

10.2 An Ancestral Shaman Spirit's Blessing

WUXIAN 巫賢 was a chief shaman 大巫 or grand high priest who served the Shang dynasty court. He lived some time during the 15th century BC.

According to the *Book of Documents* 尚書 (Shàngshū), dated to the Shang and Zhou, “During the reign of King Zu Yi of Shang, the devoted and faithful Wuxian was the chief shaman 大巫 who served as the mediator between Shangdi 上帝 and the King of Shang.”¹

A powerful diviner, astrologer, rainmaker, and healer, Wuxian is considered the great ancestor of the 商巫 *Shāng wū*, or Shang dynasty shamans. He is credited as having invented the drum 鼓 *gǔ* that *wu* shamans use in their rites, and a form of divination 筮 *shì* using stalks of grass. The *Liezi* 列子 (5th century BC) traces Wuxian's lineage back to the Yellow Emperor and from Wuxian came a long lineage of great *wu* 巫, shamans and healers.

The chief shaman was then deified 神化 *shén huà* and venerated as an ancestor spirit who can gift shamans with blessings.

An ancestor or deified shaman spirit who can bless present-day shamans is a recurring and unifying motif found across Asian cultures.

The *txiv neeb* shamans of the Hmong spiritually descend from Siv Yis, the first shaman, a divine being with the knowledge of healing and defeating evil.²

The *jhākri* of Nepal hold a similar belief, that the first and primordial shaman was Mahādev who created shamans and taught them the magical arts, *tantra-mantra*.³ Mahādev gifted the descendant shamans with magical drums and knowledge of how to heal the sick and exorcise evil.

Likewise, the *tāng ki* of the cultures by the Pacific Ocean venerate Matsu who was a shaman in her mortal life then deified as Wuxian was. Matsu is now a patron goddess that shamans pray to for blessings.

This practicum will call upon the ancestral spirit of Wuxian in prayer to receive a divine omen on how you might advance in your metaphysical and spiritual studies from where you are now.

¹ Jun Shi 君奭 from the *Shangshu* 尚書 noting: “在祖乙時，則有若巫賢。可知巫賢是商王祖乙時期擔任上帝與商王之間媒介任務的大巫。”

² Pranee Liamputtong Rice and Pranee Liamputtong, *Hmong Women and Reproduction* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 2000). 47.

³ Homayun Sidky, “On the Antiquity of Shamanism and its Role in Human Religiosity.” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010), 72.

Using the yarrow stalk method instructed in Chapter 7, you will be constructing a trigram of the Ba Gua, rather than the six-line hexagram.

Wearing Ceremonial Blue. For this divination ritual, opt for all-blue ceremonial wear. You do not need special articles of clothing; rather, from what you already have, go with an outfit that is predominantly a medium to dark blue. One common association I found among north Asian and southeast Asian shamanistic practices was the color blue in traditional ceremonial wear.

Offerings. You'll also want to prepare three small dishes of offerings, such as uncooked grains, nuts, seeds, candies, fresh fruits, or pastries, and three cups (a small teacup size will suffice) of drinks, such as a good liquor, tea, and juice/nectar.

After the spirit has accepted the *qi* of these offerings, the spirit will replace that consumed *qi* with *shen* 神, meaning the offerings become blessed. When you consumer those offerings after the divination ritual, they will bless you with good health and prosperity.

Cleansing. Begin by washing your hands and rinsing your mouth thoroughly. This is symbolic of personal purification. Light one stick of incense.

Awakening the Spirit. Next, tap a wood block instrument three times. Alternatively, in lieu of a wood block, you can beat a ritual drum or ring tingsha cymbals three times. You'll want to beat at about 40 bpm, or beats per minute.

Recite the following:

I call upon Ancestor Wuxian and pray for your Great Blessing	BÀI QǐNG WŪ XIÁN Zŭ QÍ SHÒU ZĪ JIÈ FÚ	拜請巫賢祖 祈受茲介福
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Anyone from any walk of life can call upon Ancestor Wuxian. If you feel a closer connection to the goddess Matsu, then invoke her by replacing the preceding invocation with the following:

I call upon Shamaness Matsu and pray for your Great Blessing	BÀI QǐNG WŪ MĀ Zŭ QÍ SHÒU ZĪ JIÈ FÚ	拜請巫媽祖 祈受茲介福
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This divination ritual for receiving blessings from an ancestral shaman spirit can be modified to reflect your culture, heritage, or spiritual path. You're invited to invoke either Ancestor Wuxian or the goddess Matsu, the shamaness sea goddess of the South Pacific, but feel free to adjust any part of the instructions for invocation of your own tradition's ancestral shaman spirit. If you're of Hmong ancestry, for instance, that might be Siv Yis.

After the recitation, rap the wood block instrument three more times to conclude, again at 40 bpm.

