



## COSMOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF TIME IN "THE CHANGE OF ZHOU" ("THE BOOK OF CHANGE")

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**Abstract:** This paper represents one chapter from my PhD dissertation, written and successfully defended at Beijing Normal University in 2012. The whole content is translated from my doctoral dissertation that was originally written in Chinese language. According to the existing references, the earliest Chinese philosopher who mentioned in his essays the word "cosmos – yuzhou" was Shi Jiao (390-330 BC). He said: "four directions of Heaven and Earth are called 'yu', time since ancient times till today is called 'zhou'". In other words, yu represents space, while zhou symbolizes time, and that is why Chinese ancient cosmology may be even called "concept of space and time". Inscriptions on the oracle bones and tortoiseshells with the symbols called "ganzhi", originating from the Yin dynasty, were used to record hours, days, months and years i.e. time, but at the same time, Chinese people used these symbols to mark the directions of space, too. All of the cosmological diagrams used by "The Change of Zhou" and yijingologists, like Fuxi's transcendental bagua diagram, king Wen's empirical bagua diagram, river map and Luo book simultaneously depict time and space. In the eyes of the Chinese people, since ancient times, time and space are one whole and inseparable unity. However, being a foreigner, the writer of these lines will separately analyze the meaning of time in "The Book of Change".

As a foreigner, I find that the greatest charm of Chinese characters is that every character holds the whole history and etymology of one word or term in it. In other words, the most prominent feature of Chinese characters is symbolism. Therefore, if we want to explore "the time" concept, we must start from the character 時 - shi meaning "time". Character shi is formed of one radical meaning "sun", and another meaning "measure". This shows that the meaning of character shi is "measuring the sun", i.e. measuring the length of sun shadow. The shorter the sun shadow is, the weather is being warmer and the Yang energy gets more abundant. It explains that character shi depicts increasing and decreasing of Yin and Yang energy in the cosmos and on the Earth.

This paper analyzes time concept in "The Change of Zhou" from the Chinese and Western point of view. It explains meanings of Heavenly dao, Heavenly time, chance and synchronicity. The paper uses time

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theories (like simplicity of time, presentism, etc.) of German scientist Leibniz (1646 – 1716), and famous Swiss psychologist Carl Jung's (1875 - 1961) concepts (like cosmical archetypes and synchronicities), and compare them with ideas of "the cognition of subtle", "progress through change" and "capability to grasp the chance" in "The Change of Zhou". Finally, it combines and summarises the concept of time from "The Change of Zhou" and Western point of view.

**Keywords:** "Zhou Yi", "Yi Jing", "The Change of Zhou", "The Book of Change", Cosmos, Concept of Time, Heavenly Time, Heavenly dao, Chance

## 《周易》中宇宙图示的时间观<sup>2</sup>

**摘要:** 中国历史上第一次提出过“宇宙”这个单词是战国的思想家尸佼（公元前 390 – 330 年）。他曰：“天地四方曰宇，往古来今曰宙”。实际上，“宇”代表空间而“宙”象征时间，因此中国古代的宇宙观也可称为“时空观”。殷代甲骨片上的干支记法被采用来纪时、日、月、年即时间，不过干支体系不但记时间，它同时也用于定空间的方位。《周易》与易学所讨论的先天八卦图、后天八卦图、河图、洛书等宇宙图示都是同时测定时空的。在中国人的眼光中，自古以来，时空是一个整体，是不可分离的统一。无论如何，笔者是西方人，而西方人习惯分割时间与空间。

作为外国人，我认为，汉字最大的魅力是每一个汉字带有一个单词或一个概念全部的历史。换言之，汉字最突出的特点是意象化。因此，探讨“时间”我们一定要从“时”字的意象开始。“时”字由一个“日”和一个“寸”组合而成，它的意思是日影的长短，即对太阳的测量。所测量的日影越短，天气越热，而阳气越盛。由此可知，“时”就表示天地阴阳的消息。

该论文以中国人和西方人两种角度来分析《周易》中的时间观，并解释《周易》中的天道与天时、时势与时中概念的含意。论文以德国自然科学家莱布尼茨（1646–1716）的理论，如时间简化论与现在论以及瑞士著名的心理学家荣格（1875 - 1961）的宇宙原型论与“同步性”同《周易》的“知几”、“变通”与“趋时”的概念做比较，并最后结合与总结起来中国与西方的时间观。

