THE BODY IN THE POLITICS AND SOCIETY OF EARLY CHINA

by

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This dissertation discusses the political conceptualization and social practice of the body in early China through a close examination of the texts and documents produced from the Spring and Autumn period to the end of the Eastern Han dynasty. It demonstrates that, in addition to medical concerns, the body in early China was transformed into a political concept and a ritual subject that served indispensably in state construction and social control. It is divided into the following three chapters.

Chapter one, "Physiognomy and the Body," examines the relationship between physiognomy and the body. Following a roughly chronological order, this chapter shows how physiognomy, a divination technique, read the body for political purposes. In addition to this, the chapter also discusses philosophical reactions to this political interpretation of the body by looking at criticisms in the works of Mengzi, Xunzi,

Dong Zhongshu, Wang Chong and Wang Fu.

Chapter two, "Politics and the Body," discusses the political theory and practice of the body in early China. It begins with a description of the metaphorical meanings of the body in early political discourse, focusing on their role in defining the competitive relationship between the ruler and the minister, as well as their significance in defending the political and ethical legitimacy of the state. The use of the body as an actual political tool forms the second consideration of this chapter. I demonstrate how the political symbolism of the body weighted significantly in Han China's foreign policy making.

Chapter three, "Ritual and the Body," deals with the issue of ritualization of the body in early China. The chapter is organized in accordance with two issues concerning the body in early ritual theories: ritualizing the body and embodying the ritual. I show how ritual trains the body to be acceptable to the society and how the ritualized body facilitates the maintenance of a hierarchical social order.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation, *The Body in the Politics and Society of Early China*, attempts to examine the interaction between the body and the world in early China, focusing specifically on the issue of how the body is connected with the politics and society of the pre-Qin and Han period. I intend to probe the political conceptualization and social practice of the body in early China through a textual study of both received texts and recently discovered written documents from the early period. To be more specific, the texts I will investigate extend from pre-Qin philosophical, ritual and medical writings to Han historical and legal texts. However, this dissertation is not intended to describe general social history and the development of political thought in early China, nor is it an attempt to illustrate the early medical tradition that was based upon a growing understanding of the body. Instead, my project attempts to understand early China from a new angle that has not been fully explored before. By examining the political conceptualization of the body and the interaction between the body and the society, I wish to present to the reader a cultural historical study that might supplement our thinking about the Chinese past.

Historical study often falls victim to oversimplification. The *Zuozhuan* claims that the important affairs of a state are those of war and ritual sacrifice. Indeed, scholarly

interest in early China generally focuses on these most important issues of history. Consequently, the politics, economy, philosophy, art and literature of early China have long been the center of academic research. Modern academic disciplines further divide these researches into specific subcategories, yet they are still organized according to the above major interests, which, to borrow anthropological terminology, fall into the category of the "great tradition." Our understanding of early China would be incomplete if interdisciplinary studies were not emphasized and if the "little traditions" of the past were not considered. The philosophy of the body, conventionally a subject of the "little traditions," bridges the disciplines of cultural studies and contributes to our understanding of early China. For this reason, it deserves scholarly attention.

In early China studies, the body is often treated as a medical subject. Researches on the medical body explicate its role in the understanding and treatment of illness, describing its significance in the formation and development of early Chinese medical thought and practice. Nevertheless, such research says little about the social meanings of the body. Was the body only a pathological matter? Abundant materials in medical documents as well as in other texts disprove this assumption. Still, scholars in early China studies trend to ignore the social and political significance of the body. Instead of acknowledging that the philosophy of the body contributed fundamentally to political institutions and social practices in early China, they reduce references to the body to the level of rhetoric, regarding such references as nothing more than political metaphors or argumentative devices. This oversimplified treatment of the social meaning of the body needs to be revised.

Some recent scholarship on early Chinese philosophy has begun to analyze the relationship between the concept of the body and other cultural institutions. In this research, the body is no longer a mere medical subject, nor is it a peripheral reference in discussions of philosophy. Instead, the body is understood as a site where metaphysical ideas become concrete and as a channel through which philosophy interacts with the world. The term "conceptualization of the body" (*shentiguan* 身體觀) frequently appears in these studies, and it serves as a starting point for philosophical exploration. Among these new studies, Cai Biming 蔡璧名 demonstrates the intimate relationship between the perception of the body and the view of nature in the pre-Qin world; Yang Rubin 楊儒賓 focuses on the early Confucian ideas of the body and indicates how these ideas shaped Confucian philosophy; and Huang Junjie 黃俊傑 explores the social practice of the body, showing how the body was ritualized for the purpose of social control.

Western literature concerning the early Chinese body concentrates mainly on medical study. Joseph Needham's research on Chinese medicine exemplifies this interest. Art history is the other field in which the body is studied in order to discern its unique place in the Chinese aesthetic tradition. However, the body is discussed in a broader cultural context in just a few articles. This tendency to separate the body from its social context has begun to be challenged only recently. Two major works written in English have contributed to this academic change: Kuang-ming Wu's *On Chinese Body Thinking* and Mark Ciskszentmihalyi's *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China.* Kuang-ming Wu's book uses Western philosophical theory to assert the concrete, rather than the Western abstract, nature of Chinese thinking by organizing its discussion under

the symbol of "body thinking." His argument is based upon the Chinese conceptualization of the body as an intelligent substance and extends this to address the social function of the body. Focusing on Mencius' promotion of the concepts of *jing* 精 and *qi* 氣, Mark Ciskszentmihalyi's book examines the development of early Confucian ethics, arguing that in early Confucian philosophical discourses virtue has a physical manifestation in the human body. The inspiration his research provides is that it explicitly demonstrates early Confucians' theorization of the body as a vehicle through which virtue is materialized and displayed.

While the contributions of these new studies on the social function of the body ought to be fully appreciated, each of these works is limited by its research scope and interest. The main body of Cai Biming's book is devoted to discussions of the medical body and natural philosophy. Ciskszentmihalyi narrows his research solely to Mencius' bodily discourse and the representativeness of his conclusion therefore becomes questionable. Concentrating on the Confucian concept of the body, Yang Rubing's work pays little attention to the rich materials of the body presented in other pre-Qin philosophical writings. The limitations in the work of Huang Junjie and Kuang-ming Wu become apparent when philosophy completely occupies the center of their studies.

All the materials covered in these studies concentrate on the pre-Qin era. Although the importance of the Warring States period in the development of Chinese philosophy need not be questioned, the neglect of Han philosophical discourse and social practice concerning the body inevitably undermines the comprehensiveness and depth of their research. The Han dynasty is the time when correlative cosmology integrates the

philosophy of the body formulated in the Warring States period with the contemporary political construction and maintenance of social control. The Han philosophy of the body permeates Han culture and influences profoundly people's thought and deeds. Han dynasty writings in the areas of history, literature, religion, and philosophy also yield rich material concerning the body. To understand the social function and cultural significance of the body in early China, these Han sources cannot be ignored.

To be sure, examining the Chinese body through philosophical analysis and discussing its cultural significance purely on a theoretical level, a common weakness seen in the recent research surveyed above, are insufficient in describing the dynamic interaction between the body and society in the Chinese cultural tradition. What needs to be emphasized instead is to understand the political symbolism projected onto the body and the transformation of the body into a subject that needs to be trained for the purpose of social control.

In my dissertation, I examine primarily the received texts and recently unearthed documents from pre-Qin to Han, extracting sections from these sources to demonstrate the connection between the philosophical body and the social body. This textual approach means that my dissertation is not primarily theoretical. However, this does not suggest that Western bodily discourses will be completely excluded from my discussion. When it is appropriate, I will refer to certain Western literature on the body to strengthen my argument.

My dissertation is composed of three chapters. Chapter I discusses the relationship between physiognomy and the body. The central argument of this chapter is

that in early China physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相術), a technique of divination, read the body for political purposes. Examining Warring States to Han texts, we see that physiognomy occupied a spot at the center of the political world. It was used to solve succession problems, relieve intellectual anxiety generated by social mobility, link the Han imperial body to divine power and transform the female body into a political investment for Han elite families. Because of its political influence, physiognomy inevitably became a concern in philosophical discussions. Early philosophers such as Mencius, Xunzi presented different views on physiognomy, which are adopted and developed by the Han thinkers Wang Chong and Wang Fu.

The relationship between the body and politics is the focus of chapter II. Discussions in this chapter are organized around two topics, the political theory and political practice of the body in early China, and are divided into three sections. Section one examines the metaphorical meaning of the body in political discourse. I argue that the physical structure of the body was equated with the structure of the state. By linking the ruler's body with the body of the state, political legitimacy was best argued and manifested. Section two looks at the ethical meanings of the body. I argue that the humane treatment of people's body and the brutal damaging of the body of the innocent were presented and read as testimonies of the ethical nature of the state. The role of the body in actual policy-making is discussed in section three. I will single out Han China's relationship with the Xiongnu nomadic people to highlight the use of the body in creating efficient foreign politics.

Chapter III deals with the relationship between the body and ritual. The central argument of this chapter is that ritual trains the body to be acceptable to society, and society needs the normalized body to maintain its hierarchical order. To demonstrate this, I will organize my chapter according into two topics concerning the body in early ritual discourse: first, ritualizing the body: and second, embodying the ritual. The three sections in this chapter thus discuss respectively the issues of the performative body in ritual theories and practice, the notion of *weiyi* 威儀 and the pedagogical nature of early Confucian ritual texts.

CHAPTER II

PHYSIOGNOMY AND THE BODY

Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide background to the conceptualization of the body in early China by examining the development of early Chinese physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相術). In the following discussion, I will use an expanded definition of the word physiognomy to encompass not just formal inspection but also informal judgment of a person's physical appearance. In other words, I use this term to refer to all techniques employed to read the body for political and social purposes. Following a roughly chronological order, my discussion in this chapter will be organized around two central aspects that propel this development of early Chinese physiognomy. One aspect concerns the political practice of physiognomy and the other emphasizes its philosophical theorization. The dynamic relationship between these two aspects highlights a movement in early Chinese physiognomy from an ad hoc use of physiognomy within a political context to a tendency toward philosophical systematization, a process that finds its full expression during the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). This movement, moreover, is a part of the larger picture of Han ideology and provides a philosophical basis for the body to connect with political and social constructions that took shape during the Han.

Despite abundant accounts concerning physiognomy in early Chinese historical and philosophical texts, this subject has not yet drawn much scholarly interest in either China or the West. There is little research into Chinese physiognomy in English scholarship on ancient China, which contrasts sharply with the growing fascination with the body in studies of the Chinese medical tradition and of Chinese art history. For example, in Joseph Needham's multi-volume *Science and Civilization in China*, only a scant four pages are allotted to a general introduction of Chinese physiognomy.[1] In addition to this, there are scattered comments on physiognomy in Kenneth DeWoskin, Jack Dull and Bernhard Karlgren's studies of early Chinese culture.[2] These fragmentary passages, together with Needham's relative indifference to the subject, reflect a common neglect of the Chinese physiognomic tradition and an implicit denial of its social and cultural significance.

Only two Western scholars have produced studies on Chinese physiognomy; their works, for this reason, deserve a brief review. The first of these, Livia Kohn, an expert on Chinese religion, has published three articles on the topic. Kohn's introduction to the Ming 明 encyclopedic physiognomic book *Shenxiang quanbian* 神相全編 offers the reader a clear picture of the textual development of physiognomic texts from the Tang 唐 dynasty to late imperial period. However, Kohn's focus on medieval and later texts

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[1] Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 2, *History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 363-4, 385-6.

[2] See Kenneth DeWoskin, *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), Jack Dull, "A Historical Introduction to the Apocryphal (*ch'an-wei*) Texts of the Han Dynasty" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1966), and Bernhard Karlgren, "Legends and Cults in Ancient China," in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 18, 1946: 199-365.

leads her to draw the wrong conclusion that the physiognomic tradition "ultimately goes back to the 10th century."[3] The problem of such an assertion is that it ignores pre-Tang sources, especially the Han *chenwei* 讖緯 texts which contain a rich vocabulary of physiognomic practice as well as a number of theories that were inherited by later prognosticators. Kohn's study consequently fails to recognize that the Han dynasty was actually the period of time when physiognomic terms and principles were systematized.

The strengths and deficiencies of Kohn's research are equally evident in her other articles. Kohn excels in summarizing the physiognomic tradition in a clear and economic way, providing the reader a necessary glimpse of this popular belief. Some minor mistakes that Kohn makes cause no serious damage to the overall high quality of her research, which is quite creditable and even, at times, inspiring.[4] Yet Kohn's academic interest in Taoism undermines the scope of her research. Her study is confined to medieval Taoist canons and utilizes very few early sources. Furthermore, focusing exclusively on the adoption of physiognomic theories by religious Taoism, Kohn completely ignores Confucian bodily philosophies. As a result, Kohn explains physiognomy in a strictly Taoist sense. Physiognomic examination, Kohn writes, "is the

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[3] Livia Kohn, "A textbook of physiognomy: The tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian*," *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2. (1986), p. 247.

[4] Kohn's article on the appearance of Laozi in medieval Taoist texts convincingly demonstrates that the legends of Laozi's physical features combines the Chinese physiognomic tradition, Taoist doctrine of the "immortals' bones," and the Buddhist model of a perfect body. See her "The Looks of Laozi," *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 55, 1996: 193-236. However, Kohn seems to have made a mistake in identifying the gender of the early bodily diviners Tang Ju 唐舉 and Xu Fu 許負. She addresses Tang Ju as a "she" while referring Xu Fu as a "he." There is no evidence in the early tale of Tang Ju suggesting Tang Ju is a female. However, "fu" is a common suffix for an old lady in Qin and Han times.

recognition of what is natural," and the ideal physiognomist, a sage who is in harmony with the Tao, "spontaneously intuits people's standing in the world."[5]

William Lessa's *Chinese Body Divination* is probably the only book on Chinese physiognomy in Western language. Lessa is a physical anthropologist and therefore takes an exclusively anthropological approach to Chinese physiognomy. It is both surprising and disappointing to find out that no primary early Chinese historical documents are used; Lessa's writing completely relies upon English translations of a few Warring States texts. The major portions of this book are categorizations and translations of the Ming physiognomic canon *Shenxiang quanbian*, followed by a survey of the generic connections between Chinese and Indo-European physiognomic traditions. Despite many weaknesses found in this slightly out-of-date study, Lessa's emphasis upon the social function of physiognomy is useful.[6] He correctly points out that physiognomy helped to relieve anxiety felt by intellectuals in the face of increasing social mobility, a theory fully developed in Zhu Pingyi's 祝平一 study of Han physiognomy.

Zhu Pingyi's book, *Handai de xiangrenshu* 漢代的相人術, follows the theoretical framework Lessa proposes.[7] It contains six chapters. In the introduction, Zhu gives a brief review of previous scholarships on physiognomy, criticizing primarily Lessa's research. Chapter two is a survey of the physiognomic tradition before the Han dynasty. Zhu argues that in pre-Qin times, physiognomy was used in solving succession

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[5] Kohn, "The Looks of Laozi," p. 198.

