

The *Book of Changes*:

Its Implication and Reflection in the Creation and Design of Ancient China

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Abstract: The act of divination was a persistent custom and tradition in Ancient China. The *Book of Change* started as a divination text for the prediction of events, but later was described as the great principles of changes in nature, human, and the world, which embodies the wisdom of the ancient saints. The Classic as a divination symbolic system reflects the pictographic thinking of *Image* (象, Xiang), as a philosophy it conceals with the cosmological thinking of the *Way* (道, Dao). It is a book of *Images* in simulation of all things of creation to represent all the *Way*. In the history of art, the pictographic thinking has been embodied in various forms of Chinese art. The concept of the *Way* has become the highest achievement that many craftsmen or artists strive to reach. This study intends to use a system view to introduce the philosophy of creation and design in ancient China from The *Book of Changes*, and how its technical theories of *Image* and the *Way* and artistic influence have affected the production of art.

Key words: the *Way*, *Form*, *Vessel*, *Images*, *Changes*


1. Introduction

The *Book of Changes* (周易, ZhouYi) is one of the oldest Chinese classical texts, written approximately 3000 years ago in the Zhou dynasty. It is one of the most well-designed and thoughtful divination systems in history. The book consists of two parts which are the YiJing (易經, the symbols with texts) and the YiZhuan (易傳, the Commentary). The YiJing is a divination system of *Images* (象, Xiang) with minimum expositions which was designed much earlier than the YiZhong. Confucius and/or his students 100 years later further exposed the meaning of the YiJing from a system of divination to a philosophy of cosmology which became the explanatory notes of the *Book of Changes*. This makes the *Book of Changes* more unique than other divination classics. Because it is not only a divination system for the prediction of events, but also comprehensively describes the principles of changes in nature, humanity, and the world, it embodies the great philosophy of the ancient saints. The Master (Confucius) said: “As for the Changes, what does it do? The Changes deals with the way things start up and how matters reach completion and represent the Dao that envelops the entire world. If one puts it like this, nothing more can be said about it” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 2).

2. The Pictographic System in The *Book of Changes*

2.1 Historical Background of Divination in Ancient China

In Neolithic times, people used oracle bones, stones, and turtle shells for divination by heating up or drilling to create cracks for images. Then, the practitioners would predict the future by interpreting the cracks and record

the contents of images by carving on the same bone or turtle shell with oracle scripts. Yin Xu (殷墟) is one of the historical archeological discoveries of oracle bone inscription. The city of Yin existed as early as the Dynasty of Yin and remained until the Dynasty of Shang more than 200 years later. The Yin ruin was discovered in the late 1890s, the oracle bones became a valuable evidence of the activity of divination in ancient China (Figure 1: Type of Oracles). It proves that the act of divination was a persistent custom and tradition, and practised in everyday situations, military campaigns and even within the organization of the state. The purpose was not only to obtain instructions from gods or ancestors, but also for other supernatural uses such as healing. People believed that sickness came from the invasion of evil spirits, therefore, hunting the evil down would cure the disease. This oracle impression from the Yin Ruin was inscribed with an image  which depicted the shaman or practitioners hunting the evil with a cross (Figure 2: Oracle with inscriptions of healing). It is noticeable that these oracle inscriptions present a strong pictographic thinking. Thus, most scholars supposed this type of pictogram was the early development of Chinese characters.