**关键词:** 《周易》，《易经》，宇宙，时间观，天时，天道，时势

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The first person in Chinese history who mentioned the word "cosmos" or "宇宙" (*yuzhou*) was a philosopher from the Warring States period named Shi Jiao (390–330 BC). According to him: "The four directions of Heaven and Earth are called *yu* - space, from ancient times until the present it is called *zhou* - time."<sup>3</sup>. Linking up *yu* and *zhou*, the modern Chinese word "cosmos" is formed, which indicates that ancient Chinese concept actually represents cosmos as a space-time continuum. Calendar inscriptions on the oracle

<sup>2</sup> Title and abstract in Chinese language.

<sup>3</sup> 李守奎等译.尸子译 [M]. 哈尔滨: 黑龙江人民出版社, 2002:52. (Translated by Li Shoukui etc.: Translation of Philosopher Shi. Harbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, 2002:52.)



bones and tortoiseshells with the symbols called "ganzhi", originating from the Yin Dynasty<sup>4</sup> were used to record time – hours, days, months and years, but at the same time they also determined directions in space. The various cosmos diagrams discussed in "The Book of Change" and by the yijingologists<sup>5</sup> of later dynasties, such as Fuxi's transcendental bagua diagram, king Wen's empirical bagua diagram, the river map, and the Luo book simultaneously depict both time and space. In the Chinese mind, from ancient times to the present day, space and time constitute a unified and inseparable whole. Regardless, in accordance with the Western worldview, the authoress of these lines will divide the time and space, and separately continue to interpret the concept of time in "The Change of Zhou".

## The concept of time in "The Change of Zhou"

Being a foreigner who has lived and studied for many years in China, I find that the greatest charm of Chinese characters is that every character holds the whole history and etymology of one word or term in it. In other words, the most prominent feature of Chinese characters is picturesqueness. Therefore, if we want to explore "the time" concept, we must start from the character 时 – *shi* meaning "time". Character *shi* is formed of one radical meaning "sun" (日-*ri*) and another meaning "measure" (寸-*cun*). This shows that the meaning of character *shi* is "measuring the sun", i.e. measuring the length of sun shadow. The shorter the sun shadow is, the weather is being warmer and the Yang energy gets more abundant. It explains that character *shi* depicts increasing and decreasing of Yin and Yang energy in the cosmos and on the Earth.

In „The Book of Change" which was created in the era between Yin and Zhou dynasties<sup>6</sup>, we almost don't find character 时- *shi*. In the part of the text that belongs to "The Book of Change", the character 时-*shi* appears only once, in the text of the nine in the fourth line of the 54<sup>th</sup> hexagram *Guimei*: "The marrying maiden is late for marriage, a new chance awaits her later". A girl delays getting married because she hopes to get a better opportunity, i.e. meet a young man who suits her better. Here 时-*shi* has the meaning of opportunity, chance. Although there is almost no text in "The Book of Change" that directly talks about time, many yijingologists believe that the symbols and texts of hexagrams and lines, using symbolic language, primarily describe time. For example, contemporary yijingologist Huang Lixing quotes Wang Bi: "The hexagram represents time, and the lines represent changes according to time."<sup>7</sup> In other words, individual lines are related to the change, while the whole hexagram represents the flow of time. The basic characteristic of time is obviously - change, so if there is no change, then time does not exist. When the author of "The Judgment Text"<sup>8</sup> realized that the hexagrams depict time, he excitedly and enthusiastically composed many statements on the subject of time. In "The Judgment Text", the author simply worships time. For this reason, "The Judgment Text" has the characteristics of a so-called chronotheism - time is regarded as a deity. Based on the interpretation of the famous Serbian culturologist and philosopher, Professor Sreten Petrovic, chronotheism is a type of cosmology. This type of cosmology sees the passage of time as an alternation of fortune and misfortune, with good and evil spirits playing with human destinies like marionettes. In such a

<sup>4</sup> The late Shang Dynasty period, 14<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

<sup>5</sup> All of the philosophers who explore, interpret or comment "Yi Jing" – "The Book of Change", which is also called "Zhou Yi" or "The Change of Zhou", from 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. till today.

<sup>6</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

<sup>7</sup> 黄黎星.与时偕行 趣时变通 ——《周易》“时”之观念析 [J]. 周易研究, 2004, (4):16. (Huang Lixing.