[6] See William Lessa, *Chinese Body Divination* (Los Angles: United World, 1968), especially chapter IX, pp. 177-95.

[7] Zhu Pingyi, *Handai de xiangrenshu* (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 1990).

crises and relieving a general anxiety among scholars that was generated by social mobility. Chapter three is a bit ambiguous in comparison with the clear structure of other chapters. Zhu discusses the Han conceptualization of physiognomy in this chapter, and, at the same time, gives explanations of key physiognomic terminology. Chapters four and five dwell on the political role this divination of the body played in Han time. Zhu first offers a comprehensive survey of how physiognomy is used by the Han ruling class, emperors, empresses and prime ministers, in a political context and then analyzes the social status of prognosticators and the general Han attitude towards physiognomy. A short conclusion is presented in chapter six.

Zhu's familiarity with early historical texts makes this book a great source for further research on early Chinese physiognomy. Based on concrete textual study, Zhu describes the political use of somatomancy during the Han period. The importance of physiognomy to the elite community is convincingly demonstrated and its role as a popular belief in the whole Han society is also introduced. However, the intertwined relationship between the political reading of the body and philosophical discourse on physiognomy is not fully discussed by Zhu Pingyi. Further studies on the Han philosophical systemization of physiognomy still must be done in order to fit it into the larger construction of Han ideological. My goal in this chapter therefore is to demonstrate the development of early Chinese physiognomy as a movement from a political concern to a philosophical discourse, a tendency toward systemization that culminates in the discussions of Wang Chong 王充 (ca. 27-97 CE) and Wang Fu 王符 (ca. 90-165 CE).

Physiognomy as a Political Reading of the Body

Physiognomy in pre-Qin politics

The earliest account of physiognomy in Chinese historical texts is found in the *Zuozhuan*:

> 元年春，王使内史叔服來會葬。公孫敖聞其能相人也，見其二子焉。叔服曰：“穀也食子，難也收子。穀也豐下，必有後於魯國。
> In the first year of Duke Wen, spring, the king [King Xiang of Zhou] sent Inner Scribe Shufu to come to attend the funeral [of Duke Xi]. Hearing that he was capable of giving physiognomic examinations of people, Gongsun Ao introduced his two sons to him. Shufu said, “Gu is the son who will offer you sacrifices and Nan is the one who will bury you. As for Gu, his cheek and chin are plump, and he will certainly have posterity in Lu.[8]

In this anecdote, the bodies of the sons are immediately associated with the body of the father: Gongsun Ao will be buried by his son Nan and his sacrifices will rely upon Gu. In addition to this, the bodies of the sons are also intertwined with the body of the family. The prognostication the Inner Scribe Shufu gives to Gongsun Ao clearly reveals Gongsun Ao's concern for the political fate of his clan. As a son of Qingfu 慶父, who assassinated two dukes of Lu, Gongsun Ao must feel that at the time of Shufu's visit, when Duke Xi 僖 had just died and Duke Wen 文 had so recently ascended the throne, was a

[8] Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), p. 510. Translation is mine.

dangerous moment for the Meng 孟 clan.[9] To learn the fate of his family, Gongsun Ao consulted Shufu's physiognomic knowledge and entrusted his hope upon the bodies of his sons. In Shufu's political reading of the body, the plump cheeks and chin of Gu were interpreted as auspicious signs pointing to a favorable future to the clan and offering a needed comfort to Gongsun Ao's fear.[10]

This theme of physiognomy as an important method for predicting the political future of ruling families appears repeatedly in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu*, texts concerning the events of Spring and Autumn period which were compiled by the hands of Warring States intellectuals. In this Warring States recounting of the past, the body carries political messages and weighs heavily in making decisions for the state and the clan, as the following *Zuozhuan* episode further illustrates:

> 初，楚子將以商臣為太子，訪諸令尹子上。子上曰："君之齒未也，而又多愛，黜乃亂也。楚國之舉，恒在少者。且是人也，蜂目而豺聲，忍人也，不可立也。"

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[9] Gongsun Ao's father Qingfu 慶父 was a half-brother of Duke Zhuang 莊公 of Lu. Qingfu had an incestuous relationship with his sister in law, Aijiang 哀姜, wife of the duke. When Duke Zhuang died, Qingfu assassinated his son Ziban 子般 and established Duke Min 閔公. Two years later, Qingfu also had Duke Min killed and fled to the state of Ju 莒. After the new ruler Duke Xi 僖公 ascended the throne, Lu bribed Ju to return Qingfu for punishment. Qingfu begged for pardon but this was not granted, so he committed suicide as he was returning to Lu. Gongsun Ao succeeded Qingfu as leader of the Meng clan in Lu and fathered Gu (Wenbo 文伯) and Nan (Huishu 惠叔). Later when Gongsun Ao was sent to receive his cousin Xingzhong's 襄仲 fiancée from Ju, he took the bride as his own wife. Xiangzhong and Duke Wen 文公 consequently planned to attack Ao but finally made peace with him upon the admonishment of a minister. Ao retuned the bride to Ju but subsequently fled Lu in order to join her. The people of Lu then established Gu as the head of Meng clan. Ao later returned to Lu with Gu's help but fled again to Ju after three years. Gu soon died and Nan was established. Ao once again requested to return and was permitted as the result of Nan's imploring the court. He died before his departure Qi 齊. Lu did no allow Ao to be buried in Lu. Nan, whose body became haggard when mourning the death of his father, pleaded with the court and finally buried his father in Lu. See Yang Bojun, ibid., Duke Zhuang 32: 5, p. 254, Duke Min 2: 3, pp. 262-3, and Duke Wen 7:7, 7:8, 8:5, 14:11, and 15: 14, pp. 562-3, 567, 605-6 and 609-11.

[10] Gu's son Xianzi 孟獻子 was one of the dominant ministers in the regions of Dukes Wen, Xuan 宣, Cheng 成 and Xiang 襄.

> Previously the Earl of Chu was about to make Shangchen his heir apparent and he conferred about this with Chancellor Zishang. Zishang said, "You are still young in age and you have many favorites. Disaster will occur if you dethrone him. Succession in Chu always resides in the younger ones. Moreover this man [Shangchen] has eyes like a wasp and the voice of jackal. He is vicious and should not be established.[11]

As in many *Zuozhuan* episodes, the above anecdote is yet another example of a succession crisis created by the ruler's abandonment of proper ritual and his indulgence in passions that lead him to favor an unworthy son. The minister Zishang articulates three reasons the king should not make Shangchen his heir: the first is the potential disaster caused by the capricious nature of the king's favor; the second is the rule of succession in Chu; and the third focuses on the vicious disposition of the candidate Shangchen, as indicated by some of his physical characteristics. Although the second reason is simply a fact of Chu political custom, the first and third reasons compose an interesting contrast between each other: the unpredictable nature of the king's love and the predictable character of his son. Zishang's prognostication concerning Shangchen depends exclusively on physiognomic terms, highlighting particularly his bodily features: wasp-shaped eyes and a jackal-like voice. The cruel personality of Shangchen is immediately perceived by Zishang, who points directly at the resemblances between Shangchen's physical appearance and the bodies of ferocious animals. Shangchen's body indicates that he poses a danger to the safety of the state. What is worth noticing in Zishang's rejection of this succession proposal is that Zishang's only attack on

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[11] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Wen 1: 7, pp. 513-4. Translation is mine.

Shangchen personally speaks explicitly of the fact that his body fails the physiognomic observation.

This physiognomic connection of a man's evil heart to violent animals based upon physical similarities appears repeatedly in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu*. Bodies of this type usually pose a threat to the fate of a powerful family. Another striking example from *Zuozhuan* concerns Yuejiao 越椒, a child fathered by Ziliang, the Chu minister of war. Ziwen, a wise Chu minister, notes that Yuejiao's body resembles the figure of a bear or a tiger and his voice that of a jackal and then predicts that this boy will destroy the entire Ruo'ao 若敖 clan. Ziwen's prediction comes true when Yuejiao leads an unsuccessful rebellion, which does indeed bring about the destruction of the Ruo'ao clan.[12]

Undoubtedly, the voice of a jackal is understood as an extremely ominous sign in Spring and Autumn tales. In addition to the *Zuozhuan* stories cited above, we see a similar prediction given in a *Guoyu* episode in which two half brothers of the Yangshe 羊舌 clan in Jin 晉 were born with features that resemble beasts:

> 叔魚生，其母視之，曰："是虎目而豕喙，鳶肩而牛腹，豺聲可盈，是不可饜也，必以賄死。" 遂不視。楊食我生，叔向之母聞之，往，及堂，聞其號也，乃還，曰："其聲，豺狼之聲，終滅羊舌氏之宗者，必是子也。"
> When Shuyu was born, his mother inspected him and said, "This boy has the eye of a tiger and the mouth of a pig, his shoulder is hawk-shaped and his abdomen resembles that of an ox. A ravine could be filled and yet [his ambitions] would not be satiated. He will certainly die from taking a bribe." She therefore did not raise him herself. When Yang Shiwo was born, Shuxiang's mother went to see him upon hearing this. Approaching the hall, she heard his cry and then returned, saying, "His voice is the voice of a jackal. The one who will destroy the Yangshe clan must be this boy."[13]

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[12] See Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Xuan 4: 3, p. 679.

[13] *Guoyu* 國語 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), p. 453.

This story and the other story cited earlier indicate that the voice seems to have been given particular weight in physiognomic judgments. Judging someone as having a "jackal-like voice" may have been part of a larger practice of divination by sound.[14] Still, most of the comments about ominous beast-like features during the Spring and Autumn period do have an ad hoc quality—that is, they do not seem to be part of a larger, systematized body of knowledge. This is especially true when we notice that animals as metaphors in Spring and Autumn literary writings are generally regarded as auspicious signs while physical resemblances to animals in physiognomic term is believed to be evil and inauspicious.[15] As a reflection of these contradictory perceptions of animals, the physiognomic accounts in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* show little effort of systemization in that animals are arbitrarily given a negative symbolic meaning, despite the complex, sometimes ambivalent, moralities people projected onto them as metaphors.

It is noteworthy in this connection that there is no general explanation of physiognomic principles in either *Zuozhuan* or *Guoyu*. The *Guoyu* story discussed above,

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[14] Kenneth DeWoskin argues that in early Chinese cosmological thinking divination by means of sound was probably a common practice. See his *A Song fro One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982), p. 37.

[15] For example, in the *Zuozhuan* story, a bear-shaped body suggests Yuejiao's wicked nature. However, the bear is used as an auspicious metaphor in the *Shijing* 詩經 poem "Sigan" 斯干 in which the head of a Zhou 周 noble family dreams of bears and snakes in his recently built home, which the diviner interprets as favorable: "The chief diviner will divine about them. The bears and grizzly bears, are auspicious intimations of sons. The cobras and [other] serpents, Are auspicious intimations of daughters." 大人占之，維熊維羆，男子之祥；維虺維蛇，女子之祥。Moreover, the tiger, which is presented as a metaphor of ill fortune in the *Zuozhuan* accounts, is used in *Shijing* poems to describe mighty ministers. In the poems "Changwu" 常武 and "Panshui" 泮水, tiger-liked generals are portrayed as heroic defenders of the Zhou kingdom and the Lu state. See James Legge, *The She King* (Taibei: Wenzhi chubanshe, 1981), p. 244. Koko Takezoe's 竹添光鴻 *Maoshi huijian* 毛詩會箋 (Taibei: Datong shuju, 1975), Vol. 3, pp. 2010, 2207. For metaphorical meanings of animals in early China, see Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002) and Victor Mair's review on *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 122, No. 4. (2002), pp. 841-6.

in which Shuxiang's mother recognizes the jackal-like voice of the infant Yang Shiwo and predicts that he will destroy the Yangshe clan, has a much more elaborated version in *Zuozhuan*.[16] It begins with a lengthy lecture given by Shuxiang's mother on the devastating nature of female beauty and ends with a quick physiognomic prognostication. The long speech focuses entirely on the value of historical precedents and the physiognomic diagnosis serves as a vivid demonstration of the lesson drawn from them. The logic behind the mother's prophecy is simply an old belief that "a wolf pup has a cruel heart" (*langzi yexin* 狼子野心).[17]

A hint of some of the ideas behind physiognomy can be seen in another *Guoyu* account. A certain Yang Chufu 陽處父 once lodged at Ning Ying's 甯嬴 house. Believing that Yang Chufu was a true gentleman, Ning Ying followed him. After talking with Yang Chufu on the road, Ning Ying decided to return to home. When his wife asked the reason Ning Ying said:

> 吾見其貌而欲之，聞其言而惡之。夫貌，情之華也；言，貌之機也。身為情，成於中。言，身之文也。言文而發之，合而後行，離則有釁。今陽子之貌濟，其言匱，非其實也。
> I observed his appearance and desired to [follow] him; but I disliked him after hearing his words. Appearance is the full expression of disposition and words the essence of appearance. Disposition is generated by the body and formulates

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[16] The *Zuozhuan* story tells that Shuxiang wants to take a daughter of Wuchen 巫臣 and Xiaji 夏姬 as his wife, but this plan is rejected by his mother. The mother first points out that Xiaji has brought death to her three husbands, a ruler, one of her sons and two ministers and destroyed the state of Chen 陳. She then lists those beautiful women in history who have brought disaster to dynasties and families, concluding that unless one is virtuous and righteous, taking such a wife as will certainly destroy the family. After hearing this, Shuxiang dares not to marry the daughter of Xiaji but is forced to do so by the command of this ruler. When his son Boshi 伯石 (Yang Shiwo) is born, Shuxiang's mother goes to see the infant and she hears the jackal-liked voice of the new baby. She predicts that Boshi is the one who will destroy the Yangshe clan. See Yang Bojun, Duke Zhao 28: 2, pp. 1492-3.

[17] Ibid.

> itself within the heart. Words are the ornaments of the body. [Only when] words are polished and disposition is exposed [by appearance], and these two are in accordance with each other then can things be done. If they are in conflict with each other disaster will occur. Now Master Yang's appearance excels but his words are deficient, this does not show what he truly is.[18]

Ning Ying's criticism of Yang Chufu indicates a popular idea that appearance reflects one's character. This adds a philosophical tone to the practice of physiognomy and foreshadows the bodily philosophy of Mencius that will be discussed later. However, Ning Ying's answer indeed shows a suspicious attitude toward the bodily prognostication. Ning Ying delivers a dual criticism. The first criticism points to Yang Chufu's duplicity, his physical appearance creates a false impression that covers up what he truly is. The second is a self-criticism. By examining Yang Chufu's words Ning Ying realizes that observing only appearance can lead to a false reading of a person. Thus while Ning Ying acknowledges that appearance is the full expression of disposition, he nevertheless stresses that words are a more reliable source for understanding a man. From this point of view, Ning Ying seems to be undercutting an excessive belief in physiognomy and is suggesting that ultimately what a person says is more important.

