

## Philosophy of Chinese Mythology: An Introduction\*

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The term “philosophy of mythology” is not a newly-coined terminology. It has been used by Schelling<sup>1</sup>, a German philosopher of the 19th century, as the title of his masterpiece. Ernst Cassirer, a famous German philosopher of the 20th century also used it in the chapter heading of the introduction of *Symbolic Forms of Philosophy* Volume 2.<sup>2</sup> However, a review of the books on mythology or philosophy in China reveals the concept of philosophy of mythology is still unfamiliar to the Chinese academic circles since the books mentioned above of both Schelling and Cassirer have not been translated into Chinese. So there is a necessity to clarify the title of this book.

The phrase can be interpreted from two perspectives. On one hand, it refers to the philosophical concept embedded in mythologies, as the philosophy in mythologies. On the other hand, it means the philosophical researches of mythologies, as the mythological philosophy. Although the two understandings are interlinked, they still have subtle differences. Schelling and Cassirer’s philosophy of mythology falls into the second category, while the book uses this phrase in the first sense, focusing on the philosophy in Chinese mythologies, and mythological foundation of the Chinese philosophic thinking mode.

The explanation of the title has unveiled that this research is interdisciplinary, which is not simply the study of the theory of literature and art, mythology, or philosophy, but an attempt of comparative culture connecting the art, history and philosophy, focusing on the origin of mythology and philosophy, the philosophical embryo in mythology and its developing process toward philosophy. Therefore, the long-existing boundaries of several disciplines need to be broken.

The first one to break is the boundary between mythology and philosophy. For a long time, the researchers of Chinese mythology were devoted to the collecting, sorting, checking of materials, which have made a great success since the rise of the Doubting Antiquity School in 1930s. However, we seldom realize that we are getting enmeshed in a web of our own spinning when we study mythology for the sake of mythology. Consequently, I advocate we take mythology as the thinking mode of pre-theory stage, and research it as the pre-philosophic world view and ideology, turning the focus from the explanation of specific texts to the general patterns and rules of the mythological thinking to the interaction of Chinese language, Chinese mythology and Chinese philosophical thinking.

But some researchers in the field of philosophy as well as mythology hold prejudices and are self-limiting. For example, for philosophers, mythology is a kind of illusion against the rational thinking, which should never

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be the focus of philosophers, which can be evidence by the attack of ancient Greek philosophers against the Homeric poets and the proclamation of Hegel in his *Speech Selections about History of Philosophy*.<sup>3</sup> The attitude to separate mythology from philosophy is really common in humanities. It is a pity for the book *A General History of Chinese Thoughts* to begin with “the official schools in Western Zhou Dynasty”. However, since ancient time, with the development of people’s knowledge and field of vision, there has been voice of breaking the prejudice. The Italian scholar Vico and French anthropologist Claude Gustave Levi-Strauss, as the greatest philosophers of the age, were both famous for their study on mythology, which gave an enlightenment to the “philosophers” looking down on the mythology, especially to Chinese philosophical research. If we say the eastern philosophical thinking model is developed after discarding the mythological thinking model, then the Chinese philosophical thinking model is developed directly from the mythological thinking model. For one thing, the Chinese pictographic characters retain most of mythological representation. The language and characters as the supporters of thinking symbols and culture help to shape the Chinese way of thinking and cultural structure. The early Chinese philosophers like Laozi,<sup>4</sup> Zhuangzi<sup>5</sup> display the features of mythological thinking, and basic categories of Chinese philosophy like tai ji, dao, yin, yang, the five elements, bian, yi and so on, are all abstract from concrete representation of mythological thinking. I will illuminate it in this book with both theories and examples. From the point of this view, the book tries to discover Universe outlook of philosophy from ancient mythology, manner, custom, characters, buildings and even archaeological findings, which can be regarded as the effort of trading back to the prehistory of Chinese philosophy.

The second, linguistic and cognitive science. As a country that has a great amount of historic documents, there were so many annotation researchers in China that “xiaoxue” (basic learning) became the most developed research area in Chinese traditional culture. However, few of the masters of “xiaoxue” can be called linguists based on the modern standard, because most of them only concentrated on the micro annotation or meaning check, while few of them thought about macro language. As known, the first work of Chinese grammar study *Ma Jianzhong’s Grammar* didn’t appear until the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and was learnt from the English grammar.

