have you seen the insignia of my new status?'

'What new status?'

'Did not Lizong himself invest me this very morning with the office of Librarian?'

She sits back on her feet, annoyed. 'Why would the Emperor invest you with such a noble office?' Then panic as she thinks out loud. 'Why would he invest you with any office? Oh Bao, you must take these things back to where you have found them. It is a capital offence to imitate Imperial Officials.'

'What little faith you have in me.' He sighs. 'Have I not just said...'

'I know what you have just said, but you are so full of play that sometimes I cannot tell when you jest. Please Bao, tell me in all sincerity, that it is true.'

'It is true.' He says this with as much sincerity that he can squeeze into so few words.

'But why would he invest you?'

'Zhao Yun has a keen interest in my ancestor Shao Yong. On hearing that I have employed myself in researching his work he involved me in conversation on this matter. So impressed was he, *unlike others that I will not mention*, that in his wisdom he thought I would be best employed in carrying out my research in an official capacity.'

She raises her hands to cover her mouth. 'Oh Bao, what fortune.'

'What fortune indeed.' He smirks with a deep satisfaction.

'But how did he hear of you?' She says with suspicion.

Sounding bored. 'Was Shi not presented yesterday? Did he not win great favour with the Emperor? Was he not assigned a special assignment? Was I not indentured to Shi? How then, could the Emperor not hear of me?' Pressing home his advantage he takes out from his sleeve the opera tickets and hands them to her. 'On investment, an official receives a small present. These I received from the Emperor's own hand.'

She looks at them with curiosity then quickly removes the sliver of ivory from its housing in its end. She jumps up 'These are for this very night's performance.'

'Indeed. So you must be ready by the Evening Drum.'

'But I can't go Bao.' She says in pain.

'Why not?'

'I have nothing to wear.'

Bao falls over with merriment.

'I cannot go to the Imperial Opera House in anything but the very finest of fine clothes.'

Righting himself. 'Then you best up and away. You cannot tarry here.'

'Oh. You are impossible.' She flings at him.

'And while you are about it you might as well see to your wedding things.' He slips this in without a trace of pronouncement.

It takes a little while to sink in. It affects her legs first as they buckle at the knee, followed by a hand that stretches out to his face. 'Are we then to married be?'

He reaches up and kisses her. She kisses him back placing just the tip of her tongue between his lips and he rolls her over on the floor. A breast escapes her garments with tempting serendipity. He takes it in the moment. Slipping his hand inside he peels back her robe.

Enter Poppy at speed. 'All is lost. All is undone. Your father has arrived back and at this very moment seeks you out.'

A moment of frozen silence erupts into a flurry of activity as they scramble for the door. Poppy holds it open but shuts laughter behind her hand.

Out on the balcony Tai drags Bao towards the furthest end away from the stairs and the teashop. They round the corner and pass a sitting area.

'Quickly, over the side, you can scale down the trellis work and hide in the garden.'

'I can't get down there.'

'If I could do it when I was a child, you will do it now.'

'But think of my status. What if someone saw a Palace Official scaling a trellis like a common criminal?'

'And what good is status to a dead man, which you will surely be, if my father catches you with me in my present state of undress.'

She pushes him over and he half falls into the garden below.

'Hide in the bushes.' She whispers in strength.

She passes the sitting area and rounding the corner runs into her father. Wu Chi is a giant of a man with the beard of a bear. He looks at her dishevelled state suspicion arising.

'Dear father, you have returned.' She says this with as much pleasure as she can infuse into rushed words.

'Why are you out here in only your sleeping robe?'

'I thought I heard ... a dog.' She grasps onto absurdity in her haste.

'A dog?'

'Perhaps a cat.'

'Perhaps a scoundrel.'

He brushes past her and quickly makes his way to the end of the balcony and leans over looking into the garden.

Bao is hiding inside the cover of an ornamental rhododendron. Looking up he realizes 2 things, first he can see Wu Chi's face looking down, and second, he has left his hat in Tai's bedroom.

'Who is that down there? Come out and show yourself, before I come down there and break your legs.'

Bao is now in the realization of a 3<sup>rd</sup> thing, in that, a member of the Night Watch is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony directly above Wu Chi and about to descend to his rescue. He waves furiously trying to direct him away.

Wu Chi turns to Tai who has now joined him. 'Who is that idiot and what is he doing? Does he think he can insult me by waving his arms about in that demented style?'

Tai can see that it is useless. 'Bao, Bao, show yourself. My father is enraged and only a full declaration of the truth will assure him now.'

Bao is left little choice so moves into full view and bows. 'It is I, Shao Bao, and I have brought good news...'

'It will need to be better than that if you have defiled my daughter.'

'Indeed he has not father. How could you think such a thing? You entrust me with the Ink Stone but not with my own grace.'

'Shame on you.' Says Bao coming to her defence.

Wu Chi turns back to Bao 'And the less said from you the better.'

'I will not stand by and watch you insult my betrothed. Take back your insinuation or I will come up there and box your ears.'

Wu Chi laughs at the thought. 'Box my ears? I will give him credit for his audacity.'

Tai leans over the rail. 'Bao, you must not box my father's ears. He has very sensitive ears. They give him much trouble in the winter.'



'It was only a figure of speech, dear heart. If it pleases, I could always say, I will give him a good spanking.'

Wu Chi is now in a state of full hilarity. 'Perhaps he would like to put me over his knee.'

'Do not laugh at my loved one. Can you not see the exulted position that he now holds?'

Wu Chi looks back at Bao who is once more signalling the Night Watch not to come down.

'Then am I to assume that this exuberant waving of the arms, is, *in some mysterious way*, a part of his Imperial duties?' He enquires of his daughter.

Tai is confused and looks down at Bao. 'Why are you doing this?' She gives a good impression of his waving arms.

'Bees.' Says Bao.

'Bees?' Says Tai.

'Bees.' Says Wu Chi in merriment.

'Bees?' Says Poppy, who is leaning over the rail further down the balcony in the middle of a giggling fit.

'Bees.' Says Bao, then to himself. 'Without even getting wed, I have joined this family. For have they not enticed me into repeating everything, as is their natural want.'

'Stop mumbling.' Wu Chi demands 'And answer the question?'

Bao stops waving his arms the Night Watch staying his hand.

Drawing himself up to his full height and standing with his feet apart, he joins his hands behind his back in imitation of the senior lecturer at the Imperial College when he wishes to be taken seriously. 'I have had enough of this bickering. I will now tell you how things stand and then there will be good grace between us.'

Tai clasps her hands together in joyful support and even Wu Chi is impressed behind his smile.

'Zhen Shi has been placed on special assignment by no less a person than the Emperor himself. I have been promoted so that I can assist him in his endeavours. I will not be going away. So Tai and I can be married forthwith.'

'Well why didn't you say so, come up and take tea.'

Wu Chi retires to the sitting area as Tai in her excitement jumps up and down. 'Come join us Bao, father has spoken.'

Bao is amazed at his own success and for once is lost for words. He climbs back up the trellis and finds father and daughter sat in arms entwined.

'Father and Poppy were just having a little joke. To remind us that we should not let your new status make merry with our virtue.'

Bao dusts himself off as a means of deflecting his annoyance. 'Noble intentions creatively employed, I have little doubt.' He turns to Poppy. 'Come, see to my dress.'

Poppy circumnavigates him flicking and dusting while giggling in between. Having finished, she stands up, where Bao catches, then holds her eye. Her smile retreats when he observes. 'You are well named Poppy, for there is more to you than meets the eye.'

He sits down opposite father and daughter.

Wu Chi, still full of bright humour, asks of Poppy. 'Bring us some breakfast. Such sport makes me hungry.'

Poppy turns to go, but niggling doubt stays her progress, and she turns back and bows to the horizontal. 'I trust you will not bear me a grudge for my part in this game.'

Bao softens, giving her a smile of reassurance. 'Have I not played such games myself. Would it not then be churlish if I was to bear a grudge when the game is on me?'

She leaves, content enough.

Wu Chi's demeanour suddenly turns serious. 'This special assignment that you and Shi have been set upon, is it anything to do with the Deputy Censor's murder?'

Bao is so shocked he is frozen in situ.

'Your silence is certainly more eloquent than your recent pronouncements. Now tell me this, did the murder take place on the Little Egret?'

Bao looks to Tai. 'Is your father blessed with second sight?'

'Why not ask him yourself, he is sitting right here.' She turns to her father 'Then you can verify to me what my ears have heard but my mind cannot grasp.'

Wu Chi ignores her and demands of Bao. 'Just tell me. For I may be able to help.' Wu Chi's frustration is already showing.

'But I am sworn to secrecy. If such a crime has been committed then I couldn't possibly comment.'

'Bao, the Ink Stone is filled with rumour at the best of times. But when someone as important as the Deputy Censor dies while enjoying perfect health, then the traffic in fanciful words increases until the entire air is suffused with the buzzing of gossiping bees.' Then more to himself 'And probably the same ones that plagued you in our garden.'

Bao looks glum and just a bit sheepish.

Tai, her curiosity aroused, looks first to one love then the other. 'What is this? The Deputy Censor has been murdered?'

Bao groans and briefly holds his head in his hands. 'It sounds worse on a second exposure.'

Wu Chi turns to his daughter. 'It is a rumour. Confirmed only by the silence of your betrothed.'

Tai turns to Bao with a questioning look, making him groan and seek out his hands once more.

Wu Chi avoids an outburst by taking an authoritative tone. 'Appointing Zhen Shi to a special assignment was

probably the best option in the circumstances that Lizong had. We all know that Shi is beyond reproach and will fulfil his duty in fullness. That, however, is a sign. It lets everyone know that this crime will not go unpunished. Unfortunately, it also lets everyone know that a crime has been committed. But this is not why I have broached this subject. It just so happens that I might have evidence pertinent to this crime.' He can see Bao's discomfort and so tries to help. 'Does it satisfy the pledge of secrecy that you have given to Lizong, if we only talk about the crime, in the manner, *that it has not been committed*. That way we can make progress.'

Bao's face is writ with strong characters of grave concern.

Tai is catching up fast. 'My father has debated with the best in Buddhist circles, Bao, and knows how best to use words to solve paradoxical statements. So why not take his generous offer of a logical negation in this matter, and that way, we can find out what evidence he has for this crime ... *that has not been committed*.'

Bao sighs and leans back. 'It may very well suit Buddhists to solve such problems in terms of the logic of language but it sticks in my craw, as it were, that it is not in the virtuous spirit of my commitment to Lizong.'

He looks from one to the other, where expectation and anticipation he sees in equal measure.

'However, under the circumstance that it was my silence that broke this commitment and I already feel that I have betrayed that sacred trust, I will say this: that the crime, *that was not committed*, would like wise, have not been committed on the Little Egret.'

'Nor that the crime, *that was not committed*, was not committed in the lowest portside cabin.'

'That would be correct if the crime, *was not committed*.'

'At last, progress.' Wu Chi throws on the table between them a fan.

Bao reaches out to get it but Tai is too quick and he grasps thin air.

She opens it revealing a shining black arc then after examining both sides she looks at it askance. 'It has no great beauty nor is there anything exceptional except for the material it is made from.'

Bao holds open his palm 'That is jet and comes from some distant land.'

Tai places it closed in his hand.

'It is not, I suspect, the reason for its value.'  
He plays with the end and springs it open in an arc of white, showing that it is the same on both sides. Tai and her father are both taken aback.

'But where did you get this?' Bao asks as he surrenders it once more into Tai's beckoning hand.

'I was coming to that. Now listen well. It was late on the night before last that I set off from the Buddhist Monastery of Lingyan. I had been in deep meditation with the Abbot.'

Tai, humorously interprets this for Bao's benefit. 'They had most likely been sampling the most recent ferment of rice wine, and been meditating on its quality.'

Wu Chi tries negating her remark with a disparaging glance. 'As I was saying, I was want to return home and he said he would walk with me as far as the southern end of the Su Di. Perhaps, halfway along, we were past by a pleasure boat...'

'The Little Egret.' Bao whispers in excitement.

'We were then witness to a strange event. Out of the back portside cabin, what looked like a child was being lowered to a man in a small rowing boat.'

'That was no child.'

Wu Chi is surprised. 'It looked like a child. Perhaps an older child. Passing on. Once they had lowered the rope they made off across the lake. We both had disturbing and unwelcome feelings about this. So the Abbot said he would leave me there and try to see where they came ashore. It was not long after he ran off, that I heard a loud noise coming from the Little Egret. Soon it was followed by

voices in distress. And when I could see that it was putting in at a small jetty I quickened my pace.'

Poppy appears carrying a tray full of steamed rice cakes, a range of sauces and Bao's hat which after putting the tray down she sticks on his head at a rakish angle. 'I swear, it looks better on the head I have just removed it from.'

'Poppy, you are transgressing your station. Please remove it forthwith.' Poppy complies only by taking it from Bao's head and sticking it on Wu Chi's. Where it sits balanced barely covering his giant topknot.

Wu Chi gives her a backhand on her bottom as she leaves making her cry out. 'Ow that hurt.' Then playfully. 'I will have to take you in hand, Master Wu, if you insist in such familiarity.'

Wu Chi laughs while flashing his eyebrows at Bao who enjoys the moment; and all to Tai's displeasure. 'She spends far too much time in your bed, father. And as a result she has become over familiar and rude.' She takes the hat and places it on the table.

'Can we please get back to the story?' Bao pleads.

'Where was I?'

'At the point where the Little Egret arrived at the police post.'

'That's correct. I could see a crowd leave and make their way up onto the Su Di. Then the police arrived and ushered them back onboard. All except one man. He was walking quickly towards me and so I stopped and leaned on the wall pretending to take in the view. If I needed final proof that something was amiss, it was when he took off his outer garment and threw it into the lagoon on the west side of the Su Di.'

Wu Chi stops and helps himself to the food. 'Come, fill your belly before they get cold.'

'How can you eat at a time like this?' Tai questions as Bao helps himself to a second breakfast.

'We are men, you would not understand.' Her father says while filling his mouth.

Tai has to wait with increasing frustration while they consume several rice cakes. 'That is enough. You will be both be as big as potbellied pigs.' She gets up placing the fan on the table and takes their bowls from them then takes the tray around the corner before placing it on the floor. 'Poppy!' She shouts as loud as she can, before returning to her seat.

Wu Chi whispers to Bao. 'I have been on a diet since her mother died.'

'I heard that.' Then to Bao. 'Can you imagine how big he would be if I had let him eat all he wanted.'

'You have been warned.' Wu Chi says conspiratorially.

Bao smiles at Tai then turns back to her father. 'So then you tackled him?'

'I could not. What had he done wrong? At this point I did not know of any crime having been committed. But I did get a good look at him as he passed by on the other side. For I had positioned myself in the well of darkness between the lanterns and waited until he was well lit before turning. When he saw me looking he tried to cover his face and walked past at speed. I have seen this man before. But where, for the life of me, I cannot remember.'

'But where did you find the fan?' Tai takes on the role of an exasperated inquisitor.

'I am coming to that. Have patience. I decided to follow this man, so convinced was I of his criminal intent. So I waited until he was some way ahead then I crossed to his side of the Su Di and followed. Every time he looked back my heart was in my mouth for though I pretended to be in some way engaged, I knew that he would eventually realize that I was following him.'

'You are so brave, father. So what happened next?'

'The northern end of the Su Di was busy as usual and so I made fast my progress. He dropped down into the carriage park at the island of Gushan and there I lost him amongst the crowds...'

'But not for good, surely?'

'Let me finish, dear child. Having made my way to the far end of the carriage park I saw on the small track that leads down to the jetties, the ones before the harbour, the Abbot coming up towards me. He was holding his arm with blood dripping down. I quickly used my belt as a tourniquet and stopped the flow. Then helped him to a carriage where people were alighting. The Abbot explained how he had been attacked and these good people put the carriage at our disposal. And so it was we returned to Lingyan.'

Tai unconsciously strokes her father's beard, as Bao, in amazed silence, remains.

'On the way back the Abbot told me what had befallen him. And what a story it is.'

Wu Chi takes his daughter in his arms and plants a kiss on her forehead, the memory reminding him of his blessings. 'The Abbot had made it to the Bai Di causeway, where the jetties are, in time to see the man carry what, he and I both thought was a child, off the end of the jetty. Being a man of fearless disposition he approached them and was about to engage them in conversation when the man placed the child on the ground. Then turning at speed, as he righted himself, he wielded a short sword at the Abbot's head. But as we both know, the Abbot is a master of the martial arts and he avoided the blow. There then unfolded an uneven fight with the Abbot always on the counter against a man of great skill in the art of the short sword. He managed to pick up a stick and with this giving him length he began to get the upper hand. Only then a carriage came down the track and he had to dive to the side to avoid being crushed. The man picked up this, supposed child, and as a man held open the carriage door they got inside. The brave Abbot even then did not give up but tried to pursue the carriage on foot. Only a man atop the carriage let fly with a crossbow, winging the Abbot in the arm.'

'I must go to the Abbot, father, and see what help I can be.' She says getting up.

Wu Chi holds onto her arm. 'He is well, and well looked after. Go to him after a while. He has plenty to keep him busy at the moment.'



'But where did the fan come from?' Bao says in exasperation.

'Ah. The fan. The Abbot found it on the way back to where the fight had taken place. He remembered, this woman you say, had kept her face covered all the while, and he realized it must have been by the means of this fan. She must have dropped it on entering the carriage. So here it is, a piece of evidence, and of unusual design.'

Tai picks up the fan from where she had placed it on the table and examines it again in detail.

Wu Chi finishes his tea. 'Thanks to the oyster sauce, I have a rare thirst, Tai, will you not bring me more tea.'

Tai hands the fan to her father and disappears around the corner. Picking up the tray she makes her way to the teahouse.

Wu Chi gets up, handing the fan to Bao, and checks to see that she has gone. Then as he returns. 'I could not say this in front of Tai because she would have been gone to him immediately. He was her instructor in the martial arts for much of her education and holds him in high regard. But the Abbot was pierced by a poisoned dart, and is most unwell.'

'This is terrible news.'

'Indeed it is. However, the Monastery has an excellent herbalist and he recognised the poison and knows the antidote. So all yet may be well.'

'These assassins, their plans so obviously gone wrong, will not dare to leave any witnesses alive.' Bao thinks aloud. Then it strikes him. 'Your life may well be under threat.'

'It may, so I will return to the Monastery. A thousand warrior monks makes for the safest haven in all of Kinsai.'

'I will have you escorted.' Bao springs to his feet as Wu Chi protests. He leans over the balcony to shout for the Night Watch only the Night Watch has landed on the floor behind him.

Two things then happen, first, Tai having just returned leaps past Bao and sends the Night Watch flying with a straight arm blow to his head, and second, her father springs to his daughter's aid with astonishing speed for such a large man.

The Night Watch, however, is no sooner on his feet than he back flips onto the rail, then in the air. Then swinging himself up by the rails onto the floor above, he disappears.

'Stop, stop. It is not an assassin but the Night Watch here to protect me.' Bao finally catches up with the action.

Father and daughter both complain. 'Then why didn't you say.'

Bao sighs. 'When did I get a chance?'

'Is it safe to come down?' The Night Watch jokes from above.

'As safe as it ever was.' Bao replies in kind.

He swings down and bows in one flowing movement. 'We will escort Wu Chi to the Monastery and provide Wu Tai with an escort. They may wish to get at the father by kidnapping the daughter, if all I have heard is true.'

He takes a mirror from inside his tunic and uses it to signal to the east tower of the Gate of Tranquillity. A flashing reflection soon comes back in reply.

Tai turns to her father. 'Have you not seen this flickering light before?'

'Indeed I have, and oft I have wondered what it was.'

They look into each other, suspicion fast rising.

Bao tries working out the signal but gets only as far as realizing there are long and short reflections before the Night Watch is finished with his communication.

The Night Watch addresses them all. 'It has been agreed that Wu Tai should join her father at Lingyan after the Opera.'

Tai adopts a confrontational stance. 'Who agrees? I do not agree. Who will look after the Ink Stone if my father and I are not here?'

The Night Watch answers. 'There is one of our order who already works here and is already conversant and capable of running your establishment.' He looks beyond them 'I think you will find that they now approach.'

Tai and her father turn into surprise, shock giving way to a slow-fused anger.

Bao on the other hand relaxes back against the rail softly wafting the fan as he watches Poppy, in apparent innocence, walk into their midst carrying a pot of tea.

She looks at Tai and Chi with mounting concern before addressing the Night Watch. 'I take it there will be need for another bowl.'

Bao pushes himself off the rail. Passing Poppy he hands her the fan then leaves her with this remark. 'I have a feeling you will soon be in need of this'

Her cringing expression makes a fine contrast to Bao's unwelcome grin.

★

## The Changing Lines

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Contemplation of the self**

**From the perspective of the self**

**Leads to arrogant self-appraisal.**

**Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**Contemplation of the nature of reality**

**From the perspective of the self brings**

**Limited results.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Retreat (7)**

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===== Heaven

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== == Mountain

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**THE IMAGE**

**The stationary Mountain under the upward movement of Heaven:**

**The Image of RETREAT.**

**In a time of confusion,**

**The superior man shows his strength by dignified reserve.**

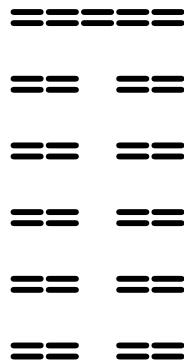
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# Chapter 8

## Splitting Apart (57)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 Before The Afternoon Drum

★



### THE IMAGE

**Mountains are born from the Earth:**

**The Image of SPLITTING APART.**

**The superior man remains attentive**

**In times of a civilization's development.**

**Factions can cause problems.**

**Even danger.**

★

“The Western Inscription (G)  
by  
Zhang Zai (G)

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such as a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst.

Therefore that which extends throughout the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider my nature.

All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.

The great ruler [The Emperor] is the eldest son of my parents [Heaven and Earth], and the great ministers are his stewards. Respect the aged – this is the way to treat them as elders should be treated. Show affection toward the orphaned and the weak – this is the way to treat them as the young should be treated. The sage identifies his virtue with that of Heaven and Earth, the worthy are the best amongst the children of Heaven and Earth. Even those who are tired and infirm, crippled or sick, those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands, are all my brothers who are in distress and have no one to turn to.

When the time comes, to keep himself from harm – this is the care of a son. To rejoice in Heaven and have no anxiety – this is filiality at its purest.

One who disobeys the Principle of Heaven violates virtue. One who destroys humanness [ren] is a robber. One who promotes evil lacks moral capacity. But one who puts his moral nature into practice and brings his physical existence to complete fulfilment can match Heaven and Earth.

One who knows the principles of transformation will skilfully carry forward the undertakings of Heaven and Earth, and one who penetrates spirit [consciousness] to the highest degree will skilfully carry out their will.

Do nothing shameful even in the recesses of your own home and thus bring dishonour to it. Preserve the mind and nourish nature with untiring effort.

The Great Yu\* shunned pleasant wine but attended to the protection and support of his parents. Border Warden Ying\* cared for the young of the barbarian and thus extended his love to his own kind.

Emperor Shun’s\* merit lay in delighting his parents with unceasing effort, and Shensheng’s\* reverence was demonstrated when he awaited punishment without making an attempt at escape.

Zeng Can\* received his body from his parents and reverently kept it intact throughout his life, while Yin Boqi\* vigorously obeyed his father’s command.

Wealth, honour, blessing, and benefit are meant for the enrichment of my life, while poverty, humble station, are, and sorrow will be my help mates to fulfilment.

In life I follow and serve Heaven and Earth. In death I will be at peace.”

The Western Inscription – So named because Zhang Zai inscribed it on the west wall of his study.

From Zhangzi quanshu 1:1a-6b

\* There are famous stories of filial piety attached to all of these people.

\*

'Get-up, get-up, get-up, get-up, get-up.' Shao Ling-Ling, Bao's youngest sister, a girl of 13 years, and a wonderful mix of woman and child, is slapping him on his raised shoulder with both hands in time to her wakening call.

Bao slowly opens his eyes and sees his tormenter. Her wicked grin is only a breaths distance away.

'Have you nothing better to do than disturb your dear brother. Heaven knows I need my beauty sleep.'

'There is little hope for you in that regard. All the beauty that has been handed down to this family from Heaven, has been handed down to me.'

She sits back on her feet and strikes a pose that she assumes portrays her beauty best. Her head, held high, is slightly raised and cast to the side. Her eyelids, almost closed, mimic her mouth that is stretched, only stretched too far into what unfortunately looks like a grimace.

'It is a rare beauty indeed.' Says Bao. 'As rare as a green moon.'

Her head swings back with lightning speed. 'I have not heard of a green moon. Does such a thing exist?'

'It just goes to show how rare it is if your superior knowledge has not heard of such a thing. Now run along and consult your books, best to satisfy your insatiable curiosity.'

He turns over a warm smile trying to settle, but it is not to be.

'Get-up, get-up, get-up, get-up, get-up.' She pummels his other shoulder.

'Surely there is someone else that you can torment with your bright energy?'

'Surely there is not.' She sits back again on her feet 'Besides, I am here under instruction.'

'Have I then 2 tormentors?'

Clasping her entwined fingers to her cheek she is inspired to a lyrical lament. 'How can you call his noble Magistrate self, a tormentor? When he is the very substance of virtue and integrity, and would make anyone a great mentor.' Then dropping her hands and in a more coarse tone. 'I think Bao you should have more respect for our dear, dear friend, Shi.'

Dark words enter Bao's mind, they are the last words that Shi had said to him: Make sure you are ready.

He sits up in full wakefulness. 'Tell me he is not here?'

'I can tell you that if you want, but it will make little difference to the fact that he is at this exact moment in our reception hall talking with mother.'

Ling-Ling leaps off the bed and takes the sheet off with her, twirling it around her as she spins like a mini tornado.

Bao leaps from the bed through the door across the hall and into the bathing room.

The mini tornado twirls towards the door then stops and peeps out before dancing on tiptoes to the bathing room door. Here she looks inside and sees Bao release a catch on a cistern full of water. The water pours through a grid soaking him from head to toe. He shuts it off.

'Bring me the soap.'

The mini tornado reverses her spin so by the time she reaches the shelf where the jars of soap are seated the sheet lies a white snake on the floor.

'Peas and herbs, peas and dried flowers or peas and peas?'

'Peas and herbs.'

Holding it out for him he cups a mound with his fingers and rubs it all over his body.

She leans on the wall and watches as he lathers himself up then in curiosity. 'Why is your ding-dong all red?'



After his eyes make a quick visit. 'You should not be looking at your brother's ding-dong. You are getting too old.'

'But why not? Have I not seen your ding-dong all my life? If it had been that I had not, would I not be able to recognize it now?'

Bao sags unable to countenance this conversation. 'Make yourself useful and take the brush to my back.'

She quickly replaces the jar and takes down the long handled brush with relish from where it hangs by a string on the wall.

She sets about her task with vigour as her mother, Shao Ang, walks in. 'Is what Shi has told me true?'

'Dear Ma, has Shi ever lied to you? Then why would he start now.'

'This is disgraceful behaviour Bao. Why could you not have told me yourself?'

'Were you not asleep when I came back? Had you been awake then surely I would have done.'

At this point Bao's other younger sister Mai walks in. The same age as her best friend, Tai, she does not compare in beauty but is pleasant enough on the eye. She strides past her mother, a smaller more wrinkled version of her daughter, and confronts Bao. 'What is the meaning of this? Are we, your family, to be the last to know of your good fortune?'

Bao sags to his waist before righting himself. 'Have I not just explained. Why must I be chastised in triplicate in everything I do?'

Mai takes the brush from Ling-Ling. 'And you should not be scrubbing your brother's back at your age.'

She takes over the job with Ling-Ling fighting to get the brush back.

Bao's love-maid, Crystal, enters and takes the brush from them both. 'I think this is my job.'

'Watch out for his ding-dong, its all red and sore.'  
Ling-Ling helpfully suggests.

'It is time that child had things explained to her.' Ma confides to Mai.

'Do not expect me to take on that task. It would be too impossibly embarrassing to contemplate.'

'I will tell the little minx.' Crystal says while taking between her finger and thumb a fold of Ling-Ling's cheek and shaking it.

'What will you tell me?' She says while rubbing her cheek.

Bao's father, Shao Zuo, walks in. 'Congratulations my dear son. Though there were those who said you would come to nothing. I always knew the Shao line would run true.' He beams a huge smile from his small balding head.

Bao turns and bows, sending an arc of spray from his long hair across the ladies gathered, and who, all complain without fail.

'Thank you dear father, it is indeed the Shao line that is responsible for my good fortune. Did Shi not tell you?'

Ma barges in. 'I wager 10 strings of copper cash you did not mention Black Shao the pirate to his noble self, Lizong.'

Shao Zuo takes his wife to task. 'He was not a pirate but a trader on the South China Sea, and how many times have I told you that his name was not Black Shao.'

Shi walks in. 'Ah, there you all are. What a family for eccentricity. You leave your guest in the Reception Hall so you can have a family party in the bathing room.'

'And enough said from you Zhen Shi. You are not too old to feel the back of my hand.' Ma states in humorous kind.

Then they all join in with disparaging words for Shi's enjoyment.

Ling-Ling pushes her way through. 'Come, noble Magistrate, leave these common people with their common words and engage me in poetry.'

'What kind of poetry have you in mind?'

She guides him out a willing foil. 'I have in mind a love poem and one that speaks of a beauty so rare it is likened to that of a green moon.'

'And whose rare beauty does this belong to, I wonder?'

The whole family join in. 'Who do you think.'

Ling-Ling puts her head back around the door and sticks out her tongue.

They all follow her out leaving Bao with Crystal. He amorously grabs her as soon as they are alone but she pushes him off. 'Bao, you are soon to be wed and for the life of me, I cannot.' She looks at his ding-dong. 'And besides it looks like it needs a rest.'

He sighs in exasperation. 'The very opposite is true. Have I not suffered frustration at every opportunity that has presented itself of late? You know how cranky I get when my juices do not flow. Please take pity on me.'

'I cannot. Has Ma not just asked me to stay on in another position, now that you are to wed?' She runs to the door and peeps out to see if there is anyone listening then on seeing they are truly alone. 'She has lost interest in the marriage bed and would have me take her place as Zuo's concubine.'

'It makes sense, I can see. Did he not choose you for me? So at long last he will taste the joy of his choosing, and I will in misery be.'

'Nonsense, you will have your own true love.' She gently laughs. Then remembering their time together 'I was but 17 and you but 12, some marriages last in happiness barely as long.'

'And few so blessed with the pleasures of the bed.'

They share a moment. Then she picks up the sheet from the floor and throws it over his head that she has done a thousand times before and starts rubbing dry his hair.

## **The Changing Lines**

Changing Line at the beginning means:  
A faction behaves like a hidden dragon.  
Danger.

Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
Disaster as the faction makes a bid for power.  
This branching of power weakens civilization.  
Misfortune.

Changing Line in the fifth place means:  
Branching occurs in the open.  
It stimulates development.  
Civilization is enriched by this form of branching delivering  
Good fortune.

## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Innocence (8)

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### THE IMAGE

**Under Heaven Thunder rolls:**

**All things attain the natural state of INNOCENCE.**

**Thus the sage-kings of old,**

**Were in harmony with Heaven and Earth,**

**And with the times in which they lived.**

**Thus they nourished all living things.**

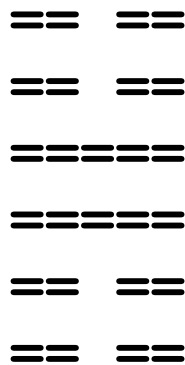
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# Chapter 9

## Preponderance of the Small (54)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Afternoon Drum

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### THE IMAGE

**Thunder on the Mountain:**

**The Image of Preponderance of the Small.**

**Thus the superior man turns to his Inner Truth**

**When he is confined by fate.**

\*

“Someone asked: Man has been darkened for a long time. If he is to recover his original nature, he must do so gradually. May I ask what the method should be?”

Answer: Without deliberation, the feelings will not arise. When the feelings do not arise, thought becomes correct. The Book of Changes says, “What is there in the world to deliberate about?” It also says, “Guarding against depravity, he preserves his sincerity.” And the Book of Odes says, “Have no depraved thoughts.”

Question: Is that all?

Answer: No. This is the fasting of the mind. It is not yet free of tranquillity. As there is tranquillity, it will necessarily be followed by activity, and when there is activity, it will necessarily be followed by tranquillity. The unceasing alternation of tranquillity and activity produces the feelings. The Book of Changes says, “Fortune and misfortune, occasion for repentance or regret, all arise from activity.” Under such conditions how can one recover his original nature?

Question: What can be done?

Answer: At the time of tranquillity, to know that there is no thought in the mind is the fasting of the mind, to realize then, that originally there is no thought in the mind and that it is completely free from the cycles of tranquillity and activity. To be in this state of absolute quiet, that is absolute sincerity. The Doctrine of the Mean says “Given sincerity, there will be enlightenment.” And the Book of Changes says, “All activities in the world obtain their nature from one principle.”

Question: During the time when there is neither deliberation nor thought, things attack from the outside and the feelings respond to them from the inside, how can one stop the feelings? Is it possible to stop feelings with feelings?

Answer: Man’s feelings are the evil aspect of his nature. If one realizes that they are evil, then this evil will not arise in the first place. If the mind is in the state of absolute quiet, depraved thoughts will cease of themselves. If original nature shines clearly, how can depravity arise? If one is to stop feelings with feelings, that is to magnify the feelings. When feelings are used to stop one another, will there be an end to it? The Book of Changes says, “The son of the Yen family, whenever he did anything wrong, never failed to realize it, and having realized it, he never did it again. As it is said in the Book of Changes, “Returning after having gone a little astray, there is no occasion for repentance. Indeed, there will be good fortune.”

Question: You said that originally there is no thought in the mind and that it is completely free from activity and tranquillity. But is one, then, not to hear the sound that comes or to see the thing that happens.

Answer: If we were not to hear anything or see anything, one would not be a man. But to see and hear clearly and yet not to be aroused by what is seen or heard – that will be all right. To know everything, to do everything, to be absolutely quiet in the mind, and yet to have its light illuminate Heaven and Earth – that is the enlightenment

resulting from sincerity. The Great Learning says, “the extension of knowledge consists of the investigation of things.” And the Book of Changes says, “In the operation of Change, there is no thought, because it is in the state of absolute quiet, and when acted on, it immediately penetrates all things. If it was not, then it would not be the most fundamental of all things under Heaven and Earth.”

From The Recovery of Original Nature in the Collected Works of Li Ao (G).

SPTK, 1:8a-9b

\*

The Grand Canal that runs north to south through Kinsai lies to the east of the Imperial Way by 2 city blocks. It is wide enough to allow 2 of the largest barges to pass each other with room to spare. The Dragon Ford Bridge, that provides passage over the canal for one of the main east west roads, has a central support in the middle of the canal because of its size.

At 10 metres wide and 50 long the bridge usually has several hundred people crossing at any one time along with numerous carriages, carts and pack animals.

Today is a normal day.

Bao and Shi lean on the balustrade near the centre of the bridge, looking north. Here, the canal on its east side has been widened so barges can tie up to unload their cargo. On the west side, running the entire length up to the Catnip Bridge some 200 metres away, there are new apartment blocks, 5 and 6 storeys high, some still in the process of being completed.

The transformation from what had been a shambles of warehouses and poor accommodation to a desirable area for the newly rich is now the topic of conversation for the 2 men.

‘Where is Lee Fat’s pancake shop now?’ Asks Bao.

‘Outside the city walls would be my best guess.’

‘Was he not offered new premises where their old one had been?’

‘Almost for certain. But how can a pancake maker afford the prices that are now being asked.’



'There ought to be a law.' Bao says with proper affront.

'There ought to be a law? Is this your answer to everything? Why not a law against fire? That way we could at least imprison Pan Cheng, the kitchen hearth God, and put to rest most of the fires that have devastated our fair city over the centuries. It is easy enough to make laws, Bao, but to enforce them is another matter.'

Bao, after giving his head a good scratch, adjusts the coarse jute cap he is now wearing so it sits more lightly on his head. 'Where do you think the Night Watch got this disguise? From some poor dead wretch they found in the gutter.'

Shi scratches inside the coarse cape he is wearing. 'I doubt he was dead as fleas will not stay on a lifeless man.'

'At least your turban is clean material. My cap on the other hand is stiff from sweat and grime.'

Shi smiles at Bao's grumpy face. 'At least you look the part, scratching and scraping ourselves.'

A barge passes under the bridge from the south and pulls in next to one tied up just below them. They watch as the men make it secure then busy themselves with raising the mast that has been lowered to go under the bridge.

'Do you think he is coming?' Bao asks while observing the crowds as they pass.

'As it was the, King of the Beggars, that requested this meeting, I doubt he will renege. He knows only too well we will send the Night Watch if he doesn't.'

The mast from the barge swings up taking both by surprise as it touches the balustrade before settling back a short distance away.

Cursing can now be heard from a lookout barrel attached to the mast. 'Pairs of hairy bums on your heads bargemen. What are you trying to do? Kill me!'

Bao and Shi look at each other before Shi questions the barrel. 'Is that you King of the under world? Perhaps

this is the wrong setting for one who rules from the gutter.'

'Is that you Magistrate?'

'It is.'

'And are you alone?'

'Except for my assistant, Shao Bao.'

'Why bring that dandified fool along?'

Bao turns to Shi. 'How does this man know me? And why does he hold such a negative view?'

'Because yer a poncy whip-sickle, that's why.'

Rough laughter can now be heard from within the barrel that ends in a choking cough. A large gob of spittle circles out from the barrel, and Bao and Shi have to quickly move aside for fear of it landing on them.

'Now listen carefully, I will say this but once. This morning I was woken to a knife applied to my throat and a terrible fear in my heart. The assassin that killed the Deputy Censor, or one of his guild, wants you to know that they were unaware that it was *he* that they killed...'

'That will make no difference to the retribution that will shortly be visited upon...' Bao is cut off.

'Shut up and listen fool. He wants you to know who they thought they were killing. They had carried out their research, as is their want, and were sure they had the right man...'

'What is his name?' Shi is losing his patience.

'I am coming to that, if you will let me.' He bites back 'He was Liu Zin an antiques dealer at the Golden Morning Arcade. And there is one other thing. He told me to tell you that there is another assassin at work in Kinsai. One, needless to say, your arse-wipe friend will know, as he it is rumoured he comes from Amoy.'

Shi looks to Bao.

'Is he speaking of me?' Bao asks, mystified.

'How many arse-wipe friends does the Magistrate have, arse-wipe?'

'Come out from that barrel and fight me like a man.' Bao hurls back.

'Oh that would please you well. To fight a blind man would just about be your style, yer dandified poncy whip sickle arse-wipe. Now stay away from me. If the guilds ever found I had talked to either of you they would stop using our service. Then the poor would even poorer be.'

The King of the Beggars throws a weighted red rag down to the deck below. The bargemen quickly haul the mast down. It bumps off the deck to sounds of curses from the barrel. Then crowding around they haul him out covering him in a cloak. A boy leads him limping away.

'It would be hilarious if it wasn't so disturbing.' Says Bao with confused emotions.

'Do you believe what he has said?'

'I don't know. Do you?'

'There is one way to find out.'

Shi sets off at pace with Bao following behind in his wake. After leaving the bridge in a westerly direction they travel one city block then turn north into a street. Then into an alley where the Night Watch are waiting. They get into the carriage before removing their disguise.

The Red Phoenix wearer joins them. 'What had he to say?'

'Only that he had been visited by an assassin. An assassin who wanted us to know that *they* thought they were killing an antiques' dealer by the name of Liu Zin.'

'It would appear they didn't know he was the Deputy Censor.' Bao throws into the pool of silence in which he and Shi now sit.

'Never heard of this man. Liu Zin, you say.' The Red Phoenix wearer looks at the others, but they haven't heard of the man either.

'Then take us to the Golden Morning Arcade.'

The Red Phoenix wearer starts getting out until Shi stops him with this. 'Oh, and by the way, the assassin also wanted us to know that there is another assassin's guild working in Kinsai. One from Amoy, perhaps.'

The Red Phoenix wearer sits back down. 'That is serious news, if true. But that's a big if.'

'I understand your reservation, but, we will have to assume what the King of the Beggars has told us is true. For the life of me, I cannot see any reason for him to make up such a story. And these disguises and this ridiculous meeting to avoid being seen with us would also bear testament to its veracity. Do you not think?'

'Perhaps.'

'Come man, think. The only reason the King of the Beggars would wish to see us, is if his life depended upon it.'

'There is truth in that.'

'That leaves the veracity of the assassin. But what possible reason could he want for us to know they have made a mistake? And why tell us there is another assassin working in Kinsai, other than to confuse our investigation.'

'Indeed.'

'But if he wants to confuse our investigation it means *they* are still here. Indeed, he was here this very morning, if the King of the Beggars is to be believed.'

'Then we have still a chance of catching them.' He turns to his men. 'Take a message to the Palace and bring out our reserve.' He turns back to Shi 'We have 4 units, like our own, out in Kinsai at this moment. And 4 held in reserve. We can have them all on the street before the Evening Drum.'

'Then do it and let us be gone to this address that has been given us.'

Progress is slow as the streets are busy but it gives time for Shi and Bao to think things through.

Bao who has been sitting next to Shi crosses over and sits opposite. He leans forward and leans on his knees with his elbows. Shi does the same so their heads are close together.

'Why would he talk only with you?'

Shi flicks his eyebrows. 'You know why or you would not be asking the question, nor sitting so close.'

'But why would he not trust our noble guard?'

'Are they not assassins as well?'

Bao takes this on board before replying. 'Then who can we trust?'

'A good question. Can I trust you?'

Bao sits back shocked. 'Tell me you jest?'

'Why? Did the King of the Beggars not allude to your connection with the assassins of Amoy? Did your mother not mention Black Shao the pirate just a short time ago? And is he not based in Amoy.'

Bao relaxes as he brings forth a mischievous grin. 'Black Shao the pirate is the stick my mother uses to beat my father with. She's a dear kind Lady as well you know, but she has always had to contend with my father's famous lineage, the noble line from Shao Yong. Although her family were rich jewellers she never had the same illustrious lineage to match her husband's. So when she found out that my grandfather, Shao Yuan, had done business with Black Chou the pirate, pronounced Shao in the southern accent, she holds it in balance to my father's famous lineage.'

'Your grandfather did business with Black Chou?' Shi is genuinely amazed.

'As a pearl merchant with several ships he was forced to pay squeeze or chance loosing not only his cargo but his ships as well. Not to mention the crew. My grandfather was a cunning man. When he first set out in the trade he took his very first ship, on its way out to the southern islands where the southern-cross blesses the night sky, into the port of Amoy. And there he tied up next to Black Chou's war junk.' Bao gloats at the thought. 'What

audacity. And that is what Black Chou thought as well. They agreed on a price for protection and my grandfather even took several of Black Chou's best fighting men on his passage. As a consequence my grandfather never lost a ship to pirates. So now you see how it is.'

'Now I see where you get your roguish nature from.' Says Shi, only half in jest.

'Man's original nature is good, as we both know. But it is sorely tested by having to choose between the lesser of two evils.'

Shi scowls in silence before looking up at the trap door in the ceiling that has opened.

'We have entered the street of The Golden Morning Arcade. Best look out and see if you can see this merchant's name. Liu Zin you say?'

'Indeed.'

Bao and Shi now take a side each and scour the names on the signs.

Shi slaps the side of the carriage as he sees the name they require.

They are all out and mount the sidewalk and enter the establishment in silence, Shi taking the lead.

He sees a clerk sat writing at a table with two customers with their backs to the door, and approaches them with speed.

'Take a seat across there.' The clerk doesn't look up. 'I will be with you directly.'

'You will be with me this instant. On your feet and honour my position or I will have you flogged.'

The clerk is up and bowed to the horizontal in the instant required, likewise the customers.

'Where is Liu Zin?'

'I have not seen him for several days, Magistrate.'

Two guards come running from the back waving swords until they see the Night Watch with swords also drawn.

Shi quickly stands front and points to the floor. 'On your knees before my seal of office. But the men are frozen in situ.'

Bao steps to the front and speaks calmly. 'You would defy a Prefectural Magistrate. Would you then defy me, a Palace official robed by the Emperor himself?'

They drop to their knees and place their heads on the ground. The Night Watch quickly take their blades.

Bao can't help a little swagger for Shi's benefit.

Shi, after giving Bao a disparaging look, swings into action addressing the Night Watch. 'Secure this establishment and remove any customers. Have the workers assembled and ready for questioning.' Then to Bao. 'Come, quickly, we must have this element of surprise.'

Shi and Bao move through to the back followed by the Red Phoenix holder. There they find nothing except antiques and a flight of stairs going up, which they quickly mount.

The same type of merchandise is on display on the next floor and the next, but there, their progress stops.

'What is it you are looking for?' Bao asks mystified.

'Where are the ancient manuscripts?'

Bao quickly spots the angle of stairs leading to a floor above but it is fully enclosed by panels. 'You take that side and I will take this. A secret door we will surely find near the end and almost certainly near the wall.'

Shi finally realizes what Bao is talking about when he pats the underside of the hidden stairs. Nothing they try finds a means of opening the panels. The Night Watch joins in the search establishing by the use of their sword handles where the wall is solid wood and where hollow.

'It is hollow behind these panels that hide the stairs. What we need is an axe.' The Red Phoenix wearer holds out his hand.

One of the Night Watch stands forward and removes an axe from his belt at the back, placing it in the outstretched hand.

A few moments are all it takes for a hole big enough to take his head. Removing it he stretches his arm inside and after a short while fumbling he releases a catch. The panel opens just enough so that a finger can be placed inside and a sneck pushed over its mounting. The panel then slides back with ease.

Shi presents the opening to the Red Phoenix holder who takes the offer with relish and he, and 2 of the Night Watch, are soon on their way.

Bao and Shi arrive into darkness. It takes sometime for their eyes to adjust to the weak light coming in through closed lattice windows and the small lamps the Night Watch carry on their persons.

Slowly, vertical lines appear, then shelves, and finally, books.

One of the Night Watch breaks open a window at the furthest end. The light reveals the full extent of what turns out to be a large library.

Both Shi and Bao head for the window passing columns of shelves to both left and right. Near the end Bao takes down a book bound in silk and undoes the knotted string that holds it together. He lays it on the floor and opens it up. A small piece of paper describes the contents.

Bao reads it aloud. 'The Collected Works of Li Ao. Dated (850 CE) Tang Dynasty. Copied from the original in the Imperial Library.'

He opens the book's cover made from carved wooden boards lacquered black. Inside, the bulk of the papers are held by ribbons of silk but in a paper folder resting on the rest of the work is a small work that has a piece of paper attached to the front.

Bao reads: The Recovery of Original Nature by Li Wen (Li Ao)' in the author's own script.

Shi drops down alongside Bao as he turns over the cover paper and reads from a faded but legible script in the



old style: Someone asked: Man has been darkened for a long time. If he is to recover his original nature, he must do so gradually. May I ask what the method should be?

Answer: Without deliberation, the feelings will not arise. When the feelings do not arise, thought becomes correct. The Book of Changes says: What is there in the world to deliberate about? It also says: Guarding against depravity, he preserves his sincerity. And the Book of Odes says: Have no depraved thoughts.

Lines of questioning thought crease Shi's brow. 'I can't remember those exact words he quotes from the Book of Changes, can you?'

'They do not strike a cord, it's true.'

'He could be quoting from the original I.' Shi says, touching the paper lightly with his fingertips.

'What a work that would be to find.' Bao says almost in rapture. 'Is not this original of Li Ao's minor classic already a find of great importance?'

'Indeed. If only for the reason that the content is a major part of the Tang inspiration that brought about the revival of Confucianism. And this very work is still used as a means of showing our debt to Li Ao and his master Han Yu who are rightly attributed a place in the genealogy of Daoxue.'

'Mind you, I think they were both overrated myself.' Bao's mercurial mind has moved on from astonishment to criticism in the turning of a page.

'You would say that.' Shi says in annoyance. 'Indeed, if you had the original copy of the Classic of Changes with the original 10 Wings in Confucius own hand, it would still need revision by your ancestor Shao Yong before it would meet with your approval.'

Bao laughs. 'So true, so true. But can you imagine if we had that illustrious work, would we not in Heaven be?'

They look at each other then look up at the shelves packed with ancient books, a thought dawning in both their minds.

'You start at that end and I at the other.' Shi instructs  
'If there is an original work already here that may quote from the Original Book of Changes, may there not be the original of the Great I, itself, on these very shelves.'

Shi and Bao set to work with focused attention until they are stopped in their tracks.

'Magistrate, we have found another secret staircase.'

They follow the Night Watch to an opening in the wood panels next to the stairs. They quickly enter and climb up a winding staircase until they come to a long passageway. This is illuminated by thin slits cut into the wooden sides but starting at some distance from the entrance. They can just about make out a Night Watch some 50 metres in the distance, beckoning them. They have to remove their hats as the corridor has little height.

Arriving to where the Red Phoenix wearer stands pointing to slits, they each take a view, one on each side.

They look down onto a maze of workshops on several levels. The muffled sounds of silver and gold smiths beating out their trade finally makes it into their conscious awareness.

Bao with insight. 'I know where we are. My father brought me here as a child. It is the foundry for the Guild of Metal workers.'

'Indeed it is.' The Red Phoenix wearer says before pointing to the ceiling of the passage. 'And I have walked on this very roof while exploring the hidden world of Kinsai. This passage joins the 2 sides of the square where the foundry was originally built over a hundred years ago.'

Hundreds of workers can be seen through the slits, all in ignorance of those watching. Crucibles of molten metal from ground level are being raised to the different workshops on different levels by means of chains.

'Come, let us see where this passage leads.' The Red Phoenix wearer directs.

Bao and Shi follow as he sets the pace.

'And to think I never knew such a place existed.' Says Shi with just a little concern.

'And I would never have known if my father had not been in the jewellery trade.' Bao adds.

At the end of the passage they descend a spiral staircase and enter a sumptuous room.

They are drawn in by the silence of expectation to a connecting room, and peering in, see a man sitting at a dressing table. His clothes would suggest a merchant. He is taking off a disguise consisting of a false beard and eyebrows. Having finished, he looks passed his reflection in the mirror and sees the 3 gathered around the door.

Zhao Yun stands up and turns towards them sporting a big smile. 'There you are. I thought I was going to have to send for you, as you were taking such a long time.'

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**Struggling against Confinement**

**Wastes time and effort.**

**Perseverance brings**

**Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**He pleads his case to be released from Confinement**

**But the official refuses to accept his argument.**

**No blame.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**The army is encircled by the enemy.**

**Massing his troops he attacks their weakest point.**

**Breakout.**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**The army encircles the enemy.**

**The enemy surrenders.**

**Success.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**The superior man Confined unjustly**

**Does not rail against the prince.**

**Instead he searches his Inner Truth**

**For a creative solution.**

**Perseverance eventually brings**

**Success.**

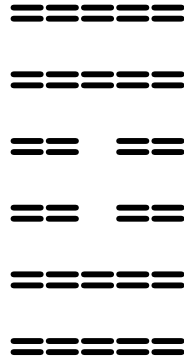
**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Long confinement breaks his will.**

**Grave misfortune.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Inner Truth (9)**



**THE IMAGE**

**Wind penetrates The Joyous Lake:**

**The Image of INNER TRUTH.**

**Inner Truth makes the invisible manifest.**

**Thus the superior man acts in the world,**

**Using his Inner Truth to change it**

**\***

# Chapter 10

## Holding Together (58)

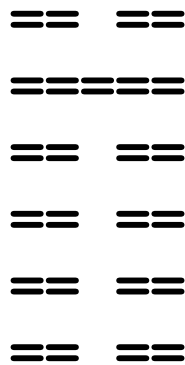
The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

4<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

After The Coming Night Drum

★



### THE IMAGE

Water holds fast to the Earth:

The Image of HOLDING TOGETHER.

The Earth is like the father.

The Waters are like his children.

The Mandate of Heaven is his creed.

Supreme good fortune.



“The superior man considers a rich possession of moral principles in his person to be wealth. Therefore he is always at peace and is never discontented. To him carriages and ceremonial caps are as light as a sash, and gold and jade are as tiny as a speck of dust. Nothing can be added to the great value of the rich possession of moral principles.”

By Zhou Tun-I (G).

From The Complete works of Zhou Tun-I. Chapter 33 – Wealth and Honour



The luxurious nature of the carriage cannot be defined as Bao and Tai are sitting in darkness, the blinds being drawn down.

‘You could have pushed me over with one of my own calligraphy brushes, such was my amazement at Zhao Yun’s presence.’

‘So it is true that he haunts the streets of Kinsai in various disguises.’

‘Indeed.’

‘But why was he there?’

‘Having heard from the Night Watch we sent to the Palace for reinforcements, he said, he felt he was compelled. And that, by reason, that he knew where the Deputy Censor’s city house was, and, he also knew that it was close to the address the Night Watch said we were going to on our investigation. He had simply put these things together and assumed the truth.’

‘A reasonable explanation for an investigator, hardly one for the Emperor of China.’

‘He is a strange man, it is true, but we can hardly criticise him as he is our generous benefactor. Did he not put this carriage at our disposal for our night at the opera?’

Tai is sceptical and it can be heard in her tone.  
'Generous with his minnows that he uses as bait.'

'How contrary you are, was it not just a short time ago that you were more than willing to act out this role you now play.'

Tai gently laughs at Bao's exasperated words, and, in recognition of her own foibles. 'It is probably a nervousness brought on by my coming performance. Forgive me, I will execute what has been asked of me and do so in good heart.'

Bao moves on. 'Tonight we will make such a play that the good citizens of Kinsai will talk of nothing else for the rest of the year.'

The carriage draws to a halt. The noise of a great crowd can be heard outside, producing the blended cacophony of sound associated with excitement. The carriage door swings open and the great noise is let in with the startling light.

It takes a while for their eyes to adjust to the many lanterns on display, but once they have, Bao turns to Tai. 'It is our night, let us enjoy it.'

He steps out onto the platform at the entrance to the Imperial Opera House, dressed in the ceremonial robes of his office. These magnificent clothes he has only just received when he went to the Palace to collect Tai. If the other girdle was large and ornate then this ceremonial one is gigantic and preposterous; it covers most of his chest in bejewelled splendour. The white coarse-silk outer robe is hemmed in gold wire with the designs of his office and weighs as much as a half grown child.

He is at least wearing platform shoes of cork that give him an extra hand's span of height. It is needed to balance his appearance, as the ceremonial hat is almost a full arm's length. This is placed on his head on reaching the ground by 2 of the Night Watch, who themselves are wearing black cloaks adorned with the symbol of the Red Phoenix.

The sight that greets Bao is awe inspiring: The gold steps that lead up to the gold carved entrance of the Opera House is lined by men dressed in theatrical garb



representing famous characters from the many operas performed within. Behind these, huge crowds are gathered to witness the rich and famous arrive; the noise builds as Bao prepares for his ascension to the Imperial Opera House.

Then a hush descends.

Tai emerges and is helped down from the carriage by the 2 Night Watch.

In total silence she rights herself. Her platform shoes give her as much height to put her on eye level with Bao. Her wig in the shape of a fan is only half the height of Bao's ceremonial hat, but is even more magnificent, as it is set in jewels of every colour.

Her robe of ivory white is vertically lined in silver thread that shimmers beneath the mirrored lamps of the Opera House. The silver fan design, one on each side, is housed in black ovals. A large black oval on her back contains a fan of black and white stripes stitched onto the fabric with silver thread. The whole is edged in small fans pointed out with a fortune in diamonds. It is a gift for 1 night from the Empress herself for this special occasion.

They stand side by side their masks of black as different as polar opposites: Bao's covering his forehead and down as far as his nose is made of lacquered paper; Tai's is painted on, with wings sweeping up from just below her eyes and from below her eyebrows, leaving her full beautiful face still on display.

Her skin, lightly covered in white cosmetic, has shadows of a light purple that have been expertly applied by the Palace Ladies to emphasize her perfect features. The fan design of deep purple centred on the curved centres of her lips leaves the rest of her lips covered in the same white as her face. It produces the effect of a pouting child, a seasonal fashion statement.

Now that they stand ready for movement, a Night Watch, having made sure their trains are straight says between them. 'Have no fear our men are in the crowds. None will harm you.'

'That's comforting' says Tai sounding anything but, and saying it through just the smallest gap in between her lips.

'Are we ready?' Asks Bao, who is also speaking without moving his lips.

'Remember your shoes, when we reach the stairs lift your feet up and feel for the first step. I do not wish to end up in a heap with that great girdle pressing down on me.'

'Have I not practiced this with guidance from the, Master of Ceremonies, himself?' Bao chides.

'Let us break all convention and let me take your arm as I do on our walks in the countryside.'

'An excellent idea, and once we are so set, so we will begin.'

As she slips her arm through his a collective gasp engulfs the crowds.

She presents the now infamous fan, first in black then in white. Repeating the exercise every other step. It is such a marked behaviour that all who watch marvel at such an extravagant play.

They make the stairs and mount them with hundreds of people holding their breath. Once inside the air outside bursts forth in jabbering excitement.

It is the turn of those standing in the Reception Hall to fall silent. They all turn, feeling compelled to watch, as the newly appointed Imperial Librarian, Shao Bao, and his betrothed, the Lotus of Kinsai, seemingly act out their destiny. Then as one, those gathered bow; the entire affair is taking on the proportions of a Rite, where the audience join in becoming an active part of the ritual being performed.

People scurry to their positions opening a path through to the grand staircase. They all bow again this time in the ceremonial manner, with one knee slightly bent and one leg straight out behind them and with their heads almost to the floor. Tai and Bao mount, nay, more float up the stairs. Not a single blemish on a perfect performance.

Arriving at the top and out of sight of the vast majority of those below, they enter a new world. Here, they are unrecognised. People are standing around in family groups enjoying each other's company. Children play their games of hide and seek, in and out, amongst those gathered.

To have gone from being the very centre of attention to being ignored so completely, seems like arriving at the place of the Immortals, where you are now just another Immortal recently arrived from the mundane world.

Their performance having finished they are as actors who have forgotten the plot of their own lives. Indeed, their plot ends here. They have no further plans.

'Shall we turn to right or left?' Tai enquires.

'Perhaps you should go one way and I the other. Then by good fortune, at least one of us we will meet our destiny.'

A man dressed in the theatrical costume of a Red Phoenix weaves his way towards them from a distant door. He arrives out of breath. 'Forgive me, I am your red phoenix and I'm here to show you to your place.'

Bao looks at the man's mouth and chin, the only parts visible beneath his headdress, and observes his two front teeth are crossed. A cleft in his chin is also most pronounced. Neither of these characteristics fit with Bao's imagined face he has attributed to the red phoenix wearer, and it makes him smile that he could have been so wrong.

They follow in his footsteps, passing through the door that leads to the balcony area. To the right a straight line leads towards the stage. To the left a curved line bends away to the right.

They swing to the left and round the curve until they are opposite the stage. Many of the curtained cubicles are still open allowing a view of groups of people arranging themselves for the performance.

'Let me see your tickets.' Says the Night Watch.

Bao hands over the 2 tickets.

'You have the choice either of this one or the one next to it.' The red phoenix states in haste.

'Perhaps we could have one each.' Bao jokes.

'You must excuse me I have much to do.' The red phoenix says in a hurry before handing back their ivory tickets and rushing off.

Bao notices the glance the red phoenix gives in the opposite direction from which he now retreats. Bao turns to see a man dressed in all green leading a family party. The man, the Opera's Front House Manager, having seen Bao looking towards him, now waves.

Tai has already chosen the cubicle, and is already arranging the clothes stand so that she can remove her outer garments as the Manager arrives.

'My apologies for not being there to greet you. A performance, I believe, worthy of our noble establishment. Can I now indulge your generosity?' The Manager presents the family he has been leading 'This, as I am sure you know, is the Grand Duke Zhao Chu Feng and his family.'

Courtesy bows.

'As you see, he has a large party and only 1 cubicle. There are only 2 in your party and have 2 cubicles. The Grand Duke craves that you would exchange the present arrangement.'

Bao beams a smile of such benevolence at the Grand Duke that it unnerves his haughty stance. 'It would be an honour. Have I not recently been with the Duke's cousin, Lizong, our beloved Emperor, and did he not give me these very tickets himself. I am sure he would respect my giving these cubicles up for such a noble purpose.' Bao turns to Tai who now steps forward. 'May I present my betrothed, Wu Tai.'

The Grand Duke and his entire family fall immediately under her spell. The Grand Duke's daughters bow in the old style as if greeting the Empress.

The Duchess feels compelled to follow and even the Grand Duke produces a formal bow, though not without some disquiet as she is but a Tea House Keeper's daughter. Tai

waits till they have righted themselves before she repeats the same bow only with the grace of a Goddess.

Bao takes command. 'Please, enter and take up your positions. Come Tai, I'm sure this good fellow will show us our new accommodation.'

'Indeed, it is not far but next to the ones you have just vacated.'

'Excellent.' Says Bao with just a touch too much good humour, which brings a narrow eyed reprimand from Tai.

The Manager is flushed and quickly shows them their new cubicle abandoning the Grand Duke and his family to arrange things for themselves. A chore they obviously are not used to completing for themselves.

'I will bring the stands for your Ceremonial robes immediately.' The Manager bows to Tai and Bao then leaves in a hurry.

Tai comes close to Bao and whispers. 'Take care not to make enemies of such a powerful man. He is Lizong's cousin after all.'

In all innocence Bao replies. 'Was I not showing that I would delighted be to facilitate their requirements.'

'That, as may be, but you did not show due deference to his status. He is not just the Emperor's cousin but also a member of the government.'

Bao frowns with sincerity. 'A man who has won his position through blood and not through merit is of little consequence to me.'

'Your Daoxue culture may be fitting amongst scholar officials but I doubt it holds true for one who is now a Palace Official, and one who's position is due entirely to Imperial patronage.'

Bao's eyes are perfect circles of contrition. 'What you say Tai is a painful truth. I have not considered this in its full context.'

'It is so typical of you. Blundering about in total ignorance. Not everyone knows you well enough to forgive you for your foibles.'

Bao's smile comes slowly as he slowly approaches Tai. He takes her in his arms. 'I do not care if there were none, as long as you were there to chide me.'

She can't hold back and melts into his arms.

The Manager returns with 2 men carrying special clothes' stands. 'Forgive me, I must take care of The Grand Duke.'

Bao dismisses him with a theatrical flourish of his hand and a wry smile. The Manager waves him away but in a familiar manner, leaving them with a friendly smile.

Tai draws the heavy curtain that separates their cubicle from the corridor outside. She presents herself with arms out wide. At first Bao is uncertain about her action, then realizing, he assists her out of her outer robe and places it on its stand.

Tai's dress is of the finest silk, so fine it is impossible to see the threads.

She helps him out of his ceremonial garb and reveals underneath he is also wearing a garment made of the same material. Only hers is in moonstone blue to his of parchment white. Bao also has a ceremonial sword attached to his side.

Tai can't help but joke with him about this. 'So my love you have brought your sword to protect your betrothed?'

Bao goes to remove it from its scabbard with a flourish only to be denied by its refusal to be drawn.

'I suspect there is a safety catch, come here and let me see.'

She quickly releases it and he draws it forth waving it about like a mad thing.

'I see your technique is to confuse the enemy before striking the fatal blow.' She giggles.

Bao takes affront or at least appears to. 'Was I not taught at the Imperial School.'

'What, exactly, were you taught?'

'How to thrust.' He thrusts. 'And how to parry.' He parries. 'And how to remove the head of a rascalion with a single blow.' He swings the sword and forces Tai to duck.

'Careful Bao, my wig would not be half as nice if it was only half as big. Besides, could you not demand because of your exalted position, that the rascalion bow his head so that you may remove it with greater ease?' She laughs.

'I think you pull my tail.' He states in feigned annoyance.

'Only if you a monkey be.' She retorts 'Come, let me see this blade.'

He presents it, un-swordsman like, blade first and she is forced to take it from his grip, doing so with a deft ease. Then rubbing her finger along the edge 'But the edge does not exist. It is rounded like a poker. Still, you can use it to parry. That way the rascalion will blunt his blade and leave the field of battle exhausted in the effort.'

He takes the sword back off her. 'Now I know you pull my tail. But you will see. One day my fighting skills will save us both.'

He tries a few more thrusts before lunging at his ceremonial robe only going too far and sending it crashing against the curtain. An involuntary cry comes forth from the other side of the curtain. Bao and Tai look at each other and are then witness to the robe and stand, come flying back. Bao saves it from crashing to the floor then quickly joins Tai to see who it is.

Their heads, one above the other, stick out from the curtain but there are still many families talking and making play in the corridor.

'Perhaps it was a child.'

'Or perhaps an assassin listening to our conversation.'

'Where are the Night Watch? Are they not supposed to be guarding our persons?'

'They are masters of disguise. They could be anyone out there.' Then Bao has a bright idea. 'Perhaps it was a Night Watch that sent my robe crashing.'

'I can see Bao this is not one of your more rational states of mind that you find yourself presently in. Pushing your ceremonial robe over seems hardly the work of the Emperor's own bodyguard.'

Bao brings her back inside.

'Come, let us make ourselves comfortable, the performance can't be long in starting.'

They take their places on a divan from where they can see the stage from a slightly raised position but still out of sight from the audience down below. These are the most expensive seats after all.

From their vantage point they can see the various cubicles running off down both sides. They are also now aware that they are the focus of attention from the people from the sides and from the floor above. This is achieved because the main lighting, from a round wooden device, like a giant cartwheel, holding many lamps, casts them in full illumination from above.

'You don't suppose they were watching our play before?'

'If their merriment is anything to judge this by, then unfortunately, dear heart, I think they were. I shall wave and set them at ease.' Bao is up and taking a curtain call before Tai can stop him.

To her surprise people stand and bow. He then holds up his hand for Tai to join him. Soon the whole theatre, even those below are standing and bowing.

'Well, that seems to have gone down well.' Says Bao with a deep satisfaction.

The cartwheel of light begins to ascend, hauled up by ropes on giant pulleys. The opera house slowly falls into darkness. This state of illumination is completed when a horizontal curtain that stretches the full width of the auditorium is drawn underneath the cartwheel of lamps. A dim glow seen through the curtain is all that is left.



The stage slowly gains light as mirrored lamps slowly ascend from beneath the front of the stage. A minor bird starts its "meow ... meow ... meow" call, greeting this theatrical dawn made by the rising lights. This reveals the vividly painted props that make up the bower of the Opera's title: The Bower of Minor Bird Tranquillity.

The perfect imitation of the minor bird's call subtly changes into that of a human voice imitating a minor bird, as the first character enters stage right. The singer's voice takes off into the opening, joined by a single lute acting as an echo to the melody.

Bao takes from his pocket a clay pipe filled with the sorcerer's mix then looks around for a light.

Tai takes it away from him, whispering. 'Have you forgotten why we are here? I would have you with your full senses in attention as we are liable to be attacked at any moment.'

As if to illustrate the point she turns around to look at the curtain behind them only to see it pulled back into place from outside.

