

ISCKMC 2020**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****ESOTERICISM OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF "ZHOU YI"**

Aleksej Nikolaevich Ovshinov (a), Oleg Vladimirovich Usalko (b)*,
Baldzhya Batnasunovna Dyakieva (c), Kermen Andzhukaevna Nadneeva (d),
Artur Mikhailovich Burinov (e)

*Corresponding author

- (a) Kalmyk State University, 11, Pushkin str., Elista, Russia, philosoph@kalmsu.ru,
(b) Kalmyk State University, 11, Pushkin str., Elista, Russia, oleg-usalko@yandex.ru,
(c) Kalmyk State University, 11, Pushkin str., Elista, Russia, raisadyakieva@mail.ru,
(d) Kalmyk State University, 11, Pushkin str., Elista, Russia, philosoph@kalmsu.ru,
(e) Kalmyk State University, 11, Pushkin str., Elista, Russia, philosoph@kalmsu.ru

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to demonstrate free thinking of the Zhoush texts, which allows one to enter a free sphere that does not experience pressure and encourages a person to strive to obtain comprehensive knowledge about this sphere and make a complete picture of it. It also encourages to determine the creative nature of reality through the mystical teaching of "Zhou Yi", its all-encompassing synthesis. As the beginning of Chinese culture, the source and resource of Chinese ideology and national spirit, "Zhou Yi" represents the depth of spiritual cultural structure, lifestyle, ethics, and social psychology, having influenced the thousand-year Chinese social life; it formed the foundations Confucianism and Taoism. Zhou Yi testifies to the development of Chinese history from mantics to logical Chinese culture, from fortune-telling and prophecies to science, from mythology to the harmonious theory of the Great Limit (Taiji), and the development of Chinese philosophical thinking. Zhou Yi is an esoteric philosophy that created special technological methods necessary to bring the human personality to the level of comprehensive cosmic systemic knowledge. Aspects of this philosophy were determined by the corresponding qualities of mind and morality, spiritual maturity, which contained the knowledge that is revealed in the complex process of self-development and self-realization of a person. Because of this, initially the esotericism of Zhou Yi, and in general the esoteric philosophy of Confucianism and Taoism, was intended only for initiates, since the created abilities gave considerable power over others.

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1. Introduction

"Zhou Yi" is one of the greatest and most mysterious creations and is a treasure of knowledge and wisdom. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this classic work in the development of Chinese philosophy, one of the most ancient in the history of civilized world, since "Zhou Yi" is the oldest Chinese literary and philosophical monument. It contains valuable information on the ancient history of Chinese people in the 6th – 5th centuries BC and is a monument to the earliest cultural layer of Chinese civilization.

The Zhou Yi philosophy is esoteric and synthetic. This means that it presents knowledge on the hidden relationships between man and cosmos, studying the innermost secrets of life, intended only for selected people. At all times of the historical development of mankind, representatives of this philosophy have tried to invent powerful, supernatural phenomena responsible for certain phenomena of the objective world. They were also disseminators of these ideas. Esoteric philosophy includes a body of knowledge, information that is inaccessible to the uninitiated, ignorant of mystical, occult teachings to people, special ways of perceiving reality, which have content and expression in psychospiritual practices. The knowledge of esoteric philosophy about the innermost secrets of the universe and the human soul, the unity of the earthly and heavenly has survived to this day.

The adepts whose comments make up the main content of "Zhou Yi" are: an ancient thinker of China, the founder of the Confucian moral and ethical doctrine, an ancient Chinese philosopher of the 6th-5th centuries BC Confucius (KunQiu) (531 – 526 BC) and Lao -zi, one of the founders of the teachings of Taoism, as well as their students.

Philosophical disputes over the Zhou Yi texts continue today. These texts use the basic theoretical and methodological principles of the ontological explanation of the world. These explanations have a metaphysical meaning and emphasize universality of the world.

According to the philosophical world concept, the doctrine of "being" is decisive, based on the speculative method of comprehending the essence of the world, a person himself with his consciousness and his beliefs.