Certainly, there is no necessities for us to blame the old time researchers. What I mean is that the tradition of Chinese “xiaoxue” which focuses too much on micro research while paying little attention to macro research has an underlying side effect, on contemporary scholars of humanities, especially on linguistic and ancient characters study. Scholars of ancient characters conducted researches for the sake of ancient characters as the mythologists study mythology for the sake of mythology, focusing on the form, pronunciation and meanings while overlooking the fact language and character themselves are material symbols of thinking. What we learn from the study of thinking modes can open a new period for the tedious ancient characters study, helping scholars turn from the study of form, pronunciation and meanings to the thinking modes of mythology and presentation of pictographic characters, which is another researching aspect of this book. Although some mistakes may appear, I still believe there are a lot to do by integrating linguistic and cognitive science to make use of the micro research to help with macro research, and conduct the micro research with the common model of cognitive science.

The third, “studies of Chinese ancient civilization” and “Western learning”. Some may think this book only concerns Chinese Quintessence, because the title is *Philosophy of Chinese Mythology*, but I try to find out the philosophy in Chinese mythology through the common model of mythological thinking, which must base on world mythology, and broadly take in the theories and methods of contemporary foreign cognitive science,

especially the anthropology, linguistic and theory of literature and art, to have a new understanding of Chinese literature, to strike out a prototype for the incomplete brief and vague Chinese mythology material, and reconstruct the ancient Chinese mythology. For the methods, terminologies and reference materials are in line with western practice, the book can be regarded as a good example of adopting western academic achievements to study Chinese mythology or an attempt to look for the common language of international academics. The purpose is to let Chinese mythology, philosophy, and culture go to the world. To change the present closed and laggard situation of domestic humanities, narrow the gap with the international academic research, it is necessary to introduce and assimilate some new theories and methods abroad. To integrate the western methods with Chinese materials and find out some new things are the way to prove the feasibility and necessity of integration of “studies of Chinese ancient civilization” and “Western learning”, but we should avoid the “bombing of new terms” and applying the western learning mechanically and blindly.

In this book, I quote some prototypes of contemporary anthropology and make efforts to reconstruct a “metalanguage” of philosophy of Chinese mythology so as to standardize and systematize Chinese mythological researches. The metalanguage refers to language or symbols used to analyze and describe another language, according to the definition of English scholars R. R. K. Hartmann and F. C. Stork.<sup>6</sup>

They also stressed that in language analysis, it is important to distinguish the object language from metalanguage. Bearing this we can say that in the whole area of humanities, to find and establish a metalanguage different from the object language is the premise to standardize and systematize the research. When we see from the view of contemporary scholars of semiotics, regarding the mythology or object culture as a language, then what should be the metalanguage of it that observing, describing and explaining it? I think it is the prototype model. We learn from the experience of anthropologists that culture is a system, including meanings, symbols, value and concepts, which can rationally mastered only by finding the inner model covering the rules of generating and transferring of the system.

Anthropologists, even when they are attracted by the specific things of aborigines, try to formulate a model to make things more easily understood. Once a model formulated, the specific become logic and easily understandable.

The term “formulate” is important. Anthropologists cannot directly see, hear or touch a model, which like a rule constructed by intelligence instead of intuitional things. Formulating a model or a rule is to explain things, while on the contrary, the intuitional things give a base for formulating a model or a rule.

Luckily, in the research of mythology, structuralist anthropologists like Claude Gustave Levi-Strauss and Edmund Leach have plenty of experience in model formulation. The feature of structuralism is to observe things from the relationship between them, which has been fully expressed in anthropological study.

Model formulation instead of enumeration is one of the basic missions of anthropologists. On the contrary, adventures always keep the different parts of life briefly, without going deep into the relationship between them. From an adventure, we can learn the society of plain wetlands, where people grow rice, keeps the custom of polygamy... but we can't learn the inner relationship between them which are not the purpose of adventures. However, anthropologists need not only to describe these isolated customs but understand how they are related. To do it, they have to formulate a simple model.

