

**“Oh Rose, thou art sick...”**  
**The Furies and the Water Spirit Disease**

Stephen Karcher Ph.D.

O Rose, thou art sick!  
The invisible worm  
That flies in the night,  
In the howling storm,  
Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy  
And his dark secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*

**I Dance of the Apocalypse**

The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of a passionate intensity.

W. B. Yeats, *Second Coming*

I want to set the stage for a divination that might lead us to the roots of the fury and the sickness that seem to possess our world today. To begin, I use the strident voice of Deena Metzger, a contemporary writer and activist.

I have asked how we have come to this? How we have come to the place where we can imagine inflicting the equivalent of another Hiroshima? How have we become so mad? This madness is everywhere. Dreams of power and annihilation, of revenge and rage, of total destruction inhabit all corners of the globe.

This madness is in the White House and the Palaces of Saddam Hussein. It is in Congress, in Parliament and in Al Qaeda. It is in rebel

armies, among terrorists and the scientists who imagine the weapons of mass destruction. It is in those who manufacture the weapons and those who will use these weapons, will sacrifice soldiers and civilians in order to use them. It is in everyone who is making a profit from the business of war and the dark fantasies and nightmares that inhabit our secret moments.

This is the madness of fear and terror and rage, the madness of fury. It comes from willful ignorance, not innocence. From turning away from what must be known, from refusing to hear the voices, from refusing the intelligence of the heart.

When I asked Change, the great divinatory mirror of the East, for an image of this situation it offered two kinds of symbols. The first, which it took from *Daodejing*, gives us a portrait of the Rulers of This World, the “worst” who are, in the words of Yeats’ poem, “full of a passionate intensity”:

Those who look down on the world from on high  
those who seek to gain it by grasping -  
know that they cannot succeed.  
For the world is the Vessel of the Way.  
If you tamper with it, you ruin it.  
If you grasp at it, you lose.  
One who listens can see these things as they are,  
and discard this love of the extremes,  
this corrupting luxury of the absolute.

The second symbol is an image of the great Gate through which all must pass who come into this world.



**2 Field/Yielding KUN**

**The Way to the Source is open.**

**Advantageous to put your ideas to the Trial through the Mare.**

**The Realizing Person has a direction to go.**

**First there is confusion, then you acquire a purpose.**

**Acquire partners in the Southwest. Lose partners in the Northeast.**

**Trial: You are safe and secure.**

Yield to each thing that approaches you, nourishing and providing what it needs. Do whatever presents itself without judgment or goal. Do not take the lead. Keep your sense of purpose and you can acquire what you desire and achieve mastery. Let go of the past. Join with others in concrete projects. Stay calm and assured.



## **2 Field/Yielding**

**The old character shows the Tree at the Earth Altar and two hands offering sacrifice to the deep river of symbols beneath, the primordial waters and rhythm of birth and death. This energy renews itself endlessly.**

### **Myths for Change: The Story of the Time**

Field/Yielding, the Dark Animal Goddess, supplies security and brings things to a good end through the Mare, her emblem animal. She is autumn, harvest, the River-Mountain paradise times and the marriage ceremonies, military expeditions and sacrifices at the Earth Altar, home of the spirit that protects, assures fertility and harvest and wards off disaster. From her center, sacrifice is offered to River and the Underworld Waters and to Mountain, who connects with Heaven and the Four Directions, the Four Sides or Hidden Lands of this square field of earth with their four Hidden Winds. An age-old tradition underlies this figure, the tradition of the Mysterious Female or Valley Spirit that goes back into the Neolithic, often symbolized as jade and jade objects. It suggests *Nu Gua*, the mother who made our bodies and the Two Protectors, the Couple who watch over our fate. This Mother of the World (*Tianxia Mu*) carries an ancient heritage of symbols. She acts through these seed-images to give security and refuge to all creatures. She is the flow, the provider, welcome everywhere. Her hands give blessings. She receives the dead. The Way-Power Classic says: He who has found this mother understands he is a child. When he understands he is her child and clings to her, he will be without danger when the body dies. In the body, Field acts through the spleen and the stomach, stabilizing and transforming nourishment. She rots and ripens, governs the free flow of ideas, controls and protects central energy.

With these images, we enter what Jung called the Untrodden Path, a journey to the Mothers that calls up the deepest shadows of our culture. For, together, these two symbols depict a world of greedy and absolutist rulers who are cut off from the Dark Animal Goddess and her great field of Earth. And it is precisely from this great rift or division that the menacing power of the Furies arises.

