



## ***Heaven & Earth*** ***from Yin and Yang***

***By Frank Fiedeler***

---

IN THE WAKE OF NEW ATTEMPTS IN THE NATURAL sciences to formulate an ecologically meaningful understanding of the world, J. E. Lovelock developed the so called Gaia hypothesis, which presents the entire earth as a living organism. This meant a rediscovery of an animistic conception of the world, one characteristic of traditional Chinese thinking. Admittedly, the Gaia hypothesis still lacked a certain dimension, by which it is not merely proposed to be a living object, but from the very outset is understood truly to be a living subject, namely the dimension of a geocentric sky. For the heavens are indeed nothing other than the physical environment of the earth, that is, the proper subjective horizon of Gaia, the surface upon which the pattern of its cosmic consciousness is produced. This is how the ‘Chinese’ Gaia hypothesis was conceived. One could also interpret this conception in the thoroughly modern sense of a fundamental

***Translated by***  
***Gabriel Weiss***

‘eco-logic’ of evolution. We will come back to this in chapter two with our examination of the *Yijing* system and its amazing congruence to the genetic code.

In the early epoch, the relationship of the Chinese to the heavens above them was, above all, extraordinarily concrete. So it was that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millenium B.C.E. there were three verifiable conjunctions of all five of the planets visible to the naked eye. As the sinologist David W. Pankenier has pointed out, the record of these exceedingly rare celestial events have also come down to us through Chinese sources. These conjunctions took place in 1953, 1576, and 1059 B.C.E., and were understood as signals from the heavens, the legitimacy of which was understood in terms of “Heavenly Mandate” (tian ming) conferring the authority of rule to a new dynasty. In fact, these dates appear to agree with the reconstructed approximations of the founding of the three earliest dynasties—the Xia, Shang, and Zhou. Pankenier, who investigated the

astronomical origins of the Heavenly Mandate, concludes:

*We have therefore every reason to believe that there was a firmly established mentality in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millenium B.C.E., whose distinguishing features are enmeshed in a dependency on regular examination of celestial phenomena. Not only the calendar but also the proper alignment of every sacred space, as well as the timely performance of religious sacrifices depended thereon, that the king exercised the cosmomagical office of a calendrical priest. Among the various offices of the King, this was perhaps the most important, as all other functions depended upon his proper execution of this one role.*

We can define this “firmly established mentality” in early Chinese history as a shamanistic sky-religion. Admittedly, each facet of the definition has yet to be explained. For there is hardly any cultural phenomenon in history which seems stranger or more incomprehensible to the present day understanding. It is, however, precisely this archaic mentality that fostered the birth of Chinese culture.

In particular, a unique trait in Chinese thinking can be understood from this mentality that has come to signify the peculiar character of Chinese philosophy, namely the reciprocally analogous projection or correlation between the heavens and the realm of human beings, between macrocosm and microcosm. Benjamin I. Schwartz defined this essential feature as “correlative cosmology” or in the still more precise terminology proposed by him, as “correlative anthropo-cosmology.” For all practical purposes, this concept corresponds to the older term coined by J.J.M. De Groot, that of Chinese Universism.

By this is intended a way of thinking by means of which all domains of human Existence—from the conditions of the landscape to the anatomy of the human body, from the development of history to the system of

government—were interpreted as reciprocally analogous to the entire macrocosmic universe represented through the apparent order of the heavens.

We will become familiar with this seemingly fantastic logic of world- interpretation through numerous examples. Its natural principle allows itself to be revealed when we proceed from the autonomy of the phenomenal cosmos as it presented itself to the people of ancient times in their immediate experience.

The most impressive and powerful of all phenomena was naturally the sky with its “divine lights” (*shenming*): the sun, the moon, and the stars. Through their movements, these luminaries produced the eternal interplay of day and night, full moon and new moon, summer and winter. It was thereby obvious that the creatures and events on the earth in their apparent forms obeyed the celestial phenomena.

They (earthly creatures and events) changed their appearance and behavior in undeniable correspondence to the changing celestial pictures of the time of day and year and also the alternation of weather such as rain, and thus “came” quite clearly from the sky. The macrocosmic system of celestial phenomena determined the microcosmic behavior patterns of terrestrial entities. So, it naturally became the main model for a systematic formulation of world order in symbolic form.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM THE FULL  
EIGHT PAGE ARTICLE.

PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING  
A MEMBER TO SUPPORT THE SHARING  
AND PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL  
CHINESE MEDICINE.