Keeping pace with the time and adapting to the time - An analysis of the concept of "time" in "The Change of Zhou" [J]. Zhouyi Research, 2004, (4):16.)

<sup>8</sup> 彖辞 in Chinese.



cosmological concept, time absolutely defines the ontos of space and cosmos.<sup>9</sup> The feeling of worship and awe towards time is associated with primordial sacrificial ceremonies. In ancient times, sacrificial ceremonies could not be performed at any time. The oracle would first observe celestial phenomena and based on them, choose the most auspicious time for conducting ceremonies. The hexagram symbols in "The Book of Change" indicate the ideal time for conducting rituals, which is why it is said that the primary content of the hexagram symbols is time. In the gradual evolution of "The Book of Change" into a philosophical system, one of the first stages are the parts of "The Judgment Text" that talk about time. "The Judgment Text" has preserved the passion for time, which is why it contains numerous exclamations related to time. There are 12 hexagrams in "The Change of Zhou" that exclaim to time<sup>10</sup>. These hexagrams emphasize the significance, importance, and usefulness of time. Regardless of whether we are in favorable or unfavorable circumstances, "exclamatory hexagrams" remind us that we should appreciate every moment of our life. "The Judgment Text" of the 16<sup>th</sup> hexagram quotes: "...Time of the *Yu* hexagram, how great its significance is". Hexagram *Yu* speaks of joy and happiness, and the moments of joy in a person's life are short and rare, for this reason, when a person is happy, he should focus on present moment and experience the maximum happiness in it. Happiness and joy will not last long, and they will be replaced by sadness and tragedy. If an individual is not focused on the "here and now", but his spirit constantly wanders from memories of the past to fear of the future, then he does not lead a fulfilled life at all, but is de-concentrated, chaotic and unaware of the present moment. "The Judgment Text" of the 38<sup>th</sup> hexagram *Kui* quotes: "...Time of the hexagram *Kui*, how great its benefit is." Although this hexagram symbolizes separation, it points to the benefit of it, meaning that occasionally separating from a friend or loved one, and being alone gives us time and space to do some useful things that we normally do not have time for. Superficially, *Kui* is an unfavorable hexagram that drives us into isolation and loneliness, but if we look at things that way, we forget that when a person is alone, he gets the greatest inspiration for creative work. Only when he is separated from loved ones, a person has time to observe himself, plunge into the depths of his consciousness and his soul and thus feel the fullness of the moment. The 12 "exclamatory hexagrams" prompt us to meditate on the theme of time and tell us that the present moment is far more important than the past or the future. Contemporary Serbian philosophy professor Velimir Abramovic believes that neither the past nor the future exist, they only represent symbols and images, and time is actually the eternal present. "The Judgment Text" of the 12 "exclamatory hexagrams" also seem to hint at this view of time. Huang Lixing, in his paper concerning the concept of time, himself composed a similar exclamation at the end, saying, "Oh, how great the importance of time is!"<sup>11</sup>. With this exclamation, he evoked and crystallized the immeasurable importance of the concept of time in "The Change of Zhou".

In "The Change of Zhou", another meaning of the character 时 is celestial time i.e. four seasons. The four seasons represent two solstices and two equinoxes, as well as the division of the sky into four quadrants - 四象 within "The Change of Zhou". Celestial time represents the law and regularity of movement of the Heavens as well as its corresponding time sequence. The movement of the celestial *dao* is circular and constantly returns to the beginning, for this reason celestial time also has a circular nature. In "The Sequence of Hexagrams"<sup>12</sup>, it is said: "Creation has no end and therefore the last hexagram is called *Wei ji*." The

<sup>9</sup> Sreten Petrović. *Kultura i civilizacija* [M] . Beograd: Lela, 1997:51. (Sreten Petrovic. *Culture and civilisation*. [M] . Beograd: Lela, 1997:51.)

<sup>10</sup> According to the interpretation of Kong Yingda - the famous philosopher and Confucian, who lived in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D.

<sup>11</sup> 黄黎星. 与时偕行 趣时变通 ——《周易》“时”之观念析 [J] . 周易研究, 2004, (4):23. (Huang Lixing. Keeping pace with the time and adapting to the time - An analysis of the concept of "time" in "The Change of Zhou" [J]. *Zhouyi Research*, 2004, (4):23.)