Bao's full attention is elsewhere. He is watching a fan flashing a signal from a cubicle halfway down the left side of the auditorium. 'Quickly, flash your fan.' He whispers in excitement.

Tai, however, is crouched up on the divan with her hands grasped firmly on its back rest, ready to jump towards the curtain. 'And what use will that do?' She whispers infuriated.

Bao turns to see her in a crouched tiger stance and is mystified. 'Come, dear heart, you are facing the wrong way.'

'I swear Bao, there times I would cheerfully murder you myself. There is someone outside, so stop your foolishness and draw your sword.'

A number of things now happen: a great crash occurs overhead as the giant cartwheel falls onto the horizontal curtain; two of the lamps become dislodged falling onto the curtain setting it alight; a cry comes from the cubicle next to there's; then the audience give way to cries of concern.

Tai springs into action making the leap to the curtain in a single bound. She whips it open shielding herself in its fleeting retreat. But there is only emptiness. She jumps outside into the middle of the corridor so as not to be taken by surprise by anyone standing at either side and takes up the crane defence stance. But all she can see is a man carrying a child around the curve and out of sight.

Bao has not been idle for he has leant around the post so he can see into the next compartment. The children are looking up at flames now engulfing the curtain overhead but the Duchess is frozen in front of her husband, who, sitting on a single seat at the rear, is leant back with a long protrusion sticking out from his nose.

Bao jumps onto the balcony edge and swings himself into the cubicle. He ignores the cries of the children and grabbing a garment in passing throws it over the Grand Duke's head. It is quite obvious he is dead.

All now erupts into chaos: people in the well of the auditorium flee the flames of the falling curtain; those in the cubicles, on seeing the ropes holding the curtain and hence the cartwheel lamp holder on fire, rush into the corridor; a fire bell adds a background chorus to the fleeing opera singer.

Bao opens the Grand Duke's cubicle and quickly ushers the family into the throngs of people now filling the corridor.

Tai rushes back in and grabs their robes from their stands. As a man descends on a rope from above and lands on the rail. His eyes search for the ... fan. Tai beats him to it but only after delivering the man a blow to the head with a straight-leg kick as he leaps from the rail.

The man is on his feet in a moment, now with drawn sword. Tai, still grasping the clothes with one arm, holds out the fan in the other in a fencing pose.

The man smiles revealing his crooked teeth. 'You are far too beautiful to kill over such a trinket.' He retreats to the rope, and hand over hand, he disappears from whence he came.

Tai backs out into the chaos of the corridor. Looking about she sees people leaving through an exit in the opposite direction from which they came and alerts Bao. 'Bao, the rear exit.' She points with the fan.

Bao stops the family following the crowd and directs them in the other direction. They now descend a darkened staircase and eventually make the open air. They follow the crowd out of the lane behind the opera house and enter the street.

A man comes from the crowds and grabs at Tai's hand holding the fan. She uses the garments as a shield and parries his arm. Bao sees this attack and drawing his sword lunges at the man with undeniable force. The man is wounded on his side but lashes out with a small knife, catching Bao on the arm as he swings to one side. Tai drops the garments then rolls herself along the man's outstretched arm as he thrusts at her, delivering a blow to his head that sends him reeling. He only half recovers and makes a bid for escape, but is cut down by the Night Watch who have finally made their appearance.

Shi ploughs his way through, scattering the crowd with a short staff. 6 members of the Night Watch hold open a corridor and the Duchess and her family are led quickly away to waiting carriages.

Shi approaches Tai, who is examining Bao's arm, and enquires with concern. 'How goes it with his wound?'

'It is but a scratch. A few stitches will suffice.'

'Take him to my carriage where his wounds can be treated.' Shi is gone with these words. Gone to examine the dead man. A man he recognizes. 'This is not an assassin. This is a thief, well known in the Northern Prefecture.' He turns to the Night Watch. 'Could you not have taken him alive?'

'We thought he was an assassin, Magistrate. We were not to know.'

After a few moments, Shi seems to agree. 'Indeed.' He drops to the ground, next to the thief, and starts going through his clothes.

Even though the road is wide it is already filled with people escaping from the fire.

A line of carriages sits across from the smoking Opera House. A Night Watch is in action, dressing Bao's wound as he sits on the step of Shi's carriage. Bao grimaces with pain as the man sprinkles on alcohol and ginger extract and even more so when the man starts stitching the cut together.

'Such anguish over such a little cut.' Tai chides to hide her concern.

'Can I help it if I have sensitive skin?' He retorts.

The Night Watch enjoys the banter before putting Tai's fears to rest. 'The wound is clean. The blade was free of poison.'

'Poison?' Says Bao with concern.

'Have you not heard what he has just said?' She needs not to feign anger but it is not directed at Bao. 'I will leave you in this fellow's good hands and seek out Shi.'

She leaves before he can reply and makes her way towards Shi who has taken command of the entire situation. He directs the police and the fire watch as rows of local inhabitants join-in carrying water into the Opera House.

The Police Chief, covered in powdery soot, joins Shi. 'The situation is saved. The fire has been confined to the well of the auditorium and will soon be extinguished.'

'Then I will leave you in command.' Then as an afterthought. 'And do something about these crowds they are a menace when not employed.'

'Indeed.' He bows.

Shi turns into fury.

'What went wrong? Where were you?'

'Forgive me Tai but we were led astray by a clever diversion. Come, let us join Bao and I will explain.'

She follows him, simmering, as he paces towards his carriage at speed.

The Night Watch is biting through the last stitch of catgut as they arrive.

'If you have finished here then join the others and try and bring back one of the assassins. Alive.'

The man bows low as he can hear the anger beneath the surface of Shi's words. He passes a bandage and the bottle of alcohol and ginger to Tai then leaves.

The wound is weeping blood so Tai flushes it away with the contents of the bottle before starting to wrap the bandage around his arm.

'The assassins killed one of the Night Watch so they could take his place as an usher of the theatre. They then threw his body down from the roof, at the rear of the theatre, to create a diversion at the precise moment, to divert us from our task with the maximum effect.'

'Was it the man wearing the red phoenix costume that was an assassin?' Asks Tai.

'Indeed.' Shi acknowledges.

'He showed us to our cubicle.' Says Bao with a sense of relief.

'I must apologise for putting your lives in danger.' Shi is suitably contrite.

'But why? When our lives were not in danger.' Bao responds.

Tai's anger evaporates as she realizes what Bao has already worked out. 'Bao is right. The man they obviously wanted to kill was the Grand Duke. And in that they have succeeded.'

Shi is confused and looks from one to the other.

Bao enlightens him. 'It would have been a poor assassin who would have mistaken me for the Grand Duke, even if we had not switched cubicles.'

Tai continues. 'There was activity before the assassination took place, which in hindsight, was the assassins making sure they got the right man.'

'How so?'

'There was someone outside of our cubicle.'

'And someone signalling to them from the audience with a fan.' Bao adds.

Shi speaks his thoughts. 'But why would they want to kill the Grand Duke?'

Tai looks at Bao. 'Will you not tell him?'

Bao looks straight at Shi. 'Because, that dragon in the sky, which you will not countenance, has landed. Is the Grand Duke, Zhao Chu Feng, not the understudy to the Deputy Censor? And was he not, since the death of the Deputy Censor but 2 night ago, the new Deputy Censor.'

Shi covers his face with his hand smudging the soot particles over his face.

Bao continues. 'The old Deputy Censor, the man leading a double life, was a member of the bureaucracy, a scholar official just like you. The new Deputy Censor, the one that is now dead with an assassin's blade shoved deep into his brain through his nose, was a member of the aristocracy. Has it not been the practice to alternate the Censor's position between these 2 factions in the government since the beginning of the Song Dynasty? Well, has it not?'

'Indeed.' Shi finally agrees.

'With the 6 ministries of the government split evenly between the bureaucracy and the aristocracy there was a fair balance. That only leaves the Censor's Office to swing the difference. Was that not the reason why it was decided to alternate the position of Censor between these 2 factions?'

'It was.'

'The Censor's Office was created to keep watch on the 6 ministries. The Censor alone can walk into any ministry and order an audit of any department. This system has served us well, up until now. The murder of the old Deputy Censor changed all of that. Because the new Deputy Censor was an aristocrat, just as the present Censor is an aristocrat...'

Shi cuts Bao off. 'You cannot seriously think that scholar officials would stoop so low as to have the new Deputy Censor murdered just to rebalance the Government?'

'That's exactly what I think.' Bao retorts.

Shi is shook as he grasps the consequences if Bao is right.

Tai takes pity on him and having finished bandaging Bao's arm takes a piece of bandage and soaking it she wipes Shi's face clean.

'Is this what you think?' Shi asks of Tai.

'My life is surrounded by the factionalism inside of the bureaucracy, and, between the bureaucracy and the aristocracy in the government. Is there not a day goes by when I do not hear of some conflict along these lines. The Ink Stone is a nest of intrigue, most of it harmless, perhaps, some not so. But what it does reveal, is the ever present conflict that exists, in all but name, between these factions.'

Shi sags.

Tai softens further. 'Not everyone is as noble as you Zhen Shi. There are those who are part of *this culture of ours* that would joyfully murder to be free of the aristocracy, and members of the aristocracy that would murder to be free of the bureaucracy.'

Bao takes it up. 'So how do you think the scholar officials would react to having their own man, the old Deputy Censor, removed from his position by an assassin's blade?'

Shi is distraught but hangs on to the hope that it is not true. 'It is still just a possibility. There could be other reasons, and reasons that you yourself have made plain.'

'You will at least consider the possibility?' Begs Bao.

'Indeed, what choice do I now have?'

'Then a plan of action, we must make, that will take our investigation into all of these dark places.'

Tai and Shi agree with Bao while another, in the dark place behind the carriage, listens to their plan. A smile barely perceptible in the shadows gives animation to Wang Chi's face as he steps out into the light. He glides over the flagstones in the direction of the palace an unannounced witness to the night's happenings and now a speeding wraith with who-knows what intent.

\*



## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
All relationships are based on trust.  
Only sincerity and truth can build trust.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
Holding Together with a ruler must align with your  
Inner Truth.  
Then there is  
No blame.**

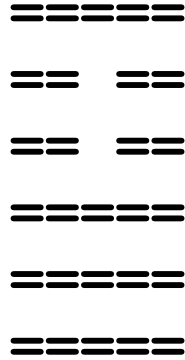
**Changing Line in the third place means:  
There are many who would wish you to  
Hold Together with them.  
There are few who are worthy.  
Beware.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:  
The ruler allows those that disagree with him  
To go their own way.  
Thus he guarantees loyalty from those  
He Holds Together with.  
Good fortune.**

**Changing Line at the top means:  
Like with all things,  
Holding Together is for the right time.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**The Taming Power of The Great (10)**



**THE IMAGE**

**Heaven within the Mountain:**

**The Image of THE TAMING POWER OF THE GREAT.**

**The superior man gathers strength from the wisdom of the past,**

**So he can apply it in the times in which he lives.**

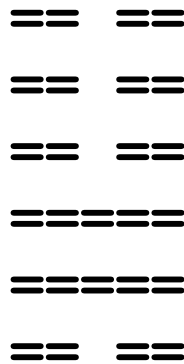
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# Chapter 11

## Pushing Upward (55)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 5<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Midday Drum

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### THE IMAGE

Within the Earth Wood grows:

The Image of PUSHING UP.

The superior man moves up

Without haste but with continuous application.

He will surely achieve something great.

\*

Confucius said, "A ruler who governs his state by virtue is like the north pole star, which remains in its place while all the other stars revolve around it."

Analecets 2:1

Duke Ting asked how the ruler should employ his ministers and how the ministers should serve the ruler. Confucius said, "A ruler should employ his ministers according to the principle of propriety, and ministers should serve their ruler with loyalty."

Analecets 3:19

King Hsuan of Ch'I asked, "Was it a fact that T'ang (who had been a minister) banished King Chieh and that King Wen (who had been the prime minister) punished King Chou?" Mencius replied, "Yes, according to records." King Hsuan said, "Is it all right for a minister to murder his King?" Mencius said, "He who injures humanity is a bandit. He who injures righteousness is a destructive person. I have heard of killing a mere fellow named Chou but I have not heard of murdering him as the ruler."

Book of Mencius 1B:8

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They stand in an arc with Lizong at its centre. The Minister's of the Government are grim faced to a man as they listen to the Emperor recount the happenings of the past few days since the murder of the Deputy Censor.

The Minister of Rites, Kao Tzu, is a 60 year-old, tall and lean member of the bureaucracy. He has responsibility for what is the most important Ministry in Lizong's Government as it officiates over the state Rituals, Music and Sacrifices, the Palace functions, the entire Education system including the Examination board, Astronomical Observation and the weighty responsibility of Disasters both natural and man made. His tenure has been executed with professional efficiency. He is respected by all, even by the aristocrats in the government, if he has a flaw it lies in his rigidity in respect to protocol and his disdain to those that don't follow it. At this moment his eyes are fixed firmly on Bao's bare toes, as they drum in sequence from little to big, from one foot to the other. It is as much an affront to the protocol of behaviour, as it is to dress requirements, in the presence of the Emperor. Bao is the only one present who is not wearing the foot covering required. Oh how Kao Tzu would like to take a cane to the young upstart who stands in the privileged position along side and within an arm's length of the Emperor.

Yuan K'ang, who stands next to Kao Tzu, also has his eyes on Bao but his eyes are fixed on Bao's eyes that are looking straight at him. The, Minister of Personnel, is painfully thin he has skin barely able to cover his skull that renders his eyes large and menacing. His Ministry has great political power as it is in charge of all recruitment and promotion. He cannot believe the audacity that Bao is displaying for there are none below the rank of Minister either in his own bureaucracy or in the aristocracy who would dare to hold his gaze. Bao switches his gaze to Wang Mou-hung standing next to Yuan K'ang and the Minister of Personnel follows suit to see if Mou-hung has noticed.

The, Minister of Revenue, has not, as his eyes are firmly on Shi. Wang Mou-hung is filled with admiration for the Dianshi Scholar. Here is the very best of the younger generation and one who looks the part. That he bears a striking similarity to himself would not be lost on this man. He is shrewd to the point of cunning with an impeccable memory for detail. This last attribute is a blessing that is employed in its full capacity in his Ministry, as he has to keep a thousand changing figures from taxes on salt, land and commercial enterprises to balancing these with the expenditures from the other ministries. How he would love to second Shi to his Ministry, would he not make Mou-hung's perfect replacement.

Duke Zhao Lung-tse the, Minister of Works, is usually an affable fellow much taken with his own intelligence and quick wit. He is, however, at pains at this moment to control his jaw as it descends involuntarily to the news that Lizong, his cousin, is relating of the murder of his second cousin the, Grand Duke Zhao Chu Feng, at the opera. That the murder of the Deputy Censor was already known to this podgy member of the aristocracy and secretly welcomed was not a preparation for this second murder. Nothing in his 50-year life has come as such a surprise, and one filled with such dangerous portent as to shake the foundations of his belief system, attuned as it is, to the superiority, and hence inviolable position of his social class. If the Grand Duke has been murdered who could possibly be safe. His years engaged in the great projects of water conservation and canal building, of road construction and fortification had engaged his ample abilities in creative exercise. There is not a

single strand of his privileged life that has been preparation for what he is now hearing.

Baron Li Ye Zhu, a member of the old aristocracy dating from the early part of the Tang Dynasty heads-up the quaintly named, Ministry of Punishments, which attends to all Legal Affairs and Law Making. Nothing shocks this man as a life as a Magistrate then as a Governor in the far flung regions of the Empire has immunized him to the wickedness of men. His attention is firmly on Shi, trying to sum up the man who is leading the investigation. That the Emperor has seen fit to appoint an assistant Magistrate, a first time Dianshi scholar of known brilliance, it could be argued, is still, in the Baron's opinion, a grave mistake. He, Baron Li Ye Zhu, and he alone, should have been appointed. There had to be other reasons for Lizong's decision. He was not, like so many of his fellow aristocrats, of the opinion that Lizong was a fool. The Emperor's behaviour is eccentric to say the least - prostitutes in the palace and the appointment of a known member of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor as a special advisor to name but 2 examples - but he suspects a first class mind behind Lizong's projected affable and decadent persona. Then there is the investigator's assistant, Shao Bao, a well-known and well-liked radical. As a student he had already established a reputation for independent thinking. What had the teaching staff of the Imperial College been thinking about in allowing his disruptive presence to continue at that illustrious establishment? As the Baron turns his attention to Bao he is suddenly aware of the scrutiny that this potential subversive now employs in his direction. A shiver runs the full length of the Baron's spine as he witnesses an imperceptible smile disappear from Shao Bao's face. There is obviously more to the recently appointed Palace Librarian than his reputation would suggest.

Standing at the farthest end of the arc, the Ministry of Military Affairs was headed up by the Emperor's cousin the Grand Duke Zhao Yen Yuan. A man that has ingratiated himself with the Generals of the Imperial Army so as to win them over to the Government's point of view when it comes to the difficult problem of reunification with the Northern Song. The Mongols who control the north are considered unbeatable on the northern plains where their cavalry can be put to full use. As such, the idea of reunification is an aspiration; it has ceased to be a practical consideration for the Government or even for

the senior Generals. Young warriors, however, coming up through the ranks in waves, continued to challenge this defeatist assumption and the Grand Duke had periodically to use his considerable skills to assure that nothing ever comes of them. The problem is that the younger Officers are always forming new factions that cannot always be identified. They pose, as they have always posed throughout the entire history of China, a real threat to the established order. This double attack on both strands of the Government, the Deputy Censor a member of the bureaucracy and The Grand Duke Zhao Chu Feng a member of the aristocracy, had all the worrying signs of war-mongering involvement. For a start, the victims were both vocal for the status quo in regard to the Mongols, and then there was the manner of their dispatch, carried out with a martial skill suggestive of certain special units of the army. The Grand Duke from his lofty height gazes down on his Emperor and friend with concern. Before even being asked Zhao Yen Yuan is already planning a full enquiry into the secret societies that are doubtless in operation inside of the army at this very moment. But now, stepping into his mindscape without so much as a courtesy bow comes a strange thought concerning Bao, and that is. 'Why does he wear his hat at such a rakish angle?'

Lizong having finished informing the Ministers of the Government of the double murder turns now to the actions that he wants taking. For this he turns to his left where the Prime Minister and the Censor stand.

The Prime Minister, Su Chi-Ming, a scholar official who had risen through the ranks and had married into the aristocracy. Even in his late 50s he is a handsome man with a pleasant disposition and enough political skills to keep him in his job for nearly two years; a long time in Lizong's government. Skills that have served him well in the delicate balancing act that he is expected to perform every day in keeping the ship of state on an even keel. Keeping the peace between the two main factions of bureaucracy and aristocracy could be a full time job in itself, keeping the internal factions inside of these main factions could test the abilities of an entire department of diplomats. Yet, the Prime Minister, had achieved this with what appeared to be lots and lots of good luck. That he had been blessed by a period of relative calm in the affairs of state he was fully aware. As such, he was yet to be tested. The past year, since his appointment, had been relatively free from the

turbulence that Lizong's reign had been marked by so far; three floods, two droughts, a tsunami, and one big earth quake and one small earth quake. That the ship of state was now heading into turbulent waters filled him with foreboding. At least the Secretariat's Office he had inherited was a well ordered establishment; it functioned like a water clock.

With Lizong addressing him directly his attention is fixed on every single proposition and intending consequence that he files away in the various sections of his well-ordered mind. What it doesn't do is produce a single creative thought that might be useful in resolving the crisis.

'I have considered the situation at length and have come to a decision on the course of action that must be taken. It must be obvious' He turns to his ministers. 'That there is a distinct possibility that there are factional forces at work.' He turns back to Su Chi-ming. 'So I entrust you with conducting an investigation' he turns back to the Ministers 'along with my trusted Ministers' then back to the Prime Minister 'into factional elements in the Government and the bureaucracy.'

Everyone present, except Shi and Bao, are thinking the same thing. 'It could have been worse. It could have been much worse if the investigation of the Ministries was to have been carried out by Zhen Shi and Shao Bao.'

'I expect a thorough investigation, and if Prime Minister, you find your way blocked in any way, I expect that you will inform me immediately so that I can bring my authority to bear.'

Su Chi-ming bows to the horizontal and is followed immediately by the Ministers.

'You may now leave; for the sooner you start the sooner you will finish. Not you Censor, wait behind.'

After the Ministers leave the, Hall of Government, passing through its ornate decorations of Ritual significance, the Emperor turns to the Censor, Marquise Zong Shen-he.

'With your Deputy and his understudy both now dead we have a major problem in the line of succession. Is this not the case?'



The old Censor with his watery eyes and stooped stance can only agree. 'Indeed.'

'We will have to be extremely careful in who we choose to replace them, otherwise we could have open warfare in the Government.'

The Censor takes this as a fact. 'As you are well aware, the Censor's Office, just like the other branches of government, is split into the executive and administration branches. I fear we may have to drop down into the administration to find a replacement for my Deputy, as most of the other members of the executive are aristocrats.'

'You obviously see the problem. The bureaucracy will not tolerate an aristocrat taking over the position of Deputy when it is not their turn to do so.'

'That has been the unwritten agreement that has served us all so well since the beginning of the Dynasty. Yet there are none in the administration that is trained for such a position. I will have to interview candidates from the administration and hope the aristocrats in the executive will tolerate my choice and the fact that they are being past-over. The only other possibility is to appoint an aristocrat from the executive as a temporary measure until a member of the administration can be trained for the position.'

'And do you really think that is a possibility?' Lizong says in surprise.

The old man smiles in resigned acceptance that there is not. 'There's more chance of skinning an angry tiger with a nail file.' He laughs 'Nor is it possible to allow the Minister of Personnel to promote a member of the bureaucracy from the executive of a different Ministry as the aristocracy will never accept it. They'd fear it would set a precedent as the Censor's office has always been outside of the Ministry of Personnel's remit.'

'We will speak of this further. The other problem is the administration of the 3 Ministries controlled by the aristocracy. These administrations are also run by members of the bureaucracy in the lower ranks, and as such, they will not take kindly to being scrutinized by members of the aristocracy.'

'You would have me take on this burden?'

'Sorry old friend, you are the only one they will trust.'

The old Censor, pointedly, looks around Lizong to Shi.  
'Give me Zhen Shi as my Deputy and I will train him myself.'

Lizong shakes his head. 'Sorry again, Zhen Shi and his assistant have enough work on their hands. These murders may have nothing to do with factionalism. Indeed, there is far more chance that there are other motives behind them.'

The old Censor is taken by surprise but his brilliant mind soon has a proposition to add to Lizong's worries.  
'Perhaps the death of my Deputy may have been for other reasons. But, the bureaucracy, or a powerful faction inside of it, may have seen fit to take revenge thinking that the aristocracy were indeed behind his murder.'

Shi sighs, and moves around Bao so that he can address the Censor directly. 'We were wondering about the possibility of that ourselves. Do you have any such knowledge of this?'

'I have not. However, it strikes me that certain members of the bureaucracy would suspect that the murder of the Deputy Censor was an aristocratic plot, as indeed it could be, and have then taken action to rebalance the situation, as it were.'

It is now time for Lizong to sigh. 'If that proves to be the case, and if it ever became known, it could prove disastrous' He turns to Shi and Bao. 'If this proves to be the case then that information must be suppressed at all costs. The aristocrats would demand retribution on the bureaucracy and then who knows where it would end.'

Bao and Shi bow in recognition of the seriousness of this possibility.

'Now old friend, my 2 investigators would like to examine the Deputy Censor's office. Would you be good enough to take us there?'

The old man leads the way with Lizong by his side.

Shi and Bao follow behind, at such a distance, which protocol dictates, so that the Emperor can involve the Censor in private conversation that none can over hear. This, however, allows Shi and Bao to engage in their own private conversation.

'In the name of all under Heaven, how anyone will be brought to justice for these heinous crimes if all knowledge of the perpetrators is to be suppressed.' Bao asks in a slightly sarcastic manner.

'Don't play the fool with me, *Master Librarian*. People can easily be transferred to dangerous provinces where they are liable to encounter hazards detrimental to their wellbeing, as I'm sure your creative mind can imagine.' Then turning on the sarcasm himself. 'Did I not just hear of a new branch of the Imperial Library having just recently opened in the province of Yunnan.'

Bao's eyebrows theatrically visit his hairline. 'A frontier province filled with many deep ravines and high mountain passes filled with bandits and assorted rogues, doubtless to say.'

'Doubtless to say.'

Bao looks on Shi's roguish grin, one he wishes that he would see more often as it reminds him of the young student that was present when they were at the Imperial College together. It also pleases Bao that his friend is more relaxed in the situation so that he can joke about these matters. Indeed, he himself is beginning to enjoy the Celestial game they are involved in. That Shi is also in the same mind bodes well, for he knows his friend well enough to know that when Shi is relaxed and feels comfortable that his mind is at its brilliant best.

The journey they take is not of any great length as the Censor's offices are located on a spur from the palace complex, indeed, it is joined via a covered walkway to the Hall of Government, and itself is part of the Palace. This symbolizes the intimate relationship between the Emperor and the main organ for keeping control of the Ministries.

The Censor presents the door to the Deputy Censor's office to Shi and Bao then instructs the guards standing either side to open it.

Lizong has a final word. 'I will be in the Censor's office if you make any discoveries.'

Bao and Shi bow.

'How is your good wife the Duchess? I will always have a fondness for her.'

The old man laughs. 'That's because she spoils you unmercifully.'

Their fading laughter is the signal for Shi and Bao to enter the Deputy Censor's office.

The office is neither grand nor of great size. The wood panel walls are fitted out with shelves that house the files of the ongoing inspections. There is a huge table at the north end with an ornately carved chair in plain wood facing south. A few chairs and a few small tables with chairs arranged around them are the only other pieces of furniture present. The light comes from windows high up on the western wall. Below these, set in a purpose built alcove amongst the shelves is a large mounted piece of calligraphy.

The table is covered with documents set out in such a manner as to suggest that this was the work the Deputy Censor was working on before his demise. Shi wastes little time before making himself acquainted with their content.

Bao visits the shelves, first, the ones next to the door through which they have entered then the ones on the south side. Here there is a door that leads into the administration offices, this is locked. Taking files out at random he scans the covers that deliver the Ministry that is being investigated and the department. Inside the front cover he finds attached a list of personnel and their positions in the department. The first page lists the areas of investigation covered and the rest of the document the outcome. Without a summary it is impossible to tell what has been found at a glance. Worse, each file is exactly the same and Bao soon becomes bored with their monotony.

Casting about for something exceptional in the filing system his eye finally falls on the calligraphy on the western wall. The more he looks the more he appreciates

the workmanship. Though design has been the overriding factor in its production he now takes interest in the content that the characters carry. To his surprise he finds he is reading, *The Western Inscription*, by Zhang Zai, and after a quick visit to the calligrapher's mark he realizes he is looking at the work of the 12<sup>th</sup> century master calligrapher, Chin He. It is an original. It's value beyond measure.

Bao can feel Shi's eyes on him. 'It's an original Chin He of *The Western Inscription*.'

But Shi's eyes do not move to the calligraphy but the frame it is housed in. From where he sits on the Deputy Censor's chair he can see that the frame protrudes from the wall by a hand's width. Already inside of the mind of the Deputy Censor and knowing this man's desire to hide what is most valuable, Shi leaves his position and joins Bao. Ignoring the great calligrapher's work he examines the frame; a branch motif with several stubby twigs sticking out a finger's width on each side. One in particular is smoothed to the point of discolouration. After a few attempts at twisting and pushing, a pulling motion springs the catch. A gap appears between the frame and the extension from the wall that the frame is attached to, enough to insert his fingers and he lifts the sneck over the catch. This is of exactly the same design that is used for access to the hidden rooms in the antique merchant's showroom.

What they are confronted with when the secret compartment is fully opened is a disappointment. There appears to be nothing concealed in the space. Only a closer inspection reveals the flat box that stands on its end and fills the space leaving only a finger's width at both sides. Slipping their fingers in at either end they wriggle the box out to the edge. This is necessary as the box is incredibly heavy.

'Wait, let me clear a space on this table.' Shi follows his own instruction then returns to help Bao lift the box out. The full weight has them both toiling and stretching their sinews.

Placing it down on its back the box must measure a metre by three-quarters of a metre by 10 centimetres. Shi finds the catch on the side and springs it open. Inside is a bronze tablet broken along the base of the short side. Resting on top is a large folder tied with silk. Removing

this and placing it to one side Shi reveals the full face of the tablet.

Bao rubs his fingers over the raised inscription. 'What is this mess of raised lines?'

'If I am not mistaken this is the script of the Shang.'

'The Shang, in terms of the Shang Dynasty?'

'The very same. It would have been the script that was used by the Early Zhou and quite possibly by King Wen himself.'

Bao's fingers find their way to the top and there he more feels than sees the six lines of a hexagram. 'By all under Heaven this is, Difficulty at the Beginning' number three of the Classic of Change.'

'Let me see.' Shi pushes Bao away with his body so that he can feel the marks. He starts at the bottom of the hexagram. 'An unbroken line followed by 3 broken lines followed by an unbroken line followed by a broken line at the top.'

'As I said, Hexagram number three, Difficulty at the Beginning.'

Shi allows his fingers to move to the left. 'Except this has a single mark that should denote number one.'

Because of the discolouration of the bronze surface and the fact that the source of light is overhead, it makes it difficult to see the raised marks of the hieroglyphs. Bao sets out to rectify this by placing a number of files under one side as Shi lifts up one end.

With the hieroglyphs now in relief the full text and how it is laid out becomes clear: There is a top section 4 characters deep cut off from the script below by 2 raised horizontal lines; Both the top and bottom sections have vertical lines to house the characters; The lines on the bottom section run down to the jagged edge where the tablet has been broken in a roughly diagonal direction of 30 degrees to the horizontal; As a consequence of this fracture some of the hieroglyphs are split and hence unreadable.

'May I make so bold as to suggest' Bao starts 'that what we have here is a copy of the original, I. That most noble of classics.'

'You may suggest what you may and do so in whatever manner you see fit. However, this is but one of the hexagrams, and as to its authenticity, that remains to be proven. If it were written in the Shang script, that was used by King Wen, then this would be the, I Zhou, the forerunner of the classic of Changes the, I Ching.

Bao looks at his friend with annoyed exasperation. 'I declare Shi your procrastination is taking on a life of its own since the start of this investigation.'

'One of us must keep to an exact description of evidence and as you have no intention of doing so in this matter that leaves me to fulfil this necessity.'

Shi turns his attention to the large file and undoing the silk ribbons that bind it together opens it up. What is revealed on the first sheet is a scale plan of the tablet. The exact design, with all of the hieroglyphs in place, has been copied with great skill.

Shi passes this on to Bao while he looks at the second sheet. This has the exact design as the first but the hieroglyphs have been replaced by contemporary Chinese script characters where they are known, and a small faint star where they are not.

'It is obvious the Deputy Censor was in the process of deciphering the Shang script.' He shows Bao.

'Indeed, but how did he achieve such a task.'

As if to answer this Shi moves this second sheet to one side and there beneath running to some ten pages is a Shang/modern character dictionary. Each page containing approximately 100 hieroglyphs with associated contemporary Chinese characters.

'And where did the Deputy Censor get this from I wonder?' Bao laces this question with so much suspicion in his tone as to turn it into a statement.

'Where indeed.' Shi says while turning to Bao. 'As an Imperial Librarian I would have thought this was your area of expertise.'

'As well it might be, if I'd only had time to visit the Imperial Library.'

They both laugh before turning more serious as the implication of their find takes on its full significance.

'If there is one bronze tablet containing one hexagram then there must have been 64 at some point in time. Would you not agree?' Shi asks.

'Indeed I would. But it would appear that the Deputy Censor has only the one, or surely there would be a reference to others.'

'Also, there is the fact that the tablet is broken and part of it missing.'

'Indeed.' Bao turns his attention to the sheet that contains the partly deciphered content. 'Look at the top section. There appears to be more of the hieroglyphs deciphered than in the bottom section. Can you make out what it means?'

Shi pulls on his wispy beard as he concentrates.

'According to the Deputy Censor's interpretation it says: This section contains the nuclear compounds of Change that are influenced by Earth. At least that is what this first part up to here seems to say.' He points a section out.

Bao thinks for a long moment before giving birth to the freshly forming thought. 'It is true that Earth is a nuclear trigram in this hexagram - the 3 broken lines above the bottom unbroken line - but what does it mean by the nuclear compounds of Change?'

'Perhaps they had a different way of categorizing the Changes in those days.' Shi pronounces this as a passing thought of little consequence.

But Bao takes this up as a deep insight. 'If that were true then there would be another category of Change that would represent what are influenced by Heaven. For are there not nuclear trigrams of Heaven in some of the Hexagrams? Like number thirty-one, Hsian/Influence which has three unbroken lines below the top broken line, or number thirty-two, Heng/Duration that has 3 unbroken lines above the bottom broken line.'



Shi now takes up the categorising theme with enthusiasm. 'And are there not some Hexagrams without either nuclear trigrams of Heaven or Earth? Such as number forty-seven, K'un/Oppression, or, forty-eight, Ching/The Well.'

'That would be three different categories.'

'Plus, there are special hexagrams like Heaven and Earth that contain a double trigram of themselves.'

'And as these two are very special, representing the polar opposites, perhaps these would have their own categories.'

'Indeed they might.' Shi says this with enthusiasm before adding boldly. 'And then there are Hexagrams that contain both Heaven and Earth only in different positions.'

'You mean number, eleven, T'ai/Peace, and number twelve. P'i/Stagnation.'

'Precisely.'

'Would they make up a separate category?'

'I suppose they could.'

Bao looks at his friend. 'But all we are doing is guessing?' He suddenly bursts out laughing.

'True.' Shi joins him in laughter 'But you can see how people could be easily drawn into this kind of speculation. Have we not just done so ourselves.'

'Perhaps this is what Confucius alluded to when he said: I wish I'd had another 50 years to work on the, I. For he was sure, given such a time frame, he could work it all out.'

'Then he must have been of the opinion that if you speculate for fifty years you will finally come to the correct answer.' Shi barks a laughs.

'But surely, if one had an enough time to speculate, one could arrive at the correct answer to anything.' Bao says in the same humorous vein.

Shi now turns more serious. 'But what of your ancestor Shao Yong, did he make any claim to knowing how the, I, was arranged?'

'I have found nothing as yet in this regard. But it is well known that he and Zhou Dun-Yi both regarded the, I, as an inspiration and indeed, the source of their metaphysics along with the Taoist, Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate.'

'Indeed. And do the Taoists not claim that the, I, was the source of the Diagram.'

'Along with their entire philosophy.' Says a voice behind them.

Bao and Shi swing around to see Wang Chi entering the room. He walks over to the tablet, Bao and Shi making way for him. He examines all the pieces that they have found in silence before turning and examining the secret compartment behind the calligraphy.

Before turning back to Bao and Shi he states. 'It would be prudent not to mention this find to anyone except Lizong.' He turns and eyes them both. 'You are proving to be *adept* at your work. I congratulate you. You have found something that I could not. An achievement in itself.'

Bao can't resist. 'Do you then think that it is genuine?'

Wang Chi eyes Bao with a long stare before coming back between Bao and Shi and examining the tablet with great intent. He then rests his hand on it, closing his eyes. He stands like this for some time as Bao and Shi exchange glances of bemusement.

'It is certainly very old and with a rich history. Whether it is an original copy of the I Zhou remains to be seen.' He turns to Bao. 'There is a librarian by the name of, Hao Wen, who specializes in the Shang script. Deliver all of this to him.' He sweeps his hand over the contents of the table. 'And perhaps, he will do a better job of translation than the Deputy Censor. Make sure he is aware of the prudence that is required.'

Wang Chi turns and looks directly at Shi who pales under his gaze. 'There will come a time when you may need my assistance. Think on this moment and with your inner voice say Wang Chi Fu.'

The voice Shi can hear is inside of his head. Wang Chi's mouth remains closed and the combination has Shi reeling.

Wang Chi leaves without further comment.

Bao grabs his friend before he falls and helps him into a chair.

'Does he not enter your mind?' Shi asks, hoping that Bao shares the experience.

'I doubt he would risk such an action in case I was able to look into his mind.' Bao is thoughtful before continuing. 'He was reading me, I could feel him. But perhaps the action of placing thoughts in someone's mind takes his full concentration. And in doing so perhaps he cannot stop or block those like myself who have a certain natural ability to read others. He must realize that I am trying to read him as he reads me, and so, perhaps, would not risk such an action.' Bao comes back to Shi from his own thoughts. 'But what thoughts did he implant in your mind?'

'He said there would come a time when I would need him and that to summon him I was to think of this moment and say: Wang Chi Fu.' Shi trembles at the thought as he gets an immediate vision of Wang Chi in his mind.

Bao shakes Shi by the shoulders to bring his attention back to focus on him. 'Shi, dear friend, concentrate on me. I am here in the room with you. Surely I am more real than Wang Chi who is not present.'

'It passes.' Then after a few moments. 'You are right. I must concentrate on the external world if I am to be rid of him.'

Bao tries to re-engage Shi's attention. 'It could be useful to summon someone in such a manner. Especially one with such remarkable abilities.'

'Perhaps. Although I cannot think of a single reason why I would want to put myself through that experience.'

Bao knows intuitively that he must ground Shi back in the external world and so plays the fool. 'Supposing you were locked in some public night-soil deposit because the

sneak had been broken on the inside, as it once happened to me. Would this not be a useful occasion?'

Shi laughs in spite of himself. 'Ah Bao, what would I do without you?'

'Well if you were locked in a toilet without me to assist, then, like me, you would have been forced into singing at the top of your voice that old college song: The Riddle of the Empty Night-Soil Box.'

'Is that what you really did?'

'Indeed it was. And I was eventually rescued by some of my fellow students, who in passing, joined in the chorus.' Here Bao sings the following: Oh what a dilemma, oh what a ca-tas-tro-phe, to be stuck without paper in a night-soil lav-a-tor-y.'

'Stop, enough, I don't believe a word of it.'

But Bao's distraction has worked as Shi is recovering fast and so he engages him with something he knows will interest him. But not before visiting the door where he speaks with the guards. 'Fetch two men to remove some artefacts to the library.'

The guard is more than uncertain at this request. 'We have orders from the Censor that nothing is to be removed from this room.'

'Then seek out Wang Chi who has made this order pertinent. You will probably find him in the Censor's office.'

The guard does as he is bid and Bao returns to Shi who is looking much better.

'Since I have met Wang Chi, I swear my abilities in reading people have increased. Perhaps while engaging with him as he reads me, I have absorbed his knowledge in some way.' Then in a reflective tone. 'We must occupy the same mindscape somehow and perhaps it is this that I now feel.'

'In what ways have your abilities increased?'

'I was able to access the minds of the Ministers with exceptional ease. I even detected single thoughts in two

of them, both of course in reference to me as their concentration was on me at that moment.'

'And did you detect any hidden knowledge of the murders?'

'I did not. They were all blissfully ignorant of the crimes committed. As such, Lizong was right in trusting them to root out factionalism in their Ministries. They all seemed to realize the importance of this.'

'That is excellent.'

'It is indeed.'

'It allows us to concentrate on the leads we already have. At least for the time being.'

Shi suddenly jumps to his feet and then bows as Lizong walks in. Bao follows his example.

'We will discuss our strategy and tactics in regard to the investigation tonight. I have decided to call a conference, with all those involved, and with what evidence we have, in regard to these terrible events. As the Abbot of Lingyan Monastery is unable to travel due to his injury, we will make the journey in his stead. Now let me see this find.'

Bao and Shi present the bronze tablet.

Lizong's eyes are bright with excitement. 'What a find. If this turns out to be genuine you may well have further investigation work to do. Would we not all be overjoyed at having the original I Zhou returned to us? The very source of *this Culture of Ours*.'

Bao and Shi bow in recognition of the statement's veracity.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**He rises from the lowest place.**

**And like the sap in the root of a tree that ascends through the trunk**

**He reaches the crown.**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**Pushing Upward attains**

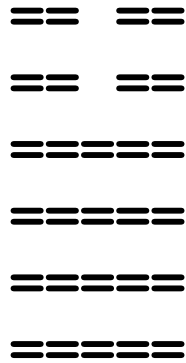
**Success of the highest order.**

**Who can doubt that**

**Heaven and Earth have blessed this action?**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**The Power of the Great (11)**



**THE IMAGE**

**Thunder in Heaven:**

**The Image of THE POWER OF THE GREAT.**

**The superior man avoids doing anything**

**That is not in accord with the established order,**

**Or the times in which he lives.**

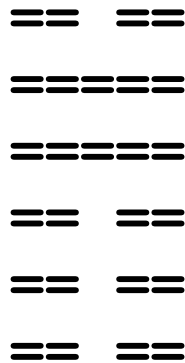
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# Chapter 12

## Gathering Together (53)

The Song Dynasty  
 1458 I.A. (1237 CE)  
 6<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Dawn Drum

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### THE IMAGE

Lake rests upon the Earth:

The Image of GATHERING TOGETHER.

The superior man prepares for the unexpected

When men gather together.

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“What is called ku-wen (G) establishes language worthy of being remembered according to the ancient Tao, and the language must illuminate the ancient Tao. What is the ancient Tao? It is the Tao the sage-teacher Confucius practiced. Long ago Confucius related the affairs of Yao and Shen and took Wen and Wu as models; the six classics were then complete. His fundamental precepts were simply benevolence and righteousness and the five constants (G). If you aspire to *This Culture of Ours* [ssu-wen] you must really master the Tao of the five constants. Do not loose the centre yet change with the times, change but maintain continuity, for what is continuous endures and what endures agrees with the Tao. Once you have apprehended the Tao in the mind, let it come out by doing literary composition and spread it as transformation through instruction [chiao-hua]. This should be the goal of doing wen. The creation of ku-wen truly is complete in this. Were ku-wen merely writing without parallelism and creating sentences difficult to read, . . . then the books of the heterodox – Lao-Tzu, Chung-Tzu, Yang Zhu and Mo-Tzu – could also be seen as ku-wen since they are neither rhymed nor parallel, and that should not be.”

By Chih-yuan (976 - 1022 C.E.) a Buddhist monk who taught ku-wen to his fellow monks. Showing the extent of the syncretic process between Buddhism and Confucianism at the beginning of the Song Dynasty.

From the Song Chin Yuan wen-lun, pp 16-18.



The meeting convened by the Emperor Lizong at the Monastery of Lingyan so that all the players of the unfolding drama can be present, is to take place in the Meditation Hall of the Adepts. This hall is offset from the Main Hall and has a fine view over the West Lake to Kinsai.

When Lizong, Shi and Bao arrived the previous evening it was decided the meeting should be scheduled for the following day. This was necessitated because the Abbott needed rest after attending to the affairs of the monastery during the day. It must be said, that this mundane work of the monastery affairs that he carried out, was against the advice of his physician and the senior monks.

Having retired early, those that had arrived from Kinsai had awoken early. Shi accompanying Lizong on a constitutional walk through the renowned gardens of the monastery are exchanging views on the problems at hand.

Bao, following his natural inclination, explores the monastery with the hope of finding Tai. He finds her in meditation in a small room before a Tanka of The White Tara. He joins her in meditation until, as one, they turn

to each other. Exchanging smiles in the early morning light as if they were strangers only met. Then without a word they get up and approach the Tanka.

'This is The White Tara. Tara as the Bodhisattva of Compassion in the female form and is different from The Green Tara where she is the Bodhisattva of Enlightenment Activity.' Tai offers in a detached manner.

'The presentation has exquisite symmetry, don't you think?' Bao states in the same manner.

Tai reflects on this aspect of the painting before answering. 'Now that you point this out, I would have to agree, however, it is not the aesthetic qualities that one meditates on but on the concept the Image presents.'

'Never the less the artist must have been aware of this aesthetic quality to achieve the effect.'

Tai is a little annoyed at this. 'You are obviously not aware that the act of capturing this Image is a form of meditation and a Buddhist technique that will eventually lead to enlightenment. The Image and concept are as one in the mind of the artist and, as such, the artist can identify directly with Tara and all of her qualities.'

'Then symmetry must be one of her many qualities.' This he states in a manner as if presenting a conclusion to an argument. Turning to Tai he is confronted with a look that he knows only too well. This is her superior looking-down-on-Bao look. A withering look meant to instil in him knowledge of his own ignorance. This he would normally accept as a challenge but in the circumstances and the fact that he is in a Buddhist monastery he now decides that deflection is a better course of action. 'Is this Tanka not of Tibetan origin?'

'You know well it is.'

'The Tibetans fascinate me. They have the most fantastic creation myth that I think I have ever heard. Would you like to hear it?'

Tai eyes Bao with suspicion. She knows only too well what he is about but his extraordinary knowledge base always impresses her and this piece of information he wants to relate is of particular interest. 'You will not be happy

until you have exercised your inflated self-worth in this matter, so you best proceed.'

Bao, having deflected her by gaining her attention in another direction proceeds with only the slightest smirk to mar his delivery. 'The bodhisattva Avalokitshvara looked down from his divine abode and saw that all the living creatures on the Earth did not live in peace. Therefore he emanated a thousand incarnations that took birth among them in various forms and taught them the ways of peace and harmony, thus transforming the land into a celestial garden. When the external conditions had been ripened in this way he took birth as a monkey. During that life he did encounter an abominable snow-lady who was an emanation of the Goddess Tara. They mated, and as a result she gave birth to the first human beings. They were all of different colours in complexion and they rapidly increased in number until they populated the land. Apparently the mountain in Tibet, that this union took place, is still a place of pilgrimage.'

Tai is not amused by what she perceives as a slight on her beliefs, and giving him a disparaging look, she exits the room and walks out onto the balcony. Bao follows but not before bowing to the Bodhisattva of Compassion and giving her a mischievous wink for good measure. Was it just his imagination or did Tara just give him a wink back. He looks back at the Tanka in puzzlement before turning into another perfect symmetry - Tai's annoyed face.

'You have managed to ruin my early morning meditation, I hope you are pleased with yourself.'

Bao goes to take her in his arms but she backs away and says in a stern voice. 'Remember where we are.'

'But we are alone.'

'That is not the point. Now replace your shoes and hat on your person, the Abbot is approaching.' Her eyes give Bao the direction.

He does as he is bid then waits in silence until the Abbot greets them. 'A Buddhist blessing to you both on this fine morning.'

Bao and Tai bow to the horizontal.

Tai bubbles with delight. 'You look so much better, I feel sure that you must make a full recovery if you would only rest more and leave the burden of office to others.'

'You worry too much about your old friend. I have the constitution of a mountain goat. Now, will you not introduce me to your friend?'

Tai's disposition changes as she changes her attention. 'This, for good or ill, is my betrothed, Palace Librarian Shao Bao.'

'Ah, we meet at last. I have heard so much about you that it is as if we were long acquainted.' The Abbot beams a smile at Bao.

Bao, who, feeling the effects of such genuine good will, responds in kind. 'I must admit feeling exactly the same in regard to you. Have my family not made me acquainted with your many great qualities. While my betrothed has impressed me with her devotion to your exercise of your noble duties.'

The Abbot laughs as he turns to Tai. 'He has indeed a silvery tongue.' Then turning back. 'But she has not told me of your ability to read people.'

Bao is taken aback, Tai is furious but the Abbot is nonplussed.

'Pray tell me Bao that you have not been trying to read the Abbot's mind?' Tai cries out in anguish.

Bao's guilt is written all over his face to a degree that there is little need for a reply.

'How could you...'

Tai is cut off by the Abbot. 'Stay your criticism, Tai. For it was I that instigated a sharing of a mutual mindscape, little realizing that Bao has a natural ability in this regard.' He turns to Bao. 'If you ever need assistance with this talent there is a monk of great ability whom I could place at your disposal. It would be normal that an adept, such as yourself, would join our order to attain such knowledge. However, under the special circumstance that the Dynasty now faces, and, the fact that your virtue is well known, and now, known to me directly, I will make an exception.'

Bao is so stunned by what he is hearing that he stands gawping until he sees Tai shaking her furious head as direction.

He bows to the horizontal then on returning to the vertical. 'I am at a disadvantage in that I have nothing of equal worth to give in return.'

'You must not trouble yourself on this account, but, if you ever discover your ancestor Shao Yong's formulation of Tsao Hua, the endless process of creation, I would appreciate that you would explain it to me.'

Bao is delighted. 'Nothing would give me greater pleasure.'

'I am uncertain as to what value could be placed on such formulated knowledge.' He ponders for effect before continuing. 'Was it not Chaung Tzu that said that even the Yellow Emperor had to give up his wisdom to attain enlightenment? And is this knowledge that is Tsao Hua nothing more than the wisdom of the Yellow Emperor.'

Bao has often wondered whether this was the case, but to hear it expressed with such clarity and from the mouth of a Buddhist leaves him in a state of profound shock. As if to emphasize his point the Abbot plays a mischievous grin and then, winks, at Bao. His amazement is complete for he is rendered speechless.

'Come' the Abbot raises his undamaged arm and places it around Bao 'they await us in the Hall of the Adepts.'

Tai takes his damaged arm above the point where the wound rests in a sling and together as one they walk off along the balcony to the sweet sound of the Abbot's laughter.

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On entering the hall each person is handed a schedule that has been compiled by Shi.

**THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND EVIDENCE  
RELATING TO THE CRIMES**

#### The Hard Evidence:

- 1) The assassins' knives: they are identical even down to the screaming skull. Find the maker of the one that Tai has and you find the maker of the one that killed the Grand Duke.
- 2) Tai relates how she came by the one she gave to Bao – it was returned with the laundry. 3 beds 3 scholar officials – 3 servants – none of which knew anything about it.
- 3) The double fan dropped by the assassin: find the maker and you might find the assassin. Lizong produces an exact copy only it is made of pink coral and speckled ironwood. It belongs to a lady of the palace who acquired it from her great grandmother. It was a wedding gift and was acquired from the maker Teng Yin when she lived in Kaifeng. The maker and his family moved to Ningbo after the Jin took over Northern China.
- 4)

#### The Other Leads:

- 1) The Deputy Censor's partner in the antiques business Chan Ze (the missing man): Was he the man on the Little Egret? Where is he now? Shi is having the man investigated by the police.
- 2) The Guild of Antiquities and their connection to the Deputy Censor. Questions: Did they know who the Deputy Censor was? How much criminal activity do they indulge in? Did they know the child woman assassin? What do they know of the bronze tablet the Deputy Censor possessed?
- 3) The King of the Beggars: Is he to be trusted? What of the name and address that was used for the contact by the guild? Has any connections been made by the police? Can they use the contact system to the investigation's advantage? Set up a bogus meeting between the assassins and the investigators perhaps?

#### The Factions inside of the Government:

- 1) Lizong's opinion including his thoughts on the death of his cousin the Grand Duke. His preference for a scholar official involvement in the death of his cousin.
- 2) Shi's thoughts on the possibility of factional involvement – his preference for an aristocracy involvement.
- 3) Bao's thoughts and his preference for an army involvement.

#### Other contributors:

- 1) The Abbot.
- 2) Wu Chi.
- 3) Wu Tai.

#### Plan of Action:

- 1)

The meeting lasted all morning. Many things were discussed. A few things were decided: the fan was given importance as after Tai had revealed how the assassin had visited the opera box to retrieve it, a consensus thought that it could lead the investigation to the assassins; the same was thought about the assassin's blades; finding

the missing man, the Deputy Censor's partner in the antiques business, Chan Ze, was essential, as he could have evidence leading directly to the murder; the bronze tablet of possible Shang lineage, and possibly an original copy of the, I Zhou, was considered important not just as a motive in the investigation, but as an important historical document in its own right; finding the other sixty three bronze tablets was now part of the investigation; it was also agreed that the factional component in the bureaucracy was best left to the Ministers of the six Ministries; the death of the Grand Duke could be seen in the light of this factionalism.

The investigation, therefore, could be split into two main strands. The motivation for the murder could either come from the Deputy Censor's position in the government, or, from his illegal activities in the antiques business.

As such, Shi and Bao, were charged by Lizong to concentrate on the Deputy Censor's illegal activities in the antiques business. While the Emperor and the Censor's Office would monitor the investigation into factionalism inside both the bureaucracy and government.

Shi was satisfied with this arrangement. Bao was not, with one exception, and that was being charged in finding the sixty-three bronze tablets of the, I Zhou. With this he was more than satisfied.

After the meeting breaks up, Shi, Bao and Tai, walk back to Kinsai by crossing the Su De. They walk in silence each lost in their own thoughts. They stop, as one, at the jetty where the Little Egret is still moored. They lean against the wall looking down at the deserted pleasure craft.

'Magistrate, Tai has something to tell you.' Says Bao in a matter-of-fact way.

'What have I to tell Shi?' Tai is confused.

'When recounting your version of the assassin who visited our opera box, you forgot to tell those gathered at our recent meeting what the assassin said to you.' Says Bao in the same matter-of-fact manner.

'Oh, that.' Says Tai, slightly annoyed. 'Modesty forbade me.'

Bao and Tai have captured Shi's attention. He looks at Tai with curiosity. 'Modesty is a fine quality. And one that you have in abundance, however, it must not interfere with the accuracy of the evidence.'

'The assassin said: he would not kill me because of my great beauty. Or something of that nature.'

It takes Shi just a few moments of reflection to understand the meaning of this omission. 'Would an assassin spare your life so you could retain the fan that could lead us to him and his guild? I seriously doubt that.' He turns to Bao. 'Why didn't you prompt Tai in her telling?'

'Modesty forbade me.' Says Bao, without a trace of sarcasm. 'That, and the fact, that I have only just thought of it.'

'That is a contradictory statement.'

'Tai's modesty in regard to her beauty, forbade me. She has problems in this regard that we cannot even begin to understand. Her modesty blinded me to the significance of what the assassin said. That is all.'

Shi turns to Tai who stands in between the two men. 'I never knew that you had a problem with your great beauty.'

Tai looks out over the West Lake. 'If I walk down the street. If I enter a shop. Even in the Ink Stone. I hear people point me out as: the Lotus of Kinsai. I try to ignore these references to my beauty. Indeed, I have become used to ignoring all such comments. My virtue depends on it.'

Shi is saddened by this. 'I had little idea.'

'The great irony is that she is famous for her great physical beauty, when, it is the beauty of her mind that should make her famous.' Says Bao with affection.

A single tear winds its way down her cheek. 'I hope you will forgive my omission. It was unintended. A quirk of my mind.'

'Indeed.' Says Shi reassuringly.



'It is but a small consideration. Yet, it gives me bad feelings.' Bao turns to Tai. 'He was smiling when he said it. Was he not?'

'Smiling at the behest of some private thought. Or that is how it seems to me.' After a moment. 'Then there was his teeth.'

'His teeth?' Bao and Shi say in unison.

'His teeth were crooked, and in the same way that the Red Phoenix usher's teeth were crooked. I would say he was the same man.'

'As well he might.' Says Shi. 'If when he greeted you at the opera he had already been replaced by an assassin. The man that was thrown from the roof of the opera house as a diversion was wearing the Red Phoenix's clothes and mask.'

'Did he have crooked teeth?' Asks Bao.

'I don't think so. However, I will enquire.'

'A superior man modest about his modesty may cross the great water.' Says Bao, quoting the Changing Line at the beginning of Modesty in the I Ching. He addresses this to Tai.

'Modesty that comes to expression. Perseverance brings good fortune.' Says Shi, quoting the Changing Line in the second place of Modesty in the I Ching. He also addresses this to Tai.

Tai appreciates their sentiment. 'I know not the Changing Lines as scholar officials know them. I can but quote the Image of Modesty: The superior man reduces that which is too much, and augments that which is too little. He weighs things and makes them equal.' She turns to Shi. 'Bao taught me these words so I can think of them when in distress from my fame. He also taught me this from the great, I, by saying: genuine modesty stimulates the creation of order and should inspire the individual to discipline their own arrogance.'

Shi is amused. 'Noble words, coming from an arrogant dragon.'

'The arrogant dragon knows the words but thinks they apply only to other people.' She directs these words to Bao but with a smile.

'Modesty forbids me to make a reply.' Says Bao while trying to keep a straight face.

A policeman appears on the deck of the Little Egret. On seeing the Magistrate he comes running to where they stand. 'Forgive me Magistrate, I was not informed of your visit.'

Shi turns to his friends but then asks the policeman.

'Are there refreshments on board?'

'Indeed. The very finest teas from all over the Empire.'

'Then perhaps you will provide us with a selection?'

The policeman is overjoyed and without replying he runs back down to the pleasure craft.

Shi, Tai and Bao descend to the deck and take up seating on the richly cushioned furniture.

'As you know, my father keeps a small junk tethered near here on the, He River. I'm sure he will give his permission for us to use it, so that we may visit the port of Bingpo and seek out these fan makers.' Says Bao.

'Excellent. Then why not take Tai with you as she may well bring order out of the chaos of our investigation by her genuine modesty.' Says Shi, trying his best to sound sincere.

'I need not your flattery, Master Magistrate.' She turns from Shi to Bao. 'However, if you do not mind my presence, I would dearly love to ride the bore.'

'Then so you shall. And you, Master Magistrate, where will you concentrate your efforts?'

'It is time to make an official visit to the Antiquities Guild. A hive of villains with priceless antiques for honey. They are in need of a stern reminder of their position, at the very least.' Says Shi with relish.

'Nothing that would not further modesty in movement.' Bao quotes from the Changing Line in the fourth place in

Modesty from the I Ching. Then he laughs at Shi's discomfit.

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## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**When men are forced into a gathering,  
Either by natural disaster or war,  
Strict discipline by the ruler ensures  
Success.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**The superior man acts for the ruler at a gathering.  
Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**The man of destiny gathers people together spontaneously.  
Who can tell where this power comes from?  
Spirit to spirit.  
Supreme good fortune.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**The gathering disperses,  
Like seeds on the wind.  
No blame.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Waiting (12)**

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==  ==
===== Water
==  ==
=====
===== Heaven
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**THE IMAGE**

**Clouds appear in Heaven:**

**The Image of Waiting.**

**Thus the superior man fortifies the body,**

**And fills the mind with good cheer**

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# Chapter 13

## Peace (50)

The Song Dynasty  
 1458 I.A. (1237 CE)  
 7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Dawn Drum

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== == Earth

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===== Heaven

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### THE IMAGE

Heaven and Earth unite:

The Image of PEACE.

Thus man works in harmony with Nature.

And Nature rewards man with

Bountiful prosperity.

\*

“In a quiet courtyard in the spring, with evening's light filtering through the leaves,  
 guests relax on the veranda and watch as two compete at wéiqí.  
 Each calls into themselves the divine and the infernal,  
 sculpting mountains and rivers into their world.  
 Across the board, dragons and serpents array for battle,  
 geese scatter as collapsing fortresses are sacked;  
 masses die, pushed into pits by Qin's soldiers,  
 and the drama's audience is left in awe of its General Jin.  
 To sit at the board is to raise halberd and taste combat,  
 to endure the freezing and brave the flames in the constant changes;  
 life and death each will come to both masters,  
 but victory and defeat must each go to one.  
 On this road, one strips away the other's disguises,  
 in life, one must erect one's own facade;  
 dreadful is a wound to the exposed belly or heart,  
 merely painful is an injury to the face, which can be cured;  
 Effective is a blow that strikes home in an opponent's back,  
 successful are schemes that use repeated feints and deceit.  
 Look at the activity on the streets of our capital,  
 if you were to go elsewhere, wouldn't it be the same?”

A poem by Shao Yong [a\[>\]](#)

★

The Deputy Censor's partner in the antiques business, Chan Ze, the missing man, is now missing forever. Yet here he sits in front of an original painting, Early Spring, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century Master, Gui Xi, reflecting the fate this painting has brought him. If the Deputy Censor had not offered him this original work as an inducement to enter the antiques business then he would not be in the terrible predicament that he is in now. For an artist, like himself, to have a master-piece of this quality at his disposal so that he is able to study form, content, composition and pigment application right down to single brush strokes, on a daily bases, was a temptation too far. He could not refuse the Deputy Censor's offer even knowing his fate, decapitation, if he was ever found out. He had of course taken precautions. He had invented the antiques merchant Chan Ze and had become a master of disguise transforming himself into a plump middle-aged man from the 35 year old artist Cao De that now sits before the master-work with a rising terror pressing in his belly.

The Deputy Censor was a man of great refinement, or should we say he had been before his recent demise. His knowledge of history and philosophy was, as you would expect from a Daianshi degree holder, encyclopaedic. His passion was an overflowing vessel. Cao had fallen under his enthusiastic spell and soon was as engaged in the living history of the antiques world as the Deputy Censor himself.

This painting by, Gui Xi, Early Spring, however, was more than just living history to Cao, for the Deputy Censor had provided Cao with a manuscript that had provided Cao with an insight into the great artist's mind. The manuscript may well have been written in the artist's own calligraphy but it was impossible to tell as it was not signed and as convention demanded it was written in formal terms, a simple statement of fact.

This remarkable manuscript stated that Gui Xi, a devoted Taoist, would meditate for a week or more on the concept of the content, in this case of early spring. Once this had become a fixed Image in the mind of Gui Xi the great man would finish the painting in a single sitting. The Deputy Censor had pointed out that this process Gui Xi used was indicative of the Classic of Changes, the Great I. Was it not understood by the early Confucians that in the I, the characters described the Image and the Image delivered the concept. Gui Xi delivered the Image from the concept, simply reversing the process.

Cao knew he would never have that genius as he found it impossible to hold a single Image in his mind's eye for any length of time. It was enough, however, to improve his own work on aesthetic grounds alone, and well enough to improve his work to the status of, Journeyman. His work sold well and he had a rising reputation, but at what price?

He knew that his time in, Kinsai, was coming to an end. The Deputy Censor had several paintings of his, so there was a direct connection between the 2 men. It was only a matter of time before the authorities caught up with him and he knew that he would not withstand even the lightest of interrogations. His only hope was to move to a distant part of the Empire, but a successful move would require enough money to set himself up. Money he did not possess. All of the money he, and, the Deputy Censor, had made from the antiques business had been plied back into the



business. The antiques shop and all its content was now in the hands of the Palace Guard.

This left Cao with only one avenue left to explore: his knowledge of the whereabouts of the original I Zhou. The man from the north, Li Guo, had turned up the year previous and had presented the first bronze tablet, *Difficulty at the Beginning*, to Cao and the Deputy Censor. Li Guo had not been too happy when the Deputy Censor had taken a hammer to the bronze, breaking off a corner. Everything was soon resolved when the Deputy Censor confirmed, by the internal structure of the bronze tablet, that the bronze was indeed a Shang Bronze. The exact composition of lead, zinc and copper that makes Shang bronze unique has never been discovered and many have suggested that perhaps the Shang had used other ingredients in its production. The script was also Shang and was not this the script used by the Dukes of Zhou, King Wen and all the great men of the Early Zhou, that golden era of Chinese history when all the classics were written.

The result of this confirmation to the satisfaction of all brought about a transaction. Gold talons were exchanged for the first tablet that Li Guo had brought with him from the north. He would not say where the other 63 tablets were, but agreed that he would smuggle them from the Mongolian controlled north to Kinsai and indeed place them in the hands of the, Deputy Censor, albeit, as the antiques dealer Liu Zin.

The man from the north, Li Guo, had been quite specific about his return, indeed, he was due to return in the next few days. Cao now saw the sixty three bronze tablets as a bargaining tool that just might save his life. If not, then their intrinsic value would assure him of the very finance to become a missing man forever.

Cao knew he must intercept Li Guo before he arrived at the antique shop. For if he did not, the Palace Guard would detect his northern accent and be suspicious. As all arrivals from the north were supposed to register with the police and consequently with the Ministry of Military Affairs, Li Guo would soon be under suspicion as a spy, if he had not registered. And as he had not registered the first time there was little reason to believe that he would on this second visit. Cao was understandably concerned.

Cao took one last look at, Early Spring, before rolling it up and placing it in its bamboo holder. He then placed this in a secret compartment near the door, it was the one thing he would not leave behind if he had to make a quick exit.

Then with purpose he leaves his studio with the first light of dawn just breaking across the sky. He walks quickly up the narrow lane that leads to the city wall then turning left along the track that skirts the city wall he makes his way to the Six Wells Gate. He knows the Captain of the gate and gives him his usual nod of recognition. Nothing untoward there.

Moving with ever increasing speed he crosses a crossroads and enters an alley between buildings. He does not look around until he is deep within the alley and then only to check that he is not being observed. Satisfied, he quickly enters a store room and bolts the door. The place is filled with empty crates used for transporting antiques. He lights a lamp and works his way through a maze until he arrives in a space hidden deep within the crates. He sits down in front of a table covered with theatrical makeup and false hair pieces with a mirror behind. How many times he had repeated this action he could not recall but this was the first time he was not going to transform himself into Chan Ze, the antique dealer. Now he must make himself into a coolly, a carrier of goods for general hire.

He had acquired the rough hemp garments and the wooden carrying frame the day before from a poor man who had been surprised at being offered so much for so little. A bamboo hat with a large brim he had bought separately as he wished to cover his face to a large degree so that he could keep the face of the antiques dealer, Chan Ze. The man from the north needed to be able to recognise him.

After some debate he adds dirt to Chan Ze's face, then cleans most of it off until he gets the desired effect, a recognisable Chan Ze as a coolly.

He quickly changes clothes and as a final gesture to his new Image, he grabs at the earthen floor with his fingers, blackening his fingernails.

At the door he extinguishes the lamp then places his ear to the door to make sure the alleyway outside is empty. Sliding the door open he sticks his head out far enough

to see to where the alley meets the street. Placing the wooden carrying frame on his back and pulling the bamboo hat down over his face he exits the store room, quickly locks the door and walks at pace to the street.

He joins the hectic commerce of the streets that makes Kinsai the richest city in the world. He is called more than once on his journey to the Golden Morning Arcade to carry and deliver but pretends he is already employed. Cao is pleased with his disguise, if it fools the merchants it should fool just about everyone.

Entering the Golden Morning Arcade, he takes up a position opposite the antique shop with a good view down the street in both directions. The Palace Guards, 3 in all, chat amongst themselves, oblivious to Cao's presence.

He hunkers down between 2 upright wooden pillars using his wooden carrying frame as a back rest. All he can do now is wait.

★

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**In times of Peace**

**All men are called upon to**

**Accomplish something.**

**Success.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**In times of Peace**

**Even the inferior man finds his place.**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Even in times of prosperity**

**The superior man follows**

**The middle way.**

**Success.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**In times of Peace**

**The distinction between rich and poor,**

**Between the high and the lowly,**

**Is reduced to a minimum.**

**Affording great works to be completed.**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**In times of Peace**

**The superior man accomplishes**

**Great things by extending his Inner Truth**

**Into the world.**

**Great good fortune.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Even in times of Peace**

**Evil does not disappear.  
It is on the wane but will return eventually.  
No blame.**

\*

## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Standstill (13)

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=====
===== Heaven
=====
==  ==
==  == Earth
==  ==

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#### THE IMAGE

**Heaven and Earth pull in opposite directions:**

**The Image of STANDSTILL.**

**Fruitful activity is rendered impossible.**

**Thus the superior man cultivates his Inner Truth.**

**\***

# Chapter 14

## Following (47)

The Song Dynasty  
 1458 I.A. (1237 C.E.)  
 6<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Dawn Drum

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== ==

===== Lake

=====

== ==

== == Thunder

=====

### THE IMAGE

Thunder resting in the Lake:

The Image of FOLLOWING.