In addition to the lack of a theory or clear system of physiognomy in pre-Qin texts, we see there is no professional physiognomist mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* stories. Instead, physiognomic inspections are said to be given by wise ministers, including female leaders of the family, and are presented as evidence of their ability to make correct judgments. Their reading of the physical features is yet another demonstration of their ability to recognize signs that carry political significance,

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[18] *Guoyu*, p. 394.

including dressing, demeanor and bodily movements. Still, the issue dominating this type of political reading of the body is the concern for the survival of a state or a clan.[19] The body is thus transformed into an analyzable source in order to make needed predictions that offer proper advice in a political context. Such an adoption of physiognomy stays in line with the overall use of divination in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu*. Various forms of divination, dreams and the appearance of ghosts for example, convey a message that is ubiquitous in these texts—the importance of listening to good advice.[20] In these stories, wise ministers often function as diviners. They are indispensable to the political body of the state or family because of their knowledge of ritual and historical precedents and their ability to judge people and events that are based upon keen observation. Within this political context, physiognomy, adopted (or probably practiced) by the elite society, is utilized as an important form of advice that must be consulted and heeded by political leaders.

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[19] Zhu Pingyi argues in his book that in Spring and Autumn period physiognomy was used to make succession decisions. (p. 28) His theory is that the Zhou *zongfa* 宗法 system gradually declined during that time and for the priority of the first son in the line of succession was seriously challenged. Zhu further cites Du Zhengsheng's 杜正勝 research on this topic. Du believes that during the Spring and Autumn period, all sons of a ruler could be equal candidates for the throne. The final decision was made and publicized in the *li* 立 ritual, which was a public ceremony to announce the name of the heir apparent to the nobles and other states. However, a careful examination of the physiognomic accounts in *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* shows that Zhu's conclusion need to be revised. Although there is evidence to support his theory, many other stories are not linked to succession crises. Rather, they demonstrate a general fear among leaders of eminent clans concerning the ill fortune of their families that is indicated by the inauspicious physical features of their descents. For Zhu Pingyi's theory, see his *Handai de xiangrenshu*, pp. 23-37. For Du Zhengsheng's article, see "Zhou dai fengjian de jianli: fengjian yu zongfa" in *Zhongguo shanggushi daidinggao* 中國上古史待定稿 (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1985), Vol. 3, pp. 136-9.

[20] For discussion on the *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* narratives, see David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

The use of physiognomy seemed to have shifted to a different focus as we come to the mid-to late-Warring States period. One sees in the historical and philosophical texts of this era a growing anxiety about knowing people and appreciating talent, and these concerns occupied the center of many physiognomic exercises. Dramatic changes in social structure took place during the Warring States period. The Zhou feudal politics (*fengjian* 封建) and *zongfa* system that had already undergone a gradual decline finally fell apart completely. Along with population increase, agricultural improvement, the establishment of big cities, the emergence of new types of warfare and the flourishing of philosophy, changes in every social aspect contributed together to the formation of a different world.[21] The rigidly stratified society that once defined the Spring and Autumn period diminished, allowing freer movement for "an individual from one social stratum to another."[22] This transition provided the *shi* 士 class with the opportunity for upward social mobility, as official positions were no longer reserved for aristocrats. Rank and nobility were granted on the basis of merit rather than upon bloodline. This change is reflected in the following comment from the early Warring States philosopher Mozi 墨子: "Merits are evaluated and ranks distributed accordingly, therefore no officials could

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[21] For studies of Warring States social change, see, for example, Li Zongdong's 李宗侗 "Fengjian de jieti" 封建的解體, in *Zhongguo shanggushi daidinggao*, ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 549-85, Yang Kuan's 楊寬 *Zhanguo shi* 戰國史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1980) and Xu Zhuoyun's *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965).

[22] Xu Zhuoyun, ibid, p. 1.

enjoy constant nobility and no commoner would remain inferior forever" (量功而分祿，故官無常貴，而民無終賤).[23]

Rulers of the Warring States, in their constant competition for hegemony, felt the urge to select men of talent. Virtuous and capable men were regarded as vital to the government and they were promoted from all social strata. The *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 correctly points this out:

> 身定，國安，天下治，必賢人。古之有天下也者，七十一聖。觀於春秋，自魯隱公以至哀公十有二世，其所以得之，所以失之，其術一也。得賢人，國無不安， 名無不榮；矢賢人，國無不危，名無不辱。先王之索賢人無不以也，極卑極賤，極遠極勞。
> To secure the body, pacify the state and govern the world one must use worthy men. In antiquity, there were seventy two sages who ruled the world. Observing *Chunqiu*, from Duke Yin of Lu to Duke Ai there were twelve generations. That they were successful or failed depended upon one principle. If virtuous men were selected, no state would be in disharmony and no ruler's name would not be glorified. If virtuous men were lost, no state would not be in danger and no ruler's name would not be stained. As for former kings' seeking virtuous men, none of them would not be used, regardless of how low and humble their status might be, how far away they might live and how taxing it might be to visit them.[24]

In the face of a social trend such as this, the ability to know people became a requirement for the ruler. Many texts compiled during the Warring States contain rich discourses on this topic and they are designed to train the ruler in how to evaluate people. Physiognomy is an important part of this education. For example, the chapter "Xuan jiang" 選將 in the

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[23] See Sun Yiran 孫詒讓 *Mozi xiangu* 墨子閒詁, chapter "Shangxian" 尚賢, (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), p. 27.

[24] Xu Weiyu 許維遹 *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi* 呂氏春秋集釋 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), chapter 22, section 5, p. 1051. My translation is different from John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel's. For their translation, see *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 578.

Warring States military text *Liu tao* 六韜 lists eight criteria (*ba zheng* 八徵) in selecting a general. The *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 and *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 contain similar chapters, "Wenwang guanren" 文王官人 and "Guanren" 官人, in which six principles (*liu wei* 六微) are given for the purpose of observing people.[25] While the *Liu tao* chapter focuses exclusively on judging a man's virtue, principles advocated both in *Da Dai Liji* and *Yi Zhoushu* argue for the necessity of examining physical appearance as well. The theory behind the principles in such texts as *Liu tao* and *Yi Zhoushu* is that external appearance displays one's inner heart (*cheng zai qi zhong, ci xian yu wai* 誠在其中，此見於外) through the movement of *qi* 氣.[26] *Qi* generates five types of emotions—joy, anger, desire, fear and worry—that determine one's personality. One's facial features and other physical characteristics such as the voice give expression to these emotions. Through observing voice (*sheng* 聲), complexion (*se* 色), and appearance (*mao* 貌), a ruler can recognize the inner quality of a man.

Apparently the *Da Dai Liji* and *Yi Zhoushu* passages allude to the influence of physiognomy on Warring States political philosophy. Such influence is also reflected in the Warring States revision of early tales that detail elements of bodily prognostication. The most famous tale of this type is probably the Shang 商 king Wuding's 武丁 search for the sage minister Fu Yue 傅說. As reported in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji*, Wuding sees a sage named Yue in his dream. He compares the appearance of all of his officials to

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[25] See Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 *Da Dai Liji jiegu* 大戴禮記解詁 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), chapter 10. Zhu Youzeng 朱右曾 *Yi Zhoushu jixun jiaoshi* 逸周書集訓校釋 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), chapter 7.

[26] See Wang Pinzhen, *Da Dai Liji jiegu*, chapter 10, pp. 3B-4A.

this sage, but none of them resemble him. Wuding then dispatches ministers to search for such a man throughout the kingdom and subsequently finds Fu Yue.[27] As seen in this account, searching for a worthy man can, and in this case does, make use of physiognomy. The king in this case performs the same art as a bodily diviner does: he recognizes a man by reading his body.

In addition to assisting the rulers, the practice of physiognomy during the Warring States addresses another social need. For those who desire to promote their own social class, physiognomy is an effective pill to soothe their pain when reality disappoints them. This is caused by the fact that while Warring States social mobility gives the *shi* group greater political opportunity, it is at the same time a source of frustration. Numerous stories of immediate appreciation received from a ruler and instant career success ignited the hearts of ambitious intellectuals. They traveled from state to state selling their doctrines and seeking government positions. To the majority of them, reality proved to be cruel. These failed men needed an explanation for their lack of success; and they also wanted a prediction of their future. Physiognomy, as a form of divination, helped to solve this social anxiety. For example, *Shiji* says that after Cai Ze's 蔡澤 political pursuits failed he asked the famous physiognomist Tang Ju for an explanation.[28]

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[27] *Shiji*, 2: 102 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996). Sima Qian must have adopted this story from Warring States sources. This story also appears in the *Shangshu* 尚書 chapter "Shuo ming" 說命. However, the authenticity of the *Shangshu* chapter is highly problematic. It is traditionally believed to be one of the Eastern Jin 東晉 scholar Mei Zi's 梅賾 forgeries. For discussion of the *Shangshu* chapters see Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, *Shangshu tonglun* 尚書通論 (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1957).

[28] Cai Ze's biography in *Shiji* reads: "[Cai Ze] traveled and sought employment among feudal lords and in many states, both large and small. But he was not appreciated. He thereupon went to Tang Ju for physiognomic inspection" (遊學干諸侯，小大甚眾。不遇，而從唐舉相). See *Shiji* 79: 2418.

This instance in *Shiji* of reporting the name of a physiognomist is important. In the Warring States texts we see for the first time professional prognosticators emerge. Such names as Gubu Ziqing 姑布子卿, Tang Ju and Jiufang Yan 九方歅 represent the beginning of a textual tradition of physiognomy. As their names appear in historical and philosophical documents, physiognomic records begin to have an authoritative voice. The implication of this must be understood in a larger philosophical context, as a variety of schools of thought and intellectual traditions took shape at the same time during the Warring States period. Similar to the formation of an early Chinese medical school, in which fundamental principles were built up by primary figures such as the physicians who counted themselves followers of the Yellow Emperor, the appearance of physiognomic masters helped a tradition of bodily divination to take shape around them, and this lead further to a systematization of physiognomy that was entirely congruent with the systematizing trends that characterize Han thought more generally.[29]

Physiognomy and Han imperial bodies

As I have discussed in the section above, physiognomy was used in the Spring and Autumn period to make political predictions about states or powerful families. Moreover, the Warring States period saw a growing concern about recognizing political talent, and this perhaps led to a more widespread application of "techniques of recognition," including physiognomy. I have also noted that physiognomy became more

[29] Later physiognomic texts often attribute their authorships to early masters such as Tang Ju. For a brief summary of textual tradition of physiognomy, see Livia Kohn's article on the *Shenxiang quanbian*: "A Textbook of Physiognomy: The Tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian*," *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2. (1986).

systematized during the Han, which may indeed be related to the appearance and greater status of physiognomists. But there is something else new during the Han that should be explored here before turning to the systematizing trends, and that is the appearance of political myths that center upon the body of the Han ruler. In Han historical narrative, physiognomy was manipulated to create political myths that read the physical signs of Han imperial bodies as evidences of their heavenly bestowed authority. By linking their bodies to a divine source, these myths helped to declare and affirm the political legitimacy of Han rulers.

Mythical stories concerning the body functioning as political narratives is most evident in the biography of the Han emperor Liu Bang 劉邦 (r. 206-195 BCE). In Sima Qian's *Shiji*, the opening paragraphs of the biography emphasize the message that the future emperor has a destiny bestowed by Heaven. Liu Bang, we are told, had a supernatural birth, as his mother conceived him after a dragon covered her body. His divine origin was also manifested by visible signs on his own physical body: supposedly he had seventy-two black dots on his left leg. The number seventy-two is composed by multiplying two other cosmological numbers: eight, symbolizing earth, and nine, symbolizing heaven. Sima Qian claims that people also observed a dragon above Liu Bang's body when he was sleeping, and they also knew where he might be hiding by observing the clouds, natural phenomena that are also associated with dragons. The theme of recognizable signs prevalent in the myths surrounding Liu Bang is confirmed by physiognomic anecdotes. Liu Bang was first recognized by Elder Lü 呂公, a physiognomist who married his daughter to him:

單父人呂公，善沛令，避仇從之客，因家沛焉。沛中豪桀吏聞令有重客，皆往賀。蕭何為主吏，主進，令諸大夫曰：“進不滿千錢，坐之堂下。”高祖為亭長，素易諸吏，乃紿為謁曰“賀錢萬”，實不持一錢。謁入，呂公大驚，起，迎之門。呂公者，好相人，見高祖狀貌，因重敬之，引入坐。蕭何曰：「劉季固多大言，少成事。」，，，呂公曰：“臣少好相人，相人多矣，無如季相，願季自愛。臣有息女，願為季箕帚妾。”

Elder Lü from Shanfu befriended the magistrate of Pi. While avoiding a foe, he followed the magistrate as a guest and thereupon dwelt in Pi. Hearing that the magistrate had an important guest, able clerks of Pi all went to greet him. Xiao He was the chief clerk and took charge of the congratulatory money. He commanded those honored guests, saying, "If the money does not reach one thousand, one should be seated lower down in the hall." The emperor [Liu Bang] was a village constable and he always disdained those clerks. He then deceitfully wrote a letter, claiming [that he brought] congratulatory money of ten thousand cash; but in fact he carried no money with him. When the letter was delivered, Elder Lü was greatly surprised. He rose up and welcomed him at the door. Elder Lü was a man who was fond of physiognomy. He saw the emperor's appearance and deeply respected him. He invited him in and offered him a seat. Xiao He said, "Liu Ji always talks big but seldom accomplishes anything." .... Elder Lü said, "From a young age I have been fond of physiognomy. Many have I inspected and none of them had your appearance. I hope that you will take good care of yourself. I have a daughter and I want her to serve you as your wife."[30]

A comparison between Elder Lü's appreciation of Liu Bang and Xiao He's contempt for him is highlighted in the above anecdote. This makes the recognition of Liu Bang even more apparent and important. Instead of being announced by a worthy minister, Liu Bang's future achievement is implied by a physiognomic expert. The episode that follows the one cited above further articulates Liu Bang's auspicious appearance by introducing another anonymous physiognomist who predicts Liu Bang's emperorship: "The lord's physiognomy is so noble it cannot be expressed in words" (君相貴不可言).[31]

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[30] Takigawa Kametaro 瀧川資言, *Shiji huizhu kaozheng* 史記會注考證 (Zhengzhou: Beiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1999), pp. 615-7.

[31] *Shiji huizhu kaozheng*, p. 618.

