

HEXAGRAM 44

KOU CONTACT (SEXUAL INTERCOURSE,
MEETING, ETC.)

Component trigrams:

Below: SUN, wind, wood, bland, mild.

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

TEXT Contact. Women wield the power. Do not marry.¹

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT In this hexagram, the yielding encounters the firm. A marriage made now would not endure for long. From the intercourse of heaven and earth, all things have their being. When strength is controlled and rightly used, everything in the world goes well. The timely application of this hexagram is of vast importance.

SYMBOL This hexagram symbolizes wind blowing across the face of the earth.² When the ruler issues commands, he has them proclaimed in every corner of the world.

The Lines

6 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE The chariot wheel is held with a metal brake. Persistence in a righteous course brings good fortune. Those with a goal (or destination) in view will witness misfortune. However, even a lean pig is able to wiggle its trotters.³ **COMMENTARY** The first sentence implies that the weak have to be dragged.

9 FOR THE SECOND PLACE There is fish in the bag—no error! But it is of no advantage to the guests.⁴ **COMMENTARY** This implies that we are not dutiful to our guests.

9 FOR THE THIRD PLACE His haunches have been flayed and he walks tottering—trouble, but no great error! **COMMENTARY** His walking tottering implies being able to walk without being dragged.⁵

9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE No fish in the bag—this gives rise to misfortune. **COMMENTARY** Misfortune in the sense of being remote from the people.

9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE The medlar leaves wrapping the melon hide its beauty.⁶ Something falls from heaven. **COMMENTARY** This line denotes beauty, for it is central and suitably placed. Something falling from heaven means that what is willed is consonant with heaven's decrees.

9 FOR THE SIXTH PLACE It rubs against things with its horns—regret, but no error!⁷ **COMMENTARY** Regret owing to the complete exhaustion of our powers.

NOTES (1) At this time marriage would be unfortunate; the husband would almost surely be henpecked. (2) A reference to the component trigrams; the Chinese text actually says: 'there is wind below heaven'—heaven being the upper trigram. (3) This whole passage suggests that we find ourselves weak or hampered in some way, but that persistence will enable us to emerge from the difficulty. Close to our goal (or destination), we shall witness (but not necessarily suffer) misfortune. Despite the weakness of our present position, we shall manage to progress if we take sufficient pains. (4) There is a danger that we shall fail to share an advantage with people who have a right to expect a share. (5) Despite rather severe trouble, for which we are not much to blame, we shall manage to get along somehow. (6) This is more or less equivalent to hiding our light under a bushel. (7) We shall regret our inability to progress, even though we are not at fault.