The superior man Follows nature's way

And rests in the joy of calm and tranquillity.

\*

“The Mind of man is precarious, The Mind of Tao is subtle; true insight reveals the universal centrality [chung-wung] of Mind.”

Shen the Sage King (1800 B.C.E.)

The Mind of man is the Mind of common men: pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy.

The Mind of Tao is the original Mind: it is what is able to bring into being pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy.

Security and danger come into being out of pleasure and anger; order and disorder depend on joy and sorrow.

Shen the Sage King warned Yu saying “Would I have you follow the Mind of man? When the Mind of man is precariously balanced between opposite emotions. Would I have you follow the Mind of Tao? When the Mind of Tao is so subtle only a Sage can know it.”

And what then of this duality of Mind; this Mind of Man and this Mind of Tao?

I tell you this: there is no difference!

From the Notes of Shao Yong (1011-1077 C.E.) Recorded by Shao Bao for the Imperial Library CAT: 27a-sh-1-b

★

The speed the small trading junk is going is truly amazing. Not only is the wind with them but also the estuary bore is in full retreat. Bao and Tai lean against the stern rail keeping out of the way of the sailors who seem to be on an endless quest to keep the small craft at maximum speed and at the right orientation to the widening channel.

Tai is wearing her Buddhist fighting tunic and trousers, the leggings wrapped around the ankles with thick braid are mirrored by the same braid wrapped around her waist and wrists. She carries an iron-wood staff, a formidable weapon in the hands of a martial artist such as herself.

Bao is still wearing his white Palace Official robe and the ridiculous Librarian's ceremonial hat. He has forsaken the ceremonial sword as it only seems to get in the way.



The port of Bingpo springs up before them and the coxswain deftly swings the junk in amongst the bustling ships. The small trading junk is like a bee in a swarm of bees, the larger ocean going ships tied to the quays like the papery leaves of a bees nest. With great skill the coxswain suddenly swings the junk into a tight circle coming alongside, The Purple Moon, the biggest ship in port. The sail is quickly lowered and stored as ropes are thrown over the sides of the Purple Moon, where the crew tie the small trading junk off. A jib is swung over the side and a small cage lowered and all of this without hardly a word been spoken.

Once the cage is on deck, Bao and Tai, step in and are hauled up to the main deck of the Purple Moon. For Tai, this is a fresh experience. Only now can she see the full size of this ocean going monster, 175 metres long, 20 metres wide, with 4 masts each spaced so their sails can catch the full force of a side wind. The massive deck is tipped by a raised bow and a raised stern, but only to the height of a tall man.

A giant of a man, Captain Miko, appears on the stern rail and laughs at Bao who has got his hat stuck in the cage's ropes as he gets out.

Turning to the first mate, a man who has had his nose cut off, Miko presents the humorous scene. 'What say you, Pigface? Have you ever seen such an uncultured arrival by a Palace Official? This must be a travesty of protocol that would set Heaven itself into fits of laughter.'

Bao, having disentangled his hat from the cage's ropes, turns on his tormentor. 'Go ahead and have a good laugh. The Emperor Lizong, will be pleased to know how his subjects pay respect to his officials. Perhaps a few years in one of the Son of Heaven's slave ships, will cure this pirate's tongue.'

The crew laugh.

'Now little master, step up here before you upset my men and they are forced to hold you for ransom. Although, what price they will get for you will be small, I have little doubt they will get a King's ransom for your hat.'

The crew laugh even more.

Bao climbs the stairs onto the stern followed by Tai.

'Come here you little pipsqueak.' Captain Miko comes over and lifts Bao off the ground in a bear hug. 'So what has happened to my young friend that he has been forced to join the pen-pushers of the Palace?'

Miko drops Bao on the deck and not waiting for a reply turns to Tai. 'Is it possible that this is the, Lotus of Kinsai?' He walks around her, viewing her from different angles. Then in words slowed and slightly in awe. 'They told me you had no equal, now I see they are right.' He turns to Bao. 'Bring your betrothed below, I have something worthy of such beauty.'

Bao and Tai follow the Captain down stairs cut into the stern's starboard side. They enter a large cabin, the Captain's own. A large table with legs is covered with charts, a sea bed in the corner half hidden behind thick curtains, a low table with thick cushions surrounding it and a cabinet filled with bottles of drink, furnish a room where the walls on 3 sides are covered with fitted cabinets. The rear wall is filled with windows all of them open.

As Captain Miko unlocks a cabinet, Bao and Tai gaze upon the sea charts out on display on the table.

'Here we have maps, sea routes to all of the known world.' Bao shows Tai. 'Most of these have been drawn up by the good Captain, on his many journeys for my father.'

Miko, having retrieved a small tortoiseshell box, places it on the map they are looking at. 'You wanted something special for your betrothed, something that would revival her beauty, well, here it is.'

Bao picks the box up and opens it, then removes a gold chain with a spherical jewel the size of a cherry attached. Bao holds it up to the light from the window. Fire flashes from the many facets across the cabin's walls.

Tai, bewitched. 'What manner of object is this?'

Bao's face, lit up by light from the precious stone, breaks into a big smile. 'What do I owe you for such a prize?' He turns to Miko for an answer.

'Now I have seen you betrothed with my own eyes, this seems a small insignificant bauble by comparison.' He takes the jewel from Bao's hands and undoes the chain. Moving behind Tai he places it around her neck and fastens it. 'This will be my wedding gift to you.' He speaks this into Tai's ear. Then turning once more to Bao. 'I will find something of far greater value for you to give to your betrothed.'

'But this far more than I could ever expect.' She lifts it up close to her eye. 'What is this jewel that has fire encapsulated within its core?'

'It is a tangerine sapphire, all the way from the spice island of Lanka. A mythical place where the King of Demons is supposed to reside.'

'And where you must have wrestled this King for possession.' Bao adds with just a little sarcasm.

Miko laughs. 'Indeed, Indeed, what mortal could have ever possessed such a prize?' He shuffles the maps until a map of India surfaces, stabbing his finger at a large island off its southern most coast. 'Here is the land of Lanka, a more beautiful place you will not find in this world. The land is so lush that every kind of fruit grows there, and the very ground is filled with precious stones.' He turns more reflective. 'And yet, they will only buy and sell with copper cash.' Seeing Bao and Tai's mystification, 'That's correct. Good old Chinese copper cash.'

'So it's true then, the world is for sale but only in Chinese money?'

'Indeed, little master. Even the Demons will only exchange for copper cash.' Miko laughs and throws his head back brushing his topknot against the ceiling.

'I will treasure this gift from you, Captain Miko, and hope my betrothed can find me something to rival its awe inspiring perfection.' Her smile to Bao is disfigured by a roguish twist to her lips.

Bao knows only too well that smile, that captivating smile, a smile of innocent wickedness, which, if it wasn't for her Buddhist faith, would have made her a Queen fitting the Lankan King of Demons. Bao sighs. 'It will be a hard quest. However, I will attempt to give you

something that will eclipse this mere bauble in perfection and outshine its flickering nature.'

'Enough of this child-like talk, what brings a Palace Official to the Purple Moon. This is not a visit from an old friend to show off his betrothed, I'd bet my sea legs on it?'

'Indeed not,' Bao turns serious, 'it concerns a series of events that has the Emperor in much agitation. The Deputy Censor has been murdered, a fact you must keep to yourself. I am here in Bingpo tracking down a line of enquiry. Tell me, Miko, have you heard of a fan maker named Teng Yin, previously of Kaifeng before the fall?'

'The Teng family are well known to me. They are first to the ship on arrival. They seek the unusual and the beautiful, materials that can be used in the construction of their great art.'

'Then you must take me to them, and, straight away.'

Miko takes a curved sword from its place and slips it through a leather noose on his belt. Then offers Bao one, who waves it away. 'What need I, when I have 2 bodyguards of such potent martial ability.' Miko hands it handle first to Tai who rings it with her staff then sends it flying into the wooden door.

The door opens to reveal the point has pierced its thick planks. Pigface tries his finger on the point before applying himself to withdrawing it from the door. 'It will do for me.'

'And who says you are coming on our quest?'

'And who would stop me?' Pigface says in a flat matter of fact style.

Miko laughs then turns to Bao and Tai. 'See what a miserable crew I have. A crew who only do what they want, and only when they want.'

Pigface having retrieved the sword shows the others out with a flourish.

\*

The 4 walk abreast along a track by the river Wenny on the outskirts of Bingpo. Throngs of people line the banks of what is a slow flowing tributary of the He, a good seventy metres wide. There's a boat race and by the thrill of the atmosphere the boats are due. Banners of many designs are held aloft on long bamboo poles. Mainly young men are practicing throwing stones out as far as they can; the object is to stone the crew of their rivals as the boats pass. Others, their rivals' supporters on the far bank, are doing likewise. Much jeering breaks out at attempts that make it only halfway, until finally, one stone falls close enough to the bank to wet the supporters. This brings about a massive agitation and renewed effort to cross the river with their own stones.

It's an enjoyable scene but one interrupted by rising smoke coming from a large building up ahead. The building is at the end of the track. The track ends at a smaller river, more a stream, which joins the Wenny. This building is both home and workshop to the Teng Yin family.

Pigface and Captain Miko exchange glances, and when flames can be seen above the courtyard walls they break into a run. Bao and Tai follow with concern.

A solid gate blocks the entrance to the compound and although they try pulling the bell rope and banging on the gate their efforts are in vein. They can hear anxious voices within and many cries for water.

Miko looks about for another entrance but what catches his eye is a small boat that is leaving the stream and pulling into the Wenny.

A large cry goes up from the waiting boat race crowd and they start pelting the boat with stones. Miko knows that it would have to be a desperate man that would venture out onto a river where a boat race is taking place. The chances of interfering with the race are great and the nearby crowds know they are more likely to interfere with their boat as it is on their side of the river.

Miko makes up his mind in an instant and grabs Pigface by the arm and whisks him away, running full tilt towards the stream. He turns briefly and shouts to Bao and Tai. 'Stay and help the Teng family, we must go after the man in the boat.' He points to the boat now approaching the centre of the Wenny, now under a bombardment of stones.

Bao and Tai only exchange a glance before Tai hands Bao her staff. She turns Bao toward the gate and makes him lean against it. It is obviously an action they have done before. Bao braces himself with both arms against the gate and his body angled away from the gate where his feet are set apart. Tai runs up him and springs from Bao's shoulders onto the wall of the compound. She drops down the other side and opens the gate for Bao to enter.

What greets Bao is a scene of chaos as many people are engaged in fighting a fierce fire to a building that backs onto the stream. They join a line of people passing buckets of water to people up ladders as they try desperately to control the raging inferno within.

\*

Miko and Pigface have secured a small boat from a mooring on the stream and now risk the wrath of the crowd as they too pull out into the Wenny. Both the men have rapped their upper garments around their heads for protection. Miko is rowing with Pigface steering. Miko is quick to spot the danger and warns Pigface. 'Hard to port before the racing boat cuts us down.'

Pigface looks back and guides the small boat out of the line of the near-shore boat, placing it in between the 2 racing boats. They are now in a race of their own, as well as a race with the racing-boats. Miko plies his great muscles to the task at hand. By keeping between the boats they are protected from most of the stones.

Curses stream upon them from both the boats and once the finishing line has been crossed the rowers try hitting them with their oars. Miko ploughs on and soon leaves the race behind. They enter the He River and the port of Bingpo.

'He has just turned in between those ships tied to the quay.' Pigface points and Miko allows himself a quick look around to where he needs to go.

They find the boat drifting near the nearest ship. Scrambling up the side they accost the crew for the direction of the rower. A man points to the quay and to disappointment. An auction is in progress and hundreds of merchants, coolies and seamen, mingle in a discordant

manner. The man rowing the boat is lost in the chaotic sea of humanity.

★

Black smoke and steam mingle in the wreckage of the building. Bao and Tai sit down on stone steps near the water course that brings water into the compound from the stream outside. Bao offers Tai a drink from a bucket he still has a hold of. It raises a smile on that beautiful if dirty face before she cups her hands and allows Bao to pore water into them.

A man comes u. 'I must thank you for your assistance from myself and my family.' He bows low.

Bao and Tai stand and bow. 'Is this the residence of the Teng Yin fan manufacturers?' Asks Bao.

'It is,' he says with curiosity, 'and by your robes, you are a palace official. Is that correct?'

A man comes up and hands Bao his ceremonial hat. He had the good sense to remove this pompous headwear before starting his fire fighting duties. He bows in recognition. Placing it upon his head and straitening his belt he tries adopting an official air, much to Tai's amusement. His dirty face, his dirty garments but gleaming hat, making a comic sight of this member of the inner court.

'And, I am here, on official business.' Bao states with as much gravitas as he can muster. 'My name is Shao Bao and I am here at the request of the Emperor himself, who, wishes to know if you and your family have made this particular fan.' Bao takes out the fan from his inner garment and hands it to the man.

The man bows low in taking the fan. 'Excuse my manners.' then straitening himself he bows low to Tai. 'My name is Teng Yin Fu, the great, great, great, great, great grandson of the man who started our illustrious business.' Fu examines the fan with great interest before pronouncing. 'This is indeed one of our fans but from a time before the Jürgen invasion.'

'The fire was started in your records room, if I am not mistaken?'

Fu looks to the smouldering building, 'You are not mistaken. Our clerk was rendered unconscious and a fire deliberately started. We managed to save the man but not our records.'

Turning away Bao allows his displeasure to show as he ponders the possibilities.

Fu is not unaware of Bao's distress and soon puts things to right. 'The record's room contained all of our records since we arrived in Bingpo, the records you wish are stored in the family's Library.'

Bao swings around with hope rekindled to find Fu showing him the way.

Crossing the courtyard they enter a large room filled with many objects including precious and semi-precious materials used in the production of Teng Yin fans. There are also fans of various designs on display.

Fu ignores these displays and picks out a record book from amongst a shelf filled with identical books. He does this several times before finding the right one. Taking it to a stand he places it so Bao and Tai can easily see. 'There would appear to have been only 3 doubles made using the jet material.'

'That's the black jade of these blades?' Tai points to the leaves of the fan.

'Except it is not jade. It's a strange material from an island on the other side of the world. Let me show you what it looks like.' Fu shows the way to a long box on one side of the room. 'Here's what it looks like before we start working on it.'

The object is one and a half metres long and thirty centimetres wide at its widest point and perhaps ten centimetres thick in the centre. It is covered in different types of smoky blue sea shells fused into the body of the jet.

'How these shells became fused into this material is unknown. Perhaps the material was at the bottom of the sea at one time. Perhaps when the jet was soft. It is an interesting material but difficult to work in fine



slices, which is what is required for fan making. So it's hardly surprising that so few fans were made.'

Tai points out a smoky blue edge to the ends of the fan's blades. 'Do you think these parts are sections of the shells?'

Taking the fan from Tai he scrutinizes the fans edge, 'They certainly are. That makes for ready identification as only our family ever used this material.' Fu returns the fan to Tai then returns himself back to the records as Bao and Tai examine the large piece of jet. He quickly finds a description of the fan and he reads it out. 'The stone fractured through the shell but ten leaves were cut and a fan made with a distinctive edge. This was then edged in silver and the double made with the finest white ivory. The Grand Duke, it was made for, was delighted, as it was a present for his wife.'

'Does it say which Grand Duke?' Bao says this while joining Fu.

'Indeed, it was for the Grand Duke Zhao Chu Feng.'

Tai swings around. 'The noble ancestor of the recently deceased Grand Duke Zhao Chu Feng.'

Fu recalls. 'Of course, the Grand Duke that recently died in the fire at the opera.'

'The very same.' Tai looks to Bao. 'Now that is a strange coincidence.'

Bao raises his eyebrows at Tai.

Fu, seeing this as a signal, wonders out loud his thoughts on the coincidence of Bao and Tai turning up as the families records are set on fire. 'There is more than one set of coincidences if I am not mistaken.'

Bao and Tai share a moment before Bao turns to Fu. 'You are most certainly correct, Teng Fu, but this must be kept a state secret.'

Teng Fu bows in recognition of the implication.

Tai examines the metal that holds the fan together. 'Tell me, Teng Fu, this fan is very old yet the metal, silver I presume, is as if it had been made yesterday.' She shows

Bao. 'See. Where is the discolouration that blights the moon's metal?'

'If it was only silver, then, it would indeed be tarnished by now, however, my family experiment with the alchemist's art. We have our own small foundry.' Teng Fu's pride shines through. 'A foundry that can melt any metal, and a skilled work force that is able to blend the many different kinds into new and exciting forms. All of this to keep ahead of our rivals in the production of desirable fans.'

A thought rises in the mind of the Palace Librarian. 'So you can recognise different metals?' Teng Fu nods in a semi bow, as Bao goes into his inner sleeve and draws out the assassin's blade and hands it to Teng Fu. 'What kind of metal is this made of?'

Teng Fu handles the knife with some distaste. 'But this is an assassin's blade, and, with the mark of the, screaming skull. The metal I do not know, you would have to ask the metalist of the Imperial Army's foundry, only he would know.'

'You think that it was made by the Imperial Army?' Bao is incredulous.

'Only they have the knowledge, and the authority, to produce weapons that kill human beings. It has always been so.' Teng Fu hands the blade back to Bao, glad to be separated from its cold touch.

Bao replaces the blade in his sleeve, thoughts rising and falling as he does so. 'Surely there are private sword makers?'

'Indeed, but they are licensed by the government.' Teng Fu is confused in that Bao is unaware of what is, as far as he is concerned, common knowledge. 'To obtain a license the sword maker must share their knowledge with the Imperial Army.'

Tai, who has been listening with keen interest, pronounces under her breath, one word. 'Poppy.'

Bao looks at her with intensity, then makes a decision. 'We must return immediately.' He bows to Teng Fu. 'Excuse our rudeness, Master Teng, but we must return to the harbour so as to catch the tide.'

'Of course.'

'I will make sure you are compensated for the fire, and in return, you will keep this meeting and its contents secret. Can I count on your discretion?'

'Indeed.' And with that he bows to the horizontal.

Bao and Tai leave quickly.

★

Miko and Pigface move quickly along the ship to the bow, and towards the quay, keeping their heads down. From behind sail ropes they watch the crowds at the auction, until the arsonist gives himself away by scrutinizing the length of the ship.

Pretending that he is content that he is not being followed, the arsonist slowly makes his way out of the auction and along the quayside and into the town.

Once out of view, Miko and Pigface, drop down a rope from the bow sprit to the quay and run at speed in the direction the arsonist went.

The arsonist, however, is cunning and waits in the shadows of a narrow alley until he sees, Miko and Pigface, pass. The smile on his face distorts as a blade enters his back and exits through his chest.

The blade is withdrawn, raised slowly, but brought down with force to remove the blood from its gleaming length. It leaves a long thin splatter of blood on the flagstones.

★

Tai and Bao walk quickly past the auction until they are confronted by a knot of merchants who have not witnessed their progress. Stepping out in front of Bao, Tai uses her staff to prod them into recognition of the Palace Official fast approaching. They scatter to the side, bowing low in recognition of Bao's status.

Arriving at the junction, Bao and Tai are about to turn left along the quayside when Pigface brings them up sharp. 'Master Librarian. Captain Miko wants you to join him. Please, this way.'

Pigface doesn't wait but heads off into town. Soon they come to a big crowd of people. Pigface shouts in a voice that is used to being obeyed. 'Make way for the Palace Official, Shao Bao.'

The crowd break apart in a sea of turbulent comment.

Captain Miko is in an argument with the local police who have an alley blocked off. As Bao arrives the situation changes dramatically, as all of the police bow to the horizontal and stay thus prostrated.

'What is happening here?' Shouts Bao. 'Where is the Captain of the police?'

The Captain of police returns to the vertical. 'I regret to inform your noble Master there has been a murder here committed.'

'Show me.'

The Captain of police takes the lead up the alley, followed by Bao, then Captain Miko and Pigface. Tai stations herself at the entrance.

The Captain of Police turns the body over to show where the sword entered and exited the body.

Bao walks a little way further up the alley and discovers it is a dead-end with only a boarded-up door. On his way back he notices the blood splatter pattern on the flagstones. He drops to his knees to confirm the splatter is blood. 'The blood is still wet. The body is still warm. This is a blind alley that the murdered man must have known was occupied by another. Therefore, he must have known the murderer. Trusted him. And, paid the ultimate price for that knowledge.' Bao stands and addresses the Captain of police. 'Have your men question all those who have stalls near the entrance to this alley. We need at least a description of the murderer. Someone must have seen him enter or leave.' Bao sees the Captain of police look at Captain Miko and Pigface. 'These men are with me. So go about your duty as you have been instructed.' He turns to Captain Miko. 'What say you Captain?'

'I say he was the arsonist that we tracked from the fan makers.'

'The Captain is right. This is he.' Says Pigface.

'Then we are left with only one question: why was it necessary to kill the arsonist?' This thought surfacing in Bao's mind is uttered aloud.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**During these times of rest**

**The superior man gathers followers**

**By the strength of his ideas.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**In gathering followers**

**The superior man chooses men of ability bringing**

**Great success.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Followers are made up of individuals**

**Who follow for their own reasons.**

**The superior man distinguishes those of worth**

**And those who are not worthy.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**Having achieved a following**

**The superior man communicates his ideas with clarity.**

**Thus preventing inferior men from misinterpreting him.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**The recluse is aroused from his slumbers**

**By a follower who will not be put off.**

**The recluse becomes a teacher and his follower a student.**

**Good fortune.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**The Gentle Wind (14)**

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===== Wind
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===== Wind
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**THE IMAGE**

**Wind penetrating Wind:**

**The Image of THE GENTLE WIND.**

**Continuous gentle penetration**

**Achieves what brute force cannot.**

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# Chapter 15

## Difficulty at the Beginning (44)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Dawn Drum

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===== Water

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== == Thunder

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### THE IMAGE

**Thunder then Rain:**

**The Image of DIFFICULTY AT THE BEGINNING.**

**In the chaos of a difficult beginning**

**Order is already implicit.**

\*



“Wen is a means for conveying Tao. If the wheels and shafts of a cart are decorated but men do not use them, they are mere decorations – so much more so when the cart is empty.

Literary elaboration is art. Morality is substantial. When one is earnest about the substance and one with art writes it down, then if it is beautiful it will be cherished. When cherished, it will be transmitted, and then worthies will be able to arrive at it by learning. This then becomes instruction. This is why Confucius said, ‘If it is said without wen, it will not go far in practice.’ However, the unworthy will not learn . . . . They do not know they should be concerned with morality. They instead regard literary elaborations as ability. They are being artful and nothing more. Alas, this defect has been with us a long time.”

Zhou Dunyi (Tun-I) (1017-73 C.E.)

From *Comprehending the Changes (I)* Ch. 28 – p.117-118

★

Shi, having been assigned the task of investigating the, Antiquities Society, the name of the guild for dealers in antiques, has taken the most direct route. He simply marches into the building where it is housed and has it placed under the control of his Magistrates Office. As his men set about their tasks he plays audience to the President and Vice President of the Guild.

Shi feigning annoyance. ‘A member of your illustrious guild is murdered and you say it is a complete mystery, is that correct?’

The President is sweating under Shi’s gaze. ‘I can only tell you what I know.’

‘Perhaps I have not made myself clear, perhaps my eloquence fails me. Or, perhaps, you have not grasped the full enormity of the situation you now find yourself in.’ Shi turns to a member of his team. ‘Show them the bronze piece.’ The man places the broken corner of the tablet found in the Deputy Censor’s office in the hands of the President. ‘Do you recognise this?’

The President, and Vice President who has joined him, only shake their heads.

Shi watches their reaction with great care before continuing. 'This is the corner of a bronze tablet, what can you tell me about it?'

The Vice President takes the bronze piece and examines the inner metal. 'It would appear to be a fragment of a Shang Dynasty bronze tablet. The internal structure of the metal has the same peculiarity,' he points to the Shang hieroglyphs 'and these are Shang symbols, but what they mean I do not know.'

'Indeed, and what if I was to tell you that this piece is from the corner of a Shang tablet describing, Difficulty at the Beginning, the third change in the, Classic of Changes, the great, I, itself.'

The surprise is written all over their faces.

'You must be aware that such antiques belong only in the providence of the Emperor. Those found dealing in such antiques will suffer decapitation. Those found shielding such people will also suffer decapitation. It will be up to you to make members of your guild aware of these penalties. Now let me ask you a pertinent question. Have you ever been offered such a tablet?'

The two men deny this profusely.

'Have you ever heard of anyone who has?'

After exchanging a glance with the Vice President, the President starts nervously. 'It was some time ago, a man from the north offered a member of our guild, Hu Xiping, not just a single bronze tablet but 64 tablets. The entire I.'

'Where is this Hu Xiping to be found?'

'In the, Antiques Arcade, near the number two canal.'

'I am fully aware of where the, Antiques Arcade, is. I only hope that you are fully aware of the consequences in wasting an Investigating Magistrate's time.'

Shi doesn't wait for a reply but summoning two of his team he leaves at speed with the two scribes hurrying to catch him up.

\*

The, Antiques Arcade, is a small square which has antique shops and nestled in amongst them tea-shops, all under canvas awnings on a broad wooden walkway. Shi stands in the middle of the square and searches for the name. Members of the Night Watch fan out and soon find what Shi is looking for.

Two members of the Night Watch enter first, bringing consternation to both customers and staff. Shi enters barking an order. 'Bring me, Hu Xiping, immediately.' A member of staff quickly leaves and is followed by a member of the Night Watch. They soon return with a man in his prime and wearing expensive clothes. 'You are, Hu Xiping?'

Bowing low, 'I am he, what can I do for you Magistrate?' He doesn't wait for a reply but stretches out his arm as a means of direction. 'Please step this way, where we can talk in private.' He leads the way to a sliding door at the side, behind which is an office. Bowing low again, he waits for Shi and his two scribes to enter before entering himself and closing the door.

Shi is impressed by the man's his general manner, affable nature and winning smile. 'Were you approached by a man from the north, who, offered you a bronze tablet, a Shang Dynasty bronze that was inscribed with: Difficulty at the Beginning - the third category of change in the I Ching.?''

'That must have occurred, let me see, about a year ago. Except of course it wasn't the I Ching, but was, supposedly, the original: the I Zhou.'

Shi turns to his scribes. 'Show him the copy.'

The scribe takes out from a bamboo tube a rolled up parchment and placing it on a low table unrolls it, using objects from the table to hold it open. It is an exact copy of the bronze tablet found in the Deputy Censor's office.

Hu Xiping, drops down to examine the drawing. 'It could be, the areas were divided up in a similar manner and the hieroglyphs, at least the ones in this top area, if my memory serves me right, were indeed the same.' He points to a hieroglyph at the bottom of the top section. 'This, the man from the north told me was the change's number,

but he said it was not number three, as it is in the present I Ching, but indeed, number one.' He looks up to Shi with curiosity.

'I take it you didn't buy it?'

Hu Xiping, laughs as he stands up. 'He was asking one hundred tallies of gold, for a piece that was unverifiable. As interesting as the piece was it could not justify such expenditure. What's more, he wanted one hundred tallies of gold for each of the other sixty three tablets he said were in his possession. A sum so large, that I doubt if even all of the members of the Antiquities Guild pooled their resources, we still could not have purchased the collection.'

'So what did the man do?'

'I told him to seek out Liu Zin and Chan Ze at the Golden Morning Arcade, it is well known that they have vast resources and that Liu Zin was a collector of ancient manuscripts.'

'You would consider this bronze tablet a manuscript?'

'Indeed, and what's more, if it turns out to be authentic, the most important one of all.'

'The Son of Heaven agrees with you and has decreed that this manuscript is to be considered as Imperial heritage. As such it must be handed over to the Palace.'

'If this man from the north returns I will make sure that your noble Magistrate is informed immediately.'

'Without raising his suspicion.'

'Indeed.' Hu Xiping takes a turn about the room as he considers the various possibilities. 'Perhaps, Magistrate, the Palace has knowledge of the Shang script and that is why the Emperor has placed such a high status on what, for a simple dealer like myself, is nothing more than a sophisticated forgery.'

Shi realizes that Xiping is fishing. 'That may well be the case.'

'A complete copy of the, I, would allow the Shang Script to be deciphered. That is, of course, if it bears a close resemblance to the present day I.'

'Which present day I were you thinking of?'

Hu Xiping laughs softly, 'There are several worthy interpretations. I know, I have several myself.' He reflects for a moment. 'Zhou Dunyi produced a commentary on the I. This I was a Taoist version and one close to my heart.'

'You are a devotee of Daoxue, the Learning of the Way?'

'Of course. After 1500 years it was time for a reappraisal of Confucius.'

'Did you take the entrance examination for the civil service?'

Again Hu Xiping laughs. 'My fate was sealed when I was born into my father's house. My destiny was mapped out for me by the family business.'

'Your knowledge of Chinese history, this was taught to you by your father?'

'And other members of the family.'

Shi is intrigued. 'My own education was set out by my family, but then, they are all members of the bureaucracy. Everything I know, and everything my family know, has been taken from the formal education laid down by the Imperial College. It is interesting to meet a man who has knowledge of Chinese history that wasn't learned from the proscribed edicts of the examination system. Perhaps you could give me a quick precise of Chinese history from your commercial point of view?'

Hu Xiping's smile widens. 'You suspect that your education might have been one sided, as well it might, however, I doubt it will differ much from my family's own. Where would you like me to start?'

'At the beginning of course.' Shi's smile appears in an involuntary manner.

'As every child knows Fu Hsi was the founder of Chinese civilisation, some four thousand years ago. He achieved

this by inventing marriage. The next notable was the Yellow Emperor, some three thousand five hundred years ago, and as I'm sure you are aware he discovered the wisdom that makes the natural world work. Then there was, Shen, the Sage King, who introduced into Chinese philosophy the famous lines: The mind of Man is precarious. The mind of Heaven is subtle.'

Shi can't help but correct Hu Xiping. 'The Way of Heaven is subtle'.

'Indeed. The Great Yu came next with his moral compass. Then we come to the, Dukes of Zhou, who lived at the very end of the Shang Dynasty, some two thousand years ago. King Wen, father to both Wu, the man who overthrew the last Shang Emperor, and Tan the man who as Regent gave us the, The Mandate of Heaven. King Wen, also gave us the I Zhou, the forerunner of the great I.' Hu Xiping stops to question. 'How am I doing?' Shi nods his approval and so he continues. 'It is at this point that things get more difficult. For a start the next two hundred years were considered to be the Golden Age of the Zhou, and yet, nothing would seemed to have happened. According to my grandfather, this was not true. It was during this period that the, five Classics, were written: The Classic of Records, The Classic of Odes, The Classic of Rites, The Classic of Songs, now lost, and of course, The Classic of Change, the great I.' Hu Xiping can see that Shi has a puzzled look on his face. 'Your superior education disagrees with this, Magistrate?'

Shi ponders for a few moments more. 'Not necessarily. There is much confusion about this period and of course, the Classic of Records, must have begun before this period or how would we have records of Yu, Shen, The Yellow Emperor, or Fu Hsi, for that matter.' Hu Xiping's wan smile brings a smile to Shi's face. 'Please carry on.'

'Would your noble Magistrate take some refreshment?'

'Indeed.'

'Please, take a seat.' Hu Xiping goes to the door and cries out for tea as Shi sits down. The two scribes remain standing. 'There has always been a problem in my mind with the conversion from the Shang script, and how and why this script was abandoned for the character script of Confucian times. There would appear to have

been a four hundred year period in which this occurred, and yet, nothing to suggest why.' He sits down opposite Shi.

'A mystery indeed. However, the I has an important element in its construction: The Image. In this copy of the I, Difficulty at the Beginning,' Here, Shi points at the copy. 'The second section would appear to be, The Image, and as the Han historian, He, pointed out, the Confucians had a very distinct way of using, The Image.' He stops for effect. 'Knowing the Image, one can forget the characters, knowing the concept one can forget, The Image.'

Hu Xiping is taken aback then repeats what Shi has just said for confirmation, which is duly given.

After a few moments of thought Hu Xiping has an insight. 'So, the concept is derived from, The Image, as The Image, is derived from its description in characters. Then, The Judgement, is underpinned by the concept of, The Image. Is that how you read it Magistrate?'

'I've always thought of it as the concept revealed in all of its complexity in Man's relationship to Nature, and also, to Man's relationship to his fellow man.'

'The world is indeed complex. Is not this the great wonder that the I reveals.'

'On this we agree.'

'And now I know why. My sincerest thanks for explaining this subtly inherent in the Great I.' Hu Xiping bows in respect.

'How do you see Confucius?' Shi asks with just a little cunning tinging his question.

'Was Confucius a philosopher, or, a commentator on the philosophy of the philosophers of the, Golden Age. Is that what you are asking?'

'As you have set the question in context, perhaps you can answer it in that self-same context.'

'My noble Magistrate, I am but a humble merchant, I can't be expected to stand on judgement on Confucius. I have neither your superior education nor intellect.'

Shi's beguiling smile is of the charming variety, as he has already worked out that the man sitting opposite him has a unique perspective on Chinese history; one that has the validity of physical proof in the artefacts of his trade. A unique perspective indeed. 'Nevertheless, you do have an opinion and I would like to hear it.'

The tea arrives and is poured for Shi and Hu Xiping, the two scribes are offered tea elsewhere and Shi gives them permission to go, thus leaving the 2 men alone.

After several sips and a refill of the pot Hu Xiping starts. 'What a man he was. He travelled between the warring Zhou states trying to convince the various leaders that there was a rational and reasonable code of conduct that all mankind could adopt that would put an end to conflict.'

'Yet he failed.'

Hu Xiping ponders this statement before he replies. 'He failed in his own time, perhaps, but not in the end. Are we not all Confucians now?' Shi acknowledges this and so Hu Xiping continues. 'Perhaps Confucius' genius was in finding the great wisdom of the Golden Age and presenting it as a living philosophy that all men can understand. At least for all men that can read.'

'Ah,' Shi exclaims, 'then you would agree with the Emperor Lizong, in that he has built schools for the children of the poor, here in Kinsai, so all can read?'

'Indeed Magistrate. Would not all mankind benefit from the words of the greatest Confucian, Mencius. I believe that is the form of education that these schools use.'

'Surely Mencius is more than just a Confucian.'

'In the sense that he expanded the wisdom of the Golden Age and presented it with a greater sophistication than Confucius himself.' He can see Shi is puzzled. 'Would you not agree?'

Shi is enjoying himself. He has spent much of his life discussing these very topics with the various functionaries of the literati, and this conversation reminds him of happy times before the arduous duties of the Magistrate's Office took control of his life. 'So in



the final analysis, neither, Confucius, nor, Mencius, were philosophers but merely commentators on the philosophers of the, Golden Age.'

'I would rather put it this way: without the philosophers of the Golden Age, Confucius and Mencius would have had little to work on. To use one of Mencius' tools, the analogy, it would be like having a corn grinder without the corn.'

Shi is so impressed he claps his hands together, taking Hu Xiping by surprise. 'My dear Hu Xiping, you have missed your vocation. Have you never thought about taking the Jieshi exam and becoming a member of the bureaucracy?'

The door slides open with speed and a member of the Night Watch leaps into the room with drawn sword.

'Stay your hand Night Watch there is nothing amiss here. Only my enthusiastic reaction to a comment by our host. Tell the others to stand down and take refreshment. I will be a little while yet.'

The Night Watch bow and then push back the small crowd gathered in the doorway before closing the door.

Hu Xiping and Shi enjoy the moment before Shi continues. 'You have not answered my question.'

'What use would it be when there is so little chance of becoming a member of the bureaucracy? They tell me there are half a million studying for the exam and with only 20,000 places the chances of finding employment are small. Here,' he waves his arms denoting his establishment, 'I already have a good living and can provide for my family.'

Shi is struck by a thought which he speaks out loud, 'I wonder how many such men as you exist in the Empire.'

'Since the invention of the printing press at the end of the Tang Dynasty, all of the important works have become available to anyone who cares to read them. It was because the works of the Cheng brothers were printed shortly after they were produced that Daoxue, the Learning of the Way, became an almost instant success. Strange to think that if it hadn't been for this

development in producing copies, Daoxue would never have become the force it is today, but that is the truth.'

'What part of Daoxue impresses you most?'

Hu Xiping has to think for a few moments 'What impressed me as a young man was the metaphysics of Zhou Dunyi and Shao Yong. There is a desire in all men to know the nature of reality, do you not agree?'

'Indeed.'

'The explanation of the, Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate, was a revelation. The random chaos of the, Primordial State, the psycho-physical make-up of, Qi, that is the very substance of both the, Primordial State, and consequently our world's make-up, and, how the very random chaotic nature of the, Primordial State, gives rise to endless worlds including our own, was an explanation of such power that I am still under its spell.'

'It is indeed a powerful observation that random chaos gives rise to order, even perfect order. I have a friend and colleague, Shao Bao, a descendant of Shao Yong, who studies these metaphysical works from this very perspective. He has even speculated that the, Classic of Change, is constructed on this relationship between random chaos and perfect order. Perhaps I have been too cruel in my criticism of his keen interest when I find a man, such as yourself, has gained such satisfaction from these metaphysical musings.'

'And not just myself, there are many that have come to Daoxue along this path. To have a theory of everything gives an underpinning to Daoxue that other philosophies lack.' Hu Xiping becomes agitated in his enthusiasm, 'Imagine any other philosophy with such an underpinning, you cannot because they do not exist. Daoxue is unique in this respect.'

'There are other aspects to Daoxue that I think are more relevant. Self-cultivation being one. Would you not agree?'

Hu Xiping rubs his head with both hands as if trying to stimulate his mind. 'The Cheng brothers have been given credit with this addition to Daoxue, however, was it not the sage-philosopher, Chuang Tzu, who encouraged his

students to choose the path of the sage. To achieve this, do you not have to cultivate yourself.'

Shi jokes. 'If only I had the time. Now what is that old song that I learned as a child: All men know that salvation must be won, must be won, but with earthly pleasures won't be done, won't be done.'

Both men laugh.

'If only we had the time we could all be sages.'

Shi agrees then slaps his knees and stands up. 'It reminds me that I am on pressing business and must not linger here.'

Hu Xiping stands and bows to Shi, 'I will let you know if this man from the north turns up. Or, if there is word of the original I Zhou.'

Shi bows to Hu Xiping and receives a full bow in return.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**The enterprise is hardly under way when difficulties arise.  
The superior man halts to take stock  
Before appointing helpers.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Difficulties can only be overcome at the right time and  
With the right people.  
Patience furthers.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**The superior man discerns the seeds of coming events.  
Forearmed he chooses the right path.  
Success.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**With difficulties of such proportions  
The offer of help must be taken,  
Even if it brings  
Humiliation.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**In times of difficulties  
The superior man only proceeds  
When all have confidence in him.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Difficulties always produce casualties.  
This cannot be helped.  
No blame.**

## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### The Ting (15)

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==    ==    **Fire**

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=====

=====    **Wind**

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### **THE IMAGE**

**Fire over Wood/Wind:**

**The Image of THE TING.**

**Thus the superior man chooses the path of the sage.**

**Who can doubt, that with perseverance,**

**What follows can only be**

**Supreme success.**

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# CHAPTER 16

## Providing Nourishment (48)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 6<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Dawn Drum

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== == Mountain

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== == Thunder

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### THE IMAGE

**Thunder at the foot of the Mountain:**

**The Image of PROVIDING NOURISHMENT.**

**Thus the sage provides nourishment**

**For all who seek The Way.**

\*

“Those who dream of the banquet may weep the next morning, and those who dream of weeping may go out and hunt after dawn. When we dream we do not know we are dreaming. In our dreams we may even interpret our dreams. Only after we awake do we know we have dreamed. Finally there comes a great awakening, and then we know life is a dream. But the stupid think they are awake all of the time, and believe they know it distinctly. Are we rulers? Are we shepherds? How vulgar! Both Confucius and you were dreaming. When I say you were dreaming, I am also dreaming. This way of talking may be called perfectly strange. If after ten thousand generations we could meet one great sage who can explain this, it would be like meeting him in as short a time as in a single morning or evening.

Suppose you and I argue. If you beat me instead of my beating you, are you really right and am I really wrong? If I beat you instead of your beating me, am I really right and are you really wrong? Or are we both partly right and partly wrong? Or are we both wholly right and wholly wrong? Since between us neither you nor I know which is right, others are naturally in the dark. Whom shall we ask to arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with you, since he has already agreed with you, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with me, since he has already with me, how can he arbitrate? Thus among you, me and others, none knows which is right. Shall we wait for still others? The great variety of sounds are relative to each other as much as they are not relative to each other. To harmonize them in the functioning of nature and leave them in the process of infinite evolution is the way to complete our lifetime.

What is meant by harmonizing them with the functioning of Nature?

We say this is right or wrong, and is so or not so. If the right is really right, then the fact that it is different from the wrong leaves no room for argument. If what is so is really so, then the fact that it is different from what is not so leaves no room for argument. Forget the passage of time and forget the distinction of right and wrong. Relax in the realm of the infinite and thus abide in the realm of the infinite.

The shade asks the shadow, ‘A little while ago you moved, and now you stop. A little while ago you sat down and now you stand up. Why this instability of purpose?’

‘Do I depend on something else to be this way?’ Answered the Shadow. ‘Does that something on which I depend also depend on something else? Do I depend on anything any more than a snake depends on its discarded scale or a cicada on its new wings? How can I tell why I am so or why I am not so?’

‘Once I, Chuang Tzu, dreamed that I was a butterfly and was happy as a butterfly. I was conscious that I was quite pleased with myself, but I did not know that I was Chuang Tzu. Suddenly I awoke, and there I was visibly Chuang Tzu. I do not know whether it was Chuang Tzu dreaming that he was a butterfly or the butterfly dreaming that it was Chuang Tzu. Between Chuang Tzu and the butterfly there must be some distinction. This is called the transformation of things.’”

From the Chuang Tzu

#### A. The Equality of Things (Chapter 2)

## NHCC, 1:18a-48b

Tai is surrounded by 3 of the Night Watch with their swords drawn. She manages to keep them at bay by a number of sweeps and lunges with her ironwood staff.

The cliental of the Ink Stone are standing to a man, watching this exhibition on the other side of the bamboo fence, with heightened interest.

Even the Captain of the Guard, at his usual post at the Gate of Tranquillity, is watching with interest.

The only ones not taking much interest are Shi and Bao. They are in deep discussion on the seats of the first floor level, inside. From this vantage point they can see the exhibition while remaining seated.

'And Captain Miko is certain it was the arsonist that was found murdered?'

'He has the eyes of an Albatross and that rarest of things a willingness to be totally honest with his friends.' Bao says this with conviction. 'They were on their way back to the, Purple Moon, after scouring the area, when they saw a commotion. The arsonist had been skewered from behind. The First Mate, Pigface, also recognized him.'

'Your seafaring friends have such charming names. Perhaps the Second Mate's name is, Buffalohead, or, Dogsbreath.'

Bao ignores Shi's comments. 'It would be too great a coincidence for such a man to die in such a manner after setting fire to the records of the, Teng Yin Fu, fan factory. And this is not the only coincidence. What a chance it would be that after discussing these people at our meeting at the Lingyan Monastery that the very next day their records are set on fire by an arsonist.' Having said this with a touch of sarcasm he now spits it out. 'Coincidences happen all of the time but surely not in such circumstance.'

'What you are saying then is that there might well be a spy amongst those gathered at the Lingyan Monastery. A terrible thought if true.'



Tai having swept her staff at head height and made her adversaries duck reverses the movement but this time takes the staff at ankle height and catches the last one out. He tumbles to the ground admitting defeat. One down, two to go. The clientele of the, Ink Stone, roar their approval.

Shi and Bao fall silent for a moment and watch Tai swagger in front of the 2 remaining Night Watch, an inducement to attack. Her strategy works as both Night Watch leap in co-ordinated movement only for her to pole vault over their heads and over the bamboo fence. The clientele scatter as the Night Watch leap over the fence and pursue Tai as she dances away around the corner and out of sight.

Shi looks at Bao, deep in thought, and finishes his report. 'After my most excellent meeting with, Hu Xiping, I visited your good friend the King of the Beggars.' He waits till Bao turns to him before continuing. The look on Bao's face at the mention of the blind man is worth the wry smile that now graces Shi's face. 'I have solicited the beggars help in tracking down the assassins' lair. Also, I thought it prudent to have the Golden Morning Arcade watched. If the man from the north returns, as well he might, he may well give himself away when he sees the place is guarded by Palace Guards.'

Bao stirs himself and sits on the edge of his seat. 'You trust the beggars to do your bidding, when they would be helping to destroy one of their revenue streams in doing so? Your faith in humanity never ceases to amaze me.'

'Of course I was able to impress upon him that the Emperor, having given you the honour of promotion to the ranks of, Palace Official, was leaving his fate in your hands. I even had an edict to deliver to him with the seal of the Emperor that said as much. He was somewhat reluctant to take it, however, the Night Watch pressed it into his hands, telling him it was a great honour, and they themselves would take great pride in removing his head at your command.'

Tai lands in the middle of the table sweeping her staff behind her and making Shi and Bao duck. She faces the Night Watch as he comes from within the Ink Stone at speed just as the other one arrives on the rail almost in silence. It was a trap of her making as the end of her staff is in the throat of the man on the rail and he

falls back, completing a backward summersault onto the table below. Another roar goes up, and another, as it is now Tai's turn to pursue the remaining Night Watch back through the building.

Bao leans across to Shi and whispers. 'The fan maker said he recognized the assassin's blade, as only the military forge at Zhenji produced blades with the distinctive screaming skull ensign of the maker on its handle.'

Shi narrows his eyes and leans into Bao. 'You have always assumed that the war faction was involved and so see this as proof. Your speculation is without proof as that blade was wielded by an assassin and not a soldier.'

Bao produces his blade from his sleeve. 'Tai believes this belonged to the singing girl, Poppy. As a spy it was certainly standard issue. Tai had to beat it out of her and the girl was only saved from serious injury by Tai's father. A man who would seem to have formed a serious attachment to her.'

'A connection there might be, but, it does not constitute proof of a conspiracy.' The loudness of Shi's voice has Bao looking around to see who is listening but the scholar officials have only interest in the fight that is now winding its way through the ground floor.

Bao's whisper is now more like a hiss. 'There has to be a connection, this is one coincidence too far. And why did the fact that these blades are made by the Imperial Army not see fit to come to light. You and I have remained in the dark about their origin even when surrounded by those that knew.'

Shi throws himself back on the seat in only half suppressed anger. 'Such talk is dangerous. Silence your tongue.'

Bao bows the smallest of bows and sits back.

The fight has made its way onto the street outside where Tai climbs her staff and balance on 1 foot on the top. A trap, as the Night Watch takes his sword to Tai's staff near the base only for Tai to remove it dropping down and bringing the staff down in an arc on the Night Watch's head as she falls. She bows to the horizontal and remains there until all 3 members of the Night Watch have reciprocated her action.

Shi gets up and is followed out by Bao. They have to push their way through the roaring crowd. On the street they soon adopt the peculiar half walk half run of the devotees of Daoxue. Tai falls in behind in a relaxed trot and the Night Watch, all 8 members of this unit, fall in behind her. They wind their way into the crowds like a snake in early spring rice, and like a snake they are soon lost to view.

★

The Police Surgeon, towers over Tai, his great girth almost touching her. He bends a little so he can see her face. 'So it is true, your beauty is flawless.' He turns away as if it is too great to bear and turns his attention on Bao. 'What folly can there be in such a union with this poor excuse for a man.' He shakes his great head as if in despair, showering all in cascades of sweat. 'Can it be that she has less on the inside than her great beauty would suggest?'

'My noble Police Surgeon you will not insult my betrothed or I will be forced to make you apologise.'

'Listen to the young pup now he has the power of office to back him up.' He turns to Shi. 'Give me a reason for living, anything.'

'As you wish.' Says Shi. 'Show the noble' the police Surgeon groans, 'Shao Bao, Librarian to the Emperor, the blade that you removed from the Grand Duke's skull.'

The Police Surgeon moves over to a table and from under a cloth he brings forth an assassin's blade. He holds it out. Bao goes over and takes it from his massive hand. He removes his own assassin's blade from his sleeve and compares the two. Then, with an exaggerated pronouncement. 'They are identical.' He presents both to Shi.

Shi examines them before showing them to the Police Surgeon. The Police Surgeon gives them only a cursory glance before retreating to a solid bench stuck in a corner with shelves on 2 sides. He slips his hand beneath his animal skin apron and brings out his clay pipe and starts filling it with the sorcerer's mix.

Shi returns Bao's blade before turning to the Police Surgeon. 'Tell the noble' more groans 'Palace Official how things were when you first examined the body.'

They have to wait until the Police Surgeon has fumes belching out of his pipe. Taking a deep draft the Police Surgeon holds his breath for what seems an age before blowing a plume of smoke across the room towards Bao, 'The blade was wedged in the skull here.' He points to the area on his own face, a place in between the eye socket and the bridge of the nose. 'The person wielding this blade either didn't have the strength to remove it when it became embedded in the bone, or, they didn't have time, or both.' Another deep draft of sorcerer's mix and another blast across the room.

Coughing on the smoke Bao turns to Shi. 'When Tai arrived in the corridor behind the Grand Duke's box, the only people she could see was a man carrying a child. Perhaps it wasn't a child, but the child woman that assassinated the Deputy Censor.'

'That is the most likely explanation.' Shi says in a flat matter of fact way.

'Ha!' A note of triumph from the Police Surgeon. 'The numskull let the murders get away.' He belches out laughter to the discomfort of Bao.

'Unfortunately, that may well be the case.' Admits Bao.

'It may well be the case, but having escaped, they are now able to lead us to the assassins abode.' Shi aims this at the Police Surgeon.

'You are putting a lot of faith in the beggars of Kinsai.' The Police Surgeon smugly suggests. 'Most of them have children so they can boil down their bones for glue and a few tasty morsels for the table.' He splutters and coughs and chortles in such a manner that it looks as if he is a cheap firework about to explode.

Shi waits until the fit passes. 'The beggars, like all poor people in Kinsai, love their Emperor. The King of the Beggars sends two of his children to one of the schools the Emperor gave to the poor. And there are many beggars who have benefited from the hospitals the Emperor has also provided them with. Do not underestimate the beggars' gratitude, or dismiss their abilities. There is

very little passes in this city that they do not know about.'

'True, true. Like sewer rats they are everywhere beneath our feet. If I had my way they would all be rounded up and transported to some distant frontier province where they could practice their noble arts on the barbarian.'

'Have you never heard of compassion?' Tai asks with sincerity.

To which the Police Surgeon merely grunts.

A member of the Night Watch arrives at speed. 'Quickly, it may be that we have found the assassins' hideout.'

★

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
Providing nourishment for the body  
But not the spirit brings  
Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
Forgetting to nourish the body  
While pursuing The Way brings  
Misfortune. No blame.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:  
Nourishing desire for worldly things  
Starves the spirit.  
Grave misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
The superior man provides nourishment for his helpers;  
Both inner and outer sustenance.  
Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:  
The superior man nourishes himself  
With the wisdom of the sage.  
Supreme success.**

**Changing Line at the top means:  
A sage walks the Earth  
Nourishing all.  
Supreme success.  
There is nothing that will not further.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Preponderance of the Great (16)**

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===== Lake
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===== Wind/Wood
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**THE IMAGE**

**The Lake rises over the Trees:**

**The Image of PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT.**

**The superior man is like a tree grasping onto the earth during a flood.**

**He is undaunted by the situation,**

**Knowing it is only temporary.**

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# CHAPTER 17

## Biting Through (46)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

After The Dawn Drum

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== == Fire

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== == Thunder

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### THE IMAGE

**Lightning then Thunder:**

**The Image of JUSTICE.**

**Clarity brings judgement.**

**Punishment brings shock.**

**Justice brings civilization.**

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“Only because there is ultimate principle in the world is it possible to employ strength and uprightness completely and to drive far away those who ingratiate by flattery. . . . If we understand the activities of things, we shall know all the principles which make them what they are. (Commentary on hexagram no. 1 Ch’ien or Heaven or The Creative in the Book of Changes)

Taking the position of the superior and contending with the subordinate are things that can be changed. Therefore they are not great faults. If one can return to obey the fundamental principle and alter the command, rest with the firm and the correct, refrain from drifting away from the Way, and practice humanity beginning with oneself, good fortune will follow him. (Commentary on hexagram no. 6 Sung or Contention or Conflict)

If one is agreeable but does not follow indiscriminately and is joyful without deviating from the Mean (*chung/wung*), one will be able to associate with superiors without flattery and with subordinates without disrespect. As he understands the causes of fortune or misfortune, he will not speak carelessly, and as he understands the necessary principles, he will not change his good conduct. (Commentary on hexagram no. 16 Yu or Happiness or Enthusiasm)

Similarity in general principles but diversity in functions and facts. (Commentary on hexagram no. 38 K’uei or To Part or Opposition)

If a thing has any fault, it will not be its principles. A concept is the same as principle. (Commentary on hexagram no. 40 Chieh or To Remove)

To return is to revert to the original. The original is the mind of Heaven and Earth. Whenever activity ceases, there is tranquillity, but tranquillity is not opposed to activity. Whenever speech ceases, there is silence, but silence is not opposed to speech. Thus although Heaven and Earth are vast, possessing the myriad things in abundance, where thunder moves and winds circulate, and while there is an infinite variety of changes and transformations, yet its original is absolutely quiet and perfect non-being. Therefore only with the cessation of activities within Earth can the mind of Heaven and Earth be revealed. (Commentary on hexagram no. 24, Fu or To Return)”

#### From Wang Pi’s (226-249 CE) Commentary on the Book of Changes

Cao sits almost opposite the antique shop that had been the cause of his present predicament. He peers from under the brim of his hat looking first one way then the other. He wonders about the one-legged beggar hanging about the Golden Morning Arcade. He knows this man, or knew him when he was Chan Ze, the Deputy Censor’s partner. Had they not used his services for delivering messages and fetching things? This was one man that could identify him. Perhaps he should change his position. Perhaps. Perhaps it was too late, for now Cao recognizes the man from the North nearing the antique shop. He involuntarily goes to intercept him, perhaps with just a touch too much haste.

‘In the name of all under Heaven it is you, the man from the North, Li Guo.’ The man is taken aback and looks at

Cao with a deep suspicion. Cao continues at pace, 'It is I Chan Ze and I am in disguise because my partner has been murdered.' The man from the north peers at Cao until recognition expresses itself on his face. 'Come with me, we have much to discuss.'

Cao leads Li Guo away but not before the man from the North looks back to the entrance of the antique shop and finally recognizes the Palace Guards and the danger he now is in. He follows Cao at speed.

He's not the only one. The one-legged beggar has witnessed this strange encounter. He also recognises the coolly from the previous day, who had managed to sit without touting for work, as if he was waiting for someone who never turned up.

The coolly turns and looks directly at him. The beggar slowly turns away and looks in the other direction before heading off in that direction. He waits until he thinks that he will be lost in the crowd from the coolly's perspective before crossing the street, then moves with surprising speed, for a one-legged man, to catch up with the coolly and what would appear to be a merchant. The beggar has now a number of glimpses of the coolly's face from different angles and realizes that there is something familiar about it.

Cao turns north at the junction with Li Guo hurrying to keep up with him. After several more turns Cao dives down the alley where the warehouse come changing room is situated. He then has to wait for the man from the North to step with caution into the dark alley.

Letting his eyes adjust, he sees Cao further down unlocking a door and waving for him to follow. Li Guo decides he has nothing to lose and so follows with trepidation.

The one-legged beggar had lost them but is just in time to see the merchant enter the alley. He is forced to wait for fear of being spotted if the two men are just standing in the alley. Pretending he has to relieve himself, he enters the alley to find it empty. He checks the alley for doors but only finds one. It leaves him little option and so comes back out to the junction of streets. He picks a place on the far corner from the entrance to the alley, hidden by a basket stall.

Cao has led Li Guo through the maze of packing cases to his make shift make-up room. He takes a seat and starts removing the make-up of Chan Ze and the various aspects of the coolly. 'Take a seat and let me tell you what has happened.' The man from the north looks about before taking a packing case almost directly behind Cao. 'My partner, as I'm sure you remember was, Liu Zin.'

'Who you say was murdered.'

'Indeed. But it was not as simple as that.' Cao can see the stress on Li Guo's face through the reflection in the mirror and it prompts him to change tack. 'Whereabouts are you staying?'

Li Guo is deep in thought and answers absent-mindedly. 'At the, Drum and Bell, tea house.' As soon as he has said it he regrets it. He looks directly into Cao's eyes, who in turn, switches his gaze to his own reflection in the mirror. 'So why was he murdered?'

Glancing at Li Guo in the mirror. 'That is what I'm trying to tell you. It's complicated. It's complicated by the fact that Liu Zin was a member of the government, the Deputy Censor.' Cao can see the rising horror on Li Guo's face.

'But that is impossible. Members of the bureaucracy are not allowed to have commercial interests.'

'Now you see the problem in its full enormity. The Deputy Censor was leading a double life.'

'Did you know?'

'Unfortunately, I did.'

Cao can see the terrible effect this is having on Li Guo as his head sinks and his eyes are cast down. 'Now you will understand why I had to intercept you before you fell into the hands of the Palace Guard. The price for having commercial interests for any member of the government, or the bureaucracy for that matter, is decapitation; as you have so rightly pointed out. It is also the price to be paid for those who have commercial interests with members of the government. You and I are dead men if they find us.'

The shock of these last words brings Li Guo back from the dark place his mind had sunk into. Now, his mind is on survival, but he swerves the conversation to something more mundane. 'Would you have bought the other 63 bronze tablets?'

'Indeed, and by the way, where are they?'

'They are still in the North. It was impossible to smuggle them out. The Mongolians are vigilant to all the devices used for smuggling purposes. They were too big, too heavy and too many to make it feasible '

'So why are you here?' Cao turns to look at Li Guo directly.

'I have brought something else. Bronze rubbings of all 63 tablets and I have made a book of the original I Zhou, an exact copy. I was hoping these would fetch another 100 bars of gold.'

'As well they might.' Cao turns back to the mirror and continues removing the make-up.

Li Guo stands up and paces about behind Cao, who, watches him in a second mirror placed at the side. To Cao's horror he sees Li Guo remove a knife from within his garments. He grabs the nearest thing to hand, a wooden handled cosmetic brush, jumps up and rams the handle into Li Guo's ear as he turns. The pain makes Li Guo raise his hands to his head involuntarily, allowing Cao a purchase on Li Guo's hand that holds the knife.

They struggle like drunk men, bouncing off packing cases in the death grip of a grim embrace. Their hands are entwined, their strength equal, only Cao can see the one advantage and he sweeps the legs from under Li Guo. They both hit the floor still locked in this grim embrace.

The wooden handle still sticking out of Li Guo's head hits the floor first driving it deeper into his head. Cao releases one hand and smashes it against Li Guo's head driving the handle even deeper into his brain. A few more blows and finally the grip Li Guo has on the knife slackens. Cao takes it off him and drives it deep into his chest.

He staggers back sickened by the turn of events. He weeps in great gulps.

\*

The one-legged beggar sees Cao emerge from the alley. Cao is dressed in the clothes of the man from the north, and seeing him attired in the manner of a merchant, the beggar recognises him as Chan Ze. Thoughts of great reward surge through his mind and a grin of greed covers his face. He follows Cao on the opposite side of the street, making sure he is not seen.

Through alleys and dark passages Cao leads the beggar to the, Drum and Bell, tea house. Here he stops and braces himself for the deception he now has to make. He enters, but before continuing he looks out from the dark interior and sees to his horror the one-legged beggar moving to a place of concealment.

One of the Drum and Bell's singing girls approaches him. 'Can I be of assistance?' She almost sings this through a pleasant smile.

'Indeed, I have a friend from the North staying here, could you give me a room on the same floor?'

She walks across to the reception desk while asking, 'What is his name?'

'Li Guo.'

The girl looks at the chart of the sleeping accommodation. 'He is on the top floor. I can give you the room next to his if you like.'

'That would be excellent.'

The girl leads Cao to the stairs. 'Have you luggage?'

'It will arrive shortly.'

Arriving on the top floor the girl opens the door with a butterfly key and slides it back. She bows and lets Cao enter. He moves immediately to the door that leads to the veranda and opens it. Moving onto the veranda he peers down into the street where he sees the one-legged beggar talking to another beggar who suddenly runs off at speed. Cao knows the game is on, so he must act fast.

'Will you be requiring a girl for the night?'

'Indeed.'

'Perhaps I can be of service?'

Cao turns and gives the girl a forced smile. 'That would be excellent.'

The girl smiles and bows. 'Until the moon rises.' She leaves, closing the door behind her.

Cao re-enters the room and checks the corridor outside leading to the stairs. It is empty. He then locks the door and makes his way back to the veranda. The door to Li Guo's room is soon forced by a tool that is used for opening packing cases and that Cao had brought with him for just this purpose.

Taking a central position in the room, Cao swings slowly around, his eyes finally alighting on a large bamboo tube. Soon the cap is off and the content removed.

The first few bronze rubbings he lays on the bed. He makes sure they are all different, which they are; and yet all have the same form. Counting the corners of those still rolled up and adding those laid out he has all 64 changes accounted for. Cao rolls them up and returns them to their bamboo carrying case. His hands are covered in charcoal so he washes them in the bowl provided, and as he dries his hands, he listens for sounds on the other side of the door. Nothing.

The book he finds in a leather satchel obviously made for the purpose. Each page of the book is an exact copy of each change. Meticulously copied, they present only a quarter of the size of the bronze rubbings themselves. After counting the pages he returns the book to its satchel, saying under his breath. 'By the auspices of King Wen himself, the entire I Zhou.'

After listening at the door to the corridor, he leaves the room with the bamboo tube and satchel slung over his shoulders.

Arriving at the entrance he approaches the singing girl taking her by surprise. 'They have left the wrong things. I must go after them. I'll be back shortly.' He leaves quickly before the puzzled girl can say anything.

Outside he turns right and away from the one-legged beggar. He saunters along the busy street looking at the merchandise in the shops, until he reaches the next junction. He checks to make sure the one-legged beggar is following; which he is. Once around the corner he runs at speed to the next corner and turns another right and repeats the exercise at the next corner until he returns to the entrance of the Drum and Bell. He re-enters.

He approaches the singing girl once more. 'I couldn't catch them. I will have to do this later.' Removing a small leather pouch from within his robes he takes out a small gold coin, and smiling, presents the girl with it. 'I hope this will be satisfactory for this evening's arrangement.'

The look on the girl's face expresses that it is more than satisfactory, she bows.

'I am very tired and wish to refresh myself. Would you make sure that I am only disturbed by your good self. Indeed, if anyone comes calling for me could you tell them that I have gone shopping and haven't come back?'

The girl enjoys the subterfuge, and the implication, and so bows low.

Cao returns to his room, removes the man from the north's outer clothing and lies on the bed, a strong weariness overtaking him. As he falls asleep images of the bronze rubbings flit before his eyes until one appears that has the dead man's face embedded in the Shang script. He lets out a small cry and with the image gone he soon falls into a deep sleep.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**The first sentence is meant to deter,  
Stopping him from choosing  
The path of evil.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**The second sentence is severe,  
As he has not learned from his mistakes.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Justice is difficult as the case is complex.  
Punishment should reflect this.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Punishment of incorrigible criminals is severe.  
There is no alternative.  
Misfortune.**



**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Duration (17)**

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== == **Thunder**

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===== **Wind**

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**THE IMAGE**

**Thunder and Wind:**

**The Image of DURATION.**

**Thus the superior man remains constant in his ability to adapt;**

**Changing to the changing situation;**

**While holding to his Inner Truth.**

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# CHAPTER 18

## The Arousing Thunder (49)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

After The Early Evening Drum

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== == Thunder

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== == Thunder

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**The Image**

**Thunder arouses Thunder:**

**The Image of SHOCK.**

**Even the superior man is momentarily shaken;**

**Showing his common humanity.**

**Then The Way beckons and he is lost in spiritual bliss.**

\*

“Tzu-chi of Nan-kuo sat leaning on a low table. Looking up to heaven, he sighed and seemed to be at a loss as if his spirit had left him. Yen Ch’eng Tzu-yu, his pupil, who was standing in attendance in front of him, said, ‘What is the matter? The body may be allowed to be like dry wood but should the mind be allowed to be like dead ashes? Surely the man leaning on the table is not the same man leaning on the table before.’

‘Aren’t you asking a good question!’ Tzu-chi replied. ‘Do you know that I have just lost myself? You have heard the music of man but not the music of earth. You may have heard the music of earth but not the music of heaven.’

‘I beg to ask about its composition,’ said Tzu-yu.

‘The breath of the universe is called wind,’ said Tzu-chi. ‘At times it is inactive. But when active, angry sounds come from thousands of hollows. Have you never listened to its prolonged roar? The peaks and heights of mountains and forests, and the hollows and cavities of huge trees many a span in girth are like nostrils, mouths, ears, beam sockets, goblets, mortars, puddles, and pools. The wind rushing into them, whizzing, making an explosive and rough noise, or a withdrawing and soft one, shouting, wailing, moaning, and crying. The wind that comes ahead sings “yu” and the wind that follows echoes “yung.” When the winds are gentle, the harmony is small, and when the winds are violent, the harmonies are great. When the fierce gusts stop, all hollows become empty and silent. Have you never witnessed how the trees swing and bend?’

Tzu-yu said, ‘Since the music of earth consists of sounds produced in the various hollows, and the music of man consists of sounds produced in a series of flutes, what is the music of heaven?’

‘The blows in a thousand different ways,’ replied Tzu-chi, ‘but the sounds are all produced in their own way. They do so by themselves. Who is there to rouse them to action?’

‘Great knowledge is leisurely and yet all-embracing and extensive whereas small knowledge is inquisitive and discriminative. Great speech is simple whereas small speech is full of details. Whether in sleep when the various elements of the spirit are interlocked in dreams, or when awake when the body is free to move, and act, in all their contacts and associations, some of our minds are leisurely, some are deep, and some are serious. We scheme and fight with our minds. When we have small fears we are worried, and when we have great fears we are totally at a loss. One’s mind shoots forth like an arrow to be the arbiter of right and wrong. Now is it reserved like a solemn pledge, in order to maintain its own advantage. Then, like the destruction of autumn and winter, it declines every day. Then it is sunk in pleasures and cannot be covered. Now it is closed like a seal, that is, it is old and exhausted. And finally it is near death and cannot be given life again. Pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy, anxiety and regret, fickleness and fear, impulsiveness and extravaganza, indulgence and lewdness come to us like music from the hollows or like mushrooms from damp. Day and night they alternate within us but we don’t know where they come from. Alas! These are with us morning and evening. It’s here where they are produced!