**“The worst are full of a passionate intensity ... ”**

Let us enter what I call Mediterranean Mythological Memory to reflect on the image of “those who look on the world from on high,” those who seek to grasp the world and change it the name of a series of corrupt and devouring absolutes. Here we enter the passion and fury of the Realm of the Jealous or Zealous Gods.

Zeal, the jealous and all consuming desire for power, does not exist apart from the Great God and his kin: Power, Violence and Victory. It is mothered by the deathly waters of Styx, the River of Hell that makes our words into bonds, and fathered by Titanic blows and batterings. It is a *Metis*, a hidden cunning through which the High God maintains his rule.

Central to being zealous or jealous is a desperate need for what the Greeks called *timē*: portion, honor, recognition, having or not having a place in which one is honored not as a human being but as a deathless god. The opposite of *timē* is *lack*, a panic lack of soul or place that fills the being with wildly alternating despair and violent aggression. In this fantasy, we are either in the center or we are cast out, literally pushed over the edge of the world.

These jealous and zealous spirits inhabit what Buddhists call the *Kye-Ne* Bardo, the Bardo of Birth, consumed by fear and driven desperately by the great wind of karma. The entire State of Mind of this Bardo is based on a trust in speed, zeal and aggression, the driving ambition to achieve at all costs. The experience of bliss in the womb turns around completely. We are filled with sudden envy, jealousy and desperate zeal. We have been lied to! Our faith is shattered! We react with speed, anger, grasping, devouring and defending, driven by the heavy wind of extreme paranoia.

The Jealous God searches for and builds a style of being, an occupation, that fixes him at the center of an illusory state. He wants to BE SOMEBODY with style, dignity, honor, place. He wants to be IN with The One at the center, zealous to protect his boundaries, full of sudden violence and a refusal to accept anything from the Other, eternally polarized between Having and Lacking. He registers EVERYTHING as either the Enemy or the Object to be Devoured. Extreme Method. Extreme Accuracy. Extreme Defense.

Sexual arousal here is directly connected with vital threat and extreme danger in an atmosphere of fear, aggression, and distorted spiritual impulse. It is lived out in an apocalyptic desire for perfection which always makes every pleasure appear incomplete, for there is no joy or pleasure so great in this life that it could possibly quench this thirst in our soul.

## **On Monotheism and the Dark Twins**

This hellish birth and its traumas are the experiential base of our madness. The imaginative polarization produced by the Jealous God lies deep in the Western imagination. It has produced a set of Dark Twins or Murderous Brothers in our souls, a set of competing monotheisms personified in a terrible duplex figure haunting the world today that, in a previous talk, I called *Osama bin George*. Here is a description of this figure, from a well known writer and journalist shortly after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

What is Osama bin Laden? He is America's family secret. He is the American president's dark doppelganger, the savage twin of all that purports to be beautiful and civilized, sculpted from the spare rib of a world laid waste by America's foreign policy. For the Twins use the same rhetoric: the One God and the apocalyptic vocabulary of Good and Evil. Both are engaged in unequivocal political crimes. Both are dangerously armed, one with the nuclear arsenal of obscene power, the other with the incandescent rage of the utterly hopeless.

This could be used to describe almost any conflict of the Murderous Brothers. The point that we as explorers of the imagination must hold in mind is that in some deep way the Two are always One. For what these Dark Brothers truly want is blood, our blood and the blood of our children. And this realization takes us back to the ancient House of the Atrides where mothers are murdered, children eaten by their own fathers and war, the greatest war the ancient world had ever seen, was loosed on the world. This is the house the Furies haunt in the Mythological Memory of the West.

## **The Furious Voices**

Let us hear the voice of these Furies, a voice raised long ago by the murder of mothers and children in the name of war and greed (adapted from: Ted Hughes, *The Oresteia*).

Disinherited, suffering, heavy with anger, we shall let loose the vindictive poison dripping deadly out of our heart, breeding cancer, leafless, barren, to strike the land and drag its smear of mortal infection.

Wherever you go, we will go. Wherever you stand, or sit, your eyes will peer out through these bars, prisoner of your own dark mind. We shall

sniff you out by the smell of your mother's blood, like a track of fire, the spoor of the polluted man. There is no hope for you. Fate has granted your body to us, to hunt, to consume, till you are dead. We will fasten our talons in your eyeballs. We will ride you into the land of death and there we will ride your ghost forever. Though we sleep in the blindest cavern of earth, in the blink of an eye we are with you. The blood you have shed spills into your mind, beating like the drum of vengeance. Your brain whirls into darkness, while the voices of the dead happily deepen your groans.

The wind we breathe is fury and utter hate.

And let us hear the description of the House we live in, the House of the Murderous Brothers that is our house whenever we make war and slaughter our children in the name of a corrupt absolute.

