

## HEXAGRAM 54

KUEI MEI THE MARRIAGEABLE MAIDEN<sup>1</sup>

*Component trigrams:*

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

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

**TEXT** The Marriageable Maiden. Advance brings misfortune. No goal (or destination) is now favourable.

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT** This hexagram symbolizes a great principle of heaven and earth; for, if they had no intercourse, none of the myriad objects would come into existence. The Marriageable Maiden also signifies man's end and man's beginning.<sup>2</sup> Joy and movement conjoined<sup>3</sup>—such is a maiden's marrying. That going forward brings misfortune is indicated by the unsuitable position (of the third and fourth lines). That no goal is now favourable is indicated by the fact that yielding lines surmount the firm ones.

**SYMBOL** This hexagram symbolizes thunder over a pool.<sup>3</sup> The Superior Man knows that, to achieve an enduring end, he must be aware of his mistakes at the beginning.

### *The Lines*

**9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE** The maiden marries and becomes a concubine. The lame can walk—to advance brings good fortune!<sup>4</sup>

**COMMENTARY** What is described in the first sentence was due to her constancy; the second sentence presages mutual support.

**9 FOR THE SECOND PLACE** The one-eyed man can see. Righteous persistence brings advantage to the recluse.<sup>5</sup> **COMMENTARY** The second sentence indicates that, as yet, no change occurs in the ordinary course of events.

**6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE** From being a servant, the marriageable maiden becomes a concubine.<sup>6</sup> **COMMENTARY** Her former state is indicated by the unsuitable position of this line.

**9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE** The maiden stays unwed beyond the proper time, but the day comes when she makes a late marriage. **COMMENTARY** Her firm desire to postpone her marriage indicates that we should wait before taking action.

**6 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE** The Emperor's second marriageable daughter wore regal garments less splendid than those of her bridesmaid.<sup>7</sup> Close upon the full moon comes good fortune! **COMMENTARY** The first sentence means that, though we may be of only middle rank, we should behave with true nobility.

**6 FOR THE TOP PLACE** A woman holds a basket with nothing inside; a man stabs a sheep without drawing blood. No goal (or destination) is favourable now. **COMMENTARY** This top line implies absence of solid worth, hence the symbol of holding an empty basket.

**NOTES** (1) This hexagram is, on the whole, a most unfortunate omen. Wherever the moving lines do indicate a degree of success, it is usually qualified and not much to be desired. According to the family arrangement of trigrams, the lower trigram stands for the youngest daughter and the upper trigram for the eldest son. Because not much good fortune is signified, the hexagram is named after the former, rather than the latter. We must not suppose that it deals only with marriage. What is said about the maiden symbolizes in some way or other what we may expect for ourselves within the context of our enquiry. (2) For it is she who gives birth to the new generation before the present one reaches its end. (3) A reference to the component trigrams. (4) Some advance is indicated, but not a very splendid one. To become a concubine is doubtless better than remaining single; to walk with a limp is better than not walking at all—neither is greatly to be desired. (5) It is not unusual for a one-eyed man to see, more or less, or for a recluse to benefit from persistence in his meditations and devotions; neither of them symbolizes anything at all remarkable. (6) Again, a small advance is made, but nothing very satisfying is won. (7) The implication is that the princess showed better taste than her maid in not dressing too grandly. We must be on our guard against ostentation.