Without these feelings there would not be I. And without me who will experience them. They are right nearby. But we don't know who causes them. It seems there is a True Lord who does so, but there is no indication of his existence.

There is evidence of activity but we do not see its physical form. The hundred bones, the nine external cavities and the six internal organs are all complete in the body. Which part shall I love best? Would you say to love them all? But there is bound to be some preference. Do they all serve as servants of someone else? Since servants cannot govern themselves, do they serve as master and servant by turn? Surely there must be a true ruler who controls them!

But whether we discover its reality or not, it does not affect its being true. Once it received the bodily form complete, it does not fail to function till the end. Whether in conflict or harmony with things, it always pursues its course like a galloping horse which cannot be stopped. Is this not pitiful indeed? People say death does not exist. But what is the use? Not only does the physical form disintegrate; the mind also goes with it. Is that not very lamentable? Are men living in this world really so ignorant? Or am I alone ignorant while others are not?

If we are to follow what is formed in our mind as a guide, who will not have such a guide? Not only those who know the succession of night and day and choose them by exercising their own minds. Stupid people have theirs too. To have opinions as to right or wrong before the feelings are produced in the mind is as mistaken as to say that one goes to the state of Yueh today and arrives there yesterday. This is to turn what is not into what is. Even Yu with his spiritual intelligence cannot know how to turn what is not into what is. How can I?

For speech is not just the blowing of breath. The speaker has something to say, but what he says is not final. Has something been said? Or has something not been said? It may be different from the chirping of chickens. But is there really any difference? Or is there not a difference?

How can Tao be so obscured that there should be a distinction between right and wrong? Where can you go and find Tao not to exist? Where can you go and find speech impossible? Tao is obscured by petty biases and speech is obscured by flowery expressions. Therefore there have arisen the controversies between the Confucianists and Moists, each school regarding as right what the other considers wrong, and regarding as wrong what the other considers right. But to show that what each regards as right is wrong or to show that what each regards as wrong is right, there is not a better way than to use the light of the natural world."

From The Chuang Tzu - Chapter 2 – A. The Equality of things.

Shi, Bao, Tai and a member of the Night Watch are on a roof hiding behind washing draped over the balustrade. They peer through the gaps between the washing to where they can see opposite to a building in a street of similar buildings. The street below is busy with

commerce. It is situated in the north-eastern part of the northern prefecture of Kinsai.

'They would appear to have possession of the entire 4 floors, the entire building.' The Night Watch says.

'How many are there?' Shi asks.

'We think there are 7.'

'Does that include the child-woman?' Bao enquirers.

'Indeed. She is an assassin just like the others. However, we are having to wait as she, and one of the others, is out. Once they return we will take the place. There are 2 squads of Night Watch here already and a third on the way.'

'Better than 3 to 1. You obviously have a great deal of respect for their martial abilities.' Tai joins in.

'It's not just their sword play that is potent, they also have many devices that have deadly potential, and that is why, Wu Tai, we will not allow you to take part in this operation, even with your undoubted skill with your iron-wood staff.' Tai can hear in his voice a slight mocking tone.

She produces a knowing smile and beams it at Bao.

He has a disturbed and concerned look on his face that is hardly lessened by this news.

Down in the street the child-woman and a man arrive and enter the building. The Night Watch turns from the street and looks at his 3 colleagues, 'You must stay here whatever happens. The Emperor Lizong would not be pleased if anything happened to you.' He slithers across the roof and down through an opening.

Shi turns to Tai. 'Surely you would not wish to join the Night Watch?'

'Half of me would like to join them but the other half is wary. My exhibition at the Ink Stone was a bit of a sham. They only allowed me to win as a matter of courtesy. I doubt if any man could take on 3 members of the Night Watch and win. But as they have such respect for these assassins I am pleased to be just an observer.' She turns

to Bao. 'Of course, if you think me such a coward, then I will vault across the street and attack from the roof.'

'You will not do any such thing!' Bao intones with anger, then seeing the grin playing across Tai's face. 'It would mean that I too would have to vault across the street and you know that I'm not good with heights.'

Shi, who has been looking through a gap in the washing, sees several members of the Night Watch swarming across the roof. 'The game is on!'

Tai and Bao take up their places and watch the scene now unfolding.

Hidden from view an assassin on the roof is out of his hiding place and spots the Night Watch. He is down a trap door and has it bolted before the Night Watch can stop him. While two use a crowbar to open the trapdoor the rest climb over the side and swing down to the veranda below.

An assassin leaps out at the first Night Watch on the veranda. He carries a sword in one hand and a metal tube in the other. They spar for their lives as another Night Watch arrives. He leaps to his friend's assistance but the assassin turns his metal tube towards him and a plume of blood erupts from the Night Watch's back. The other Night Watch attacks with ferocity and it is all the assassin can do to hold him off. He backs to the doorway and through the doorway where he releases the door that crashes down through solid runners sealing the doorway. The Night Watch kicks at the door with force but fails to make an impression. With only a cursory glance at his fallen friend he scales down the building joining another Night Watch as he enters through another doorway, where they are both attacked by another assassin.

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Inside, the building is a maze. Room upon room joined by doorways with sliding vertical doors. Some of these come down as the Night Watch make their way deeper into the building.

Outside, at street level, the Night Watch break cover and rush the door. A fierce fight between Night Watch and assassins takes place. The child-woman and her male companion escape through to the back. Picking the child-

woman up he enters a secret stairway and carries her upstairs allowing the vertical sliding door to block the entrance to the room they have now entered. This is not like the other floors. It has a low ceiling so he is forced to bend. She on the other hand can stand upright and even with her bound feet can move with some speed.

They approach two large vessels balanced in a frame, these are filled with oil. Releasing the mechanisms that hold them in place the oil pours out into gutters of bamboo that go in opposite directions through holes in the walls.

The sound of the Night Watch breaking open the door forces the child-woman and her companion to set fire to the oil before escaping up another staircase and sealing the door behind them. Fire engulfs the room as the Night Watch enter. With little regard for their lives they soon ascertain that the fire has been spread along the entire street of buildings via the bamboo gutters.

Three assassins are already in the room filling backpacks with gold, silver and copper cash, when the child-woman and her lover arrive.

'The fire is set. Get out now while you still can.' The child-woman yells at her colleagues. They acknowledge what she has said but carry on filling their bags. She and her partner don't stop but find the ladder in an alcove and with her on his back they ascend.

Smoke rises through the floor boards then through a hole in the door made by an axe. This sends the assassins on their way as they scramble for their bolt holes in various parts of the room.

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On the roof Shi, Bao and Tai watch as an assassin emerges from the trapdoor on the roof of the burning building. He is immediately attacked by a Night Watch left to guard this exit. This sword duel is evenly matched and it takes a bolt from a crossbow to swing the fight in favour of the assassin. His comrade had followed him to the roof.

As the Night Watch falls with the bolt in his shoulder he lets his sword fly at his duelling partner, slicing clean through his throat. The Night Watch struggles to gain his feet fighting the poison from the bolt, but not to any

avail, as another bolt from the assassin, now on the rim of the trapdoor, pierce's his heart. This assassin locks the trapdoor with a metal pin then turns his attention to a long bamboo pole lying in the angle of the wall and roof. He soon has it up and taking a run he wedges the pole into the base of the balustrade and pole-vaults the street.

He lands behind Shi, Bao and Tai, but Tai is already in movement and engaging the assassin before he can recover from his flight. It is all the assassin can do to keep her at bay with his sword, so he swings the metal tube from around his shoulders and lets fly the metal cone from the metal-spring device at Tai. She, however has already seen this weapon in action and avoids the metal cone by swivelling on her staff. The metal cone cuts the staff from under Tai and as she recovers the assassin has the other end of the metal tube pointing at her.

Bao leaps to Tai's defence hurling his ceremonial hat flying at the metal tube. The poisoned darts that emanate from the tube embed themselves into the hat. This distraction is all Tai needs as she thrusts the broken end of her staff deep into the assassin's throat. She holds the staff in place until his death throws fall silent.

Shi, who has been watching, turns away as Bao and Tai embrace. He is just in time to see emerging from the trapdoor the child-woman and her partner. They take opposite sides to look along the roofs of the street. And are themselves just in time to see the third contingent of the Night Watch swarming up the walls and onto the roof on both sides. They head back to the trapdoor but a huge sheet of flame greets them sending them into despair. The man drops to his knees in front of the child-woman whom now is almost the same height.

Their embrace affects Shi in quite an unexpected way, a feeling of loss. He watches as she takes out two tiny knives hidden in her hair and just as the Night Watch arrive on the roof she plunges one into his neck and one into her own. The poison is almost instantaneous and as she collapses against him so they fall over.

Bao and Tai join Shi at the balustrade and are just in time to see a Night Watch stick his sword into the man and take a swipe at the child-woman, slashing her body.



It's too sickening to watch and all three turn away to lean with their backs on the balustrade.

'Don't they believe in taking prisoners?' Bao asks.

'It's more to the point that the assassins won't be taken prisoner. They would rather die at their own hands than at the hands of the torturer.' Replies Shi.

Bao is both disgusted and horrified with what he has just seen. Shi's words reinforces these black emotions, so he alters the direction of the subject. 'It has to be faced up to sooner or later. The assassins are merely the tools of the murderer. If they are all dead then any clues they may have will be lost. Then where do we go from here?'

The fire in the building is now on every floor and worse the fire can now be seen to have spread the length of the street in both directions, as fires emanate from the middle floors of those buildings.

'What if the war faction are behind this, where would they hide? Where could they hide? Where could they hide and yet remain close to the centre of power?'

Bao's statement sets Shi into a state of hardly suppressed anger. 'And where would you suggest? Perhaps inside the Night Watch?'

After a moment of silence Bao's nimble mind wonders out loud. 'Where are the Night Watch based? Who controls their actions?'

'And who controls the spies, like Poppy, and where do they train?' Tai joins in.

Shi turns to Bao and Tai with annoyance writ large over his face. 'If you must pursue this line of enquiry then you should know that they are both subject parties to General Lee, the Emperor's chief of Army Intelligence. And as I'm sure you both know General Lee is the brother of Lizong's wife, and, along with General Liu, the commander of the Eastern Army, he is one of Lizong's most loyal subjects.'

A member of the Night Watch arrives to bring them up to speed with what has happened. 'Seven dead assassins and seven dead among our order. But at present the immediate danger is the fire the assassins set. See,' he points,

they look, 'the fire, by a cunning device, has been spread between the floors of the entire street. You must excuse me as I must return to Phoenix Hill with our dead.' He bows and goes to leave.

'One question: is that where the Night Watch are based?'

'I forget Shao Bao that you have not been privy until recently to the Night Watch's home. We will arrange for you to come to the funeral of our fallen comrades, if you would grace us with your presence.'

'It would be a great honour.' Bao bows low.

'And if you, Magistrate, and you Wu Tai would also honour us, I know how much it would mean to us; the devotees of the Doctrine of Chung-Wung.'

Tai and Shi bow low. The Night Watch leaves.

Once he has gone, they all try talking at the same time, until Shi stamps his authority. 'You will not use the funeral as a cover to snoop around.'

'Would I do such a thing?' Says Bao in total innocence.

Tai smiles knowing full well he would and Shi sets a hard face for the same reason.

Behind the three friends, on the roof opposite, the child-woman stirs. She is recovering from a short acting poison that produces a death-like coma.

Making sure there are no Night Watch around she quickly staunches the blood now flowing freely from her shoulder wound; the wound delivered by the Night Watch to finish her off.

'This arrangement where both the Night Watch and the spies share the same encampment, and all under the watchful eye of General Lee, this is how it has always been? This is not just a new arrangement?' Asks Bao with concentrated focus.

Shi can see that Bao will not let this go and so takes a more resigned approach. 'It has been such since the Jürgen conquered the north and the capital moved here to Lin'an. What more do you wish to know?'

The child-woman can see Shi, Bao and Tai leaning with their backs to her on the balustrade of the opposite roof. She crawls to the corner and retrieves a coiled rope from under a pile of rubbish. She attaches the rope to the end of a metal arm that is part of a device for hauling materials from the ground to the roof.

'It is surely a strange arrangement if General Lee lives at the encampment with his wife and family.' Says Bao, making it sound like a question.

'It does not work like that. General Lee is encamped with the Eastern Army. What use would Army Intelligence be if it was not in permanent contact with the Eastern Army? The very army that is to defend Kinsai.' Shi's frustration can be clearly heard.

'Ah ha, so General Lee is not ensconced on Phoenix Hill? And if he is not there then who runs this secret establishment?'

'The Director.'

'The Director? And what does he direct?'

'It's just a title.' Shi almost shouts. 'He's an administrator, actually he's a member of the bureaucracy, a scholar official from the Ministry of Military Affairs. It's not a high ranking post, perhaps 6 or 7.'

Bao leans forward to look at Shi, forcing Tai to stand up so she can see Shi as Bao now blocks her view. As she turns towards them she can now see the child-woman as she makes her descent down the rope. At first she is too taken with surprise to understand what is happening, but then. 'Look! Look! The child-woman is escaping.'

Shi and Bao turn quickly and see the child-woman landing in the street where she is soon lost amongst the crowds escaping the fires.

'Quickly, after her!' Tai demands and leads the way, only the explosion that rips the assassin's lair apart is so powerful it knocks all three to the ground.

Shi has taken the worst hit and has to be dragged by Bao and Tai under the material drying on the balustrade. The falling embers bounce off the tent they have created, or if not, are removed by quick blows from within.

The explosion has sent a huge cloud of fire into the air and where it drops new fires are soon lit. Even the roof where they are sheltering soon has a fire set.

As Shi comes around he mumbles. 'What is more rare ... than a green moon?'

Tai doesn't understand, but Bao smiles at the very thought.

Shi is almost fully recovered by the time the worst of the falling embers have subsided. 'We must go in pursuit and let the Night Watch know what has happened.'

All three make a dash for the stairs, and down the stairs. Where they find the front of the building decimated and on fire, and so are forced to find a way out through the rear.

Another huge explosion has them cowering back inside of the building. The embers scattered over a huge area rains down fire, and where these fires fall new fires start.

Shi has fully recovered and barks orders to the bewildered citizens. 'These buildings,' he points to where he has just come from, 'are already on fire. It is essential to form water carrying lines from the nearest canal. Now go to your homes and return with buckets.' The crowd looks from Shi to each other but seem frozen to the spot. 'Don't stand there like rooted trees. Go to your homes and fetch buckets. If you don't I will have you all flogged.' This angry outburst from Shi, finally has the crowd in action.'

As the street clears a small group of police come running through the thinning crowd. The Captain runs up to Shi, 'Magistrate, I have news from the King of the Beggars, they have found the merchant, Chan Ze, he is at the, Drum and Bell, tea house.'

It takes Shi only a moment. 'Then you must take over here and organize the citizens. They seem too bewildered to organize themselves.'

'As you command, Magistrate.' The Captain turns to his men, 'You all know the water drill. Spread yourselves out to the number five canal then line the citizens up when they return.' As the police run off the Captain shouts

after them. 'Ladders, we will need all available ladders.'

Shi turns to Bao and Tai. 'The Drum and Bell is on the west side of the South Prefecture and some way from here. We must hurry.'

Shi sets off at pace, Bao and Tai falling in behind.

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## The Changing Lines

Changing Line at the beginning means:  
Laughter follows terror follows shock.  
Thus it has always been.  
Good fortune.

Changing Line in the second place means:  
The shock of a natural calamity must not bring despair.  
One needs to be shocked into action.  
Perseverance eventually brings  
Success.

Changing Line in the third place means:  
A shock to the body brings forth trembling.  
A shock to the mind brings forth laughter.  
A shock to the spirit;  
The spirit is never shocked.

Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
If shock finds no expression  
The Movement that is Tsao Hua is halted.  
The Movement that is Tsao Hua is never halted.  
Thus perfect order arrives like the White Crane,  
On the wings of random chaos.

Changing Line at the top means,  
All men are  
Riders on The Storm.



## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Decay (18)

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== == Mountain

== ==

=====

===== Wind

== ==

## THE IMAGE

**The Still Mountain slows the Wind:**

**The Image of DECAY.**

**Thus the superior man avoids the debasing attitudes of decadence,**

**And inspires the people to renewal by great works.**

**Perseverance brings success.**

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# CHAPTER 19

## Increase (45)

The Song Dynasty  
1460 I.A.  
7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
After The Evening Drum

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===== Wind

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== ==

== == Thunder

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### THE IMAGE

Wind and Thunder, Thunder and Wind:

The Image of INCREASE.

The superior man reads natural phenomena

To decipher the category of Change.

Supreme good fortune

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“There is nothing that is not the ‘that’ and there is nothing that is not the ‘this’. Things do not know that they are the ‘that’ of other things: they only know what they themselves know. Therefore I say that the ‘that’ is produced by the ‘this’ and the ‘this’ is also caused by the ‘that’. This is the theory of mutual production. Nevertheless, when there is life there is death, and where there is death there is life. When there is possibility there is impossibility, and when there is impossibility there is possibility. Because of the right, there is the wrong, and because of the wrong there is the right. Therefore the sage does not proceed along these lines but illuminates the matter with Nature. This is the reason:

The ‘this’ is also the ‘that’. The ‘that’ is also the ‘this’. The ‘this’ has one standard of right and wrong, and the ‘that’ also has a standard of right and wrong. Is there really a distinction between ‘that’ and ‘this’? Or is there really no distinction between ‘that’ and ‘this’? When ‘this’ and ‘that’ have no opposites, there is the very axis of Tao. Only when the axis occupies the centre of a circle can things in their infinite complexities be responded to. The right is an infinity. The wrong is also an infinity. Therefore I say that there is nothing better than the light of Nature for illumination.”

From The Chuang Tzu - Chapter 2 – A. The Equality of things.

The first thing Cao is aware of is the sound of a deep murmuring, like that of a large crowd before the start of an opera. When he opens his eyes to the twilight of the setting sun the sound is still there. He moves to the door that leads to the veranda and opens it. The sound increases in strength but not quality. Leaning on the rail he looks down to the junction at the entrance to the tea house. A steady stream of people carrying their possessions are moving in one direction; west. He also sees the one-legged beggar leaning partly on the end of the building opposite at the junction and partly on his crutch. When the beggar turns in his direction he ducks back in. It is only then he notices the red glow of the fire that is set in the east, like a rising sun.

His mind races from what appears to be a terrible portent. A distant explosion and a plume of fire awakens him to the reality that this is indeed a fire. He returns to the room and quickly collects his things, then stops as he is about to leave. He returns to the bed and sits down in deep thought before taking out one of the bronze rubbings. Removing a pen and a bottle of ink from his sleeve he begins writing on the paper over the charcoal imprint of the bronze tablet.

Finished, he places the rubbing on the bed trapping it at one end by the pillow and at the other end by unused candles.

Sliding the door open he checks to see if there is anyone on the landing and not seeing anyone takes the stairs down to the entrance.

He avoids the singing girl at the main entrance and slips out through a courtyard at the rear where there is another entrance to the tea house.

Once on the street, on the same side as his room and veranda upstairs, he heads away from the junction where the one-legged beggar is still mounting guard. Waiting for a group of men to hide him from the beggars view, he falls in just in front of them. When he gets to the corner, only then does he turn to see if the beggar is following. He has to walk a little way out into the street before he can just make out the beggar's crutch at the distant corner.

Not being followed he now turns left in a westerly direction and soon comes across what is a solid body of people heading north at the next junction. Slipping in amongst them like a stream joining a river he soon disappears as an individual and becomes just a part of this sea of humanity.

As he approaches the north-western gate, the Six Wells Gate, he sees the Captain and gate guards turning men back and only allowing women and children through. Pushing his way out of this flood of human beings he stands on the side wondering how he can escape the city.

A middle-aged woman with several children, all carrying their belongings, come along side where he is standing. When one of the children drops a bundle of clothes he spots his opportunity. Picking up the bundle he hands it back to the child, and then says to the mother who has turned to see what has happened. 'Where are you going?'

The woman is a little confused. 'We were just told to leave the city; not where to go. I have had to leave my husband and brother on fire fighting duty, but how I will find them after the fire is out I do not know. They were desperately trying to save our building the last I saw of them. I ... I ...' her voice trails off as the tears begin to fall.

'I have a quite a large house in the artist quarter on the side of the West Lake. You and your family are more

than welcome to stay until this terrible catastrophe is over.'

The relief on the woman's face touches Cao and he feels his normal emotions returning after the violent episode with the man from the north. 'Come, let me help you with some of your belongings.' He picks up what appears to be the youngest child slinging the little bundle of clothes it is carrying over his shoulder.

Approaching the Six Wells Gate, Cao speaks to the Captain, a man he knows quite well if only by sight. 'Captain, this family are destitute and I have told them they can stay at my home in the artists' quarter. If you let me through so I can show them where it is, I will return directly.'

The Captain is not pleased with what he is hearing but the woman, having been shown a way forward in her desperate situation grasps the Captain by the arm. 'Please, I beg you, we are lost without this man's kindness. Let us through and I will burn incense at your ancestor's burial ground, I will give you money,' she takes out a small pouch and goes to open it. 'I will give you money.'

The Captain stops her by covering her hand with his. 'It is alright, I know De Cao, and I will allow him to take you to his home.' He turns to Cao. 'I will trust you to return as soon as possible.'

Cao bows to the horizontal.

They take the track next to the city wall going south, then west down the street where Cao lives, where he briefly talks to neighbours.

Inside, Cao shows the family around. 'Take all of the bedrooms, including my own. I will stay with friends when I return from fighting the fire. There's plenty of vegetables in the kitchen and you can purchase fish down by the lake. Now you must excuse me I must get back and before that I must take these,' he shows the bamboo tubes, 'and this,' he takes out the other bamboo tube with Gui's painting in it from its hiding place, 'to my friends that own these things.'

Cao can see how desperate the woman is and so leaves before he gets waylaid.

Down the street to the road that runs alongside of the lake, he hugs the wall. At the bottom, and hiding himself from the road, he sees two soldiers rounding up the oarsmen on the jetty; they are not too pleased about being forced into fire fighting duty.

He waits for them to be marched off before crossing the road and running along the jetty to his small boat, strung out with hundreds of others. He doesn't try pulling it in but loosening the rope dances across the other boats to the, Water Pipit. He coils the rope and pushes himself off from the other boats and quickly paddles out into the lake. He ignores the voices behind him and soon has a good 500 metres behind him; a distance he feels it is safe to look back; he sees a soldier going back along the jetty. That was close.

Avoiding other traffic on the lake he heads to the, Islands of the Moon. The creeping darkness gives him cover as he approaches the smallest island. A large ferry, filled with men from the island and a number of soldiers, comes out from the other side of the island; more recruits for fire fighting duty. The little cove he pulls into has long been a favourite of his for trysts with singing girls from the tea shops on the island. He decides to wait for full darkness before continuing his journey.

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Shi storms into the Drum and Bell, followed by Bao and Tai. The one-legged beggar stops at the door but his eyes wander over the singing girls who have all stopped entertaining their customers and stand bowing to the horizontal.

'Where is Chan Ze, or, perhaps, a man from the North?'

'On the top floor, Magistrate.'

'Show me girl, and quickly.'

The girl runs ahead and shows Shi the rooms.

'Chan Ze's room is here, and the man from the North, Li Guo, his room is here.' This faltering statement is followed by a low bow and much sobbing.

Tai asks Bao. 'Why is she so upset?'

'I have little doubt that the man from the North will not have the required registration papers; it probably means her job.'

'Open the doors, quickly now girl.' Shi stands back so the girl can perform her task.

Shi enters Chan Ze's room while Bao and Tai enter Li Guo's room.

Bao and Tai stand either side of the bed on which the bronze rubbing is pinned down.

Shi enters and takes a position at the bottom of the bed. 'What is it?'

'A letter to the Emperor.' Answers Bao.

'What?'

'A letter written on a bronze rubbing.' Bao takes his finger down the side of the rubbing and shows Shi. 'A bronze rubbing off the bronze tablet that the Deputy Censor had in his possession.' His finger points to the number in the Shang script. 'Number One.'

'Proof enough that this is the man with the bronze tablets.' Bao steps out of the way to allow Shi a close inspection of the writing on top of the rubbing. 'What nonsense is this?' Shi looks across the bed to Bao. 'A letter to the Emperor requesting an exchange, an exchange for what?'

'His life for the original I Zhou, I should imagine.'

Shi ponders this for a moment. 'Lizong may well think this an excellent exchange, especially, if he thinks it is genuine.'

'As it may well be.'

'But we have not lost this rouge yet. If, as it says here, he wants a red paper-moon lantern hung from the, Thunder Point Pagoda, if Lizong agrees, then he would have to be outside of the city walls to see it. He must, at this very moment, be trying to find a way out.'

'We should be away to the, Six Bells Gate, for that is the closest exit from here.' Adds Tai.

'Indeed.' And with that Shi heads for the door.

With the one-legged beggar in tow and with Bao carrying the rolled up bronze rubbing, they make their way through the surging mass of people.

The Captain of the Gate sees Shi coming and brings his men to attention. Bowing low he waits for Shi's first words before he raises.

'You have stopped all able-bodied men from leaving?'

'Indeed Magistrate, as you can see,' he points to crowd of men standing off to the side, 'we gather them up and have them marched to the fire by the police. Those were our orders.'

'Excellent. And you have not allowed any man to leave.'

'Indeed not.' Then he remembers. 'Except for one man, an artist, De Cao. He was taking a destitute family to his own home. A noble act.'

'Was this, De Cao, carrying anything?'

'Indeed, an artists' bamboo carrying case.'

Shi shares a moment with Bao and Tai before he returns to the now worried Captain. 'Do you know where he lives, this, De Cao?'

'He lives in the artist quarter on the banks of the West Lake. Anyone will tell you where. I hope I haven't committed an offence.'

Shi puts the Captain's mind at ease. 'It may well be your act of charity has made our job of finding him that much simpler. Carry on Captain'

Shi, Bao and Tai quicken their gait as they set off. After a few enquires they stand outside of, De Cao's home. Shi wraps on the door and after a few moments the homeless woman opens it.

She collapses on the floor in full prostration. 'Forgive me Magistrate but the man said we could stay here.'

'Get up. How do you expect me to talk to you while you lie on the floor?'

The woman drags herself up with Shi helping. Her children are now on display and seeing their mother on the floor and witnessing the sterner side of Shi's character, they have all been reduced to tears.

'I take it he is not here now?'

'He said he must take certain things to a friends and that he must go back to fight the fire.' She says this while trying to comfort her children.

'He left with an artists' bamboo carrying case?'

'With two. One he already had then he took another out of that place.' She points at Cao's secret compartment near the door that has been left open.

Bao signals to Shi that they take a look around. Shi acknowledges Bao's signal but can't free himself from the woman who has now broken down in tears and grasps onto his garment, pleading for her life and the life of her children and just about every member of her family in a most distressing discordant manner.

Bao enters Cao's studio. Standing in the middle of what is a large room he tries to take it all in. He sees a stack of artists' folders any one of which could hold the bronze rubbings. As he picks his way through them he realizes each folder has a different theme. One of them has drawings of what looks like statues or reliefs, he shouts through to Tai. 'Come and look at this.'

Tai joins him and leafs her way through the folder.

'These are drawings of the reliefs in the caves of the Lingyang monastery.'

'That is what I thought, but what of these?'

Near the back of the folder there is a series of drawings of calved tunnels and passage ways, and finally, a drawing of a reclining Buddha set before a pool of water.

Tai is surprised. 'How is this possible, this is in the inner most chambers of the sanctuary.'

Shi, having freed himself from the demented woman, arrives wanting answers. 'Well?'

Bao is finishing off the folders. 'The rubbings are not here, so he must have taken them with him.'

'We must hurry. His best means of escape would be across the lake. There may yet be time to catch him.'

All three leave the house and run down the lane to the road beside the lake. After looking in all directions at the junction they cross the road, which is almost deserted, and run along the jetty.

Coming to the end they take up positions to left and right and straight ahead. All three know that he must have left from here but is long gone.

For a few moments they are left to their own thoughts, then the silence is broken by Shi. 'A thought came to me as I sat upon a mat. I am this, and they are that.'

A smile comes to Bao's face as he recognizes the old children's poem, then adds the next line. 'A thought came to me as I sat on a mat, with a cat. I am the this and they are the that.'

Tai finishes off. 'A thought came to me, as I am the cat. That I am this and we are the that.'

Shi and Bao join her in the last line. 'Oh why can't mankind understand what is obvious to a cat. We are all the this, and all the that. So I am not just this, but also, that.'

The three laugh and turn around to each other in warmth.

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Lying in the bottom of his boat he can see the stars in patches through low cloud. His thoughts, however, are on the day's events. Was he mad, had he really killed the man from the North, had he really left that message? The moonstone clouds in their bountiful bulbous forms are lit by the rising moon but were now being despoiled by jagged black clouds from the fire. He must have fallen asleep.



He heads north-west running the Water Pipit alongside the Su De, looking for an entrance to the lake on the other side. He finds a bridge on the north end of the causeway that is deserted. Speeding under the bridge he shoots his little boat across to the North West corner of the lake and looks for a place to land. The vegetation is dense with weeping willows shielding the very edge so he cannot tell if there are soldiers waiting beyond. He sits and listens.

What he hears is not what he expects. It's a rhythmic tread, the sound of many feet in unison. A voice calls out a marching chant. This is followed by a great host of men chanting the reply.

Cao can see torches weaving their way down to the track that runs alongside of the north shore of the West Lake. One thousand Buddhist monks marching to fight the fire.

He wants to stand up and cheer as the first squadrons appear on the lakeside. They march in a relaxed trot, an effortless perambulation to raise the spirits of the fleeing citizens of Kinsai.

Waiting until this procession has passed he swings his boat into the willows only to find a deserted shore.

Pulling his boat out of the lake he hides it in a pile of cut logs. Then adjusting his bamboo cases and his satchel, so he is carrying the weight on his back, he sets off with pace.

He follows the stream, almost a river, up towards the monastery. The moon, flitting in and out between the clouds, allows him brief glimpses of the terrain ahead. In one such moment he sees a monk sitting meditating on a rock, he freezes and waits for the next beam of moonlight to reveal this image: a monk sitting on a rock meditating. There he is but now can be seen to be talking. Talking to who? For he is alone.

Cao crawls closer during the moonless periods, freezing when the moonlight returns. When, within 15 metres of the monk, the moonlight returns he can clearly see the monk and hear his voice.

'I know you are there' Cao thinks this refers to him and experiences a rash of panic driven symptoms, 'you have

little need to fear me. Am I not an old man and a blind one at that?'

The man appears as out of thin air. Standing on the rock behind the monk he surveys the forest around him.

'You have nothing to fear for we are alone.' The monk says in reassuring tones.

'I thought I sensed another presence.'

The monk laughs. 'The wisdom of the Yellow Emperor is not infallible, as you should know. The complexity of reality is too great to allow such certainty.'

The man moves around the monk so he can face him. This allows Cao to see he is a man in his early 30s dressed in rich purple robes with gold edging, the robes of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor.

'What would you know of the wisdom of the Yellow Emperor?' The man says in tones close to ridicule.

'Do we Buddhists not fish in the same ocean as your noble order? The Great Ocean of Infinite Consciousness. Is it so strange then, if we have caught the same or similar fish?'

'Perhaps.'

'You visit me here quite often, trying to catch me unawares. Surely by now you can see that it is impossible?'

'I admit your awareness disturbs me.' He pulls a short sword from out of his robes with astounding speed; the point delivered to within a few centimetres of the monk's face.

'Death is with us all, I learned to make friends with the transformer of consciousness when but a child. I'm afraid you can't intimidate me with his noble presence, even when he is in the form of a sword.'

The monk tilts his head up as if facing the man and slowly opens his eyes. The luminous moonstone blue eyes are as big as any that Cao has ever seen. He would like to move but dare not in case the man with the sword

becomes aware of him. The monk, on the other hand, holds little dread.

'There is someone trying to contact you.' The monk says this in a matter of fact manner.

The man puts the sword away, dropping his head almost onto his chest and closing his eyes, he disappears without trace.

'It's alright to come out now, De Cao, he has gone.'

Cao comes out of his hiding place and approaches the monk whose eyes are once again closed. 'Thank you for whatever assistance you have provided me with.' He bows even though the monk can't see him.

'You are a man who is propelled by the dynamic law of unintended consequences.' The monk says with mirth.

'And what unintended consequences would they be?'

'The ones that bring you here. For certain you were not aware that your relationship with the Deputy Censor would have led you to this place and time, but nevertheless, here you are.'

Cao sinks down and leans against the rock the monk is sitting on. 'Nor did I intend to kill the man from the North.'

'Everyman has a right to defend himself. Therefore, do not dwell on this particular unintended consequence. The blame lies elsewhere.'

Cao breaks down and weeps.

'You must hold to your present course and make sure the Emperor has what is his by right.' This the monk says with sober sincerity, only to follow it with mocking humour. 'Asking for gold is an insult. It would be better to be free from the unintended consequence that it will bring.'

'In my heart I know you are right. It was only my practical nature that led me to such an outcome.'

'You have travelled far beyond such practical concerns. Make amends and free yourself from the burden of the law

of unintended consequences. If you do not then you will be forever on its terrible treadmill.'

Cao gets to his feet and turns to the monk. 'Can you not take this burden from me?'

'Unfortunately not. The law of unintended consequences demands that those whose actions caused the unintended consequences must rectify those actions, and when this is not possible they must act like a hero and act only with integrity in bringing these consequences to an end.'

Cao sighs from his depths.

'Follow your present course as it can lead to redemption. Have you not already rescued the great I from obscurity? In the right hands it provides an understanding of the changing world we live in that is not usually available to those who dwell solely in the mundane world. Your fate is tied to the great I.'

Cao sighs again as if the burden is too great for him to bear.

'Does it not appear to you strange that your fate is caught up with that of the great I? Why has the great I appeared now, if its presence is not part of a greater play? And why are you the arbitrator of its fate as much as it is the arbitrator of your fate. So, I say to you again: hold true to your course and all may yet be well.'

'This law of unintended consequences, is there a reason for it.'

'It begins when we make a decision; a decision needs many facts that need to be reasoned; but what happens if we do not reason with all the facts; how can we then know what will happen even if our reasoning is correct; the other facts will happen if they are part of that decision; the other facts that were left out and we might not even be aware of will set off a string of consequences, for good or for ill, but which were never intended. We live in a complex world and cannot be expected to know all the facts, so we must use in conjunction with reason a different mind tool other than reason; we sometimes call this intuition; intuition can be honed by the precepts of great philosophic traditions like Confucianism, Taoism and of course Buddhism; so it is said that the wise man takes knowledge from many sources. With our intuition

fully developed we simply know what the right decision is, and, we find we have the perfect rational that goes with it. Is this not how our minds work?'

'When I decided to become a partner of the Deputy Censor I was consumed by the desire of what he had to offer. I knew the dangers but reasoned that there was little chance of being caught. I ignored my intuition that was telling me that it was wrong and that I shouldn't do it.' Cao breaks down again and weeps.

'You have been listening to the wrong voice. Desire is also a part of our make-up; a part that seeks gratification but only for itself; it does not seek the wellbeing of the whole being; it can be a rogue part that destroys the harmony of the mind, and, without a harmonious mind, how can we make the right decision?. We can't.'

'If only I had met you before.'

'You have met me now, is that not enough? You are fortunate that the game is still in play and you can still do the right thing.'

'Do you believe this is true?'

'Indeed.'

'Then I must continue my journey to the caves of the Lingyan monastery and put my plan into action.'

Cao adjusts his load with purpose and sets off before turning back. 'I can but thank you for your assistance.'

'It is enough. And be not disturbed, you will find your way unhindered.'

Cao approaches the giant escarpment opposite the Lingyan Monastery, the Monastery being across the other side of the stream. There he finds an old monk on guard but who is fast asleep. He takes a torch from the side of the box the monk is sitting on then carries on his way. The path to the left that winds its way around the outcrop of rock has many cave entrances. He ignores these. Only when he comes to a staircase cut into the rock does he leave the path. Up on a different level he finds another path and takes a southerly direction.

Now he is above the trees and can see Kinsai in the distance with an evil glow emanating from behind the city walls. It makes him wonder what unintended consequences had brought this about and if his actions had anything to do with it. He searches for any connection but can find none. He turns away and enters a small cave.

Lighting the torch by flint and iron, he finds the narrow gap in an outcrop; the outcrop left to disguise an entrance to a tunnel. He has to remove his load and pull it in behind him. The tunnel twists and turns but always goes up. Arriving at the end he looks down into a big cave where a statue of the Reclining Buddha sits behind a pool of water.

Cao had asked permission from the Monastery to draw some of the carvings. The Buddhists had been delighted with the drawings he had presented them with. But the drawings of the Reclining Buddha he had kept for his eyes only. A necessity, in that he did not have permission to enter that particular cave. He feels a pang of conscience, a pang he had not felt at the time.

Making his way down a staircase cut into the rock he arrives at the side of the pool. Slings his load off, he drops to his knees and scoops up water covering his head and face. Looking up at the Buddha. 'Forgive me for this intrusion and the many that I have made in the past. My eyes were blind to your great wisdom and I have abused your hospitality. I return only to do the right thing so I hope you forgive me for what I am about to do.' With this he dives into the pool where the rings of water slowly dissipate and from where he does not return.

\*

## The Changing Lines

. Changing Line at the beginning means:

The ruler provides the energy.  
The superior man the organization.  
What cannot be achieved?  
Supreme success.

Changing Line in the second place means:  
Where Increase occurs which is in harmony  
With Tsao Hua,  
Whatever is undertaken  
Succeeds.  
This is the natural law!

Changing Line in the third place means:  
Success comes to even those who suffer unfortunate events.  
There is no blame in this,  
As long as they react with sincerity.

Changing Line at the top means:  
Those who refuse to be generous in times of Increase  
Bring opprobrium on themselves.  
Grave misfortune.



## **This Changing Line Delivers:**

### **The Well (19)**

==	==	
	=====	<b>Water</b>
==	==	
	=====	
	=====	<b>Wind/Wood</b>
==	==	

#### **THE IMAGE**

**Water rising through Wood:**

**The Image of THE WELL.**

**The superior man organizes the people**

**In the same manner as the tree organizes its parts.**

**Raising nourishment from the wellspring of his Inner Truth**

**He spreads it through civilization.**

**Success.**

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# CHAPTER 20

## Oppression (39)

The Song Dynasty  
1460 I.A.  
7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
After The Evening Drum

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===== Lake

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===== Water

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**The Image**

**The Lake drains of Water:**

**The Image of OPPRESSION.**

**The superior man protects his spirit by remaining cheerful.**

**Thus he escapes from an Oppressive fate.**

\*

“Mencius said, ‘All men have the mind which cannot bear the suffering of others. The ancient kings had this mind and therefore they had a government that could not bear the suffering of the people. When a government that cannot bear to see the suffering of the people is conducted from a mind that cannot bear to see the suffering of others, the government of the Empire will be as easy as making something go around in the palm.

‘When I say that all men have the mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: Now, when men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they all have a feeling of alarm and distress, not to gain friendship with the child’s parents, nor to seek the praise of their neighbours and friends, nor because they dislike the reputation if they did not. From such a case, we see that a man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man; a man without the feeling of shame and dislike is not a man; a man without the feeling of deference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of deference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Men have these Four Beginnings just as they have their four limbs. Having these Four Beginnings, but saying that they cannot develop them is to destroy themselves. When they say that their ruler cannot develop them, they are destroying their ruler. If anyone with these Four Beginnings in him knows how to give them the fullest extension and development, the result will be like fire beginning to burn or a spring beginning to shoot forth. When they are fully developed, they will be sufficient to protect all people within the four seas. If they are not developed, they will not be sufficient even to serve one’s parents.’”

From the Mencius – 2A:6

The Great Hall of the Prince of Heaven has been transformed. In between the giant gilded columns many low tables cover the floor. Scribes and scholar officials exercising their duties sit behind them while messengers stand in front or dash from one place to another.

On the diesis Lizong holds court around a large high table on which there is a map of the city. Standing next to him is Wang Chi dressed only in his orders gold edged purple.

Lizong draws an invisible line with his finger across the north east section of Kinsai, ‘Everything above this line is already lost, you say.’

‘Everything. But it is much worse than that, the north east breeze has strengthened and the fire spreads out of control towards the centre.’ Wang Chi says this without

taking his eyes from the map, even when Lizong is looking at him.

'The time has come to bring the army in. Take an edict to General Liu,' Lizong beckons one of the scribes from the line that edges the daises, 'to General Liu' he dictates, 'bring the army in as quickly as you can. Send the baggage train with the army's bivouac to Phoenix Hill. Take the northern route around the outside of the city walls for this task. Once you have set up your command post inform me and I will send a team of administrators to assist. Lizong.'

The scribe finishes and passes the watermarked paper to Lizong who stamps it with a large seal in red ink. He signs his name across this, then after the scribe has dried the ink, he passes the edict to Wang Chi. 'Return via the fire so you may update me on your return.'

Wang Chi bows and calmly leaves the hall via a side entrance.

Lizong calmly moves on to the next task. 'Minister of Personnel, Yuan K'ang, your presence is required.'

The Minister, who has been waiting in the wings, steps forward, joining Lizong at the table.

'Have you the list we drew up for such an eventually?'

Producing the list he hands it to Lizong who reads it through. 'Any further suggestions?'

The Minister is full of confidence. 'We have a full complement, Zhao Yun, with several understudies to assist where necessary. Their teams are already assembled and awaiting instruction.'

Lizong finally lifts his head from the list and turns to the Minister. 'With the right personnel, in the right places, at the right time, how can we fail?' His smile is echoed by that of the Minister. 'Make sure that all of the Ministers know that you are to be furnished with all of the relevant information. Your role is central to resolving this disaster.'

The Minister bows and leaves the daises to inform those in the hall.

Next, Lizong turns to the Captain of the Palace Guard, who stands but a few paces away with two guards. 'You have heard that I have ordered General Liu to bring his mobile encampment to Phoenix Hill. This is not for the army but for all those made homeless by the fire. An area must be secured for this very purpose, I entrust the Palace Guard to carry this out.'

The Captain bows. 'It would be best to have the encampment as close to both the West Lake and the western most canal for the ease of provision.'

'Indeed.' Lizong looks at the Captain. 'The Abbot of the Lingyan Monastery is to provide another area south east of the monastery for the injured. Make sure that all those fleeing through the Six Bells Gate are directed to Phoenix Hill. Only the injured and those that have already fled should be allowed to stay at the monastery.'

The Captain bows again and leaves, leaving the two guards behind.

Shi, Bao and Tai enter the hall and quickly make their way to the dais.

Lizong looks up as they arrive on the stage. 'The Night Watch have informed me about the assassins' demise, so spare me those details. How goes the investigation?'

The three newly arrived have bowed to the horizontal before Shi starts. 'I wish to be granted permission to return to my position in the northern province of Kinsai. My duty lies there.'

'Your position has already been filled, so permission is refused. So what news from the investigation?'

Shi presents Bao who is still carrying the bronze rubbing. Bao steps forward and says while presenting Lizong with the rubbing. 'It is possibly not for the eyes of those gathered.'

Taking the rubbing he turns and enters a room at the back of the dais. 'What is this?'

Waiting until the door is shut behind them Bao finally answers. 'It is a letter to you.'

Intrigued, Lizong unrolls the rubbing, making a fuss about the charcoal on his hands. 'What is this?'

'It is a bronze rubbing of the bronze tablet, Difficulty at the Beginning. It is meant as proof of the existence of the other 63 tablets of the original I. If you read what is written you will soon understand.'

His facial expression goes through a series of near contortions before he bursts out laughing. 'This fellow has a brave sense of humour. Who is this, De Cao?'

'He is an artist, but more importantly he was the Deputy Censor's partner in the antiques business.'

'Ah, ha, now it makes sense.' Then after a reflective moment, 'What chance is there that he has the original I Zhou?'

'It is possible.' Shi replies.

'It is probable.' Bao replies before continuing. 'He has the other sixty three rubbings as proof of the existence of the bronze tablets.'

'Or so he claims.' Shi adds.

'And what say you, Wu Tai?'

'If it is true that he has all sixty three rubbings then it is almost certain he has in his possession the original I. The amount of work for such a forgery would surely be prohibitive.'

'Indeed.' Lizong reflects. 'You must take this and compare it with the bronze tablet in the Library. If it is conclusive, then you must hang the lantern as he stipulates.'

'Surely you will not bargain with this scoundrel?' Shi is indignant.

Lizong smiles while handing the rubbing to Bao. 'Inform your noble friend that such a prize is welcome from any source. De Cao's life is a small price to pay for the original I. Would you not say, Shao Bao?'

'Indeed.'

They follow Lizong out onto the dais where he turns to them. 'Thank you for this interlude, a little light entertainment in the middle of a disaster is always welcome.' He beams a benevolent smile at them before returning to work.

They bow and leave.

\*

They bow and have the return from the Head Librarian.

He shows them into the room where the bronze tablet lies on a high table. Unrolling the rubbing, Bao stretches it out on top of the tablet; an exact match. The hieroglyphs match perfectly as well. There are even wax marks on the tablet that correspond exactly with wax marks on the back of the rubbing.

'There can be little doubt that this rubbing came from this tablet.' The Head Librarian looks for confirmation.

'Indeed.' Shi answers with Bao and Tai agreeing.

'It is written here that he has all sixty four rubbings and a complete copy of the original I Zhou in book form. Who is this person?'

'Unfortunately we are not at liberty to divulge that information. However, and all in good time, Master Librarian, I am sure Bao will reveal the full story to you. Until then, keep it safe.' Shi bows and they all bow.

\*

'A red paper-moon lantern is to be hung from the top floor of the, Thunder Point Pagoda, on the northern most point, is that what you are saying?' The caretaker is in a state of disbelief. His weak eyes turn from one to the other, before turning back to Shi. 'Magistrate, I am only the caretaker, the workers have gone to fight the fire and so there is only this weak and decrepit man you see before you.'

'Then we will have to hang the lantern, for hung it must be.' Shi says this more to Bao and Tai.

'I will show you the way.'

The Caretaker leads them out onto the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the pagoda and shows them the long poles with the hooks on the end that are used in changing both the lamps and the paper-moon lanterns. The lamps sit inside the lanterns and both hang from different hooks on the ends of the pointed roof beams.

'A little more to the left, brave master.' The Caretaker says this to Bao who is standing on the rail with Tai and Shi holding onto his legs. 'You have it hooked! Now lift.'

Bao lifts the long pole from the very end with the lantern swinging precariously at the other end. A gust of wind catches inside the lantern and soon the lantern is winging its way across the West Lake.

'By the few hairs I have left on my poor head you must be more careful, brave master.' The old man leans on the rail and holds his head in his hands.

Bao gets down and they all watch as the lantern is blown around like a mad thing.

'It's a metaphor for life. The celestial wind blows and man is cast this way and that. Not knowing where he will land, that is, if he ever does.' Shi says this with the correct reflective tones to enhance the solemn sincerity of the sentiment.

The Caretaker suddenly straightens up. 'See, see, it jumps about and soon will be passing over the Lingyan Monastery.' He points and then holds his head in despair.

'Dear friend do not take on so. It is only a lantern.' Shi tries comforting him.

'Besides, if it is heading for the Lingyan Monastery, the monks may yet rescue it. Then it will become a metaphor for salvation.' Tai chimes in with not just a little humour.

The old man takes comfort in this and tries a weak smile that is unfortunate in that his teeth are all rotten in his head.

'Come, let us continue.' Bao says this as he approaches the flat red paper-moon that they have brought with them.

It is bigger than the other lanterns that hang in perfusion from the pagoda and once it is pulled into the spherical it takes them all to hold onto it in the sprightly wind.

After Bao refuses to return to the rail the old man is inspired. 'Wait, wait, we have been doing this all wrong.' He dashes off and returns with a wider bamboo pole. 'That first pole will slide into this one, making it long enough for us all to hold while remaining on the floor.'

They soon have the making of the play and the lantern soon has the lamp inside of it. Quickly followed by the ring on the lantern secured on the hook of the pointed roof beam.

Having returned the pole to the floor of the pagoda, all four lean against the rail looking up at the red paper-moon lantern as it swings to the rhythms of the wind.

'The Emperor has chosen a strange way to announce the fire, but at least it will be visible to everyone around the West Lake.' Shi and Bao share a knowing smile over the old man's head. 'Now you must excuse me as I must return to my post; the doors are all left open.' He disappears down the stairs.

'So what are we to do now?' Bao says as he turns to Shi.

'I suggest we return to our families to make sure they are well, and if possible, get some rest.'

'Tell your families that they are welcome at the Ink Stone. The teahouse is too close to the palace to suffer from the fire.'

Shi and Bao bow to Tai's generous offer.

After walking through the park after leaving the Thunder Point Pagoda, they arrive at a junction where Shi departs for the Six Bells Gate. Bao waits until he's out of view before pouncing on Tai and stealing a kiss. 'And what is this you have pressed into my hand? Is it a young cucumber or perhaps a small, nay, a very small marrow?'

'Tai, you have little idea how the sap rises in my loins, take pity on me, a poor hapless man.'



Tai twists his penis with force, producing a pained reaction, 'Oww! What have I done to deserve this?'

'My grandmother told me that causing pain to the pleasure seeking snake reduces the pleasure to what it is attached to. You can surely see what a wise woman she is?'

Bao doesn't appreciate Tai's grin as he holds his penis after she has left go. He is then forced to watch as she heads south to pass around the bottom of Phoenix Hill. After she has disappeared from view, head down, he heads down the path that leads to the, West Gate.

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Lizong is talking to a scholar official on the daises with a scribe in attendance. 'Take an edict to all of the gunpowder makers and have their stores placed on carts and have these carts lined up on the Imperial Way as far from the fire as possible. They must await instruction from General Liu when he arrives.' He thinks for a moment. 'You,' he points at the scholar official, 'must find General Liu when he first arrives and inform him about the situation in regard to the gunpowder.'

Wang Chi arrives through a side door and having caught Lizong's eye they both retire to the room at the back of the daises.

Once inside Wang Chi makes his report. 'General Liu is on his way. He will arrive with cavalry shortly after midnight. The rest of the army will arrive before the early morning drum.'

'Let us hope they are in time. Did you see the fire?'

'The wind has increased its potency. I'm afraid The Prime Minister is not up to the job as chaos rules where order should.'

'It cannot be helped.' Lizong sags. 'I have organized the running of the Empire by placing the best men in the right places. My Prime Ministers, since Shih Mi-Yuan, have been chosen for their competence in dealing with the day to day running of state affairs. This one, however, was placed in this position for other reasons, as well you know.'

'The fire was an unforeseen event, and, a consequence of our own actions. A good example of how interfering in the changes that govern the natural world can have these unforeseen consequences.'

'As soon as General Liu arrives he will replace our Prime Minister in charge of extinguishing the fire. I will reassign him to taking care of the refugees on Phoenix Hill where he can do little harm, and perhaps, even do some good.'

Wang Chi puts on a hopeful face. 'Let's hope so as these people have already lost their homes and belongings.'

Lizong can see that Wang Chi wants to say something more, 'Well, place it before me.'

'I don't know how to tell you this, so I will simply speak forth. It may be that we have a rogue member of our order. A young man of some talent that has taken to acting alone. A man who was given specific orders and decided to interpret those orders in his own way.'

'Are we talking about the Ningbo incident?'

'Indeed. And other ... events.'

'That's all we need, a member of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor acting alone. Can he be terminated?'

'Only with great difficulty.' Wang Chi looks about the room as if expecting the man to materialize.

'He's not here now?' Says Lizong with just a little apprehension.

'Not as far as I can tell.'

Lizong is not pleased with what he is hearing. 'I haven't time for this at present. The fire must come before everything. You, the guardians of the Yellow Emperor's wisdom, must deal with this.'

Wang Chi bows as Lizong returns to the dais.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
A fated adversity overcomes an individual  
Who retreats into despair.  
Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
A man suffering from internal oppression  
Overcomes his despair by an external direction.  
Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:  
A man suffers despair inwardly  
While facing outward adversity.  
Grave misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the fifth Place means:  
Oppression above and below in society.  
The superior man retreats into self-cultivation  
Until the situation changes.**

**Changing Line at the top means:  
The oppression comes from without;  
At first despair.**

\*

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**The Clinging Fire (20)**

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== == Fire

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== == Fire

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**THE IMAGE**

**Fire clinging Fire:**

**The Image of THE CLINGING FIRE.**

**Thus the superior man develops the brightness of his spirit,**

**So he can illuminate the principles of the unseen world.**

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# CHAPTER 21

## Dispersion (40)

The Song Dynasty  
1460 I.A.  
7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
After The Midnight Drum

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Wind/Wood

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Water

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### THE IMAGE

The Wind carries the Rain:

The Image of DISPERSION.

Penetrating to the core of his Inner Truth

The superior man finds that the

Greatest of all its attributes is spirit;

That which unites all things in union.

\*

“In the great beginning, there was non-being. It had neither being nor name. The One originates from it; it has oneness but not yet physical form. When things obtain it and come into existence, that is called virtue. That which is formless is divided into Yin and Yang, and from the very beginning going on without interruption is called destiny. Through movement and rest it produces all things. When things are produced in accordance with li (principle), there is physical form. When the physical form embodies and preserves the spirit so that all activities follow their own specific principles, that is nature. By cultivating ones nature one will return to virtue. When virtue is perfect, one will be one with the beginning. Being one with the beginning, one becomes vacuous, and being vacuous, one becomes great. One will then be united with the sound and breath of things. When one is united with the sound and breath of things, one is then united with the universe. This unity is intimate and seems to be stupid and foolish. This is called profound and secret virtue, this is complete harmony.”

From the Chuang Tzu – Chapter 12. The Nature and Reality of Tao - NHCC, 5:8b-9b

He is short. His round head sits on his round body just like a child's snowman. The armour he wears accentuates this impression. The face is flat, the eyes just slits, the mouth just a larger slit beneath a snubbed nose. Yet, in spite of this, General Liu manages to cut a heroic figure sat on his Arab stallion at the head of the cavalry.

As he passes through the Yuhang Gate the fleeing population stop to watch his arrival, they do so in silence.

Two of his advance party greet him at the gate and with their tall banners unfurled they clear a path through a river of desolate humanity, forcing them back against the buildings.

Arriving at one of the tallest buildings on the west side of the city the General dismounts and strides up 5 floors of staircases. His arrival produces much bowing as they show him out onto a veranda with a clear view of the burning city in the east.

In places the flames reach up 50 metres, in a series of peaks along the skyline. There are smaller fires spread like a rash across the dark face of Kinsai. It is possible to see people fighting these fires at the nearest ones; ant like behaviour in silhouette against the flames. The air above the fire is pockmarked with burning embers spreading the deadly contagion south west across the city.

General Liu takes it all in then without turning around. 'Set up a map room out here on the veranda.'

A flurry of movement belies the well-organized machine of the general staff as they carry out his orders in silence. When the movement has stopped, he turns to a high table covered with a map of the city. 'Where are we on this map?'

An adjunct drives a needle through the map into the table below. He then attaches the General's monogram to the needle with wax.

'Now show me the area the fire has already consumed.'

A scribe marks out the area in red ink.

General Liu returns to the veranda's rail and sticks his hand out feeling for the direction of the wind.

Returning to the map he takes the scribes pen and draws a big arrow from the centre of the fire in a south westerly direction across the city. Using his fingers like compasses he travels the length of the red arrow marking off the distances with red flicks. Counting out from the frontline of the fire he first chooses the third flick and then the fourth. 'Give me a straight edge.'

The adjunct passes him a wooden ruler.

He draws a line at right angles to his arrow of the fires direction; he draws a thick red line right across the map. Turning to those gathered. 'Everything north easterly from this line will be abandoned to the fire and here' he draws a zigzagging line in black that follows the streets and lanes just north of the thick red line, 'in between the red line and black is where we must demolish the buildings, thus make a fire break for the advancing fire.' He allows his general staff a few moments to grasp his plan. 'The buildings for demolition must be marked out so that when the army arrives it will know what is for demolition. Am I making myself clear on this matter?'

A general murmur of agreement is followed by a uniform bow from all those present.

'Then about your tasks.' General Liu turns once more to the fire on the skyline. 'Fetch my horse I will view the

fire close up.' As he turns he sees Prime Minister, Su Chi-ming arrive. They bow to each other. 'Prime Minister, under instruction from the Emperor, I am to take over fighting the fire. Lizong has reassigned you to taking care of those displaced by the fire. I believe the headquarters for this essential action is on Phoenix Hill.'

The relief on the Prime Minister's face is writ large. 'I wish you the luck of Chuang Tzu, General Liu, you will need it to stop this fire.'

His cheeks puff out and the line of a mouth widens and curls up at the ends into a smile. 'Chuang Tzu was not lucky, he followed the Tao and allowed the light of Nature to illuminate his path. I will follow his example and luck will be seen for what it is: the unseen movement of Tao acting through Heaven on the earth. Now, I hope you will excuse me, there is much work to be done.' With this, and after the courtesy of bows, he leaves.

\*

General Liu and part of his general staff pull out of a trot and come to a stop at a crossroads. The slow moving line of evacuees blocks the road ahead. Beyond this the fire can be seen at the very far end of the street they are on. Great flames shoot into the air spreading their deadly embers far and wide. Lines of people carrying buckets of water from the canal pass their loads to people on ladders who are busy drenching the buildings.

'Nothing will further us by approaching the fire any closer. All of these buildings must be abandoned, for in truth they cannot be saved. Send out a squadron to evacuate the people who live here.' General Liu holds out 3 fingers to his side, and is joined by 3 members of the general staff. 'We will need more saws than we have brought with us; take a squadron and scour the city for carpenters and their equipment. Have them start immediately along the black line.' The cavalry office peels away and is replaced by another. 'Take a squadron to the southernmost end of the Imperial Way and bring the gunpowder up to the black line and at regular intervals along it.' The cavalry office peels off. 'Take a message to the Emperor informing him of my actions. And take a copy of my plan. Tell him that if all goes well we will save most of the city; the exact measure of which is unknown.' The cavalry office peels off.



He watches as his cavalry daub the buildings with black paint and sees a resident arguing with one of the soldiers.

The man sees the General and runs up to him. 'I beg you General to save my home. The fire is some way off and we have soaked the building.'

'You will take your family and neighbours and what possessions they can carry and take them to Phoenix Hill. Stay away from the main roads as they are all blocked with escaping people.' The man goes to say something but is cut off by the General. 'You will obey or you will die. Now go!'

The man, with tears pouring down his cheeks drops to his knees in despair.

General Liu shouts. 'Get this fool out of here and if he refuses to leave, kill him publically; as a lesson to all those who would defy my orders.'

The man is visually shocked by this but allows himself to be lifted from the ground and marched back to his building where he is thrust inside.

'Bring forth the map.'

Two of the general staff ride alongside of General Liu and stretch out the map between them so he can see the play.

'The black line stretches down this road for a block then swings east.' He points in the direction the mass of people in front of him are moving. 'Clear a way for our progress.'

The cavalry push through the crowds forcing those still coming from the north to stop and those carrying on south to squeeze into the side. Cavalrymen paint that side of the street with black paint as the column progresses. Arriving at the next junction they turn left and carry on until they arrive at the crossing over the central canal.

On the bridge the General stops the column. 'This canal is a natural firebreak, the distance is too great for the flames to reach across, indeed, I now suspect all the canals are such. Bring forth the map.'

Once again General Liu traces their progress on the map with his finger. 'Hand me a brush with black ink.'

He alters the black line on the map so it includes all the canals in the direction of the previous black line. 'This will save us time in demolishing buildings.'

Having completed his alterations to the map he takes the cavalry over the bridge and down the east side of the canal until he comes to the next bridge. He passes over the road that crosses the canal and continues down south alongside of the canal until he arrives at the next bridge where he turns east. Forcing their way through the fleeing crowds; crowds running in fear; General Liu can see what their panic is based on; the fire here, has spread further south west than at any other point.

'Things were going far too well.' He says this more to himself, although those surrounding him here this. 'This spur of flame must be tackled now.' He turns around to his general staff. 'Bring up 2 carriages of gunpowder as quickly as you can. We will make our stand here.'

He dismounts with a flourish, calling for tea, then to his dismounting general staff. 'For many of you this will be your first taste of battle. The enemy may not be conventional but it is just as dangerous as any Mongolian horde. Learn the lessons here and they will stand you in good stead for the future.' He looks at his men and is pleased with their confident demeanour. 'It is sometime since we left our camp, so let us take sustenance and have a rest before the battle begins.'

\*

Lizong is trying to map the map that General Liu has just sent him onto the skyline he has before him. Although he is on one of the highest verandas in the palace it is still not enough to give him enough elevation to see the city like a landscape; the streets are too closely packed together. There's only one thing to do. 'Fetch my horse and a squadron of the Palace Guard to the main entrance of the Main Hall.'

As he passes through the Main Hall he is accosted by scholar officials asking for permission, a seal or information. His progress slows till it comes to a halt.

Zhao Tan, the Emperor's nephew hurries into the hall. With only a cursory bow he launches into a speedy monologue. 'The Prime Minister is creating chaos at the city of tents. I beg you uncle let me take charge. I can do little harm in comparison.'

'So you wish to prove yourself as a great administrator?'

Zhao Tan gives a full bow.

'I think I have everyone in their right place, except of course for our illustrious Prime Minister. There is, however, nothing to fear from that quarter as the Captain of the Palace Guard will assume command if things go drastically wrong.' He rests his hand on his nephew's shoulder and gives him a winning smile. 'If it is experience you want then why not take over from me.' He turns and addresses the hall in a loud voice. 'While I go to assess the fire first hand, my nephew, Zhao Tan, will fulfil my functions until my return.'

Tan is in a state of shock.

Lizong turns to the scribes lined up behind him. 'Make sure he knows the correct seals to use for which purpose. And forget modesty, you all know the situation as well as I do. So help my young nephew make the right decision.'

They bow in unison.

Hardly able to suppress a laugh at Tan's facial expression; one more suited to a child than the supreme commander of the crisis, Lizong leaves the hall with these words. 'Let all those under Heaven obey the Prince of Heaven's order: Zhao Tan is my mouthpiece while I am gone.'

Before Tan can say anything Lizong has gone and he is surrounded by scribes wanting things he has never even heard of.

\*

Shi having past through the Six Bells Gate and having walked quickly to his parent's house arrived just as he made up his mind about something that had been bothering him. He then had turned around and made his way to the Drum and Bell teahouse.

He arrives, as always in speed, and enters the teahouse like a mini tornado. Guests and singing girls jump to their feet and bow.

'Are the rooms that I visited today still undisturbed?'

'They are as you left them.' Says the singing girl who showed them the rooms.

Shi takes little time in reaching the rooms. The singing girl soon has the doors open and the lamps lit. 'Shall I wait, Magistrate?'

'Indeed.'

He quickly goes through De Cao's room where there is little evidence of his presence. The man from the north's room is, however, filled with objects that he had brought from the north. He opens a bag filled with clothes and searches it with a skilled precision; nothing. He examines objects and in particular a book he finds; nothing. He turns to the girl in the hall, who, seeing the book in his hand, suddenly remembers, and places a hand over her mouth.

'What is it girl?'

The singing girl throws herself on the ground at his feet. 'The man from the north left a package with me, I'm sorry, I forgot. With the fire and the confusion ...'

'Stop jabbering and bring it to me, now.'

The girl is gone in an instant.

Shi drops to the floor and scans the room at that level. He sees something tucked into the corner made by the bed and the wall. He retrieves it and unrolls it; it is a black belt very similar to the one used by scholar officials in the civil service. Once unrolled he halves it and lets it dangle between his fingers; it is the exact length of those used by scholar officials.

He's still pondering the meaning of this when the singing girl returns. She drops to her knees placing the book to her forehead before outstretching her arms to present it to Shi.

Shi throws the belt on the bed and takes it then using a knife from his sleeve he quickly cuts the string that binds the hessian. Breaking the wax seals he reveals a book. And what a book, an 11<sup>th</sup> century copy of the classic, The Great Learning. On the inside of the cover is written a memorial: In honour of Li Guo for obtaining the Jinshi exam on a first attempt.

Had he himself not received such a book, and yes, his first black belt, when he first passed his Jinshi exam. It had been the tradition for centuries. He rolls the belt up and puts it in his sleeve pocket; a smile playing on his face.

'Kneel on the bed girl.'

The girl leaps on the bed and immediately raises her skirts baring her buttocks.

'Now spread your cheeks.'

The girls obeys immediately. Shi lifts his skirts revealing his aroused member. Allowing the tip of his penis to enter her vagina, he looks up to the skyline through the open door. The flames, now closer, seem to inflame his ardour and he thrusts his penis deep into her with force.

\*

General Liu is crouched down in a doorway when he hears a commotion behind him. He turns to see Palace Guards clearing a way through the fleeing crowds at the last junction before the frontline of the fire.

He runs out into the road, the heat of the fire, not more than 50 metres behind him, scorches his armour. He runs with surprising speed to the oncoming Palace Guard waving his arms wildly.

'Get back! The entire block on the frontline is about to explode!'

The Palace Guard pull up and Lizong rides through.  
'Greetings General Liu, are we not safe here?'

'Indeed you are not.' He points to a building near where they face each other. 'We must take shelter immediately, there are 70 casks of gun powder primed to explode.'

Lizong and the Palace guard dismount in haste and enter the building. They have hardly entered when the explosion knocks them all off their feet. And just as they are recovering another explosion sends them all reeling.

Burning debris starts falling from the sky providing a dangerous firework display only a matter of a few metres away.

'If I knew you were having such fun I would have come sooner.' Lizong jokes.

'What folly. Your presence here is a danger to us all. Have you such little regard for the celestial game that you endanger your life?' General Liu returns.

Lizong laughs. 'Nothing will befall me while you ...' The explosion is the biggest yet and both men are sent flying; ending up in a heap pressed against a wall.

'What was that you were saying?'

'Only that ...' Lizong is cut off by not just another explosion but a whole series of explosions.

The ground trembles and vibrates so it's impossible for them to stay on their feet. They bounce around like peas placed in a red hot pan. The debris now falling outside is much larger than before until an entire roof beam penetrates the wall upstairs then the ceiling of the room they're in then the floor they are on; missing them by just a few metres.

'I was saying ...' The final explosion is the mother of them all, shaking the building they are in from its foundations. It sways, finally coming to a stop leant over.

'Quickly, they must have sawn through the uprights of the building. The whole place will come down.' General Liu grabs at Lizong and half drags him outside.

They stand in a transformed world. Most of the buildings have either collapsed or are in a state of collapse as far back as where the fire was.

General Liu turns to the opposite direction and shouts. 'Get the lines of water carriers down here now!' He pulls Lizong away from his position in the middle of the road, and in so doing awakens him from a state of near paralysis. 'Now you have seen the enemy, perhaps you will return to the palace and safety.'

They both stagger up the road into onrushing soldiers and civilians carrying buckets and ladders. They finally make the junction and stop to look back.