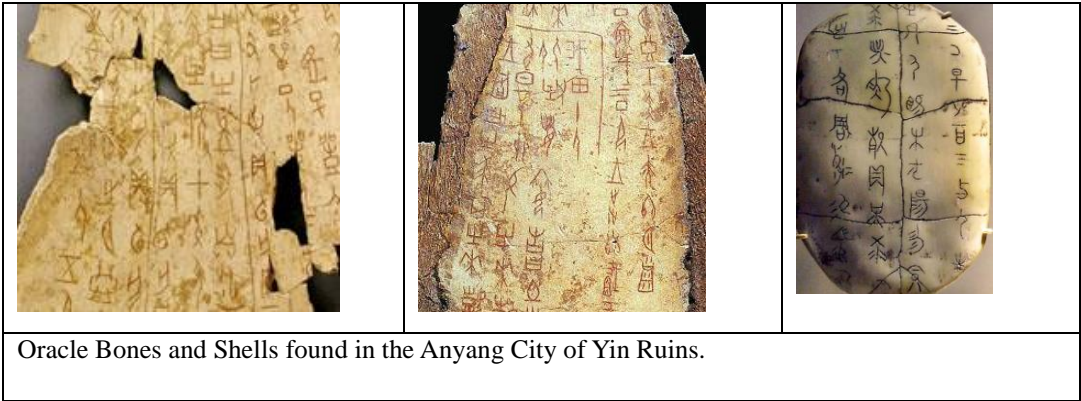


Figure 1: Type of Oracles (Pictures from Anyang City Yin Ruins Website: www.ayyx.com)

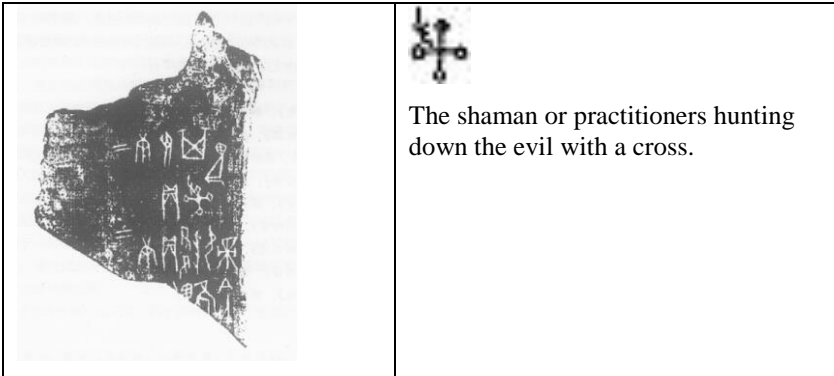


Figure 2: Oracle with inscriptions of healing (Pictures from Anyang City Yin Ruins Website: www.ayyx.com)

Today, we might still think divination is a superstition without scientific proof. However, The *Book of Changes* still has a great amount of influence. It reflects the thoughts and wisdom of the sages. So who designed the symbol system? What are the key concepts of the symbol? The Master (Confucius) told us that “when in ancient times Lord Bao Xi ruled the world as sovereign, he looked upward and observed the images in heaven and looked downward and observed the models that the earth provided. He observed the patterns on birds and beasts and what things were suitable for the land. Nearby, adopting them from his own person and afar, adopting them from other things, he thereupon made the eight trigrams in order to become thoroughly conversant with the virtues

inherent in the numinous and the bright and to classify the myriad things in terms of their true, innate natures” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part II, Chapter 2).

2.2 The Divination System of Images

There are still a lot of debates about whether or not Lord Bao Xi (包犧氏) is the author of the YiJing, but from the passage it clearly explains the process of designing the divination system. The key word of “observe” in the original text is Guan (觀, Observe), which means to look or to observe with attention. Indeed, the whole system is rooted on an in-depth observation of heaven, earth, nature, and people phenomenon in order to create the *Images* (象, Xiang). However, I would like to stress that the result does not come from the subjective view of the author or self-expression to the universe, it is about the representation of the universe based on an objective view. It is intended to categorize all things in order to illustrate the law of universe (the *Way*). For example: the trigram of Kan (坎) represents water in the *Image* of nature. The symbol of Kan ䷜ is based on an objective observation to resemble the water movement. Here, it also shows that the oracle word of water and symbol of Kan ䷜ are very similar (Figure 3: The Transformation of Image Kan 坎).




Image in Nature	Phenomenon	Oracle	Trigram Symbol	Trigram Name
Water				Kan 坎

Figure 3: The Transformation of Kan 坎 Image

Based on this observation, the Sages defined that “in change there is the great ultimate. This is what generates the two modes (the yin and yang). The two basic modes generate the four basic images, and the four basic images generate the eight trigrams. The eight trigrams determine good fortune and misfortune generates the great enterprise” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 11). The system of symbols in the YiJing begins with Yin (陰) and Yang (陽) which both represents the force of all things to maintain the balance of the universe. Yin and Yang also refer to the light and dark. The system all starts with these two modes to produce four other images of TaiYin (太陰), ShaoYang (少陽), ShaoYin (少陰), and TaiYang (太陽) which represent four seasons. The four images produce the eight trigrams of Qian (乾), Zhen (震), Kan (坎), Xun (巽), Li (離), Dui (兌), Gen (艮) and Ku (坤) which represent the more diversified changes (Figure 4: The System of Eight Trigrams).