Understanding the essence of being, in all its manifestations, is organically linked with ideas about the nature of relations between things (objects) surrounding a person, which are not eternal: they arise and disappear into nothingness. "Zhou Yi" emphasizes the incompleteness of the world, which develops spontaneously from itself and acts as a source of self-development of all existence. According to this interpretation, spiritual existence and physical nature are united.

Zhou Yi's kind of intuitive thinking represents the process of transition from concrete objects to abstract images, from objects to principles comprehended from images. Consequently, images became a mediator, and someone can intuitively comprehend the principles contained in images, trigrams, hexagrams and numbers, and express the content of thinking through trigrams-hexagrams, which in itself contributes to the expansion of the concept, and the culture itself (Usalko, 2012).

2. Problem Statement

The peculiarity of the philosophy of "Zhou Yi" is that, along with the worldview problems of classical Chinese philosophy, there are many provisions inherent in synthetic and esoteric philosophy.

Zhou Yi is an esoteric philosophy that created special technologies necessary to bring the human person to the level of comprehensive cosmic systemic knowledge. Aspects of this philosophy were determined by the corresponding qualities of mind and morality, spiritual maturity, which would contain the knowledge that opens up in the complex process of self-development and self-realization of a person, based on the interpretation of the provisions of the central text – the Book of Changes (I Ching).

Initially the esotericism of Zhou Yi and the esoteric philosophy of Confucianism and Taoism, was intended only for initiates, since the created abilities gave considerable power over others and, accordingly, imposed a high degree of responsibility on the individual.

3. Research Questions

Just as the philosophical understanding of the world of Chzhoush Changes, the doctrine of “being” is decisive; it is based on the speculative method of comprehending essences, a person himself, his consciousness, and beliefs.

In the main canon "Zhou Yi" – "The Book of Changes" (I Ching), the so-called middle spiritual link is absent. More precisely, it is present non-embodied in the spiritual emptiness of Tao (literally, the path is one of the most important categories of Chinese philosophy). The Book of Changes is the only system capable of harmoniously combining the opposing philosophies of Yin and Yang and presenting the synthetic philosophy of Tao culture (Lao Tzu) with some elements of esoteric philosophy, as a result of which a person gets the opportunity to systematize his thinking (Marshall, 2001).

The philosophy of ancient China did not use the concepts of "being" and "non-being". In the ancient Chinese language, the verb "to be" is absent, but there is a verb "yu", which means "to be present". Accordingly, there is a verb meaning "not to be" or "to be absent." This dichotomy of "absence = presence" constitutes the metaphysical basis of Chinese philosophy associated with "Zhou Yi". It opposes the Western European phenomenon of “non-being-being”. This is clearly presented in the I Ching, which must be taken into account in the ontological analysis of its text (Eremeev, 2005).

Tao is viewed in Chinese philosophy as "non-empty void", as it includes void channels. Tao flows in a person through these channels. In other words, a person acts and passes Tao through himself, moving in Spirituality, and not in Matter. Action should take place in emptiness, according to Tao. As Taoists say, Tao appears in emptiness, giving a rise to space and time – space. So, cosmos is born in emptiness. Tao also denotes eternal action or the principle of creation in Chinese philosophy, from which proceeds the origin of oneness and duality, the beginning of the World and Creation.

The I Ching represents the work of the Superman (Podoplelov, 2013), captured in special symbols, signs, and codes of the universe. Its roots go back to mythological antiquity, like the culture of Ancient China itself. Traditional Chinese culture and art have deep meanings associated with symbols and archetypes. According to the time of the cosmogonic teaching of Ancient China, two universal forces

were born from the formless Darkness: Yin and Yang. These opposites make up a united whole, complementing and flowing into each other.

The Yin-Yang theory is one of the basic and oldest philosophical concepts in the Taoist tradition and carries an esoteric meaning (Torchinov, 2005). This theory determines the dynamics of the Universe and the rhythmic change in the phases of all occurring phenomena helps to implement a balanced approach to all natural phenomena and to carry out corrections in the event of a violation of the natural balance.