The difference between the way of observing things of adventures and anthropologists unveiled in the quote is of great significance in the study of mythology and culture. From the view of methodology, nowadays scholars of domestic humanities are still like “adventures” and fail to live up to the standard of contemporary

science, which partly results from the tradition of “xiaoxue” features in micro research. Consequently, it is feasible and necessary to formulate a prototype model that has a great function of explanation, and to establish a metalanguage observing specific phenomenon of mythology and culture. The subtitle of the first part of this book is “the metalanguage of philosophy of mythology” in order to stress its great significance in systematic organization of Chinese mythology and cultural heritage. Breaking the three boundaries mentioned above is to emphasize mythology is a way of thinking, a mental form of human beings to grasp the outside world, an organic and indispensable part of the development of mental form. It is in associated, permeating and transferring relationship with other mental forms of human beings. Mental form of human beings appeared and developed based on the practical activities, the historical nature of which limits the features of mental form of human beings and the forms of human mental activities. Marxism, especially the historical materialism gives a scientific explanation of the relationship between practice and the development of human society, among practice, the development of human cognition and the forms of human cognition. So the integration of the three aspects based on the world view and methodology of Marxism can give a scientific methodology guiding principle for the philosophy of mythology.

The formulation of this book is on its initial exploration that many mistakes cannot be avoided. I hope to keep making progress on this way and to find friends of common interest. For that, I request specialist experts and readers to give criticisms.

### **The Enlightenment of Taiyi Songs**

Primitive spirit does not understand the meaning of the Creator. It is we, our scientific analysis that unveils the meaning and explores the fact behind the masks.<sup>2</sup>

---Cassirer

The most important questions of philosophy lie in the narrow and stupid ideas of barbaric age.<sup>7</sup>

---Engels

### **Anthropologist View of Taiyi Rites**

China is called “states of rites and music”, which has been a symbol of constructing standard of culture. From the view of modern anthropology, “rites” are developed from tribal and religious ceremonies of prehistoric society as a symbolic behavior, and “music” is another symbolic behavior to accompany the religious ceremonies in the beginning. The difference between them only lies in the symbolic forms of media. In brief, rites are supported by people’s stylized action (or performance) while music expresses the symbolic content with vocal symbols---music and singing. Being indivisible parts of religious ceremonies, they are always stressed together though they differ in functions in civilized society. As noted in *Shiji Book of Music* of Si maqian:<sup>8</sup>

And in *Tong Shu*:

From this somehow homiletic saying, we can still see the religious function of rites and music—to achieve a harmony between natural order, social order and supernatural beings. At first, the comperes of these religious activities were the chief and wizard of tribes, who have the ability to communicate with supernatural beings, as they have the supernatural power to “climb up to heave and go into the earth”. With the appearance of country and civilization, the right of compering went to “ming wang (Vidyā-rāja )” who had both political and religious power. Actually, some early anthropologists like Frazer have pointed out that the early kings developed from

the chief and wizard of tribes.

The perspective of anthropology enlightens that the pattern of religious activities can remain unchanged for hundreds of years in social life structure of different age for its historic stability. So from the record of religious activities, we can reconstruct and reverse the lost ancient pattern of ceremonies and homologous religion.

In this way, I start from a lyric of ceremonies, trying to reconstruct a comic schema of ancient mythological thinking.

Notes that, when talking about official ceremonies activities, Si maqian wrote in *Shiji Book of Music* that:

From it we have several questions:

First, what kind god “taiyi” in official ceremony records of Han Dynasty belongs to?

Second, why was the memorial ceremony of “taiyi” held at night?

Third, what was the meaning of the four songs in the ceremony?

Fourth, why were there seventy singers in the ceremony?

The last question relates to the symbolic numbers of ancient times, which will be explored in the later chapter. We will talk about the other three questions here. Actually, the clue to answers to the first two questions underlies can be found in the answer to the third. We can only explore the nature and meaning of ceremony and then the fact “taiyi” will be known.