'The fire will not remain extinguished for long so they must drench the embers and soak the timber before the clinging fire reignites.' He turns to Lizong and shouts. 'This is far too dangerous for the Emperor.'

'You will have to speak up as I seem to have gone deaf. There's an intense ringing in my head. Is this normal?'

General Liu groans. 'Normal for what.' Then he turns sarcastic. 'A pleasant walk through a raging battle, perhaps.'

Lizong delivers the look of incomprehension again. 'What?'

General Liu has had enough and decides it's time for drastic action where the Emperor is concerned. He takes a bucket of water from a man in the waterline and throws it over the Emperor.

'Why did you do that?' Lizong says after getting over the shock.

'There were burning embers on your garments.'

Lizong points to his ears and shakes his head in incomprehension. General Liu leans in towards him and shouts. 'There were burning embers on your garments!'

Lizong finally comprehends and tries desperately to remove his outer garment but his belt is knotted. Seeing his chance, the General summons the Palace Guard. 'Take your master home, he has become deaf by the explosions and also slightly ... confused. He needs to rest.'

The Palace Guard stop Lizong from disrobing and taking him either side march him to where the horses are

tethered. Picking him up and placing him on his horse they take the reins and lead him away at speed.

The thin line of his mouth gives way to one curved at the ends and to what makes for a smile on the General's face. Turning to his men. 'The Emperor is safe, now do your duty and extinguish the fire.'

A great cheer goes up and squadrons of soldiers rush past the general and into battle.

★



## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
The situation calls for quick and vigorous action  
Before dispersion of one's allies begins.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
Dispersion of negative thoughts by self-cultivation brings  
Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:  
Dispersion of negative thoughts by external creativity brings  
Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
The situation is beyond hope;  
The superior man does not descend into despair.  
He disperses his allies far and wide  
So like seeds blown on the Wind,  
His ideas can find fertile ground.**

**Changing Line at the top means:  
The superior man saves his clan from grave danger  
By avoiding it head on,  
Then by dispersing it in multiple conflicts.  
Good fortune.**

**\***

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Revolution (21)**

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==  ==
===== Lake
=====
=====
==  == Fire
=====

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**THE IMAGE**

**Fire in the Lake:**

**The Image of REVOLUTION.**

**The old order resists the necessary change.**

**As such the moment has arrived where violent conflict is inevitable**

**\***

## CHAPTER 22

### Youthful Folly (42)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 8<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Midday Drum

\*

=====

== == Mountain

== ==

== ==

===== Water

== ==

#### THE IMAGE

Water springs up from the foot of the Mountain:

The Image of YOUTHFUL FOLLY.

Eventually the Water rises to cover the Mountain

But only after it has filled in every hollow, hill and valley.

Likewise Youth must attain all knowledge before becoming a sage.

\*

“Although the universe is vast, its transformation is uniform. Although the myriad things are many, their order is one. Although people are numerous their ruler is the sovereign. The sovereign traces his origin to virtue, and attains his perfection in Nature. Therefore it is said that in the cases of sovereigns of high antiquity, no action was undertaken and the Empire was in order. That was because of their natural virtue. When speech is seen through the point of Tao, the name of the sovereign of the world becomes correct. When functions and ranks are seen through Tao, the distinction between the ruler and the minister becomes clear. When ability is seen through Tao, the offices of the Empire become regulated. When all things in general are seen through Tao, the response of things to each other becomes complete. Therefore it is virtue that penetrates Heaven and Earth, and it is Tao that operates in all things. Government by the ruler means human affairs, and when ability is applied to creative activities, it means skill. Skill is commanded by human affairs, human affairs are commanded by the distinction of functions, distinction is commanded by virtue, virtue is commanded by Tao, and Tao is commanded by Nature. Therefore it is said that ancient rulers of Empires had no desires and the Empire enjoyed sufficiency. They undertook no action and yet all things were transformed. They were deep and tranquil and all their people were calm. The Record says, ‘When one is identified with the One, all things will be complete with him. When he reaches the point of having no subjective feelings, spiritual beings will submit to him.’

The Grand Master Confucius said, ‘Tao covers and supports all things. How overflowing great! The ruler should cast away his mind. To act without taking any action means Nature. To speak without any action means virtue. To love people and benefit all things means humanity. To identify with all without losing his own identity means greatness. To behave without purposely showing any superiority means broadness. To possess an infinite variety means richness. Therefore to adhere to virtue is called discipline. To realize virtue means strength. To be in accord with Tao means completeness. And not to yield to material things is called perfection. If a superior man understands these ten points, he surely makes up his mind and all the world will come to him like rushing water.’”

From the *Chuang Tzu* – Chapter 12 – No. 5: Tao as Transformation and One.  
(NHCC, 5:1a-3a)

Shi and Bao stand on, *The Rotten Eggs Bridge*, over, *The Grand Canal*. On the west side that they have just come from the buildings are all intact; on the other side all that remains are blackened mounds of smouldering wooden beams. A desolate landscape as far as the eye can see.

They are not alone. Soldiers and ordinary citizens pack the bridge, having come to witness the devastation. A line of soldiers in festive mood block the eastern end of the bridge to stop any who would be foolish enough to try to enter the burnt out remains of the city; one third having succumbed to the clinging fire.

'Were we really responsible for all this?' Asks Bao of Shi.

'Only as far as the law of unintended consequences is applied to our actions. And, as we did not intend for any of this to happen, then we are just poor innocent fools. If there is any blame then it must be placed squarely on the heads of the assassins that started the fire as part of their escape strategy. But I suspect that even they never planned this disaster.'

They turn away and push their way through the crowds. Once into less crowded streets they adopt the Daoxue gait and travel at speed through people in the joyous state of those reprieved from execution or recovering from some terrible disease.

They slow as they reach the Ink Stone. There she stands in mourning clothes her demeanour as cold as the wind on an icy winter's day. 'The midday drum has come, gone and is now part of history. Yet, here you are, arriving as if ...' Tai accepts their bow to the horizontal. Then moves off, as is the custom. Shi and Bao draw along either side of her.

'I have never seen such destruction. It was a landscape befitting one of the Buddhist's seven hells.' Says Bao in expansive mode.

'A place that would suit your person that you should tarry there so long.' Retorts Tai.

Bao knows he will suffer and have to be seen to suffer for his late arrival. 'Please Tai, we were overcome by the sheer magnitude of what has overcome our beautiful city. Swept away by the misery of our citizens we lost our bearings on this sea of change.'

'Did your weeping drain your body of its fluids and that is why your face is contorted like that of a warthog?'

Shi has to suppress a laugh as Bao's expression of grim remorse goes beyond the theatrical.

'Oh play your game, Master Librarian, I fear you have forgotten with whom you speak.'

'Tai, please, why not just whip me with a drover's leather. Your tongue should be reserved for someone more deserving.'

Shi has to look away as Tai glances at him. 'And I have not forgotten you, Master Magistrate. I have come to expect a total disregard for punctuality from my betrothed, but from someone who is the very embodiment of, *this culture of ours*, it is monstrous.'

Bao's body heaves with suppressed laughter as Shi endures Tai's spiky tongue. 'Was it not you who promised to instil self-cultivation in the mind of this wayward vagabond?' She cuts Shi off as he goes to reply. 'There is little point in denying it as I was present when you made this extravagant claim.'

All Shi can do is sigh.

Like two naughty boys they fall in behind Tai as she sets off at a blistering pace.

\*

They come into the secret valley by way of a cart track half way up the valley side. Rounding a tight bend they are confronted by what appears to be a village a little below where they stand. But there has never been a village with such a rich variety of buildings with varying numbers of floors. They surround an ornamental lake that is pinched in the middle and where a fortified bridge stands out by its size and uselessness. The 2 pools either side of the bridge each have islands; one covered in lush vegetation and the other with a fortified house. Further up the valleys' sides other buildings are set into the very earth.

A procession can be seen winding its way from a Confucian temple near the lake up the hillside towards a cemetery on a promontory. The long flags on tall bamboo are freshly hung and so are without ragged edges. They flap in the breeze. Their percussion provides a backdrop to cymbals and bells carried by the mourners in between the seven bodies being carried by the Night Watch.

'See how late we are we must hurry and join the procession before it arrives at the graveyard.' Tai says

this as she sets off down the track that leads to this unique village.

'If we take this side track that skirts the hillside we can arrive before them and so welcome them as they arrive.'

Bao and Tai both look at Shi as he points out a hidden track.

'You have been here before?' Enquires Bao.

'Many times. But this is not the time or place to explain.' He sets off in the Daoxue gait with Bao quickly falling in behind and Tai having to run to keep up.

Shi is right and they are in position when the procession arrives. They bow in respect as each body passes. Falling in behind the last mourners.

\*

Having arrived back in the village Shi and Tai are engaged by members of the Night Watch. Bao seizes his chance to explore the training ground of both the Night Watch and their Shadows; their spying colleagues. The buildings he discovers have the dual function as administration offices as well as for assault training. 'But where do they all live?' Bao wonders.

He looks up at the buildings on the valleys side and soon finds a path that leads up to them. Looking in through open doors and windows he sees the domestic arrangement of their layout. Passing one door he sees what appears to be a young girl at her toilet. He stops to watch until the girl turns around; this is no girl but a woman; and not just any woman but the child-woman assassin that he was witness to escaping from the burning building. She quickly closes the door averting her face as she does so.

Bao continues as if nothing has happened. He ambles until finding an advantage point he sits down to appreciate the view of the mock village below.

A man joins him from the way he came. 'Master Librarian, your friends are looking for you.' His bow comes after his pronouncement, denoting a need for speed.

Returning the bow. 'As well they might.' Then after half a moment. 'Which is the best way down?'

'Follow me.' This is direction by action, and as such, as much an order as a request.

Bao follows the man down a different path to the one he came up on. He soon joins his friends and offers his commiserations to the Night Watch present.

They are offered refreshment during which Tai joins him. 'You are like an old man wandering off without so much as a farewell. Perhaps I will need to tether you as they do in Mongolia to their senile family members.'

'Then tether me to your bed with just enough play to allow for horizontal pleasures.' Tai is not amused but before she can say anything he continues. 'Come then, let us explore together. This imposing building over here seems open to the world.' Seeing her reluctance he forces her hand. 'With you to guide my actions what harm can I do?'

'You, who will find mischief where others find none, are a liability. I will first seek permission from our hosts.' She points at him. 'Stay right there.'

He gives her a mock bow that enrages her but she doesn't return the courtesy. Instead she visits a group of Night Watch and they assure her, her request is not a rudeness.

Bao falls in behind Tai as she passes. Entering the building they find a central hall with various weapons in great number attached to the walls. A space in amongst the armoury soon attracts Bao's attention for it contains a large board with room numbers and topics that are carried out in them. One catches Bao's eye: The Fellowship for the Study of the Art of War in Times of Invasion.

An elderly man, who looks like a scholar official because of his dress, is passing through the hall until he is hailed by Bao. 'Perhaps you can help us?'

After the customary bows the man stares at Tai while answering Bao. 'What is it you wish to know?'

'This Fellowship,' Bao points, 'I have never heard of it. What exactly does it do?'



'It was set up under the Emperor Gaozong after the Jürgen invasion of the north.' Seeing Tai's confusion he continues. 'The Emperor thought it a good idea to allow members of the bureaucracy, as these are the cleverest men in the Empire, to have their input on these matters rather than just leave it to the military men.' He finally takes his eyes off Tai and turns to Bao. 'But surely you must be Shao Bao, and of course, this must be the Lotus of Kinsai.' He beams a smile at Tai who gives him a small bow as a means of acknowledging that he is correct. He returns the bow before turning to Bao. 'But surely your friend,' he directs Bao's attention to Shi, via a raised arm, who has just entered the hall, 'must have told you about the Fellowship as he has been a member for some time?'

Bao's eyebrows twist like hairy caterpillars attacked by stinging ants. He adopts a confrontation stance by placing his fists on his hips as Shi approaches. 'Why, Magistrate, have you been so frugal with your information? You never told me that you were a member of this Fellowship.' He points at the board.

'You never asked.' Shi says with a superior tone.

'I never asked? How could I ask when I didn't know this Fellowship existed?' Bao says with exasperation.

'Well there we are then.' Shi pretends this provides the perfect reply.

The official intervenes to save conflict. 'Shao Bao, your friend provided a brilliant critique of the, Dalian Corridor, strategy. A brilliant analysis of why it wouldn't work.'

The official and Shi exchange bows.

'And what, exactly, is the, Dalian Corridor?'

'One of the many strategies for retaking the north from the Mongolians.' The official offers. 'Members of the Fellowship can either put forward a plan or offer critiques of those plans provided by their fellow members. Perhaps,' here he turns to Shi, 'it would be a good idea to engage Shao Bao in finding a solution.' He turns back to Bao. 'Your reputation at the Imperial College has not gone unnoticed. A wayward genius, I

believe, is how you were described by the Head of the Department of Policy Studies.'

Bao is surprised at this and not a little pleased.

'Please, do not inflate his arrogance, his opinion of himself is somewhat inflated, as it is.' Shi offers.

Bao offers a shocked expression, even if it is in a mock theatrical vein.

'A wayward genius is perhaps what is necessary to solve this most important problem.' The official directs this at Shi before turning to Bao. 'Why not turn your creative talents to this. Shi has all of the information in regard to Mongolian military potential as well as that of our own forces.'

Shi groans as he can see that Bao's interest has been roused.

'Let me digest this. You would like me to produce a plan of how we can unite the north and south under Chinese control?'

'You have put it perfectly.'

Shi rubs his forehead but manages to stifle another groan.

Bao seeing how he can annoy his friend smiles with perfect equanimity. 'Tell me, is there a time limit for this plan to work. Ten years, perhaps twenty years.'

'It was decided from the beginning that placing a time limit on such a plan would be folly.'

'I see.' Says Bao with satisfaction. 'I will do as you ask and I will give it my careful consideration.' Then turning the tables on Shi. 'If I had known about this I would have turned my attention to the problem long ago. You don't have to be a member of the, War Faction, to want to reunite the Empire.'

'Well said.' The official exclaims with genuine enthusiasm.

Shi can't suppress the groan and looks at Tai who is all smiles. 'Please Tai don't encourage him in this. You know what he is like when distracted from his studies.'

'You forget Shi, Bao is now a Palace Official, and as such, does not need to study at the Imperial College. Perhaps, as our friend here has suggested, it might take a wayward genius to solve such a problem.'

Bao is enjoying himself at the discomfort of his friend and beams a smile to one and all.

Shi surrenders. 'Perhaps you are right.' He turns from Tai to Bao. 'I will give you what you need, but, not until after we have solved our present investigation. Agreed.'

'Agreed.' They bow to each other in formal agreement.

\*

As the 3 friends enter the Ink Stone, Tai peels off wishing to change from her mourning clothes while Shi and Bao sit on the first floor balcony overlooking Phoenix Hill.

They sit in reverse position to the last time they were here. They sit in silence for a while before Shi expresses his concern. 'We have come to an impasse in the investigation. All the leads we have followed have either run their course, or, they have been blocked by the unforeseen consequences of life. The leads we have left are more to do with the recovery of the original I. The murder of the Deputy Censor is perhaps tied to the I Zhou but it may well not, and, indeed, it may be acting as a decoy.' Having been resting against the seats cushioned back, Shi places his feet on the ground and leans forward in Bao's direction so best not to be overheard. 'I returned to the Drum and Bell last night and found two objects belonging to the man from the north.' On hearing this Bao adopts Shi's position and leans in close so their heads are close enough to whisper. 'I found a scholar official's belt, and, an early copy of The Great Learning, with an inscription written in the traditional form. The form that was used extensively when Kaifeng was the capital of the Empire. Placing the writing form to one side, this tradition is the very same tradition that we use to this day. Were you and I not given copies of

one of the classics when we graduated from the Jinshi examination?’

‘What are you suggesting? That this man from the North was a scholar official working under Mongolian rule.’

‘What other explanation can there be.’

Bao ponders this for a while. ‘If he is a scholar official from the bureaucracy of the North, perhaps they are trying to get in touch with our scholar officials to supply us with information to help to destroy the Mongolians.’

‘Perhaps, but why not make a direct approach. Why go to all of the subterfuge of trying to sell a copy of the original I Zhou if what you want is to contact us.’

‘It makes little sense based on what we know. Perhaps there are other factors that we are, as yet, unaware.’

‘You are almost certainly right. Successful reasoning is dependent on the facts that are reasoned. Leave any of the facts out and false reasons can be the only outcome. As such we will have to leave this until we are sure we have all the facts.’

Bao agrees by thoughtfully nodding his head, then after a while. ‘I also have news. While we were at the village of the Night Watch and their Shadows, I took a walk up on the hillside where they live. As I past an open door I saw the child-woman assassin that escaped.’

Shi is greatly disturbed by this. ‘Are you certain?’

‘I got a good look at her as she slipped down the rope to freedom. I got a good look at her through the open door. It was her. And, it goes a long way to explaining how she managed to escape the Night Watch. Indeed, without their connivance, she could never have escaped. We know how efficient they are.’

‘The Night Watch stabbed the man but slashed at the child-woman. Of course! He slashed at her to give her a superficial wound.’ Says Shi in hurried tones.

‘Which we saw was on her shoulder. What Night Watch would make such a mistake? There are none. It was an act put on for our benefit.’ Says Bao with concern.

'I can see you have thought this through.'

'Indeed, and the only explanation is that she had infiltrated the assassins on behalf of the Prince of Heaven.'

'The Night Watch and their Shadows answer only to the Emperor. This is just the truth.' States Shi.

'However, it changes little. She may well have been the murderer of the Deputy Censor, but she almost certainly was unaware of who he was. She would have thought she was killing the rich antiques merchant, Liu Zin.'

'So we have the murderer ...'

Bao cuts him off. 'Not the murderer, merely the tool the murderer used to kill him. As I have just said, it changes very little.'

Shi stands up. 'I must visit the Scarlet Ribbon ...'

Bao stands up with a big grin on his face. 'I will join you.'

'You will not. I go to see Scarlet not for the pleasures of the pillow, but because I asked her if she could find out anything from the other madams if they knew Liu Zin or anything about him. Besides, you must think of your betrothed now you are soon to be married.'

Bao plonks himself down in frustration. 'But she makes me wait for the marriage bed.'

'As is her right. I will see you tomorrow.' He goes to leave then turns back. 'With so much time on your hands perhaps you can think of the direction that our investigation should now take.'

'How can I think straight with the animal spirits rising in my loins, like a phoenix from the fire?'

'Is that what you call your noble member?' Tai chimes in arriving unseen. 'Perhaps I will take this phoenix in hand and see what all the fuss is about.'

Bao's face lights up. Shi smiles as he bows to Tai and leaves, and Tai smiles with a fake coyishness for Shi's benefit.

★

Scarlet rides Shi with flicks of her pelvis and grinding rubs of her sex. Galloping to a climax she throws herself forward and sprawls across his chest, undulating her body until Shi finally spends. They lie for a few minutes exhausted by their efforts until she slides off and ends tucked up into the crook of his arm.

'What was that you were saying?' Scarlet says on recovering.

'I forget, remind me.'

Scarlet laughs. 'How can I remind you of what only you can know?'

'Ah, indeed, that would be a feat worthy of the Yellow Emperor.'

Scarlet turns her head and bites his nipple.

'Dragon's breath! Your teeth are as sharp as your finger daggers.' says Shi with a frown.

'An inducement? More a trigger to your memory. I will give you another bite if you cannot deliver what only you can.'

'I know.' Shi says, as he desperately searches his memory.

'Well?'

'I do know why I'm here. It is only I have temporarily forgotten due to excessive flows of pleasure. These seem to have wiped my mind quite clean.' He speedily replies.

'You asked me to talk to the other madams in regard to the Deputy Censor. Could this be the tiny little thought that has slipped clean away?' She mocks.

'Indeed, indeed. That indeed would be it.' He sighs in relief.

'What were you hoping for?'

'Anything. We are quickly coming to an impasse in the investigation, so any information about him, or, about his alias, the antique merchant, Liu Zin, would be most gratefully received.'

Scarlet can tell that Shi is worried. 'Then, perhaps, I have something that may be of use.'

Shi turns her over onto her back and looks into her eyes. 'You know me well enough to know how important this could be. That is why you play with me on this.'

'Indeed not Shi. I am guarded because it might come as unwelcome news.' Scarlet frowns and bites her lip.

He rests his head between her breasts. 'Please tell me and spare me the anguish of waiting.'

'The Deputy Censor was seen out with the Emperor on his nightly visits to the teahouses of the less reputable establishments. Only in his disguise as Liu Zin.'

Shi slowly lifts his head and studies Scarlet's face, or at least seems to. 'Why does this not come as any surprise?' He is, of course, speaking to himself, which Scarlet understands having witnessed this form of behaviour by Shi in their long relationship. 'The Deputy Censor, because of his position, was often in the company of the Emperor. They could have become friends, especially if they shared a common interest in ... shall we say ... exotic forms of sexual play.' Shi's eyes focus on Scarlet's eyes, turning his attention out from within. 'You must come with me to see this madam and her singing girls that told you of this. If I go myself she will tell me less than if you are with me.'

'I will do this but first I must see to my toilet.'

Shi rolls over on his back and allows Scarlet to rise.

She stops in the doorway but doesn't turn around. 'They will help but only if they know it is for the benefit of the Emperor. They have a fondness for the Prince of Heaven that is touching in its sincerity.'

'How else could it be?'

'Then let your demeanour show this and you will win their trust.'

She glances back at Shi to read his face and is pleased with what she sees, then she is gone.

\*

Bao is naked on his back, hands tied to the legs of the bed. 'Moonbeam of my heart, where is the joy in this play?'

'Moonbeam of my Heart? What poetic nonsense is this you babble?' Then changing tone. 'You are tied because you admit to rising animal spirits. The evidence for this spews forth from your mouth: Moonbeam of my Heart. Indeed.'

'My eloquence is confined by these very ropes.' He tugs at the restraints as if this provides evidence of his lingual constraint.

'I will not. You have the choice, either, I take care of your giant woody, in which case you remain tied, or, I do not take care of your love bone and I will set you free. Which is it to be?' She stands over him looking down at his erection.

'You say I have a choice but what choice is this?'

'It is the choice of the beggar. Have you not heard the saying: beggars by chance; choosers by necessity?'

'Then get on with it, for I am fit to burst.'

'I do not like that tone, Bao. If this is how you intend to treat your betrothed when married then it is perhaps best if we don't marry.'

Bao is frustrated beyond words and rails against the ropes.

'Oh, are we having an outburst of temper now. Poppy showed me how to stop a man out of control of his animal spirits. Let us see if what she showed me works.' She leans over and gives his testicles a vicious smack.



Bao, who was animated before, takes his exertions to an entire new level. Tai can't help herself and has to cover her mouth with her hand to stop from laughing out loud.

Bao slowly relaxes as the pain subsides.

'Well look what has happened to the giant woody; it has turned into a dried up old twig.' She almost sings this in her merriment.

'You must stop taking instructions from Poppy, she is a trained killer.'

'Indeed, and that is her final solution to those men that will not debase their ridiculous antics. As she pointed out the female mantis eats the head off her lover as he mounts her.'

'You would eat my head?'

Tai drops down to her knees and leans on the bed taking his shrivelled up penis in one hand while stroking it with the other; stroking it like a child strokes a pet rabbit. 'Bao, I must talk with you. You see I have this intuition, I have had it since we first visited De Cao's studio.' She reflects on what she has just said as Bao begins to listen with genuine interest. 'I should take more notice of my intuitions, the Abbot has told me this on more than one occasion.'

'What exactly did he tell you?'

Tai can here the sincerity in Bao's voice as he is always interested in what the Abbot has to say. She lays his penis down with care then takes up the lamp and makes it smoke. She plays this through a moonbeam that has entered the room through a small gap in the drapes. Once the moonbeam is inundated with smoke she extinguishes the lamp but opens the door so the room is lit by moonlight.

The moonbeam has swirling clouds of smoke passing through it but only the light of the moon reveals the vortices at play in the smoke. Bao is fascinated.

'This moon beam represents the plane of consciousness. These vortices represent consciousness of individuals. They are joined to every other conscious entity.' She points these features out with care. 'Sometimes what we thing are products of our own minds are, indeed,

connections between different conscious entities. Thoughts and feelings that enter our minds are sometimes from others, as we all share the plane of consciousness. And this is why we should take notice of these thoughts, because they are communications of import, or at least can be.'

'What intuitions have you been having? Are they about De Cao?'

'Can you remember those drawings De Cao made of the caves of Lingyan Monastery?'

'Indeed, they were filled with atmosphere, and as such, he is an artist of some skill.'

'They also showed that he had been into the secret parts of the caves.'

She walks through the moonbeam sending the smoky vortices into turmoil. 'I just know that he is hiding out in that secret place.'

'Your intuition tells you this?'

'Indeed.'

'Then we must go and find him out.'

She leans over and kisses him untying his wrists as she does. 'Get up and get dressed, we must go now. Later may be too late.'

Tai goes to the far side of the room and takes her clothes off. Bao slides off the bed and onto the floor. Leaning on it, he watches Tai render her nakedness before him. This is the first time that Bao has seen her naked beauty: the crescent breasts are topped by nipples that point to the moon, the muscle contoured belly gives a relief like athleticism to her torso, her buttocks have been formed by years of martial arts practice into the pinched shape of a Hubei lute and legs whose length add elegance to the entire body.

She notices him watching and turns full frontal, thus allowing the moonlight to give relief like form to her entire body, but only for a moment. She dresses quickly in her martial arts clothes.

Stopping in the doorway on her way out. 'I will make us a light supper for we have far to travel and a steep climb at the end.' Then to herself as she leaves. 'And I must get another short staff as the last one is broken ... and torches ... and a lamp ...'

Under his breath and lost in admiration. 'In the name of all under Heaven, what did I ever do to deserve you?'

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**Before self-cultivation, self-discipline.**

**Before self-discipline, external discipline.**

**With external discipline, moderation and the mean.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Tolerating youthful fools shows wisdom.**

**Tolerating old fools shows one to be a fool himself.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**A student must respect his teacher,**

**Not idolize him.**

**It is bad for the teacher who becomes arrogant,**

**And the student who becomes a fool.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**Youthful folly in all innocence,**

**Endears the student to his teacher.**

**Good fortune.**

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**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**The Family (22)**

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===== Wind
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==  == Fire
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**THE IMAGE**

**Wind emanates from Fire:**

**The Image of THE FAMILY.**

**So the great man adds actions to his words.**

**Like a father with his own family,**

**He is the power that regulates behaviour.**

**So acts the ruler with his people**

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# CHAPTER 23

## Before Completion(38)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 9<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Midnight Drum

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== == Fire

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== ==

===== Water

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### THE IMAGE

**Fire over Water:**

**The Image of BEFORE COMPLETION.**

**Harmony – separation – transition.**

**Thus the superior man increases his knowledge**

**By learning to differentiate.**

\*

“Kao Tzu said, ‘Human nature is like the willow tree, and righteousness is like a cup or a bowl. To turn human nature into humanity and righteousness is like turning the willow into cups and bowls.

Mencius said, ‘Sir, can you follow the nature of the willow tree and make the cups and bowls? If you are going to violate the nature of the willow tree in order to make cups and bowls, then must you also violate human nature in order to make it into humanity and righteousness? Your words, alas! Would lead all people in the world to consider humanity and righteousness as calamity as they require the violation of human nature!’”

From the Book of Mencius. Book 6, Part 1 – 6A:1

The ascent up the southern face of the rock outcrop next to Lingyan monastery has been a mixture of climbing and scrambling. Goat tracks and solid rock buttresses intertwine in a medley of exertion.

They have had to backtrack on only 2 occasions, such is Tai’s memory of the place. A place she hasn’t visited for several years and then only once.

She hauls herself up and then hauls Bao up to sit beside her on a slab of rock that slightly overhangs the precipice they have just surmounted.

The view from above the trees is expansive. The West Lake lies like a black mirror with the lights on the Su De lying like a string of pearls stretched across it. The brazier fires on the city wall define the line of the lake’s furthest edge. The Thunder Point Pagoda with one red lantern atop its stairway to Heaven marks the southernmost edge of the view.

They sit for a while recovering their strength from their exertions.

‘Are you well rested?’ Tai enquires.

‘A few more moments. How far have we left to travel? Surely we must be near the top by now?’

‘From now on we travel down.’

Bao looks around for a track but can see none.

‘Not out there.’ She pats the slab of rock they are sitting on. ‘In here.’ She slips over on one side of the

slab and undoes a device. 'Stand on the other side and we can push this slab back into the mountain.'

With remarkable ease the slab slides back into the very rock, revealing a steep staircase descending into darkness.

Tai lights a lamp and hands it to Bao. 'You go down first and I will close the entrance.'

Standing at the base of the staircase in a cave of some size he waits for Tai. 'Was this all worked by the monks?'

'Mostly, but some, like this one, are natural formations.' She says on arrival. Setting fire to a torch she explores the far reaches of the cave with Bao tagging along behind with his lamp.

Having found the exit from the cave, they descend on a shallow staircase for what seems an age. Passages off to right and left are ignored as Tai keeps up a quick pace.

They suddenly and without warning enter a cave of massive proportions. Sixty tables and benches hewed from the rock and each capable of seating 20 monks are laid out in 2 rows stretching the length of this underground refractory.

Bao is stunned. 'What ... how ... why have the monks built such a place?'

'During the persecution of Buddhism during the late Tang Dynasty, especially under the Emperor Wuzong, when so many monks were forced to return to a secular life, it was felt necessary to construct this refuge. We live in happier times with an enlightened Emperor, but you can never tell what the future brings, so this refuge is kept in perfect condition.' Tai runs her hand over a table and holds it up to show how clean it is. 'Even now the system of caves and tunnels are being extended, just in case.'

She moves down the central aisle with Bao in tow. Half way down she cuts across to where a massive entrance leads down to a tunnel that could take 10 men walking abreast. 'Wait here and I will show you something.'

She runs at speed down the slight incline until she arrives at the bottom, where she turns and holds up her



torch. 'De Cao drew this from the place you are standing.'

Bao remembers the complex drawing that was almost an abstraction. 'Of course, that drawing now makes perfect sense.' He runs down and joins Tai coming into a confusing space. 'What under Earth is this?'

A huge chimney stretches up beyond the light of torch and lamp. A spiral staircase dipping in and out of the rock walls winds its way out of sight ever upward. And down, the cave widens out still further. At the very base of the chimney a fire box 5 metres square, made of banded metal straps for holding the burning logs, fills the central area. And the logs can be seen stacked against the walls.

'This is the main ventilation. When this redoubt is filled with a 1000 monks it is necessary to suck air in through small ventilation shafts throughout the cave system and push the fowl air out through this chimney.'

'Fire underground. It reminds me of one of the Buddhist Hells that my mother told me about when I was a child.' He reminisces.

Tai descends to the base with Bao not far behind. Many tunnels lead off between the piles of logs and she has to enter each one in turn to try to jog her memory into which one she needs to take. Bao enters one and lets the light from his lamp reveal the descending staircase. The walls are covered in sculptures in relief, depicting the life of the Buddha. As he stands admiring their beauty he can hear something, a murmuring sound. What it is he cannot make out.

Tai joins him and he holds his hand up to stop her from speaking, then he points to his ear with one hand and points down the tunnel with the other.

She stops and listens. Her face changes and as silent as an owl she approaches Bao to whisper in his ear. 'Voices. Voices at a distance. The sound travels in strange ways in here. They could still be a long way off.' She sets off on carefully placed steps so as not to make a sound.

Bao follows trying to imitate her, and in this manner they descend until they arrive into a smaller cave. Several tunnels lead off but Tai does not hesitate and

plunges down the largest one. Bao watches from the entrance and sees her stop to listen. She places her torch into a torch holder hewn into the rock and signals to Bao to join her.

Taking the lamp from him when he arrives she whispers in his ear. 'The voices are coming from the cave of the Reclining Buddha. He must have found the way in through the pool and found the mechanism to open the door into the chamber.'

None of this makes any sense to Bao who just shrugs his shoulders. They descend until a staircase winds off to the left which they then follow. Down it goes with the voices getting louder all of the time. They hit a landing where a flight of steps goes up. The voices now are almost discernable. Tai covers the lamp and light can be seen at the top of the stairs. She extinguishes the lamp before ascending with Bao but a few steps behind. As they arrive at the top of the stairs they stop and listen.

'All 63 are here?'

'Indeed.'

'They seem genuine enough, for what they are.'

Bao suddenly recognizes the voice and rushes past Tai before she can stop him. He arrives out of the base of the Reclining Buddha that has been moved back to reveal the staircase. He stands frozen with shock as Tai joins him.

De Cao seeing their arrival backs off to the exit tunnel before Lizong calls him back with soothing tones. 'They are not here to do you harm. This is Shao Bao an Imperial Librarian and his betrothed the Lotus of Kinsai.' Turning towards Bao and Tai. 'Although what they are doing here, I do not know.'

Bao and Tai bow to the horizontal and remain in situ until Lizong releases them. 'Well, Master Librarian, explain yourself.'

Bao straightens up. 'It was Tai's intuition that brought us here.'

'Are you hiding behind your betrothed's skirts?' Lizong chimes in merriment.

Tai straightens up. 'Indeed not, Son of Heaven, it was I who impressed upon him to come here.'

Lizong turns to De Cao who has relaxed somewhat. 'See, they are here because they follow, The Way. This is destiny, indeed. Would you not say, Wu Tai?'

'It would appear so, Prince of the Celestial Game.'

'Then come down and join us. Your opinion on these bronze rubbings could be invaluable.'

Several rubbings are laid out on the wall that surrounds the pool. Others are scattered across the floor.

As soon as Bao arrives on the floor he is engaged by Lizong. 'Have you pronounced on the first one that De Cao left for our scrutiny?'

'Indeed. The rubbing was definitely made from the bronze tablet the Deputy Censor had in his possession.'

'And these,' he sweeps his hand around, 'would you say they are genuine too?'

Bao examines some of the rubbings before turning one over. 'See here,' he points at the wax marks on the back, 'the paper was held in position by wax in exactly the same manner as this.'

'What say you, Tai, with your highly developed intuition, would you say these are genuine?' Lizong says this with just a hint of sarcasm.

'Indeed.'

'Possible, probable, certain?'

'I am certain, Bao thinks it probable and Shi thinks it possible.'

Lizong laughs. 'Then we have a full complement.' He turns to Cao. 'I will join Bao and say that I think it is probable. Now let me see this book that the man from the North called the original I Zhou.'

Cao leaves his escape route and picks up his leather satchel that is leaning against the wall of the pool.

Opening it he takes out the book and places it on top of the wall, then stands back to allow Lizong to scrutinize the book.

As he examines it, first Bao and then Tai crowd in on Lizong, to see. 'Well, well, what have we here?' The book has been superbly bound in leather and embossed in gold hieroglyphs. 'What does it mean?' He directs this to Bao.

'I would suggest it says, I Zhou, and underneath, King Wen.'

Lizong looks to Cao who replies. 'That is my take on this.'

'The book is nearly new. So this has been compiled by the man from the North.' Lizong opens it and at the base of the inside cover there is a monogram in modern Chinese characters that states: The Imperial Press, Kaifeng.

Lizong and Bao exchange a knowing look before Bao explains to Tai. 'This book has been bound by the Imperial Press, but not printed by them. If it had been printed it would have said so. There are many copies in the Imperial Library that contain this and they all came from Kaifeng when it was the capital of the Empire.'

'I would suggest the man from the North copied the hieroglyphs and then took it to the Imperial Press to have it bound.' Offers Cao.

'Probably.' Offers Lizong.

'Possibly.' Offers Bao.

Bao and Lizong look to Tai for her comment. 'I have nothing to add as I have little knowledge of Kaifeng or the Imperial Press.'

Lizong opens the book and flicks through the pages. Each page has the same format, the same as the bronze tablet. Lizong stops on the first page.

'The top section must be the Image, and the main section the Judgement.' Bao offers with confidence.

'For certain.' Adds Tai.

'Probably.' Says Lizong. 'What say you, De Cao?'

De Cao comes out of some kind of reverie. 'That's how I see it.'

Lizong returns to the book, flicking through the pages until something catches his eye. He quickly goes back a few pages until he comes across modern day Chinese characters written on the opposite side from the tablet page and on the back of the previous one. It says: There is a Mongolian spy close to the Emperor.

Three heads turn to Cao.

'It was I who wrote that down.' The 3 heads all have questioning looks, so Cao continues. 'With nothing better to do while waiting for the exchange I examined every Change. And when I came to this one,' he points at the Change opposite the writing, 'I found modern Chinese characters mixed in with the Shang script. If you look you will see.'

The 3 heads drop down towards the book and quickly come up with the characters. The heads turn once more to Cao.

'It was simpler to write the characters on the opposite page.'

'Indeed.'

'Unless you are examining the writing carefully, you would never notice.'

'Did you find any other modern Chinese characters anywhere else?'

'Indeed not.'

'What happened to the man from the North?' Bao asks with suspicion.

Cao's head drops but it is Lizong who answers. 'He is dead. Killed by the man before you.'

'In self-defence.' Pleads Cao.

Lizong turns to Bao and Tai. 'Under instruction from a beggar the police found a store room where the man from the North's body was found.'

'Once I had told him that, Liu Zin, was the Deputy Censor, his entire demeanour changed. He must have realized that I was the only person who could recognize him and to insure his safety he decided that he would have to kill me.' Cao says with a faltering voice.

'But you got the better of him.' Lizong prompts.

'Indeed. I didn't want to kill him. I was fighting for my life.' Cao breaks down on recalling the memory and sobs in great gulps.

Lizong, Bao and Tai, can feel his pain, and results in their silence.

'It's a terrible thing to take a fellow human being's life.' Cao finally adds before breaking down completely. His body heaves as the tears flow.

After a while Lizong breaks away and paces around the cave before confronting Cao. 'Youthful folly has brought you to this. A person of your sensitivity should never have become involved with a man who was as duplicitous as the Deputy Censor. I hope this has taught you a lesson.'

Cao is incapable of speech and covers his face with his hands.

Lizong moves on. 'The problem is Cao we have nothing to exchange. If this is the original I Zhou then it belongs to the Dynasty and thus, by right, belongs to me. However, without your engagement, none of this would have come to light. That you have offered this in exchange for your life, however, makes little sense.' Cao drops to his knees and curls up. 'Come, come, Cao, things are not as bad as you may fear. Officially, the Deputy Censor died from a terrible accident. The antique merchants, Liu Zin and Chan Ze, have disappeared. This will be shown to be a case of tax avoidance; I have little doubt on that account. That allows for the confiscation of the property and the goods of their business. And that allows the artist, De Cao, to get on with his life, as he obviously is not either, Liu Zin or Chan Ze, who have disappeared completely without trace.'

Cao unfolds and looks up to Lizong, who helps him to his feet. 'Just remember this by remembering nothing. Can we count on your silence in regard to this matter?'

Cao is brought out of a state of shock by Tai. 'If you wish to keep a secret, don't even tell the breeze.'

'Wise words.' Lizong adds.

'I swear on my ancestors' graves I will never tell anyone.'

'Then let that be an end to it.'

Cao bows low.

Lizong exercises his authority. 'Bao, I entrust you with the rubbings and the book. Tai, I entrust you to see these artefacts delivered to the Palace Library for safe keeping. Now let us gather these things together so we can move on.'

It takes little time to return the rubbings to their bamboo holder and the book to the satchel.

'We must return the Reclining Buddha to his rightful place.' Tai says as she jumps into the stairwell under the statue. She quickly releases the mechanism holding the statue in place and returns to the cave. 'Help me push it back in place. Because of the slight incline the reclining Buddha sits on, one man can open the entrance to the inner caves.'

It takes all 4 of them to roll the Reclining Buddha back over the stairwell. A loud, click, as the mechanism holds the statue in place.

Lizong takes Cao by the arm and leads him out through the main entrance; followed by Bao, carrying the bamboo tube and the satchel; and Tai bringing up the rear.

They walk into the early morning air, thankful for a breeze. They cross the small bridge over the stream to the Monastery and turning east, they walk down the hill towards the West Lake.

Cao is still upset and Lizong takes pity on him and puts an arm around his shoulder. 'Cao, I haven't been totally honest with you. The truth is I know you. Or, at least I know your work. My wife has a painting of yours; it hangs in her bedroom. Phoenix Hill by Moonlight.'

Cao stops and looks at Lizong. A small smile creeping from the corners of his mouth transforms his face into that of a handsome man.

'Perhaps, if you have time, I could commission you to paint some other works for my wife. A series of paintings set from the perspective of the Su De. Let us say 5 paintings looking west and 5 looking east. Would it be possible to complete these in one year; for my wife's next birthday?'

'Indeed.' Cao says with enthusiasm.

'One ingot of gold per painting; would that be fair?'

'More than fair.'

'Then we have a deal.'

Cao bows to the horizontal.

Bao and Tai have heard the conversation with the effect that they search for each other's hands in the early morning light. Fingers entwined they walk several hundred metres until they see others approaching from the West Lake; there hands reluctantly and simultaneously part company.

The Captain of the Palace Guard and several of his men greet the Emperor with relief.

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## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
Until one understands the situation completely,  
Thoughtful deliberation is essential.  
Investigation by the differentiation of things  
Is the correct way to proceed.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
Understanding that the situation is one of transition  
The superior man waits for clarity  
Before acting.  
Success.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:  
When the situation is hopeless  
The superior man creates a new situation.  
Success.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:  
The situation is known.  
Resoluteness in action brings  
Success.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Grace (23)**

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== == Mountain

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== == Fire

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**THE IMAGE**

**Fire illuminates the Mountain:**

**The Image of GRACE.**

**So the superior man appreciates the transient nature of life,**

**Including his own.**

# CHAPTER 24

## The Abysmal (43)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 9<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Midday Drum

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===== Water
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==  ==
===== Water
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### THE IMAGE

**Water upon Water:**

**The Image of the ABYSSMAL.**

**Floods wash away the course of the river**

**Making a new way to the sea.**

\*

“The Way of Learning to be great, consists in manifesting the clear character, loving the people, and abiding in the highest good.

Only after knowing what to abide in can one be calm. Only after being calm can one be tranquil. Only after having achieved tranquillity can one have peaceful repose. Only after having peaceful repose can one begin to deliberate. Only after deliberation can the end be attained. Things have their roots and branches. Affairs have their beginning and ends. To know what is first and what is last will lead one near the Way.

The ancients who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who would wish to cultivate their personal life would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. When things are investigated knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world. From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of the personal life as the root or foundation. There is never a case when the root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order. There has never been a case when what is treated with great importance becomes a matter of slight importance or what is treated with slight importance becomes a matter of great importance.”

From Zhu Xi’s interpretation of, *The Great Learning – Chapter 42 of The Book of Rites*. The text is believed to be the words of Confucius as handed down by Tseng Tzu.

Shi helps Crimson down from her carriage. She is resplendent in red brocaded silk covered in white cranes. They walk down an alley off the String of Pearls, on the north side; but still south of the pleasure district.

The, *Water Nymph’s Pony*, is more than a tea house; it is a theatre of men’s fantasies. It had originally been a warehouse until the famous Madam, *Clinging Fire*, had bought it and turned it into a place of entertainment with several stages of varying size. It also had all of the usual facilities of a tea house in the pleasure district.

At this time of day, just after the noonday sun has passed its zenith, the place is nearly deserted. Only a few men are sitting in the reception room being

entertained by sleepy singing girls. The whiff of the sorcerer's mix pervades the atmosphere.

A singing girl, on seeing them arrive, shows them through the big stage and into the private quarters of, Clinging Fire.

She is expecting them and greets them in the old style with some virtuosity for a woman well into her 50s. 'What an honour for my humble establishment.' Her dress is, if anything, conservative; the midnight blue of fine silk is overlaid by a fine net of white pictorial flames in silver and diamonds. Her smile reveals the lacquered teeth, also of the old school, in a white face of mask like quality. She shows them to a low seat and as they arrange themselves she signals for refreshments. 'Magistrate, Zhen Shi, it is too many years since you have visited.'

Shi's smile is born from happy memories. 'My position allows little time for entertainment.'

'I suspect that what free time you have is spent in more salubrious surroundings.' She glances at Crimson with a meaningful look and turning the statement into a question.

'If only it were true. His noble self has all but abandoned me. Seeking a noble woman from the court for his marriage bed, I have little doubt.'

They both look at Shi accusingly, who, having being put in an impossible position simply throws his hands in the air.

Clinging Fire, turns to Crimson. 'These Dianshi scholars are truly clever as they are able to lie without saying a single word.' She manages to say this without a trace of sarcasm.

'I believe they practice the noble art of deception by writing, Policy Statements, on the Empire, for public consumption.' Adds Crimson with a cutting edge.

They have between them forced Shi into a lizard's skin. 'I must protest.' This produces groans of derision from Clinging Fire and Crimson, quickly followed by giggling laughter more associated with school girls. 'Policy

Statements, are a true reflection of the government's intentions.'

'Ah, that word, so slippery it could have come from a serpent's mouth: Intentions.' Clinging Fire is having her play and enjoying every moment.

'What a foolish man I am to engage with two dragons of the bedchamber. I submit to your superior intellect and throw myself on your mercy.' He gives a little bow while keeping a straight face.

'Then we shall release you of your burden, and I will ask you a pertinent question: What can a humble madam do for such a noble man?' Clinging Fire reverts to sarcasm with a straight face.

'As you are aware I am involved in an investigation of a delicate nature. I was wondering if the antiques merchant, Liu Zin, ever visited the Water Nymph's Pony, with a man from the North?'

'Liu Zin?' Clinging Fire says in all innocence. 'You mean the Deputy Censor?'

'Why do you think Liu Zin was the Deputy Censor?' Shi asks with concern.

'Liu Zin turned up here with the Emperor, both disguised as merchants. The Deputy Censor is well known at the Water Nymph's Pony. Known in the guise of Liu Zin. The Emperor, as I'm sure you are aware, enjoys his play time amongst the lower orders. And he often arrives with friends so inclined. All in disguise, of course, and accompanied by members of the Night Watch, also in disguise. They will take a box upstairs to watch the performances on the main stage, and then, have a selection of girls visit the box for selection.' Clinging Fire can see that Shi is disturbed by this news, and hence, unaware of these details concerning the Emperor, so she continues with enthusiasm. 'The Emperor has a taste for girls with large breasts. His concubines are all of a standard beauty; large breasts are considered to belong to the beasts of the field, and so it is, that a man with over 200 concubines has not one that satisfies his animal desires, his animal spirits.' She laughs with abandon, which sets Crimson off.

Shi looks from one to the other, but only with a slight annoyance. 'How do you know that Liu Zin and the Emperor were together?'

'Because they would arrive together and would often leave together.'

Shi moves on quickly. 'And, Li Guo, the man from the North? Was he ever hear with the Emperor?'

'There was a man that came with Liu Zin who could have been a man from the North because of his accent and dress. However, he was only here on a few occasions, and not when the Emperor was here.'

'Did the Deputy Censor have any particular tastes? Was he enamoured of a women child for instance?'

'Ah, now we get to the crux of the matter.' Clinging Fire gloats. 'What you want to ask is: did he have a taste for a child-women?'

'Did he?'

'Indeed he did. But these are rare creatures, and even if you can find one the price is beyond measure.'

'You never provided him with one?'

'Unfortunately not. My commission for such a creature would have me clothed in emeralds and pearls, instead of these rags that I wear.'

'Surely you know where such a woman can be found?'

'My dear Shi, if I did I would tell you, as I do not, I cannot.'

Shi gives a small bow in recognition of her honesty.

'Were there any other members of the government that arrived with the Emperor?' Crimson asks.

'There have been other members of the government that have visited my humble establishment, but only a few who arrived with the Emperor and these were so heavily disguised their own mothers would not have recognized them.' She remembers with a smile. 'The Censor. The old man who banned Lizong from taking my girls into the

Palace. He was one. His disguise was so badly applied he was forced to abandon it altogether. He left wearing one of my wigs, which attracted more attention than if he had walked naked through these hallowed halls.' She laughs at the memory. 'But this was many years ago.'

The thought of the conservative Censor wearing one of Clinging Fire's wigs brings an involuntary smile to Shi's face. 'That, I would have paid copper cash to have seen.'

Clinging Fire turns to Crimson. 'You never told me that your paramour has unnatural tastes.' She jokes.

'Oh, he has many unnatural tastes; as most men do. I will tell you when next we meet to save the blushes of our noble Magistrate.' Both women laugh at Shi who has retreated behind one of his hands.

'Men are such pathetic creatures with their insatiable desire for novelty.' Clinging Fire stokes the fire.

Shi fights back. 'Providing you with a good living in silver and diamonds, if not in emeralds and pearls.'

'We have attacked the arrogance of the man and should be careful he does not arrest us on some trumped up charge in an act of revenge.' Crimson chimes.

'Tell me Shi, will you ever catch the killer?' Clinging Fire changes direction.

'I have been charged with this duty. As such, I will pursue this person until relieved of this burden.' Shi says in all seriousness.

'If there is anything I can do to help, you only need ask.' Clinging Fire replies in kind.

Again Shi gives a small bow.

'Finding the child-woman is paramount, but even a whisper about the war faction in regard to this matter could lead to financial reward.' Crimson offers.

'Payment in this regard is not necessary. War brings not only death and destruction but financial ruin, and even worse, horrors for our noble profession. If the stories that are told of the grave acts committed against our sisters in the North by the Mongolian barbarian are only



half true, then we must commit ourselves to acting against provocation. Those who wake the sleeping dragon must expect to keep him entertained.'

'Indeed.' Shi stands up. 'We will leave you now, safe in the knowledge that your full support is on our side. *This culture of ours* must survive, civilization depends on it.'

Crimson and Clinging Fire rise and bow.

As they walk up towards where the carriage and the Night Watch are waiting, Crimson asks a pressing question. 'Are you satisfied with what you have heard?'

'Satisfied with what I have heard, but I wish I had heard more.'

'Perhaps you will. Now that she is aware of your pressing need and as you had the good sense to approach her directly, she will become an ear to your cause.'

'Have you ever heard anything at the Reels of Splendour?'

'Fat merchants give little away: goes the old saying. However, I will charge my girls to renew their efforts in this matter.'

Shi helps her into the carriage. 'I will not join you but will walk from here. It will be quicker.' He turns to the Night Watch. 'Take the Crimson Reel back to her abode and I will join you back at the Palace.'

'You must take at least two of us with you, Magistrate.'

'As you wish.' Shi turns to Crimson and places his hand over hers as it rests on the carriage door. 'I will see you soon.'

'Where have I heard that before?' She scolds.

'I promise.' He squeezes her hand then sets off at pace without looking back.

Arriving at the street called: The String, or The String of Pearls. He stops and debates with himself before turning to the Night Watch. 'I will visit the Shao family who have a shop near here. I search for my colleague, Shao Bao, as we have much to discuss.'

The Night Watch follow and stand either side of the side door once he has entered.

Arriving on the first floor he calls out but is replied to only by silence. He calls out again but this time is rewarded by the arrival of a dragon of the air. She slides into the room on stocking feet and still in her night clothes. Her hair, all twisted and dishevelled, is matched only by the wild look on her face. 'Magistrate, you have caught me at a disadvantage. Please go out and come back in, giving me enough time to attend to my toilet and dress.' Ling-Ling orders.

'I will go if that is your desire but I will not return. I search for your brother.'

'What use is he? When at last we have time for ourselves in my deserted home?'

'Where is everyone?'

Ling-Ling swivels her head from side to side engulfing her face in her strong black hair. Then suddenly stopping in this strange behaviour. 'Have you not heard, most of the city has burnt to the ground, and my family have fled to our estate in the country?'

'So why are you here alone?' Shi asks with genuine concern.

She flicks the tousled mess back over her head and takes on a haughty pose. 'Am I not as brave as a dragon? A little fire will not drive me from my home. You of all people should know that.' She chides while striking a heroic pose.

Shi can hardly keep his face straight. 'Indeed.' He gives a little bow.

'Sit on the tall chair, so I may sit on your knee.'

'Don't you think you are getting a little too ... big ... for such ... familiarity?'

'So you have finally noticed that I am not a child any more. For an investigating Magistrate you are remarkably slow. Let us hope the resolution depends on stealth and

not speed, or we may well be murdered in our beds before you have turned a change.'

She pushes Shi onto the chair and sits on his lap. 'Perhaps it was you that started the fire so that we could spend some time alone.' Then as an afterthought. 'You wicked man.'

'Ling-Ling, you are right. We should not be alone together, now you are a woman. Please rise and I will leave.'

'What nonsense you speak. Once we are married I will seek to relieve you of your wayward tongue.'

'We are to be married?' Shi says in mock shock.

'But of course we will be married.' She insists with some strength. 'Was this not how Tai and Bao became betrothed? Were they not alone in this very house and did not Bao steal a kiss.'

Ling-Ling purses her lips and closes her eyes.

'The way that I heard that story was that it was Tai who stole a kiss.'

Ling-Ling opens just one eye and with the help of the rest of her face she manages to scold Shi without saying a word.

Shi can't resist and moves in, giving her a peck on the lips. 'There, we are now betrothed.'

She opens both eyes into a face already contorted with something akin to anger. 'You call that a kiss?' She grabs his head and grinds his mouth open into a tongue swapping full blooded encounter that fades away into tenderness.

After the lips have parted. 'Where did you learn to kiss like that?' Shi says with suspicion.

She looks away. 'With my secret lover. We modern ladies all have lovers, you know. Well, what's good for the snake is also good for the duck.'

Shi is confused at first but then realizes her pronunciation of drake has become confused in her mind,

and to control his laughter rests his head on her shoulder to hide his reaction. 'Now tell me the truth.'

She smiles coyly. 'Bao's love maid, Crystal, has been giving me lessons in the art of love making.'

'Oh has she indeed.'

'How else is a poor girl to learn such skills when that same poor girl must remain a virgin? You are quite naïve at times Shi.'

'I bow to your superior knowledge on these things. Perhaps I could borrow Crystal for a few weeks so that she can teach me.'

She looks at him with shocked annoyance. 'I will pretend that I didn't hear that.'

'So, are we now betrothed?'

'Indeed.' She smiles into true beauty.

And it melts his heart and he kisses her with tenderness. Then breaking off into seriousness. 'Marriage before you are 16 is not possible. Your parents would not countenance such a play. Bao also wishes for you to finish your education, and I admit, it is also my wish.'

'Then I am doomed to the same fate as Tai. To be betrothed to a man till I am an old maid.' Her sorrow is real if slightly exaggerated.

He pushes her wild hair back from her face. 'Your brother is now a Palace Official. Which means they will marry before this, Year of the Rabbit, is out. An auspicious sign for those who desire children. So things have turned out well for them in the end. Sometimes waiting can be a good thing, and three years is hardly a long time in the great game of life.'

She gets off his knee in sadness. 'You are right, of course' then turning with mercurial speed 'still, it gives me time to emulate Tai in her martial skills.' Ling-Ling jumps in the air and kicks at an invisible head, then at Shi's head while shouting out. 'Duck.' Not ready for the speed of the blow and confusing in his mind the double meaning of duck he is knocked sideways onto

the ground; slightly concussed he tries to get up but falls back down again.

Suppressing laughter she cradles his head in her arms. 'As a wife, you can be sure of one thing: I will keep you entertained.' She presses his head to her breast and kisses him on the forehead.

★

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**Dangers surround us like a flooding river.**

**The right course of action is unclear as everything has changed.**

**Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Danger surrounds us like a flooding river.**

**It is enough to survive.**

**No blame.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Danger surrounds us like a flooding river.**

**To move anywhere or do anything only**

**Increases the danger.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**Danger surrounds us like a flooding river.**

**Sincerity and honest intention**

**Form the bases for mutual help.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**Danger surrounds us like a flooding river.**

**The danger has reached its height.**

**From now on it will recede.**

**Hold still.**

## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Abundance (24)

```

==  ==
==  ==  Thunder
=====
=====
==  ==  Fire
=====

```

#### THE IMAGE

**Thunder and Lightning:**

**The Image of ABUNDANCE.**

**The superior man celebrates the principles**

**Which have produced such abundance.**

**But still he enforces the law**

**For civilization depends on the rule of law.**

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# CHAPTER 25

## Deliverance (41)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 9<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After The Early Evening Drum

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==  ==
==  ==  Thunder
=====
==  ==
=====  Water
==  ==
  
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### THE IMAGE

**Thunder and rain:**

**The Image of DELIVERANCE.**

**Thus the superior man pays special attention**

**To the special conditions created by disasters.**

★



“What is meant by saying that cultivation of the personal life depends on the rectification of the mind is that when one is affected by wrath to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When one is affected by fear to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When he is affected by fondness to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When he is affected by worries and anxieties, his mind will not be correct. When the mind is not present, we look but do not see, listen but do not hear, and eat but do not know the food. This is what is meant by saying that the cultivation of the personal life depends on the rectification of the mind.”

From Zhu Xi’s interpretation of, *The Great Learning* – Chapter 7 of Zhu Xi’s *Commentary on The Book of Rites*.

The three sit on the first floor veranda of the, Ink Stone. Bao sits on the left hand seat playing with his assassin’s blade on the table before him. Shi sits on the very edge of his seat facing out across Phoenix Hill, resting his elbows on his knees, deep in thought.

Tai is stretched out on the seat behind the table. Dressed in white cotton and with her eyes closed she resembles a corpse waiting for burial. A corpse that now speaks. ‘She is like her brother. Her mercurial mind cannot be focused by external means. She needs to find an interest that genuinely appeals to her. Then, and only then, will she concentrate her attention. Her teachers despair at her lack of self-discipline in learning one day, only to find the next, she has surpassed her teacher in some esoteric understanding of the, Pali Canon; a particular peculiarity that few, including myself, have never discovered. The Abbot has commented on this strange quality she possess. But then, she is just like her brother in this.’ Tai sighs without opening her eyes.

Shi has turned his head around to listen to Tai only to find Bao’s grinning face the living proof of Tai’s exposition on Ling-Ling’s state of mind.

‘Is he grinning?’ Asks Tai for confirmation.

‘Like a monkey with a jack-fruit.’

‘She will make you a good wife, Shi, but not a conventional one. I have had to accept the vagaries of Bao’s mind and even his delinquent actions, at times. Just remember they dance to different music, music that few can hear. I try to hear their music, and sometimes, I hear a passage that enthralls me and leaves me in awe. Bao and Ling-Ling are the true recipients of Shao Yong’s

genius, be assured of that. We must trust they have also inherited his qualities of love and loyalty, which he showed to his wife and family. The two, I feel, are connected.' She sits up and sits on her hands. The faintest of smiles she passes between her two companions.

'I have known her since she was a small child. She fascinated me even then. How I looked forward to her boisterous play and extravagant manner. I formed a bond, a bond of love, one that seems to have been reciprocated. Although, of these things, I was barely aware of at the time. So I was hardly going to stop loving her when she turned into a woman.' Shi offers this to Tai in the manner of the defence's reason in a criminal trial.

'Bao said to me when Ling-Ling was but 10 years old that you would marry. But then, he shares his sister's mind.'

Bao's grin widens. 'We are an acquired taste, but once acquired we are like the soccer's mix, highly addictive.'

'I can attest to that.' Says Tai, but not unkindly.

'Your father will be amenable to this marriage? A scholar official family marrying into a merchant family?' Bao switches the normal, marrying into order, such a union would be described as.

'He will make much of Ling-Ling's noble lineage. A scholar official family, marrying into, the noble lineage of Shao Yong, one of the founders of Daoxue, will be how it is portrayed.' Shi says in all sincerity.

'Then this will truly be a marriage made in Heaven.' Says Tai with just a touch of sarcasm.

They are all in agreement and can be seen to be happy in their agreement.

It is time to move on and Shi takes the lead. 'Prior to my meeting with my betrothed,' Shi is forced to stop at this point to allow Bao and Tai to recover from a bout of merriment at the word: betrothed. The very idea that this most serious of scholar officials should be marrying the wild heart and tangled hair of Bao's sister, tickles both, 'as I was saying, prior to my meeting with Ling-Ling, I had visited the Water Nymph's Pony.'

'An excellent place to prepare for a betrothal...' Bao is cut off.

'Enough! I have much to say and some you will find less than amusing.'

Tai signals to Bao, with just a look, to stop his baiting.

Bao sobers immediately.

'There I spoke with Clinging Fire.' Shi looks around to make sure that their conversation is not being overheard. 'She told me that the Deputy Censor had visited the, Water Nymph's Pony, in the guise of, Liu Zin, the antiques merchant. And not only that, but he had been in the company of Zhao Yun, our noble Emperor.'

Bao and Tai are suitably surprised.

'Liu Zin was a regular visitor, and, had visited with a man from the North. Though I must add, not at the same time as Lizong. I admit that I do not know what to make of any of this.'

'Then let us bring you our news. Tai, tell Shi of our encounter with the missing man. This is your privilege as it was you that found him out.'

'De Cao's drawings of the inner sanctum of the caves, convinced me that was where he was hiding. I convinced Bao to make the journey and we eventually entered the caves by a secret route. It was there we found De Cao in conversation with Lizong.'

'With the Emperor?' Shi is suitably surprised, even, shocked.

'Indeed. A surprise to us as it was to them. But the interest in this story lies in the words written in the book of the original, I Zhou. De Cao, having time on his hands while waiting for the Emperor, had looked through the book with care and had discovered some modern Chinese characters mixed in with the Shang hieroglyphs but only on one of the changes. These characters amounted to this: There is a Mongolian spy close to the Emperor.'

Bao and Tai look intensely at Shi, who is obviously disturbed at this development. 'This would tie in with

what I have found out previously about the man from the North. I have come to believe that he was a scholar official from the northern bureaucracy. Trying to contact Lizong without rousing suspicion; a necessity if there is a spy close to our Prince of Heaven.'

Bao thrusts himself up against the back of his seat bringing his feet up under him in a cross legged repose. 'This could change everything. Perhaps the man our investigation hopes to reveal is also the Mongolian spy from the North.'

'But why would he have the Deputy Censor murdered?' Shi comes back with interest.

'If the Deputy Censor was close to discovering that the man from the North was a scholar official then he would have to die. He could not be allowed to inform Lizong as his true identity, as the Deputy Censor, might well be discovered.' Bao becomes agitated with excitement. 'This would explain a lot. However, this Mongolian spy could only know about the scholar official, if he had visited the Water Nymph's Pony with either the Deputy Censor or Lizong.'

'Or both.' Adds Tai.

'Indeed. Or both. Now we know that Lizong has taken members of the government along with him on his nightly adventures. All that remains to discover is: who accompanied the Emperor?' Shi is perplexed by his own words.

'We must ask the Emperor.' Bao insists.

Shi makes sounds of disquiet. 'That is a very delicate issue. And besides, if the spy is close to the Emperor, and he finds out which direction our investigation is going, he may well act.'

'He may well act against the Emperor, or even against us.' Bao catches up with Shi's thoughts.

'Indeed.'

'Then how are we to approach this?' Asks Tai.

Bao sees the consequence of her question. 'Tai, this must not engage you any longer. You must remove yourself from our investigation. There is far too much danger.'

Tai leans quickly across to Bao and delivers him a short sharp blow with the flat of her hand to his head. 'Excuse me, Shi, it is necessary at times to remind Bao that he does not make decisions for myself; betrothed or not betrothed.'

Bao rubs his face. The smile, however, is not so easily removed. 'These Buddhist women have minds of their own.' He says this in a conspiratorial tone. 'Ling-Ling will be little different, I fear, in this regard.'

Shi smiles, remembering the blow to his head that his betrothed had delivered to him just that day. 'Indeed, it would make more sense if Tai kept close to us from now on. If we are watched then she becomes a target; is almost certainly one already.'

'Precisely. Besides, who would look after you? You are both ill equipped for such play.' Tai adds with a haughty self-confidence.

'The Night Watch have done a perfectly adequate job up until now, my Orb of the Celestial Sky.' He flatters.

'And are the Night Watch not close to the Emperor? And this Shadow of theirs, this child-woman, she bothers me greatly.' Tai's sincerity can be heard in her cracking voice.

Bao explains to Shi. 'The taking of life has a different meaning for Buddhists. The individual whose life is taken cannot fulfil their sacred duty to advance towards enlightenment, as a consequence, the murderer has interfered in the dharma of that individual, and that has a further consequence, in that it affects, The Dharma; the dharma of all things.'

'It is alright Shi. I understand she is but a tool. The complexity of our present times, in a world of conflict between barbarism and civilization, makes judgments on individuals difficult to call. Perhaps that is what the original I Zhou was originally designed for: to make decisions when the complexity is beyond our feeble minds.' Tai contributes.

'Now you are beginning to sound like Bao.' Shi returns.

Tai lightens. 'Do they not say that the master eventually looks like his faithful slave?'

'Which in my case would be a definite improvement.' Bao brings smiles to Tai and Shi's faces.

'I have had to make an appointment to see Lizong, as he is busy with the arrangements for tomorrow's victory parade as well as arranging the details of the aftermath of the fire. The entire city, what is left of it, will turn out for General Liu and his men; the saviours of Kinsai. So I will entrust you both to revisit De Cao and find out what you can from him about what we have discussed.' Shi is back to his normal scholar official self. Is it agreed?'

'Indeed.' His companions verify.

\*

The sun's rays penetrate the forest in great shafts. Dappled light plays tricks with the forms on the forest floor. Small animal groups of wood mouse, vole and shrew, play in endless patterns unseen beneath the leaf litter. Their tiny conscious awareness swing from mood to mood in time to the changing light above their heads. He Yanshou, experiences them all.

Sitting on his rock, Guardian of the Eastern Approaches to the Langyan Monastery, his mind, expanded to the very edge of the West Lake flits in tune to the dappled light.

The darkness comes across the lake at speed and passes over him.

Yanshou knows this consciousness, knows its malevolent pitch, knows it now stands behind him dressed in gold edged purple.

'You lied to me, monk. You deceived me last we met. You allowed De Cao to escape when I was about the Dynasty's business. What have you to say for yourself?'

'There is nothing to say. De Cao has fulfilled his destiny and all is well in the Celestial Game.' The monk smiles knowing that his end will be swift and painless.

The short sword is driven through his back and out of his chest in silence.

'Thank you, Yao.' Is all Yanshou says before he topples over.

The blade, released from the body by its fall, hangs down by the side of this Member of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor, where it almost touches the ground.

'How do you know my name, old monk?' Yao asks, knowing there will be a reply only the dead can hear. He is angry, angry with himself that he has dispatched the monk so quickly, when he could have revealed so much. He swings the sword in the air bringing it down with speed so that the blood fleeing the blade leaves a sprayed arc on the rock. He then wipes the blood that remains on the sword, on the monks robes; an act of defilement.

Replacing the sword in its scabbard he allows his head to rest on his chest before disappearing into the dappled air.

\*

As Shi passes through the main hall, still the centre of operations for the catastrophe, he is spied by Zhao Tan, the Emperor's nephew. Tan catches up with Shi halfway to the dais where Lizong is looking at a map and exercising actions to his scribes.

'How goes the investigation, Magistrate?'