The irony of the future chief minister Xiao He's inability to recognize his ruler's potential and the prognosticators' assertions points to the important role physiognomy played in the creation of the Han dynastic myth. Xiao He's criticism of Liu Bang reflects a challenge that historical narratives of the founding of the Han must overcome: that is, how to reconcile Liu Bang as an indecent commoner with Liu Bang as a son of Heaven? To solve this problem, Sima Qian repeatedly claims that Liu Bang's rulership is bestowed by heaven. In his preface to "The Monthly Chart of the Transitional Period Between Qin and Han" 秦漢之際月表序, Sima Qian writes: "Is not this [Liu Bang becoming emperor] because of heaven! Is not this because of heaven! If [he, Liu Bang] had not been great sage, who else could have been able to receive the mandate at that moment and become an emperor?" (豈非天哉！豈非天哉！非大聖孰能當此受命而帝者乎！) That heaven grants Liu Bang the emperorship (*tian shou* 天授) is again affirmed through Zhang Liang 張良 and Han Xin's 韓信 words.[32] In this creation of the political legitimacy of the first Han emperor, physiognomy as a form of divination provides the historian yet another authoritative voice to assert Liu Bang's heavenly destiny. Thus, as Sima Qian concludes, Liu Bang "indeed obtained the Heavenly authority" (*de tian tong yi* 得天统矣).[33]

Like his ancestor, the founder of Eastern Han, Liu Xiu 劉秀 (r. 25-57), had to deal with the same challenge in claiming legitimacy. Liu Xiu had to distinguish himself

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[32] *Shiji huizhu kaozheng*, pp. 1178, 3081, and 4085.

[33] *Shiji huizhu kaozheng*, p. 696.

from many other competitors from the Liu family in the struggle for the throne. His biography in *Hou Hanshu* directly links his body with that of Liu Bang. Their faces show similar characteristics. Both of them are portrayed as having a high nose (*long zhun* 隆準) and a beautiful beard (*mei xumei* 美鬚眉). While Liu Bang's face looks akin to a dragon (*longyan* 龍顏), Liu Xiu possesses a sun-shaped forehead (*rijiao* 日角), another divine facial feature.[34] Undoubtedly, the striking facial features, which Liu Xiu and Liu Bang shared, manifest the fact that authority is continued within the same ruling family. Legitimacy therefore is inherited from the great ancestor to the equally great descendent, highlighted by their bodily resemblances to the most prestigious natural objects: the dragon and the sun.

In addition to facilitating the myth of dynastic origins, the body was also an important political source Han politicians resorted to when legitimacy was in question. Among the Western Han emperors, Emperor Xuan 宣帝, Liu Xun 劉詢 (r. 73-49 BCE), was the only ruler besides Liu Bang whose physical appearance had unique features. Emperor Xuan was praised as a ruler who rejuvenated (*zhongxing* 中興) the declining power of Western Han. Nevertheless, his birth proposed a problem to the dynastic glory. Emperor Xuan was the grandson of Liu Ju 劉據, the one-time heir apparent (*li taizi* 戾太子) who was executed by his father Emperor Wu 武帝 (r.140-87 BCE). His grandparents and parents died because of the black magic event (*wugu* 巫蠱) that occurred during the later period of Emperor Wu's reign. As an infant, Emperor Xuan was

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[34] See *Hou Hanshu*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), p. 1.

put in jail and was almost killed by his great grandfather. When he grew up, he married a daughter of the court eunuch Xu Guanghan 許廣漢 and lived as a commoner. His grand uncle, Emperor Zhao 昭帝 (r. 86-74 BCE), died without an heir. After an unsuccessful succession, Emperor Xuan was established by the chief general Huo Guang 霍光.

Because of Emperor Xuan's problematic background, Han historians were faced with the challenge of how to prove his legitimacy as a successor. After all, he was once an imperial criminal and had lost all his royal prestige. The solution, as seen in *Hanshu*, involved two strategies: one was a ritual-based argument pointing out Emperor Xuan's legal and moral qualifications, as voiced in Huo Guang's succession proposal; the other featured a portrayal of Emperor Xuan's unique physical body. His torso and feet were covered with hair and his body emitted brilliant light when he was sleeping. The detail of Emperor Xuan's bodily hair is a clear reminder of Liu Bang's awesome beard. His luminous body resembles again his ancestor's vapor-generating body. Their physical similarities unquestionably created a symbolic tie that bound the two rulers together and provided visible evidence that allowed the descendant to claim his place in the line of succession.

From the above examples, we see that Liu Bang's body is reduplicated. The bodily characteristics that once symbolized Liu Bang's political legitimacy reappear in the bodies of his descendants as proofs of their own authority. Physiognomy, with a shared vocabulary and principles, unifies the imperial bodies, creating ultimately a sense of political continuity that sustains the fate of the dynasty.

The value of physiognomy in affirming political legitimacy was fully understood and utilized by Han politicians. Their adoption of physiognomy resonated with Sima Qian's description of the heavenly authority (天統) that Liu Bang had received. It also participated in the construction of Han ideology and served actively in the discourse of the orthodox succession (*zheng tong* 正統) that was proposed by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒(c. 179-c. 104 BCE) and debated among many scholar officials. A comparison between two historical writings of Eastern Han illustrates the role physiognomy played in such a political discourse. *Hou Hanshu* presents a brief description of Emperor Ming's 明帝 (r. 58-75) face: "The emperor was born with plump cheeks and chin" (帝生而豐下).[35] However, the original source in *Dongguan Hanji* 東觀漢紀 is much more detailed. In addition to plump cheeks, Emperor Ming is described as having a sharp forehead and a red neck, and these features "resemble the ancestor Yao" (有似堯世祖).[36] The articulation of the physical similarity between Emperor Ming and the sagely king Yao is significant. In an article discussing the development of the Five Virtues (*wude* 五德) theory in early China, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 has convincingly demonstrated how Yao was transformed from an ancient legendary king to the very ancestor of Han imperial family.[37] As Gu Jiegang shows, from the Han Gongyang 公羊 school, Liu Xiang 劉向

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[35] *Hou Hanshu*, p. 95.

[36] See Wu Shuping 吳樹平 annotates *Dongguan Hanji jiaozhu* 東觀漢紀校註 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 55.

[37] See Gu Jiegang, "Wude zhongshi guan xia de zhengzhi he lishi" 五德終始觀下的政治和歷史, in *Gu shi bian* 古史辯 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), Vol. 5, pp. 500-08.

(ca. 77-6 BCE), Wang Fu 王符 to apocryphal texts, theories and stories were produced in order to give the Han rulers a respectable ancestor in the circulating course of the Five Virtues and consequently prove the legitimacy of the Han replacement of the Qin.[38] Physiognomy, in the writing of such a history, adduced visible evidence for the construction of this ideology.[39]

That the body served as a testimony for political legitimacy can be seen from its power of denial. Physiognomy was often manipulated in historical writing to deprive the legitimacy of a usurper. The Han dynasty was briefly interrupted by Wang Mang 王莽 from 8 to 25 CE. To Han historians, Wang Mang was a problematic figure. He was an ardent Confucian follower who had tried to realize many Confucian ideas that had been advocated by scholars for generations but had so far only found textual expression. Yet Wang Mang was a usurper who ended the rule of Western Han and put himself on the throne. To Han historians, Wang Mang's reign was unacceptable and needed to be denounced. The Latter Han attack on Wang Mang was intensified in two ways: rebuking his morality and demonizing his body. *Hanshu* portrays Wang Mang as a hypocritical man who had stolen the throne by deceitful actions. In addition to moral corruption, Wang Mang's body was depicted as presenting many evil features. As *Hanshu* describes:

> 莽為人侈口弗頤，露眼赤精，大聲而嘶。長七尺五寸，好厚履高冠，以麁裝衣，反膺高視，瞰臨左右。是時有用方技待詔黃門者，或問以莽形貌，待詔

[38] Gu Jiegang, ibid.

[39] The value of physiognomy in arguing for political legitimacy was also used by men of ambition in early China. During the war between Liu Bang and Xiang Yu 項羽, Kuai Tong 蒯通 pretended to be a physiognomist so as to persuade Han Xin to compete for the throne (*yi xiangren shui Han Xin*, 以相人說韓信), see *Shiji* 92: 4075-6.

> 曰："莽所謂鴟目虎吻豺狼之聲者也，故能食人，亦當為人所食。"問者告之，莽誅滅待詔，而封告者。後常翳雲母屏面。
> As a person Wang Mang had a large mouth and a short chin. His eyes were protuberant and his pupils red. His voice was loud and hoarse. He was seven *chi* and five *cun* tall. He liked thick-soled shoes and wore a tall hat, and stuffed his clothes with furs. He had a dented chest and looked with his head facing up. To those around him, he looked at them as if watching far away. At that time there was one who, because of his expertise, served as a palace attendant. When asked about Wang Mang's appearance, the attendant said, "Wang Mang is what is to be called a man with the eyes of an owl, the mouth of a tiger and the voice of a jackal. Therefore he is able to eat people but will also be eaten by people." The inquirer reported this to Wang Mang; Wang Mang killed the attendant and rewarded the reporter. After that Wang Mang often hid his face behind a mica fan. No one except his favorites could see him.[40]

It would be naive to believe the *Hanshu* passage provides a real portrait of Wang Mang.[41] Wang Mang's body is exaggerated and exemplifies all the physical features of evil men throughout history, especially those of the first emperor of Qin.[42] Contrary to the Han emperors' great bodies that are meant for public display and inspiring awe, Wang Mang's stereotyped body is concealed behind a fan. The depravity of Wang Mang's face and the malformation of his body symbolize the illegitimacy of his rule. The message behind this

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[40] *Hanshu* 99: 4124.

[41] Wang Mang himself was a believer in the apocrypha. He forged many auspicious signs to justify his usurpation. *Hanshu* reports that Wang Mang promoted two commoners as generals because their looks fit well with physiognomic principles. See *Hanshu* 99: 4101.

[42] The first emperor of Qin is described as having a bee-shaped nose, long eyes, hawk-liked shoulders and the voice of a jackal (蜂準，長目，鷙鳥肩，豺聲). See *Shiji huizhu kaozheng*, Vol. 2, p. 426.

manipulation of history is clear: Wang Mang is one who should not appear in the royal portraits.[43]

Physiognomy and the female body in Han

The physiognomic transformation of the body into a political subject is also evident in the Han treatment of the female body. In Han elite society, the female body was politicized and evaluated in physiognomic terms.

In Han *yinyang* cosmology, the dominance of *yang* forces was absolutely unquestionable. As an embodiment of the *yin*, women were subordinate to men. But this gender differentiation in terms of social status in Han China was not as rigid and arbitrary as seen in later Neo-Confucian discourse. Early Chinese cosmological thinking acknowledged exchange and transformation occurring between *yin* and *yang* energies. Influenced by this, Han ideology also emphasized a balanced relationship between men and women. As Ban Gu 班固(32-92 CE) wrote in his preface to the "Biographies of the Imperial Consort Families" (*Waiqi zhuan* 外戚傳), "the transformation of *yin* and *yang* is the primary principle of the ten thousand creatures" (陰陽之變，萬物之統也).[44]

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[43] We see abundant records concerning physiognomy in Han history. Like other *fangshi* 方士 experts, physiognomists directly served the emperor. Sometimes they participated unexpectedly in crucial political events. For example, when general Li Ling 李陵 was captured by the Xiongnu 匈奴, Emperor Wu wanted to know if Li Ling had fought to the death, so he summoned his mother and wife and had a physiognomist inspect them. They did not have the appearance of mourning for the death. Later when he heard Li Ling had surrended to the Xiongnu, he was extremely angry (上欲陵死戰，召陵母及婦，使相者視之，無死喪色。後聞陵降，上怒甚). *Hanshu* 54: 2455.

[44] *Hanshu* 97: 3933.

Throughout Chinese history, women often held considerable power in politics. Their actions could be determinant at certain historical moments. Liu Bang's wife, Empress Lü 呂后 (r. 187-180 BCE), is a famous example of Han women's impact upon the course of history. Nevertheless, in the Han political world the female body was transformed into a political investment by men of ambition. The famous Han minister Huang Ba's marriage with a daughter of a shaman demonstrates this:

> 始霸少為陽夏游徼，與善相人者共載出，見一婦人，相者言："此婦人當富貴，不然，相書不可用也。"霸推問之，乃其鄉里巫家女也。霸卽取為妻，與之終身。
> Previously when Huang Ba was young he served as a sheriff in Yangjia. Sharing a carriage, he [once] went out with a physiognomist. They saw a woman and the physiognomist said, "This woman will be rich and noble; otherwise physiognomic books are unreliable." Huang Ba inquired about her. She was a daughter of a shaman of the village. Huang Ba then took her as his wife and maintained the marriage throughout their entire lives.[45]

Huang Ba's marriage with the daughter was purely an act of political speculation. Neither the beauty nor the virtue of the woman mattered in this marriage. Despite her low and indecent family background, she was qualified to be his wife simply because the physiognomist recognized her as profitable political capital.[46]

This political potential of the female body recognized by a physiognomist occurred also in stories concerning the Han imperial family. *Hanshu* recounts that the

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[45] *Hanshu* 89: 3635. A similar story is found in the biography of Boji 薄姬, consort of Liu Bang and mother of Emperor Wen 文帝. During the war after the fall of Qin, Boji was given to King Wei Bao 魏豹, an ally of Liu Bang. The famous physiognomist Xu Fu 許負 inspected Boji and predicted that she would give birth to an emperor. Wei Bao was delighted upon hearing this and joined the competition for the empire. See *Hanshu* 97: 3941.

[46] The social status of a shaman in Han China was very low. For a study of the Han shaman, see Lin Fushi 林富士, *Handai de wuzhe* 漢代的巫者, M.A. thesis, National University of Taiwan, 1987, pp. 26-43. Cf. Zhu Pingyi, *Handai de xiangren shu.*

mother of Empress Xu 許后, wife of Emperor Xuan, hired a physiognomist to inspect her daughter. The prognostication was so auspicious that the mother refused to marry her daughter to the future Emperor Xuan, a commoner who was cut off from his original imperial privileges at that time. The same physiognomic prediction was also given to Wang Zhengjun 王政君, wife of Emperor Yuan 元帝 (r. 48-33 BCE). After hearing that his daughter would be extremely noble, Wang Zhengjun's father trained her to be an imperial consort and presented her to the palace when she was eighteen.[47] The body of Wang Zhengjun thus paved the way to wealth for her family.

As the above examples show, physiognomy in Han China opened a channel to those who desired to join the circle of the court and provided to them an immediate access to power and wealth. As is further recorded in *Hou Hanshu*, physiognomy was also used for selecting imperial consorts:

> 漢法常因八月筭人，遣中大夫與掖庭丞及相工，於洛陽鄉中閱視良家童女，年十三以上，二十已下，姿色端麗，合法相者，載還後宮，擇視可否，乃用登御。
> The Han convention often took the chance of levying taxes in the eighth month and dispatched the Palace Grandee, the Assistant of the Lateral Courts and physiognomists to inspect virgins from good families in villages near Luoyang. Girls aged between thirteen and twenty, whose looks were decent and beautiful and accorded with physiognomic principles, were taken back to palace. After examining their qualification, they were introduced to the service of the emperor.[48]

Following this procedure, a physiognomist's judgment could change the life of a selected girl and, most importantly, could determine the fate of her family. Emperor Shun's 順帝

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[47] See *Hanshu* 97: 3964; 98: 4015.

