

## HEXAGRAM 53

## CHIEN GRADUAL PROGRESS



*Component trigrams:*

*Below: KÊN, a mountain, hard, obstinate, perverse.*

*Above: SUN, wind, wood, bland, mild.*

**TEXT** Gradual Progress. The marriage of a maiden brings good fortune. Persistence in a righteous course brings reward.

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT** This hexagram signifies a gradual advance and good fortune for maidens who marry now. Progress made now leads to a commanding position,<sup>1</sup> hence this advance achieves concrete results. By making progress in righteousness, a man becomes capable of ruling the country. (Such a man is symbolized by the ruling fifth line) which is firm and central (to the upper trigram). From the conjoining of stubbornness and gentleness<sup>2</sup> inexhaustible activity arises.

**SYMBOL** This hexagram symbolizes a tree upon a mountain.<sup>2</sup> The Superior Man, abiding in holiness and virtue, inclines the people towards goodness.

### *The Lines*

**6 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE** The wild goose<sup>3</sup> moves gradually towards the river bank. The younger son is in trouble. There is talk, but no error. **COMMENTARY** 'The younger son is in trouble' is just a way of saying that there is trouble for which we are not to blame.

**6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE** The wild goose<sup>3</sup> moves gradually towards the rock. Eating and drinking happily—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** Good fortune in the form of delicate and plentiful food.

**9 FOR THE THIRD PLACE** The wild goose<sup>3</sup> moves gradually towards the dry land. The husband goes forth and does not return. The wife is pregnant, but the child's birth is delayed—misfortune! This is an auspicious time for chastizing evil-doers. **COMMENTARY** The husband's failure to return symbolizes separation from our normal companions. The delayed childbirth symbolizes our going astray. The final sentence indicates willingness to take precautions for mutual protection.

**6 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE** The wild goose<sup>3</sup> moves gradually towards a tree and may find a suitable branch (on which to perch)—no error! **COMMENTARY** Its finding a suitable branch augurs willing acceptance and gentleness.

**9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE** The wild goose<sup>3</sup> moves gradually towards the hillock. In the end, the results will be incomparable—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** Good fortune in the form of complete fulfilment of our desires.

**9 FOR THE TOP PLACE** The wild goose<sup>3</sup> moves gradually towards the mainland. Its feathers can be used for ritual purposes—good fortune! **COMMENTARY** The sentence about the feathers indicates that now disorder cannot prevail.<sup>4</sup>

**NOTES** (1) A reference to the fifth or ruling line. (2) A reference to the component trigrams. (3) The additional Chinese commentaries explain that the wild goose is a bird which moves towards the sun. Now, a commonly used Chinese term for the sun is **YANG**, namely the male principle. So the bird obviously betokens a maiden seeking a husband. Its movement from river bank to rock, dry land, a tree, a hillock and the mainland (which is said in one commentary to mean peninsula) signifies gradual movement in an unchanging direction. From the point of view of divination, this is the best course for us, even if marriage is not our objective. Regarding marriage: the first line betokens gossip, although the marriage is not unsuitable; the second, a materially successful marriage; the third, an unfortunate marriage; the fourth, marriage to someone exceedingly kind and thoughtful; the fifth, a blissful marriage; the six, marriage to a public figure who bears some responsibility for good order within the realm and who succeeds in his task. (4) The traditional Chinese conception of good government, good order within the family and so on, allots an important role to ritual because of its efficacy in making people inclined to regard their duties with solemnity and because it helps to make everything seem orderly.