Shi stops and bows to Tan. 'The investigation has taken a strange turn, Zhao Tan. Join me as I explain this to the Emperor.'

The Emperor sees them coming and retreats to the small room at the back. They join him, Tan closing the door.

'Congratulations, I believe, are in order.' Says Lizong with a knowing smile.

Shi is confused and it shows.

Lizong helps him out. 'On your betrothal to Bao's sister.'

Shi is amazed at Lizong's knowledge of an event that has only recently happened. But on just a moments reflection, he realizes that he should know better. 'Thank you, Zhao Yun. I hope this match meets with your approval.'

'Indeed. A feisty young woman, I am led to believe, in the mould of her brother; a young man of great potential in the same vein as his noble ancestor; perhaps she will also exercise her noble lineage.'

'She is but 13 years old and we will not marry until she finishes her education at the Buddhist nunnery.'

'I would be disappointed if I were not invited to the celebrations.'

'It would be a great honour.' Shi bows low.

Lizong changes direction. 'I hear you have visited the Water Nymph's Pony in your investigation. Have I become embroiled?'

'In as much you were there with the Deputy Censor, when he was disguised as Liu Zin, the antiques merchant.'

'The name the Deputy Censor used when he was disguised as a rich merchant, was not known to me. And what is more, the Deputy Censor had been a regular visitor to the Water Nymph's Pony, long before he and I visited that most entertaining of establishments together.'

'It may be that the man from the North visited that establishment with the Deputy Censor.'

'When the Deputy Censor was disguised as the merchant Liu Zin?'

'Indeed.'

'And?'

'And we now believe that the man from the North may have been a scholar official from the bureaucracy that runs the North of China for the Mongolians.'

'That would make sense of the hidden writing in the book that De Cao brought me.' Lizong leans on the table and



stares at the map but his attention is elsewhere. 'Have you seen the book?'

'Not yet.'

'Then you must. You may well spot something that the rest of us have failed to find.' He looks at Shi in the eye. 'What is it in regard to the Water Nymph's Pony that you wish to ask?'

'Only those from the government that accompanied yourself to the Water Nymph could possibly have had suspicion about the Deputy Censor. That's if the Deputy Censor had been seen in the company of the man from the North.'

'You are assuming that the murderer is also the Mongolian spy.' Zhao Yun states in a questioning way.

'It is a fair assumption.' Shi is confident.

'What say you Tan?'

'Indeed, it is a fair assumption. It is hardly likely there is both a Mongolian spy, and a killer with an unknown motive, at loose in the heart of Kinsai at the same time. Also, if the spy thought that the Deputy Censor was about to discover who the man from the North really was, would he not wish to dispense with him. Would he not wish to dispense with him just in case the Deputy Censor had already discovered that information?'

'These are all thoughts I have had myself. However Shi, you must proceed ... as proceed you must ... you must be discreet.'

Shi bows almost to the horizontal.

'I will provide you with a list, but it will not be comprehensive. And if it fails to provide you with the killer then you must find who else that is close to me that has visited the Water Nymph's Pony. We may all be surprised at who has been entertained at that remarkable establishment and those who, like myself, have enjoyed the services it provides its customers.' The Emperor shows not a sign of embarrassment. Indeed, he smiles an infectious smile that is soon reflected on the two faces present. 'A friendly conversation with De Cao might reveal what is hidden in his mind. He was not in the right frame of mind when last I saw him.'

'Bao and Tai have taken this task upon themselves. Between them they should extract what he knows with the minimum of fuss.'

'Excellent. It shows that we are all thinking in the same vein.' Lizong moves to the door and just as he is about to leave he turns and looks at Shi. 'Make sure you keep me informed.'

Shi bows and stays bowed until the Emperor has gone.

'How I wish I could accompany you on your quest.' Says Tan wistfully.

'Perhaps, when your duty here has been exercised, the Emperor will allow you to accompany us; the experience would be invaluable.'

Tan is pleased and bows in gratitude. Shi bows and leaves.

\*

The Head Librarian, Han Keqiang, is bent over the book.

'You see, Magistrate Zhen, here are the modern characters mixed in with the Shang script.'

Shi searches out each character and visits every Shang hieroglyph before he is satisfied with Cao's written characters. 'You have had time to examine the entire work?'

'Indeed.'

'And you have not found any other hidden messages?'

'None such as this. However, there are other aspects to this amazing work.' The twinkle in the old man's eyes are full of play. 'First, there's the paper.'

'Indeed?'

'Indeed.' He smiles benevolently at Shi.

'And what is it about the paper?' Shi feels he is involved in the childhood game: guessing the name in twenty questions.

'Now, that is a very interesting question. It is little surprise to me that you are an Investigating Magistrate.' The old man bows deferentially but with a full grin covering his face, revealing the sarcasm in his words.

'Is it, perhaps, the paper is made of human skin?'

'Oh, dear me, that would be an abomination.'

They both laugh.

'Is it, perhaps, made of spiders webs?'

Han Keqiang laughs with abandon. 'You are as funny as my new librarian. What a pair you must make when together.'

'Indeed. As funny as a troop of monkeys playing in a vat of chang beer.'

The old man slaps his sides and Shi has to wait until he calms down before he hears the inevitable question. 'Do you give up?'

'What choice do I have?' Shi says in good humour.

'The paper is made in, Loyang, by the old, Tang Paper Works. It is the paper that was used in the very first books that were published. And, the only paper used by the bureaucracy of the Northern Song until the barbarians invaded.'

The Librarian watches Shi's face with great interest.

After careful thought. 'They are sending us a sign that this is from the bureaucracy of the North that now serves the Mongolians. That has to be it.'

'My thoughts exactly.' The Head Librarian pats Shi on the shoulder. 'I just needed you to run it through and see if you came up with the same answer as I have.'

'The Mongolians would never guess if the book fell into their hands.'

'Precisely.'

'So we can safely assume this is a message from northern scholar officials that still have loyalty to the Song.'

'To the Han Chinese, and, *this culture of ours.*' Says the Head Librarian.

'This is the final proof that the man from the North was indeed a scholar official, risking his life to warn us of the spy within our midst.' Shi says in satisfaction.

'But there is more. Once I realized this was a product of our allies in the North, I turned my attention to the Shang script.'

'I thought nobody knew the Shang script?' Asks Shi with mounting curiosity.

'Except for a few obvious hieroglyphs that have similarities to the characters of our own character script; the Shang script has never been deciphered. It was, in fact, the word decipher that make me wonder about the Shang script. What better way to disguise a secret message than to make it look like an old Shang script? So what I did was search out the old codes as used by the Scholar officials of the Northern Song, when Kaifeng was the capital. And sure enough, there it was. Different symbols, of course, but the same code.'

'They have substituted the symbols with Shang hieroglyphs.'

'Precisely.' The old man is filled with pride. 'I have two librarians, who are familiar with these old codes, deciphering the secret message; even as we speak.'

'What good fortune.' Says Shi excitedly.

'Good fortune, indeed, to discover the coded message. However, what the message contains may not be such good fortune.' Says Han Keqiang, reminding Shi that the content is more important than how it is delivered.

'There is something else that you should be aware of. The first bronze tablet is not in the coded form. It would appear to be a genuine Shang bronze and the inscription would therefore be genuine Shang writing. Writing we cannot decipher ... as yet.'

'These scholar officials from the North must have had bronze tablets especially made so that rubbings could be made from them.' Says Shi in admiration.

'They have gone to a lot of trouble to make this work. This is true. However, they would not have needed to have them cast in bronze. The mouldings, once made, could have been cast in ceramics. Or, carved wood. Whichever means they chose, they have still gone to a lot of time and effort to deliver the information.'

'If there is one genuine Shang bronze, there could be others?' Asks Shi hopefully.

'Indeed. That is my belief. The scholar officials of the North are tempting us to believe it. Would you not say, Master Zhen?'

'It would be the most reasonable expectation.' Says Shi thoughtfully.

'Precisely.'

★

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**People recuperate and rest after deliverance from disaster.  
This is without blame.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Villains take advantage of disasters.  
There are many types of villains,  
But they are all defeated by the same weapon;  
The righteousness of the virtuous man.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Deliverance from one's own faults;  
From greed and selfishness;  
From arrogance and deception.  
Thus the superior man remains superior.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**Deliverance has radically changed the situation.  
The superior man seeks out new allies for the new situation.  
Neither those who were allies before the disaster,  
Nor during the disaster, can expect consideration.  
No blame.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**After deliverance the superior man considers what he has learned.  
Disasters provide a measuring-stick by which to judge himself.  
There is no substitute for self-criticism or self-cultivation.  
Perseverance in these matters brings  
Success.**

## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### After Completion (25)

```

==  ==
===== Water
==  ==
=====
==  == Fire
=====

```

**The Image**

**Water over Fire:**

**The Image of CLIMAX.**

**Boiling water soon evaporates**

**Leaving an empty vessel.**

**\***

# Chapter 26

## Obstruction (36)

The Song Dynasty  
1460 I.A.  
9<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
After The Evening Drum