[48] *Hou Hanshu* 10: 400. Translations of official titles are adopted from Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

(r. 126-144) wife Liang Na 梁妠 was thus promoted to be the Honorable Lady (*guiren* 貴人) among many candidates because of the physiognomist Mao Tong's 茅通 recommendation.[49]

Mao Tong's prediction concerning Liang Na was probably a political plot concocted by the Liang family. From the founding of the Eastern Han dynasty, the Liang family was at the political center. Liang Tong 梁統 was an influential governor in the Hexi 河西 region; he joined Liu Xiu's group and was granted a lordship (*gaoshan hou* 高山侯). Liang Tong's son was the grand tutor (*taipu* 太僕) to Emperor Ming and his two grandsons, Liang Hu 梁扈 and Liang Song 梁竦 were famous scholars. Liang Song's two daughters became consorts of Emperor Zhang 章帝 (r. 76-89) and one of them gave birth to Emperor He 和帝 (r. 89-105). However, at that time the Dou 竇 family controlled the court. Fearing that the Liang family would replace them, the Dou family, relying upon the influence of Empress dowager Dou 竇太后, slandered the Liang. Liang Song and his two daughters died because of this. After the death of Empress dowager Dou, the Liang family regained favor from the court. However, their political status was far from being solid. Before Emperor An 安帝 (r. 107-125) died, all the Liang men lost their official posts. When the new emperor 順帝 ascended the throne in 126, the Liang needed to secure their family.[50] Their immediate action was to send two girls from the family to the palace. During Eastern Han, becoming imperial relatives was

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[49] *Hou Hanshu* 10: 438.

[50] *Hou Hanshu* 34: 1165-88.

regarded as a shortcut to power that many elite families chose to follow, including the Liang family. It was against such a background that Liang Na was sent to the palace in 128 at the age of thirteen.

Liang Na had to compete with many other girls whose bodies had been entrusted with the hopes of their families. The physiognomist Mao Tong distinguished her from other candidates by linking her body with the imperial body. Upon seeing her, Mao Tong congratulated the court, saying that Liang Na's appearance presented a sun-shaped forehead (*rijiao* 日角) with lying moon lines (*yanyue* 偃月) on it.[51] The resemblances to both the ultimate *yang* and *yin* forces that Mao Tong discovered in her visage undoubtedly conveyed a political message: Liang Na would give birth to an emperor and she should become the empress. Yi 易 divination confirmed this and Liang Na was immediately promoted to the position of "Honored Lady"; five years later, at the age of eighteen, she became the empress. There could have been many reasons that account for the promotion of Liang Na. For example, the new Emperor Shun 順帝 might have been searching for a strong political ally. After all, Mao Tong's prediction gave the promotion a legitimate excuse, as her body resembled the natural phenomena that symbolize imperial power. With this marriage, the Liang family was guaranteed consistent political support from the court. Both Liang Na's father Liang Shang 梁商 and her brother Liang Ji 梁冀 acted as the Chief General (*da jiangjun* 大將軍). Liang Ji eventually became a

[51] *Hou Hanshu* 10: 438.

dictator in the reigns of emperors Chong 沖帝 (r. 145), Zhi 質帝 (r. 146) and Huan 桓帝 (r. 147-167).[52]

Compared with Liang Na, Empress Ma (*Mingde Ma hou* 明德馬后) and Empress Dou (*Zhangde Dou Huanghou* 章德竇皇后) were in fact rescuers of their endangered families, who had bet their political fate upon them. Empress Ma was a daughter of the famous general Ma Yuan 馬援. After Ma Yuan died, the Ma family declined. Her mother called a physiognomist to inspect her and was told that Empress Ma would become the wife of the emperor. At that time, the Ma family was oppressed by other noble clans. In order to save the family, Empress Ma's brother terminated her marriage engagement with the Dou family and appealed to the court to send her into the palace. Her brother requested that she to be examined by a physiognomist to show her qualifications for becoming an imperial consort. She was thus favored by Emperor Ming and was established as the empress.[53]

The same hope was also entrusted upon Empress Dou by her family. Both Empress Dou's grandfather and father died in prison. The survivors of the family are then described in *Hou Hanshu* as follows: "After the family declined, they frequently summoned physiognomists to ask about their fortune. Those who had seen the empress all predicted that she would enjoy extreme nobility, for her appearance was distinct from that of the consorts" (家既廢壞，數呼相公問息耗，見后者皆言當大尊貴，非臣妾貌).

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[52] *Hou Hanshu* 10: 438.

[53] *Hou Hanshu* 10: 407-8.

In 77 CE, she was sent to the palace and became the empress in the following year. Five years later, her father was granted a lordship (*hou* 侯) posthumously.[54]

As shown in above examples, presenting a female relative to the court became a desperate stake for many Eastern Han elite families in their gamble for power. Such a transformation of women into a political investment, with the assistance of physiognomy, contrasts sharply with the pre-Qin treatment of the female body. As reflected in *Zuozhuan*, for example, the female body was regarded as a threat to the stability and continuation of a clan. This destructive nature of the female body was articulated, interestingly, by a wise woman:

> 初，叔向之母妬叔虎之母美而不使，其子皆諫其母。其母曰：“深山大澤，實生龍蛇。彼美，余懼其生龍蛇以禍女。女，敝族也。國多大寵，不仁人間之，不亦難乎？余何愛焉？”使往視寢，生叔虎，美而有勇力，欒懷子嬖之，故羊舌氏之族及於難。
> Previously, Shuxiang's mother was jealous of the beauty of Shuhu's mother and therefore did not allow her to serve in the bed. All her sons admonished their mother on this. The mother said, "Deep mountains and big marshes indeed give birth to the dragon and the snake. She is beautiful and I am afraid that she will produce a dragon or a snake that will bring disaster upon you. You are a family in decline and there are many favored clans in the state. If some unworthy men slandered you, would this not be difficult to deal with? What [else] shall I begrudge?" She permitted her to serve in the bed, and she gave birth to Shuhu. [Shuhu] was a handsome and mighty man favored by Luan Huaizi, and for this reason the Yangshe clan was involved in the calamity.[55]

Although it is difficult to explain why the dragon and the snake are used as metaphors in this passage, the negative image that these two dangerous animals convey is clear. The

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[54] *Hou Hanshu* 10: 415.

[55] Because Shuhu was favored by Luan Ying 欒盈, he was killed when Fan Xuanzi 范宣子 attacked Luan Ying. Shuxiang was also imprisoned. See Yang Bojun *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Xiang 21, p. 1062.

female body is here linked to *yin* objects: deep mountains and large marshes. These are unconquerable and incomprehensible; they are death traps to man. The female body therefore is perceived as a source of danger that must be kept out of the political realm.[56]

Politicizing the female body during the Han period resulted directly from a political reality. Besides Liu Xiu, the founder of the dynasty, there were only two Eastern Han emperors who ascended the throne after the age of nineteen. Five others ranged between the ages of ten and fifteen at the time of their ascension and the rest of them were even younger than ten (Emperor Chong was two years old, Emperor Zhi was eight). The youngest Eastern Han emperor Shang 殤帝 (r. 106) was only four months old and died at the age of two.[57] This generally young age of Eastern Han emperors unavoidably put power into the hands of empresses and their families. As Zhu Pingyi summarizes, the Liang family had eleven daughters in the palace and two of them were empresses. Their marriage relationships with the court lasted through four generations. The Dou family married seven daughters to the court and two became empresses. Their imperial marriage relationships lasted five generations. The Deng 鄧 family produced five palace ladies, including two empresses. Empress dowager Deng was the most powerful ruler in the Eastern Han; she held power for twenty years.[58] Because of their connections through

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[56] For other example of a similar early concern with the danger of the female body, see Yang Bojun *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Zhao 28, pp. 1492-3.

[57] The following is a summary of the ages of Eastern Han emperors: Emperor Ming 明帝 19, died at the age of 48; Emperor Zhang 章帝 19, died at 33; Emperor He 和帝 10 to 27; Emperor Shang 殤帝 4 months old, died at 2; Emperor An 安帝 13 to 32; Emperor Shun 順帝 11 to 30; Emperor Chong 沖帝 2 to 3; Emperor Zhi 質帝 8, poisoned to death by Liang Ji at the age of 9; Emperor Huan 桓帝 was 15, Emperor Ling 靈帝 12 and Emperor Xian 獻帝 9 when they became emperors.

[58] Zhu Pingyi, p. 124.

imperial marriage, Liang Ji and Dou Xian 竇憲 were the most feared ministers of their times.

Physiognomy and the body of Han ministers

In addition to this concern with the imperial body, the Han political reading of the body also took the ministers as a subject. Abundant records in Han historical documents suggest that in Han political culture the body was conceptualized as a reflection of inner virtue. This attention on physical appearance influenced the Han selection of officials. It also generated among Han officials a social anxiety about physical perfection that physiognomic explanation could somewhat relieve.

The physical body was often equated with the moral body in Han political discourse. It was believed that a distinguished appearance reflected moral superiority. The body, following this logic, was a manifestation of political potential and ability and made a person a natural candidate for civil service. In the following passage, for example, the Han prime minister Zhang Cang 張蒼 has been verbally silenced, but his life is saved by reason of his unusual body, a body that testified to his moral worthiness:

> 苍坐法当斩，解衣伏质，身长大，肥白如瓠，时王陵见而怪其美士，乃言沛公，赦勿斩。
> Zhang Cang broke the law and was sentenced to be beheaded. Lying on the execution block, his clothes were stripped. His body was tall and big; and it was corpulent and white, looking like a gourd. At that moment Wang Liang saw him and was amazed that he was such a fine man. Wang Ling spoke to the Lord of Pi [Liu Bang] and pardoned him from execution.[59]

[59] *Shiji* 96: 2675.

In the above anecdote, Zhang Cang's body was read and his talent was discovered. The theme of recognizing people by reading their body that characterized pre-Qin physiognomic accounts reappeared in tales from Han political history. Indeed, the discovery of a great man first through physical attraction becomes a stereotype in stories relating to the founding of Western Han. Like in the story of Zhang Cang above, Han Xin's outstanding appearance miraculously saved his life when he was about to be executed.[60] In another story, we are told that because Chen Ping was so good looking, he started his career with finical assistance from a rich woman who married her granddaughter to him with the belief that "it is impossible for a man as beautiful as Chen Ping to forever suffer from a humble and destitute life" (人固有好美如陳平而長貧賤者乎).[61] In one further example, when Li Yiji 酈食其 wanted to serve Liu Bang, he recommended himself as a sixty-year-old man with an unusually tall body (年六十餘，長八尺).[62]

As I have discussed previously, *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu* stories treat the body as a source from which one can make an assessment of people. The body and bodily movements are observed and evaluated, and judgment is accordingly given, often as a prediction based upon physiognomic principles. Compared with these earlier precedents,

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[60] Han Xin was about to be executed. He saw Tenggong 滕公 at that moment and spoke to him, "Does not the ruler [referring Liu Bang] desire to obtain the world? For what reason does he kill a great man!" Tenggong was surprised by his words and admired his appearance. He released him from execution. See *Shiji* 92: 2610.

[61] *Shiji* 56: 2052.

[62] *Shiji* 97: 2692.

the Han reading of the body as a manifestation of talent and merits seems to be generally accepted.[63]

As reported in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, Emperor Wu was often impressed by subjects with impressive bodies and promoted them immediately. Jiang Chong 江充, Che Qianqiu 車千秋 and Jin Midi 金日磾 were thus favored by the emperor.[64] Gongsun Hong's 公孫弘 experience would probably serve as the best example of Emperor Wu's fascination with outstanding looks. Gongsun Hong was once selected as an erudite (*boshi* 博士) and was dispatched to the Xiongnu as a Han envoy. He was soon removed from office because Emperor Wu disliked his report on his mission. Several years later Gongsun Hong was again recommended to the court as a learned scholar. This time Gongsun Hong's memorial impressed the emperor and he received him in audience. In Emperor Wu's eyes, Gongsun Hong's appearance was, as *Shiji* writes, "very beautiful" (*rongmao shen li* 容貌甚麗) and he was instantly reinstalled.[65] The same impression

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[63] An anecdote cited in *Lunheng* 論衡 gives us a vivid description of this Han popular notion: Yan Yuan 顏淵 climbed Mount Tai with Confucius. At the top, they looked at the Changmeng 閶門 gate in the Wu 吳 capital located thousands miles away. Confucius discerned there was a white horse outside of the gate but Yan Yuan mistook it for a roll of white silk. Confucius wiped his eyes and corrected him. They then walked down. After they descended the mountain, Yan Yuan's hair turned white and his teeth fell. Because of this he died (下而顏淵髮白齒落，遂以病死). In this story, not only is Confucius' sagehood understood by his ability to discern an object thousand miles away, but also it is highlighted by the suddenly collapsed body of Yan Yuan, who exhausted his energy in a vain attempt to imitate his master. Wang Chong further provides us a Han general comment on this story: "All in all, [Yan Yuan's death] was because his *jingshen* was not equal to that of Confucius. He forced his strength to the extreme and exhausted all his energy. For this reason he died young. When common folks heard this, they all believed it is right" (蓋以精神不能若孔子，彊力自極，精華竭盡，故早夭死。世俗聞之，皆以爲然). See Liu Pansui 劉盼遂 *Lunheng jijie* 論衡集解 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), p. 80.

[64] See *Hanshu* 45: 2177, 66: 2883, and 68: 2960.

[65] *Shiji* 112: 2950. *Hanshu* 58: 2617.

was also made by Wu Liang 吳良 upon Emperor Ming of Eastern Han. Wu Liang was recommended to the court by Liu Cang 劉蒼. Reading the letter, Emperor Ming told his minister that:

> 前以事見良，鬚髮皓然，衣冠甚偉。夫薦賢助國，宰相之職。蕭何舉韓信，設壇而拜，不復考試。今以良為議郎。
> Previously I saw Wu Liang on government business. His beard and hair were white and brilliant and he dressed imposingly. Recommending virtuous men to assist the state is the duty of the prime minister. In Xiao He's promotion of Han Xin, he set up a terrace and conferred him an office upon him without evaluating and examining him. Now I appoint Wu Liang as a Gentleman Consultant.[66]

Emperor Ming's fondness for Wu Liang alludes directly to Han Xin. As we have seen above, it was Han Xin's physical appearance that saved a great general for Liu Bang, the founding emperor of the Western Han.

The Han emperors' obsessions with imposing bodies reflect the general Han conception of the body as a manifestation of talent and merit; in other words, Han people believed that a great man must have an imposing body.[67] This popular notion was so influential that even the critical historian Sima Qian expressed his surprise when the physical appearances of men he admired failed to meet this expectation. For example, in his postface to Zhang Liang's biography Sima Qian wrote that he originally thought Zhang Liang to be a big, awesome man but was surprised upon viewing his portrait to

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[66] *Hou Hanshu* 27: 943.