To explain further, the system of Yin and Yang in one perspective is a subsystem of eight trigram (八卦) within a system of sixty-four hexagrams (卦, Gua). Each hexagram is a figure composed of six stacked horizontal lines (爻, Yao). The unbroken line stands for Yang (陽), and the broken line presents Yin (陰). Each trigram embraced three lines and was repeated to a form of six lines as a completed hexagram. It created sixty-four possible combinations that indicate all changes in the universe. “This is why the Changes as such consist of images. The term image means ‘the making of semblance,’ and the Judgments deal with their materials” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part II, Chapter 3). The system is in conformity with the *Images* of things, men,

and nature. The *Images* are used as symbols to explain the concept of the *Way* which is the main theme in the *Book of Changes*.

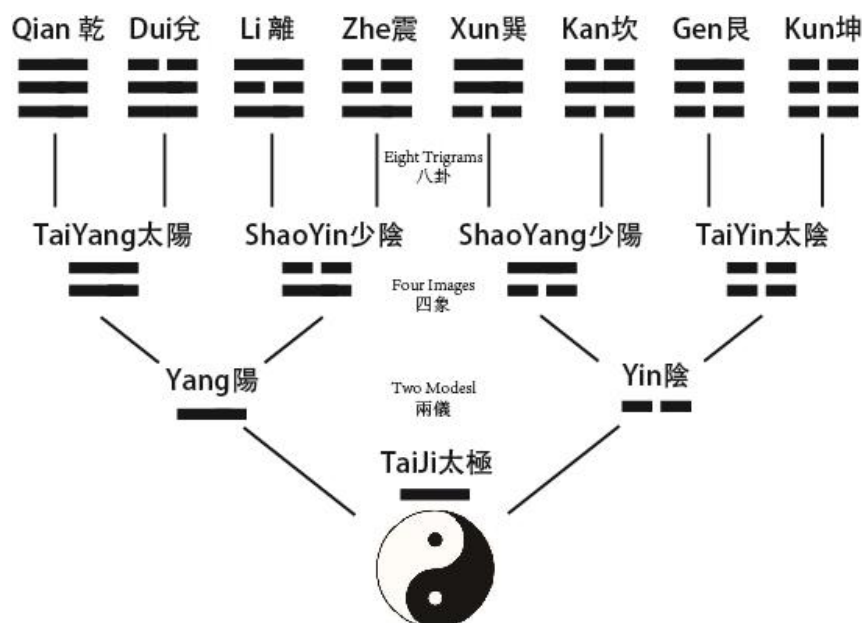


Figure 4: The System of Eight Trigrams

Each of the symbols has a name. It is appointed to particular objects and is described with phenomena (象, Xiang) of nature. The symbols could refer to various phenomena such as nature, directions, relationships, family, body parts, animals, situations and so on. It is used to figure out or foresee the fortune by oracle. For example, the eight trigram: Qian, Zhen, Kan, Xun, Li, Dui, Gen, Kun in nature refer to the images of heaven, thunder, water, mountain, wind, flame, lake, and earth. The word of *Image* (象, Xiang) in Chinese could mean figure, image, shape, pattern, sign and phenomenon. Thus, the hexagram is also called *Gua Xiang* (卦象) that each symbol carries a phenomenon (*Image*). In terms of Semiotics theory, the relationship between *Gua* (卦) and *Xiang* (象) is signifier and signified. The most basic meaning of a hexagram is a denotation. The hexagram of Qian (乾) signifies heaven. A higher level of symbolic meaning, the hexagram of Qian could signify power, strength, royalty in a cultural aspect and situation. Therefore, if someone wants to know about how to become a leader, he/she should look up the hexagrams of Qian. If someone wants to know about how to be a servant, he/she should look up the hexagrams of Kun. Accordingly, the *Images* are metaphors in simulation of all things of creation to represent all the *Way* in universe. The *Image* system in the *Books of Changes* is a valuable example to illustrate how people believed in the power of images and how pictographic thinking was applied in ancient time.