★

```

==  ==
  ===== Water
==  ==
  =====
  ==  == Mountain
==  ==

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### THE IMAGE

**Water rains on the Mountain:**

**The Image of OBSTRUCTION.**

**Thus the superior man tests himself against obstructions**

**So that he can learn to solve problems and develop his Inner Truth.**

★



"1. Principle is endowed in me by Heaven, not drilled into me from outside. If one understands that principle is the same as master and really makes it his master, one cannot be influenced by external things or fooled by perverse doctrines. (1: 3a)

2. The mind is one and principle is one. Perfect truth is reduced to a unity; the essential principle is never a duality. The mind and principle can never be separated into two. That is why Confucius said, 'There is one thread that runs through my doctrines,' and Mencius said, 'The Way is one and only one.' Mencius also said, 'There are but two ways to be pursued, that of humanity and that of inhumanity.' To do in a certain way is humanity. Not to do in a certain way is the opposite of humanity. Humanity is the same as the mind and principle. 'Seek and you find it' means to find this principle. 'Those who are the first to know' know this principle, and 'Those who are the first to understand,' understand this principle. It is this principle that constitutes the love for parents, reverence for elders, and the sense of alarm and commiseration when one sees a child about to fall into a well. It is this principle that makes people ashamed of shameful things and hate what should be hated. It is this principle that enables people to know what is right to be right and what is wrong to be wrong. It is this principle that makes people deferential when deference is due and humble when humility is called for. Seriousness is this principle. Righteousness is also this principle. What is internal is this principle. What is external is also this principle. Therefore it is said, 'Straight, square, and great, the Superior Man works his operation, without repeated effort, in every respect advantageous.' Mencius said, 'The ability possessed by men without having acquired it by learning is innate ability, and the knowledge possessed by them without deliberation is innate knowledge.' These are endowed in us by Heaven. 'We originally have them with us,' and 'they are not drilled into us from outside.' Therefore Mencius said, 'All things are already complete in oneself. There is no greater joy than to examine oneself and be sincere.' (1: 3b)

3. The Way fills the universe. It does not hide or escape from anything. With reference to Heaven, it is called yin and yang. With reference to Earth, it is called strength and weakness. With reference to man, it is called humanity and righteousness. Thus humanity and righteousness are the original mind of man. Mencius said, 'Is there not a heart of humanity and righteousness originally existing in man?' He also said, 'We originally have them with us and they are not drilled into us from outside.' The stupid and the unworthy do not come up to them and thus they are obscured with selfish desires and lose their original mind. The worthy and the wise go beyond them and thus are obscured by subjective viewpoints and lose their original mind. (1: 6b)

#### From The Complete Works of Lu Hsiang-Shan - Chapter 1

The West Lake is covered in boats and craft of all kinds; the first signs of Kinsai returning to normal. Bao and Tai hear happy and excited voices as they walk along the path next to the lake. Many recounting tales of the fire, of acts of bravery, of how luck played its part and of how this disaster has changed their lives forever.

In more normal times they would have been stared at and commented on. A Palace Librarian with a female bodyguard, for that is what it looked like, would have left a trail of tittering voices in their wake. Today, however, their own lives were more important and as a consequence their attention was focused on things closer to home. It gave Bao the queasy sensation that he had become invisible.

Even as a student of the Imperial College he had become used to people looking. He was special. When Bao had received his jinshi belt, deference had become a way of life, and one he soon accepted as normal. But not today.

'Look, there's an empty seat, quick before someone else takes it.' Bao hurries to the seat with Tai in tow.

'Surely you can't be tired already?'

'Tiredness has nothing to do with it; beauty, everything.' Bao stretches his arms out as if trying to encompass the view. The sun setting over the western hills and forming a backdrop to the West Lake is truly inspiring.

Tai has to restrain herself from putting her head on his shoulder, an act that she would have performed in the seclusion of night. A stolen kiss she would have allowed, even welcomed. But even with their new status of invisibility, the act is still unacceptable behaviour in broad daylight. Then she realizes she's been had. 'What is it that you wish to say?'

'Something that will not find words to express itself. A niggling doubt; or a lesson not yet learned; or a shadow on reason. Something that has not come fully formed into my mind.' He turns to Tai. 'What is it that I cannot see?'

'If you must speak in riddles then you must at least give me a clue as to the subject matter.'

'But that, moonbeam of my heart, is the problem. I don't have a clue. Let alone one that I can offer you.'

Tai has been here before and on more than one occasion. She knows Bao's idiosyncrasies. This one in particular, where he can't quite bring into focus a pattern that plays just beneath his conscious mind, is an old friend. She has become the sound box of a lute, amplifying his

thoughts so he can best hear his own mind at play. 'Is it Ling-Ling?'

'I certainly cannot leave the little minx in our home alone. That is for certain, but that is not it.'

'Is it Shi?'

'He visits Clinging Fire and she opens a door into the Emperor's mind. She then opens another door, a door into the minds of several members of the government. But that is not it.'

'Is it the child-woman?'

'Now that is closer, but it is not her. This society that seeks a battle plan for retaking the North, a society that Shi belongs to, that is closer still. It provides a backdrop to whatever it is.'

'You have found a reason for joining the war faction?' She jokes.

'Is it possible to discover a strategy for retaking the North without becoming a ... traitor?'

Tai is disturbed by this. 'Why a traitor?'

'I can make little of it myself. But that's what it feels like.' He bites his lip in thought. An unconscious act, that along with his eyes focused intently on nothing in particular, are clues to the processes going on in Bao's mind.

'Will you find such a strategy when the best minds of the Empire have been engaged in this search since the Jürgen's invasion of 1127 C.E.?'

'Of course.'

'Your arrogance is contemptible.'

Bao is surprised but in a humours way. 'Oh white crane of my heart, how can you say such a thing. This is a problem that can be solved. Someone will solve it and as I have been asked to try, then what would be the point in starting out with such a negative attitude. Of course I will solve it, although it might prove to be unpalatable to those in power.'

'You have had thoughts on this already?'

'Not thoughts as such, more a mind-set that is prevalent in both the bureaucracy and the army. A mind-set that is trapped by facts, but, where all of the facts are not included, thus rendering a solution impossible. Man's rationality is, in a way, bounded by the facts he uses. The first thing I asked myself is: do I have all the facts. All of the facts that have been used since 1127 and have become the bounded rationality of the Southern Song; a mind-set that perpetrates itself from generation to generation.'

'So what are these facts that are missing?'

'If I knew that then I would know everything.' He laughs.

Her chiding smile melts his heart and he makes an attempt to steal a kiss. She, however, will have none of it. Blocking his advance with a forearm in his throat. 'What are you doing?' She quickly looks around to see if anyone is looking. 'Those children have seen.' Bao turns to see a small group of young children playing around a group of parents. Except they are not playing but staring. Tai is up and off and Bao after her. 'Bao, your reputation is already secure, mine is tested every day until we marry, and beyond that until the grave.'

She finds she is talking to herself as Bao is pulling faces at the children and making them laugh but also making them hide behind their parents' skirts.

Just as the parents are beginning to take notice he rushes to join Tai. His smile is wilful and charming and childlike. 'If the parents ask their children what has been going on they will say that the funny man was pulling faces. Thus saving your reputation while at the same time delivering my arrogance a mortal blow.'

Tai's stern face soon wipes the smile from his. She sets such a pace that he is forced to run to keep up.

In silence they arrive at the house of De Cao. Outside the street is filled with playing children. Most of the houses have their doors open so that they can keep an eye on the children and provide ventilation on what is another hot day. De Cao's door, however, is firmly shut.

Tai knocks on the door with her staff and then stands back to allow the Palace Official to exercise his status. The door slides open a little at a time. The child opening the door is little over the age of four.

Bending down to the child's height Bao applies his charm. 'Sweet child, is Cao at home?'

'Cao ... Cao ... Cao ...' The child is stuck for words and runs inside where she is picked up by Cao and brought back to the door.

'You will forgive me I trust. I have little experience with family life and their poor mother is permanently agitated, and to such a degree that she is permanently tired. I have become a sort of adopted father to these orphans of the fire.' As Cao is speaking the other children have arrived and hang onto various parts of his body depending on their height.

'You seem to be making a good job of it Cao.' Bao bends down and tickles the two who are wrapped around his legs. 'Surely they should be outside playing with the other children?'

'The mother won't hear of it. She's worried that they will get lost, or stolen, or drowned in the lake at the bottom of the street.'

'Child abduction was common in the Tang Dynasty, but is not in the Song. As for the lake, the jetty men are charged to keep the children safe. She really doesn't have anything to worry about.' Bao says this as the mother arrives. 'Why not take the children down to the jetty and introduce your children to the neighbourhood as you go. I have important things to discuss with your benefactor.'

She finally remembers to bow and to the horizontal. The older children take up their position at her side and bow likewise.

'Come greet your neighbours.' Bao stands to one side and shows her out.

The arrival of a Palace Official in the street has brought the neighbours out and grabbed the attention of the children. Bao has a captive audience. 'This poor woman is a refugee of the fire that Cao has offered a

home to. Will you not make friends with her and her family, thus fulfilling your duty as good citizens of our most civilized of cities?’

Silence is followed by a low murmuring then a woman comes forward, obviously a friend of Cao's. 'Let me take the child.' Cao hands over the child. 'Come, let me introduce you to your new neighbours.' This is directed at the mother.

Bao encourages her by a sweep of the arm, and reluctantly at first, but not wishing to fall foul of a Palace Official, she moves off with Cao's neighbour followed by her children.

'Once they all know each other your new found duties as a father will be far less demanding.' Bao says this to a much relieved Cao.

After watching the family disappear into a neighbour's courtyard Cao offers them inside with a bow. 'Please go through to my studio, I have abandoned the rest of the house to the family. It seemed the most sensible arrangement.'

'Indeed.'

Even with the addition of a bed the studio is still spacious. Cao quickly moves some of his clothes from a low seat then offers Bao and Tai to sit. Neither take the offer, wishing to explore his work, which is scattered everywhere.

Bao looks through the cave drawings and realizes that the cave system is far bigger than what he saw. 'Did you have permission to enter the caves?'

'The Abbot was most generous in granting me access and in return I allowed him to keep whatever drawings he liked. He chose several for the walls of his personal library, where I believe they still hang.'

'So you spent some time with the Abbot?' Asks Tai with an intense curiosity.

'Indeed. He asked me many questions, particularly about my drawings. He was particularly interested in the drawings that were less obvious in terms of representation.' Cao can see that Tai is struggling to

understand. 'If you did not know what the drawings were taken from, you would be hard pressed to know what they are. Just forms and shapes of light and dark. The Abbot saw in them a different quality, as he said: they reveal a hidden quality that has as much to do with the act of drawing, and hence the artist's mind, as they represent something tangible in reality. Which of course they are as well.' He pulls a drawing out as an example. 'Here is a tunnel leading between two large caves. It is merely a series of concentric lines narrowing towards an undefined centre.' He points this out. 'If you didn't know what it was it would almost certainly remain a mystery.'

'Indeed.' Tai and Bao agree.

'He also said that the viewer must bring something to the drawing. By this I think he meant the viewer's imagination.'

'The viewer's interpretation, perhaps.' Says Tai.

'Or the viewer's translation of the artist's visual language.' Says Bao.

'Something along those lines. But then he went further. The Abbot said these shapes and forms were theoretical Images created by the mind; in this case, my mind. They were more like visual ideas of the thing, rather than a visual representation of the thing itself.'

'Knowing the Image one can forget the characters that describe it. Knowing the concept one can forget the Image.' Bao intones as much to himself as to Tai and Cao.

'I'm sorry, I don't follow.' Says Cao.

'And neither do I.' Says Tai.

'My ancestor, Shao Yong, wrote this in his notes on the I Ching. In fact it is a quote from an early Han historian, who had found a document from the time of Confucius that described the Image as it was understood then.'

'Are you talking about the Image part of the, changes, of the, I Ching?' Tai asks.

'I'm sorry. It is indeed the Image part of the I Ching. In that most amazing of books we have the Image described in characters.' Bao can see the problem they are

struggling with: what this has to do with what the Abbot was saying about the Images created by the mind, that they were more like visual ideas of the thing, rather than a visual representation of the thing itself. So he tries to illuminate his thoughts on the matter further. 'One can describe the Image in terms of written characters. Once the Image is formed in your mind the concept is revealed. So once the concept is revealed the Image becomes superfluous. However, the concept can be multidimensional and have many connections that make its description impossible in the linear format of writing with characters.' He pauses for a moment before adding a personal desire. 'I wish I could find Shao Yong's commentary on the, I Ching. I'm sure it would reveal an understanding of the Great I that has been long forgotten.' Bao brings the conversation back to the drawings with a wave of his hand. 'These drawings are like the visual concept of a tunnel. They reveal the Image of the caves in some sort of visual, conceptual form.' He turns to Cao. 'What you have done is reveal the conceptual form of the caves of Lingyan, but only those that have seen the caves can hope to understand, as they are part of their mindscape. We understand because we have seen the caves but would anyone else that hasn't?'

'What does that say about the I?' Tai asks, hoping that Bao knows.

'That to understand the I, one must understand the language of visual concepts that are contained in the Image. Or, at least, that is how I understand it.'

'Sixty four Images that contain the conceptual meaning of each change that governs the world and can only be understood by knowing the language of visual images.' Pronounces Tai, in the manner of deep understanding.

'Indeed.' Bao responds with joy. 'An excellent way of putting it.'

Cao is impressed by Bao's explanation and Tai's insight. He is also impressed by her beauty now that he is so close to her. How he would like to try and capture her image in hope of capturing the Image of beauty wrapped up in her face. 'Would you allow me the honour of painting your portrait? I would gladly give it to you as a wedding gift.'



Tai is pleasantly surprised. 'What say you, Bao? Or is it too soon to talk of weddings?' She laughs.

'Too soon? We will be married before this auspicious year is out.' He turns to Cao. 'You would best make a start soon if you would have it completed by our wedding day.'

'I will believe it when your mother calls me daughter.'  
Tai drips cynical words of frustration.

'Cao, you would think me an inferior man, if you will listen only to my betrothed. It is true that there have been obstacles preventing our marriage ...'

Tai intercedes with force. 'Obstacles of your making.'

Bao chokes. 'As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted. It is true there have been obstacles preventing our marriage but these have now been removed. So you must start on her portrait as soon as possible, and in that way she will have less wounding arrows for her tongue's bow.'

'Wounding arrows?' Tai rasps.

Cao intercedes. 'I will start immediately. Please, Wu Tai, sit here on this stool in the light.'

'We have not the time, Master De.' Tai's words carry the unmistakable tone of hurt.

'Indeed we do. Cao can draw you as we speak. Is that not possible?' Bao pleads to Cao.

'I can make preliminary drawings as we speak. There are stages in making a portrait and ones that need total silence for total concentration but this is not one of them. Please.'

He ushers Tai towards the stool with Bao assisting, not, by imitating Cao's fawning actions but with a hand placed firmly on her buttocks.

'You will feel the sting of my staff, Master Librarian, if you carry on in this manner.'

Bao bows out. 'As you wish.'

The look of joy on Cao's face placates Tai and she finally sits on the stool. He quickly fetches his easel and paper and fine twig charcoal.

'Did you at any time visit the, Water Nymph's Pony, with the man from the North?' Bao asks Cao from behind his shoulder.

Cao sketches away as he replies. 'I believe we did. The Deputy Censor visited that most entertaining of establishments often, and was intent on pleasing the man from the North.'

'And was he entertained?'

'From what I remember, he was disturbed by the more lewd acts. Pony stallions having sex with women is an acquired taste, to say the least.'

Bao laughs at his own first memories. 'Indeed. And was he there when the Emperor was?'

Cao stops but then replies as he carries on drawing. 'I wouldn't know as I was not always with them. The Emperor certainly wasn't there when I was with him.'

'But it is possible?'

Cao stops and turns to Bao. 'Indeed. However, he was interested if we knew the Emperor. He asked me specifically if I had contact with Lizong. If though a lowly antiques merchant would have contact with the, Son of Heaven.'

'And he asked the Deputy Censor?'

'Indeed. The Deputy Censor made a point of telling me as it was such a peculiar question.' Cao turns back to sketching Tai.

'It was indeed a strange question to ask. It suggests that the man from the North did not know with whom he was talking.' Bao cunningly says.

'It would be surprising if he had known as only myself and the Deputy Censor knew of the deception.' Cao replies in sincerity.

'Except for Clinging Fire and perhaps some of her girls.'  
Bao is fishing.

'Perhaps, but they would not have known what they knew,  
if you get my meaning.'

'They would have known, Liu Zin, the antiques merchant  
who sometimes arrived with the Emperor and sometimes not.  
Would they have even known that the antiques business was  
real?'

'Probably not. I don't know.' Cao becomes lost in his  
drawing.

Bao ponders this then changes tack. 'Which teahouse did  
the Deputy Censor find the child-woman?'

'He did not. She walked in from the street wanting to buy  
a cabinet or a piece of furniture. You should have seen  
the Deputy Censor's face when she did. You would have  
thought the white crane had arrived to carry him to  
heaven.'

'Do not make fun of Buddhist symbology, Master De. You  
speak of what you do not know.' Tai chides him.

Cao bows low. 'Forgive me if my offensive tongue has hurt  
your sensibilities. I would not knowingly commit such an  
act.'

Tai gives just a nod of her head in recognition of his  
sincerity.

'She walked off the street and the Deputy Censor  
approached her directly?' Bao queries.

'If you knew how obsessed he was with the play of a  
child-woman, this would not seem so strange. He had  
tasted this particular fruit only once before and that  
with a woman that played children's parts with a band of  
travelling actors. He told me that he was distraught when  
he found that this travelling theatre had moved on. He  
even tried to find her again but without luck as they had  
taken a ship from Bingpo to who knows where.'

'Did he make a great play of this to others?'

'Indeed. Every teahouse we visited he would ask. Always  
with the same reply. He even offered the prospect of

reward for information to anyone who could provide information on such a creature.'

'How was it you ended up bringing this child-woman on board the Little Egret?'

'He was running late, and so asked me to collect her from the guild meeting on Gushan Island. He had sent a messenger from the palace to inform me.'

'Did you get on well with the Deputy Censor?' Tai asks.

'Well enough. He was very self-confident, bordering on arrogance and was always upbeat. Good company generally speaking, generous, even kind, if just a little too relaxed about the game he was playing.'

'This you are saying with hindsight?'

'Indeed. His manner was reassuring for me. It filled me with confidence. The thought of being caught quickly disappeared. The thought of being decapitated a fading shadow to our operation. As the Emperor so poignantly put it: Youthful Folly.'

Cao doesn't see the knowing look that passes between Tai and Bao as he sketches. Bao looks over Cao's shoulder at the sketches and is impressed.

A loud banging on the door is followed by the speedy entry of a young Buddhist monk, out of breath and agitated. He bows in a perfunctory manner. 'Tai, the Abbot has sent me to find you and Shao Bao. There has been a murder at the monastery and he wants you to come and investigate.'

\*

The young monk is leading the way with Tai right behind him and Bao struggling to keep up. They are following the woodland track beside the river that Cao had taken on that fateful night.

A number of monks are gathered around the stricken Guardian of the eastern approaches. The Abbot, a little way off in the forest, comes to greet them as they arrive.

Bao, who is carrying his official's hat, is bent over gasping for breath.

'You should look to your physical health, Shao Bao.' The Abbot admonishes him with a friendly tone.

'This young monk must be part Arabian stallion.' Is all Bao can say as he gasps for air.

The Abbot turns to Tai. 'You have known, Lou Jiwei, most of your life. And I'm sure you know of his illness. A disease that defies any cure. In a way his death is a blessing. The pain he endured became the focus of his meditations and this allowed him access to the plane of consciousness with remarkable ease. His suffering is now over but to have been murdered is both an affront to our order and a criminal act most despicable.'

Bao, still breathing heavily, joins in. 'This is the third murder in our investigation.'

'You think this has to do with the Deputy Censor?' Then on reflection the Abbot adds. 'As well you might?'

'Cao, the missing man, must have come this way on his way to the caves. He would have had to pass your Guardian. Did your Guardian not warn you of this intrusion?' Bao asks in disappointed tones.

'He did not. And neither did he warn me he was under attack. A strange occurrence in that he and I share our consciousness with ease.'

'You do not know of the meeting in the caves?' Tai asks of the Abbot.

'What meeting in the caves?' The Abbot turns on Tai.

Tai wilts under the Abbot's gaze and her voice falters. 'I thought ... I thought you would have known of our ... presence ... in the caves.' The full seriousness of the situation hits her now and she slowly sinks to her knees. 'Forgive me Abbot. I have betrayed your trust.' Her tears flow like wine and she is lost in grief.

The Abbot turns to Bao. 'What is she talking about?'

'I must admit, that like Tai, I thought you would have been aware of what happened at the cave of the Reclining

Buddha. It was a strange meeting between Tai and myself with the missing man De Cao, and, with Lizong.'

'Lizong was here?' The Abbot is amazed.

'I thought you would have experienced us on the plane of consciousness. Please Abbot forgive me.' Tai humiliates herself by placing her forehead on the ground.

'Stop! Stop this nonsense.' The Abbot lifts her up with his one good arm. 'Your action in bringing people to our secret redoubt is not the problem Tai. The reason why I did not detect a presence in the caves, nor detect what was happening to our Guardian, is.' The Abbot is worried, even fearful.

Bao moves around, then onto the rock where the stricken monk lies. He observes everything in detail. The entry point of the sword and the exit point. The blood that has flowed off the rock and the blood that has been wiped on the monks robes by the assassin's blade. He stands up and places himself in the place the assassin must have stood to have killed Lou Jiwei. Looking down to his right he sees a splatter mark where the spray of blood has been removed from the blade by the downward sweep of the sword. 'I have seen this before.' A thought he says out loud.

The Abbot has heard and turns with a slow deliberation. 'What have you seen before?'

'This mark on the rock where the killer cleaned his blade.' The Abbot joins Bao to examine the mark as Bao continues. 'This is where the assassin shook of the blood from his blade. An action only applicable when used on a short sword.' Bao demonstrates.

'Where did you see this before?'

'It was in Bingpo. When we pursuing the arsonist. The arsonist was found dead, killed in exactly the same manner.'

The Abbot turns to Tai. 'Were you there?'

'Indeed.'

He jumps down beside her and lays a hand on her shoulder. 'Open your mind Tai. Let me have access to your memories.'

They stand like statues, eyes closed, until the Abbot has what he wishes. 'I have the residue of his presence, both there,' he turns to Bao, 'and here. A man of great mystical knowledge. A man capable of aportation.'

'Excuse me Abbot but I do not understand the word.' Says a mystified Bao.

'It means to travel from place to place without travelling through the normal physical world in which we live. There is little doubt that this is how he took our Guardian by surprise, as I have examined the entire area looking for tracks but found none. A man of such power is a danger to us all.'

Bao feels his skin crawl, the sensation rising up on back of his neck. He looks around with wariness, as others do the same.

'He is not here now as I would know. But if you are wise you will remember this feeling that he has left behind. If he returns you will know he is present by this.' The Abbot says with little joy.

'Perhaps I should explain what happened in the caves.' Says Bao.

'You need not trouble yourself, Bao. I have gained it all from Tai's consciousness. What worries me is why I was not aware of this, any of it.' He thinks out loud. 'Unless our Guardian placed his consciousness over the entire area to stop this ... abomination ... from gaining access to what was happening in the caves.'

'Could he be a Buddhist?' Asks Bao innocently.

'There are Buddhists that have achieved such knowledge but do so in the confines of our mystical order. Compassion is the defining attribute of the Buddha. It is the defining attribute of all Buddhists. I therefore cannot believe that such a man is a Buddhist.'

'A Taoist?'

'There have been Taoist Illuminates that have had such knowledge, but they do not interfere in the affairs of man as they governed by Nature.'

'That only leaves ...'

Bao is cut off by the Abbot. 'The Yellow Emperor. They are well known to play in the Celestial Game, it is true. However, even they use such knowledge with caution. To use it to kill someone has all sorts of consequences. They know full well that taking even a single life will alter the game and can alter the game in such a manner that it achieves the complete opposite of what was intended.'

'Then it would have to be a rogue element. A rogue element from one of the mystical traditions where this knowledge is known.' Here, Bao is at his most logical and at his most innocent.

'A rogue element is it Shao Bao? Let us pray to the Buddha that you are wrong. Such a man would be dangerous in the extreme.' The Abbot turns to Tai. 'Would you accompany me to the caves?' Tai bows in acceptance. He turns finally to Bao. 'I trust Bao you will not mind me borrowing Tai from you for one night?' Bao bows in acceptance. 'And one last thing. When next you see Lizong tell him I crave an audience about this matter.'

Bao bows to the horizontal.

\*



## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**One must not strive blindly ahead**

**When one meets an obstruction.**

**Reflection before action brings**

**Success.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Obstructions that are not of one's own making carry**

**No blame.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Remember one's family and friends**

**Before tackling a dangerous obstacle.**

**However, responsibility must not become an obstacle in its self.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**In overcoming obstructions,**

**The most direct route is often not the shortest.**

**Beware.**

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## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### The Joyous Lake (26)

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==  ==
===== Lake
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==  ==
===== Lake
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#### The Image

#### The Image of JOY.

The superior man joins with friends in convivial discussion

Where knowledge and philosophy develop in joyful accord.

Great success.

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# Chapter 27

## Darkening of the Light (36)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 9<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 On the Midnight Drum

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==  ==
==  ==  Earth
==  ==
=====
==  ==  Fire
=====
  
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### THE IMAGE

Earth subdues the brightness of Fire:

The Image of DARKENING OF THE LIGHT.

Even the superior man is affected

But he clings onto his own light; his Inner Truth.

Hiding it from a severe ruler he avoids confrontation.

Danger.

\*

“I use these two words, righteousness and profit, to distinguish between Confucianism and Buddhism. I also use the terms ‘public-spiritedness’ and ‘selfishness’ but actually they mean righteousness and profit. The Confucianists consider man, living in the world, as more intelligent than the myriad things and more noble than the myriad things, and that man and Heaven and Earth coexist as three ultimates. For Heaven there is the Way of Heaven, for Earth there is the Way of Earth, and for man there is the way of man. Unless man fully practices the Way of man, he will not be qualified to coexist with Heaven and Earth. Man has five senses and each sense has its own function. From this we have the right and wrong and success and failure, and we have education and learning. This is the basis on which Confucian doctrines have been founded. Therefore we call them righteous and public-spirited. Buddhists, on the other hand, consider man, living in the world, as consisting of a chain of birth and death, a wheel of transmigration, and afflictions resulting from passions, and regard them as most painful, and seek to escape from them. Those who realize the truth and achieve awakening realize that there is originally no chain of birth and death, no transmigration, and no afflictions resulting from passions. Therefore they say, ‘The matter of the chain of birth and death is important.’ What you called resolution to become a bodhisattva is merely for this important matter. This is the basis on which Buddhist doctrines are founded. Therefore we call them profit-seeking and selfish. It is precisely because righteousness and public-spiritedness that we Confucians are engaged in putting the world in order, and because of their desire for profit and selfishness that the Buddhists withdraw from the world. Even when the Confucianists reach to the realm of Heaven which has neither sound or smell which is not spatially restricted, and which has no physical form, they always they always emphasize putting the world in order. Although Buddhists would save all people in the future, they always emphasize withdrawing from the world. Now, those who follow Buddhism are all human beings. As they are human beings, how can they cast aside our Confucian humanity and righteousness? Although they renounce the family, they still want to repay the Four Kindnesses. Thus in their daily life they of course they sometimes preserve this principle which is rooted in the human mind and cannot be obliterated. However, their doctrines did not arise in order to preserve it. Therefore whether it is preserved or not is of no sufficient importance to those who are advanced in the Buddhist way of life. We Confucianists, on the other hand, say that ‘That whereby man differs from the lower animals is but small. The ordinary people cast it away, while the Superior Man preserves it.’ The Buddhists pity people because they have not escaped the wheel of transmigration but continue in the chain of birth and death, regarding them as floating and sinking in the sea of life and death. Do sages and worthies in Confucianism merely float and sink in this sea of life and death of theirs. Our sages and worthies are free from that which the Buddhists pity. Their doctrines did not arise for the sake of escaping from it and therefore their teachings do not emphasize it. Therefore our Confucian sages and worthies are free from which the Buddhists pity, but Buddhist sages are not free from those things for which we Confucianists show concern. If we judge the Buddhist sages by the law of the, Spring and Autumn Annals, which demands putting the world in order, even a boy knows

that they cannot get away from its condemnation. From the point of view of the origin of their respective doctrines, we see that the distinction between the Confucianists and the Buddhists as one for public-spiritedness and righteousness and the other for selfishness and profit is perfectly clear and that they are absolutely incompatible.”

From the Complete works of Lu Hsiang-Shan – (Chapter 2: 1b-2a)

The street known as the String of Pearls, is busy. A carnival atmosphere prevails as people indulge their very real human emotions of deliverance.

‘Hail and well met.’ Bao exclaims with something close to relief.

Shi is just about to go down the alley to the entrance to Bao’s parents’ apartment. ‘It is indeed. The synchronicity of our friendship never ceases to amaze me.’

‘Let me guess. You are so enamoured of my sister that you thought, as my parents were away, that you would perhaps steal a kiss from your betrothed.’ Bao grins from ear to ear.

‘And you have arrived to protect her virtue.’

Bao sticks out his chest in confrontational pose. ‘Was there ever a brother whose thoughts and actions were so aligned with filial piety?’

They walk down the alley to where the policeman stands guard. He bows.

‘I trust you are not guarding an empty abode?’

‘Indeed not, Master Bao. Ling-Ling has only made one attempt at escape, which I thwarted with ease.’  
Opening the door. ‘Excellent.’

Bao and Shi arrive into a deserted reception room. Only a single lamp lights the space, which Bao turns up. Then shouting. ‘Ling-Ling your betrothed has come calling, so rouse your sleepy head.’

Bao and Shi stand in silence, listening for movement above. Eventually a slow soft tread on the stairs is accompanied with the arrival of Ling-Ling still half asleep.

'Magistrate Zhen, you would be better calling at an earlier time as it is long past my bedtime.' She sleep walks into Shi's arms and allows herself to sink into his embrace.

'Is this any way to greet your betrothed when your brother is present? Shame on you.'

Ling-Ling tuts. 'It is either too late or too early for your word play, so decease.'

'Have we not come to ensure your safety, and all you can do is chastise.'

'Now we see that you are indeed safe, I'm afraid we cannot tarry.' Shi says this in soft sweet tones.

Ling-Ling pushes him away. 'You have roused me from my bed and now you will leave. I regret already my betrothal to such a fickle man.'

'The path of true love is like a meandering river with many a twist and turn ...' Bao is cut off.

'And waterfall, where rascally men do plunge to their fate, or something like that.'

Bao and Shi laugh at the sleepy words that hardly make sense.

'We must away to fulfil our duty, dear heart.'

'Then you must take me with you.' She looks up into Shi's face with a sickly smile.

'Unfortunately, we visit the, Water Nymph's Pony.'

Ling-Ling is beginning to waken. 'An excellent place for my education. Crystal has told me all about that strange establishment of men's fantasies. And now is my chance to witness first-hand the depraved exhibitions so best that I may please my husband on our wedding night. I must go and change.'

Shi goes to stop her but Bao stops him. Then after she's gone. 'We must away before she returns or we will be here all night trying to explain why she cannot go.'

Bao half drags Shi away.

Outside, Bao instructs the Policeman. 'Take good care of her. There are foul men about, so trust only to ourselves.'

'Indeed.'

The two men walk out of the alley and are just about to join the crowds when Bao stops and looks up to the first floor balcony of his parent's home.

Ling-Ling is leaning over the side. 'So you would sneak off like a fox raiding a chicken coop. Is this any way to treat your betrothed?'

Shi is desperate. 'It was your brother's idea.'

'If, Magistrate Zhen, you follow my brother's lead, you will surely end in a bog that you will not be able to retrieve yourself from.'

'I, I ...'

'Do not waste your breath but save it for panting at the antics of the depraved.' She says with a haughty aloofness.

Bao whispers to Shi. 'She knows only too well the state of play. Simply bow and let us be gone.'

Shi bows and leads the way into the crowds.

Ling-Ling watches as they travel at speed like two spinning tops. She watches until they disappear from view. Then turning her attention to the opposite side of the street she sees, Lao Fat, the master cook of, Lao Fat's Pork Establishment, taking a short rest out of the front of his renowned shop. He wipes the sweat from his brow while admiring the queue formed for his delicacies. 'Master Lao, Master Lao!' She shouts. 'Are you blind, I'm up here!'

Master Lao soon locates Ling-Ling and a smile comes to his face. He has known her all of his life and has a fondness for her eccentric ways. 'Will twice fried pork with rice and green onions do for your supper?'

'Indeed Master Lao, send them up when they are ready.'

He bows a little too far for the occasion and she returns the complement before returning inside.

\*

The room is divided by a gossamer screen. On one side it is lit brightly and where an old billy goat is sniffing at the genitalia of a woman who is kneeling on a long thin table with legs carved in the shape of a goat. The woman has a goat skin covering her back, and her head is dressed up as a goat's head. Finding the spot where the female goat's issuance has been rubbed the old billy is finally aroused and mounts the woman.

A great cry goes up from the other side of the screen. The darkness of the room hides the squalid goings on. Young girls and boys go amongst those gathered and give pleasure with their hands and mouths to those willing to pay.

Bao and Shi pass through this squirming mass of bodies, now yelling encouragement to the goat to do his duty.

They exit the room and are shown into Clinging Fire's chambers.

She greets them like old friends. 'Imperial Librarian Shao Bao, what a pleasure. You are here to arrange the entertainment for your wedding?'

'If only.' Bao bows and Clinging Fire presents herself in the old style, and again, with some virtuosity.

'Magistrate Zhen, you have returned on receipt of my message?'

'Indeed.' He bows and receives the same.

Clinging Fire turns to a servant. 'Fetch Rose.' The servant is gone in an instant.

'Please, sit and take refreshment.'

As they sit servants deliver wine and sweet meats to the table in front of them.

A giant hooker of Arabian origin is delivered to the table. The charcoal glows brightly in the gloomy room.



The bottom of the block of resin is well lit and the heady smell of marijuana soon transforms the atmosphere.

Bao takes an offered pipe and fills his lungs with gusto. Breathing the smoke up towards the ceiling he lies back to enjoy its effects. 'This is indeed a rare treat. Resin from the, Mountains of Snow, if I deduce correctly.'

'What a rogue for a friend you have Shi. A man who can guess the origin of a pipe on just one draw has obviously spent his youth in folly.'

'Many a true word spoken in casual remarks.' Says Shi in disapproval. 'He was always too fond of the noble weed.'

'Will you not participate?'

'One of us must keep a clear head and that decision has already been taken.' Shi eyes Bao who is having another draw.

Clinging fire laughs and allows the smoke to come forth from her lungs in belching rings. 'Tell me is it true that Shi is betrothed to your sister, Ling-Ling?'

Bao laughs then coughs as the smoke scrapes his throat. 'How is it possible that you should know such recent news?' He turns to Shi. 'Perhaps we need only employ the Madams of Kinsai to solve our dilemma.'

'Perhaps you are right. And on this subject at least we will soon know.'

Shi and Clinging Fire share a moment.

'And how is the, Lotus of Kinsai? Well, I trust?'

'She is as always, the morning star of her people. A little grumpy at times, a little head strong and, when the mood takes her, a little dictatorial.' Bao's smile is sickly in the extreme.

'The perfect wife.'

'Indeed. I could not think of anyone more suitable to take to the marriage bed than her.'

'You are indeed a lucky man, Shao Bao. But will she be so lucky to have you as a husband?' Clinging Fire teases.

'Must I list my undoubted talents, my physical prowess - you undoubtedly heard of my brave actions at the opera - and, of course, my sweet and tender nature.' He can hardly keep a straight face.

'If only I was a virgin, I would marry you myself.'

'If only I was a virgin, I would marry myself.' Bao states in a matter of fact, marijuana induced, sort of way.

'They tell me you are quite brilliant, Master Librarian.'

'Modesty forbids me to extrapolate on this subject. And before this excellent smoke destroys my natural sincerity and I start waxing lyrical about my genius, I will fall silent.'

'An unusual occurrence that we should avail ourselves of.' Shi adds as a reminder to Bao not to let his tongue rule his head.

Rose enters and bows. She has a rare beauty having large round eyes and a long slender nose. She is tall and slender and with large breasts she cannot disguise.

'Sit here next to me.' Clinging Fire pats the seat next to her and opposite Shi. Once Rose is settled, Clinging Fire prompts her. 'This man, Chang Heng, tell my friends what you know.'

Bao interrupts. 'Who is this Chang Heng?'

'His position is in the Secretariat's Office. A grade eight, certainly not higher than a seven. However, he is in close proximity to Lizong. As all of the Prince of Heaven's edicts pass through the Secretariat's Office, and, all communications to the ministries, he would have been in contact with the Emperor on a daily bases.' Informs Shi with a knowing look in Bao's direction.

'An excellent position for a spy to hold.' Says Bao in all innocence. The marijuana having clouded Bao's mind it is also freeing his tongue. Much to Shi's annoyance.

Rose is nervous and tries to avoid Shi's eyes. 'He first selected me for pleasure after a performance. He had arrived with the Emperor's party and was obviously in disguise. His manner was awkward as he was not experienced in these matters. As I was kind to him and showed him what to do he always selected me on his future visits.'

'Did he visit often?' Shi asks.

'He did. And was often seen in the company of Liu Zin the antiques merchant, another regular visitor.'

'Did you know who Liu Zin was?'

Rose looks towards Clinging Rose for guidance who nods for her to answer. 'I have been told he was the Deputy Censor.'

'Was he seen with the Deputy Censor and a man from the North?'

'On one occasion a man from the North, Li Guo, was there. I remember the occasion well, as I was selected to pleasure all three; an unusual occurrence.'

Bao rouses himself. 'All three together?'

'Indeed.'

'Ah. The secret life of the bureaucracy. They spend so much time together they even take their pleasure together.' Bao's flippant remark is met by a stern look from Shi.

'Is it too much to ask if they discussed any ... business ... or private matters while you were there.'

'It is not Magistrate. But the only thing I heard was Liu Zin ask Li Guo if there were such places in the North. He was referring to the Water Nymph's Pony.'

'And this was how you deduced he was indeed a man from the North?'

'That, and his clothes, and his accent.'

'Did they spend any time alone?'

'Chang Heng and Li Guo?'

Shi affirms.

'It is almost for certain. I had gone to relieve myself and on the way back saw Liu Zin also returning. It would have left the other two men together, in the room, alone.'

Clinging Fire turns to Bao to find his eyes firmly fixed on her. 'What credibility do you give to this story?'

The blood drains from Rose's face as Clinging Fire's gaze locks onto her. 'I beg you. I have not lied. I have told you all I know.' She breaks into tears. 'May I now go?'

'That is up to the Magistrate.'

'You may go but I entrust you with silence in this matter. And if anything else arises make sure to inform Clinging Fire.'

The girl bows and flees.

Once the girl has gone Clinging Fire turns to Bao. 'You have an edge to your tongue, Master Librarian. Do you not realize she is filled with fear? To be formerly questioned by a Magistrate and an Imperial Librarian, for her is a frightening experience in itself. To have her credibility thrown into doubt raises the spectre of torture and death.'

'Torture and death?' Bao is incredulous.

'Why did you have to ask that question?' Clinging Fire is angry.

'Because it is a question that had to be asked.' Shi stamps his authority. 'Only it should have been asked when she wasn't here.'

'I disagree. It was obvious from her behaviour that she was telling the truth. But I had to ask to find out. And now we know.' Says Bao with satisfaction.

'Make sure you tell this to Rose so that we may expect her memory not to be clouded by images of terror.' Shi adds.

'Tell me Clinging Fire, did Rose ever pleasure the Emperor?'

Bao's question has an instant reaction on her face, one of surly discontent. 'He has had her on more than one occasion. Although what that has to do with your enquiry, I do not know.'

'The fact that the same girl has pleased Li Guo, Chang Heng, Liu Zin and Zhao Yun our Emperor, is reason enough. Men talk of many things when they have been relieved of their animal spirits' desires. Pillow talk is a vast ocean of gossip. See if you can coax these conversations from her. It is important.' Shi almost pleads.

'As I have brought about this obstacle. I will be the one to rectify it. I will take her to bed and win her confidence.' Says Bao taking another toke on the hooker.

Clinging Fire calls in a servant. 'Take the Imperial Librarian to the acorn suit and then have Rose brought to him.'

Bao, on entering the room, makes a note of the bare wooden walls and floor. This is not the Reels of Splendour. It has at least one good feature and that is the large window that allows natural light to supplement the two small lamps either side of the bed.

Rose enters and is disturbed by finding who the client is.

'We have got off to a bad start, so let us begin again. Just take your clothes off and in this, your normal condition, we can indulge ourselves while we talk.' Bao says this while discarding his robes.

Rose disrobes but reluctantly. Her nervousness has her covering up her breasts with her arms once she is naked.

'Come Rose kneel on the bed.'

Rose kneels on all fours which allows her breasts to swing below her body.

'What remarkable breasts you have indeed.' Bao says with little tact. 'They hang down past your elbows.'

'Why do you torment me? I cannot help my deformity.' She sits back on her feet covering her breasts once more with her arms. She bursts into tears.

'Rose, Rose, be not distressed. How can your breasts be considered a deformity? Has not the Way of Heaven not acted in accordance with Earth to bring about Nature's boundless variety? I was merely making an observation. It was not a criticism.' Bao's rising ardour is in competition with his sympathy for her distress; one that it is destined to lose.

He sits on the bed and encircles his arms around her. 'You are a very sensitive being. Perhaps this is why the Emperor likes you so much.'

'He is always gentle and kind. He even paid off my bond so that I am a free woman.'

'Well there you are then. Would the Prince of Heaven have enjoyed the pleasures of the bed with someone who is deformed? The very idea is an abomination. And as for myself, I have never before seen such magnificent breasts. You must understand that the teahouses I visit only provide singing girls who conform to a recognised norm.'

'I could find little sympathy in those establishments who were only too ready to call me a barbarian.' She bends forward engulfed by a new wave of grief.

Bao's ardour has already surrendered and sympathy rules supreme. 'How can they call you a barbarian? That is a travesty. Barbarians are those that have not embraced civilization. They live their lives without regard for common humanity, for righteousness, and for social harmony. It does not mean that physical attributes determine your status. That, is ridiculous.'

Rose recovers a little and sits back on her feet but she still covers her breasts with her arms. 'Have you never seen big breasts before?'

'Never. But I'm beginning to see their allure. Come, show me your breasts.' He gently pulls her arms down. 'They are like two sugar melons confined in stockings. How wonderful.'

'You are only saying that. It is not what you truly think.'

'Rose, you must learn to trust me. Do you think the Lotus of Kinsai would entertain such a rogue as her betrothed?' His thoughts turn to Tai and the only time he had ever seen her breasts. 'You know that Tai has larger breasts than would be considered normal. Two crescents, like large slices taken from a water melon. Of their texture I cannot speak, but their form and size were not a disappointment to me.'

Rose produces a weak smile even though her eyes are still moist with tears. 'Now I see that you are being kind. I thank you for your generosity.'

'Excellent. We need to be friends, Rose. The Magistrate and myself work directly for Lizong and so we should all have common purpose. What we need to know may seem insignificant to you, yet, it may have a greater significance than you would expect. So think of anything that was said by anyone who has a bearing on this man from the North, Li Guo. Anything at all.'

'I will try.'

'Excellent.'

A knock comes on the door followed by Shi's voice. 'Can you finish up? We need to talk before I see the Emperor.'

Bao, who has been wondering if his ardour is returning, rolls his eyes at Rose, conveying the idea of frustration. 'I will be with you directly.'

Bao quickly dresses. He takes Rose's head in his hands and kisses her on the lips. She responds in kind. Then he opens the door.

'Wait!' Rose has remembered. She gets up off the bed and walks right up to Bao. 'It was Zhao Yun who asked me if I had pleased Li Guo. Only, I did not know who he was then.'

Bao's mind has gone into feverish action and it takes several moments before he replies. 'It is such information, if not this particular piece, that we want. Make sure you let me know. Promise me.'

'I promise.'

And with that he is gone.

Outside, having related what has transpired, they arrive at the junction with the lane and the String of Pearls. They stop and face each other.

'Why would the Emperor ask such a question?' Shi asks more of himself. 'Or is Rose only trying to please her new admirer?'

Bao ignores the last question feeling it is beneath comment. 'It can only mean the Emperor had an interest in Li Guo. Which well he might.'

'The man from the North could easily be an assassin.'

'True. You must ask the Emperor. And another thing, why has the Emperor not spoken of this?'

'Perhaps before, he did not think it important, and now, now that it has been proved beyond doubt that he was a member of the bureaucracy that runs the North for the Mongolians, he feels the information is superfluous.'

'Perhaps.'

They both have reservations.

'The grand parade in honour of General Liu is tomorrow. Shall we meet at the Ink Stone on the first beat of the midday drum?' Bao can't help himself. 'I shall bring your betrothed to meet mine so they may compare notes on our virtue.' He grins.

'On mine alone as yours is still suspect.'

Faking offence. 'A friend you call yourself, while insulting me to my face.'

'Then in future I will confine my insults to when you are not around to hear them. And with that I bid you a goodnight.' Shi bows with a mock solemnity and has the favour returned.

They go their separate ways.



Bao walks the short distance to the family home having to dodge in and out of the happy residence of Kinsai still filled with the joy of salvation. Yet Bao's mind is filled with Rose's large and unusual breasts. How, he wonders, has he been able to miss out on such an erotic pleasure when he had lain with hundreds of women? Was there a conspiracy at work? Or, was his mind so full of conspiracy with the work at hand, now passing over from one area of his life to another; from one area of his mind to another; from one area of his conscious awareness to another.

Then there was the actuality of the breasts themselves. They were a manifestation of material force. And according to Zhu Xi there was never any principle without material force. So what was the principle governing such things. And was that principle in his mind as well as in the breasts themselves.

He knew he was close to a great breakthrough in his understanding of the Nature of Reality, but it was not to be. As soon as he turned into the alley he knew there was something wrong. Where was the policeman?

He hurried to the door and just inside the policeman's body was splayed out at the foot of the stairs. He was dead.

Bao took the stairs two at a time until he arrived in the reception room in a state of panic. 'Ling-Ling! Ling-Ling!' He cries out in desperation. Knowing she is lost.

The twice fried pork sits half eaten on the table and next to it a message: Your sister is enjoying our company on board the Little Egret.

He feels the meal which is still warm. There is still a chance.

He is down the stairs and out into the street. He dashes to the police post only metres away. 'Captain, one of your officers lies dead in my home and my sister has been kidnapped. She has been taken on board the Little Egret and I must follow. Give me two of your men as the trail is still warm.'

Bao doesn't wait and the Captain directs his men to follow. Then after a moment's thought and after giving

instructions to his remaining men in regard to the dead policeman, he follows himself.

Bao runs like a madman through the streets only stopping at the Six Wells Gate to ask the Captain of the Gate if he has seen a girl been carried or anything unusual involving a thirteen year old girl. The Captain has not.

Bao dashes down to the jetties where the Little Egret is normally moored. He can see it in the distance heading out across the lake. Choosing a fast boat he and the policemen give chase and soon overhaul it.

They scramble on board to find it deserted.

Calling up to the polemen. 'Where is everybody?'

'In the rear cabins.' Comes the reply.

He dashes to the cabin in which the Deputy Censor was found murdered to find it locked. The police Captain uses his sword to prize the door open, and there she is, tied to the bed a gag in her mouth.

Bao undoes the gag and soon wishes he hadn't.

'And where have you been? While I have been kidnapped you have been ...'

She cannot speak as Bao is holding her tight against himself. 'If anything had happened to you I would have killed myself.'

Ling-Ling fights free from his embrace. 'If anything had happened to me you would not need to kill yourself as I would have done it for you.' Bao hugs her tight again and listens with joy to her mumbling violence.

'What are you doing? Get after them before they escape.' Ling-Ling applies reason.

'Cut her bonds, Captain, before she ruptures her spirit.'

The Captain soon has her free from her bonds. Her tiny fists are soon turned to pummelling Bao and when the Captain tries to restrain her she turns them on him.

'Ling-Ling you must learn to direct your anger from whence it came.' Bao's advice, sound as it is, is ignored as she returns to Bao with even greater fury.

Then she suddenly stops and bursts into tears, sitting back on her feet. 'They molested me. They defiled me with their dirty hands.'

'They didn't rape you?' Bao's concern can be clearly heard.

After a short heart wrenching moment. 'They could hardly rape me with my legs tied together.'

'Did you get a good look at them?' The Captain intervenes.

'Didn't you know, Captain, that rascallions all look the same. Especially as they had covered faces.'

'A dangerous breed of men these, rascallions, especially the ones with dirty hands.' Bao jokes.

A faraway look comes to Ling-Ling's eyes as she turns her attention within. 'I was doing so well. I heard a scuffle on the stairs and knew at once there was something wrong. So I retreated to our private quarters and picked up my staff. I caught the first one with a side swipe full in the face as he arrived at the top of the stairs. The next felt the end of my staff and he was forced to spit out his teeth. The third turned and fled but he did not get far with my staff amongst his legs and a vase smashed over his head. Then ... then nothing. There must have been someone behind me, but I felt nothing, saw nothing, heard nothing. I awoke to find the rascallions feeling my body. I should have killed them while I had the chance.' She changes tone. 'Except the Buddha would not have approved, believing, as he does, in compassion.'

'Did they not say anything?' Bao enquires.

'Indeed they did. But I could not make any sense of it.' She turns her head slightly on its side to look at Bao. 'They asked me a lot of questions, like ... like ... did Bao know the man from the North.'

'But why would they think you would know such a thing?'

'I don't know. And what was more peculiar, he was reading from a parchment.' She looks across to the window.  
'There, on the window sill. They left it behind when they left.'

Bao is quick to the parchment and quick to read what is on it and this is what it reads:  
Did Bao know the man from the North?  
Was the man from the North a Mongolian spy?  
Was the man from the North in league with the Deputy Censor?  
Was De Cao in league with the man from the North?  
Were they all part of a Mongolian spy ring?  
Did they use the Water Nymph's Pony as a secret place to meet?  
Why did De Cao meet the Emperor in the caves of Lingyan Monastery?  
Is the Abbot of Lingyan Monastery in league with the Mongolians?

'What nonsense is this?' Bao intones with conviction.

'And why would they expect me to know such things?' Ling-Ling suddenly perks up. 'Unless they think I'm part of Magistrate Zhen's investigation team. As well they might as I am betrothed to his great nobleness and brother of his assistant.'

'And without doubt it is our mother who is the ring leader of the Mongolian spy ring.' Bao says without taking his eyes from the parchment.

'Our mother? I always knew our mother was strange but who would have guessed that she was a spy.' Ling-Ling bursts out laughing. 'I fear they have that one wrong. Our mother, for all her many great qualities, is incapable of keeping a secret. A fine spy she would make.'

Something in what Ling-Ling has just said triggers something in Bao's mind. He looks around him, then up, as if he were trying to see through the ceiling. 'We have been tricked. I sense his presence now. But ... now he has gone.'

'Who has gone?'

Bao turns to Ling-Ling. 'Someone who can share consciousness with others.'

'Has this to do with the plane of consciousness?'

'It has indeed. There are those who belong to great mystical traditions that can perform these feats. Your Abbot for one and some of his senior monks. And besides the Buddhists, the Taoist Illuminates also have great knowledge of the plane of consciousness. But neither would use such knowledge for nefarious deeds as it would defile the source of all things. It would defile the Supreme Ultimate; the infinite mind of consciousness that we all belong to. Even the Yellow Emperor was loath to use such knowledge in the world of the myriad things that we all inhabit every day. For it would trigger the law of unintended consequences. Unless ...' Bao sits back on the bed apparently looking out of the window at the West Lake but in fact looking into his own mind. 'I have been tricked. You were kidnapped to bring my guard down so I would not realize that he was sharing my consciousness in regard to these questions.' He holds up the parchment.

Ling-Ling looks nervously about her. 'But he's gone now?'

'Indeed. As soon as he realized I was onto him he left. I just caught a taste of him, then he was gone.'

Bao stands up and engages a confused police Captain. 'Have your men search for three dead bodies. If this is whom I think it is then he will not have left any clues to his identity. Nor witnesses.'

The Captain leaves immediately.

Bao, still looking to where the Captain was standing in the open doorway, sees on the floor in the corridor the tell-tale signs of an arc of blood. The same as in Bingpo. The same as at the Lingyan Monastery. Here it is cut in half as if he had cleaned his blade on his way out of the room opposite. Bao moves into the corridor and shouts after the Captain. 'Captain, please return and open this door.'

The Captain quickly returns and soon has the door open revealing a dead man on the bed and one either side.

Bao tries to stop Ling-Ling from seeing the bodies but she avoids his attempt. 'Well at least they got what they deserve.' She turns to Bao. 'These are the rapscallions who defiled my body with their hands.' She turns to the

Captain. 'Lend me your sword that I may cut their hands from their bodies.'

The Captain looks to Bao who turns to Ling-Ling. 'They are nothing but poor fools. Deceived, as I myself have been deceived, by a man that has used mystical knowledge for the pursuit of mundane things. They deserve pity not defilement.'

'They have pushed my Buddhist compassion to its limit.' She storms out onto the deck with Bao following. She stops as the tears flow.

The policemen on deck and some of the polemen look at her.

'Stop staring at me!' Her anger returning.

Bao wraps his arms around her stopping her struggles until she finally gives in and grasps onto him in pain and sorrow.

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## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Rescuing others from misplaced laws**

**The superior man risks grave danger.**

**His duty to common humanity is rewarded by friendship.**

**In the end,**

**Good fortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**The hegemon falls by chance.**

**Undoing his strict rules and regulations too quickly**

**Leads the people to expressions of anger,**

**This may result in rebellion.**

**Danger**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**The hegemon will not relent.**

**The superior man knows it is time to leave.**

**No blame.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**For those unable to leave the unrelenting hegemon,**

**There may even be a case for feigning insanity.**

**Grave danger.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**The hegemon reigns supreme.**

**The Darkening of the Light is complete.**

**Then comes the dawn.**

**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**Conflict (27)**

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===== Heaven
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==  ==
===== Water
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**THE IMAGE**

**The creative Heaven shuns the abysmal Water:**

**The Image of CONFLICT.**

**The superior man looks to the beginnings of transactions**

**For the seeds of conflict.**

**Coherence of the spirit makes arbitration possible.**

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# Chapter 28

## Influence (34)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

10<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

Before the Early Morning Drum

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===== Lake

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== == Mountain

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### THE IMAGE

The joyous Lake and the still Mountain:

The Image of natural INFLUENCE.

When the Lake rises over the Mountain in the form of mist,

Beauty abounds.

Thus the superior man is stimulated by Attraction and

Asks for ideas that are alien to him.

★

“The mind of Heaven and Earth is to produce things. In the production of man and things, they receive the mind of Heaven and Earth as their mind. Therefore, with reference to the character of the mind, although it embraces and penetrates all and leaves nothing to be desired, nevertheless, one word will cover all of it, namely, humanity (jen). Let me try and explain fully.

The moral qualities of the mind of Heaven and Earth are four: origination, flourish, advantages, and firmness. And the principle of origination unites and controls them all. In their operation they constitute the course of the four seasons, and the vital force of spring permeates them all. Therefore in the mind of man there are also four moral qualities – namely, jen, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom – and jen embraces them all. In their emanation and function, they constitute the feeling of love, respect, being right, and discrimination between right and wrong – and the feeling of commiseration pervades them all. Therefore in discussing the mind of Heaven and Earth, it is said, ‘Great is Heaven, the originator!’ and ‘Great is Earth, the originator.’ Both substance and function of the four moral qualities are thus fully implied without enumerating them. In discussing the excellence of man’s mind, it is said, ‘jen is man’s mind’. Both substance and function of the four moral qualities are thus fully presented without mentioning them. For jen as constituting the Way consists of the fact that the mind of Heaven and Earth to produce things is present in everything. Before feelings are aroused this substance is already existent in its completeness. After feelings are aroused, its function is infinite. If we can truly practice love and preserve it, then we have in it the spring of all virtues and the root of all good deeds. This is why in the teachings of the Confucian school, the student is always urged to anxious and unceasing effort in the pursuit of jen. In the teachings of Confucius, it is said, ‘Master oneself and return to propriety.’ This means that if we overcome and eliminate selfishness and return to the Principle of Nature, then the substance of this mind, that is jen, will be present everywhere and its function will always be operative. It is also said, ‘Be respectful in private life, be serious in handling affairs, and be loyal in dealing with others.’ These are also ways to preserve this mind. Again it is said, ‘Be filial in serving parents,’ ‘Be respectful in serving elder brothers.’ And ‘Be loving in dealing with all things.’ These are ways to put this mind into practice. It is again said, ‘They sought jen and found it,’ for Po-I declined a kingdom and left the country in favour of his younger brother, and they both remonstrated their superior against a punitive expedition and chose retirement and hunger, and in doing so, they prevented losing this mind. Again it is said, ‘Sacrifice life in order to realize jen.’ This means that we desire something more than life and hate something more than death, so as not to injure this mind. What mind is this? In Heaven and Earth it is the mind to produce things infinitely. In man it is the mind to love people gently and benefit things. It includes the four virtues of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, and penetrates the four beginnings of the sense of commiseration, the sense of shame, the sense of deference and compliance, and the sense of right and wrong.”

From the Collection of Literary Works by Zhu Xi – A Treatise on Jen (humanity)

Tai had always been a little afraid of Moti, the monk from the, Mountains of Snow. She had heard him called, a shape changer, and a friend of the Demons that protect the Dharma. There was something of the demon about his

Tibetan face; it is contorted into a permanent snarl; a childhood accident.

The Abbot, on the other hand, has a face that is gentle yet strong. The fine features rarely contort and have a permanence about them that is reassuring. Tai had known this face most of her life and when she meditated on the face of the Buddha it was often his face that became the object of her concentration. The Abbot did not approve but allowed this indiscretion as it worked so well for his able student.

The three are sitting on the stone where Lou Jiwei was killed. Although the stone had been cleansed by a dozen energetic monks and a ceremony performed to rid the place of its perfidious atmosphere, there was still a residue of treachery lingering in the cracks and holes of the stone. Or at least that's how it felt to Tai.

She had taken it in her stride when Moti became transparent and disappeared altogether for a few moments, having been warned by the Abbot to expect exceptional happenings from the friend of demons.

Moti is outraged and jumps down from the stone. 'This abomination will be hard to catch. He slithers like a snake, in and out of the forest of mundanity, in and out of the plane of consciousness. Leaving only a small residue of his passing. A man of such knowledge should be a friend of the Dharma. How is it possible that he can exist in the world of the myriad things and commit such terrible acts without damaging and damning his consciousness?'

'The only explanation can be is that he has not a dichotomy in his consciousness. He must be wholly wicked. There are stories of such men even in our noble order.'

'Pah! Stories? Fictions more like to keep our teachers on their guard against such men gaining knowledge that they would use to corrupt the world of the myriad things.'

'Have you penetrated the mind of my student that sits here with us?' The Abbot wants to return to the play at hand.

'She already can share her consciousness at times, with you, and with another, a man with whom she loves. This means she has already set out on a mystical path, which

if she did but know it, would eventually lead to enlightenment.' Moti's contorted face contorts still further with what Tai thinks must be a smile.

'This is my opinion. If she was to take her vows and become a nun she would be sent down this path as the techniques would be familiar to her when she starts out.' The Abbot stops for a moment's reflection. A reflection on the correct words to convince Moti. 'I am suggesting that you teach her these techniques even though she has not renounced the world.'

'She will not renounce the world because of love.' He barks a laugh. 'This is not uncommon in the land of the Mountains of Snow, where couples often form parallel paths. This is not a problem for me but more a problem for your order. If she is worthy and capable, and she appears to be, then I will take her along this path so that she may gain transmission from the Dharma itself. This will also help her partner with whom she already shares some of her consciousness.'

'Excellent. For he may be in great danger from this abomination. With the right knowledge he may prove this creature's bane.'

'Now I see your play. And all we risk, you, me, Tai and Bao, is one more turn around the wheel. To protect the Dharma such risks are inevitable and acceptable. And we will remain blameless.'

'Blameless? We must remain in humility. We must commit to right-action whatever the cost to ourselves. And if that means missing out on enlightenment in this life, as you say, then one more time around the wheel will be a small price to pay.'

The Abbot's acceptance that he may have to give up enlightenment in this life impresses Tai beyond measure. 'As you and Moti will risk so much then I will go down this path even though I dread meeting with demons.'

'Only one demon and he's a pussycat.' Moti laughs with a sinister edge.

The Abbot turns to Tai. 'Are you ready?'

'We will do this now?' Fear creeping into her voice.

'There is only the present. That is all that exists.'  
 Moti jumps up onto the stone and sits facing Tai. 'Empty your mind and I will create a world that we can share in mine.'

Tai can feel the Abbot's consciousness propelling her on. A surge of courage to match theirs permeates her being and she enters a world of snow covered mountains. Moti's face rises up in front of her mind's eye. She concentrates on his eyes to avoid the rest of his face. In so doing she enters his mind completely. A beautiful mountain valley streams towards her. An object that hovers in the air is approached at speed. Before she has time to react a demonic face frozen into a metal ring that is infused with amber light presents itself. The face of Moti's anger demon embossed on the ring strikes terror into her heart. But it lasts only a moment as she passes through it and into the amber light that fills the ring's centre. Her consciousness is torn apart by the Dharma and then reformed as she passes out of the back of the ring where a symbol of the Dharma acts as a gateway back into the world of the myriad things.

'There, it is done.' Moti says with deep satisfaction.  
 'Your fate, and ours, is cast.'

Tai feels little difference until she remembers the symbol and is transported back into the Dharma. Elation beyond measure. Then a voice she recognizes. 'You cannot tarry here as much as you would like to. You must return to your own mind for the one you are in belongs to another.'

She opens her eyes to face the contorted face of Moti which she sees in a new light. Amber light.

'My anger demon has a fearsome reputation, but as you now see, he is just a pussycat.' Moti jokes. Then for just a moment his face is transformed into that of his anger demon and an emotion of dread passes through Tai's consciousness but goes as Moti's deformed face returns. She understands everything and can't control her emotions as she is overwhelmed with compassion for this beautiful ugly monk. The terrible accident he had as a young teenager that left him deformed and with great anger. Anger so strong that it could only be controlled by giving it form. Once the anger demon was configured in the form of a ring in his mind he offered it up to the Green Tara, the bodhisattva of enlightenment activity.

And to his surprise she sent it straight back only now filled with the light of the dharma. All this Tai now knows as if it was her own memory.

'Can you sense our presence?'

She turns to where the Abbot was sitting but he has left. Yet she can still feel his presence.

'And what of me?'

Moti is gone and yet she still feels his presence.

'The plane of consciousness has several levels in the scale of reality. You have been gifted knowledge of access to the first two. A person standing next to you, and a crowd within several metres. Not only can you enter their minds but you will be able to detect the presence of others that are operating on the plane of consciousness only. You have been gifted these first steps on the scale of reality. If you practice you can expand your consciousness to the entire world and beyond to the universe and eventually beyond, leaving the finite forms of consciousness behind. You will not exist in a finite form but will become the infinite consciousness; the consciousness of the primordial state we call enlightenment.'

'This is great knowledge for a novice to have been gifted. Use it well.' Moti adds.

She is alone. But then, they were never there in their physical forms. She casts about her trying to detect their presence but all she pulls out is the consciousness of a passing bird - oh how it thrills to its flight. The wood mouse watching her from a thicket thrills to her presence as she shares its consciousness. The tree near her is more difficult to detect as its consciousness's form is far removed from her conscious experience of life but eventually she senses the wind moving its branches and something akin to joy as the sap rises to its canopy of leaves.

What a world she has entered as she feels the entire area as a singular consciousness - a consciousness she is just a part of.

Suddenly a feeling of deep humility engulfs her. Why has she been so blessed? The answer slowly coalesces around

her - it is her birth right, it is everyone's birth right. Then this knowledge overwhelms her and she is lost in the great mystery of the mystic.

\*

As the dawn breaks Tai wanders down through the forest to the West Lake. Here she finds that this massive but finite expanse of water has a form of consciousness just by dipping her fingers into its soft wetness. She walks down the Su De dropping in and out of other people's consciousness. Human consciousness is rich in detail and the more she homes-in on individuals the more sophistication is revealed. Tai finds herself embarrassed by her snooping and decides to stop. She manages to make the West Gate before she tries her new skills on the city itself. Its far too big. An area, like a road junction, is just within her reach. But even here she can't hold the area but is confronted by hundreds of thoughts in a melange of confused sensations. With practice she knows she will be able to home-in on individuals. Again she becomes embarrassed at invading private thoughts and feelings, and so stops.

Her fame allows her access to the Shao household guarded by police. She finds Bao and Ling-Ling asleep in each other's arms in Bao's bed.

She can't resist and probes Bao's mind which immediately awakens him with a start and closes her out with a violent reaction. She's disappointed, and for more than one reason.

Ling-Ling is totally different. Her young friend hugs her with affection and her mind, filled with a thousand thoughts, is swimming in a sea of love. Love directed at her. The sensation is overwhelming and she is forced to close down her exploration.

'Don't I get a hug?' Bao asks with some justification.

'Indeed not. Not after what I saw in your mind.'

'Ah. So this why the Abbot wanted to borrow you. He gifted you the skills to detect the rogue mystical practitioner.'

'A double-edged sword. What did I find when I shared my consciousness with yours?' She demands.

'My love burning bright like a great volcano.' He says hopefully.

'Sex, sex, and yet more sex. You would have me trust up like a glazed duck on a spit.' She spits the words out.

'Because you have little experience of these matters it probably all seems strange, but rest assured, my divine light, you will know great pleasure.' He presses even more hopefully.

'And whose were those deformed breast? They certainly aren't mine.' Tai is on a trail of destruction.

'Dear heart, this is what you get for invading others minds without an invitation.' Bao is now trying a logical approach.

'What are you two talking about?' Ling-Ling is genuinely curious.

'You know how your brother has a gift for reading other people's minds. Well, now I can do it. The Abbot and the monk Moti, gifted me a special skill that novices, usually, are not allowed.'

'Oh, you must teach me.' Ling-Ling enthuses.

'I ... I, don't think I can. And even if I could I don't think it would be right.'

'She might have a natural inclination like myself. She often seems to know what I'm thinking.' Says Bao while smiling at Ling-Ling. 'It must have started somewhere. And perhaps all of humanity has the potential except only some of us try developing it.'

'Is that what you did?'

'Indeed. I would see if what I thought my mother was thinking was true. And I would always take notice of feelings and thoughts that would spring out of the air.' He turns to Ling-Ling. 'Tell Tai what you said to me about this rogue that kidnapped you?'

'Do you know about my kidnap?'

'I saw it in both your minds.'



'Well, Bao was wondering what could be the motive for such a despicable act. And this word popped right into my mind: conspiracy.'

'And when she said it, it had the ring of truth. But what kind of conspiracy I do not know.' A degree of despondency creeps into his words.

'Surely it must be the Mongolian spy.' Tai offers.

'Possibly. But the fact he left us alive probably means he is still infused with *this culture of ours*. Having gained access to my mind while I was distracted he would have seen that I am not a threat to the Dynasty, nor to Lizong. He would seem to be tracking down some ...' He looks at Ling-Ling. 'conspiracy that perhaps threatens the Empire.'

'Single words often pop into my mind. Although where they come from I do not know.' Offers Ling-Ling from deep thought.

'Perhaps, while he was sharing your consciousness you caught a glimpse of his.' Tai directs this to her.

'Perhaps.'

'This of course suggests that the mind is often working sub-consciously. Something I have long considered to be the truth.' Bao divulges. 'It would appear that we have three forms of consciousness. Conscious awareness that is exercised through our senses. Conscious thought that is manifest in language and rationality. And consciousness that is greater than ourselves as in the mind of Heaven and Earth.'

'Or, in Buddhist terms, in the experience of enlightenment.' Offers Tai.

'Precisely. But that leaves an ocean of ignorance of the sub-conscious world that exists in our minds. How does that all work. Sometimes I think I am a man that is standing on the edge of some great ocean of wisdom - unknown, and unknowing.'

'The great mystery of life.' Ling-Ling sums up in profound solemnity. Only a little too profound and too solemn to be taken seriously.

'Indeed.' Bao and Tai confirm in the same vein.

'Perhaps we should be considering what is to be done about this abomination. Should we not tell Lizong?' Tai has already moved on.

'We must certainly tell Shi. It is his investigation after all. And his good council is always welcome.' Says Bao with sincerity. He gets up and starts dressing.

Tai can't help but look. Until Ling-Ling covers Tai's eyes with her hands. 'You should not be looking at my brother's nakedness, what would mother say.'

'I wasn't looking.'

Ling-Ling falls about with laughter. 'Perhaps love is blind after all.'

'You must get dressed as well Ling-Ling. I'm not leaving you out of my sight again. My poor old heart couldn't stand another kidnapping.'

'So where are we going?' Ling-Ling asks as she strips and dresses.

'Have you both forgotten? This is General Liu's great day. He will lead the army down the Imperial Way to the palace. Where, with much ceremony, he will be feted as the saviour of Kinsai. I have great hope that Shi will be at the Ink Stone for after the terrible events of the morning I cannot remember where we said we would meet.'

'Are you sure it's not at the Water Nymph's Pony.' Tai pins this onto Bao with the force of a dagger.

'Sweet flower of the celestial garden. You must let go of these images of large breasts.'

'Ah ha, so I was right.'

'Only in that the Water Nymph's Pony is a rainbow of men's fantasies. Such things are common place in that establishment.'

'When can I go? I feel my education will not be complete until I have witnessed men's fantasies first hand.' Says Ling-Ling in all innocence.

'Never!' Comes the answer from both Tai and Bao.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**At a glance mutual attraction.**

**It is too early to tell if this will survive**

**But a start has been made.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Acting too soon, and hence without propriety,**

**To a mutual attraction brings**

**Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**The superior man guards himself from the vagaries of the heart**

**By using his Inner Truth to balance the Attraction.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**Attraction comes from the depths of our being.**

**It speaks from beyond our Inner Truth,**

**From the resonance of our kindred spirit.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Trying to be attractive by the use of words alone**

**Is insignificant.**

**Content and sincerity must also be present.**

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## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Opposition (28)

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== == Fire

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===== Lake

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#### THE IMAGE

**Fire shuns the Lake:**

**The Image of OPPOSITION.**

**All men are born different and then brought up differently.**

**Individuality is a fact of life that often leads to opposition.**

**The superior man retains his individuality,**

**Even amongst men of a like mind.**

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# Chapter 29

## Development (33)

The Song Dynasty  
 1460 I.A.  
 10<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon  
 After the Mid-Morning Drum

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===== Wind/Wood

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== == Mountain

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### THE IMAGE

The penetrating power of Wind and Wood Changes the Mountain:

The Image of DEVELOPMENT.

Thus the ruler lays plans

To last a thousand years.

Only extraordinary perseverance can bring

Success.

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“The Supreme Vacuity which neither comes into nor goes out of existence is probably the subtle principle in the reflection of the mysterious mirror of wisdom and the source of all existence. Unless one possesses the intelligence and special penetrating power of a sage, how can he harmonize his spirit with the realm of neither existence nor nonexistence? Therefore the perfect man penetrates the infinite with his wonderful mind and the finite cannot obstruct him. He applies to the utmost his ears to listen and his eyes to see, and sound and colour cannot restrict him. Is this not because he leaves the vacuous self-nature of things as it is and therefore they cannot affect his spiritual intelligence? Therefore the sage exercises his true mind and is in accord with principle, and there is no obstruction which he cannot pass through. He views the transformation of all things with the clear understanding that they are all of one material force and therefore he is in accord with whatever he may encounter. Since there is no obstruction which he cannot pass through, therefore he can mix with the impure and achieve purity, and since he is in accord with whatever he encounters, he sees the unity of things as he comes in contact with them. Since this is the case, although the ten thousand forms of the myriad things seem to be different, they are not so in themselves. As they are not different in themselves, it follows that these forms are not real forms. As these forms are not the real forms, although they appear to be, they are not forms at all.

Thus things and I sprang from the same root, and right and wrong come out of the same breath. This principle is deep, subtle, abstruse and hidden, and is well nigh impossible for ordinary people to understand completely.

This is the reason why in the brief discussion of today everybody has his own opinion when it comes to the profound, fundamental doctrine of wisdom. But if agreement is to be arrived at through adhering to differences of opinion, what common ground is there for agreement? Therefore different theories have come up in competition with one another, and by their very nature they cannot agree.”

#### From the Treatise of Seng-Chao – Chapter 2. The Emptiness of the Unreal

Bao leads the way having the authority of his Palace Official's robes to make people give way and surrender their position. With Tai bringing up the rear Ling-Ling is safely positioned between the two. They make their way out onto the Imperial Way and cross over the sand covered central avenue with the help of the palace guards.

Moving behind the crowds they arrive at the Ink Stone that is packed with scholar officials. Bao and Tai are greeted with respect and joy by those assembled.

'I will go and change my robes as these are soiled around the hem.' To Ling-Ling. 'Why not come with me. I might have a more suitable robe for you, a more womanly one now that you are betrothed to Shi.'

Ling-Ling's face lights up and they leave Bao to search for Shi. Eventually he finds him in a corner in the company of Wang Chi; a surprise in its self.

'Greetings and salutations on this most auspices of days.' Bao bows low, and Wang Chi and Shi return the complement. 'Will you not tell me of the rogue member of your order that feels free to murder an innocent monk?' Bao's statement is rude in the extreme as it is in its delivery.

Wang Chi is taken aback but finds his way blocked to enter Bao's consciousness. 'These are the affairs of our order alone. And you, Master Librarian, are not privy to such knowledge.' He goes to leave in anger.

'What is the conspiracy that he searches for?' Bao pulls him back with words.

'You are either very brave or very stupid to pursue this matter.'

Shi who was nervous when Bao arrived is now in a state of high anxiety.

'It is true that I can be brave when in the defence of those I love and respect, but stupid? You try to provoke me with a word of disrespect to cover up the actions of one of your order. My little sister was kidnapped and defiled by this ... man. Have I not the right to question members of your order when so great an offense has taken place.' Wang Chi tries to intervene but Bao is having none of it. 'First he kills the arsonist, then the monk and now three rogues he employed; when will you not give him up to me that I may question him in earnest.'

'Never!' Wang Chi storms off.

'In the name of Heaven and Earth what are you doing? Don't you realize that Wang Chi has the ear of the Emperor? What can you possibly gain from attacking a man whose integrity is beyond reproach?'

'Wang Chi and his whole order know of this man's wayward behaviour. Yet they refuse to allow us access to him.' Bao can see where this conversation is going so he changes track. 'I didn't say it in front of Wang Chi but there is a further crime this rogue committed and it



concerns you. My sister, and your betrothed, was defiled by his men.'

'What?'

'Once they had taken Ling-Ling prisoner she was subjected to molestation by the rogue's henchmen.'

'She was raped?'

'Thankfully not. But to be seen naked and to have had her body subjected to the hands of villains has had a profound effect on her consciousness. It has stolen her innocence.' Bao can see the effect that this news has had on Shi and so softens his tone. 'Perhaps now you can see why I am so angry with Wang Chi and the whole of the Yellow Emperor's tradition.'

'I must go to Ling-Ling and assure her that this will not change my commitment to our betrothal.'

'Shi, dear friend, she has not once thought that it would. For her it was a terrible experience but without consequence beyond what it was. The less that is made of this the better.' Bao changes direction and tone once more. 'You must see the Emperor. If only to tell him that I resign my position both on the investigation and as Imperial Librarian. At least my integrity will remain intact and what pressure I can bring in this act will give Lizong pause for thought.'

Shi's brilliant mind works the possibilities. 'I will do as you ask. Now where is Ling-Ling that I may comfort her in her distress?'

\*

Lizong is on the balcony over the Gate of Tranquillity with members of the Imperial household, the Ministers of the Government and various dignitaries. They can hear the crowds further up the Imperial Way giving General Liu the reception he so richly deserves.

An official whispers in the Emperor's ear and Lizong's demeanour changes from happiness to one of sour distaste. He moves with speed to the room behind the balcony, where Shi stands and where he bows to the horizontal as Lizong enters.

'Can't this wait? The General is almost upon us.'

'Shao Bao has resigned his position ...' Shi is cut off and taken aback by the fury of Lizong's reaction.

'If Shao Bao wishes to resign then tell him he will do so in person, giving me a good account of his reasons. Now go and fetch him. Bring him to the Imperial Barge before the mid-afternoon drum. Do I make myself clear?'

Shi bows to the horizontal and waits until Lizong has gone before he straightens up. Then a voice in his mind that is not his own. 'And make sure he brings Wang Tai with him.'

Shi casts about for Wang Chi and on his way out sees him in the door way of an adjoining room. 'I will do what you ask.'

Wang Chi gives a small bow in recognition.

As Shi walks back to the Ink Stone he can't believe what a fool he has made of himself. Bao had been promoted by Lizong himself and as a consequence should not have used a proxy to resign. That he, Shi, was that proxy, was almost a collusion in an insult. He burned with embarrassment. Then he wondered whether Wang Chi was still sharing his consciousness. Which, if he had been made of combustible material would have seen Shi burst into flames. He is now feeling how Lizong must have felt. 'Just wait till I get my hands on the Imperial Librarian.' He thinks as many dark thoughts rise from the ashes of an embarrassment of monumental consequence.

He has to force his way through the crowds gathered at the end of the Imperial Way. His authority having been rendered invisible by the force of the occasion.

And what an occasion. General Liu leading his army arrives at the Ink Stone at the same time as Shi. But unlike Shi his demeanour is one of unfettered pride. It can be seen on the faces of the army and reflected on the face of the crowd.

Shi stops on the steps of the Ink Stone to take it all in. Shi's anger subsides and is replaced by the pride that the citizens of Kinsai overwhelmingly feel for their saviour. Shi shouts with the rest. For here is a man who is the very embodiment of *this culture of ours*.

General Liu salutes the Emperor and his family on the balcony. They in return bow low in recognition of the great service he has performed for the citizens of the greatest city the world has ever seen.

The Captain of the palace guard greets the General with a flourish; bowing with one knee on the ground. He then holds the General's horse while he gets down. They greet each other like the old friends they are. As they go inside the gatehouse so that they can join Lizong on the balcony, Shi takes the opportunity to search for Bao.

He finds him on the second floor balcony with Tai and her father Wu Chi, Ling-Ling, Poppy and the entire staff of the Ink Stone. He arrives as General Liu appears on the balcony and all thought of confronting Bao is washed aside by the power of the moment. 10,000 firecrackers are set off with 100s of thunder-flashes followed by a great cry from the entire city now lining the Imperial Way.

Shi has the good sense to let himself meld with the mass consciousness of his fellow citizens. He fleetingly thinks that this must be what it is like to experience the consciousness of an entire city. Then he is lost in the moment with everyone else.

The palace guard ride out to take the great standards of the army as they file past and onto Phoenix Hill. Every standard is greeted by more fire crackers and renewed cries along the entire length of the Imperial Way.

The standards are taken onto the top of the battlements and there fly in a stiff breeze either side of General Liu's dragon standard; a blue dragon facing out with the front two claws raised in defiance, on a gold background of swirling clouds.

After a while Bao sidles up to Shi. 'What news from the palace?'

'It's not good. Lizong was furious with your resignation, which, by rights, should have been delivered by you in person.'

'Oh, I see. He is right, of course. I will make amends.'

'You don't see. He has ordered you, me and Tai, to the Imperial Barge, for this afternoon's parade around the

West Lake with General Liu. Perhaps he has a mind to drown us as part of the festivities.'

Bao looks to Tai at the other end of the balcony. 'Did you get that?'

Tai makes her way to where they stand. 'We must go. To ignore a direct order from the Emperor is punishable by decapitation.'

'Of course we will go. And now my fury is spent I can see what a fool I have been.' Bao brightens up. 'I will throw myself on his mercy, taking full blame for my disgraceful behaviour.'

'I must change my robes for something more suitable.' Tai leaves and takes Ling-Ling with her.

'If Lizong is so angry with me, why would he want me present at such an auspicious event?' Bao worries out loud.

'Bao, I would have cheerfully strangled you myself for turning me into a bigger fool than you. However, it was my own fault. I should never have acted as your messenger.'

'Indeed not. What has befallen Zhen Shi that has changed you into such a fool?' Says Bao in all innocence.

'Don't ride a donkey and call it a dragon. Isn't that what they say? And don't mention my name. I will speak for myself if I am required.' Shi eyes Bao with suspicion. 'And none of your tricks. And furthermore, I doubt Lizong can take one of your garbled explanations without suffering a violent reaction, so keep it simple and be sincere.'

Bao is offended. 'Shi, dear friend, I will be both brief and sincere, and full of remorse, and ... '

'Enough. Please Bao. Brief and sincere. Then there is just a chance we will retain our heads if not our dignity.'

Bao knows how to mollify Shi, and he does so with a full bow.

\*

Shi leads the way along the Imperial Jetty. He is followed in quick succession by Tai and Ling-Ling with Bao bringing up the rear.

The Captain of the Palace Guard standing at the bottom of the service gang plank - the main gang plank having already been taken on board and stored - hurries them along. 'Quickly now, Emperors don't like to be kept waiting. And you are the last of the invited guests.' He turns to the jetty-men. 'Cast off and make good.'

Shi is fretting out loud. 'How could we possibly be late? This is a tragedy turning into a disaster before my very eyes.'

'Will you stop worrying Shi. We are here now, wherever here is.' Bao peers into the gloom as they are below deck in a space lit by only a single lamp.

A door leads onto the oarsmen's deck where the oarsmen on the jetty side are pushing the Imperial Barge away from its mooring.

The Imperial Barge is unlike the Little Egret, which is propelled by polemen from above the main deck, here, the propulsion is by means of oars from below the main deck.

'This way.' The Captain of the Palace Guard having secured the door after the gangplank has been brought on board, now leads the way. Up three flights of stairs and into a room filled with light as the entire rear is covered in windows. The sumptuous surroundings mark this out as the Emperor's state room, a place he and his family can retreat.

'Wait here.' The Captain leaves through a door onto a deck above the main deck where the guests are gathered.

Tai busies herself adjusting Ling-Ling's robes. A size too big but of unusual design and high quality. These were Tai's when she was a young woman.

Shi looks out of the rear windows at the departing land and feels it is a metaphor for his position - cast off. Bao on the other hand adjusts his ceremonial belt, his ceremonial hat, out of commission, has been replaced by

an ordinary Palace Librarian's hat that is a good third of the size.

Tai adjusts the hat on his head. 'It is the shape of your head that leaves whatever headdress you wear to adopt a rakish angle. Try and keep still and perhaps it will stay upright.'

Bao doesn't have time to answer as Lizong enters at speed and those gathered bow.

'So Shao Bao what have you to say for yourself?'

Bao takes a step back and then one to the side revealing Ling-Ling. 'I would like to present my sister, Ling-Ling.'

Ling-Ling steps forward and bows in the old style, and to the joy of Emperors, by placing her forehead on the floor while still retaining her bow. Lizong has not seen such a bow since he was young and marvels at her dexterity.

'Please rise.' He waits for her to regain her posture. 'You have been kidnapped and molested? Is this true?'

'I was taken from my home by villainous rascallions, who used me to entrap my brother. So best they could access my brother's mind while he was distracted. Whoever the leader of these villainous rascallions was he had mystical knowledge known to few.'

Wang Chi steps out from who-knows-where and bows to Ling-Ling. 'Forgive me and my noble order. This, *villainous rascallion*, is a member of the order of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor. He is turned rogue, much to our distress and disgrace. Once more, I beg your forgiveness.' He bows low.

Ling-Ling bows low in acceptance.

'I have consulted with the Abbot of Lingyan Monastery.' Wang Chi turns briefly to Lizong. 'And while they will not use mystical knowledge to interfere in the finite mundane world of the myriad things, he has sent us a Buddhist laywoman who risks her way to enlightenment, to help apprehend this rogue.' Wang Chi bows to Tai, who returns his in kind.

'One more time around the wheel is a small price to pay to bring this rogue to justice.' Tai looks to Ling-Ling. 'Innocence, whenever it is lost, is greeted by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with tears. It is a mark of her great courage that she is little perturbed by her ordeal.'

Wang Chi and Lizong exchange a knowing glance. 'The Empress would have you join her party in recognition of your bravery.' The Emperor directs Ling-Ling with a flourish.

After a glance at Tai she makes her way, wide-eyed and in wonder, onto the deck where the Emperor introduces her to his wife.

Inside, Bao turns to Shi. 'I think that went rather well, don't you?'

'Your silence is more elegant than your words. Don't spoil it now.'

'What say you Wang Chi?' Bao's smile is of the feline kind.

'The Abbot, having assured me that even his noble order has produced rogue individuals in the past, has chosen to send two individuals to help in the capture of this rogue. Beside Tai, he mentioned you by name, knowing you are not a Buddhist.'

'Ah. A Buddhist I may not be as I cling true to Confucianism but a friend of Buddhists I surely am. The Abbot knows me well indeed having gazed into my mind on more than one occasion. I only hope I can be of use to your order in this matter, but I suspect that Tai will be of the greater use. Her powers on the plane of consciousness far outweighs my meagre natural ability.'

Wang Chi turns to Tai. 'This monk from the Land of Snow and his ability to transmit mystical knowledge directly holds a great fascination for me. My order does not possess this knowledge. All our students must learn the techniques and skills to achieve the wisdom of the Yellow Emperor, they cannot be gifted in so direct a manner. Perhaps, because such wisdom takes such an arduous path, we have felt safe with those who acquire such knowledge. It is proved mistaken.' He addresses them both. 'This

word that sprung so readily into Ling-Ling's mind, this word, conspiracy ... '

Bao pulls him up. 'Ling-Ling was specific in the context. She believed that he was searching for a conspiracy.'

'Indeed. And she would appear to follow in her brother's footsteps in that she has a natural flair for reading the minds of others.'

'A natural ability to access the plane of consciousness, is what you mean.' Corrects Tai.

'Indeed. However, this man's belief in some form of conspiracy, is also the conclusion that we have come to. And yet there is little evidence for such a conspiracy. Having become isolated from his order ...'

'As he has lost trust in his mentors, perhaps.' Says Bao.

'Perhaps. For whatever reason, he has closed his mind off from ours and consequently we have little knowledge of his thoughts.'

'His thoughts must be dark indeed, as he has killed at least 5 people to our knowledge.'

Wang Chi brings the conversation back to what he is really interested in. 'Have you found any evidence at all of a conspiracy?'

'There are many avenues of enquiry. Piecing together information of a disparate nature can lead to all sorts of speculation. Speculations that can run out of control. Bao and I argue about these things most of the time but at least our arguments bring reason into play. Reason based on facts and not speculation based on disparate information is how we decide what path the investigation will proceed.'

'A most commendable approach.' Wang Chi sounds impressed.

'And where we have each other,' Here Bao turns to Tai, 'and others.' Back to Wang Chi. 'This man is alone with his dark thoughts. It does not surprise then, that he has allowed speculation to override reason. For without my colleagues to rein me in, my imagination would have had the better of me on many occasion.'



Tai can't help but smile but it is Shi who speaks. 'His endless speculation is maddening but also essential. But even so, I cannot imagine that it would lead Bao to murder. The man is obviously deranged and dangerous because he is deranged. He is not dangerous because of some conspiracy, of which there is little evidence, but because of his state of mind.'

Knowing Shi's mind, as he can read it like a book, he turns his next question to Bao. 'Is the Water Nymph's Pony a convenient meeting place for spies?'

'A convenient meeting place for men's animal spirits, more like.' Tai counters.

'You will have to forgive my betrothed, she has a biting wit when it comes to men's animal spirits, and that theatre of the absurd that is the Water Nymph's Pony. What can be said, is that there are many players already involved in our investigation that have been associated with that ignoble establishment. Including the Emperor himself. And where he is concerned we have little choice but to investigate. His safety must come first, even above finding the murderer of the Deputy Censor.'

'Indeed.' Wang Chi fully agrees.

Wild cheering gaining in strength filters into the cabin, breaking off the conversation.

'Shall we join the others on deck? It would be unfortunate indeed not join in the celebrations.' Bao leads the way.

The sight that greets them is uplifting in the extreme as the banks of the West Lake are lined by the citizens of Kinsai in celebratory mood.

Such joy born from survival is hard to equal.

Lizong and General Liu are standing on the port side of the Imperial Barge by themselves on the deck above, waving to the crowds. Lizong's family are on the same side just a deck down and all of the guests on the main deck have left their seats to join in.

As the Imperial Barge rounds the Thunder Point, fireworks are set off from the Pagoda. The high-pitched scream of children in awe dominates the proceedings.

At only one hundred paces from the shore the population of Kinsai have an excellent view of Lizong and the General and are sure that their praises can be heard on board.

Bao and Tai share a thought with Shi that inside the city walls a third of the city lies in ruins and yet the only thing they are aware of is joy. It's as if they had been transported to one of the seven Buddhist heavens.

The circumnavigation of the West Lake is punctuated by stops at various points to witness more fireworks and bonfires. Slowly, the Imperial Barge drifts towards the Islands of the Moon, where it ties up on a decked out jetty.

As the preparations for the great feast are not quite complete the occupants of the Imperial Barge take liquid refreshments. Lizong is seated with General Liu to his left and the Empress to his right. And to the amusement of Shi, Bao and Tai, Ling-Ling is seated next to her Imperial Majesty, having more fun than she ought. Or at least that is what Shi thinks.

A strange voice cracks the air from the poop deck and alerts those on board to the presence of a man in the robes of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor. His face is covered by a gold mask of the Yellow Emperor's face. It is the rogue mystical practitioner.

Silence covers those gathered like a dank mist allowing his words to be clearly heard. 'What hypocrisy to celebrate these two men, the Emperor Lizong and his lackey General Liu, when they are at the centre of a conspiracy to hand over the Empire to the Mongolian barbarians.'

General Liu is incensed to the point of rage, once he has recovered from the shock. He leaps to his feet and jumps down the stairs to the main deck drawing his sword as he races through the guests. 'Villainous cur, I will mount your head on my war lance.'

'The Yellow Emperor has returned to prevent this evil and restore the North to the one true Empire of civilization.' His voice cracking with emotion belies its strength.

The General is almost to the poop-deck when the Yellow Emperor disappears. Reappearing directly in front of Lizong he draws his sword and lunges at Lizong. The blade never reaches him as appearing out of the air Wang Chi takes the blow in the chest.

The Palace Guard and members of the Night Watch rush to Lizong's defence, only to find the Yellow Emperor disappeared.

Consternation abounds. Everyone looks around to see where he will appear next with a rising fear as each moment passes.

Bao, standing behind Lizong, hears Tai's voice in his mind. 'To your right by one pace.'

Bao searches about for a weapon but is beat by Shi, who having heard Tai's calm delivery grabs a sword from one of the Palace Guards and lunges at empty space. Empty, only until the sword arrives at its destiny and the Yellow Emperor materializes in its path. The Yellow Emperor lashes out at Shi wounding him on the shoulder. Then disappears as the Night Watch close in, only to reappear back on the poop-deck. The blood flows down his robes. He seems in a state of disbelief. Examining the blood as if it was an unknown substance. Then he's gone again.

He reappears amongst the guest along with 20 other golden masked Yellow Emperors who ring the perimeter of the barge. 'Not me you fools.' He points to Lizong who is cradling the dying Wang Chi in his arms. 'He's the traitor. Lizong.' He disappears.

Reappearing in front of Lizong another Yellow Emperor appears blocking the way. He appears on the poop-deck but now he's staggering.

A giant Yellow Emperor appears in front of him. 'You are wrong, it is you who is the traitor.'

'Who are you?' Asks the rogue in shock.

The giant removes his mask to reveal a human yellow face. 'I am the Yellow Emperor. I command you to desist, and die.'" The Giant points at the rogue and it's as if he has been dealt a massive blow as he is knocked across the deck and lies motionless. Dead.

The Giant turns to the barge's shocked company. 'Gaze upon the face of hope and ... forget.'

The company of guests, oarsmen, guards, the night watch, and the Emperor's entire family collapse to the deck.

The bodies of the rogue and Wang Chi disappear, even the blood on the Emperor's clothes is gone, gone with the masked members of the Yellow Emperor, leaving only the Giant.

Bao, who has struggled to retain his consciousness, sees that only Lizong is still conscious. He staggers in the direction of Lizong but is stopped by Tai who lowers him to the deck his legs giving out beneath him. She kisses him on the lips and their consciousness entwine and he is lost in the beauty of her mind.

The Giant floats over the recumbent guests to where Lizong now stands. 'When I am gone they will awake with little memory of what has happened. You must remove them all from the barge as quickly as you can as it will be a trigger to their memory.' He towers over Lizong and says in a bitter voice. 'You will not receive council from my order again. It has proved too dangerous. From this time on the Celestial Game will change of its own accord without interference from the Yellow Emperor.' And with that he is gone.

Lizong sees Bao and Tai getting up and goes over to them. 'Help me waken the Palace Guard and the Night Watch. They must help get all of those gathered off the Imperial Barge and to the feast waiting for them on the island.'

When the deed is done, and with the Palace Guard and the Night Watch helping the guests off the barge, the Emperor rouses his wife and family, Bao rouses Shi and Tai rouses Ling-Ling.

'Come, Ling-Ling, rouse your sleepy head. You have fallen asleep in the middle of the celebrations.'

Ling-Ling looks up into Tai's face with curiosity. 'I had the strangest of dreams. I was floating without a body above the lake. And there was this man. A giant. He was telling Lizong something ...'

'That perhaps it was time to go to the feast.'

Ling-Ling frowns. 'That wasn't it.'

'But it is time. So get up and let us help get everyone on shore.'

Tai's smile bewitching as ever has Ling-Ling reach up and place her hand on that beautiful face. 'Will I be as beautiful as you?'

'You will be more beautiful than me. Now get up and help me with these other lazy people who also seem to have fallen asleep.'