Si maqian only mentioned the names of the four songs without recording the lyrics, for “there must be much in the world”, from which we can see the four songs were well known in west Han. Thanks to the record of Ban Gu in his *Han Shu Li Yue Zhi*, the omission of Si maqian didn’t make a heavy lost. The full text is as follow:

Literally speaking, the lyrics of these songs involved the natural phenomenon and human activities of the whole year, which are chronologically consistent with the four seasons.

There are some words related to time concept, such as “the blessing of spring”, “the stagnancy of autumn”, “the coldness of winter” and “time of revenue”. According to *shiji*, they were sung in the taiyi ceremony in January in the ganquan palace. But from the content of songs, they were probably sung in some seasonal ceremonies at first, which was why they were called “spring song”, “summer song”, “autumn song”, and “winter song”. Seen from the prototype symbolic meaning inferred in these songs, they also have an inconspicuous spatial awareness.

Theorists of prototype Frye<sup>9</sup> pointed when summarizing the prototype symbolic model known as the basic of western literature that the image of human beings follows the “prototype” offered by the cyclic change of natural phenomenon at the beginning:

The sunshine disappears every day, the plants withers in every winter, and life ends at its limit. But the sun rises again, a new year comes and babies are born. Maybe in the world of lives, the origin of image, the basic effort and the essentials of all the religion and art, lie in the withering away seen from the death of people and the passing of days, in the resurgence seen from the rebirth of human and nature that transcends the death.

In the changeable natural phenomenon, the sun has the deepest influence on people’s imagination. The rise and set of the sun are the most important prototype of the sense of time and space of our ancestors, and also the prototype that drew forth the opposite philosophic value like yin and yang, bright and dark, life and death. In the research of mythology, anthropologists find out a regular phenomenon—the central motion of the world of god is the death and resurgence, the disappearance and reappearance of certain god. The cyclic motion of the

god is regarded as the cyclic motion of the nature. The god always refers to the sun-god, who dies as the night falls, and revives with the light of the dawn, or dies after the summer solstice and revives as the winter solstice comes, which personates the regulation of the sun, and it is the basic mythological concept of some ancient religion activities:

One of the most important activities of sorcery is using fires as symbol, to strengthen the power of the sun. Especially, on the winter solstice, the sun is thought to be tired and needed to be encouraged by fire.

For example, this kind of ceremonies in Narfi and India are fantastic. When the night falls, huge pillars are lighted on the space surrounded by fences, and burn until daybreak. The celebrators come with hair falling over the shoulder and faces and bodies smeared with white clay to symbolize the sun. Those imitators represent “wandering sun”. They have sticks with feathers on their hands, and dance around the fire. They move from east to west, imitating the moving of the sun. Though the temperature of the fire is too high to get close to, the dancers still try to get close and light the fire with feathers on sticks. When one succeeds in burning a little ball, he quickly changes with a new crown of feathers prepared before which symbolizes the sun. Then the hurrah rings out.

The climax of the ceremony is the symbolic imitation of the sunrise. At first, sixteen men sing and dance around a high pillar with a basket containing the image of the sun. Suddenly, they move back and the sun rises slowly and stately along the pillar and then stays for a moment on the top of the pillar, and disappears.

When the dawn comes, the ceremony ends. The dancers with white clay come again and light a smoky cedar rind to show fighting with simulating dance. There is only one entrance in the east of fences around in the beginning, meaning sun rises from that direction. When the real sun appears in the sky, the fences open in all directions meaning the sun shines in all directions.

The image of the sun at center of the square and the four entrances of fences can be seen in many Indian artworks. The fire god of Mexico is called “the host of four directions”. There is a ball representing the sun in this symbolic image and with four lines from it to form a cross.

The material is really interesting, and we can see from the symbolic ceremony the sense of space and some related sorcery belief of primitive men. If comparing it with the taiyi ceremony briefly mentioned by Si Maqian, we can find with surprise there are similarity in two ceremonies. Firstly, the zhuri ceremony starts before night falls and ends at dawn, so does the taiyi ceremony. Secondly, the main activities in zhuri ceremony are singing and dance. Though the lyrics are hard to know, we can infer from the nature of the ceremony that they must be related to the movement of the sun. Taiyi ceremony also features singing and dance. The so called scene of “seventy boys and girls sing together” must be a grand sight. The melodies of those songs are lost but the lyrics are preserved intact.