2.3 Pictographic Thinking in art history

The way of thinking is the major cause of national and traditional culture. The origin of traditional culture could be traced back to the culture of language. According to archaeological research, the oracle bone inscription is the earliest known and well-developed writing system in the Early China. It suggested that it was the Chinese script's origins even before the Shang Dynasty. The writing system of oracle is rooted on an image system by imitation. People used pictorial drawings to describe the characters of physical objects, human activity, and

situation to convey its meaning iconically. The words could borrow the shape, picture, pattern, character of objects at their own time to create the character. This is called pictogram. For example: The oracle symbols of Dou (豆), Ding (鼎), Hu (壺) were imitated from the shape of ancient pottery vessels (Figure 5: Type of Pictograms).

Sometimes, they might even borrow from the pattern of vessels (Figure 6: Type of Pictograms).







Detail	Black Pottery Dou (Stem-Bowl) with Carved Pattern, SongZe Culture, 3800-3200B.C.	Painted Bowl-Shaped Pottery Ding (Tri-pot), Early DaWenKou Culture, 4300-3500B.C	Red Pottery Hu (Pot) with Two Ears, PeiLiGang Culture, 6000-5200B.C.
Pottery Object			
Oracle Bone Script			
Word	Bowl (豆, Duo)	Tripot (鼎, Ding)	Pot (壺, Hu)

Figure 5: Type of pictograms (Pictures were taken by the author at Shanghai Art Museum, China.)







Detail	Pottery Object	Image	Oracle Script	Word
A Basin with Human Fished Face, Banpo Style, Yangshao Culture, 4800-4300B.C				Fish (鱼, Yu)
A Basin with the Deer Pattern, Banpo Style, Yangshao Culture, 4800-4300B.C				Deer (鹿, Lu)

Figure 6: Type of pictograms (Pictures were taken by the author at BanPo Museum, China.)

As later the Chinese Characters became more highly developed than just pictograms, more principles were added to make the language more systematic. Eastern Han Dynasty Scholar Xu She (許慎) in his book the *Dictionary of Chinese Etymology* (說文解字, ShuoWenJieZi) summarized the composition of Chinese character to the theory of “the Six Graphs” (六書, LiuShu) which contains six principles of Chinese character. They are pictograms (象形, XiangXing), simple indicatives (指事, ZhiShi), compound indicative (會意, HuYi), phono-semantic compound characters (形聲, XingZheng), derived characters (轉注, ZhuanZhu), borrowed characters (假借, JiaJie). Among all these principles, the Chinese language was originated and today however was still dominated by the system of pictograms.

The image or pattern certainly has effects on the people who use them, and the paradigms create value and social belief. Artifacts in ancient China are never neutral. Certain objects such as ceramic, bronze, and jade objects are beyond utilitarian purpose, rather they are associated with social belief, value and order. Images or pattern on Ancient arts were more than just oriental ornament or decoration, but also images of social phenomenon (Powers 2006). Pictogram can function in an analogous way to present abstraction in thought. As craftsman plans to draw a figure, he or she takes into consideration the symbolic meaning of the figure which would be acceptable for the people at that time. Wang JiaShu (2011) pointed out that the history of the Chinese Arts and Crafts can be divided into four periods according to the culture of images. As early as the Stone Ages, geometrical images appeared on the ancient pottery, especially the shape of a circle, the movement of a spiral, the linear of flowing which reflected that the people at that time were simple-hearted in their relationship to the universe. Then in the Bronze Ages, images on objects were dominated by distorted forms of animals such as TaoTieWen (饕餮纹), dragon, phoenix. It reflected that the beliefs of people in Zhou and Shang Dynasty had shifted from naturalism to deification, and had begun to question about after life. Entering to the Iron Ages, the technology and society reached in a higher level since the period of the Warring States. Higher self-esteem therefore led to human beings as the major focus of art making. After a thousand years to the Dynasty of Sui, flowers became the favored art subject matter for the craftsmen and artists. This reflected the return of nature and the harmony relationship between nature and humans (Figure 7: Millstone of China Art History).