Ling-Ling rouses herself and is soon lost in rousing the guests and helping them ashore.'

The Emperor having roused the Empress now picks up his daughter and carries her ashore with the rest of the family following like drunkards.

Bao has difficulty rousing Shi and is forced in the end to slap his face. 'For a moment I thought you were dead.'

'What happened?'

'I will tell you later, but right now we must disembark and join the festivities on the island.'

Even the jetty-men have had to be roused and even onlookers on the shore. The oarsmen, however, were forgotten and it was sometime before they roused themselves.

\*

The talk around the tables is of dreams and wondering how they managed to fall asleep during the celebrations.

Lizong, Bao, Tai and Shi are in conference under a hanging willow. Shi has been given Tai's memory to bring him into the circle who know what has happened.

'If it hadn't been for Wang Chi we would never have known about the Mongolian spy. He was useful in so many ways including giving good council. I will miss him more than I can say.' Zhao Yun is overcome by sadness.

After a while Shi speaks. 'Where does this leave the investigation?'

'Where indeed.' Lizong makes the effort. 'Where is the investigation?' His tear filled eyes look up through the hanging branches of the tree his mind barely in play.

'The investigation has revealed many things but not who was responsible for the Deputy Censor's death. Do we assume that it was a member of the spy's fraternity, maybe even the spy himself?'

'It certainly wasn't him or Wang Chi would have known. But, it almost certainly was a member of his fraternity. One Wang Chi hadn't examined.'

'If we cannot examine the spy or members of his fraternity as their use is too great then we have exhausted our enquiry.' Shi exclaims.

'Then you must examine everything one more time. If you cannot find anything then we will have to assume that it is this Mongolian fraternity under the impression that the Deputy Censor was getting too close to knowing of their existence that prompted them to have him assassinated. Does that sound reasonable?' Lizong sounds tired.

'We will carry out a full examination of everything we have uncovered then report back to you.' Shi sounds efficient.

They all bow as Lizong leaves. They watch as Zhao Yun the father greets his daughter as she runs to meet him. He scoops her up in his arms and squeezes and tickles her until she screams out in delight.

Warmth of a very human kind fills the trio under the hanging willow.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:  
Difficulty at the beginning of Development.  
Perseverance brings  
Success.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:  
Successful Development at an early stage  
Is more by chance than great skill.  
Such luck should be shared with others.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:  
Avoid the struggles of entanglement  
By Developing in quietude.  
Only perseverance brings  
Success.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:  
Successful Development can bring isolation.  
Isolation can bring resentment.  
It is easily rectified by re-engagement then follows  
Success.**

\*

**These changing Lines Deliver:**

**Decrease (29)**

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=====
  ==  ==  Mountain
  ==  ==
  ==  ==
=====  Lake
=====

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**The Image**

**Mountain over Lake brings forth**

**The Image of DECREASE.**

**The Lake at the foot of the Mountain evaporates.**

**Joy retreats in the presence of stillness.**

**No blame.**

**\***



# Chapter 30

## The Wanderer (32)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

11<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Moon

After the Mid-Morning Drum

\*

=====

== == Fire

=====

=====

== == Mountain

== ==

### THE IMAGE

Fire rises away from the Mountain:

The Image of THE WANDERER.

Fire here represents the infinite spirit

On its journey to the finite perfect forms of

The myriad things.

\*

“People say to each other, ‘I am I.’ How do they know that their ‘I’ is the real ‘I’? Suppose you say you dream you are a bird and fly way up in the sky or you dream you are a fish and dive deep into the ocean. We cannot know whether the man now speaking is awake or dreaming. As we reach the point of satisfaction we do not even smile. When a smile does come forth we do not even think of manipulating for it to come. We put ourselves at the manipulation of Nature and ignore all transformations. With this we enter into the realm of vacuous Nature which is one.

I-erh Tzu went to see Hsu Yu. Hsu Yu said ‘What has Yao benefitted you?’  
 ‘Yao said to me that I must personally practice humanity and righteousness,’ replied I-erh Tzu, ‘and talk clearly about right and wrong.’

‘Hsu Yu said, ‘Then why have you come here? Yao has already treated you like criminals by branding you with humanity and righteousness and cutting off your nose with right and wrong. How can you travel on the road of freedom, ease and flexibility?’

‘Be that as it may,’ said I-erh Tzu, ‘still I like to travel along its edge.’

‘No,’ said Hsu Yu, ‘when a man is blind, he has nothing to do with the beauty of a human face or the colours of embroidered robes.’

I-erh said, ‘The ancient beauty Wu-chaung disregarded her beauty, strongman Chuliang disregarded his strength, and the Yellow Emperor abandoned his wisdom. All these resulted from filing and hammering. How do you know the creator may not remove my branding and repair my nose so that I may again be perfect in form and follow you, sir?’

‘That I don’t know,’ replied Hsu Yu. ‘But let me tell you the essentials. Ah! My master, my master! He tears all things to pieces but did not specially make up his mind to be just. His blessings reaches the ten thousand generations but he has no partial love for anyone. He is more ancient than the highest antiquity but is not old. He covers heaven and supports the earth, and fashions the shapes of all things and yet he is not purposely skilful. This is just the way he roams around.’

Yen Hui said, I have made some progress.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Confucius.

‘I have forgotten humanity and righteousness,’ replied Yen Hui.

‘Very good, but that is not enough.’ said Confucius.

On another day Yen Hui saw Confucius again and said, ‘I have made some progress.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Confucius.

‘I have forgotten ceremonies and music,’ replied Yen Hui.

‘Very good, but that is not enough.’ Said Confucius.

‘Another day Yen Hui saw Confucius again and said, ‘I have made some progress.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Confucius.

Yen Hui said, ‘I have forgotten everything while sitting down.’

Confucius’ face turned pale. He said, ‘What do you mean by sitting down and forgetting everything?’

‘I cast aside my limbs,’ replied Yen Hui, ‘discarded my intelligence, detach from both body and mind, and become one with the Great Eternal Tao.’ This is called sitting down and forgetting everything.’

Confucius said, 'When you become one with the Great Universal Tao you will have no partiality, and when you are part of the process of transformation, you have no constancy. You are really a worthy man. I beg to follow your steps.'

#### From the Chuang Tzu – Chapter 6 – The Great Teacher

Tai, Shi and Bao sit on a low wall that runs into the West Lake. They sit in silence watching Ling-Ling fishing, a handful of paces further along the shore line. Bao had taken her fishing when she was small and after she had caught a fish, she had, quite literally, been hooked ever since. Servants, sent with her for safety, had marvelled at her patience while engaged in this skilful pass-time. An old man, a fellow fisherman, had shown her the best bait to use, and trial and error, two faithful servants of the enquiring mind, had revealed the best locations.

When Bao had told her the story from Zhou Tan's History of the Dukes of Zhou. Of how Chang-tse Fu had met with the old fisherman who used nothing as bait and only used a line without a hook. Ling-Ling had spent many moons in her eighth year, trying to emulate his achievements. By wiggling just the tip of the fishing line in the water she eventually had landed a giant carp, and this by the expedience of letting the fish swallow more and more of the line.

She had become, in her own eyes, the Man of Destiny himself, Chang-tse Fu. She had made Bao tell and retell the story hundreds of times, so in the end he was forced to embroider the story to keep up his own interest. Ling-Ling soon joined in this creative process and between them they constructed, what could or should have been, an entire chapter in that great history of the Dukes of Zhou.

The concentration of her attention was a thing to behold; the world could have been burning all around her and she would not have noticed. The three sitting watching her now, as she delicately baits the hook with a rag worm pierced through its tail so that it can squirm in the water, are more than just impressed by her fishing skills, they are fascinated by her total control of her consciousness awareness.

'What a wonderful mother she will make.' Thinks Shi.

'What a wonderful Buddhist adept she would make.' Thinks Tai.

'What a Man of Destiny she truly is.' Thinks Bao out loud.

Tai and Shi who are sitting either side of Bao look at him askance before Tai finds her tongue. 'That should be a Woman of Destiny.'

'Indeed. And why not? Women have come a long way in the Song Dynasty. Since the Tang introduced property rights at the end of their dynasty, women have become owners, not just of land, but also of ceramic works and textile yards. They have become shop owners and merchants, and just about everything else in the world of business. And very successful they have been too. So why not a Woman of Destiny? One day there will be female scholar officials, and who knows, perhaps even a female Emperor, sorry, Empress, who will be allowed the succession.'

'You have more faith than I do that women will be accorded the exact same rights as men.' Tai says with resignation.

'I think Bao's right. Women have proved themselves not only capable but also innovators. There would seem to be a general trend towards a more equal status between the sexes, and this is proving to be beneficial for the Empire. And if it is beneficial for the Empire then this trend will continue. Don't you think?' Shi addresses Tai.

'Perhaps. But only if the Song is allowed to flourish.' After a moment's reflection Tai continues. 'The Mongolians, who sit in the North on our great land, will never allow this to happen. The barbarians treat their women like cattle and now they are treating out women in the same manner.'

'That is why it is so important to retake the North.' Then with determination. 'I must apply myself to this policy statement on how to reunite the North and South of China and rid ourselves of the barbarian once and for all.'

Shi speaks over Bao's head to Tai. 'You can't say he lacks ambition.'

Tai's smile has the air of resignation about it. 'The arrogant dragon has total self-belief, and as a consequence, believes he is capable of ... walking on water or flying like a bird.'

Bao is enjoying their tail pulling. 'You may well mock the afflicted. But just wait, I will produce a policy statement of some worth.' In turning to Shi he turns more serious. 'Have you read the coded message sent by our scholar officials in the North?'

'Indeed. It makes depressing reading. Will you use the information in your policy statement?'

'Indeed. It will make it more relevant.'

'I would wait until you have read it all before getting too enthusiastic.'

'Are things that bad?'

'Worse than bad.' Shi sighs, then after a while swings the conversation back into the past. 'When Wang Anshi was prime minister in the 11<sup>th</sup> century he wanted to introduce a people's army by training farmers to become soldiers. In the two regions this was tried out, it resulted in riots. They were close to full-scale insurrection. The entire idea was finally abandoned. The Chinese farmer had spoken. And who could blame them? As if their lot in life wasn't bad enough. They were being asked not only to feed China but also to defend it. Unfortunately, this has had the consequence that the idea of a people's army has been abandoned altogether. So, Bao, until you have read the coded message. You will then see what we are up against.'

'But still, there has to be a solution.' Bao offers, more in desperation than in conviction.

'If anyone can find a solution, it will be you.'

'Thank you for your support.' Bao adds. 'Now, what are we to do about the investigation?'

'All our leads have either run out or have hit the cliff face of state security. I suggest this: You and Tai go back to De Cao and question him once more. With Tai able to read his mind we will perhaps find some detail that he has forgotten or thinks is of little importance. Meanwhile, I will revisit Hu Xiping, the antiques

merchant, who the man from the North went first to visit. There are questions that I never put to him and should have done. What say you to this distribution of labour?'

'It seems reasonable. And if we don't make any progress, then we can tell Lizong: because of security matters we must bring the investigation to a close.'

'We will then be pointing out the obvious: that it was probably the Mongolian spy or members of his fraternity that were responsible for the Deputy Censor's death.' Says Shi with satisfaction.

Bao slaps his knees and stands up with purpose. 'Will you take your betrothed with you?'

'Without a family member to accompany us, I think not.'

'Ling-Ling, pull your line in. We must go.' Bao barks at his sister.

'Oh. But there is a real beauty just playing with my bait.' Says Ling-Ling in frustration.

'We are to visit De Cao and he lives near the north-east jetty. We can leave you with the jetty policemen and they can watch your masterful skills at catching fish. How does that sound?'

'Not as good as staying right here and outwitting this slippery giant.'

'There are giants that live beneath the ferries. There was one this big.' Bao holds his arms as far apart as possible. 'That took three men to land.'

Ling-Ling brings in her line. 'And three fishermen to concoct. Or, perhaps, just one Palace Librarian.'

'Would I lie to you?' Bao sounds hurt.

'Fisher-folk don't lie, they only exaggerate. Of Palace Librarians, however, I cannot speak.' She places the hook in the end of her bamboo rod and wraps the last of the line around its knob. 'So lead on, dear brother, so that we may test your sincerity.'

'She has found out what a rascal you are when you want your own way.' Says Tai speaking from deep experience.

'We will see, we will see.' Bao says in a huffy sort of manner.

Tai and Ling-Ling laugh conspiratorially at his discomfort.

★

Shi enters Hu Xiping's antiques shop. Acting more as a prospective buyer than he did the last time he was here. The staff, however, go scurrying for their master.

Shi looks at a fine piece of calligraphy by the renowned calligrapher of the Tang Dynasty, Yeh Hui.

'What a pleasure it is to see you returned.' Xiping bows as Shi turns around.

'A pleasure for me also.' Shi smiles with genuine warmth.

'Will you take refreshment?'

'I saw on my way in, the Sichuan Dumpling House, is it any good?'

'Indeed. Spicy and hot, if that is your taste.'

'It is today. Shall we visit?'

'Why not.'

Xiping leads the way. They cross the street and enter the gold-leaf interior. Soon they are sitting at a table on the first floor.

Xiping speaks to the servant in Sichuan and he disappears.

'I hope this is not an official visit?'

'One of only minor importance. The truth is, Xiping, we have few leads left to follow. In a way this is a case of a drowning man grasping at leaves floating on the surface of a deep lake. So let us get the business out of the way first, then we can, perhaps, resume our more enjoyable intellectual pursuits.'

'An excellent idea.'

'Did you ever see the man from the North, Li Guo, with anyone?'

'The only other time I saw Li Guo, beside when he visited me, was at the Water Nymph's Pony. He was there with Liu Zin.'

'Was he indeed?' Shi sounds bored.

'But that is not what why I remembered the occasion. You must forgive me, for after your last visit I remembered an incident that occurred while enjoying the performance of the, Seven Little Maids of Joy; a depiction of how one man can pleasure seven maids at the same time.'

'A remarkable feat, and one, I must admit, I have never witnessed.'

'The little maids were little indeed. It was their size, which fixed in my mind, the play that I saw unfold before me.'

'There was a man talking to a little girl, who on closer scrutiny I could see was a very small woman.'

Shi's interest is caught. 'She was not one of those girls that pleasure men while watching the performance?'

'That is exactly what I thought at the time. However, after your visit, I cast my mind back to that time. You see, the man talking to this small woman, was pointing out the man from the North.'

'Are you sure he was pointing out Li Guo? Was it not possible he was pointing out Liu Zin?'

Xiping is obviously confused. 'I suppose he could have been. They were sitting next to each other.'

Shi thinks for a moment then casts off his thoughts like a wet garment. 'It makes little difference, unless, of course, there were further developments?'

'Unfortunately not.'

'How was she dressed?'



'Please, Magistrate Zhen, it was dark. And my mind was, shall we say, engaged in other thoughts.' This visit to his memory sparks a detail. 'Ah, now I remember.' He smiles at Shi. 'Forgive me, it can be of little consequence.'

'Please, Xiping, I'm a drowning man.'

'You will think me foolish.'

'Only I can decide that.'

'She was carrying a fan. Flicking it in and out. And as she did so it turned from black to white. A theatrical prop I suspect.'

Sounding bored. 'Now that is interesting.'

'You humour me Magistrate; forgive me my foolishness.'

Shi laughs. 'There is nothing to forgive. Leaves on the surface of a lake is all I expected. So I am not disappointed.'

'Excellent. Ah, here comes the, Fire for Both Ends. I'm sure you will forgive my coarse language, but this is the literal translation from the Sichuan.'

The plate is stacked high with dumplings and steaming with the fiery sauce.

'May your visit to the thunder-box be as memorable as the meal?'

'A noble sentiment. Now where were we on our last meeting?' Says Shi, full of good cheer.

\*

The three policemen stand in line outside their police post at the end of the north-east jetty. Bao walks slowly past them looking them over with a critical eye. The policemen, on the other hand, have their eyes fixed on the two females standing behind him.

'So, your captain and three of your number have gone on a ferry to, who-knows-where, leaving you three to look

after the arriving ferries, and, the coming and goings on the jetty. Is that correct?’

‘Indeed.’ Say all three in perfect accord.

‘Well, I have another little job for you.’ He swings around and presents Tai and Ling-Ling. ‘Here we have the Lotus of Kinsai and my sister Ling-Ling, a personal friend of the Empress.’ The policemen all bow to the horizontal. ‘My betrothed and I have business with the artist De Cao. Do you know this man?’

‘Indeed.’ They all agree.

‘And know where he lives?’

‘Indeed.’

‘Now my sister has a passion for fish. And while Tai and myself visit the artist, Ling-Ling is here to try out the fishing. You will guard her with your life.’

‘Indeed.’ The perfect harmony of their reply has deteriorated into garbled individuality; the shock of being given such an important duty.

Bao turns to Ling-Ling. ‘The jetty is yours. Good fishing.’

Ling-Ling points to one of the policeman. ‘You will show me where these monsters play.’ And with that she heads off down the jetty followed by the now wide-eyed policeman.

Bao and Tai turn to leave when one of the policemen bursts out in alarm. ‘Please, your noble self, De Cao is not at home.’

Bao swings back around. ‘And how would you know that?’

‘Because he is here on the jetty.’

‘Show me.’

The policeman takes the lead with Bao and Tai following.

The jetty, already busy with people waiting for ferries, is about to get a lot busier as a ferry pulls in. The polemen, having shelved their poles, stand gaping at Tai.

'Hurry, hurry. There will be a stampede once the ferry lands.' The policeman intones with alarm.

Bao and Tai can see the hundreds of people preparing to leap ashore as the ferry drifts to its anchorage. They hurry through those waiting to board almost catching up Ling-Ling. They turn around to witness the chaos that is about to ensue.

The brave leap the distance first. Quickly followed by others as it nears. Then, as the policeman had predicted, the stampede happens before their very eyes as the ferry touches the jetty. It is like some ancient sport where pushing and shoving by those wanting to get off are in conflict with those wanting to get on. Porters throw cases and boxes of every description both on and off the ferry.

Yet within a very short time order is restored, with a wave of arrivals exiting the jetty, and those leaving, sitting in neat rows on board. There is a half-formed idea in Bao's mind that suddenly attains its full potential. 'Perfect order, followed by random chaos, followed by perfect order.' He thinks out loud. Never before had he seen the Changes with such clarity. It was as if his ancient ancestor had provided him with the perfect example for explaining his theory of how the Great I worked.

Tai notices the faraway look in Bao's eyes as his attention switches between what he is seeing on the jetty to the model of reality Shao Yong left in his notes. It was inspirational for Bao, and a revelation for Tai as she accesses his mind.

'Can you see it?' Bao says.

'Indeed. Your ancient ancestor was truly inspired.' Then after a moment. 'What will you do with such knowledge?'

'I don't know. I certainly won't do anything until I have everything in regard to my ancient ancestor's theory. And that will take time.'

'Please, come. De Cao is near the end of the jetty.' The policeman is desperate to exercise his duty.

They follow him and approaching the end of the jetty, there is De Cao, with all of his newly adopted family except the mother. On seeing Ling-Ling with her fishing stick and its attached bobbin for holding the line, Cao's children crowd around to see such a device when they only have hand held lines.

'Children, leave the young woman alone. I'm sure she doesn't want a gang of young rascals, such as yourselves, interfering with her play.' Says Cao as he tries to usher the children away. Looking up he sees Bao and Tai and his face lights up with joy. 'What luck. I was only thinking of you but a few moments ago.'

After bows all around, Bao turns to Ling-Ling and the children who have returned to her. 'Ling-Ling, this is De Cao the artist, and these are children in his care. Perhaps you will show them your great skills in the art of fishing?'

Ling-Ling's unhappiness is written across her face but this only prompts the children to clamber for her to acquiesce to Bao's suggestion.

'Oh alright. If I must.' Is all she can manage at first but then she takes command. 'Sit down in a semi-circle, right there.' She points to a space big enough to hold them all. This takes a little arranging as the younger ones don't know what a semi-circle is. 'Now show me your hooks.'

The children hold out their hooks for inspection. Ling-Ling tuts with disapproval. 'These will never do.' She takes out her knife and two containers from her fishing bag. The knife soon liberates the lines from their aberrant hooks and these are soon dispatched to the lake, much to the horror and complaints of the children. 'Silence!' Ling-Ling asserts her authority. Opening one container she soon attaches new hooks to the children's little lines, much to their joy. Then opening the other jar she reveals squirming rag worms, much to the horror of the children, and the air is filled with their screams. 'Silence! And sit down. I said sit!' The children obey like well-trained soldiers. 'Now hold open your hands like this.' She demonstrates. Then once she has them all to her satisfaction she places a squirming worm in each of their palms. Taking one herself she shows them how to hold it and then how to thread the hook through its tail. She has to help all except one. 'Hold

them up so that I can see how they squirm.' The children do exactly what she asks and after an inspection she is finally pleased with her handiwork. 'Excellent. Now we are ready to fish.' The children scream with joy and leap to their feet intent on casting their lines. 'Stop! About turn! Did I give you permission to go?' Silence. 'Walk calmly to the edge and wait for my instruction.' They obey in a state of awe. 'Now spread out to give yourselves room to throw. Stop! Wait for my order. You will need to have some weight added to the line.' She pulls from her fishing bag a lump of sticky clay. Then walking along the line she squeezes pieces of clay, around the line of each child, near the hook. 'This will help you throw the line further out, but it will become dislodged when it hits the water. The fish are not interested in clay, but they are interested in wriggling live worms.' She says this with a wicked glee. 'Now watch me.' Ling-Ling counts to three out loud as she swings one of the children's line. 'And don't forget to let go as soon as the line is over the horizontal. Like so.' The line goes out some way. 'Then wait a few moments for the bait to sink ... then give the line a sharp little tug. Then slowly pull the line in an arms-length like so ... and then another little tug. These little tugs make the worms wriggle. And fish love nothing better than wriggling worms. Yum, Yum.'

The children copy her exactly, and cast their bait out into the water, saying with a terrible joy. 'Yum, yum.'

This has Ling-Ling in a fit of laughter, quickly followed by Tai, Bao and Cao.

'Just a little tug. Then slowly pull in your line.' She walks along correcting their pulling action until she is satisfied. 'And there we have it. Fresh fish for supper. Yum yum.'

'Yum yum.' Comes the reply.

Laughing, Ling-Ling picks up her own fishing stick; baits it; weights it; and casts it out three times as far as the children's lines.

The children turn as one to Cao and say in different ways. 'We want fishing sticks.'

The clamour becomes so big that Cao has to agree. 'Alright, alright, I will make you fishing sticks.' Then to Ling-Ling. 'That's if you will show me?'

'Nothing could be simpler. First you must buy bamboo poles, like mine. Then you must buy these little rings of metal from Li Nang the iron monger. And then this wooden bobbin for winding the line around, and you can get them made by any carpenter. And if you ask nicely then they will attach the bobbin to the bamboo pole for you.'

'I see.' Says Cao. 'I never realized how easy, yet how complex, it is.'

'That's my brother for you. He's the one that made my fishing stick.'

Bao turns to Cao. 'Under Ling-Ling's instruction. It helped that she knew exactly what she wanted.' He moves closer to Cao and whispers. 'Is there somewhere we can talk? The policeman here, can keep an eye on the children.'

'Certainly.'

They walk back along the jetty then along the shore line until they find a quiet place on a small promontory extending into the lake. From where they are, they can see General Ling-Ling commanding her troops. When she shouts they can even hear her words.

As they watch the General in action Tai has a thought that she speaks out loud. 'Where is their mother?'

'Ah, poor woman, she has gone to try and identify their father in the graveyard of those killed by the fire. Most of them are burnt beyond recognition. Having looked at the list of survivors at the camp on Phoenix Hill, and not having found his name, she has been left little other choice.'

'They have been left without a father and a home and without any means of support.' Tai states.

'Will you carry on supporting them?' Bao asks.

'I have little choice, but it's not so bad. Children, as I have come to learn, are a joy in their own right. When they eventually go, I will almost certainly miss them.'

Cao says in sadness. Then he changes tone. 'How is it that I can help?'

'How indeed. Because you were one of the only people to meet with Li Guo, the man from the North, we were hoping you might have remembered some detail that may be of use.' Bao asks hopefully. He can tell by Cao's expression there is little hope. 'Or, anything about the Deputy Censor?' It seems hopeless. So he tries a more specific approach. 'When the child-woman came to your antiques shop, you said, she walked-in off the street?'

'That's correct. I was there when it happened. He was very excited and engaged her for some time in conversation that I was not part of.'

'Did you see how she arrived?'

Cao thinks back and eventually remembers. 'She arrived in a two-pole litter. One carried by four men. An expensive mode of transport. She was obviously very rich.'

'Was there any markings on the litter? Anything to identify where it was from?'

'I was not taking that much notice. I'm sorry.'

'Did she leave by the same litter?'

'Indeed. It waited outside for her. And now you come to mention it there was something odd about it. Not the litter itself but about the men. They were all dressed in black with their trouser bottoms and their wrists bound in the manner of martial artists. They might have been her bodyguard. If that's any use.'

'It might, if only there was some distinguishing mark that could identify them. There was nothing unusual about the litter?' He can see Cao struggling with his memory. 'What kind of material was it made of?'

'Please Bao, I do not want to guess.'

'Well, if you do remember, remember anything at all, you will let us know?'

'Indeed.'

'On the way to the caves at Lingyan Monastery you met a monk.' Tai states with certainty.

'How did you know that?' Cao is more than mystified.

'He hid you from another man.'

Cao is shocked by Tai's statement. 'He did. From a man wearing the purple and gold robes of the Yellow Emperor. I did not mention it as they have such a fierce reputation. They say that if you even mention their name that they can hear you, even if you are a long way off. Although I have little idea how they could accomplish that. I purposely put the incident out of my mind so I would not have to think of him.'

'It is of little consequence. Don't trouble yourself with that memory and forget about the Yellow Emperor. He and his followers will remain hidden and will not interfere with you, or for that matter, with anyone else.' Tai smiles at Cao. 'Your fear of this man is genuine, and well might you fear him, but he is ...'

The cry from the jetty has all three quickly turn. They are just in time to see one of the children get pulled into the lake. This is followed by Ling-Ling and the policeman jumping in after her. Cao is off at speed followed by Bao.

Tai strips off her outer clothes and dives into the water. She swims out to a small boat, the occupants of which seem oblivious to the drama unfolding. This quickly changes once she is on board.

The child, a young girl of seven, is being pulled through the water at speed and only luck sends her in Tai's direction. She scoops her out of the water as she passes and nearly gets pulled in herself, such is the power of the fish pulling the girl.

The line intervenes by snapping. The screams of the girl are terrible to hear; the line, having been wrapped around the girl's hand has cut deep into the flesh and the blood flows freely. Tai unwinds the line as quickly as possible not heeding the child's screams. Then wraps part of the child's garment around the hand that Tai has ripped off for the purpose.



The policeman and Ling-Ling are also pulled on board this commandeered pleasure boat, before they disembark on a floating staircase attached to the side of the jetty.

Cao and Bao arrive and are amazed to find the situation resolved.

Cao takes the child and runs back up the stairs and off down the jetty at speed.

Ling-Ling looks up to where they were fishing, looking for the children. She can't see them for the crowd that has gathered. Taking the steps two at a time she is soon on the jetty. She is being followed by the policeman.

Bao has them lined up and is counting heads. 'There is one missing.'

'She's in the water.' Comes the excited reply from the children.

Bao smiles benevolently at them. 'Not any more. Cao has taken her to the herbalist to have her hand attended.'

'That was my fault.' Says Ling-Ling coming along side Bao. 'Now children, I want you to take the line wrapped around your hand, off. My dear brother here,' she presents Bao, 'gave me to believe that there were monstrous fish around the jetty. I chose not to believe him and this is the consequence.'

'Ling-Ling, you are all wet.' Says one of the children.

The rest of the children gather around her making the same comment.

'She is also wet behind the ears, children, if you would care to have a look.' Says Bao with a straight face.

The children clamour for Ling-Ling to show them. They are not to be denied and so she shows them behind her ears while saying to Bao. 'Just wait till I get you home.'

'Can we come, can we come.' The children cry in many variations.

'Of course you can. And uncle Bao will treat you all to leeches, honeycomb and curd at Mad Ming's famous sweetmeat emporium.'

The children burst into cheers.

'Perhaps we should wait until Cao returns?' Bao says hopefully.

The children are not impressed and start chanting. 'Mad Ming's. Mad Ming's. Mad Ming's.'

'Oh, alright. Mad Ming's it is.'

\*

The sun is setting over Phoenix Hill as Tai and Ling-Ling, now changed, sit on the long seat on the first floor balcony. Bao sits on one side and Shi on the other.

'We almost caused a riot. I doubt these children have ever been inside one of Mad Ming's establishments. It was all too much for them.' Says Bao wistfully.

'I had to threaten them with my fishing stick before they calmed down.' Says Ling-Ling, not so wistfully. 'But in the end, and with mouths full of sweetmeats, order was restored.'

'So what did you learn from Cao?' Asks Shi.

'Very little.' Replies Bao.

'Except that the child-woman arrived at the antiques shop in a litter carried by four members of the Night Watch.' Tai expounds. 'Probably because Cao is an artist, while searching his memory as Bao questioned him, I found a visual memory of that moment. They were definitely Night Watch.'

'What I found out would tie in with that. Hu Xiping, the antiques dealer, was at the Water Nymph's Pony and saw Li Guo and Liu Zin being pointed out to a child-woman by what could have been another member of the Night Watch.'

'Which suggests exactly what?' Asks Bao in frustration.

'It suggests that our quest is at an end. If the Night Watch were involved in the Deputy Censor's death then it is out of our hands. We cannot go further, besides, these are our friends. The Deputy Censor was doing wrong and

deserved to die for betraying *this culture of ours*. So there is an end to it all. I suggest we go to Lizong and tell him that our investigation has run out of leads, and as such, it must be brought to an end.' Says Shi with purpose.

Bao thinks long and hard before replying. 'What you say is for the best. What say you Tai?'

'I say that I will not use my mystical knowledge anymore for mundane affairs. I was gifted this knowledge for the single purpose of bringing the rogue Yellow Emperor to justice. I have already over stepped my mandate in this regard and I must now desist before my dharma is compromised.'

'Indeed. Therefore using the information derived from this source would be wrong. We must cease the enquiry. We must stop the investigation. Are we all agreed?' Says Bao with authority.

They all agree.

\*

## The Changing Lines

Changing Line at the beginning means:  
Setting out on a journey into the unknown  
The superior man prepares himself outwardly  
By correct behaviour  
And inwardly by perfecting his Inner Truth.

Changing Line in the second place means:  
It is the same spirit in all things  
And all people.  
Recognizing this in others is  
The Wanderer's first step.

Changing Line in the third place means:  
Ignoring the common humanity in our fellow man  
Breeds mistrust amongst strangers.  
Misfortune.

Changing Line at the top means:  
All journeys begin with a first step  
Which is different for everyone.  
The last step is finding The Way (Tao)  
And is the same for everyone.



**These Changing Lines Deliver:**

**The Marrying Maiden (30)**

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==  ==
==  ==  Thunder
=====
==  ==
=====  Lake
=====

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**THE IMAGE**

**Thunder rolls over the Lake:**

**The Image of the MARRYING MAIDEN.**

**Thus the superior man**

**Understands the transitory**

**In the light of the Eternity of the Primordial State.**

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# Chapter 31

## The Still Mountain (37)

The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

23<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Moon

Before the Mid-Afternoon Drum

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== == Mountain

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== == Mountain

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### THE IMAGE

Mountain upon Mountain:

The Image of KEEPING STILL.

The superior man practices

Reflective meditation,

So he can meld his spirit with the spirit of all things.

★

“The system of Change is tantamount to Heaven and Earth, and therefore can always handle and adjust the way of Heaven and Earth. Looking up, we observe the pattern of the heavens; looking down, we examine the order of the earth. Thus we know the causes of what is hidden and what is manifest. If we investigate the cycle of things, we shall understand the concepts of life and death.

Essence and material force, chi, are combined to become things. The wandering way of chi becomes change. From this we know that the characteristics and conditions of sentient beings are similar to those of Heaven and Earth and therefore there is no disagreement between them. This knowledge embraces all things and its way helps all under heaven, and therefore there is no mistake. It operates freely and does not go off course. It rejoices in Nature and understands destiny. Therefore there is no worry. As things are contented in their stations and earnest in practicing kindness, there can be love. It moulds and encompasses all transformations of Heaven and Earth without mistake, and it stoops to bring things into completion without missing any. It penetrates to a knowledge of the course of day and night. Therefore the sentient has no spatial restriction and Change has no physical form.”

From The ‘Appended Remarks’ on the Book of Changes. – Chapter 4

Bao is in the library sitting at a table surrounded by papers and making notes.

The head librarian, who is passing through this section of the library, stops on seeing Bao and allows an expression of curiosity to mould his face. After a moment of contemplation he makes a detour to where Bao is hard at work. ‘Master Bao, what are you doing here? Is this not your wedding day?’

Bao leans back in his chair and stretches, allowing a happy smile to greet the old man whom he has grown to love in just a short time. ‘At first light Tai and myself went to the Loyang Monastery and had our wedding blessed by the Abbot. It was only for members of the family and a few close friends. The Emperor and his good wife blessed us with their presence, and, as a consequence, it was an enlightening experience for us all and a very beautiful one.’

‘Surely there is more to a wedding day than a Buddhist blessing even if it was: very beautiful?’

‘As far as I can make out, weddings are for women; it is their day. After the blessing, Tai returned to her home to prepare for her journey to my parents’ house; as is the custom. That leaves me with nothing to do until she

arrives late in the afternoon. My parents' home has been transformed into a place I hardly recognise. Most of the furniture has been removed, or rearranged. Caterers, vintners, wedding organizers, musicians, fools, clan members and distant relatives now inhabit our home as if it was theirs. My mother may not survive this day as she has taken on the responsibility for all of the arrangements and does battle with all of these disparate groups in turn. Before, that is, starting at the beginning again. This has been going on for the last five days, ever since my aunts arrived.'

'I remember now. My wedding day was much the same. Although I had not the sense to escape as you have done.' The old librarian twists his head around so he can see what Bao is studying. 'These are the decoded messages from the I Ching, delivered by the man from the North, are they not?'

'Indeed they are. They do not make for a happy read. The Mongolians are far more powerful than I had supposed. With an Empire that stretches all the way to the, Land of the Pope; whoever he is. With an army five times as big as ours in total. It really is a problem of immense proportions.'

'What has brought on this sudden interest in the barbarians?'

Bao sighs. 'My arrogant nature and a tendency to allow the wind to blow my tongue. I foolishly agreed to provide, The Fellowship for the Study of the Art of War in Times of Invasion, a solution to the problem of defeating the Mongolian barbarians and reuniting our torn land.'

The old man breaks into laughter. 'A task that is all but impossible.'

'Indeed.' Bao sighs again.

'Take heart, my young friend. The last 110 years since the Empire was first split into North and South by first the Jurchens then by the Mongolians, we have been seeking a way to achieve such an outcome. And, I may say, without success.'

'My friend, the Magistrate, Zhen Shi, believes that China's fate was settled long ago; when Wang Anshi tried



to introduce a system where farmers would also be soldiers; and they refused. This, Shi believes, was the only chance we had of defeating our enemies. And if the farmers, who are the very heart of China, will not defend it, then we are doomed. And we are doomed, if these records are to be believed.' Bao waves his hand over the decoded messages. 'I never realized how big the Mongolian problem is until now.'

'That is why you should not take it quite so seriously. When I was asked to find a solution by the Fellowship ...'

Bao interrupts in surprise. 'You presented a solution to the, Fellowship for the Study of the Art of War in Times of Invasion?'

'Indeed. It was at the beginning of Lizong's reign. Indeed, Lizong was present when I presented my solution. He was just a young man at the time, albeit, a very clever one. And thankfully with a sense of humour. For what I presented was little more than a joke.'

This tickles Bao's sense of humour; the thought of the Head Librarian presenting a joke solution. 'So, what was this solution?'

The old man cannot keep a straight face. 'I suggested that we surrender the South to the Mongolians. Thus saving millions of lives and at the same time reuniting China.'

Bao's laughter echoes through the library. 'I can imagine how much they must have laughed. If they had taken you seriously then surely you would have been standing here today minus a head.'

'Indeed.' The old man smiles at the very thought. 'This is why you should not take the problem seriously, because I don't think anyone does.'

'Then, perhaps, I should present a joke solution. I am supposed to have the wit to make people laugh, so why not.'

'Why not indeed.' After a few moments the Head Librarian becomes serious. 'It is time Master Bao. If you listen intently you can hear the mid-afternoon drum being sounded.'

Bao listens then jumps up. 'You are right. If I am not careful I will not be there to greet Tai when she arrives. Come walk with me. You are intending to come?'

'Indeed, but I must first return home to change into my ceremonial robes and collect my family. But I will walk you as far as our ways must part.'

'It will be my pleasure.'

Bao puts his arm around the old man's shoulder and they walk out together.

★

The procession that makes up Tai's wedding party stretches from the Ink Stone to the, String of Pearls. Musicians head up and bring up the rear. Crowds line the route, hoping to get a glimpse of the Lotus of Kinsai on her wedding day.

Drummers follow the musicians and behind them carried aloft on great poles, symbols of the changing year are interspersed along the procession; each symbol is surrounded by actors playing out in costume a famous story concerning that particular symbol. Family members of Tai's clan come in order of seniority and interspersed between the year's symbols of change.

Tai's father having refused a litter of his own walks with great dignity alongside the Abbot of Loyang Monastery. They are both dressed in simple white cotton.

Behind them comes dancing girls scantily dressed carrying baskets of white petals that they do strewn the path of Tai's litter.

Tai sits in a two pole silver litter carried by 8 pole bearers; all members of the Night Watch. The litter's four upright posts are cast as trees so that the canopy is made of entwined branches. Small golden birds with pearls for eyes dance amongst the branches.

Tai is clothed in an outer garment depicting the Shakyamani Buddha sitting under the banyan tree where he attained enlightenment. It is made with the finest of silk wire, threaded with gold and silver, and covered with precious stones. Her hair is tied up in the manner of the old Kaifeng school, but not so high or so

intricate that distracts from her perfect neck which is naked. Naked all except for a single string of black pearls of priceless value. On her forehead is the tangerine sapphire given to her by Captain Miko.

Refusing the white mask of china white her natural colour has been enhanced by the artist De Cao to over shadow the finest works of art. Her lips, against all convention, are painted in coral pink that gives warmth to a face of exquisite beauty; it resonates with the fiery stone on her forehead.

Arriving at last she steps out onto a low platform of temporary construction; this is covered by raw silk in the most startling of azure blue. The platform leads from the middle of the road up to steps that leads to the entrance of what was the Pearl Merchants Store belonging to Bao's father. This has all been converted for the wedding.

Two columns of drummers stand either side of the platform and on a signal from Tai the drummers exercise their art with great virtuosity, bringing their performance to a crescendo and the audience to silence.

Tai moves off. Her bare feet pacing the distance one foot directly in front of the other as if she was walking a tightrope.

Mounting the stairs she is greeted by her new mother, and all of her new sisters. Standing to the right is Bao's father and to the left Bao.

A great cheer goes up as Tai embraces first Shao Ang, Bao's mother and matriarch of the family, then Shao Ye, Bao's oldest sister, then Shao Mai, Bao's second oldest sister and Wu Tai's best friend, and finally, Shao Ling-Ling, Bao's youngest sister.

Shao Zuo, Bao's father, then greets his new daughter and finally it is Bao's turn. Bao, however, has seen an Image in the clouds and misses his cue.

Ling-Ling skips along to where he stands. 'Dear brother, what is the matter. Your bride awaits you.'

Bao points to the clouds. 'Do you see the dragon, I swear it is pregnant.'

'Indeed. What an auspicious sign on such a day.' Ling-ling extols with amazement.

Soon the entire wedding party are looking up to see what Bao and Ling-ling are looking at. This is followed by the great crowd now assembled.

Cousin Peng of dumpling fame is first to see it and shouts out. 'It is a pregnant dragon. What fortune.'

The cry goes up as all can now see the aspiration divined by the clouds.

While everyone is looking up at the clouds Bao quickly embraces Tai and against all protocol kisses her full on the lips. His mother is first to notice this breach of etiquette and steps in between them before most have seen.

Bao, who has been idle all day, has had quite enough of convention and sweeps Tai off her feet and carries her inside. Shocked sounds are followed by cries of joy as a new tradition is enacted for the first time.

Upstairs on the first floor a banquet for the families is laid out. Below on the ground floor tables are covered with every kind of dish imaginable. Here, however, there are few chairs as the number of guests make it impossible to seat everyone. As it is, people spill out onto the street. Dishes are even passed out into the crowds and wine flows like a giant's tears.

Bao and Tai sit next to each other and play with each other's naked feet. Toasts are given and forgotten and more wine is drunk until they are all drunk, including Bao's mother who has to be taken to bed.

Bao and Tai eventually slip away to change. Escaping the crowds by leaving through the back entrance they are soon heading out of the city in a light two-horse carriage driven and escorted by the Night Watch.

\*

They arrive just before dawn to the, Thousand Island Lake. The Night Watch help them load the small boat tied at a small jetty. Then wave them goodbye.

The island, a wedding present from Bao's parents, covers one hundred hectares. The island has now been renamed, Wedding Island, after Tai and Bao's wedding. A family of farmers look after the island and have prepared the house for occupation; the farming family have their own accommodation.

The farmer arrives with two of his sons and soon have Bao and Tai safely ensconced in the old bamboo house. A massive veranda surrounds three sides and where tables and chairs and reclining-chairs allow for an outdoor life style to be lived with pleasure.

The view, or more accurately, the Image, is formed of mountain over mountain; the reflection of the mountains behind the lake, in the lake. Tai is overwhelmed by the beauty, for this is the first time she has seen this wonder of nature. Bao, who has been brought up with this magical place, is still affected by the Image's presence. And together entwined leaning against the rail they kiss with a tired resolve.

The farmer's wife hurries in with steaming soup and rice cakes, a few dried fish, buffalo curd and freshly baked bread.

The meal sends both of them to sleep. Simply curling up together on a large cushioned seat. It is well past midday before they rise.

The heat from the endless sun drives the moisture from the lake forming a bluish mist across its surface. Bao takes Tai by the hand and leads her down to the lakeside. Undressing her gently, he undresses himself and taking her hand they enter the coolness of the lake. The silky wetness of their bodies pressed against each other stimulates the primordial urge and they consummate their marriage with only the fish to bear witness.

The days pass in exploration of the smaller uninhabited islands, the shoreline with its villages and markets, and fishing for the, Jima, a fish of legendary culinary reputation.

Of love making beneath the stars and walks on moonlit paths where mountains rise out of the lake as well as bear witness to another world as yet unknown.

Would they ever be as happy again?

Is it not said in the Great I? 'Joyousness that is weighed is not at peace.' Thus the superior man does not ask foolish questions.

\*

Kung-sun K'un is introduced to Tai on his return from one of his walking tours. He is a wandering monk who wandered into the lives of the Shao family some twenty years previously. Bao's mother was approached by friends from the market village of Ch'ung. They had found K'un in a terrible state after he had broken his leg by slipping on rocks on the lakeside on a remote stretch of the shoreline.

They, the village people, knew Shao Ang was a Buddhist whose compassion was already well known, having supported the building of a small hospital in the village; and this in a region that was predominately Taoist.

Ang had K'un removed to the island so that he would not be taking up space in a hospital that was used mainly for emergencies. Bao was ten years old at the time but quickly became friends with the monk, a man in his late twenties.

Bao was fascinated by the monk's stories of life outside of mainstream society. K'un had left his monastery in the Western Mountains after he had decided that as only the present exists, as neither the past nor future did not, he was best able to exercise his philosophic beliefs by a wanderer's life; each moment of the present would be unique. For the most part he had shunned his fellow man, learning to live off the natural world.

The accident had almost killed him; had shattered his beliefs; had hollowed out his self-belief; but then again, he was only a young man.

Nevertheless, Bao had fallen in love with the idea of wandering as a way of life. It was the first time he had questioned his position in society; a role set out before him like a staircase, as he came to think of it. Perhaps, because of K'un's predicament and resulting questioning of his own philosophy, had given Bao the negative aspects of such a life to balance its romantic appeal. Still, the

wander's life was an alternative to the conventional. A viable alternative in the ten year olds mind.

Ang suggested to K'un that until he resolved his inner conflict that he remain on the island and help the farmer's family by teaching them to read and write; a great ambition of the farmer. He was paid a small wage and had three days off in every ten day cycle. These he used to wander in the local region and it was from one of these, pilgrimages into nature, which he was returning from the day he met Tai for the first time.

'Did they take to learning with ease?' Tai asks K'un as they sit down to the midday meal.

'It was a challenge. A challenge I had to give myself up to, to resolve. Once I had got them to hold the brush correctly and apply the ink with strokes of uniformity, it became easier. Children love play and by having them represent each character by a drawing, it was easy enough to engage their attention. Short stories became the standard approach after we had moved to the next stage. This exercised my creative abilities well beyond what I thought that I was capable of. If the children were learning fast then I was learning faster. I am now on my second generation of the farmer's family; I am teaching the farmer's grandchildren.'

'Are you teaching them about Buddhism?'

'Indeed not. The farmer and his family have for generations been Taoist, as most people are in this region. As I'm sure you are aware, the Buddhists and the Taoists have their differences. What you might not know is that they have their similarities as well. It was agreed that I should introduce the children to the Taoist classic, the Tao-te Ching. A book I had not read at that time. A book I am still studying for in its poetry, philosophic speculation and mystical reflection there is truth of a very profound kind.' He provides a gentle laugh to accompany Tai's amused expression.

'It is not an easy book to understand. Too much, I'm afraid, for my poor old mind.' Says Bao.

'It certainly makes you think, which of course seems to defeat the exercise.' They all laugh. 'However, there are a number of elements to the work that are ...' K'un is forced into silence by searching for the correct words.

'Shall we say for simplicity's sake, lack a philosophic consistency? Adopt the Tao and it becomes an individual's virtue or character. It denotes simplicity, spontaneity, tranquillity, weakness, and taking action that is only in harmony with nature. It thus becomes the ideal life for the individual, the ideal order for society, and the ideal government.'

'If I could only understand it, it sounds to be the ideal philosophy.' Says Bao with just a touch of sarcasm.

'Indeed.' Says K'un. 'The children have blank expressions when I read parts that I think I have deciphered. Perhaps this is the right response for a Taoist. Perhaps they are as confused as I am myself. Or, perhaps the entire meaning is in the blank expression on their little faces.'

Tai and Bao laugh.

'Chaung Tzu said: The principles that Lao Tzu built his doctrines on, were that of eternal non-being and the concept of the Great One we should all be in harmony with.' Says a more sober Bao.

'Indeed. And these are principles that I can associate myself with, as I am sure you can.'

'Perhaps Taoism is not what you read, but, is life lived without definition.' Says Tai.

'Then I will never understand.' Says Bao frustrated. 'How is it possible, when understanding becomes the very obstacle to understanding?' Says Bao truly mystified.

'That is why you should be beaten with sticks. To shock you out of your outmoded mental habits and preconceived opinions so that your mind is open, cleansed and thoroughly awakened.' Says Tai with relish.

'Considering that Buddhism is formulated around compassion. Beating someone with sticks would appear contradictory to type.' Says Bao, then to K'un. 'Tai would love to beat me with sticks but not for any noble purpose.'

'That is not true.' Says Tai sounding hurt but laughing all the same.



'So now we have an island that is owned by a Confucian is inhabited by Taoists and has a Buddhist teacher. It is almost a metaphor for China.' Says K'un.

'So you still consider yourself a Buddhist?' Asks Tai.

'A good question.' Answers K'un. 'I will make sure to tell you if I ever find out.' Then after a moment. 'I suppose I consider myself to be a teacher. A teacher of reading and writing; so that my pupils can read the classics for themselves and make up their own mind about what they believe. For their teacher is far more confused about the nature of reality than they are.'

'Bao has always considered teaching to be the noblest of professions and with some justification. As he pointed out to me when I was but a girl, the Buddha, Confucius and Lao Tzu were all teachers.' Says Tai remembering the first time she had been impressed by her husband.

'It is true.' Says Bao. 'Without teachers we would be little better than barbarians. Then, to have a teacher that will provide you with the means to understand what, men of destiny, have to offer, must be the noblest form of teaching of all. You, my dear K'un, are the very paragon of virtue.'

Tai smiles at her husband and combs his dishevelled hair with her fingers.

'Men of destiny?' Asks K'un with genuine curiosity. 'How do you define a, man of destiny?'

Bao comes straight back. 'Men who change the world by their actions. Men like Wu, the first Emperor of the Zhou Dynasty, who over through the wicked last Emperor of the Shang. Or like his brother, Tan, who introduced the, Mandate of Heaven, and so laid the foundation for *this culture of ours*. Or their father, King Wen, who wrote the I Zhou, the original Book of Changes, that provides us with the great edifice of present day civilization. These were all, men of destiny.'

'Are you a, man of destiny?' Asks K'un of Bao.

'Me?' Bao is taken by surprise. 'I have never thought of myself as a, man of destiny. However, on reflection ...'

Tai intercedes by inserting. 'The arrogant dragon has cause to repent.'

They all laugh, even Bao. 'Now you can see why I have chosen this Buddhist for my wife. If ever a man needed rescuing from himself, it is this poor creature before you.'

'Do not be fooled by his false modesty, Master K'un. Secretly he believes he is a, man of destiny, like his noble ancestor before him: the metaphysician Shao Yong. He will not rest until he has changed the world for ever.'

'And for the better, I think you should add.' Says K'un.

'Don't say that, it will only encourage him.' Says Tai. 'I have enough trouble keeping the arrogant dragon in its cave, without you enflaming its desires with praise.'

'But surely you cannot blame him for the animal spirits he was born with.'

'You have little idea how wicked he can be.'

Bao is incensed, or at least shows a great display of being so. 'Wicked is too harsh a word, dear heart.'

'Perhaps.' Tai gets up and clears away the dishes, then as she leaves. 'Perhaps, then shall we try, cunning, deceitful, scheming, or how about wilful.'

Bao watches her leave with admiration. 'You must find yourself a good wife, Master K'un. You may well find it is the missing element in your life.'

'Bao, I have enough trouble with my own wellbeing without adding the complexity of marriage.'

'Nonsense. A good wife will help you clarify your mind; bring a great joy into it that will help you see what is important; and keep you on the path of the sage. They are also very good domestically.'

'I heard that, Master Librarian. If you want to be a sage, you will find that the path runs right through this very kitchen.'

Bao gets up and sighs. 'The path of the sage is a hard one. You would be surprised how many domestic chores one must suffer.' Bao looks at his hands. 'It's taking a great toll out of these poor hands that have never done an honest day's work in their lives.'

\*

Bao sits deep in thought. Sitting at a table on the veranda overlooking the lake, overlooking the setting sun, setting behind mist covered tree lined mountains.

He bursts into action. The characters flow like water in a mountain stream. They dart hither and thither around the rocks of concepts, converging and diverging, diverging and converging like twigs bubbling in the stream.

Tai stands watching the changing light. Standing but a few paces from where Bao sits writing. She wonders about the new life stirring in her belly.

She bursts into words. 'Bao, dear heart, what is it that you write?'

'I will read it to you if you promise not to interrupt in the middle.'

'I promise.'

Bao turns towards her and reads:

'A million churning lives play out their destinies within this city's walls.

Yet, there are none who see white feathers arc from twiggy nest on gilded roof.

There are none that witness The White Crane Rise up to Heaven,  
Saving one.'

'It sounds like a poem with the symbolology and imagery, and yet, it does not rime and has more of a melody than rhythm.'

'That is because it is poetic prose.' Says Bao with pride.

'Poetic prose?' Tai's initial curiosity soon turns to Bao induced disbelief. 'In other words, this is something that you have just invented.'

'Indeed.' Bao is not disturbed by Tai's cynicism. 'To invent is to create. To be close to Heaven. What pride should course through your veins that it is your husband who has invented this new category of writing.' He beams.

'Let me see this new category of writing.'

Bao hands her the paper without getting up and she has to walk along the veranda to take from his hand. A hand that now wanders over her form.

"A million churning lives play out their destinies within this city's walls." 'That must refer to Kinsai and so, churning lives, is correct because that is what it feels like to walk through the city's streets. Play out their destinies, can only be correct, if there is a philosophic, or metaphysical,' her voice raises a tone, 'or mystical theme. Which is it?'

'Mystical. How many fingers?'

Tai slaps his hand away from between her legs. 'Yet, there are none who see white feathers arc from twiggy nest on gilded roof.' She repeats the line under her breath. 'Of course. Only the white crane is allowed to build its nest on the roofs of the Palace. So this must concern the Emperor, or perhaps his wife.'

'The Emperor.'

'Why isn't there anyone to see the white crane rise?'

'Perhaps there is.' Bao's hand wanders inside Tai's garment.

'Or perhaps not.' She struggles. 'The white crane is a symbol of illumination in Taoism. It is the same bird that carries the enlightened to the Buddhist Heaven.' Then she has it. 'It is a trick, a play on the words: saving one. The Emperor is illuminated and therefore is saved, or, someone, just one person, has seen him as the illuminated person he is. Which is it?'

Bao pulls, more eases, Tai down onto his knee. 'I wish I knew. Still, it gives a good ending to this piece of poetic prose about Kinsai.'

'So this cannot be all?'

'Indeed not. It is merely the end to a much bigger piece.' His hand has found her breast. Cupping it then squeezing it with the nipple between the third and fourth fingers.

'There now. You will have to pleasure me before I will forgive you for not telling me it was merely an abstraction.'

He lifts her up. 'This use you make of the word: abstraction. I find very interesting. Can one abstract from an abstraction?' He says while carrying her to their bed.

'I assume so.' She says without much conviction.

'Then let me abstract great pleasure from your body for both of us.' He says in wicked tones.

'Is that an abstraction from an abstraction?'

'There is only one way to find out.'

Tai's squeals and Bao's snarling growls fill the early evening air with abstracted sound.

\*

And so it was that the days past in domestic bliss, musing about the, nature of reality, and the way of the sage, until, after a moon, Tai and Bao returned to Kinsai.

For Confucians, and the new Confucians of Daoxue, the path of the sage, incorporates Humanism with Principle, the Rectification of Names, the Mean, Heaven and the Way. And all in the spirit of self-improvement.

For Taoists, the path of the sage, is entirely different. Does it not say in the Tao-te Ching: The sage manages affairs without action and spreads doctrines without words.

Bao would always have difficulty with Taoism.

\*

## Changing Lines

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**Keeping still before moving.**

**The superior man halts at the beginning**

**To reflect on his course of action.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**The ruler takes a wrong path**

**And the superior man is unable to stop him.**

**Misfortune.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Stillness develops from inner composure**

**Which rests upon the foundation of Inner Truth.**

**Forcing stillness leads to bad results.**

**Danger.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**The superior man is reserved in his speech.**

**Hence his words slowly develop into a definite form.**

**Doubts and confusion disappear leaving no room for regret.**

**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Stillness achieved.**

**Destiny accepted.**

**In every single matter the superior man is correct.**

**Great good fortune.**



## These Changing Lines Deliver:

### Limitation (31)

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==  ==
===== Water
==  ==
==  ==
===== Lake
=====

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#### THE IMAGE

**Rain pours into the Lake:**

**The Image of LIMITATION.**

**Thus the superior man measures all things**

**And applies limits.**

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# Postscript

## Earth (2)

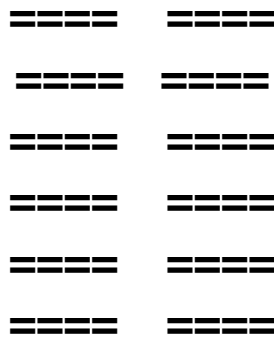
The Song Dynasty

1460 I.A.

3<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Moon

Before the Mid-Afternoon Drum

\*



### THE IMAGE

The Earth's condition is receptive devotion

Thus the superior man who has breadth of character

Carries the outer world

\*



“Tao is empty,  
 It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted.  
 It is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things.  
 It blunts its sharpness,  
 It unties its tangles.  
 It softens its light.  
 It becomes one with the dusty world.  
 Deep and still, it appears to exist forever.  
 I do not know whose son it is.  
 It seems to have existed before the Lord.

#### From the Lao Tzu – Chapter 4

‘So, how are we to address you now that you have been appointed Governor of Yunnan Province?’

‘Governor, Zhen Shi, will do nicely.’

‘Governor, Zhen Shi. The sound is pleasant enough. Perhaps it is the concept I’m having difficulty with.’

‘With most people the negative response to my new position is one of jealousy. In your case this is not true. My position will demand that my entire time will be consumed by the practical affairs of government. Something I know you would abhor. As to the, concept, I cannot imagine what you mean.’

‘Perhaps it is as simple as I have come to think of you as the, Investigating Magistrate, Zhen Shi. Which to my mind suits you well.’

‘You would wish me to remain, Investigating Magistrate, Zhen Shi?’

‘Indeed. With me as your assistant, of course.’

‘Ah. Now we have the matter revealed. You would like me to remain an Investigative Magistrate so that you can be my assistant.’

Bao laughs. ‘I must admit to having enjoyed our great play in the Celestial Game. But more than that, it was an excellent foil for my intellectual pursuits. It provided me with an element that was missing: acting in the world.’

'Bao, you never cease to amaze me. Your self-centred world, the same as your ancient ancestor, Shao Yong, would have us all revolve around you to the exclusion of everything else.'

'Is it too much to ask?' Says Bao, trying to sound sincere but failing.

'Now I know you are pulling my tail.'

'At least, you must admit to enjoying our great play?'

'I admit to a certain satisfaction that I was able to perform my duties to *this culture of ours* with some distinction. I would hardly be human if I did not.'

'Indeed, indeed. You will make an excellent Governor.' Says Bao with genuine sincerity. 'Although how you will cope with 35 different tribes with 35 different languages is beyond my feeble mind to comprehend.'

'In fact, it makes things easier. With 35 languages, it allows me to avoid having to learn a new dialect, which would be the case if there was only one. Instead, I am provided with 35 translators.' Says Shi with satisfaction.

'They are all Chinese, of course. Inculcated with *this culture of ours*, there should be little difference in governing there than anywhere else in the Empire.'

'And that is exactly how I will govern.'

'I can't wait to see you in action.' Says Bao with just a little mischief hidden in the tone.

'Have you made arrangements for a visit to Yunnan?'

'Indeed. Lizong was most amiable. A thorough classification of the Yunnan Library has been long overdue. We are also to transport with us a comprehensive set of documents on Daoxue for the library. This prompted Lizong into providing a squadron of palace guards for our protection. And when General Liu heard of our caravan to the South-west, he said he would join us as he needed to assess the defences of the province in regard to intelligence gathered of Mongolian and Tibetan incursion in that region. He will be travelling with five squadrons

of cavalry and half a division of foot soldiers that have been trained in the art of fighting in the mountains.'

'A small army.'

'Indeed. What started as a grand tour for a few family members has turned into a full scale campaign, an army on manoeuvres.'

Shi stops and Bao thinks he has stopped to admire the view and so stops himself and turns. 'It is a wonderful view from here.'

'How do you manage it?' Shi says with genuine amazement.

'All I said to Tai was: would you like to visit Shi in Kunming? The rest, including your betrothed, invited themselves.'

Shi laughs at Bao's uncanny knack of causing the law of unintended consequences to come into play. 'By the time you arrive, your caravan, at this rate, will stretch halfway across the Empire.'

'You may well laugh but Lizong himself has made reference to the fact that he has never been to Yunnan Province and has a desire to see its remarkable scenery.'

'Lizong?'

'Indeed.'

'A General, even a famous General I can easily accommodate. The Emperor would be an entirely different matter.' Says Shi with just a little apprehension.

'You have two years to prepare. With your organizational skills you could prepare for the entire inhabitants of Kinsai to arrive.'

'At the rate of accumulation of your caravan, it would be wise to plan for such an event.'

Shi turns and looks back the way they have come via the West Lake and the Thunder point Pagoda; a diversion for aesthetic reasons. Skirting the temporary city of the dispossessed and the long climb up to the secret valley of the Night Watch and their Shadows.

'You have to give Lizong credit for his handling of this recent crisis. He has a happy knack of placing the right people in the right place at the right time.' Says Bao.

'It is not a happy knack. It is the system that Shih Mi-yuan created when he realized that one man cannot run an Empire; he concentrated instead on finding the ablest of men with the right qualities to place in power; and always to have a reservoir of such men for emergencies. It is rule by delegation.'

Bao is surprised. 'Lizong rules by delegating responsibility to others?'

'Others who are better equipped to handle the various situations that arise in the world. How can one man be expected to run an Empire of 65 million persons in all its aspects, especially one as complex as ours? Well?'

'I must admit I have never thought about it in those terms before.' He quickly assesses this new information. 'My father has a friend, Tang Ye, who owns several different businesses. Each one run by a man that knows the business intimately. Tang Ye knows little about the businesses he owns except whether they are making a profit or not. Tang Ye, according to my father, is the most successful business man in all of China. He would appear to be following in Lizong's footsteps.'

'In Shih Mi-yuan's footsteps, it was his system.'

'It is four years since Shih Mi-yuan died and the Emperor has changed his Prime Minister twice already and this present one is more useless than the last. Can Lizong not find anyone of worth to run the country?'

'You still have not grasped the situation. Lizong, after Shih Mi-yuan's death, has become his own Prime Minister. This is what Shih Mi-yuan taught Lizong, to rule by delegation. It is Lizong that appoints everyone. He chooses to have weak Prime Ministers so they do not interfere with this system. As they are so useless he has little trouble in replacing them.'

'A cunning plan.' Says Bao in admiration.

Shi laughs. 'Perhaps this is why you get on so well with the Emperor.'

Bao, sounding hurt. 'I would not call myself cunning, nor the Emperor. Just because one can devise a cunning plan does not mean one is cunning by nature.'

'You must explain how that works, when you have a year or two to spare.'

'Ah, Tai worries sometimes that I have a cunning side to my nature.' Bao reflects. 'But I have assured her that it is how cleverness manifests itself into a thousand different possibilities, some of which may appear cunning.'

'Add another year or two to explain that.'

'I must admit there is often a fine line between a clever solution to a problem and a cunning one. Deception, lying by omission and hiding the facts are all ploys of the cunning. But when they are employed by the sincere for the greater good, such devices are mere tools in a clever person's potential.'

'That's just what a cunning person would say.' Says Shi sounding authoritative.

'Then we shall have to disagree.'

They turn back to the path and follow it around the hillside to the secret valley.

\*

General Lee, Head of Army Intelligence; General Liu, Commander of the Eastern Army; Duke Zhao Lung-tse, Minister of Works; Grand Duke Zhao Yen, Minister of Military Affairs; Marquise Zong Shen-he, Censor; Han Keqiang, The Palace Librarian; Minister of Personnel, Zhao K'ang; Minister of Punishments, Baron Li Ye Zhu; Minister of Revenue, Wang Mou-hung; Minister of Rites, Kao Tzu; and the Chairman of the Fellowship for the Study of the Art of War in times of Invasion, Tseng Hsi. These are all gathered around a long low wedge shaped table on various low cushioned seats. Lizong is sitting at the apex of the wedge looking down the full length of the table to where Bao, helped by Shi, is setting up his illustrations on a metal stand.

Once the apparatus is set up, Shi retreats to the wall where members of the Night Watch stand. On the other side of the table, all of the full length windows are open, allowing a light breeze to play across what is a jovial gathering in good humour. Rice wine is already being passed around and the distinctive smell of the sorcerer's mix pervades the air.

Bao turns to those gathered and gives a full bow. 'Emperor Lizong, Members of the Government, Members of the Bureaucracy, Members of the Army and the Night Watch. I welcome you to my humble presentation to the vexed question of reunification and the removal of the barbarian from the *middle-kingdom*. I will start with an analysis of the situation using the latest information sent to us by our brothers in the North in the coded message hidden in the supposed original I Zhou.'

Bao half turns and presents his illustrations. 'As there are many facts and figures I have recorded them here for your reference. First, I would like to say that I was unaware, until I read the coded message, how bad things were. The enemy we face is the greatest threat to *this culture of ours* since our history began. The Mongolians have an Empire that stretches from the East China Sea all the way to the Land of the Pope that borders, apparently, another great ocean far to the West.'

'Who is this Pope?' Asks the Censor.

'He is their God's representative on earth. A God who often appears in different disguises, and once, supposedly in human form, so that he could die by crucifixion; a particularly painful way to be put to death, as the person is nailed by their hands and feet to a cross made of wood then hung up to die. This cross of wood has become the symbol for this rather peculiar religion, which would seem to celebrate the torture and killing of the very God they worship. Most odd, I'm sure you will agree.'

Much laughter ensues as Bao lightens the proceedings by acting as the God being crucified and pulling a face to match. 'And all this so he could rise from the dead thus proving his divine nature. I'm sure I could think of many better ways to prove my divinity.' More laughter. 'But still, we must not mock the barbarians for their ignorance. What is worth mocking is that these barbarians spend most of their time fighting, fighting each other.'

Even when the two main tenets of this religion are: God is Love, and, Love your neighbour, as you would Love yourself.' Even more laughter. 'I hope this miserable description will satisfy you Censor, Marquise Zong Shen-he?'

The Censor, who is sitting to the right of Lizong, turns to Han Keqiang, Palace Librarian, sitting on the Emperor's left. 'Is this boy making this up?'

'Indeed not Shen-he. Bao is an excellent researcher. He and I visited the Christian church, that we allowed their traders to build, and talked extensively with one of their holy men. Bao is portraying their religion with a great degree of accuracy.' Here, the Palace Librarian imitates Bao's performance of hanging on the cross including an even more hilarious facial expression. This reduces the company to even greater laughter.

Lizong brings this episode to a close. 'Please Bao, continue.'

Bao bows. 'The Mongolians have an entire army group of 1.5 million men sitting on the border of the land of the Pope. Two army groups spread out across Asia, consisting of 3 million men. And one army group of 1.3 million men ruling over northern China. With 200,000 of their Tibetan allies, this makes a total of 6 million men in all. Opposed to these we have just over a million men.' The figures sober up proceedings considerably.

'However, the Mongolians are stretched to their limit. They do not have enough men in China to conquer the Song. They have also lost their Great Khan and now disputes have broken out amongst them over who shall replace him. According to the coded message, there are 5 contenders for the position and none have the full support of this vast warrior race. For the present, at least, we are safe.'

'If their army is so stretched, how will they ever conquer us?' Asks General Lee, Head of Army Intelligence.

'They will have to decide between conquering the land of the Pope, or, conquering us. I know which one I would choose. I'm sure you all know as well. Conquering a peace loving and civilized country such as ours, or, a region that is permanently at war with itself over a religion that does not quite fill the barrel. You would have to

be, one bucket short of a bath, not to choose us.' Bao waits for the laughter to recede. 'The Mongolians may be many things but they are not stupid. We, on the other hand, have a problem that is born out of the success of our civilization. When Wang Anshi tried to give our farmers the responsibility of both feeding the population and then adding the responsibility of protecting us, the farmers refused.'

Bao turns to his illustrations and flips the top one over the stand to reveal a map of China. 'Here and here,' he points, 'are the two regions that were chosen to test the farmers resolve for this new responsibility. Within weeks they were close to insurrection. So close that within weeks the entire idea of a farmer led army were put aside. And that idea was the only hope we had, or have, for defeating the Mongolians. There are 65 million Chinese in the south, 55 million of which are farmers and their families. 11 million of which could be soldiers. We have the man power to defeat the Mongolians, the farmers have not the will.'

'Bao, we know all of this.' Says General Liu.

'Please, let me finish. What interested me was the fact that the farmers were so angered by this new responsibility that was being forced on them by Wang Anshi that they were willing to take up weapons and fight. Our farmers are not cowards. In the right circumstances they are prepared to fight and die.' He changes tone. 'What has happened in the North since the Mongolians have taken over? According to the coded message the Mongolians are kept very busy fighting bandits.' Bao points to places on the map. 'All of these places are bandit strongholds, places where the bandits get support from the local people and places that are close to insurrection. Supposing that the Mongolians do conquer the South. We could safely expect the same situation. The Mongolians take the best land and estates for themselves and burden the population with extra taxes; that is what they have done in the North. What has driven our Chinese brothers in the North to banditry would happen here in the South. The total population of China, North and South, is close to 110 million. The most the Mongolians can deliver is five, or perhaps, six million. The numbers speak for themselves.'



'Are we to allow the Mongolians to conquer the Song so that our bandit farmers can take it away from them? Is that your plan?' Says General Lee to much hilarity.

'That plan is too simple. There are two elements missing. First, the bureaucracy must be prepared for such an outcome. And second, the bureaucracy must be prepared for the arrival of a man of destiny.'

'A man of destiny?' Intones Lizong with curiosity.

'Indeed. Chinese history is full of such men. Fu Hsin, the Yellow Emperor, Shen the sage King, Yao and Yu, then three men from one family, King Wen and his two sons, Wu and Tan, then those unknown heroes who wrote the classics in the golden era of our past. Confucius and the greatest Confucian, Mencius. Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. The Qin unifier and founder of the Imperial age, and bringing us into the present age, Taizu and his brother Taizong founders of the Song Dynasty. There has been an abundance of men of destiny in our history. That one will arrive, summoned only by his own volition, I have little doubt. What such a man would require would be the support of the bureaucracy. And from what we have seen from the coded message the Northern bureaucracy is already thinking in these terms. The information in the coded message is important. The fact that they communicated their intentions in this regard, to us, is even more so.'

Bao has finally captured their attention. 'It is incumbent upon us to ensure that our bureaucracy here in the South is in harmony with that of the bureaucracy in the North. We have been blessed by six men of destiny who have provided us with the Learning of the Way, Daoxue. This will provide the bureaucracy, when North and South are unified, with a single unifying philosophy. To do this, however, Daoxue must become state orthodoxy. To achieve this requires the full support of the Emperor, the government and in particular the Censor's office, the personnel of which are responsible for these affairs. It is therefore essential ...'

'Bao, Bao, my dear friend.' Lizong cuts him off. 'This is all very well, but can this be a realistic plan for reuniting the Empire and driving the Mongolians out? Who would dare suggest such a thing let alone carry it out.'

Bao looks at the enigmatic smile on Lizong's face, and he finally knows for sure. 'Who indeed.'

Bao bows to the horizontal allowing Lizong's enigmatic smile to transfer itself to his face then to everyone there gathered.

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In 1241 Daoxue becomes state orthodoxy, and the rest is history.

\*

## **The Changing Lines**

**Changing Line at the beginning means:**

**When there is hoarfrost underfoot,  
Solid ice is not far off.**

**Changing Line in the second place means:**

**Straight, square, great.  
Without purpose,  
Yet nothing remains un-furthered.**

**Changing Line in the third place means:**

**Hidden lines.  
One is able to remain persevering.  
If by Chance you are in the service of a king,  
Seek not works, but bring to completion.**

**Changing Line in the fourth place means:**

**A tied up sack. No blame, no praise.**

**Changing Line in the fifth place means:**

**A yellow lower garment brings supreme good fortune.**

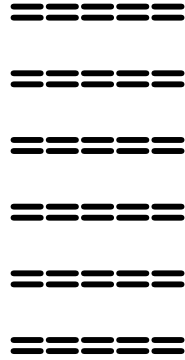
**Changing Line at the top means:**

**Dragons fight in the meadow.  
Their blood is black and yellow.**

**When all the Lines are Changing Lines, it means:**

**Lasting perseverance furthers.**

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**These Changing Lines Deliver:****Heaven (1)****THE IMAGE**

**The movement of heaven is full of power.**

**Thus the superior man makes himself strong and untiring.**

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# Quotes

**Chapter 1 (page 1)** - Wu Zeng – Historian to the Court of Renzong. First Line: ‘The Emperor Renzong (1231-1284 Imperial Age [I.A.] 1010- 1063 [C.E.]) paid attention to serious scholarship and was devoted to the way of government.

**Chapter 2 (page 16)** - Mencius: Book 6 Part 1. First Line: “Don’t suspect that the King lacks wisdom.

**Chapter 3 (page 25)** - From the Book of Rites (G):

The beginning of the Chapter on the Doctrine of the Mean (G) First Line: “What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature.

**Chapter 4 (page 38)** - Cheng Hao (1253-1306 I.A. [1032-1085 C.E.]) From the I-shu (conversations in the vernacular - The Cheng brothers)  
I-shu, 2A:3A-b. First Line: “On understanding the Nature of Jen (Humanity).

**Chapter 5 (page 52)** - Analects 9.5. First Line: “When under siege in K’uang, the Master (Confucius) said, ‘With King Wen (G) dead, is culture not here with me?’

**Chapter 6 (page 66)** - **Zhu Xi** (1351-1421 A.I. [1130-1200 C.E.]) From the Complete Works of Zhu Xi – 43:2b-3a. First Line:  
“Nature is principle only. However, without the material force and concrete stuff of the universe, principle would have nothing in which to inhere.

**Chapter 7 (page 76)** - From the Cheng Weishi Lun - The most important philosophical work of the Consciousness Only School of Chan Buddhism. TD 31, no. 1585: 7. First Line: “Based on the root consciousness, the five consciousnesses of the senses manifest themselves in accordance with the conditioning factors.

**Chapter 8 (page 96)** - “The Western Inscription (G)” by Zhang Zai (G). First Line: “Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such as a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst.

**Chapter 9 (page 103)** – Li Ao. From The Recovery of Original Nature in the Collected Works of Li Ao. SPTK, 1:8a-9b. First Line: “Someone asked: Man has been darkened for a long time. If he is to recover his original nature, he must do so gradually. May I ask what the method should be?”

**Chapter 10 (page 116)** - Zhou Tun-I. From The Complete works of Zhou Tun-I. Chapter 33 – Wealth and Honour. First Line: “The superior man considers a rich possession of moral principles in his person to be wealth.

**Chapter 11 (page 133)** - 2 Quotes from the Analects 2:1 & 3:19 and 1 quote from the Book of Mencius 1B:8 . First Line: “Confucius said, ‘A ruler who governs his state by

virtue is like the north pole star, which remains in its place while all the other stars revolve around it.”

**Chapter 12 (page 151)** - By Chih-yuan (976 - 1022 C.E.) From the Song Chin Yuan wen-lun, pp 16-18. First Line: “What is called ku-wen (G) establishes language worthy of being remembered according to the ancient Tao, and the language must illuminate the ancient Tao.

**Chapter 13 (page 159)** – By Shao Yong (1011 – 1077) Poem. First Line: “In a quiet courtyard in the spring, with evening's light filtering through the leaves,”

**Chapter 14 (page 164)** - From the Notes of Shao Yong (1011-1077 C.E.) Recorded by Shao Bao for the Imperial Library CAT: 27a-sh-1-b : “The Mind of man is precarious, The Mind of Tao is subtle; true insight reveals the universal centrality [chung-wung] of Mind.” Shen the Sage King (1800 B.C.E.)

**Chapter 15 (page 175)** - Zhou Dunyi (Tun-I) (1017-73 C.E.) From Comprehending the Changes (I) Ch. 28 – p.117-118. First Line: “Wen is a means for conveying Tao. If the wheels and shafts of a cart are decorated but men do not use them, they are mere decorations – so much more so when the cart is empty.”

**Chapter 16 (page 186)** - From the Chuang Tzu (399-295 BCE). The Equality of Things (Chapter 2). First Line: “Those who dream of the banquet may weep the next morning, and those who dream of weeping may go out and hunt after dawn. When we dream we do not know we are dreaming.”

**Chapter 17 (page 193)** - From Wang Pi's (226-249 CE) Commentary on the Book of Changes. First Line: “Only because there is ultimate principle in the world is it possible to employ strength and uprightness completely and to drive far away those who ingratiate by flattery. . . . If we understand the activities of things, we shall know all the principles which make them what they are.”

**Chapter 18 (page 202)** - From the Chuang Tzu - Chapter 2 – A. The Equality of things. First Line: “Tzu-chi of Nan-kuo sat leaning on a low table. Looking up to heaven, he sighed and seemed to be at a loss as if his spirit had left him.”

**Chapter 19 (page 213)** - From the Chuang Tzu - Chapter 2 – A. The Equality of things. First Line: “There is nothing that is not the ‘that’ and there is nothing that is not the ‘this’.”

**Chapter 20 (page 228)** - From the Mencius – 2A:6. First Line: “Mencius said, ‘All men have the mind which cannot bear the suffering of others.’”

**Chapter 21 (page 248)** – From the Chuang Tzu - Chapter 12. The Nature and Reality of Tao - NHCC, 5:8b-9b First Line: “In the great beginning, there was non-being.”

**Chapter 22 (page)** - From the Chuang Tzu – Chapter 12 – No. 5: Tao as Transformation and One. (NHCC, 5:1a-3a) First Line: “Although the universe is vast,

its transformation is uniform. Although the myriad things are many, their order is one.”

**Chapter 23 (page)** - From the Book of Mencius. Book 6, Part 1 – 6A:1. First Line: “Kao Tzu said, ‘Human nature is like the willow tree, and righteousness is like a cup or a bowl.’”

**Chapter 24 (page)** - From Zhu Xi’s interpretation of, The Great Learning – Chapter 42 of The Book of Rites. The text is believed to be the words of Confucius as handed down by Tseng Tzu.

First Line: “The Way of Learning to be great, consists in manifesting the clear character, loving the people, and abiding in the highest good.”

**Chapter 25 (page)** - From Zhu Xi’s interpretation of, The Great Learning – Chapter 7 of Zhu Xi’s Commentary on The Book of Rites.

First Line: “What is meant by saying that cultivation of the personal life depends on the rectification of the mind is that when one is affected by wrath to any extent, his mind will not be correct.”

**Chapter 26 (page)** - From the Complete Works of Lu Hsiang-Shan - Chapter 1. First Line: “Principle is endowed in me by Heaven, not drilled into me from outside.;

**Chapter 27 (page)** - From the Complete works of Lu Hsiang-Shan – (Chapter 2: 1b-2a) – First Line: “‘I use these two words, righteousness and profit, to distinguish between Confucianism and Buddhism.’”

**Chapter 28 (page)** – From the Collection of Literary Works by Zhu Xi – A Treatise on Jen – First Line: “The mind of Heaven and earth is to produce things. In the production of man and things, they receive the mind of Heaven and Earth as their mind.”

**Chapter 29 (page)** - From the Treatise of Seng-Chao – 2. The Emptiness of the Unreal – First Line: “The Supreme Vacuity which neither comes into nor goes out of existence is probably the subtle principle in the reflection of the mysterious mirror of wisdom and the source of all existence.”

**Chapter 30 (page)** - From the Chuang Tzu – Chapter 6 – The Great Teacher - The First Line: “People say to each other, ‘I am I.’ How do they know that their ‘I’ is the real ‘I’?”

**Chapter 31 (page)** - From the Ta-ch’eng chih-kuan fa-men – The Method of Concentration and Insight – 1. The Various Aspects of the Mind – First Line: “By concentration is meant to know that all dharmas, elements of existence, from the very beginning have no nature of their own.

**Chapter 32 (page)** - From the ‘Appended Remarks’ on the Book of Changes. – Chapter 4 – First Line: “The system of Change is tantamount to Heaven and Earth, and therefore can always handle and adjust the way of Heaven and Earth.”

**Postscript (page)** – From the Lao Tzu – Chapter 4

First Line: “Tao is empty, It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted.”

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# GLOSSARY

**Analects** - The discourses that Confucius held with his students and consequently the most reliable source of Confucius' Doctrines. These exerted great influence on Chinese philosophic development especially in determining its defining principle of humanism.

**Book of Rites** - A Confucian Classic, the content of which contained material from the time of Confucius (551 - 479 B.C.E.), the early Zhou (1111 - 600 approx B.C.E.) and supposedly from the Shang (1700 approx. - 1111 B.C.E.). The Chapters on The Doctrine of the Mean (G) and The Great Learning (G) were selected by Zhu Xi (G) along with the Analects (G) and the Book of Mencius (G) to become part of the Neo-Confucian canon of Daoxue.

**Book of Mencius** - Meng Tzu in Chinese, is divided into 7 books each with 2 parts. It was almost certainly compiled by his students after his death.

**Chan Buddhism** - Or Chinese Buddhism or Zen Buddhism is marked by the influence of Neo-Taoism on the Indian forms of Buddhism in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. when Buddhism first arrived in China. The syncretic process once started proceeded throughout Chinese history. Like the Neo-Taoists the Buddhists regard ultimate reality as transcending all being, names, and forms, and as empty and quiet in nature - reality undifferentiated.

**Chang Tsai** - (1017-1073 C.E.) - Like the other 4 Neo-Confucian philosophers he drew his inspiration chiefly from the I Ching (Book of Changes). His metaphysics, however, was markedly different from Zhou Tun-I and also from Shao Yong in that he identifies material force (Ch'i) with the Supreme Ultimate itself.

**Cheng Brothers** - Students of Zhou Tun-yi, friends of Shao Yong, nephews of Zhang Zai. Considered 2 of the 5 most important philosophers that formed the core of Daoxue (Neo-Confucianism) and made Li (principle/pattern) its most important component. They were both influenced by Buddhism and Daoism, and as students of Zhou Tun-Yi accepted his metaphysical Theory of Everything.

**Cheng Hao** - (1032-1085 C.E.) - The idealist of the brothers. He proposed that man and all things form one

body because all of them possess principle. The concept of the Principle of Nature is accredited to him in the form of universal truth or natural law. He promoted self-cultivation to the exclusion of nearly everything else.

**Cheng Yi** - The rationalist. If Hao is more subjective looking towards the internal, Yi, while having this element also looks towards the external and is more objective. He insists that self-cultivation and the extension of knowledge must be pursued at the same time. The Investigation of Things becomes a cardinal concept in his philosophy.

**Chinese Buddhism** - By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (C.E.) there were already 2 forms of Buddhism in China: Dhyana (meditation) and Prajna (wisdom). From the very beginning there was cross-fertilization with Taoism and knowledge cults such as that of the Yellow Emperor. This process of syncretism continued eventually leading to a uniquely Chinese form called Ch'an Buddhism (Zen).

**Chuang Tzu (399-295 BCE)** - Mystical sage-philosopher who in his writing managed to transcend the mundane world while remaining true to rationality and reason. You can read nearly everything he wrote from both the mundane and mystical perspectives - a remarkable achievement.

**Chung-Wung** - Literally translated means 'universal centrality'. There has been much debate over the meaning of this term. It is often used in the same way as the term 'moderation'. It is also used in the sense of unification of polar opposites leading to harmony. And it also has a purely Mystical meaning in that everything in an infinite universe is at the centre. The western translation 'the mean' - a statistical term - really doesn't do it justice.

**Civil Service Examinations** - To become a civil servant one first had to pass the examinations. Although this didn't guarantee employment it was an essential requirement for those without representation at court. There were 3 stages:  
The Prefectural or Shenshi or 1<sup>st</sup> Degree.  
The Departmental or Shengshi or 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree.  
The Palace or Dianshi or 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree.

**Classics** - Handed down from the Early Zhou and commented upon by Confucius they are the Books of History, Odes, Rites and Changes. Plus the Spring and Autumn Annals,

which records the events in the state of Lu during the spring and autumn period (722-481 B.C.E.) of the Zhou Dynasty. There was a sixth classic the Book of Music but this is lost.

**Confucius** - (551-479 B.C.E.) He was a teacher that commented and transmitted the classics. Gave Chinese philosophy its humanistic foundation and promoted some of its fundamental concepts: the rectification of names; the Mean; the Way; Heaven; jen (humanity). The one thread that runs through all of his teachings is benevolence.

**Consciousness Only School of Buddhism** - It was founded by Asanga (410-500 C.E.) for the purpose of enlightenment through metaphysical reflections. It bears a striking similarity to Constructivism (scientifically proven theory) where what we experience are the constructs or models of our own brains - we don't experience external reality directly.

**Dao or Tao** - See The Way.

**Daoxue** - 'The Learning of the Way' became the dominant perspective of Confucian philosophy in the Southern Song. It consisted of a genealogy from Confucius to Mencius to Zhou Dun Yi to Zhang Zai to the Cheng brothers. It placed great emphasis on the cultivation of the self and the importance of Principle (Li).

**Dianshi** - The final part of the Palace Examination (3<sup>rd</sup> Degree) where the Emperor and members of the Government set the questions. Those who past this part would normally expect employment. Those who past the exam on a first attempt, which was very rare, were destined for high office.

**Doctrine of the Mean** - is a discourse on psychology and metaphysics. Its subject is human nature and its relationship to the universe. This relationship was considered a unity the harmonious nature of which underpins all things. It is a Mystical concept that not only appealed to Neo-Confucians but also to Taoists and Buddhists. "Mean" as expressed in the Analects is chung-yung, where chung is what is central and yung is what is universal and harmonious. Hence, the holistic concept of universal centrality - all of Nature including man forming a unity.

**Five Constant Virtues** - humanity [ren], rightness [yi], ritual decorum [li], wisdom [zhi], and trustworthiness [xin]. They correspond to the five phases.

**Five Phases** - water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

**Great Learning** - It summarizes the Confucian educational, moral and political programs in the so-called 3-items: manifesting the clear character of man, loving the people and abiding in the highest good; and in the 8-steps: the investigation of things, extension of knowledge, sincerity of will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of the personal life, regulation of the family, national order, and world peace. However, its interpretation caused factions in the scholar official bureaucracy of the Song Dynasty.

**Imperial Age** - In reference to the Common Era [C.E.] the I.A. started in 221 B.C.E,

**King Wen** - Father of Zhou Wu the founder of the Zhou dynasty. He was responsible for writing the I Ching (the classic of Changes). He was also, along with his son Zhou Tan, Wu's brother, responsible for initiating the Zhou Cultural Revolution - sometimes known as The Mandate of Heaven.

**Kinsai** - Literarily translated means temporary capital. It was the name originally used by scholar officials and the Imperial court, when, after the Jia invasion of the northern part of China, the court moved to Lin'an from Kaifeng in 1127 I.A. (1127 C.E.)

**Ku-wen** - The ancient style of writing used by the Confucians.

**Li Ao (fl. 798 C.E.)** - Along with Han Yu (768-824 C.E.) are usually considered as forerunners of Neo-Confucianism. There is nothing new in their theories of human nature - the dualism of good nature and evil feelings. However, by emphasizing the Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean and the Book of Changes as works to study, they directed the literati to the importance of these Confucian Classics. They both saw Mencius as the person through whom the true doctrines of Confucius were transmitted to later generations.

**Lingyan Monastery** - One of the oldest Buddhist monasteries. Established within a century of the arrival

of the Indian Buddhist Ai, who first brought Buddhism to China.

**Marquise Zong Shen-he** - The Censor.

**Mencius (371-289 B.C.E.)** - Mencius' teachings were derived from Confucius, however, where Confucius implied that human nature was good, Mencius declared that it is originally good. It logically follows that human beings have the innate ability to do good, and from this, if humans develop this ability they can serve Heaven and fulfil their destiny. It also follows that as evil is not inborn it must be due to human failings in dealing with external factors. When this happens serious efforts must be made to recover our original nature. He was and still is considered to be the greatest Confucian.

**Principle (Li)** - It is the equivalent of the Natural Law of Mencius and stems from this concept. Principles, or Natural Laws, exist throughout the Universe and are found in all things. Moral Principle is common to all human minds but needs to be cultivated for it to flourish (this is central to both Mencius and Neo-Confucianism.)

**Qi** - Or Chi and Ch'i - Psychophysical substance that is in dynamic random chaos in the primordial state. The Myriad Things including the universe, all finite entities including human beings are made up from Qi. The application of Li (Principle) to Qi provides the patterns for the Myriad Things. Originally a Taoist concept it was supposedly derived from the Book of Changes. Used by Zhou Tun-Yi and Shao Yong in their metaphysical cosmologies. It has modern connotations in quantum mechanics and theoretical physics.

**Shao Yong** - 1232-1298 I.A. (1011-1077 C.E.) - Metaphysical Philosopher world famous for inventing binomial mathematics. His system of numerology gave all species of flora and fauna a specific number. However, the special place of human beings in relation to Heaven and Earth gave each individual person a specific number. A friend of the Cheng Brothers, he was often criticized by Cheng Yi for not placing enough importance on Li (Principle) as the foundation of social morality. He was far more interested in how the continuing process of creation (Tsao Hua) brought about the world we live in from the primordial state of the Supreme Ultimate. In this he would not be out of place in the company of Ed Witton (the creator of M-Theory) in that they both

suggest a primordial state in dynamic chaos that gives rise through differentiation to the world (universe) in which we live. A truly original thinker whose work has a resonance with contemporary Theoretical Physics.

**Scholar Officials** - Paid members of the bureaucracy who have passed the civil service examinations.

**Supreme Ultimate** - This has many interpretations (See Zhang Zai's below for one). Zhou Tun-I's became the orthodoxy and is as follows: The Supreme Ultimate through movement generates Yang. Through tranquillity it generates Yin. Movement and tranquillity alternate becoming the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction and thus to 2 modes. The union of these 2 modes in various combinations gives rise to the 5 agents of material force; Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth, which in turn give rise to the Myriad Things. This differs from the explanation from the original Book of Changes where the 8 trigrams are the agents produced from the union of the 2 modes.

**The Way** - Dao or Tao is the most important concept in Chinese philosophy. It is, however, as difficult to understand as Dharma is in Indian philosophy. It is a Mystical/holistic term that has the following connotations: it is the primordial state; it is the experiential experience of the primordial state; if you follow a Mystical path to find Illumination (Daoism) or Enlightenment (Buddhism) then you will find these on 'The Way'; it is the natural law; it is the embodiment of chung-wung - universal centrality; it is all of these things and more.

**The White Crane** - Was a symbol of Illumination in Daoism. In Chan Buddhism it was often used to describe the vehicle that transported the enlightened to Heaven.

**Zhang Zai (1020-1077 C.E.)** - One of the 5 main Neo-Confucian philosophers he identified material force (Ch'i) with the Supreme Ultimate (G) itself. To him Yin and Yang are merely 2 aspects of material force. As the substance of the material force it is the primordial state before differentiation: the Great Vacuity. As the function of Li (principle/pattern) it is activity and tranquillity, integration and disintegration etc., it is the Great Harmony. But the Great Vacuity and the Great Harmony are the same as the Way (Tao), the One.

**Zhou Tun-I (Dunyi)** - One of the five major philosophers of Neo-Confucianism. His metaphysical cosmology was the foundation of the Daoxue movement. He interpreted the Taoist diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (G) in Confucian terms thus providing a Theory of Everything that was very appealing for the increasing number of literati in the Song Dynasty. He benefited, along with the other 4 philosophers of Neo-Confucianism, from the development of printing as his works were disseminated across the entire empire, allowing a grassroots movement to develop.

**Zhu Xi 1351-1421 I.A. (1130-1200 C.E.)** - Scholar official and philosopher. He promoted Daoxue as the correct interpretation of the classics. He brought together the philosophies of Zhou Dunyi, the Cheng brothers, Hao and Yi, with those of Zhang Zai to create Systematic Confucianism (Neo-Confucianism as it is known today). Although not an original thinker himself he took the 'grassroots' philosophy of Daoxue and turned it into what would become state orthodoxy. This influenced not only China but also all of Southeast Asia for several hundred years.

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## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**Baron Li Ye Zhu** - Minister of Punishments.

**Censor** - Marquise Zong Shen-he.

**Chan Ze** - The Deputy Censor's partner in the Antiques business. Chan Ze had become a master of disguise transforming himself into a plump middle-aged man from the 35 year old artist **De Cao**.

**Chang Beng** - Owner of Chang Beng's Famous Dumpling house. An establishment that caters for functions, weddings and the fast food trade.

**Chang Heng** - A middle ranking member of the Secretariat and the Mongolian spy.

**Chang Yu-Lan** - Son of Chang Beng and an old school friend of Bao and Shi.

**Chang Sen** - Cousin of Peng and Beng, he lives in Chongching and is involved in the fraudulent production of antiques.

**Clinging Fire** - Madam of the, Water Nymph's Pony.

**Cousin Peng** - Chang Beng's cousin and a wily old *dog* with family connections in the fraudulent production of antiques.

**Crimson** - Owner of the Reels of Splendour teahouse and the pleasure boat the 'Little Egret'. Madam of one of the finest brothels in Kinsai she is also Shi's long time lover.

**Crystal** - Bao's love-maid. Given to him when he was 12 (she was 17) to make sure he developed natural sexual inclinations. A singing girl who didn't like the numerous customers of her trade, she soon became part of the family.

**Duke Zhao Lung-tse** - Minister of Works.



**Earl Zhao Yin** - The Deputy Censor.

**Emperor Lizong** - Lizong means Principled Ancestor and is his official title. His family name Zhao and his personal name is Yun. Supposedly depraved, yet he has supported the very moral Learning of the Way (Daoxue) movement in the bureaucracy. Also responsible of providing the poor with hospitals, schools and burial grounds.

**General Lee** - Head of Army Intelligence.

**General Liu** - Commander of the Eastern Army.

**Grand Duke Zhao Chu Feng** - The Emperor's cousin and understudy to the deceased Deputy Censor. A haughty aristocratic despised by the scholar officials.

**Grand Duke Zhao Yen Yuan** - Minister of Military Affairs.

**Han Keqiang** - The Palace Librarian and Bao's superior.

**He Yanshou** - The Buddhist monk who is Guardian of the eastern approach.

**Hu Xiping** - The antiques dealer who the man from the North originally approached with the Shang bronzes.

**Jade** - Head singing girl at the Reels of Splendour teahouse. Woman-child seduced by the Deputy Censor.

**Kao Tzu** - Minister of Rites

**King of the Beggars** - Elected head of the 7 branches of the Guild of Beggars.

**Lai Si** - The old Head Librarian and member of the secret society for defeating the barbarians of the north.

**Li Guo** - The man from the north who has the original I Zhou

**Liu Zin** - The name the Deputy Censor used in his double-life role as an antiques merchant.

**Lou Jiwei** - The monk who acted as the Guardian of the Eastern Approaches and was killed by a wayward mystical practitioner.

**Marquise Zong Shen-he** - Censor

**Minister of Military Affairs** - Grand Duke Zhao Yen Yuan

**Minister of Personnel** - Yuan K'ang

**Minister of Punishments** - Baron Li Ye Zhu

**Minister of Revenue** - Wang Mou-hung

**Minister of Rites** - Kao Tzu

**Minister of Works** - Duke Zhao Lung-tse

**Moon** - One of the young singing girls in the Reels of Splendour teahouse.

**Moti** - Tibetan Buddhist monk who converted his anger, with the help of the Green Tara, into a demon in the service of the Dharma.

**Officer Chou** - The police Officer that was in charge of the 'Little Egret' when Shi and Bao first arrived at the crime scene. The man who recognized the Deputy Censor.

**Pearl** - One of the young singing girls in the Reels of Splendour teahouse.

**Police Doctor** - The surgeon that carried out the post mortem on the Deputy Censor.

**Poppy** - Serving girl at the Ink Stone. Wu Chi's lover and a secret member of the Night Watch.

**Prime Minister** - Su Chi-ming

**Red Phoenix Wearer** - Spokesman for the Night Watch unit. This position of spokesman alternates between the members of the unit.

**Shao Ang** - Bao's mother and matriarch of the family. Comes from a rich jewellery manufacturing family but feels slightly below the Shao family because of their connection with Shao Yong.

**Shao Bao** - Jinshi scholar official and Librarian Palace official who is assistant to Zhen Shi in the murder investigation.

**Shao Ling-Ling** - Bao's youngest sister, a girl of 13 years, and a wonderful mix of woman and child. She has a crush on Shi.

**Shao Mai** - Bao's 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest sister. Wu Tai's best friend, they met at the Buddhist school and it was through their friendship that Tai met Bao.

**Shao Zuo** - Bao's father and a pearl merchant. Besides the honour of the family connections to Shao Yong, there is a dark side family connection to the pirates of Amoy.

**Shih Mi-Yuan** - Legendary Prime Minister who brought Zhao Yun to Kinsai to make him Emperor and remained his mentor and Prime Minister for the first 9 years of Lizong's reign.

**Su Chi-ming** - The Prime Minister

**Tang Jen** - Old Palace official of the old school. Stickler for protocol.

**Wang Chi** - Palace scholar official and special counsel to Lizong. A member of the fellowship of the Yellow Emperor he is a great exponent of the Path of Wisdom with extraordinary powers.

**Wang Mou-hung** - Minister of Revenue.

**Wu Tai** - Daughter of Wu Chi the owner of the 'Ink Stone' Tea House. Betrothed of Shao Bao and known as the Lotus of Kinsai because of her astounding beauty. A Buddhist and martial artist.

**Wu Chi** - Father of Wu Tai and owner of the 'Ink Stone' Tea House. He is a Buddhist and is having another Tea House the 'Ink Well' built in the grounds of the Monastery of Lingyan. He is a good friend of the Abbot.

**Yao** - The rogue Member of the Fellowship of the Yellow Emperor.

**Yuan K'ang** - Minister of Personnel.

**Zhao Tan** - Zhao Yun's nephew. Studying at the Imperial College for the Jinshi examinations. Is doing so in disguise as he doesn't want to be treated differently from the other students as the Emperor's nephew.

**Zhen Shi** - Dianshi scholar official leading the investigation into the murder of the Deputy Censor.

**Zhen Ying-ta** - Shi's father and a scholar official in the Ministry of Rites.

**Zhen Yen** - Shi's younger brother is 12 years old.

**Zhu Xi** - 12<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and synthesizer. He synthesized Confucius' concept of humanity, Mencius' doctrines of humanity and righteousness, the idea of the investigation of things in the Great Learning, the teaching of sincerity in the Doctrine of the Mean, the Yin and Yang with the five Agents. He was the leading exponent of Daoxue.

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**The End**