<sup>12</sup> 序卦传.



symbolism of the 63<sup>rd</sup> hexagram *Ji ji* is "the end", while the 64<sup>th</sup> hexagram *Wei ji* with the meaning of "no end" represents the intermezzo between the end and the new beginning. It is followed again by the first hexagram *Qian*<sup>13</sup> as the beginning of the next cycle. Therefore, in a circle, just like the Heavenly *dao*, the hexagrams circle forever. For this reason, in "The Judgment Text" of the *Qian* hexagram it is said: "Setting and rising of the Sun", so the Sun sets, disappears behind the horizon, only to be reborn the next morning, rising above the horizon. At first, it was strange to me why it is said that way - first the sunset, and only then the sunrise, and not the other way around, as it is usually said. But, then I realized that this is another wordplay by the author of "The Change of Zhou", a wordplay filled with paradoxical poetics, with the aim of conveying how the Heavenly *dao* and Heavenly time are endless! After each individual ending comes a new beginning and this is the most general and universal cosmic law. The *dao* of Heaven (celestial time) cyclically ends its journey and starts from the beginning, while the *dao* of the Earth "obediently follows the changes of the sky and behaves in accordance with the time". The *dao* of the Earth is meek and humble before the *dao* of Heaven and the changes of time, not to mention man! For this reason, man with great knowledge and virtue aligns his "activities with the natural course of time, ...when he moves before Heaven, Heaven does not violate his predictions, when he moves after Heaven, he respects the natural course of time." A man who is adorned with great wisdom understands the changes of the four seasons, listens and follows the celestial time, and fully harmonizes his activities with the sky. The ancient Chinese, observing the mystical path of the sky, discovered its basic characteristic, which is that "there is no deviation in the changes of the seasons". Just as the Sun and the Moon are never late, the seasons never come at the wrong time.

The last meaning of the term "time" in "The Change of Zhou" is an unprecedented concept, encountered in Chinese thought for the first time in this book, which is the concept of chance or momentary opportunity, the right moment for some specific action. The passage of time offers a person countless chances, reality is filled with endless possibilities, if a person learns to recognize in advance the signs of good or bad luck, if he can see in advance the approach of change, he can become very fortunate, and also learn how not to miss favorable opportunities for success. In "The Change of Zhou" there are precisely the most examples that talk about time as an auspicious opportunity that should not be missed.

How to recognize and use the right moment for action? "The Change of Zhou" recognized five possible reactions of people to the chance that comes in the moment. **Firstly**, if a person is too conservative and rigid, in that case he will go against the time and circumstances, he will not make progress, the chance will escape him, and he will turn out to be a loser in the game. An example of this kind of behaviour towards a sudden chance is given by the 60<sup>th</sup> hexagram *Jie*<sup>14</sup> whose "Symbolic Text"<sup>15</sup> of the nine in the second line says: "Never leaves the courtyard, misfortune, because he misses the best opportunities". A man who never leaves the house as if he is afraid of life, will surely miss too many good opportunities in various fields of life! **Secondly**, someone is too radical, too aggressive and only knows how to attack, and don't know when to retreat. He runs into the chance too aggressively, loses his balance, flies high, falls low and crashes painfully into the abyss. The nine at the top in the first *Qian* hexagram is an excellent example of this attitude of man towards the chance he is given. "The dragon has flown too high, there will be regrets", following the changes of the celestial time, he reaches an extreme. Since he behaves like an arrogant dragon who does not know what measure is and when to stop, he will face the fate of reaching extremes and suddenly turning into its opposite, which is total decline and ruin. **Thirdly**, a man who has realized the truth about himself and who knows his good and bad sides, will always thoughtfully wait for the right moment to act; in other words, when there are no favorable opportunities, he will wait passively and patiently. An example of this kind of behavior

<sup>13</sup> Symbolises Heaven and Yang energy.

<sup>14</sup> The meaning of which is frugality, moderation.