Where is the right and wrong in this nightmare? Each becomes the ghost of the other. Each is driven mad by the ghost of the other. Mind fails and we slide on blood in a tilting house rushing towards some great scream, some great final scream of creation itself.

### **The Lady of Fates**

The experience of the Jealous Gods at the root of our culture touches a very deep or primal realm of the imagination. To venture into this world I would like to call on the Lady of Fates who lays out the offerings, finds the hidden sickness, distributes the fates and couples the beings.

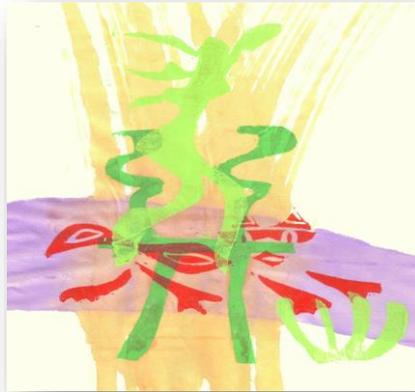


### **57 Subtle Penetration SUN**



**Success through the Small. Advantageous to have a direction to go.  
Advantageous to see the Great People.**

Let what you confront shape you and subtly penetrate to the core of the problem. Enter from below. Be humble and adapt to crosses your path. Seek those who can advise you about what is great in the situation and in yourself. Find the hidden disorders and awaken inner wisdom.



### **57 Subtle Penetration**

**The old character shows an altar with wrapped meat offerings on it representing the myriad creatures. This energy renews itself repeatedly.**

#### **Myths for Change: The Story of the Time**

*Sun*, Subtle Penetration, is the Lady of Fates who lays out the offerings on the low altar and binds the Myriad Beings to their fates. She crosses thresholds and transmits orders from Heaven. Her wrapped food offerings are an image of the Myriad Creatures toiling and laboring on the field of earth, for life is brought and carried by her winds. She is connected to the Central Palace where fates are consigned and represents a profound penetration of the above into the below which can lead to the awakening of wisdom. She prepares the food and drink for the great meal shared by humans and spirits and nourishes the people on ancient virtue. A spirit-worker and healer, she offers the virtue or *de* that actualizes an individual being. She finds the hidden sickness through subtle influences, the silent power of wind and wood. She controls the omens that regulate power and virtue, plans from hiding and knows the right moment to act. She matches and couples the beings, leading each thing to its destiny. She is imaged as a bright strutting cock, strong scented, that stimulates everything that moves or moves in the body, purifies the blood, links eyes and sexual organs, controls desire and anger. She gives vision, motivation and the capacity to act decisively at the key moment.

The Lady of Fates is the symbol and the spirit that Change offers to guide us on our journey and she has a message:

**Step 2 Inner Center:** This inner re-organization leads to harmony with others.

**Working with Change:** Shop leaders, group leaders, problem solvers.

**Subtle Penetration beneath the bed.**

**Use diviners and intermediaries in great number.**

**Wise Words! The Way opens. This is not a mistake.**

*This means acquiring the center.* Penetrate to the core of this old story, full of sexual intrigue and dark ancestors. Use those who can see the spirits and sense past and future potentials. Get to the bottom of this and free yourself from its grasp.

Guideway (57.2 [53.2 : 54.5] 58.5): Think of the feast times when the soul rejoices on its long journey. Changes are coming. The great ancestor is giving the maidens in marriage, an omen of great future happiness. You must strip away the outmoded. Have no fear.

You have a connection to the spirits that will carry you through. Step out to meet the new destiny. Gather energy for the decisive new move. Inner self cultivation now lets you see the patterns that mark real ends and beginnings.

The journey this omen suggests will take us into to the Demon Country, the world of the Outcasts, a wilderness at the Edge. It involves the great rituals that unite people in common purpose, the Spring and Autumn Festivals that call down the spirits to dwell with us. It involves lonely, silent sacrifices at the River of Ghosts to feed the Dead. It establishes a solid base for these imaginal operations through an act called “stopping,” slowing our speed, our enactment of desire and will and our ego-identification in order to free another intermediary, the Joyous Dancer who gives the spirits voice and place in our lives. It can move us from the Bardo of Birth at the edge of the River of Ghosts to the formal rites and rituals at the Ancestral Temple that enshrine an Ancestor, an imaginal figure through which blessings flow for all.

## **II Entering the Ghost River**

Between the Sun Tree and the Moon Tree flows the underground Ghost River that interconnects them, the home of all souls. “This world is not only populated by humans, but by the souls, the ghosts and spirits (*guishen*). Between Heaven and Earth there is no place the *guishen* do not exist.”