Are the lyrics related to the sun mythology?

The answer of this question can help to answer the first and second questions, and the essence of Taiyi ceremony can also be explained.

Reviewing the four songs of ceremony, we can easily find out the relationship between them and the sun. Firstly, seeing literally, “qingyang” can be regarded as the synonym of “rising sun”, “zhuming” as “blazing sun” while “xihao” and “xuanming” seems to mean the slanting sun in the west and the setting sun with poor light. What kind of connection between these four nouns and four seasons? *Erya Shitian* says “spring is qingyang”, and “summer is zhuming” while *Guangyun* says “xi is autumn” and in *shiji* “xihao” is annotated as the god “shaohao”, who is the god of autumn. “xuanming” is the god of north, and seems to be the god of winter.

What to note is the identification between “west” and “north” referring to space and “autumn” and “winter” referring to time, the reason of which is the prototype function of sun mythology.

Seen from the structure of characters, 阳“yang”, 明“ming”, 颢“hao” and 冥“ming” all has 日“ri” in the character, which seems not to be a coincidence but some hint of regular phenomenon that all their literal sense relates to the movement of the sun, and deeper research can make it more reasonable. There is no doubt that the word “yang” means the sun. “qingyang” is not only the just rising sun, but also the young sun as the sun in spring, for “qing” is the symbol of spring. “zhuming” is the sun of summer, and similarly, “xihao” the sun of autumn and “xuanming” the sun of winter.

As to how these four aliases of the sun transfer into the antonomasia of four seasons, we can make a reasonable explanation from the fact that ancient people relied on the different orientation of the sun in a year to tell the seasons.

From the brief analysis above, we can preliminarily prove that taiyi ceremony is similar to that of Indians which is a religious activity about the movement of the sun, though one in primitive society, one in civilized society with the difference in scale and degree but sharing great similarity in essence. So we can use the details of the primitive zhuri ceremony described by anthropologists to making up for the missing documents about the primitive form of taiyi ceremony.

So far, we can say, the original form of taiyi ceremony should be dated back to prehistorical ceremony of worshiping the sun, which is in virtue of the symbolic imitation of human beings to facilitate the normal movement of the sun making sure that it gives out the due light and heat so that the nature and the social life can go round in good order. The official taiyi ceremony in Han dynasty took place at night because it still kept the traditional process of prehistorical sorcery zhuri ceremony, though little of its original meaning remained, and developed into the decorating activities of feudal states’ “rites and music” ruling.

From it, we see the mysterious taiyi god is just the abstract and conceptual of sun god.

So it was not strange that Emperor Hanwu “paid homage to taiyi” on the winter solstice with “jar full of fire” (*Shiji Fengshanbook*). It was also followed by the traditional ceremony of paying homage to the sun.

### **Mixed Time-space View on Mythological Cosmology**

The scholars of Chinese ancient philosophy and intellectual history stress a fact that there is confusion of time and space in the thinking model of Chinese ancient philosophy. To explore the formation of this way of thinking, some scholars have traced back to the graphical representation recorded in *Liji Yueling*:<sup>10</sup>

In the west, there was concept of pure time and space in ancient Egypt. Aristotle analyzed the scope of time and space in his category table, putting forward the concept of time and space. The unit of time and space is the measure of objective time and space.

The concept of time and space makes a great contribution to the development of modern natural science. But in the graphical representation of *Liji Yueling*, time and space are mixed together. East mixes with spring, charged by mu; north mixes with summer, charged by water. Tu takes charge of the center and four directions. In the relationship between heaven and man, tu is the representative of human representing the earth and imperial power. So there is neither concept of time without space nor concept of space without time.

It is known that *Liji* is one of the books recording the ancient rites and custom. The confusion of time and space in *Liji Yueling* is the result of ancient or even prehistorical mythological thinking model processed by Five-element Theory. So you can make an explanation from the root while researching the feature of Chinese

philosophical thinking, only if you connect it with mythological thinking model.