The “Book of Changes” promotes understanding of real life laws in time and comprehension of the deep content of individual consciousness, provided that thought arises in the context of time through the centers of value formation in human consciousness.

The “Book of Changes” is presented as a manual for the assimilation of mental technology or the art of systemic thought. This classical Canon has historically been a textbook for the art of systems thinking for thousands of years, which all Chinese philosophers have certainly studied.

The “Book of Changes” presents so-called “symbolic reality”, the reality of embodied images, and the inner one is the reality of non-embodied transformations. Symbolic action is, in essence, an infinitely effective rest that makes possible any external limited action (Kurnosova, 2015). In the limit of rest lies the limit of accomplishment.

The philosophical category of "coming = leaving" understands time as two streams moving progressively towards each other. The world of my "I" arises at the point of their contact.

The “Book of Changes” got this name because it quite often creates new semantic content due to the changes in combinations of its original elements. According to Confucius, “there is no need to be afraid of changes, most often they happen exactly at the moment when they are needed”. But he also has another saying: "God forbid you to live in an era of change." In the Commentaries to the "Book of Changes" it is said: "Change is what is depicted, and the hexagram is what depicts."

Russian orientalist and philologist Shchutsky (1993), writes in his Commentaries to the “Book of Changes”: “The title of this classical book of China is explained by the fact that the main idea underlying it is the idea of variability ..., this idea was taken by people from observing a person” (p. 117).

System of fortune-telling was built on the basis of this idea. Does this activity run counter to the course of world achievement, or is it harmoniously included in the world? Does it bring unhappiness or happiness, as it is called in the language of technical terms of the Book of Changes (Confucius, 2017).

The Book of Changes offers a philosophical concept of understanding these changes. One of its main ideas, which serves to understand the external world, is the contemplation and conscious existence of a person in the world. The fortune-telling system presented in this treatise allows not only to look into the future, but also to receive guidance about one's activities (Meng, 2005). In the context of the philosophy of the Book of Changes, self-knowledge, leading to the development of the unknown space of the world, is the highest destiny of man.

The Infinite and then the Great Limit comes into motion and then Yang is generated. The movement reaches its limit and rest comes. Yin is born at rest. Peace reaches the limit, and movement begins again (Kalkaev, 2003).

The development of universal existence in Chinese philosophy is usually represented as a pure circle – “U-Tzu” (“Absence of division”). This category in Chinese ontology is called “unlimited” or “no limit (division).” The term first occurs in one of the canonical Commentaries to the I Ching in *Sitsichzhuany* (Torchinov, 2005). This is one of the most mysterious categories of Chinese philosophy and culture. One of its meanings is “The Source. The Beginning of the World”.

In the Commentaries to the classic canon of the Book of Changes, there are different definitions of this concept. For example, the Chinese thinker Kunlinda (6th-8th centuries) believes that the “Great Limit” corresponds to a state when Heaven and Earth have not yet separated. The original Qi makes up a single whole, and this is the Great Limit, it is also the Great Unity (Confucius, 2017).

So, the Great Limit in the “I Ching. The Book of Changes” represents a closed system with a cyclical movement, circulation. This means that in the cyclical movement, the cycle of the Great Path, the end coincides with the beginning. The “Book of Changes” reflects the cycle and its regularities in a peculiar form. This can be explained by the fact that “any system reflects in its concepts and categories the universal education of the real world, a cycle” (Vinogradsky, 2017, p. 285).

The Universe is a large hologram, and laws in it are the same at all levels; the stages of individual development semantically repeat the cycle of mankind development and life in general.

Judgments are fundamental to the Book of Changes. Judgments indicate that the action will bring happiness or unhappiness, remorse, or humiliation. Judgments allow a person to make a decision, to refuse certain actions, testify to long-term prospects (Feng, 2005). Thus, man tries to make himself independent of the tyranny of events. From the time of Confucius, interpretations to the Book reveal a treasure of Chinese wisdom. At the same time, it provides a complete picture of the diversity of human experience. This allows him to thereby shape his life, his sovereign will into a single whole in such a way as to bring it into line with the ultimate Tao, which is the basis of all that exists (Eisenstein, 1988).

