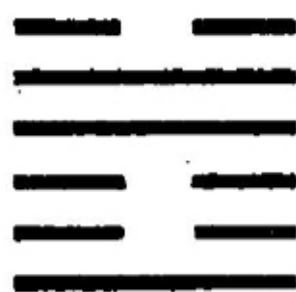


HEXAGRAM 17 SUI FOLLOWING, ACCORDING WITH



Component trigrams:

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

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

TEXT Following. Sublime success!¹ Righteous persistence brings reward—no error!

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT In this hexagram, the firm comes beneath the yielding; moreover, (the trigrams of) movement and joy² are conjoined—hence sublime success, the reward of our persistence and freedom from error. This implies that the whole universe accords with what the times dictate for it. Great indeed is this principle of according with the pulse of time.

SYMBOL This hexagram symbolizes thunder rumbling within a swamp!³ When darkness falls, the Superior Man goes within and rests peacefully.

The Lines

9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE Those in power undergo a change—righteous determination brings good fortune! Going forth from home and mingling with those outside will produce tangible results.

COMMENTARY The first sentence presages the good fortune derived from officials undergoing a change of heart and following what is right. The tangible results mentioned at the end of the passage imply that we shall not fail.

6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE He belongs to (i.e. puts himself at the service of) the boy and thereby loses the adult.⁴ **COMMENTARY** This happens because he cannot be of service to both of them.

6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE He belongs to (i.e. is of service to) the adult and loses the boy. By following the former, he gains what he desires. It is advisable to make no move but to remain determined. **COMMENTARY** The first sentence implies that he is willing to give up what is inferior.

9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE Following someone with an ulterior motive—persisting in this course would bring misfortune. But, if as he goes his way he makes sincerity his beacon, what harm can come to him? **COMMENTARY** Following others with ulterior motives is surely evil; whereas sincerity along the way produces brilliant results.

9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE Confidence is admirable⁵—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** The good fortune is indicated by the suitable position of this line.

6 FOR THE TOP PLACE He obtained people's allegiance and his followers clung to him. During the time he spent on the Western Mountain, the King made sacrifice. **COMMENTARY** Our obtaining the allegiance of others indicates that those above us have exhausted (their merit).⁶

NOTES (1) This sublime success comes, of course, only to those who follow what is right, namely the will of heaven or of those whose own will embodies it. (2) In the Book

of Change, joy is frequently associated with willing obedience to and glad acceptance of what is right. Movement and joy refer directly to the attributes of the two component trigrams. (3) The component hexagrams can be read as thunder and marsh, but also as movement and joy. It is not hard to see the connection between following and resting peacefully; for, once we have given our allegiance to others, we no longer have to worry about what should be done. (4) The implied meaning is that he rejects what is superior and follows what is inferior. (5) Confidence in the context of this hexagram implies perfect trust in those we follow. (6) This is in accord with the Confucian doctrine that rulers who consistently behave ill thereby forfeit the mandate of heaven and cease to deserve obedience. The implication is that we may have to take the initiative ourselves.