Proceed with the yarrow stalk divination method instructed in Chapter 7, pages 273 - 302. Per the traditional casting method, three operations of counting will yield a single *yao* line. For this practicum, however, you will be stopping at three rounds of the counting operations to produce a three-line trigram rather than a six-line hexagram.

Begin with your set of 50 stalks. Set down 1 vertical as the significator and as you do so, setting down that first vertical stalk to begin the operation, recite the mantra:

I call upon Ancestor Wuxian
and pray for your Great Blessing

BÀI QǐNG WŪ XIÁN Zŭ
QÍ SHÒU ZĪ JIÈ FÚ

拜請巫賢祖
祈受茲介福

Or, if you feel more attuned to the goddess Matsu:

I call upon Shamaness Matsu
and pray for your Great Blessing

BÀI QǐNG WŪ MĀ Zŭ
QÍ SHÒU ZĪ JIÈ FÚ

拜請巫媽祖
祈受茲介福

Then divide your bundle in two, setting one above for Heaven, and one below for Earth, as you see on page 278 of the text.

Pick up one stalk from the bottom horizontal bundle (Earth) and hold it with your pinky finger.

Then proceed to count the bundle into groupings of 4 until you have a remainder of 4 or fewer stalks.

Count the Heaven bundle, grouping into 4s until you have a remainder of 4 or fewer stalkers.

Count the total remainder stalks you have in your hand, as instructed in the steps on page 279.







You've now completed the First Count, which yields a remainder of either 5 or 9 stalks. Note the conversion below.

The Counting Operations

First Count	→	5 stalks	=	3
		9 stalks	=	2
Second Count	→	4 stalks	=	3
		8 stalks	=	2
Third Count	→	4 stalks	=	3
		8 stalks	=	2

Sum of Three Counts

Sum of Three Counts

6			X	Changing Yin
7				Unchanging Yang
8				Unchanging Yin
9			X	Changing Yang

Repeat the operation to cast the Second Count, and then the operation again for a third time to cast the Third Count. In both the second and third operations, your remainder will be either 4 or 8 stalks left after the groupings of 4.







COUNT 1 If 9 stalks → write 2 in box If 5 stalks → write 3 in box

COUNT 2 If 8 stalks → write 2 in box If 4 stalks → write 3 in box +

COUNT 3 If 8 stalks → write 2 in box If 4 stalks → write 3 in box +

TOTAL SUM

Table 7.1 Yarrow Stalk Line Construction Reference Table

TOTAL SUM	Resulting Line		
6	  X	Changing Yin Line	Younger Yin
7		Unchanging Yang Line	Elder Yang
8	 	Unchanging Yin Line	Elder Yin
9	 X	Changing Yang Line	Younger Yang

	Received Trigram	X	Transformed Trigram
Count 3			
Count 2			
Count 1			
	TRIGRAM NAME		TRIGRAM NAME

Changing Lines. If the resulting trigram had changing lines, cast a second transformed trigram in the same method you would cast a transformed hexagram.

This is Ancestor Wuxian revealing to you what facet of the mystic you are growing into right now.

※ **The Mystery Trigram** ※ If the result of your trigram was all unchanging lines (no Xs), for a locked trigram, then you will double the trigram, similar to receiving the “※” Mystery trigram result. The primary received trigram you received in the divination invoking Ancestor Wuxian will reveal to you what your greatest gift is as a metaphysician and what area of study or spiritual cultivation to advance.

Received Primary Trigram				Transformed Hexagram
Third Operation	6	 	X	
Second Operation	8	 		 
First Operation	7			

If, for example, the received primary trigram is Thunder, turn to the corresponding entry in Chapter 5. The trigram is interpreted as an omen from Ancestor Wuxian. Read through the entry for your primary trigram. What is the ancestral shaman spirit pointing you toward? Bridge the gap with your intuition. In the space provided on the subsequent page, note what your message you are receiving intuitively from the trigram



correspondences per Chapter 5. Take note of all that resonates and all that you're receiving inspired by the correspondences of your received trigram.

The archetype of the mystic corresponding with your primary received hexagram reveals your strongest talent or ability as a mystic, or alternatively, what Path of the Mystic the ancestor shaman spirit you've invoked is pointing you toward at this particular juncture point of your life.



In the example of Thunder, the corresponding archetype is the Spellcaster. This is someone with an innate above-average aptitude for spell-crafting. Ancestor Wuxian is advising to further hone that skill.

Find your received trigram in the Eight Archetypes of the Mystic reference table on the subsequent three pages and reflect on why this was the trigram you received at this time.

