

# HEXAGRAM 47

## K'UN ADVERSITY, WEARINESS



*Component trigrams:*

*Below: K'AN, water, a pit.*

*Above: TUI, a body of water, pool, marsh, joy.*

**TEXT** Adversity leading to success thanks to persistence in a righteous course; good fortune for the truly great<sup>1</sup> and freedom from error! Though words be spoken, they will not inspire confidence.

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT** The adversity is caused by something which lies hidden. Danger and joy are conjoined.<sup>2</sup> He who attains

success in spite of difficulty is indeed a Superior Man (and thus one of the truly great). That righteous persistence will bring good fortune to such a man is indicated by the firm line in the middle (of the upper trigram). Since what is said will not be believed, it would be a waste of effort to talk.

**SYMBOL** This hexagram symbolizes a marsh in which no water (appears).<sup>3</sup> The Superior Man risks his life to carry out his will.

### *The Lines*

**6 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE** With dried branches entangling the lower part of his body, he enters a gloomy valley. For three years he encounters no one.<sup>4</sup> **COMMENTARY** What is said about entering a gloomy valley indicates darkness that will not be dispelled.

**9 FOR THE SECOND PLACE** Difficulties arise through indulgence in food and drink. A vermilion sash-wearer (man of very high rank) appears; it is advisable to utilize this opportunity to offer sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> Advancing brings misfortune, though no error is involved. **COMMENTARY** Part of this passage indicates that the difficulties arising from our gluttony may nevertheless be productive of blessings.

**6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE** Faced by rock-like difficulties and (with naught) to lean upon (but) thistles and briars, he entered his dwelling but could not find his wife—misfortune!<sup>6</sup> **COMMENTARY** His leaning upon thistles and briars is indicated by the firm line just below this one. His not finding his wife symbolizes bad luck.

**9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE** A slow arrival. Trouble in a golden carriage.<sup>7</sup> Shame, but not for long. **COMMENTARY** The tardy arrival implies that our will-power is at a low ebb. However, though the line is not suitably placed, it does not stand alone.<sup>8</sup>

**9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE** His nose and feet are chopped off owing to difficulties with a vermilion sash-wearer (man of high rank), but joy may come in time. It is advisable to offer sacrifice.<sup>9</sup> **COMMENTARY** His injuries signify that what we will now will not come to pass. That joy may come in time is suggested by the correct position of this line in the centre (of the upper trigram). It is advisable to offer sacrifice in order to ensure this good fortune.

**6 FOR THE TOP PLACE** Entangled with creepers and tottering uneasily, he voices regret for his actions. Provided regret is felt, to advance will bring good fortune.<sup>10</sup> **COMMENTARY** The entangling creepers are indicated by the unsuitable position of this line. When our actions have been regrettable, feeling regret is a means to obtain good fortune.

**NOTES** (1) Here, as so often in the *Book of Change*, 'great' refers to high moral qualities. This hexagram is of evil omen for most people, but success can be won through tremendous persistence in doing what is right. (2) A reference to the component trigrams. (3) Usually the symbology can be understood very easily from the meanings attached to the component trigrams. This case is a little more difficult. Tui means a marsh; K'an, a pit. Presumably, the water of the marsh has been sucked into the pit or pits lying below; hence its dryness. (4) Whoever receives this line must resign himself to failure. (5) An imaginative reconstruction of the story lying behind this passage is that a man wasting the last of his substance in riotous living receives at his table an important guest and, by making a sacrifice to him or through his good offices, dispels his misfortune. If we are suffering owing to our own extravagance, the time has come to emulate the hero of this tale. (6) This line may be taken to presage insuperable difficulties; the word 'wife' does not necessarily have any special application to our case, as can be seen from the commentary on the line. (7) Trouble in a golden carriage coupled with shame suggests that we get into difficulty through our presumption, or through placing too much confidence in someone of much higher station than ourselves. (8) At least we may hope for a little aid from others. (9) It is very sure that we shall have to suffer bitterly. The joy to come is less certain, but may be assured by our making a suitable sacrifice. (10) We shall certainly suffer, but sincere regret will stand us in good stead.