“This water is no figure of speech,” Jung observed, “but a living symbol of the dark psyche (*CW 9i*, §33)... earthy and tangible, it is also the fluid of the instinct-driven body, blood and the flowing of blood, the odour of the beast, carnality heavy with passion (*CW9i*, §41). [The] crux of the spiritual problem today is to be found in the fascination which this dark psyche holds for modern man...[it] touches those irrational and - as history shows - incalculable psychic forces which transform the life of peoples and civilizations in ways that are unforeseen and unforeseeable” (*CW10*, §173; 177; 191).

If, for Jung, the drive of our time is to experience the underworld of the psyche, the task imposed upon us is the awareness this experience brings, the psychic

connection. A deep darksome gorge with underworldly water rushing along the bottom confronts us here and a steep path leads down, down into the underworld of dream and psychic image - what the ancients called the Kingdom of Hades. Here we meet the demons or *daimones*, the underworld Ancestors that are “living units of the unconscious psyche, the architects of our dreams and symptoms” (CW 8, § 210). And it is only in this fluid, dark and dangerous place where blood, thought and image mix that any change can take place.

**The Water-Spirit Disorder: “The best lack all conviction ...”**

According to contemporary African shamans and healers when we are separated from the spirits and Ancestors who live in the Village Beneath the Water, we experience what they call the “water-spirit disease.” The symptoms of this disease include moodiness, lability, stomach problems, a sense of alienation and disconnection from one’s community and the world at large, excruciating empathy, being undone by and afraid of one’s responses to the suffering of the world, a history of tragedy and mishap, bad luck, money easily made and lost, vivid dreams and daydreams, extreme visionary activity, dramatic and incomprehensible, social awkwardness, not knowing how to deport oneself in the world. It is a general instability and dislocation, a literal haunting caused by our profound disconnection from the world of the spirits.

Probably the single most characteristic feature of the traditional cultures that this description of our sickness comes from is what we have called the “worship” of Ancestors. We, of course, no longer “believe” in Ancestors and few of us would or could return to a traditional or pre-technological culture even if we wanted to. Yet there is something in the experience of Ancestors in these cultures that we desperately need. It mirrors the *hole* or lack in our lives, the “missing information” that might connect us to the *(w)hole* (Briggs and Peat).

The experience of Ancestors in traditional cultures offers an image of a creative relation to the figures of the deep psyche that people our imagination, figures that came before us and will outlive us. And these Ancestors speak through divination, myths and ritual enactment. They offer a hidden language suffused

with a sort of “pre-rational verbal therapy” that “seeks to produce and does in fact produce a real and effective change in the mind of one upon whom it acts” (Lain Entralgo).

The Greeks called this hidden language and the effective change it produces *psychogogia*, a leading-out or education of the soul. It is precisely through this hidden language and the symbols it offers that we can respond once more to the beauty and the mystery of the world that surrounds us. It is the central link connecting us to the imaginative potency and healing power the Ancestors carry.

### III Shaman of the Shadows

So how can we recover this language? How can we, afflicted as we are with the water-spirit disorder, heal ourselves and our culture? What can we do to become part of the solution rather than, one way or another, being part of the problem? When I posed the question “How can we cure our sickness?” to Change it offered figure 38 Shaman of the Shadows as a response, with the First and the Fourth Lines transforming.



This is a time of opposition, discord and exclusion. Deal with it by changing the conflicts into dynamic tension by dealing with hidden shadows. Separate and clarify things while acknowledging their essential connection. Small things are important now. Be flexible, adaptable and open to new ways of seeing.



### **38 Diverging**

**The old character shows the ancestor's eye and the sign for the last day of a ritual period when divinations were made for threatening forces. It shows an altar, a person making an offering and two hands that signify the ability to see opposing things at once. Managing these conflicts will let you skin away outmoded cultural patterns (49).**

#### **Myths for Change: The Story of the Time**

You are outside the dwelling, exposed to the night. *Kui*, diverging points at the bright presence of the star mansions: The Ghost Cart (*Yugui*) that presides over punishments, executions and dire fates; the Heavenly Horse and the Heavenly Swine; the Man leading the Ox; the Bow and Arrow; and the Orphan or Fox. The atmosphere is autumnal, for the rains are here and the gates of winter are closing. This is the sun and moon in opposition and, metaphorically, the minister cut off and exiled from the royal presence. It is all things outside, *wai*: Isolation, danger, foreigners, wilderness, punishments, the Demon Country. It suggests strange visions and chance meetings with important spirit beings: The Primal Father, Yi the Archer and the Dark Lord of the Crooked Path. This is the world of the *Wu Gui*, the Intermediaries who deal with angry ghosts and spirits. The name of the figure links with the character for the last day of the ten-day week when divinations were performed for ghosts and demons coming from the Four Hidden Lands. A related character shows waters running from the Four Directions into the Earth Pit and the Ghost River. The lines of the figure center on the terms see (*jian*) and meet, (*yu*). It is a pun on *gui*, ghost, the spirits of the newly dead whose breath is insidious and harmful. Transforming the negative power of the ghost world into a creative tension with the living is the job of the *Wu Gui* or Shaman of the Shadows.

