

## HEXAGRAM 55 FÊNG ABUNDANCE<sup>1</sup>



*Component trigrams:*

*Below: LI, fire, brilliance, beauty.*

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

**TEXT** Abundance—success! The King inspires them.<sup>2</sup> Do not be sad; it is fitting (to be like) the sun at its zenith.

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT** This hexagram signifies great quantity. Brilliance is conjoined with movement<sup>3</sup>—hence abundance. That the King inspires his people signifies that they hold him in great respect. Abstaining from sadness and being like the sun at its zenith signifies letting our light shine before the whole world. After reaching its zenith, the sun begins to set; even a full moon may suffer an eclipse. The ebb and flow, the filling and emptying of all that is in heaven and earth occur at the proper times for them; how much more so is this true of men and how very much more so of spirits and of the gods!

**SYMBOL** This hexagram symbolizes thunder and lightning occurring simultaneously.<sup>3</sup> The Superior Man decides law suits and inflicts (the necessary) penalties.

### *The Lines*

**9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE** On meeting a prince of equal rank, though (he accepts his hospitality for) ten days, he is not at fault—progress is made in winning respect! **COMMENTARY** Though he may do so for ten days, were he to exceed that time, he would invite calamity upon himself.<sup>4</sup>

**6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE** So great is the obstruction that the midday sun appears to him as a tiny star. To advance now would be to invite mistrust and various ills. However, confidence seems to be on the

increase—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** Increasing confidence reposed in us implies that presently people's trust will help us to accomplish our will.

**9 FOR THE THIRD PLACE** So copious is the rain that, even at midday, there is obscurity. He breaks his right forearm—no error! **COMMENTARY** The abundant rain implies that there is nothing great we can accomplish now. His breaking his right forearm indicates uselessness up to the very end.<sup>5</sup>

**9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE** So great is the obstruction that the midday sun appears to him as a tiny star. Meeting a prince of equal rank—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** The extent of the obstruction is indicated by the unsuitable position of this line. His seeing only a tiny star at midday implies *nothing wherewith to lighten the darkness* (surrounding us). His good fortune in meeting a prince of equal rank indicates that action can now be taken.<sup>6</sup>

**6 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE** The variegated beauty (of the sky after a storm) now appears. Blessings<sup>7</sup> and fame are won—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** Here, good fortune connotes the blessings already mentioned.

**6 FOR THE TOP PLACE** There is abundance in his dwelling and a wall around his house; yet, peering through the gate, he sees no one. For three years, he sees nobody—misfortune! **COMMENTARY** Such is the abundance in his dwelling that he seems to be hovering on the border of the skies. He sees no one, for he has deliberately hidden himself.<sup>8</sup>

**NOTES** (1) Abundance in itself is often good; but it is generally followed by the waning of what was previously abundant; moreover, as we shall see, there can be abundance of darkness, or anything else unpleasant. (2) This may be taken as an auspicious omen. (3) A reference to the component trigrams. (4) It is all very well to accept the hospitality of our equals, but accepting too much of it will ultimately lead to trouble. (5) It is not clear whether the omen refers to our own uselessness for the task we have set ourselves or to that of someone on whom we have been depending. We must interpret the line in the context of our enquiry. (6) We are obstructed by ignorance or stupidity and should not act until someone ready to help us appears. (7) Unexpected or seemingly unmerited good fortune. (8) The whole of this refers to someone who has done very well for himself but who, out of snobbery or for a similar reason, refuses to share his good fortune and therefore remains alone and miserable amidst his splendid possessions.