Eight Archetypes of the Mystic





Received Trigram	Archetype of the Mystic	Notes
 Heaven	The Virtuoso The Akasha – <i>Creativity. Divine inspiration. Genius. To bless below, received from above. To steer. One who is ethereal, decisive, and a visionary.</i>	An omen to embrace music and dance as forms of personal ritual and expressions of spirituality. Bring more music and dance into your life. You are probably one with a natural talent for choreography rites and ceremonies. Optimize that. This is the archetype of the creator and visionary.
 Lake	The Warrior The Exchange – <i>Development. Commerce. Combat. Active engagement. To generate and to manifest. Defend. Corresponds with both the archetype of the warrior and that of the sorcerer/sorceress. Here is one who is The Guardian, a fierce protector.</i>	A sign toward activism in your community. Consider the metaphor of the military strategist, which was a key role of the Shang dynasty shaman. What social change or movement are you being called to contribute to? This is also the archetype of the sorcerer sorceress. To be a true warrior, one must cultivate the demeanor of Lake—calm and mindful.

Received Trigram	Archetype of the Mystic	Notes
 Fire	The Philosopher Clarity – <i>Solar Force. To illuminate. Expansion. Intelligence. The life force of scholars and the literati. Associated with high magic. That which inspires civilization. This is the pacifist who travels with a sword. The Philosopher is a Pathfinder.</i>	You probably apply academic rigor to metaphysics. You care deeply for the theoretical because you want to answer how and why. You also have the potential to become a leading luminary. Lean in more these next few months to book study of the occult arts. This is also the archetype of the reluctant leader, one whose powers of light (knowledge and intellect) defeat the darkness of demons (fear and ignorance).
 Thunder	The Spellcaster Power – <i>Incitement. Clearing the road. Justice. To stimulate. To shake into action. The life force of confidence and success. Electrical charge; electrostatic attraction and repulsion.</i>	You have been tapped by the gods to be an agitator. You provide healthy dissent. You shake people into action. You are inclined to side with the underdog, a champion for those who have experienced injustice. You are their advocate. This is a sign toward increasing your own power so that you can lend that power to uplift the powerless.
 Wind	The Shaman Influence – <i>Sowing the seeds. Cultivation. The ability to permeate through. Powers of adaptability. To cultivate, to refine, and to command the resources. This is also the archetype of the Reinforcer. Corresponds with Wuxian and Matsu.</i>	Wind corresponds with the Taoist immortal He Xian Gu 何仙姑, a maiden who achieves immortality through the guidance of a fairy. Described as both a Taoist priestess 道姑 or Dào gū) and a shamaness 女巫 or nǚ wū. Her powers include the gift of prophecy and the gift of healing. He Xian Gu possesses mastery over herbs. She uses her magical white lotus to heal any illness, mental or physical.
 Water	The Healer Mysteries – <i>Lunar Force. Carrier waters for healing. Depths. Understanding darkness. Navigating the margins. Associated with the</i>	If your received archetype is The Healer, you probably would have made a great medical doctor, no matter what professional field you've ended up in. Consider serious dedication to study of the healing arts. Learn reiki, aromatherapy, or

Received Trigram	Archetype of the Mystic	Notes
	<i>arcane. Shape-shifting. Fluidity.</i>	herbalism, etc. This is also the archetype of the Hedge Dweller.
 Mountain	The Alchemist Specialized Knowledge – <i>The Peak: Stillness. Patience. Endurance. Self-control. Quietude. Associated with gateways. The life force of education, knowledge, and the sciences. Methods of the fangshi 方士, the occult arts</i>	When your received trigram is Mountain, this is the ancestral shaman spirit letting you know that you are on a defined, specialized path toward achieving a personal Great Work. At this time your focus should be entirely on completing that Great Work, an undertaking that is your magnus opus.
 Earth	The Enchanter The Field – <i>Receiving blessings. To reap. Building upward. Just as the Virtuoso is associated with the visionary, so, too, is the Enchanter, i.e. the two trigrams Heaven and Earth. To be fruitful and to multiply. The dream world. This is the archetype of the Channel.</i>	You are one who understands the deeper and more profound value of aesthetics. This is one with innate charisma, which you can cultivate into gains of social influence. When you consume the blessed offerings, your charisma is going to be augmented, and the next chapter of your life path is about achieving heightened social influence.

Turn to Chapter 10 of the *I Ching, The Oracle* text, pages 793 – 794 to note the primal god associated with your trigram. These are Tables 10.2 and 10.3 in your text.

Table 10.2 Eight Gods of the *Wu* Shamans and the Ba Gua⁴

Tiāndì 天帝	Shè 社	Fēng 風	Xún 旬
			
Heaven	Earth	Wind	Fire

⁴ My correspondences for Tiāndì (Shangdi) to Heaven, Shè to Earth, Fēng to Wind, Hé to Water, and Yuè to Mountain are self-explanatory, as the associations are rather literal. I associate Dōng Mǔ with Thunder due to the eastern direction and the trigram's connections to Wood in the Wu Xing cycle and Xī Mǔ to Lake through the directional and trigram connection to Metal. Moreover, the western direction, Lake, and Metal correspond with the planet Venus, and in Taoist mysticism, Xī Wáng Mǔ, the Queen Mother of the West, would come to be associated with Venus.