We can take this figure as both a description of our position and as a mask we might put on to enter the ritual worlds and begin to deal with the Mind Demons that haunt and cripple us.

#### **An Excursus on Projection: Empowering the Oracle**

We empower the Change and truly enter its images through an act of projection, directly transferring our feelings and problems onto the symbolic mirror it offers. This is the key to opening the Mother World and its “ancient heritage of symbols that give security and refuge to all creatures.”

Usually, projection is considered to lead to nothing but illusion and disappointment. We see something or someone as a guru, perfect lover or magical answer to all our problems, follow them blindly and end up sadder but wiser when all falls apart, usually amidst a storm of violent feelings of betrayal. However, far from being a catastrophe, what Jung called projection or

transference freely entered into seems to play a key part in the relation between oracle and inquirer.

Jung defined projection as the transfer of a subjective process onto an object based on an “archaic identity” of that subject and object. It can be passive, when you are an unconscious victim of the projection, or active - a “feeling-into” or mirroring that “brings the object into an intimate relation with the subject.” The object is “animated” by the transference and thus is related to the subjective sphere (CW6, §742-3, 1921).

In the case of the oracle, this projective bridge seems to be the archetypal process called the Old Wise Person, a form of what he called the Self, simultaneously male and female, that somehow embodies our Fate. This figure is “a source of synchronicity. It possesses qualities of a para-psychological nature that relativize space and time and behaves as though it were not localized in one person” (CW10, §849-50, 1958). We connect with the oracle correctly through consciously projecting this figure onto it. This projection creates a situation in which the ego is *contained*, and sets up a circumambient field in which synchronous events occur (CW8, §394/841/912, 1952).

The flow of synchronistic meaning created in a dialogue with the oracle comes from the emotional field around this projected archetype (CW18, §1190, 1958). It *therapeutically* mirrors the inquirer's situation and deep identity. This is what *Yijing* calls the Sage Mind. It is an intuitive, not a rational phenomenon (CW18, §128, 1935) that speaks with the voices of both Mother and Father. It can de-literalize our early experiences of our parents, the source of the corruption that afflicts us, by *symbolizing* them, drawing them into the synchronistic field. Such an interaction reflects our lifelong human need to be seen, to have our identity validated on a spiritual level - *as if* our beloved parents draw near.

### **The Calling or Transforming Lines**

Certain Lines in our Reading (Lines 1 and 4) are indicated as “transforming” (*bian*, radically changing form) or “calling out” (*yao*) with a specific voice and a

specific message. These Transforming Lines show us particular points or Encounters where change is active and point out the hidden pathways through which we can transform our situation. By projecting our experiences and feelings into these images we can sense where the Shaman of the Shadows is at work in us.

### The Inner Way

**Step 1 Beginnings:** This return of the spirit attracts a new fate.

**Diverging. The Shadow Lands. The cause for sorrow disappears.  
You lose your horse. Do not pursue it. It returns to its origin of itself.  
You see the Hateful People. This is not a mistake.**

*This means using casting out faults.* Do not worry over what seems gone. Harmony, strength and love will return by themselves. The pain and sorrow you feel will vanish. You will see the hateful people. Do not let them poison your mind. Keep your thoughts warm and clear and you make no mistakes.

Guideway (37.6 [63.6 : 64.1] 38.1):. Stay within your dwelling and you will receive the blessings of the Mothers, the spirit and the intelligence to carry all before you. You are confronting the Burning Water, the final crossings of the river of life and death, faced with dangers you do not really understand. Hold back and avoid distress. Gather energy for a decisive new move. Inner self reflection now lets you manage the flow and flux of life.

In the first three Encounters described in the lines of figure 38, we are in the submerged world of *Dui*, the Joyous Dancer, whose ability to express the spirit in the human community is repressed, thwarted and deeply disturbed. These encounters represent what we first encounter on our journey and the work it takes us to ready ourselves for our task as facilitators of a change in culture.

