

HEXAGRAM 25

WU WANG INTEGRITY, THE UNEXPECTED¹

Component trigrams:

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

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

TEXT Integrity. Sublime success! Righteous persistence brings reward. Those opposed to righteousness meet with injury. It is not favourable to have in view any goal (or destination).²

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT The firm enters this hexagram from without³ and becomes lord (i.e. the ruling line) of that which lies within. Movement and strength are conjoined.⁴ This firm central line (of the upper trigram) finds response (from all the remaining lines in the hexagram). Those who do what is right win great success, in accordance with the decrees of heaven. Those opposed to righteousness will suffer and have nowhere favourable to go; for, without integrity, what remains for them? What is the use of going anywhere (or seeking any goal) when heaven's decrees no longer afford protection?

SYMBOL This hexagram symbolizes thunder rolling across the whole earth; from it, all things receive their integrity.⁵ The ancient rulers gave abundant and timely nourishment to all.

The Lines

9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE Moving onward with integrity brings good fortune. **COMMENTARY** What is willed comes to pass.

6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE Do not calculate the size of the harvest while the ploughing is still in progress, nor gloat over the third year's crop while still planting the virgin ground. It is favourable to seek some object (or destination). **COMMENTARY** It is not meet to calculate profits at such an early stage, nor can we expect to become rich soon.

6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE Unexpected calamity. Someone ropes an ox and leads it off—a gain to the passer-by but a loss to the farmer (who owns it)! **COMMENTARY** The former gains an ox at the cost of the owner's suffering.⁶

9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE Something can be accomplished by righteous persistence and no error is involved. **COMMENTARY** That is to say firmness will enable us to fulfil our aim.

9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE Unexpected illness, but it will be best not to treat it. **COMMENTARY** What this really means is that we should avoid applying untried remedies.⁷

9 FOR THE TOP PLACE If it is unexpected, a journey now would be injurious. This is a time favourable for those with no destination in view. **COMMENTARY** That is to say, an unexpected journey now would plunge us into a state of dangerous exhaustion.

NOTES (1) Wu Wang has two widely different meanings, both of which occur in what follows. (2) Usually this sentence may be taken to have a wide application; but, in this case, what is said in the Commentary on the Text suggests that it applies only to the enemies of righteousness, though it does have a general application for those who receive a moving line for the sixth place. (3) The hexagrams, taken together, are held to symbolize sixty-four stages in a process of unending movement. Thus a firm (or yielding) line not present in the previous hexagram may be said to have entered from outside. (4) A reference to the component trigrams. (5) The lower trigram is pictured as thunder, but it acts through its power to quicken growth. (6) The calamity may be threatening us. Otherwise, the implication is that we cannot avoid gaining something at severe cost to others. (7) The commentary suggests that the text contains an error and supplies what the commentator considered to be its correct meaning.