[67] This notion was so influential that even someone as critical as Wang Chong also believed in this. In *Lunheng* Wang Chong writes: "That people in the world know a sage is also like this. I have heard that the reason a sage is an outstanding man is because his body has unique bones and his knowledge is profound, these are why he is considered a sage" (世人之知聖，亦猶此也。聞聖人人之奇者，身有奇骨，知能博達，則謂之聖矣). See *Lunheng jijie*, p. 341.

discover thar Zhang Liang actually looked like a delicate woman.[68] The same sentiment is also expressed in Sima Qian's comment about Guo Jie 郭解, a famous *youxia* 遊俠 whom Sima Qian had himself seen:

> 太史公曰：吾視郭解，狀貌不及中人，言語不足採者。然天下無賢與不肖，知與不知，皆慕其聲，言俠者皆引以為名。諺曰："人貌榮名，豈有既乎！"
> I saw Guo Jie. His appearance was not equal to that of an average man and his words were not worthy to be recorded. However, within the whole world, men who were worthy or unworthy, intelligent or not all admired his fame. Those who regarded themselves as knights all referred to him in order to build their own reputation. The proverb says, "Using appearance to glorify one's name, is there an end of doing this?" Alas, how pitiful![69]

From the above examples, we see that Sima Qian, like many others of his time, expected great men to have imposing bodies. However, in his comments on Zhang Liang and Guo Jie, Sima Qian simultaneously verifies this Han perspective and expresses doubt about it. He actually criticizes the equation of physical appearance with merit and talent.

Although the equation of physical appearance with merit and talent was personally criticized by the great historian Sima Qian, this popular notion still played an active role in Han politics. Moreover, it was deeply involved in Han official selection, as demonstrated by the debates between Confucian scholars and the minister Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊 that are reported in the mid-Han text *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論.[70]

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[68] *Shiji* 55: 2049.

[69] *Shiji* 124: 3189.

[70] According to the *Hanshu* chapter on Confucian scholars, "Rulin zhuan" 儒林傳, a standard for selecting imperial academy students was decent appearance (太常擇民年十八以上儀狀端正者，補博士弟子). See *Hanshu* 88: 3593.

In these debates, the government was criticized for "promoting men according to their looks" (以貌舉人).[71] Indeed, in the Han political conceptualization of the body as a manifestation of virtue and merit, physical appearance became an important criterion that was used to choose a prime minister. Consequently, Huo Guang's promotion of Cai Yi 蔡義, who, as *Hanshu* describes, was eighty years old, short, and resembled an old-lady-like cripple with no beard and eyebrows (義為宰相時年八十餘，短小無鬚眉，貌似老嫗，行步俯僂，常兩吏扶夾乃能行), was attacked by his contemporaries as "not choosing the worthy in selecting prime minister" (或言光置宰相不選賢).[72]

The Han obsession for the perfect body in selecting officials was mocked by the famous Dongfang Shuo 東方朔. In a self-recommendation letter submitted to Emperor Wu, Dongfang Shuo wrote:

> 臣朔少失父母，長養兄嫂。年十三學書，三冬文史足用。十五學擊劍。十六學詩書，誦二十二萬言。十九學孫吳兵法，戰陣之具，鉦鼓之教， 亦誦二十二萬言。凡臣朔固已誦四十四萬言。又常服子路之言。臣朔年二十二，長九尺三寸，目若懸珠，齒若編貝，勇若孟賁，捷若慶忌，廉若鮑叔，信若尾生。若此，可以為天子大臣矣。

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[71] *Yantie lun*, Longxi jinghse congshu 龍溪精舍叢書 edition (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2001), Vol. 63, chapter 4, p. 3A. Wang Chong also criticizes this: "Ji Ru was favored by Emperor Hui and Deng Tong was loved by Emperor Wen. They did not have the smallest ability and possessed little talent. They simply were favored because of their fine shape, elegant feature, seductive skin and beauty." (籍孺幸於孝惠，鄧通愛於孝文。無細簡之才，微薄之能。偶以形佳骨妍，皮美色稱。), see *Lunheng jijie*, p. 3.

[72] *Hanshu* 66: 2899. In addition to good looks, bodily demeanor (*weiyi* 威儀) was also regarded as a demonstration of merit by which candidates for prime minister were assessed. Lacking a decent demeanor could mean termination of one's political ambition. For this reason Zhang Chang 張敞 and Zhou Ze 周澤 lost their chance. See *Hanshu* 76: 3222-3, *Hou Hanshu* 79: 2579. The Han admiration of an awe-inspiring demeanor can also be observed in He Xi's 何熙 biography. According to *Hou Hanshu*, He Xi was eight *chi* and five *cun* tall and presented an awe-inspiring demeanor. Emperor He considered this outstanding and promoted him. *Hou Hanshu*: 47: 1593; see also *Dongguan Hanji*, p. 704. *Hou Hanshu* also reports that a local official Deng Yan 鄧衍 was so imposing in demeanor that even Emperor Ming envied him (朕之儀貌，豈若此人). *Hou Hanshu* 33: 1153; *Dongguan Hanji*, p. 587.

> I, Shuo, your humble servant, was orphaned young and was raised by my older brother and sister-in-law. I learned character writing at the age of thirteen and became competent in secretary services three years later. At fifteen I studied fencing. At sixteen I studied *Book of Songs* and *The Documents* and I am able to recite two hundred and twenty thousands words of them. I learned Sunzi's military art at nineteen, including deployment of troops and training soldiers by means of gong and drum. I also can recite two hundred and twenty thousands words of this. In summary your humble servant Shuo is already able to recite four hundred and forty thousands words of the classics. In addition, I have always followed Zilu's motto. Your humble servant Shuo is twenty two years old, nine *chi* and three *cun* tall. My eyes are like pearls, my teeth like sparkling shells. My bravery equals that of Mengben, agility that of Qingji, purity that of Baoshu and truthfulness that of Weisheng. A man like me is indeed qualified to be a minister of the Son of Heaven.[73]

In addition boasting of his profound learning and knowledge, Dongfang Shuo exaggerates his appearance in a way that makes him exceed the great men of the past. All this leads, of course, to his assertion that he is absolutely qualified to serve the ruler. Moreover, by feminizing his appearance, describing his eyes as pearls and teeth as sparkling shells, Dongfang Shuo teases the emperor for choosing virtuous men in the same way he would choose beautiful consorts. The ruler's sincerity and the credibility of the political reading of the body are therefore totally subverted by Dongfang Shuo's parody. Dong Fangshuo's satirical remarks, together with Sima Qian's reservations about the popular expectation that great men would have an awesome body, suggests that there were serious concerns about the Western Han overemphasis upon physical appearance.

Still we see this obsession with the perfect body exercising its influence in Eastern Han politics. The practice mocked here by Dongfang Shuo became worse in this period of time as a result of the dominance of apocryphal thought (*Chenwei sixiang* 讖緯

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[73] *Hanshu* 65: 2841.

思想). As an extreme development of early Chinese correlative thinking, Eastern Han apocryphal texts mystified imperial authority by deifying the rulers' body. These texts established resemblances between the imperial bodies and natural phenomena, arguing for the indisputable power of the throne. Influenced by such thought, the equation of the body and merit was subsequently intensified. Not only was the imperial body exaggerated, but also descriptions of the physical appearance of the ministers became extreme. As the *Donggu Hanji* 東觀漢紀 records:

> 詔書令功臣家各自記功狀，不得自增加，以變時事。或自道先祖形貌表相，無益事實。復曰齒長一寸，龍顏虎口，奇毛異骨，形容極變，亦非詔書之所知也。
> The imperial decree ordered each family of meritorious ministers to record their outstanding services. [But in doing this,] they should not exaggerate themselves to falsify past events. Some descriptions of their ancestors' bodily shape and physical appearance were not in accord with reality. In addition, what this decree does not intend is for them again to say, "Their teeth were one *cun* long, their faces like a dragon and mouths like a tiger, they had strange bodily hair and unique bones." Their looks are overly distorted. [74]

Out of consideration for imperial privilege, the court prohibited such physical descriptions as "dragon-like face" and "tiger-shaped mouth," which were symbols of imperial privilege, to be used to describe the bodies of ministers. But beyond this, the decree indicates that there was a widespread abuse of physical description among Han elites. It is obvious that the tendency to exaggerate physical appearance had become all-too-common during the Han period. However, such a fixation was generated by the Han bureaucratic system and was intensified by the political culture that resulted from it.

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[74] *Dongguan Hanji*, p. 887.

According to Han law, if a government clerk had been sick for more than one hundred days he had to be removed from office.[75] The idea behind this regulation was to maintain governmental efficiency. However, it unavoidably created anxiety over health and physical perfection among government functionaries. Sometimes this anxiety even caused tragedy. *Fengsu tongyi* recounts that a local clerk Li Deng 李登 asked for sick leave and returned home. He then appealed for an extension. Later on he was summoned by the governor. Being afraid that he was too weak and thin because of his illness, Li Deng asked his twin brother to pretend to be him and go to the office. The brother was initially reluctant about this but finally relented upon Li Deng's insistence. After a while, this was reported to the governor. The brother believed that Li Deng had caused him this trouble and became so angry that he killed his brother Li Deng.[76]

What is worth noticing in this story is that Li Deng was probably no longer sick at the time he was summoned to work. His fear derived from the fact that his physical appearance was not at its best: he still looked weak and thin. His twin brother's healthy

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[75] See Wang Liqi 王利器 *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu* 風俗通義校注 (Taibei: Mingwen shuju, 1988), chapter 4, p. 178. The deadline of one hundred days is interesting. In traditional Chinese medical thought, the first one hundred days were a crucial and dangerous period in an infant's life. If an infant survived his/her first hundred days, the family would celebrate this.

[76] Wang Liqi, p. 587.

body seemed to be his only hope. In other words, Li Deng had to borrow a perfect body in order to keep his job.[77]

When the body was equated with talent and physical appearance, and demeanor became a part of the merit that was evaluated in the bureaucratic system, anxiety over physical perfection permeated the mind of Han officials. *Dongguan Hanji* provides us a vivid account of this Han social mentality:

> 馮勤，字偉伯，魏郡人。曾祖父楊，宣帝時為弘農太守，有八子，皆為二千石，趙魏間榮之，號“萬石”焉。兄弟形皆偉壯，唯勤祖偃長不滿七尺，常自謂短陋，恐子孫似之，乃為子伉娶長妻，生勤，長八尺三寸。
> Feng Qin, styled Weibo, was from the Wei Commandery. His great grandfather Feng Yang served as the Grand Administrator of Hongnong Commandery during Emperor Xuan's reign. Feng Yang fathered eight sons and all of them became officials ranked 2000 *shi*. Men in the Zhao and Wei areas regarded this honorable and called him "Ten thousand *shi*." The brothers were all tall and strong, only Feng Qin's grandfather Feng Yan did not reach seven *chi*. He often considered himself short and ugly. Fearing that his children would be like him, he married his son Feng Kang to a tall wife and thereupon produced Feng Qin, who was eight *chi* and three *cun* tall.[78]

Feng Yan's anxiety over his children's physique was not without reason. We see in Han documents that officials were disrespected simply because they lacked an impressive body. For example, when the famous local official Gong Sui 龔遂 was recommended as governor of Bohai 渤海 Commandery, Emperor Xuan despised him because he was short

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[77] Han law also disqualified anyone with a facial injury from government service. A direct result of this rule is that the faces of all Han officials' had to be intact. On the other hand, a damaged body terminated one's hope for government service. One example of this is found in Xue Xuan's 薛宣 biography in *Hanshu*. Xue Xuan was criticized by Shen Xian 申咸, whose office was Serving within the Palace (*ji shi zhong* 給事中). To revenge his father, Xue Xuan's son Xue Kong 薛況 planned to mutilate Bao Xian's face in order to cause him to be removed from his office (欲令创咸面目，使不居位). He had someone attack Bao Xian, cutting off his nose and lips. See *Hanshu* 83: 3394-5.

[78] *Dongguan Hanji*, p. 485. See also *Hou Hanshu* 26: 909.

and small (形貌短小，宣帝望見，不副所聞，心内輕焉). Zhang Zhong 張重 was also belittled by Emperor Ming because of his short height.[79]

It would certainly be absurd to conclude that physical perfection was the only anxiety afflicting Han officials. There were many other factors that determined an official's political career. Among them, education, especially the mastery of the Confucian canon, was a more important criterion in official selection. For example, seven of the eight Western Han prime ministers reported in historical sources were respected scholars.[80] Han emphasis upon *jingxue* 經學 provided intellectuals a road leading to rank and wealth, as a famous saying indicates, "Leaving behind for your child a basket full of gold cannot equal leaving him a classical text" (遺子黃金滿籯，不如一經).[81] However, similar to their Warring States precursors, many Han intellectuals' ambition went unrealized. Consequently, explanations for the success of a few and the failure of so many proliferated, especially since virtually every one of these intellectuals was a hard-working *jingxue* scholar. To resolve the resulting anxiety, physiognomy often linked the body and *jingxue* study together as the reason for success. We see a common pattern structuring the biographies of Western Han prime ministers. These biographies often begin with the names of the person under consideration, his geographical origins,

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[79] *Hanshu* 89: 3639 writes: Zhang Zhong was a clerk from Rinan Commandery and his figure was short and small. Emperor Ming asked him: "You, small clerk, are from which commandery?" He replied, "Your servant is a clerk from Rinan, and I am not a 'small clerk'" (張重，日南計吏，形容短小，明帝問云："何郡小吏？"答曰："臣日南記吏，非小吏也。"). See also *Dongguan Hanji*, p. 380.

[80] The only exception was general Zhou Yafu 周亞夫; he lived before Emperor Wu. The other prime ministers all served from Emperor Wu's reign, when *jingxue* 經學 became the dominant learning.