Guideway to the First Encounter: 37.6 (63.6 : 64.1) 38.1



This line describes the Inner Drive of the Pair 37:38, showing the Burning Water, the River of Life and Death (63:64) flowing right through the center of our experience. So this is our first landing on the strange shores of the Other Side. When we look back across the divide to the Dwelling, we see the impressive and shining presence of the powerful head of the house, blessed by what we might call the Good Mothers. Here, however, what we encounter first is the Dark Mother and her Furies. Our horses run away and we are told to let them go. We are faced with dangers we do not understand. It is a time to hold back and “cast out faults.”

According to Change, the spirits we meet here are the Hateful People or *e ren*, souls twisted by hatred and anger, caught in their passions. They have been turned into Furies and driven on by the Dark Mother’s deep desire for revenge. At this point we cannot help them and should not succumb to the temptation to try to save them for it is beyond our powers. All we can do is to keep the feelings they carry from poisoning our hearts and gather the power to pass on. “This is not a mistake.”

In my personal experience, this was the journey into the counter-cultures and protest movements after the onset of the “water-spirit disease” and my own exile. I feel this deep anger again every time I look at the oppression being imposed on the world by the culture I was born into and I identify with its victims. I feel this anger is one of the great dangers of unconscious activism and therapies that espouse the direct expression of negative feelings.

### **The Outer Way**

**Step 4 Arrival:** This inner preparation leads to what is greater.

**Diverging alone.**

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

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

*Mingling and connecting without fault. Your purpose is moving indeed. Alone and isolated, you encounter something or someone who inspires you deeply, a primal source. This is dangerous but have no fear. Joining with this force will put you in touch with the spirits. Cut through past pains and sorrows and what you have in your heart will come to pass.*

Guideway (37.3 [42.3 : 41.4] 38.4): Make sure your house is in order and that people know their places and roles. This calls for honest repentance of past mistakes.

The center of life is moving and you are a part of it. You will soon find or lose a friend. Something significant is returning. Be open and provide what is needed. Accepting inner guidance now lets you see the patterns that mark real ends and beginnings.

In the last three Encounters in the lines of 38 Shaman of the Shadows we are in the realm of *Li*, the Radiance or Bright Omens that emerge from the Ghost River and begin to see how we might work with and express them.

Guideway to the Fourth Encounter: 38.4 (42.3 : **41.4**) 38.4



We are out into the real wilderness now. The night sky opens above us and two star clusters, the Orphan and the Fox, rise to guide our way. Though we are solitary, cut off from family or friends, our isolation becomes a source of real power. The Dream Fox, the shape shifter who leads through the liminal ways, appears to guide us.

Here we meet a spirit or *shen* called the Primal Father or Husbandman (*Yuan Fu*) and are told specifically to connect and mingle with him. The encounter is presided over by 41:42, the great paradigm of a personal sacrifice that brings a flow of blessings for all and it is subtly influenced by a transformation at the centers of the inner world, when we pass through the Tiger's Mouth (27) to Open the Heart anew (61).

*Shan Hai Jing* seems to portray this spirit as a winged and bird-footed *shen* or Mountain Lord, the one who unlocks the treasures of the mountain and give us permission to enter. I have seen him as a Dark Father who holds the keys to the

old ways or a figure like Yu the Great who clears the channels so that the water can flow once more. In any case, he is a strange, powerful and beneficent male spirit whom we are encouraged to let into our hearts. “Though there may seem to be danger, have no fear. Joining with this force will put you in touch with the spirits.”

We are further told that the danger associated with him actually comes from a flock of “hungry souls and angry ghosts” and, if we look back across the divide to the Dwelling, we might see where they originate: all the experiences we have had of “bad fathers” and their wounding punishments, indeed their abuse. These ghosts must be confronted and eliminated, for entertaining them will cut us off from the ability to experience and express this spirit. We must go back into our personal lives and accept the challenge of letting all this go, for “something significant is returning now.”

### **On Gu or Corruption**

In Change, the legacy of rage and pain we inherit from our Fathers and Mothers is called Gu/Corruption. It is like a giant face of false and manipulative images and empty moral values.



## **18 Corruption/Renovating GU**



**The Way to the Source is open.**

**Advantageous to step into the Great Stream.**

**Before seedburst, three days; after seedburst, three days.**

You are confronting insidious corruption, the evil done by parents that manifests in their children. Clear out the sources of this corruption. This is the time for a real change. Prepare the moment to announce the changes then carefully watch over their growth.