Period	The Stone Ages (From the Neolithic Time)	The Bronze Ages (From Zhou Dynasty)	The Iron Ages (From The Warring States Period)	From Sui Dynasty
Image	Geometry	Animal	Human	Nature
Object				
Detail	Painted Pottery with Ring Pattern, MacChang Type of MaJiaYau Culture, 2200-2000B.C.	Square Wine Vessel of ShiJu King Gong Reign, Western Zhou, Mid 10 th Century B.C.	Colored Pottery Figurine, Eastern Han, A.D. 25-220	Ceramic Pillow with Black Lotus Bouquet Design, CiZhou Ware, Northern Song, A.D.960-1127

Figure 7: Millstone of China Art History (Pictures were taken by the author at Shanghai Art Museum, China.)

Clearly, the pictographic thinking is broadly applied in the creation and design of Ancient China and even today. We see it in writing, calligraphy, painting, art making and even in the philosophy of the *Book of Changes*. It is true that “the cultural universe is essentially a symbolic universe. Animals are surrounded by a physical universe with which they have to cope: physical environment, prey to catch, predators to avoid, and so forth. Man, in contrast, is surrounded by a universe of symbols. Starting from language which is the prerequisite of culture, to symbolic relationships with his fellows, social status, laws, science, art, morals, religion and innumerable other things, human behavior, except for the basic aspects of the biological needs of hunger and sex, is governed by

symbolic entities”(Bertalanffy 1968:197). Pictogram creates such a powerful meaning between the signifier and signified in their own cultures. In Chinese Art, the pictographic thinking somehow is a tradition in history.

3. The Creation and Design System in the *Book of Changes*

3.1 The transformation between the *Way*, *Form* and *Vessel*

Confucius wrote: “What is prior to physical form pertains to the *Dao*, and what is subsequent to physical form pertains to concrete objects (the phenomenal world). That which transforms things and regulates them is called “change.” By extending this to practical action, one may be said to achieve complete success. To take up this (the *Dao* of change and integrate into the lives of the common folk of the world, this we all call ‘the great task of life’” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 12). From this passage, it explains the correlation between the *Way* (道, *Dao*), *Form* (形, *Xing*) and *Vessel* (器, *Qi*) (Figure 8: The Creation and Design System in the *Book of Changes*). The metaphysical realm above the *Form* refers to invisible principles and phenomena (the *Way*) and the physical realm below the *Form* refer to concerted matters (*Vessel*). The word of “physical form” in the original text is *Xing* (形, *Form*) that appears in the *Book of Changes* many times such as, “In Heaven this (process) creates images, and Earth it creates physical forms; this is how change and transformation manifest themselves” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 1), “Visible phenomena of changes are called images, and different forms of changes are called vessels” (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 11). *Xing* in Chinese language could mean more than just a physical form, it could refer to form, shape, image, model, representation and phenomena. In terms of design, it could mean an abstract idea of creative concept, but through craftsmen’s practice or manufacture could become a physical object or *Vessel*. On the other hand, *Vessel* is defined to be the physical realm existing below and coming from the *Form*. It became a concrete object or *Vessel* after the transformation or *Changes* (易, *Yi*) in other words. The word “concrete objects” in the original text is *Qi* (器, *Vessel*) in Chinese could mean ware, vessel, container and even talent. From *Dao De Jing* (道德經), *Vessel* means to describe something’s usefulness as follows: “Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness, that their use depends” (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 11) and “A vessel great, it is the slowest made” (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 41). *Form* is the state of a physical object or matter, the *Way* is the spiritual cause of the physical form, and *Vessel* is the representation of the physical form. The purpose of the *Form* and *Vessel* is to express the *Way*.