[81] *Hanshu* 73: 3107.

something about his studies and a physiognomic prediction of his future. For example, in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, physiognomists predicted that both Wei Xian 韋賢 and his son Wei Xuancheng 韋玄成 would become prime ministers. The same prognostications were given to Wei Xiang 魏相 and Bing Ji 邴吉.[82] When a physiognomist found Zhang Yu's 張禹 appearance outstanding, he suggested to Zhang Yu's father that Zhang Yu should learn the classics.[83]

Zhai Fangjin's 翟方進 biography provides more details on this application of physiognomy:

> 方進年十二三，失父孤學，給事太守府爲小史，好遲頓不及事，數爲掾史所詈辱。方進自傷，乃從汝南蔡父相問己能所宜。蔡父大奇其形貌，謂曰：“小史有封侯骨，當以經術進，努力爲諸生學問。”方進既厭爲小史，聞蔡父言，心喜，因病歸家，辭其後母，欲西至京師受經。母憐其幼，隨之長安，織屨以給方進讀。經博士受春秋。積十餘年，經學明習，徒眾日廣，諸儒稱之。以射策甲科為郎。二三歲，舉明經，遷議郎。
> [Zhai] Fangjin lost his father when he was twelve to thirteen years old and he studied alone. Serving as a secretary to the governor's office, he was considered as clumsy and incompetent. He was often scolded and humiliated by other clerks. Fangjin was saddened. He then went to Caifu of Runan for physiognomic inspection, asking what career would be proper for him. Caifu considered his appearance exceedingly unusual and told him, "You have bones indicating that you will become a lord. You certainly will be promoted because of your classical knowledge. Work hard at learning." Because Fangjin was already tired of being a secretary, he was delighted upon hearing Caifu's words. Using the excuse of

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[82] *Shiji* 96: 2686-7. A physiognomist's name is mentioned here, as Sima Qian writes: "There was a famous physiognomist by the name of Tian Wen who lived in Chang'an. When prime minister Wei, prime minister Wei and prime minister Bing were commoners they met Tian Wen in a friend's house. Tian Wen said, 'These three gentlemen will all become prime minister.' Later the three succeeded each other in serving as prime minister. How luminous was his prediction" (長安中有善相工田文者，與韋丞相、魏丞相、邴丞相微賤時會於客家，田文言曰：“今此三君者，皆丞相也。”其後三人竟更相代為丞相，何見之明也).

[83] Zhang Yu's biography in *Hanshu* reads: "The diviner was fond of him and considered his appearance to be extraordinary. He told Zhang Yu's father, saying, 'This body is very intelligent. You should let him study classics" (卜者愛之，又奇其面貌，謂禹父：“是兒多知，可令學經。”). See *Hanshu* 81: 3347.

> sickness he returned home. He bid farewell to his step-mother, saying that he desired to go west to the capital to study classics. The mother pitied his young age and accompanied him to Chang'an. She wove shoes to support his studies. Fangjin received teaching on *Chunqiu* from an erudite. After ten years, he became proficient in classical studies, his followers increased daily and many scholars praised him. He became a Gentleman because of his top rank in essay writing. After two or three years, he was selected as a Classic Scholar and was promoted to Gentleman Consultant.[84]

In consoling Zhai Fangjin's frustration, the physiognomist Caifu first predicated Zhai Fangjin's nobility through a reading of his body and then pointed out that classical learning was the way leading to achievement.

That the body and *jingxue* served as two critical standards in evaluating scholars is also reflected in other Han materials in addition to the historical records. Tomb inscriptions usually present final remarks about the deceased. Restrained by the difficulty of making an inscription on stone, the content of tomb inscriptions is extremely selective. The language of these inscriptions is concise and the style patterned. Most often they concentrate upon the general family background, the career and the achievements of the tomb occupant. Any information provided in the inscription is decided by careful consideration and is approved by social custom. It must best represent the person's life and merit. Yet despite the emphasis upon concision and formulaic expression, the body is considered as a legitimate element in this written presentation of an individual's history. For example, the stele inscription of Kong Qian 孔謙 (121-154) begins with a brief family genealogy. Kong Qian was a descendant of Confucius and his father was an

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[84] *Hanshu* 84: 3411-12.

official. It is then followed by descriptions of Kong Qian's physical features and his classical studies:

> 孔謙字德讓者，宣尼公廿世孫，都尉君 [孔宙] 之子也。幼體蘭石，自然之姿。長膺清下，孝義之行。祖述家業，修《春秋》經。升堂講誦，深究聖指。弱冠而仕，歷郡諸曹史，季世四。永興二季七月遭疾不祿。
> Kong Qian, styled Derang, was a twentieth generation descendant of Confucius and the son of General Chief [Kong Zhou]. From youth his body naturally embodied the merits of orchid and rock. His extended chest and clear-cut chin symbolized his filial and brotherly deeds. Inheriting family learning, [Kong Qian] mastered the *Chunqiu* classic. Ascending the hall, he lectured and chanted it, deeply probing into the message of the sage. At the age of twenty he served the government. In the following four decades he successively held positions as Attendant and Clerk in commandaries. In the seventh month of the second year of Yongxing reign (154 CE), he died of illness.[85]

We see in this short inscription, which includes family genealogy, a report of personal attributes and information on Kong Qian's studies, career and date of death, that Kong Qian's body was read as an embodiment of his morality and deeds. When physical descriptions appear together with compliments of scholarly merit in such a highly refined form of writing, they inarguably demonstrate the influence of this bodily culture in Han society.[86]

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[85] See Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 *Lianghan jinshi ji* 兩漢金石紀, in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 (Taibei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1982), p. 7299. Kong Qian was an older brother of the famous Eastern Han scholar-official Kong Rong 孔融 (154-208 CE).

[86] Wee see bodily description in other Han tomb writings. For example, Wang Yuanbin's 王元賓 inscription says: "When it comes to his own body, it presents all the beauties Heaven granted upon him. His unmeasured talent resembles this." 迄君之身，天鍾其美，體玆明跡，不器之量。See "Fengqiu ling Wang Yuanbin bei" 封丘令王元賓碑, in Hong Gua 洪适 *Lixu* 隸續, in *Shike shiliao xinbian*, Vol. 10, p. 7188. This dual emphasis upon the body and learning even appears in an inscription of a Han eunuch. We read in the stele inscription of the later Han eunuch Qiao Min 譙敏 (died in 185) that: "Qiao Min was intelligent and found of learning. His words accorded with that in such classics as *Book of Songs* and *The Document* (幼而好學，才略聰睿，《詩》《書》是綜，言合雅謨). In the eulogy, it describes Qiao Min's appearance as outstanding: 且以毓姿，優游口京. See Weng Fanggang *Lianghan jinshi ji*, p. 7438.

Physiognomy as a Philosophical Discourse

This section attempts to examine the philosophical discourse on physiognomy from the Warring States to the Han, focusing primarily on Mengzi, Xunzi, Dong Zhongshu, Wang Chong and Wang Fu. I argue that philosophical discourse of the body and physiognomy were developed as a reaction to the changing focus in the political readings of the body in early China. While Mengzi and Xunzi reject physiognomy, Han thinkers such as Dong Zhongshu, Wang Chong and Wang Fu adopt and synthesize previously ad hoc physiognomic discourse to serve Han ideology and social concerns.

Mengzi and Xunzi's criticisms of physiognomy

The earliest philosophical responses to physiognomy are seen in *Mengzi* and *Xunzi*. Although both philosophers deny the social function of physiognomy, their criticisms are delivered differently. This difference results from their disagreement on human nature; it also reflects the growing power of physiognomy in early China from the fourth to the first centuries BCE.

Mengzi shows an ambivalent attitude towards the body and related issues. To Mengzi, the body is a trustworthy source for reading one's moral quality. Mengzi believes that human nature is inherently good. The problem arises when environment influences us and leads our heart astray. The purpose of self-cultivation is therefore to regain the original good nature (*qiu qi fangxin* 求其放心).[87] When one consciously cultivates his nature, in which humaneness, righteousness, ritual and wisdom take root,

[87] D. C. Lau, *Mencius* 11: 11 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003), p. 255.

his body displays a transformation of its interior state. Virtue therefore is materialized and becomes observable on a gentleman's physical appearance, including his facial color, back and limbs (君子所性，仁義禮智根於心，其生色也，睟然見於面，盎於背，施於四體，四體不言而喻).[88] To Mengzi, the eyes are the most reliable part of the body for reading people's character:

> 存乎人者，莫良於眸子。眸子不能掩其惡。胸中正，則眸子瞭焉；胸中不正，則眸子眊焉。聽其言也，觀其眸子，人焉廋哉？
> There is in man nothing more ingenuous than the pupils of his eyes. They cannot conceal his wickedness. When he is upright within his breast, a man's pupils are clear and bright; when he is not, they are clouded and murky. How can a man conceal his true character if you listen to his words and observe the pupils of his eyes?[89]

Here Mengzi seems to adopt a physiognomic method: bodily qualities are material for physiognomic diagnosis and provide him with a source to assess people's morality.[90] However, when confronted by a direct inquiry concerning the reliability of physiognomy, Mengzi shows a different attitude:

> 曹交問曰："人皆可以為堯、舜，有諸？"
> 孟子曰："然。"
> "交聞文王十尺，湯九尺；今交九尺四寸以長，食粟而已。如何則可？"
> 曰："奚有於是？亦為之而已矣！有人於此，力不能勝一匹雛，則為無力人矣。今日舉百鈞，則為有力人矣。然則舉烏獲之任，是亦為烏獲而已矣。夫人豈以不勝為患哉，弗為耳。徐行後長者謂之弟，疾行先長者謂之不弟。夫徐行者，豈人所不能哉？所不為也！堯、舜之道，孝弟而已矣。子服堯之服，誦堯之言，行堯之行：是堯而已矣。子服桀之服，誦桀之言，行桀之行：是桀而已矣。"

[88] D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, ibid., 13:21, p. 295.

[89] Ibid., 7: 15, p. 163.

[90] For discussion of Mengzi's bodily theory and its relationship with early physiognomy, see Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), especially pp. 127-41.

曰：“交得見於鄒君，可以假館，願留而受業於門。”
曰：“夫道若大路然，豈難知哉！人病不求耳。子歸而求之有餘師。”
Cao Jiao asked, “Is it true that all men are capable of becoming a Yao or a Shun?”
“Yes.” Said Mencius.
“I heard that King Wen was ten foot tall, while Tang was nine. Now I am a little more than nine foot four inches, yet all I can do is to eat rice. What should I do?”
“What difficulty is there? All you have to do is to make an effort. Here is a man who cannot lift a chicken. He is, indeed, a weak man. Now if he were to lift a ton, then he would, indeed, be a strong man. In other words, whoever can lift the same weight as Wu Huo is himself a Wu Huo. The trouble with a man is surely not his lack of sufficient strength, but his refusal to make the effort. One who walks slowly, keeping behind his elder, is considered a well-mannered younger brother. One who walks quickly, overtaking his elders, is considered an ill-mannered younger brother. Walking slowly is surely not beyond the ability of any man. It is simply a matter of his not making the effort. The way of Yao and Shun is simply to be a good son and a good younger brother. If you wear the clothes of Yao, speak the words of Yao and behave the way Yao behaved, then you *are* a Yao. On the other hand, if you wear the clothes of Jie, speak the words of Jie and behave the way Jie behaved, then you *are* a Jie. That is all.”
“If the ruler of Zou receives me and I am given a place to lodge, then I should like to stay and be a disciple of yours.”
“The Way is like a wide road. It is not at all difficult to find. The trouble with people is simply that they do not look for it. You go home and look for it and there will be teachers enough for you.”[91]

The exchange between Mengzi and Cao Jiao reflects a competition between philosophy and physiognomy as a guidance for life and a solution to social problems. Mengzi is challenged by a believer in physiognomy. Cao Jiao evaluates himself with reference to a physical characteristic: his exceeding height, like in the cases of Yao and Shun, suggests a promising career. However, Cao Jiao is frustrated by his life, and he comes to Mengzi for a satisfactory explanation. Clearly Cao Jiao expects a political answer, for physiognomy in early China often provides consolation to ambitious men like Cao Jiao.

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[91] Translation modified from D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 265.

Nevertheless, we see a double rejection implicated in Mengzi's response. Mengzi first refuses to follow this conventional application of physiognomy. Instead, he replies to Cao Jiao with an ethical criticism. To Mengzi, the way of Yao and Shun evokes proper moral behavior rather than political ambition. Obtaining moral superiority is both the goal and the content of one's daily life. By giving such an ethical answer, Mengzi in fact refuses to acknowledge the social value of physiognomy. Rather than being sidetracked into a discussion of physical characteristics, Mengzi advises Cao Jiao to make moral effort and follow the correct way of the ancient sages.

Mengzi's persuasion of Cao Jiao is not successful. Until the very end, Cao Jiao is still reluctant to make any effort at learning.[92] Mengzi's failure is probably determined in part by his ambivalent view of the body. His belief in the physical manifestation of inner virtue restrains him from a complete denial of the political reading of the body. After all, morality was deeply entangled with politics in early China. As a result, Mengzi shifts the topic from politics to ethics. He does not directly attack Cao Jiao's comment about the relationship of height and moral superiority; instead he deflects the conversation into a discussion of effort, which seems to him the key to the development of moral character. His criticism is therefore implied, rather than being explicit, in the seemingly irrelevant answer he gives.

Compared to Mengzi, Xunzi's criticism of physiognomy is direct and resolute. In contrast to Mengzi, Xunzi believes that human nature is evil. What prevents men from

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[92] This is clear in Cao Jiao's response to Mengzi. After hearing Mengzi's preaching on making effort, Cao Jiao was still waiting for others to prepare for him to study with Mengzi. Mengzi therefore immediately cut off the possibility that Cao Jiao could become his disciple.

pursuing their selfish desire is the power of ritual. Because of this lack of innate virtue within men's heart, morality is only assessable by observing people's behavior, using ritual as the standard. Following this logic, the body is of only peripheral importance to Xunzi and it never forms a part of the core in his moral philosophy.[93] As a result, physiognomy is strongly criticized by Xunzi.

In chapter five, "Feixiang pian" (Attacking Physiognomy 非相篇), Xunzi attacks the absurdity of physiognomy. He first declares that physiognomy is not a part of the cultural heritage; it did not exist in antiquity and is not discussed by learned men. The contradictory physiognomic descriptions of sages and worthy men are evidences to Xunzi of the illogicality of contemporary physiognomic principles. According to Xunzi's summary, some of the sages are described as unusually tall while others are extremely short; in fact, some of them either look hideous or have physical defects.[94] Based upon these portrayals it is impossible to use physiognomy to deduce whether one's physical appearance is good or bad. Therefore Xunzi asserts that the corporal features, one's height, size and appearance, are not worth discussing (故長短小大，善惡形相，豈論也哉).[95]

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[93] Elsewhere, Xunzi does show his concern for the body. When he explains ritual he writes that ritual means nourishing the body (禮者，養也). However, nourishing the body should be regulated by ritual and is exercised to achieve the harmony ritual prescribes. See chapter "Lilun" 禮論 in *Xunzi xinzhu* 荀子新注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), p. 308. See also Zhu Pingci 祝平次 "Cong li de guandian lun xian Qin Ru Dao shenti/zhuti guannian de chayi" 從禮的觀點論先秦儒、道身體/主體觀念的差異, in Yang Rubin 楊儒賓 ed. *Zhongguo gudai sixiang zhong de qilun ji shentiguan* 中國古代思想中的氣論及身體觀 (Taibei: juliu, 1997), pp. 267-9.

[94] For details, see *Xunzi*, translated by John Knoblock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 203-4.

[95] See *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 52.

