

HEXAGRAM 32

HÊNG THE LONG ENDURING



Component trigrams:

Below: SUN, wind, wood, bland, mild.

Above: CHÊN, thunder, movement, to sprout or quicken.

TEXT The Long Enduring. Success and freedom from error! Righteous persistence brings reward. It is favourable to have in view some goal (or destination).

COMMENTARY The name of this hexagram implies that which continues long. The firm is above and the yielding below.¹ Thunder and wind conjoined—mildness coupled with activity.¹ The mutual responsiveness of the firm and yielding makes for endurance. Success, freedom from error and the reward to be won from being firmly determined all indicate long continuance along our present way. The way followed by heaven and earth endures for so long as to be endless. It is favourable to have some goal (or destination) in mind, since every end is succeeded by a new beginning.² Supported by heaven, the sun and moon can shine for age upon age; the four seasons, with their ceaseless transformations, are able to produce their effects for aeons. The holy sage continues upon his way so steadfastly that he succeeds in transforming the world. The inner nature of everything in heaven and earth can be judged from contemplating whatever it is that makes them continue (to be as they are).

SYMBOL This hexagram symbolizes thunder accompanied by wind.³ The Superior Man stands so firmly that he cannot be uprooted.

The Lines

6 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE To ensure his continuance, he digs a hole for himself. This sort of determination brings misfortune, for he

is unable to go anywhere. COMMENTARY Misfortune caused by trying to achieve enduring results at the very beginning.

9 FOR THE SECOND PLACE Regret vanishes. COMMENTARY The line implies ability to remain upon the middle path.⁴

9 FOR THE THIRD PLACE He is not consistently virtuous and therefore meets with disgrace. To continue thus would be shameful. COMMENTARY Because, then, no one could endure him.⁵

9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE No game in the field. COMMENTARY How can one who remains long out of place⁶ hope to gain his quarry?

6 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE Making a virtue of (marital) constancy⁷ is a type of persistence which brings good fortune to women, but it is harmful to men. COMMENTARY A woman follows one lord for the whole of her life, but men have to hold to their public duties. For them to subordinate themselves to women would bring shame upon them.

6 FOR THE TOP PLACE Prolonged violent exercise—misfortune!⁸ COMMENTARY The prolonged violent exercise signified by this line is completely void of worthwhile results.

NOTES (1) A reference to the component trigrams. (2) This suggests that the time has come to strike out after a goal that is new to us. (3) The component trigrams stand for thunder and wind. This might be regarded as a bad combination; but here the stress is upon ability to endure under any circumstances whatever. (4) I.e. to avoid extremes and cleave to the golden mean. This is suggested by the position of the line which is central to the lower trigram. (5) We can bear with an evil man more easily than with one who is liable to behave so inconsistently that we never know what to expect of him. (6) A reference to the unsuitable position of this line. An example of what is implied is furnished by people whose talents and interests incline them towards a profession quite different from the one in which they are employed; with the best will in the world, they cannot do justice to themselves. (7) Here 'constancy' is used in the limited sense of devotion to husband or wife and willingness to submit absolutely to his or her judgement. (8) This implies violent activity directed to wrong ends and therefore barren of result.