So what is the *Way* (道, *Dao*)? Lao Zi (老子) was probably the earliest one to define the *Way*. In *Dao De Jing*, he wrote that “Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the *Dao*. The law of the *Dao* is its being what it is” (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 25). Lao Zi’s *Dao* is the ultimate principle of the universe and all things. In Chinese, the word “*Dao*” (道, the *Way*) has a variety of meanings from time to time, it could purely be used to mean way, road, path, method and doctrine. However, in most philosophical beliefs, “*Dao*” is used symbolically in sense of way as the ‘right’ or ‘proper’ way of existence or doing things to keep the universe in harmony. The concept of “*Dao*” has countlessly influenced not just philosophers and historians but also craftsmen and artists throughout history. As we have discussed previously, the *Way* is defined to be the metaphysical realm existing above the *Form*. This is how the *Way* governs all the things to transform or *Changes*. It seems the *Way* and *Vessel* is defined by the below or above of *Form*; however, it does not mean they are an absolutely separated matter. The transformation and interaction between the *Way* and *Vessel*

are called *Changes*. The *Way* is an invisible realm of universal phenomenon but after the transformation and regulation of things, it is through the physical realm of *Vessel* that makes it possible for people to become acquainted with the abstract concept of the *Way*. “All things are produced by the Dao, and nourished by its outflowing operation. They receive their forms according to the nature of each, and are completed according to the circumstances of their condition.” (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 51) Therefore, The *Way* is to govern how things come together and go smoothly and comply with *Changes*.

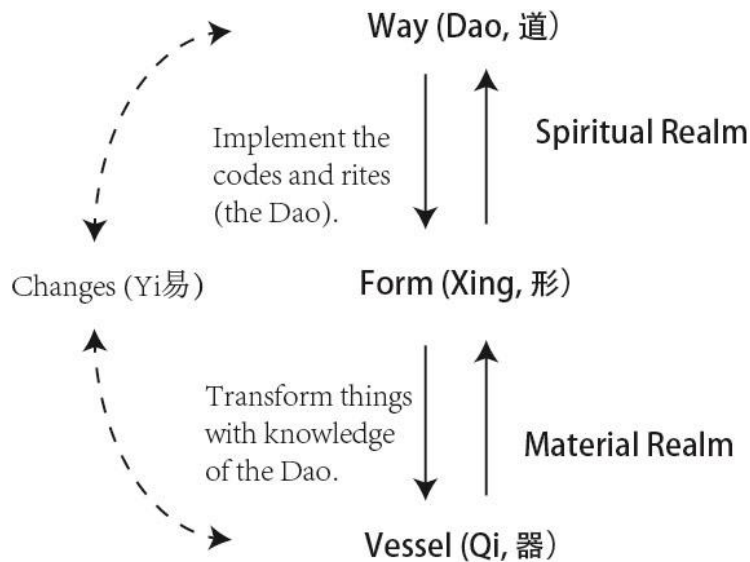


Figure 8: The Creation and Design System in the *Book of Changes*

3.3 *Vessel is to convey The Way*

Most scholars believe that the value and purpose of *The Book of Changes* is more than just a divination, “In the *Changes*, there are four things that pertain to the Dao of the sages. In speaking, we regard its phrases as the supreme guide; in acting, we regard its changes as the supreme guide; in fashioning implements, we regard its images as the supreme guide; and in diving by cracking shell and bone or by the use of stalks, we regard its prognostications as the supreme guide” (*The Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 10). From the perspective of creativity, object makers could appreciate the design concept of the hexagrams and linear images. By looking through the material culture in ancient China, art objects were fully decorated with figures, images, symbol and patterns, it is obviously the *Book of Changes* which embodies great wisdoms of creation and design. Moreover, Confucius said: “What did the sages write *The Zhou Book of Change* for? *The Zhou Book of Change* was written for revelations of the principles of all objects and their states to accomplish all work and embrace all principles under heaven. This is all about it” (*The Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 11). This is the objective of the *Book of Changes*. Li YanZu (2008) firstly argued that this passage also reflected the creation and design philosophy in Ancient China and this principle still could be applied to design practice today. Design should accomplish the undertakings of men and embrace the *Way* of all things.

