

## HEXAGRAM 3

### CHUN DIFFICULTY<sup>1</sup>



*Component trigrams:*

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

*Above: K'AN, water, a pit.*

**TEST** Difficulty followed by sublime success! Persistence in a righteous course brings reward; but do not seek some (new) goal (or destination); it is highly advantageous to consolidate the present position.

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT** Difficulty! When the Strong (the celestial forces) and the Weak<sup>2</sup> (the terrestrial forces) first unite (to procreate something new), the birth that follows is not easy. Yet, to those struggling upward from the pit<sup>3</sup> of adversity, determination to follow a righteous course promises great success. As when the universe was first created amidst the fury of thunder and rain with everything still primitive and obscure, this is a time to strive unceasingly for consolidation.

**SYMBOL** This hexagram symbolizes lightning spewed forth by the clouds<sup>4</sup>—difficulty prevails! The Superior Man busies himself setting things in order.

#### *The Lines*

**9 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE** Uncertainty prevails. It is best to make no move, but to build up determination and to consolidate the position.

**COMMENTARY** Despite prevailing uncertainty, the way of righteousness must be pursued with firm determination. Men in high places, by co-operating with those under their care, will thereby win (the) support (of the people).

**6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE** He makes no more progress, covers no more distance, than a mounted man trotting to and fro. (His hesitation

is due) not to an obstacle but to his wooing a girl who chastely repulses his advances and waits ten years before giving her consent.<sup>5</sup> **COMMENTARY** The difficulties presaged by a six for the second place are revealed by this (weak) line's position just above a firm one. Waiting for ten years to receive the beloved's consent implies awaiting a gradual return to normal conditions.

**6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE** Pursuing a deer without a guide, the hunter finds himself lost in the forest. The Superior Man perceives that he must stay where he is, as going forward would lead to trouble. **COMMENTARY** His lack of caution in hunting the deer resulted from his being too set on capturing it. The Superior Man always desists when to advance would bring disaster.

**6 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE** Hesitating like a man trotting to and fro, he waits for marriage. Thenceforth, good fortune will prevail and every action prosper.<sup>6</sup> **COMMENTARY** To pursue what we desire, that is wisdom.

**9 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE** Fertility cannot easily be brought about. Persistence in small things will bring good fortune; in greater matters, it will bring disaster. **COMMENTARY** This passage indicates that we have wrought insufficiently (for the public good).

**6 FOR THE TOP PLACE** (He hesitates) like a man trotting to and fro or like one shedding blood and tears. **COMMENTARY** How could a flow of blood and tears endure for long?<sup>7</sup>

**NOTES** (1) The fundamental idea of this hexagram is that of birth and growth amidst difficulty, as with a sprouting seed becoming a young plant and forcing its way through the earth. Our affairs, being still in their early stages, are vulnerable; we must not wander forth, but attend to them until they ripen; then, with proper care, the seed will bring forth a splendid tree. The upper trigram, a pit, suggests a need for caution; but, if we heed these omens, our success is assured. (2) The Strong and the Weak are suggested by the two component trigrams. (3) The upper trigram suggests this. (4) In this analogy, the upper trigram, water, stands for clouds and the lower, thunder, for lighting. (5) If the enquiry concerns matrimony, this passage may be taken to mean that the lady will not be in a hurry to consent; otherwise it indicates that willing delay will be well rewarded after a time. (6) This passage indicates that success can certainly be obtained, but only after a considerable period of waiting patiently. (7) In other words, our present troubles will pass away in time.