A lot of materials in anthology show that ancient people had a confusion of time and space. Cassirer also gave lots of examples in Chapter two of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* when concerning the features of mythological thinking. The world view of Zuni also confused the four directions to land, water, fire and wind and four seasons. On the comparison, the confusion of time and space in Chinese mythological cosmology is more obvious and has a more profound influence on people's thinking model and behavior. So how did this kind of confusion appear?

We can see, when we analyze the four ceremonial songs in *Qing Yang*, that the yearly regular movement of the sun gives people a measure to divide the four seasons, so another four names of the sun have symbolic meanings of time. If we change the early regular movement into the daily one, it will not be hard to see the symbolic meanings of space of the four names in *Qing Yang*. The reason seems to be simple, that is, ancient people differentiate the four seasons by the different location of the sun of its yearly regular movement and also the four directions by the different location of its daily regular movement. In this way, the sun in spring corresponds the just rising sun as the symbol of the east called "qingyang"; the sun in summer the blazing sun at noon as the symbol of the south called "zhuming"; the sun in autumn the slanting sun in the west as the symbol of the west called "xihao" or "xibo"; the sun in winter the setting sun as the symbol of the north called "xuanming". The four names of the sun except "xihao" which was named according to space, the other three were all named according to different colors. In this special meaning model, the feature of the prehistorical mythological thinking is obvious. Which is the ancient people used to use colors to symbolize the abstract concept of time and space. We can infer the concept of time and space abstracted by philosophical thinking doesn't exist in the mythological thinking or is integrated in the concrete visual image as an undifferentiated form. Based on this principle, it will be easy to understand the essential difference between the mythological cosmology and the scientific cosmology.

As the summary of mythological thinking image, the word "xuanming" has a literal meaning of the sun falling to the earth, and extending to the meaning of dusk. For the earth in mythological legends is the resource of water, the word also has the meaning of the god of water in mythology. An annotation in *Houhanshu Zhanghengzhuan*<sup>11</sup> writes "xuanming" is the god of water. Now that the water connects "the four seas", the god of water can be equal to the god of seas. Another annotation in *The Classic of Mountains and Rivers*<sup>12</sup> *Haiwai Beijing* writes "yujiang", the god of seas, is also called "xuanming". For rain is from the evaporation of the seas, the god of water and the god of seas can be equal to the god of rain. *Fengsu Tong* of *Yiwen Leiju* says "xuanming" is the god of rain. From the multiple identities of "xuanming", it is very likely he is the god Kua Fu in the north. As for the relationship between north and the water under the earth, it can be explained by the fact that "xuanming" is also the god of north. The annotation in *Hanshu Liyue zhi* says "'xuanming" is the god of north". In this way, the totally unrelated superficial phenomenon like winter, dark, god of water and god of north can all be united in the mythological concept of the movement of the sun. Xihao, as the sun in autumn, symbolizes the west, which is easy to understand based on the word "xi"(west). There remains the symbolic relationship between "qingyang" and the east, "zhuming" and the south. We can find examples as follow: *Shizi* of *Yiwen Leiju* says "south is the summer" and *Yitongguayan* says "li, the south, xia, when the heat of sun gets out of". The heat here also explains why the sun in summer is called "zhuming". And *Shangshudazhun* also says "the east, where things move. What is spring? Things come out, which is the reason why the east is called spring." *Yiweitongguayan* also says "zhen, is the east, when the sun gets the qingqi out..." we can see what the



cycling movement of the sun brings is not only the four seasons but the alteration of four hours, four directions, four colors and four gods.

To trace the origin of confusion of time and space which is important in Chinese thinking model, we can find the most authoritative stipulations of yao who is a historicized mythological figure. It is recorded in *Shangshu Yaodina*:<sup>13</sup>

This stipulation of yao is one of the examples of the mythological “charter” mentioned by Malinowski, which regularizes the cosmic order and value in the belief of certain social community in the way like a statute book. With the historicization of mythology, xi, the female god of sun was “dismembered” by the ancient male Emperor yao, and divided into four astronomer royals appointed to four directions to observe the sun, in order to tell the time according to the natural movement order, and to establish the social order.