### **18 Corruption/Renovating**

**The old character shows insects or worms in rotting meat or grain held in a sacrificial vessel. Renovating this corruption will let you progress to the symbolic world (53).**

#### **Myths for Change: The Story of the Time**

One of the traditional images of Corruption is a vase containing the five poisonous insects (snake, scorpion, centipede, gecko and toad) that were put into a jar and left until one had killed and eaten the others. This became the *Gu*, a spirit venom capable of not only crazing and killing a victim but also securing his possessions and wealth for the perpetrator of the magic. *Gu* suggests hallucination, loss of reality, sexual debauch, the insects that appear in rotting or fermenting grain, miasma, sorcery and, most of all, the curse of the Ancestors, the false dreams and delusions they send when they are neglected or offended. *Gu*, corruption means poisonous acts done by or to fathers and mothers that become manifest in the children. It extends to straightening, handling or managing these affairs, working with the inner family or parental images we all carry with us. This is a crucial time, a stem-day when a new seed can sprout, and it must be carefully watched over. It is the moment when we pass into action, cross the river, to deal with the corruption of the past.

#### **An Excursus on the Demons of the Mind**

To understand how *Gu* works we have to cross over from normative psychology to the way that shamans see things. This is the world of the spirits, independent transcendental entities or “psyches” that inhabit us in various ways. These psyches may live in complex brains like ours but they are not simply products of our brains. They have an existence in the unseen world.

There is a complex interchange that takes place between these human, subhuman and superhuman beings as they pass through the Control Room we

call consciousness, the place where the Little Person who operates our bodies and observes the world through the flux of the senses usually lives.

Various psychic entities are always lounging around the Control Room, but the ones we are concerned with here we can call Mind Demons. These Mind Demons are destructive psychic particles that, like bacteria, feed on the breakdown products of a collapsing human psyche. They eat anguish, pain and heartbreak and they attempt to control their hosts so as to cause these states. Like any parasitic entity, they camouflage themselves as natives of the psychic ecology.

These Mind Demons are hidden agents of the Jealous Gods. They invade our psyche during childhood and adolescence when we feel angry, abused, betrayed, or deeply envious. They wrap themselves around the powerful bits of our parents' shadows that we all carry inside us.

Now, unfortunately, the Little Person in the Control Room we depend on to keep our conscious identity in order doesn't function all the time. When our consciousness is stunned, asleep, distracted or helpless the Mind Demons put on the sensory experience of our Mother or our Father and step into the driver's seat. In Southeast Asia they call it running *amok*; we call it Inexplicable Behavior, like the nice man who every so often has to rape a little girl or the nice lady who destroys her children through her own greed and need. After running *amok* the hosts involved often feel much better. It's a sort of catharsis. Their Mind Demons are well fed.

### **Initiation and Divination**

The Mind Demons can be removed or transformed through various ritual practices in which we "die" and are reborn with our various resident spirits working more or less in concord. In the traditional world, this is the Water Initiation, a ceremony of Induction into the World of the Dead. It is a central part of the initiation of a diviner in virtually all traditional cultures from the *Wu* of ancient China to the *sangomas* of contemporary Africa. Like all great ceremonies it has two aims: to feed the spirits, thus securing their blessings and their

participation in the course of human life and to effect an alteration of consciousness in the participants, “to experience something and be set right.”

During this initiation several things occur. We are opened to the Ghost River and contact our personal dead in very vivid dreams. We make our peace with them through a practice resembling the creation and enshrining of an ancestor spirit: We fix the Ghost (*gui*) or passion-body of the Departed Ones in the Tomb by clearing all negative feelings - rage, sorrow, longing - we might have inherited from them. We recognize and enshrine their Bright Spirit (*hun* or *shen*), the imaginal body in which they live in and through us, in an image or *Xiang*. As we do this the Great Symbols appear in our dreams, literally re-arranging our connection to the World of the Dead and installing the Pathways through which the blessings can flow.

I am going to give you now a fairly long passage from Deena Metzger’s book, *Entering the Ghost River*. It was inspired by a *Yijing* consultation done in September 2001, just after the attack on the World Trade Towers. The character Augustine is an African shaman and healer; Michael Ortiz Hill is Deena’s husband, an experienced diviner in his own right with a great first hand knowledge of the world of spirits and initiations.

Augustine says the Spirits want to heal. He recognizes that ancestors want to assist, not haunt us. His major work is not to exorcize spirits but to teach us how to make a place for the ancestors so they can be at home and do their work. There are times a spirit has to be exorcized but in that process a place is found where the spirit can properly reside.

At the beginning of my first initiation, says Michael, I awoke from a terrifying dream: late night in the San Fernando Valley facing off against a huge black man in the employ of a white gangster, both of us armed with crowbars and covered with blood. When I told Augustine the dream, he laughed: “That was a good workout. I know that spirit well. He is a slave that your ancestors kept.”

Augustine proceeded to do ritual work on behalf of Michael and the spirit.

