

HEXAGRAM 10

LÜ TREADING, CONDUCT¹



Component trigrams:

Below: TUI, a body of water, pool, marsh, joy.

Above: CH' IEN, heaven, male, active, etc.

TEXT Though he treads upon the tiger's tail, it does not bite him. Success!

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT In this hexagram, the mild stands upon the firm (a reference to the arrangement of the lower component trigram). The tiger does not bite the man who has trodden upon its tail because it is joyous and responds to heaven's will.² The man enjoys success. The firm central line (of the upper trigram) is well suited to its (commanding) position. Blamelessly setting foot in the place of the supreme ruler denotes glory.

SYMBOL This hexagram symbolizes a body of water lying open to the sky.³ The Superior Man consults both high and low and thereby steadies the people's will.

The Lines

9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE Simple in his conduct, he goes forth—no error! **COMMENTARY** Conducting ourselves with simplicity while advancing suggests the ability to realize our desires without aid from others.

9 FOR THE SECOND PLACE The recluse treads his path peacefully. Righteous persistence will bring good fortune. **COMMENTARY** The recluse is a fortunate man because he cleaves to the middle path and does not allow himself to be confused.

6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE Though a man have but one eye, he can

still see; though he be lame, he can still walk; but he who treads upon the tiger's tail will get bitten⁴—disaster! The warrior undertakes things for his lord.⁵ **COMMENTARY** The one-eyed man does see, but not clearly; the lame man can walk, but not keep up with the others. The disaster suffered by the man who gets bitten is indicated by this line's unsuitable position. The warrior undertakes his lord's affairs because the latter is strong of will.

9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE To tread (with impunity) upon a tiger's tail, breathless caution is required—good fortune in the end.⁶ **COMMENTARY** This breathless caution leads to good fortune because the ruler's will is carried out.

9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE He treads delicately. Persistence could lead to trouble. **COMMENTARY** This trouble could arise despite the suitable position of the line.⁷

9 FOR THE TOP PLACE If they watch their step (or look to their conduct) and heed the omens, sublime good fortune will be theirs. **COMMENTARY** The sublime good fortune presaged by this top line takes the form of immense felicity.

NOTES (1) The general idea of this hexagram is that success can be won, but that the situation is dangerous enough to require extreme caution. The 'tiger' MAY not bite, but on the other hand, as lines three and five demonstrate, we cannot be certain of this. To consort with rulers and people in high places may be most beneficial; but, should we fail to please, they may make us regret our temerity. (2) The words 'joyous' and 'heaven's will' are derived from the component trigrams. (3) This is pictured by the component trigrams. In Hexagram 6, water in a pit lying beneath heaven symbolized conflict; it was as though the watery pit was trying to emulate heaven's dome; but here the flat stretch of water lying open to the sky has a favourable meaning, all the more so as the lower trigram has the secondary meaning of joy. Whereas K'an, the watery pit, always has an unpropitious significance, Tui is a favourable omen. (4) Here the significance of the line runs counter to the benign significance of the hexagram; in all such cases, it is the line which provides the main indication of what is going to happen with regard to the matter forming the subject of enquiry. (5) This is no time to stand up to our superiors (tread on the tiger's tail); it is a time for obedience. (6) This is an occasion for doing something dangerous, provided we are very cautious. (7) A firm line between two firm ones is usually an omen of strength and compatibility, but not in this case. Thus, even though we are quite certain our course is a right one and we therefore follow it boldly, trouble cannot be avoided; we should either walk delicately or refrain from the course altogether.