From the mythology that stipulates the order of time and space, we see four equal symbols. They can confirm the analysis of the four poems above, and let us identify preliminarily the space-time coordinates of the original model in Chinese mythological cosmology:

1. East model: where the sun rises, spring, green, morning, yang(tang) gu
2. South model: where the sun in the middle, summer, red, noon, kunwu.
3. West model: where the sun slants, the autumn, white, dusk, meigu.
4. North model: where the sun sets, the winter, dark, night, youdu.

The cycling movement of this system is described dynamically on the picture above.

What to note is, the periphery in the picture represents the moving trajectory, and the spot on the periphery represents the location and the representing time passed by daily movement of the sun. The horizontal black line on the periphery represents the earth floating above the water. The ripple under the horizontal black line is the netherworld water under the earth. The netherworld is the symbol of the hell in Chinese ancient cosmology, whose two features are: flood and dark. So it is called “menggu” in *Huainanzi*, and “meng” means unclear. *Shangshu* calls it “youdu”, and “you” means dark. Youdu is in the north, which seems to be a location above the earth, but the original meaning is the hell. For instance, youdu in “kind people never go to “youdu” in *Shuci Zhaohun* uses its original meaning. The formation of the concept of hell is related to the location of the movement of the sun. The sun moves from the east to the west at daytime and hides under the earth moving from west back to the east at night. The ancients believed the world the sun passes is different, and for the world lied under the earth and in the water, it was imagined into a dark hell. The word “xuan”, “ming”, “meng”, “mei”, “you” are all associated with the hell. As for the word “xi”, though referring to the night in real world, the original character pattern reflects the concept of another world under the earth and flood.

If we compare the preliminarily reconstructed sketch map of the cycling model of the mythological thinking with diagram of the universe in *the Book of Change* symbolizing the Chinese ancient philosophic wisdom, we will get beneficial enlightenment. Literally speaking, the basic ideas of the book develop under this kind of enlightenment. I am sure that we can find the origin of the philosophical wisdom in the mixed time-space mythological cosmology. Taiyi of religious category and taiqi of philosophical category are both the abstract of the cycling movement of the sun in mythological thinking. The “change” in *the Book of Change* is exactly the generalization of this phenomenon of cyclic change. The so called liangyi, sixiang and bagua, are mysterious expression of the space-time coordinates based on the movement of the sun. And how much does the original confusion of time and space mean to the modern philosophical research? We can get the answer from the dialogue between Ikeda Daisaku and Toynbee:<sup>14</sup>

Ikeda Daisaku: time and space, is the measure to cognize all the things, and is the most basic concept, where the difficulty lies in. For example, only regards to the time and space, the time and space in physics is different from the one in common people's mind. Classic physicists regard the time and space as absolute existence, and as the basic of all natural phenomenon.

While after the discovery of the theory of relativity by Einstein, we are sure the time and space is relative and interactional, which led to the view of time and space unifying the two.

Toynbee: in theory of relativity of Einstein, if I do not misunderstand, the space can be observed and measured only based on the time. Similarly, the time can be observed and measured only based on the space, which means, time and space, no matter it is the existence or the category in people's illusion of thinking, is an integrated whole.

From the above analysis, the divided category of time and space from the ancient rational thinking that took the place of the mythological thinking is faced with the challenge of the theory of relativity. So, if rethink the confusion of time and space featuring in the mythological thinking, we should take it as the "narrow and fatuous concept" as what Engels said, or as rational intuition with advanced wisdom?

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- The Book of Rites or Liji*, literally the Record of Rites, is a collection of texts describing the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou dynasty as they were understood in the Warring States and the early Han periods.
- "*Zhang Heng Chuan*" the famous classic text, from the "Later Han", the author Fan ye (398-445)
- The Classic of Mountains and Seas or Shan Hai Jing*, formerly romanized as the Shan-hai Ching, is a Chinese classic text and a compilation of mythic geography and myth.
- The Book of Documents or Classic of History*, also known as the *Shangshu*, is one of the Five Classics of ancient Chinese literature.
- The Toynbee-Ikeda Dialogue: *Man Must Choose*, Kodansha International, 1982