In the original teachings of a Chinese thinker Wang Yangming, especially interesting is his famous thesis that “outside the heart = mind” (*xinwai*) “in reality there are no principles, no objects-phenomena (*w*), no occupations – activities (*shi*)” (Vinogradsky, 2017, p. 472).

The Book of Changes is the main and original subject of the discourses of all philosophers of Ancient China. According to the theory of the “Book of Changes”, the entire world process is an alternation of situations occurring in the interaction and struggle of the forces of light and darkness, tension, and compliance (Kelly, 2006).

The philosophy of the “Book of Changes” is based on the system of all potentially possible human movements along the path of his spiritual development, that is, the system of transitions, current situations, and spiritual states of a person. Therefore, the defining philosophical law, postulated in the canonical work, is not only the principle of change, but also cyclical and dynamic movement. All this variability, shown in the “Book of Changes”, has as its theoretical source the unity and struggle of opposites, which mutually pass into each other and form the diversity of all phenomena.

According to the esoteric approach, the law of unity and struggle of opposites, their mutual attraction is at the heart of the Universe itself. We find this reasoning in the “Book of Changes”, the philosophy of which is inherent in esotericism when considering social phenomena. The key to unraveling many of its secrets lies in overcoming their apparent antagonism and understanding the

balance that leads them to harmony. Only through the knowledge of Good and Evil a person opens the way to evolution, only in Darkness, according to representatives of esoteric philosophy, you can discover Light and join its life qualities. In nature, there is also a constant change of heat and cold, day and night. In the same interaction of opposites lies the solution to Spirit and Matter and all the dogmatic worldviews that follow from them. The principles of the “Book of Changes” underlie all cycles in the universe. And the way to unraveling many of its secrets lies through overcoming their apparent antagonism and knowing the balance that contributes to their harmony.

These symbolic constructions, as ways of knowing the world, can directly enter the essence of the circumstances, thereby changing the quality of the content. In other words, proficiency in the language of Changes allows you to control the world of your consciousness; that is why the "Book of Changes" for thousands of years has been a guide to systematize thinking.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to demonstrate the free thinking of the Zhoush texts, which allows one to enter a free sphere that does not experience pressure and encourages a person to strive to obtain comprehensive knowledge about this sphere and make a complete picture of it. In other words, the article aims at determining the creative nature of reality through the mystical teaching of “Zhou Yi”, its all-encompassing synthesis.

5. Research Methods

In the course of the study, we used the systemic method. This method allows you to go beyond “elementary thinking”. It allows you to highlight invisible connections, patterns and processes that determine the system connection.

6. Findings

Zhous texts represent tools for the formation of human systems thinking on the basis of the I Ching system model, which serves as a mystical comprehensive synthesis. The I Ching model not only describes the human consciousness system but is also based on mystical modeling of the systematic structures of the objective world. The creators of “Zhou Yi” tried to make systems thinking become an integral part of human life. “Since the writing of the Ten Wings, Change for the Chinese has been a model of the Path for mastering and contemplating a conflicting life experience in which all tensions and contradictions are resolved, and all decisions are irresistibly developed”.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, Zhou Yi is:

- a system that includes the technology for analyzing situations, a system for constructing mental matrices and trajectories of thought movement in order to create integral predictive structures that come true with a high degree of accuracy;
- myth and metaphor are instruments of the art of thought in the “Book of Changes”. The “Book” strategy is one of the manifestations of the systematization of thinking;
- philosophy of the “Book of Changes” is peculiar because it goes along with the worldview problems of classical Chinese philosophy, there are many provisions inherent in synthetic and esoteric philosophies;
- philosophy of the “Book of Changes” is something special, sometimes difficult to explain theoretical phenomenon, since its essence, like the whole of Chinese philosophy, consists in the consonance, conjugation and integrity of man and the world. It reflected the transition from a mythological worldview to philosophical thinking;
- esotericism of the Zhou Yi philosophy lies in the fact that it presents knowledge about the hidden interrelationships between man and the Universe. It reveals the natural relationship of man with the level of development, his and the Universe, and living conditions.

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