Hé 河  Water	Yuè 岳  Mountain	Dōng Mǔ 東母  Thunder	Xī Mǔ 西母  Lake
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Table 10.3 Eight Trigrams and Corresponding Gods

Trigram and Eight Inner Archetypes of the Mystic	Eight Immortals and Their Magical Weapons	Shang Gods of the Wu and Corresponding Divinities
  Heaven 乾 The Virtuoso	Han Xiangzi 韓湘子 Flute 笛子	Tiāndì 天帝 God of the Skies <i>Also:</i> Shangdi 上帝
  Lake 兌 The Warrior	Zhong Li Quan 鍾離 權 Fan 葵扇 <i>Also:</i> Iron War Fan	Xī Mǔ 西母 Western Mother <i>Also:</i> Xiwangmu 西王母
  Fire 離 The Philosopher	Lu Dong Bin 呂洞賓 Peach Wood Sword 寶劍	Xún 旬 Personification of Time God or goddess of the sun <i>Also:</i> Zhurong 祝融
  Thunder 震 The Spellcaster	Cao Guo Jiu 曹國舅 Clappers 雲陽板	Dōng Mǔ 東母 Eastern Mother <i>Also:</i> Dong Wang Gong 東王公 or the God of Thunder 雷神
  Wind 巽 The Shaman	He Xian Gu 何仙姑 Lotus 蓮	Fēng 風 God of the Wind <i>Also:</i> Fengbo 風伯 or Feng Po Po 風婆婆
  Water 坎 The Healer	Li Tie Guai 李鐵拐 Longevity Gourd 葫蘆	Hé 河 God or goddess of the moon <i>Also:</i> Xuanwu 玄武 or Beidi 北帝; Matsu 媽祖
  Mountain 艮 The Alchemist	Zhang Guo Lao 張果老 Drum 魚鼓	Yuè 岳 Dongyue 东岳 or the mountain god Sanshin 山神/산신
  Earth 坤 The Enchanter	Lan Cai He 藍采和 Flowers 花籃	Shè 社 <i>Also:</i> Houtu 后土; Tudigong 土地公 (tutelary god of the soil)

Next, note the Wu Xing cycle correspondence for your primary trigram.

Table 10.1 Eight Trigrams and Five Mystical Arts Correspondences

Trigrams		Wu Xing		The Five Mystical Arts
 Thunder	 Wind	木 Wood	Spiritual Cultivation	
 Fire		火 Fire	Divinatory Arts	
 Mountain	 Earth	土 Earth	Study of Appearances	
 Heaven	 Lake	金 Metal	Study of Fate	
 Water		水 Water	Study of Healing Arts	

In the example of Thunder, the governing Wu Xing phase of change is Wood. Wood corresponds with spiritual cultivation, from the Five Mystical Arts of Taoist metaphysics. Thus, to advance in embodying the facet of the mystic that is the Spellcaster, dedicate the next three moon cycles (i.e., lunar months) to the mystical art corresponding with Wood, which is spiritual cultivation.

Below, note which of the Five Mystical Arts corresponds with your trigram. Then turn to Chapter 6 and add any Wu Xing metaphysical correspondences that you find instructive on how to best master this Mystical Art and thus fully embody your aspirational Archetype of the Mystic. This is how you best solidify your own foundations so that you can be more powerful, capable, and productive.

Next, assign the transformed trigram as the upper trigram, and the received primary trigram as the lower trigram.

		Primary Hexagram	Hexagram # and Name
6	Transformed Trigram		
5			
4			
3	Received Trigram		
2			
1			

If there were no changing lines in your divination, then double the trigram. For example, if none of the lines were changing in the primary trigram of Thunder, then the resulting hexagram would be Thunder over Thunder.

In the example of the top changing line in the trigram Thunder, the transformed hexagram is Fire. Thus, the hexagram result is Fire (the assigned upper trigram) over Thunder (the assigned lower trigram). This is hexagram 21.

Read the Oracle message for your resulting hexagram. This is the ancestral shaman spirit guiding you on what you most need to do next to advance in the most self-empowering way. To achieve that, the *qi* to cultivate and master now relates to the correspondences of your primary trigram.

After the divination ritual, bow your head to give thanks for the blessed food and drink. You may then consume the offerings you had given to the ancestral shaman spirit.

When approached with sincerity and earnest heart, you may find that any physical or emotional ailments you had been afflicted with will have improved. The ancestral shaman spirit has empowered you with what you need to advance faster in your metaphysical studies and, what's more, no ancestor shaman is going to leave without a little bit of healing magic applied to what's been ailing you. It's just the nature of the shaman.