<sup>15</sup> 象辞.



is the six in the third line of the second *Kun* hexagram: "A man who has literary talent and acts honestly, needs time to manifest himself". That is, he is waiting for the right time, i.e. his "five minutes". A man who has abilities, knowledge and talents, but needs to wait for a favorable opportunity to manifest his qualities. As we say - waiting is golden. The power of waiting, self-control and patience are qualities that not everyone possesses. **Fourthly**, a person who is active in accordance with the changes of celestial time recognizes the right opportunity and actively strives to use it to the full. Such an attitude is very measured, gentle, and wise. It means that an individual initiates his activities in accordance with the time conditions and changes that arise. There are numerous descriptions of such behavior in "The Change of Zhou": 因其时而惕 – "he is cautious when the time demands it", 欲及时也 – "he longs for the right opportunity", 应乎天而时行 – "adapts to the sky and performs his tasks accordingly", 天下随时 – "the whole world follows the changes of time", 对时育万物 – "in accordance with the time conditions, diligently nurtures a multitude of things", 与时行也 – "develops in accordance with the time flow", 柔以时升 – "softly ascends with the time", etc. To master such skills, an individual needs to understand the law of change, his attention and vigilance should be at the highest level, and his spirit should continuously observe the entire cosmos and himself. Only when he achieves such a state of consciousness and awareness, can an individual ascend to the fifth level of harmony with time and change. **Fifthly**, seize the right opportunity with graceful behavior! Someone who has learned to attract the right opportunities has previously mastered the skill of being active in accordance with changes in celestial conditions. He has reached a level of consciousness where he is continuously harmonized with the cosmic changes of Yin and Yang. The virtues he has mastered have already become his habits and part of his character and spirit. The reward for such spiritual progress is continuous harmonization with the frequency that attracts the right opportunities. In "The Change of Zhou" there is only the 4<sup>th</sup> hexagram *Meng*<sup>16</sup> whose "The Judgment Text" speaks of the level of complete compatibility with time and change, the so-called existence in "the midpoint of time" - 时中: "...*Meng* - sacrifice, seize the right opportunity with graceful behavior... He is ignorant, but he tries to follow the path of justice, he can evolve into a sage". An individual who is ignorant and spiritually undeveloped, if willing to work on himself and refine his moral virtue and wisdom, will succeed in acquiring the skill of dwelling in the midst of time, and based on that, live according to the middle path and become a sage. Why is the realm of "the midpoint of time", which is adorned with wisdom of the highest degree, mentioned in the "fool" hexagram? This is because "The Change of Zhou" considers that every human has the potential to understand the mystical *dao* of the cosmos.

## The concept of time in "The Change of Zhou" and the West

As everyone knows, the binary calculation system of the German scientist and philosopher G. W. Leibniz (1646 - 1716) is closely related to "The Change of Zhou", but I will not delve into that topic in this paper. Instead, I will first introduce Leibniz's concept of time and change, and make a comparison with these concepts in "The Change of Zhou".

Leibniz's concept of time is actually only one part of his theory of cosmic harmony. Leibniz believes that the entire cosmos is based on a state of harmony that is the so-called "divine preestablished harmony". All things and phenomena in the cosmos are interconnected and interactive. The entity of things is called a monad. Monads are spiritual essences of things. Since different monads possess different degrees of perfection, their basic aspiration is to achieve an even greater degree of perfection, i.e. spiritual improvement. Cosmic harmony embraces the diversity and unity of things. Harmony is based on order, lawfulness and

<sup>16</sup> Meaning fool or tabula rasa.



ease of existence. Cosmic law is both spontaneous and simple. Just like Leibniz, "The Change Commentaries" also recognize the existence of the law of change: "Heaven habitually displays its brilliance, Earth simply manifests its capability. The ordinariness of the Heavenly *dao* is easy to understand, the simplicity of the Earthly *dao* is easy to respect." During the process of creation of beings and things, the Heavenly *dao* uses its usual law to manifest its function of creation. The Earthly *dao*, through the law of simplicity, cares for and nurtures all things and beings. People easily recognize, appreciate, and respect the spontaneity of the Heavenly *dao* and the gentleness of the Earthly *dao*.

Leibniz also emphasizes that numbers are the essence of things. As the creator of the cosmos, God also uses numbers to create things: the diversity of the universe is based on various combinations of zero and one. "Zero" represents a negative, limited concept, while "one" represents a positive and infinite concept. Due to the limitation of "zero", monads are imperfect, but the existence of the unlimited "one" gives monads an aspiration towards perfection. This teaching is also the foundation of Leibniz's binary numerical system, but primarily it is the core and essence of the ancient Chinese philosophy of "The Change of Zhou" - the philosophy of transmutation and transformation of Yin and Yang. In "The Judgment Text" of the *Feng*<sup>17</sup> hexagram it is said: "When the Sun is at its zenith, it begins to incline toward the west, when the Moon is full, it begins to wane. The waxing and waning of Heaven and Earth alternate with time..." The waxing and waning of Heaven and Earth, alternating with time, can be absolutely replaced by zero and one, or Yin and Yang. In that case, this sentence would sound like this: "Heaven and Earth are one and zero, Yin and Yang alternate with time". Leibniz's cosmology essentially emphasizes the importance of change. Leibniz believes that the source of beauty in nature lies in continuous change. The essential nature of matter lies in motion and change. Change is the sum of two contradictory states of things. The essence of created things or beings continually changes according to a certain order. The specific order of "The Change of Zhou" is the sequence of the 64 hexagrams, and the logic of their arrangement is explained in detail in the chapter "The Sequence of Hexagrams".