Most of the time, the Chinese words of *Form* (形) and *Image* (象) are often put together to mean *Image*. *Image* (象, Xian) is the phenomenon of the Heaven, *Form* is the representation of *Image* on the Earth. The oracle word of *Image* was originally the picture of an elephant (Figure 9: The Oracle of Xiang) that was borrowed to mean

image, figure, or symbol. The story of this word and its meaning could refer to Han Fei Zi's (韓非子) commentary on Lao Zi's (老子) as follows: "People have rarely seen a living elephant but have obtained the bones of dead elephants, from the layout they have imagined the living creature; thus whatsoever people imagine is called an 'elephant.' Now even though the Way (Dao) cannot be acquired, heard or seen, the sages grasped the effects of its appearance in order to make its form visible; thus it is said, 'the shape without a shape; the image of what is not a thing'" (*Han Fei Zi*, Chapter 20, 24). Accordingly, the concept of *Image* in Chinese philosophy could have two meanings. The term of *Image* in the *Book of Changes* visibly refers to the phenomenon of Heaven, and a symbol of practical hexagram, but in Lao Zi's invisible refers to the *Way*. Lao Zi believes the *Way* is hard to describe or present, so that only through our own experience people then can recognize the concept of the *Way*. Despite the difference between them, they both used the word "*Image*" as the representations of the *Way*.



Figure 9: The Oracle of *Image* (象, Xiang)

Image refers to Han Fei Zi's explanation that has a meaning of imagination. People cannot see the *Way*, but they can experience it through the work of arts. Artists or craftsmen use their materials, skills and craftsmanship to delivery this transcendent experience beyond the reality or things. We see these attempts and achievements in many forms of art such as Ancient bronze vessels, jade arts and Chinese painting etc. In a long history, the traditional practices of Chinese Art are to convey and reflect a kind of artistic conception which specifically promotes the concept of the *Way*. "*Vessel* is to convey the *Way*" is one of the traditional beliefs for artists and craftsmen. The manifestation of the *Way* in art work would be the highest achievement they desire to reach. In Chinese, Dao (道) with De (德) means moral (道德), 道 (Dao) with 理 (Li) means reason (道理). The word "Dao" is rooted in the culture of Chinese and has not just become the direction of living, but also creating things. Obviously, the relationship of the *Way* and *Vessel* present the system of creation and design. Design is built around both the metaphysical realm and the physical realm. The world is not simply materialized necessities, but also about the material and spiritual.

3.3 The System of Changes in the *Book of Changes*

Vessel, *Form*, The *Way* have an interdependent relationship or I would call a Creation and Design system of *Changes* in another way. They are interactive with a cause and effect relationship. Elaboration and application of the principles of *Changes* are called comprehensiveness. The word Chinese of *Changes* (易, Yi) has three meanings: Easy, Variation, Unchangeable. "Easy" refers to the *Way* of the *Book of Changes* in everyday life, so the *Way* is so easy to be understood if we could appreciate the norm of *Changes*; "Variation" refers to the endless changes of the universe such as the changes of four seasons, human affairs and social matters; Unchangeable refers to the things that are immutable, such as the sky is above, the earth is below. In the *Book of Changes*, the transformation of yin and yang according with changes brings the renewal of life. "The reciprocal process of yin and yang is call the Dao" (The *Book of Changes*, Commentary, Part I, Chapter 5). The *Way* in the book has two

implications. It implies the process of the alternation of yin and yan or *Changes*. Secondly, it implies the norm of human, nature and society or the Law of things. Therefore, the *Book of Changes* is about how to keep balance between the yin and yang in order to create harmony of life. The method is by the Law of Moderation (ZhongYong, 中庸) to maintain living in harmony with the *Way*.

Philosopher Fung Yu Lan said that people cannot live without the *Way*. “What is called spiritual culture or moral instructing is nothing more than cultivations of this way (Dao)” (Fung 1996:97). In history, we can see the concept of the *Way* has had tremendous influences on China's material, political, economic and even ideological systems. The important concept of material culture in the *Book of Changes* is that all things or matters are *Vessel* to manifest the *Way*. When *Vessel* enters into our daily life and is used, people will realize the courses of the *Way*. Consequently, it creates certain a type of culture. The word “culture” comes from the Latin “cultura” refers to farming, culture, education, and development. Today, in general, culture refers to the sum of human material culture, as well as spiritual, including language, things, customs, beliefs and various ideologies. Culture can be divided into three layers: the surface is artifact, the middle is institution, and conception is the deepest level. In between the artifact and the institution is another layer of behavioral culture. The conceptual culture is our way of thinking or understand of the *Way*. The way of thinking is the cause of how humans understand the world and consequently guides us to do things. Thoughts are the core value of the culture systems embedded in the deepest level that constantly and subconsciously facilitates different levels of the culture systems, from conceptual, social and then to artificial. *Vessel* or design belongs to the layer of material culture that affects our behavior and lifestyle. The relationship between *Changes* in the creation and design system and the culture system, however, is not straightforward, it is an open system (Figure 10: The System of *Changes*). The *Book of Changes* indeed could be called to be the philosophy of *Changes*. It is about the Law of *Changes* of the universe from a macro point of view, and it is about the Law of *Changes* of creation and design from a micro point of view.

