

HEXAGRAM 16 YÜ REPOSE¹



Component trigrams:

Below: K'UN, earth, female, passive, etc.

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

TEXT Repose profits those engaged in building up the country and sending forth armies.²

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT In this hexagram, firmness meets with response³ and whatever is willed can be accomplished. Action

according to the law of righteousness begets repose (calm confidence); repose (calm confidence) stems from righteous action. Therefore, heaven and earth accord with this law, all the more so when it is necessary to build up a country and send forth armies. It is because heaven and earth act in accordance with it that the sun and moon stay in their courses and the four seasons keep to their appointed times. The holy sage, because, he, too, accords with it, seldom has to impose punishment and yet the people submit to him. The timely application of this hexagram is indeed supreme (in its value).

SYMBOL This hexagram symbolizes thunder over the earth.³ The ancient rulers venerated heaven's gifts with solemn music and they sacrificed abundantly to the Supreme Lord (of Heaven) in order to be worthy of their ancestors.

The Lines

6 FOR THE BOTTOM PLACE The crowing of the cock bespeaks repose—an evil omen!⁴ **COMMENTARY** The evil mentioned in this passage is that which results from utter exhaustion of the will-power.

6 FOR THE SECOND PLACE Unmoved as a rock; before the end of day,⁵ righteous persistence will bring good fortune. **COMMENTARY** This is indicated by the suitable position of this line which is central (to the lower trigram).

6 FOR THE THIRD PLACE To gaze reposefully brings regret; tardy action brings regret.⁶ **COMMENTARY** This is indicated by the line's unsuitable position.

9 FOR THE FOURTH PLACE From repose, great results accrue. Harbour no doubts. Why should it be harmful to befriend this official?⁷ **COMMENTARY** The first sentence indicates the fullest attainment of our will.

6 FOR THE FIFTH PLACE Illness is presaged, but it will not last long or cause death. **COMMENTARY** Illness is indicated because this (yielding) line comes immediately above a firm one. Recovery rather than death is to be expected because this line is, nevertheless, central (to the upper trigram).

6 FOR THE TOP PLACE Madcap repose.⁸ Fortunately a change takes place, so no blame is involved. **COMMENTARY** Since this is a top line, the state of madcap repose cannot possibly last long.

NOTES (1) The usual meaning of this character is 'beforehand' or 'happiness'. In the English translation of Wilhem's version, it appears as 'enthusiasm'. 'Repose' was suggested by the Chinese experts who kindly vetted this manuscript. At first I felt hesitant about adopting it, until I realized that, where it is used favourably, it must be understood as the kind of mental repose which follows absolute confidence that the action now being taken is the right one. In lines one, three and six, however, it clearly means failure to act when action is essential; in line five, failure to act owing to incapacity. (2) This means that perfect certainty as to the rightness of our cause is of great value under the conditions mentioned. (3) The two component hexagrams suggest this symbol, which combines the energy of Chên with the passive and glad acceptance of K'un. (4) A sleepy cockcrow is not likely to bring men leaping from their beds, yet the traditional role of the cock is to sound the call to renewed action. (5) Unmoved as a rock because of the repose which results from absolute confidence in a decision already taken. (6) This suggests inactivity prolonged beyond reasonable measure. (7) The meaning of this terse question is not obvious; but the enquirer may find it apt in the context either of his question or of subsequent events. (8) Madcap repose implies being tardy to the point of extreme rashness in the face of approaching danger or of a need to act.