Leibniz believed that change and time are inextricably linked. Time has no ontological independence, but depends on things and happenings. For this reason, time is entirely relative. Only if there is change, then there will be time, in other words, time is the measure of change. Regardless of whether two things happen simultaneously, or whether the first thing happens in the past and the second in the future, all things in cosmos are temporally interconnected. Based on this, we conclude that only after the occurrence of change we do have a connection with time, and this link in the chain compels us to recall the concept of 变通 - *biantong*, which speaks of advancement and development through change. In the concept of *biantong*: *bian* signifies change, and *tong* signifies connection; thus, it denotes the interconnectedness and continuous change in nature through which everything progresses. Things and events constitute the essence of reality, while time and space are auxiliary categories arising from materiality. This concept of time is called temporal reductionism. In the ninth chapter of the second part of "The Great Treatise"<sup>18</sup>, it is said, "the synthesis of the interpretation of six lines tells us about an event that happened at a precise time". One hexagram represents a specific thing at an exact time; therefore, the author of "The Great Treatise" is a fellow thinker of Leibniz. As already mentioned in the previous section, each hexagram represents a period of time, but it is revealed here that discussing a time means discussing a precisely determined thing or event occurring at a precisely determined time when change arises.

Furthermore, for Leibniz, time is like a thread without beginning or end, with a direction of movement and a sequence of events. Like Aristotle, Leibniz considers the present moment to be the most important.

<sup>17</sup> Feng symbolizes wealth and abundance.

<sup>18</sup> 系辞传.



Just as the present is the end of the past, it is simultaneously the beginning of the future, which is why it can be called 时中 – “the midpoint of time”. He emphasizes that only the present is real, meaning that only the present moment factually exists. This view of time is called presentism. In the previous chapter, I’ve already mentioned 12 “exclamatory hexagrams”, which also contain a meaning similar to presentism — that time represents an eternal present.

Leibniz was a metaphysical philosopher who studied the cosmos, change, and time in order to uncover new metaphysical laws. His interest and passion were directed toward understanding the nature of the cosmos for the sake of understanding itself, rather than applying that knowledge to the Earthly world. In contrast to him, the renowned Swiss psychotherapist, psychiatrist, and psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) focused on studying symbols to gain a deeper understanding of human psychology. This practical approach to symbols strongly resembles the approach of “The Change of Zhou” or “The Book of Change”. The subject of study in “The Change of Zhou” is also symbols. Therefore, it is said that “...the essence of ‘The Book of Change’ lies in the hexagrams, and the hexagrams are the images of specific things”<sup>19</sup>. The content of the “The Change of Zhou” consists of symbols, namely hexagrams, and the content of hexagrams encompasses symbols of all beings and things. The fundamental characteristic of symbols is their ambiguous, mystical, and easily changeable nature. Jung refers to a particular type of symbols as archetypes. Archetypes make up the collective unconscious of humanity, they are the result of the most archaic life situations and experiences of the human species, they are a priori forms that exist in the human mind. If we were to look at “The Change of Zhou” from Jung’s point of view, the 64 hexagrams represent the archetypes of the cosmos, as well as of all humanity, since Jung defines the collective unconscious as something that characterizes all peoples and every individual on the globe<sup>20</sup>.

During his study of symbols and archetypes, Jung also discovered the law of synchronicity. What is synchronicity? Jung himself defines synchronicity this way: “...A certain curious principle that I have termed synchronicity, a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality. Since the latter is a merely statistical truth and not absolute, it is a sort of working hypothesis of how events evolve one out of another, whereas synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers...”<sup>21</sup> Simply put, synchronicity is the symbolic coincidence of two or more events without any apparent causal connection. When an unexpected symbol, dream, memory, thought, intuition, or spoken words (such as the text of hexagrams and lines read or spoken by an oracle) appear, the unconscious symbol in a person’s mind transforms into awareness. The hidden contents of the mind come to the surface and give us signs - they warn us, guide us or inspire us. When a person becomes aware of these symbols, he realizes that their content and message absolutely coincide with the change that is happening right now in his life.

