

## HEXAGRAM 22

### P'I ELEGANCE



*Component trigrams:*

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

*Above: GEN, a mountain, hard, obstinate, perverse.*

**TEXT** Elegance. Success! Some small advantage can be derived from having a particular goal (or destination).<sup>1</sup>

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT** That this hexagram presages success is indicated by the fact that the yielding lines adorn the firm. The last sentence of the text is derived from the fact that the individual firm top line (of the lower trigram) adorns the yielding lines. (This alternation of firm and yielding is) the very pattern of heaven itself.<sup>2</sup> Attaining to a certain level of cultural development and there coming to rest is man's pattern. By contemplating the pattern of heaven, we can examine the changes involved in time's unfolding; by contemplating that of man, we can successfully transform the world.

**SYMBOL** This hexagram symbolizes fire at the foot of a mountain.<sup>3</sup> The Superior Man, desiring to ensure the enlightened functioning of the various departments of state, dare not make light decisions regarding legal matters.

*The Lines*

9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE Elegantly shod, he leaves his carriage and proceeds on foot. COMMENTARY This means that he declines to make use of the carriage put at his disposal.<sup>4</sup>

6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE He adorns his beard. COMMENTARY He does so in order to be able to take part in the enjoyments of his superiors.<sup>5</sup>

9 FOR THE THIRD PLACE His adornments are such that he appears to glisten—righteous determination maintained up to the very end brings good fortune. COMMENTARY This implies that, to the very end, no one will thwart our purposes.

6 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE He so adorns himself as to seem white as snow. He is, as it were, a white steed. (What delays his progress is) not an obstacle but a matter of betrothal. COMMENTARY This ruling line indicates the existence of suspicion; however, as revealed by the last sentence, nothing blameworthy is involved.<sup>6</sup>

6 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE Elegantly he strolls amidst the garden of hillocks, but his silk girdle is of the poorest quality—disgrace followed ultimately by good fortune.<sup>7</sup> COMMENTARY This good fortune comes in the form of blessings.<sup>8</sup>

9 FOR THE TOP PLACE Simple elegance—no error! COMMENTARY This top line indicates the fulfilment of our will.

NOTES (1) The implication is that the advantage is not sufficient to make it worth while to seek that goal or destination unless no special difficulty or inconvenience is involved. (2) The arrangement of the lines in this hexagram is very similar to that in the previous one, but it is adjudged much more suitable. The general idea is that, like nature, we should conform to a regular and well ordered pattern of behaviour which, since we are human beings and not mere animals, involves a high degree of refinement. From the point of view of divination, it would seem that this is a time to watch carefully so as to learn how those involved in the situation think and behave, the better to influence them for the good when the opportunity arises. (3) The component trigrams, fire below mountain, suggest a brilliance which cannot be perceived from afar. The Chinese commentators go on to suggest that this symbolizes a firm and somewhat severe exterior which hides brilliance and the beauty within. For purposes of divination, this should be taken as a pattern for our comportment in the matter at issue. (4) This implies progressing in the way we know to be right and declining the help of those who are anxious to lead us from the path of rectitude. (5) There are times when it is wise to conform with the customs of our seniors, even if we attach little value to them. (6) It would seem that someone is

suspected of loitering or hesitating for a somewhat sinister reason, but that his motive is in fact an honourable one. (7) The Chinese love landscape gardens. Here, obviously, someone improperly dressed is visiting a person of consequence and has to suffer for his carelessness. This should be taken figuratively to indicate a setback due to our own carelessness. Fortunately all ends well. (8) 'Blessings' implies good fortune which comes, as it were, by chance and not obviously as a result of our own merits or efforts.