For perhaps three seconds I was the black slave, says Michael, enraged, humiliated and absolutely powerless beneath the master's whip. And then – gone.

Augustine continued: "That one will soon be back in his village and he will be greeted by a feast because a warrior has returned and will protect the people. Now climb in the water and pray thanks. Now your spirits can be free."

### **Fixing the Omen**

To eliminate our Mind Demons, overcome the Water Spirit Disease and avoid being turned into a Jealous God or a Fury we must give this initiatory process a place in our heart. In the ritual world of Change this is called *heng* or *Fixing the Omen*. Through it we "host and guest" the Ancestral spirits, establishing a bond with them, a circle of friendship that we can extend to others. Like the early spirit-workers or *Wu*, we give to those above (*shen*, the light spirits) and those below (*gui*, the dark ghosts) what is due to them. This imaginative generosity causes a luminous spirit (*shen ming* or bright spirit) to arise within.

Fixing the omen is a crucial step in coming to peace with the past and the World of the Dead, what we might call real psychic hygiene. And as the old texts say: "Fixing the omen (*heng*) is crucial for diviners and spirit-workers (*Wu*). It is what makes their power firm. It is what keeps harm away. It is stated in *Change: A person without heng* will not succeed as a Wu-Intermediary. How true! Not fixing the *de*, the power and virtue of an omen, leads to failure. Just reading it is not enough."

We have seen that the old hidden language of the myth world that connects us with the Ancestors has been marginalized, repressed, covered up by a giant face of false and manipulative images and empty moral values. Change called this "false face" *Corruption* or *Gu*, a corruption that has been systematically rooted in our souls.

So where do we focus the inspiring energies of the Primal Father, focus them in such a way that we are not caught up in that stream of angry ghosts and hungry souls that flows out of the shadow of our parental dwelling to corrupt the world?

In the Ritual World of Change 38 Diverging and the Shaman of the Shadows represents the Last Day of a ritual period called the Ten Day Week. This Last Day is a liminal time when divinations were made to locate threatening ghosts and demons coming from the Hidden Lands. 18 Corruption and Renovating actually represents the First Day of a new ritual period, a time when what has been degraded and debauched is removed to empower new growth, rectifying the past and creating the conditions for a new starting point.

The passage from one Ritual Period or Ten-Day Week to another is a special liminal zone dedicated to the work of transition. It is marked by a double ceremony: There is a Three Day Period during which we “go out to meet” incoming spirits at the Outskirts Altar and another Three Day Period period when we say farewell to what is passing. In 18 Corruption this liminal zone between the Last and the First Day is a period called *jia* or Seedburst.

The character *jia* shows the graph for sun/day and a sign indicating the Celestial Stems. It is a unique place: The first, the East, Spring and the Wood Moment, the protected passage from the old to the new when the Way to the Source is open. It is the origin of a new Yang time, an incitation to actively prepare the new season. In the old language the term *jia* is the sign of a Royal Ancestor, “a venerable dead father.” It shows a helmet or a carapace or armor, a sign of protection through Yang and the Father’s strength. It evokes the Rouser and the Thunder spirit *Zhen*, the Gate of Spring that “through the green fuse drives the flower”. It is both protection and the breath of yang that pushes the young plants out into the world, a claw or sharp instrument that penetrates the shell or seed casing.

This is the time when the protecting and inspiring force of the Primal Husbandman, the positive experience of a Primal Father, can clear away the Mind

Demons of the personal and cultural past, the destructive psychic particles that feed on the breakdown products of a collapsing human psyche. By embracing and honoring the strength of this Primal Father, we can break through the prisons of the past and fundamentally re-imagine our situation. We can use this to cut away the false face that covers up the sterility and impotence of collective moral values. As we fix or *heng* the great symbol of the Primal Father in our heart-mind, the old hidden language of the myth world will take the place of the spin that dominates collective thought.

### **The Mirror of the Heart**

*Yijing*, the ancient *Classic of Change*, is a book, a divinatory technique and a spiritual practice or Way that has been treasured for thousands of years as a method of connecting the individual to the ever-flowing stream of the Way or Dao. From my perspective, after a life led trying to survive the jealous fury of the Rulers of this World, I see this divination between the between the Last and the First Day as an invitation to all of us. Let us make sure our house is in order. Let us engage with the *Classic of Change* and let it create a place in our heart-mind where the parental wounds can be healed, where we experience its transformative power and learn to use it in our life and in our work. To my mind this is the work of the Shaman of the Shadows. By doing this we can create a mirror in the heart reflecting what the Old Sages called the Great Enterprise, making the continual process of Change an integral part of our lives and extending that circle of the friendship of the bright spirits, setting it out “for all the people to use.”