Jung believes that the basic principles of “The Book of Change” are not based on cause-and-effect relationships between things and events, but on the principle of synchronicity. He points out that “The Book of Change” is actually a forerunner of his idea of synchronicity. It seems to me that Jung’s synchronicity is related to the idea of 知几 – *zhiji*, the cognition of the subtle in “The Change of Zhou”. The cognition of the

<sup>19</sup> 高亨.周易大传今注 [M] . 济南: 齐鲁书社, 1998:426. (Gao Heng. Modern Notes on Zhouyi Dazhuan [M]. Jinan: Qilu Publishing House, 1998: 426.)

<sup>20</sup> K. G. Jung. Čovek i njegovi simboli [M] . Zemun: Narodna knjiga – Alfa neven, 2005. (K. G. Jung. Man and his symbols [M] . Zemun: People's Book - Alfa neven, 2005.)

<sup>21</sup> C.G.Jung. Foreword by Carl Gustav Jung [A] . 见: Richard Wilhelm, Cary F.Baynes. The I Ching or Book of Changes [EB/OL] . Great Britain, 1951. , [2010-09-09] . <http://www.iging.com/intro/foreword.htm>





subtle indicates that previously unconscious content (delicate, mystical) has been transformed into consciousness, which is a kind of sophisticated insight and mini-enlightenment. "Such is 'The Book of Change', and therefore the sage studies its mystery and delves into the most subtle aspects. *Dao* of 'The Book of Change' is profound, hence it can comprehend human thought throughout the world; *dao* of 'The Book of Change' is subtle, hence it determines all things in the cosmos; *dao* of 'The Book of Change' is occult, hence it does not hasten yet is swift, does not act yet completes everything."<sup>22</sup>. An ordinary man encounters unconscious knowledge entirely by chance, while a sage deliberately explores the subtle. The sage studies the subtle with intention and purpose to understand the ways of human thinking and to define all things and phenomena under the Heavens. Finally, the ultimate goal of his study of the subtle is to acquire the skill of predicting the development of things through change and existence in the midst of time. 知几 - *zhiji* refers to subtle changes where happiness or misfortune can be predicted. When a wise person recognizes the subtle, he immediately takes action without delay. Whoever succeeds in understanding the subtlety of change will fully master the skill of progressing through change and the virtue of recognizing opportunities, thereby accumulating fortune (favorable chances, i.e., existence in the midst of time) and skillfully avoiding any misfortune. When a sublime person recognizes the subtle, he seizes the opportunity immediately, wasting no time and missing no chance to position himself in the midst of time. When a Jungian synchronicity occurs, it brings us a similar message, teaching us to pay attention to specific situations, people, or things, hinting at where changes will soon occur so that we can prepare and respond promptly. Generally speaking, the skill of recognizing the subtle in "The Change of Zhou" and the existence of Jungian synchronicity are the result of the wholeness of the cosmos, the Heavens and Earth, humans and all beings and things.

Based on all of this, we conclude that whether we consider the East or the West, ancient times or the present, humanity always and everywhere attaches great importance to the concept of time. Throughout China's millennia-long history, many centuries ago, Chinese ancestors began to probe and question various theories of time, from primitive chronoteism to "Heavenly time" that emphasizes the cosmos and nature, to the evolutionary phase of the concept of "instantaneous opportunity", which is unprecedented in the whole world. In "The Book of Change" cosmic time and change are inseparable from hexagrams. Furthermore, Western thinkers who have continuously sought inspiration from the mysterious universe of „The Book of Change" have also discovered some truths—they analyze and utilize the concept of time from „The Book of Change" through a Western perspective. According to their interpretation, the entire universe is represented by symbols that are not constant but naturally transform and spontaneously change from moment to moment. In cosmic transmutations, the importance of time is crucial. Simultaneously, "The Change of Zhou" present the model of the cosmos as understood by ancient Chinese sages. Therefore, "The Change of Zhou" emphasizes to such an extent, "Oh, how great the importance of time is!"

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