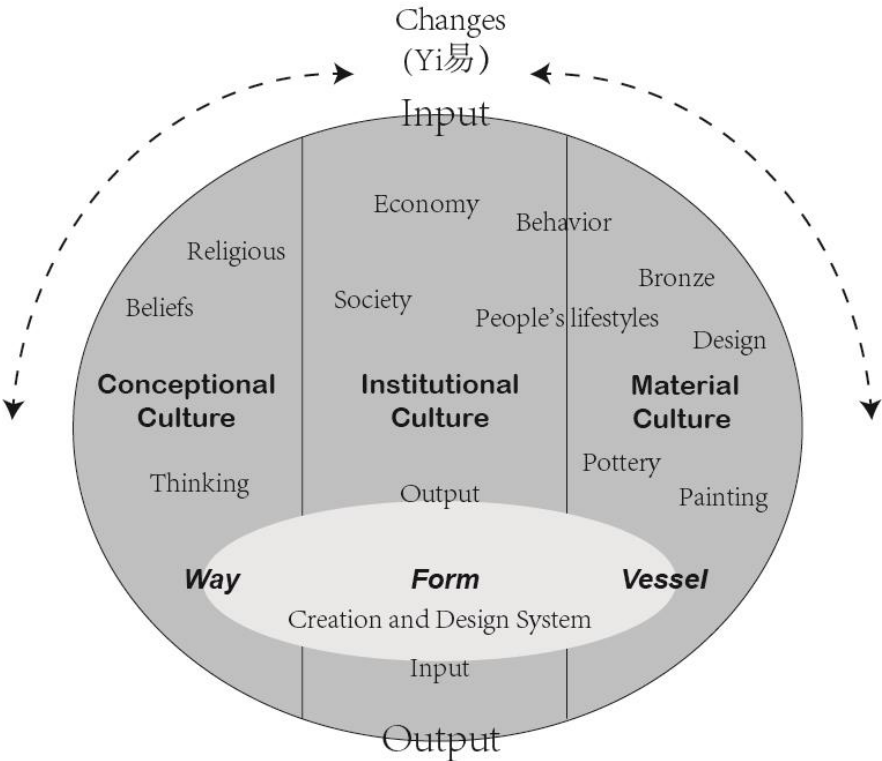


Figure 10: The System of *Changes*

3. Conclusions

Man himself is one such system, and so are his societies and his world. The *Book of Changes* describes a system of cosmology and philosophy that is intrinsic to ancient Chinese cultural beliefs. It is one of the greatest Classic books in Chinese history that is rooted in the philosophy of Daoism and Confucius. There is no doubt that the classic also contains profound design thinking and concepts of ancient history we could refer to as the source and inspiration of design philosophy. It truly reflects people's cognition of both the material world and the spiritual world, even including the cognition of creation and design. The well-designed and thoughtful system of *Changes* and the philosophy of the *Way* deeply have affected the pattern of thought and culture in China. Lothar Ledderose (2000) pointed out that the production of Chinese Arts and Crafts had already begun with the module system early in history and achieved an advanced level of skills. They used modules in their language, literature, philosophy, and social organization, as well as in their arts. I agree that the module system has contributed to the success of mass production in Ancient China. However, in this paper I would like to emphasize that the remarkable success and significance of Chinese Arts and Crafts could also be traced back to the pictographic systematic thinking and the philosophy of the *Way*, that both has inspired craftsmen or artists in art making. I argue that this is what makes the Chinese Arts and Crafts unique in their own way and still remain valuable in culture.

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