The very fact that Xunzi, a conservative Confucian scholar, wrote an essay criticizing physiognomy clearly reflects the popularity of this bodily divination technique during the late Warring States period. According to Xunzi, not only does physiognomy corrupt social customs, as marriage alliances often were determined based upon physical appearance instead of merit, but also, most importantly, it threatens the stability of a government when it was used by the ruler in his search of talent. Such a political adoption of physiognomy severely undermines the authority of philosophy. To Xunzi, it becomes a rival too influential to ignore in competing for a political audience. Xunzi has to advocate his own solution for the social anxiety that derives from the emphasis upon appreciating the worthy. After discrediting the logicality of physiognomy, a considerable remaining portion of the chapter is reserved for a discussion of the proper presentation and appreciation of talent. Instead of judging people's physical appearance, Xunzi argues that discerning one's mind (*xin* 心) and governing technique (*shu* 術) is more important: "Hence, to physiognomize the external form is not as important as evaluating the mind, and evaluating the mind is not as important as selecting the techniques" (故相形不如論心，論心不如擇術； 形不勝心，心不勝術).[96] Moreover, the idea Xunzi articulates here serves both sides of the ruler-minister relationship. A ruler, Xunzi argues, should evaluate people according to their ritual behavior; as for educated men, Xunzi continues, they, on the other hand, must be eloquent and excel in persuasion and argumentation

[96] *Xunzi xinzhu.* p. 51. Translation modified from Knoblock, p. 203.

(*junzi bi bian* 君子必辯).[97] The mutual assessment of a ruler and his ministers is therefore based upon words and deeds rather than bodily features.

Like Mengzi, Xunzi's criticism was initiated in reaction to the threat he perceived from physiognomy. These two philosophers felt the need to compete with bodily diviners in exercising social influence. Therefore they did not spend effort in discussing the socio-political reading of the body. Still, their discussions of physiognomy do give evidence that attributing political meaning to the body was so prevalent that one could hardly avoid some consideration of this issue.

We see a deliberate choice made by Mengzi and Xunzi: while the metaphorical meanings of the body cannot be completely excluded from philosophical discussion, it is deprived of any political meaning. This deliberation reflects in turn an interesting philosophical phenomenon during the Warring States period. In the competition among the so-called "Hundred Schools of Thoughts" (*baijia* 百家), a tendency toward mutual influence and synthesis characterizes the development of philosophical writings. At the same time, this tendency is intentionally ignored by some philosophers in order to present their unique voice in claiming philosophical authority. In Xunzi, for example, we encounter no discussion of the *yin yang* cosmology that was becoming dominant in his time. Moreover, the cosmological conceptualization of the body that developed under the influence of yin-yang thought and the broader symbolic meanings it projects unto the body have left no trace in Xunzi's writing, even though such conceptualizations dramatically changed philosophical discourse on physiognomy in Han China.

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[97] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 62.

Warring States medical thought concerning the body and Dong Zhongshu's theory

To understand the new conceptualizations of the body that appear in the early Han philosophical writings of Dong Zhongshu, we need to consider briefly what had taken place in the late-Zhou medical theorization of the body.

The early Chinese medical tradition incorporates elements of correlative thought that might have been widespread at the time and defines the body as both a still and an active entity.[98] In these medical texts, the internal structure of the body is described as a hierarchical system, in which each organ has its fixed position and its specific function and ultimately serves the governance of the heart. As a whole, the body is a part of the universe: it reflects and communicates with the cosmos. The human body, as *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 says, is produced by integrating the *qi* of heaven and earth (天地會氣，命之曰人).[99] *Qi* forms the essence of life and exchanges energy with nature. This circulating *qi* connects the body with a variety of natural phenomena and enables the body to be understood in terms of the same *yin-yang* and Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) theories that explain the cosmos generally and nature more specifically. The chapter "Yin yang yingxiang da lun" (Discussion on the Correspondence of *Yin* and *Yang* 陰陽應象大論篇) in *Huangdi neijing* first points out that *yin* and *yang* are the creators of the universe and the sources of *qi*. The *qi* of *yin* and *yang* are the two *qi*s that generate all natural elements. The four seasons and the five internal organs (*wuzang* 五藏) receive these *qi*s,

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[98] For an excellent study of early Chinese medical tradition, see Donald Harper's *Early Chinese Medical Literature* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998).

[99] Guo Aichun 郭靄春, *Huangdi neijing Suwen jiaozhu yuyi* 黃帝內經素問校注語譯 (Tianjing: Tianjing kexue jishu chubanshe, 1999), chapter "Baoming quanxing lun pian" 寶命全形論篇, p. 155.

with illness occurring when they are unbalanced. Following this principle, the chapter then uses the Five Phase theory to describe the body and to link it with the world with a system of correlations. Directions, temperatures, flavors, colors, sounds, bodily movements, and emotions are all associated with the five elements, *mu* 木 "wood", *huo* 火 "fire", *tu* 土 "earth", *jin* 金 "metal", and, *shui* 水 "water", and subsequently influence the health of the five organs to which they are correlated.[100] This structure made up of the *yin* and *yang qi* generates five directions, the five directions generate five temperatures, the five temperatures generate five elements, the five elements generate five flavors, and the five flavors nourish five organs—a cycle that repeatedly appears in *Huangdi neijing*.[101] In this cosmological systemization, the body corresponds to heaven or nature (*yingtian* 應天) and its physical features are categorized accordingly.[102]

This Warring States cosmological conceptualization of the body provides the vocabulary and theoretical framework to Han philosophical discussions of the body and physiognomy. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 directly incorporated this new medical conceptualization of the body into his circular historical view known as "the Three

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[100] Guo Aichun, pp. 34-5.

[101] See also in chapter "Wuyun xing dalun pian" 五運行大論篇 in Guo Aichun, ibid, pp. 373-5.

[102] Chapter "Jinkui zhenyan lun pian" 金匱真言論篇 associates the interior and exterior of the body with *yin* and *yang* and concludes that they correspond to the *yin* and *yang* of heaven (此皆陰陽表裏内外雌雄相輸應業，故以應天之陰陽也). See Guo Aichun, p. 25. Chapter "Yifa fangyi lun pian" 異法方宜論篇 explains that people who live in the east have dark skin, that those who live in the south have red skin and that people who live in the west are fat. The physical features of people who live in north are not discussed here. However, in *Hanshu*, we see this cosmological theorization is fully developed and completed. See Guo Aichun, pp. 74-6. *Hanshu*, chapter "Dili zhi" 地理志.

Authorities" (*santong* 三統),[103] which he used to argue in support of Han political legitimacy.[104]

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[103] See chapter "Sandai gaizhi zhiwen" 三代改制質文, in *Chunqiu fanlu jinzhu jinyi*, 春秋繁露今註今譯, annotated by Lai Yanyuan 賴炎元 (Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), pp.174-94. The authenticity of *Chunqiu fanlu* has long been controversial. The first scholar to question the attribution of this text to Dong Zhongshu was Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123-1195). Cheng Dachang argues that the teachings in the text are too shallow to be Dong Zhongshu's, and that the title of the text is never mentioned in *Hanshu*. Traditional scholars Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (?1183-?1261) and Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213-1281) all express their suspicions about the authenticity of the text (see more discussions on next page).

[104] The question of Dong Zhongshu's authorship of the book has divided modern Chinese and Japanese scholars into two groups. The first group believes in the authenticity of the book and uses it as a reliable resource to discuss Dong Zhongshu's thought. Most Chinese scholars belong to this group, Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 being two famous representatives of this point of view. For example, Xu Fuguan, in his *Liang Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史 (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue, 1975, pp. 192-5), has a section defending the reliability of *Chunqiu fanlu*. On the other hand, many other scholars doubt the authenticity of the book. Japanese scholars Keimatsu Mitsuo 慶松光雄 and Tanaka Masami 田中麻妙己 found inconsistencies in the chapters concerning the Five Phases in *Chunqiu fanlu*. Dai Junren 戴君仁 also directly argues that Dong Zhongshu never discusses the Five Phases, and therefore the chapters on this topic are not written by Dong Zhongshu (for a good summary on these three scholars' research, see Gary Arbuckle's article "Inevitable Treason: Dong Zhongshu's Theory of Historical Cycles and Early Attempts to Invalidate the Han Mandate," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 115. No. 4, 1995, p. 586, footnote 5; as well as his review of Robert Gassmann's translation of *Chunqiu fanlu*, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 113. No. 1, 1993, pp. 97-8). English scholarship on Dong Zhongshu also presents different views of *Chunqiu fanlu*. Michael Loewe, in his writing in *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 1. The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D.220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), treats the book as reflecting Dong Zhongshu's philosophy. Yzey-yueh Tain's dissertation on Dong Zhongshu's thought is built entirely upon the premise of the authenticity of *Chunqiu fanlu*. In his introduction, Tain provides four evidences supporting the reliability of the book (*Tung Chung-shu's System of Thought: Its Sources and Its Influence on Han Scholars*, UCLA Ph.D. dissertation, 1974, pp. 8-10). The most critical research on *Chunqiu fanlu* comes from Sarah Queen and Gary Arbuckle. Sarah Queen's book, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), is an attempt to systematically analyze the authorship of the *Chunqiu fanlu* chapters. Queen divides these chapters into five categories: exegetical chapters, Huang-Lao chapters, Yin-yang chapters, Five-phase chapters and Ritual chapters. The *Chunqiu fanlu* passages I cite in my dissertation, according to Queen's categorization, belong to the exegetical chapters, Huang-Lao chapters and Yin-yang chapters. As for the authenticity of these chapters, Queen's study presents an ambivalent view. While suggesting that some of the chapters are probably not written by Dong Zhongshu, Queen often believes these chapters contain reliable resources for understanding Dong Zhongshu. Also frequently we see Queen's inability to distinguish authentic chapters from inauthentic chapters. She often writes that "further" studies are required in order to confirm the authorship of certain chapters and her ambiguity is criticized by Gary Arbuckle who presents a more aggressive attack on the claim of Dong Zhongshu's authorship of *Chunqiu fanlu*. Arbuckle's study is developed from the research done by Keimatsu, Tanaka and Dai Junren. Arbuckle agrees with these earlier researchers, as well as Queen, that the most questionable writings in *Chunqiu fanlu* are the Five-phase chapters. In other words, chapters 38, 42, 58-64 cannot be taken to represent Dong Zhongshu's thought. At the same time, these scholars' suspicions on the authenticity of the book sometimes are counter attacked by plausible arguments. For

Following early medical thought, Dong Zhongshu argues that man is created by heaven (爲人者，天也) and that the human body is formed by the heavenly principles (人之形體，化天數而成).[105] Accordingly, in Dong Zhongshu's philosophy the body reflects the principles of heaven and earth:

> 唯人獨能偶天地。人有三百六十節，偶天之數也;形體骨肉,偶地之厚也;上有耳目聰明,日月之象也;體有空竅理脈,川谷之象也。
> Only man can resemble heaven and earth. Man has three hundred sixty joints, which resemble the number of heaven. The body, bone and flesh resemble the thickness of earth. At the top of the body, the eyes and ears are able to see and listen; they are symbols of the sun and moon. Within the body there are arteries and veins, symbolizing rivers and valleys.[106]

We see in Dong Zhongshu's philosophy a systematic integration of heaven and the body. This linkage between man and heaven continues beyond physical resemblances, as Dong Zhongshu asserts that bodily movement, human intelligence and emotions all find their counterparts in the universe.[107] Since heaven, earth, yin and yang construct the human body and are manifested therein, Dong Zhongshu concludes that the body is the embodiment of heaven (身猶天也).

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example, Xu Fuguan has a strong argument against Dai Junren's theory that Dong Zhongshu never talks about the Five Phases (see his *LiangHan sixiang shi*). Considering the theories from both sides of the *Chunqiu fanlu* controversy, it seems that the five-phase chapters are the focus of the debate. My citations from *Chunqiu fanlu* do not come from the problematic five-phase chapters. Until concrete evidence is produced by scholars that can convincingly deny the reliability of the non-five-phrase chapters of *Chunqiu fanlu*, my use of the *Chunqiu fanlu* passages should be valid.

[105] Lai Yanyuan, pp. 282.

[106] Ibid., p. 327.

[107] Dong Zhongshu argues that the round shape of the human head resembles the sky, other facial parts are equated with natural objects: hair is taken as the embodiment of stars, eyes and ears as sun and moon, breath as wind. See Lai Yanyuan, p. 327.

This equation of the human body with heaven provides a theoretical basis for Dong Zhongshu's historical and political philosophies. As Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 points out, the essence of Dong Zhongshu's philosophy can be characterized as a "philosophy of *tian*" (天的哲學).[108] Different from pre-Qin medical thought, in which *tian* is an abstract force, Dong Zhongshu's *tian* is conceptualized as an ontological being that reflects an ethical concept. Dong Zhongshu argues that the refined *ren* 仁 lies in heaven and that heaven is itself *ren* (仁之美者在於天，天，仁也).[109] Since man is created by heaven, he receives *ren* as his nature. Moreover, the benevolent heaven creates and nourishes the myriad things but it attributes its accomplishment to man. Man, especially the ruler, thus becomes the agent of heaven in the world; he receives this *ming* 命 from heaven (人受命乎天).[110]

Clearly Dong Zhongshu inherits the pre-Qin idea of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), in which political legitimacy is conferred by heaven's will. Nevertheless, different from the pre-Qin thought in which heaven is both a reverential awarder and a fearful punisher, Dong Zhongshu describes a genetic tie between heaven and man. Because man is created by heaven, heaven, in Dong Zhongshu's view, is defined as the ancestor of man (人之本於天，天亦人之曾祖父也).[111] Such a genetic

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[108] See Xu Fuguan, *Liang Han sixiangshi*, Vol. 2, chapter 3 "Xian Qian Rujia sixiang fazhan zhong de zhuanzhe ji tian de zhexue de wancheng" 先秦儒家思想發展中的轉折及天的哲學的完成, pp. 177-281.

[109] Lai Yanyuan, p. 295.

[110] Ibid., pp. 295, 327.

[111] Ibid., p. 282.

link enables a revised *tianming* thought and a new historical theory to unfold. In addition to the famous *santong* 三統 principle, Dong Zhongshu also proposes a theory called *sifa* 四法 (Four Eternal Principles) in which previous dynasties are categorized and the course of the past is outlined. Dong Zhongshu argues that the principles of heaven and earth are imitated and exemplified respectively by Shang 商 and Xia 夏, despite their actual sequence. Shang took the model of heaven and its rule was *wen* 文 (refined); Xia took the model of earth and its rule was *zhi* 質 (substantive"). When these elements, heaven, earth, Shang and Xia, are multiplied they produce four eternal principles. These four principles took turns dominating the past, circulating in the same way that the four seasons change.[112] Before heaven granted the mandate to the ruler of a dynasty, its intention was first implied in the fate of the ancestor of the ruler and, most importantly, fully displayed on the body of the founder of the dynasty:

> 故天將授舜, 主天法商而王, 祖錫姓為姚氏, 至舜形體, 大上而員首, 而明有二童子, 性長於天文, 純乎孝慈. 天將授禹, 主地法夏而王, 祖錫姓為姒氏, 至禹生發於背, 形體長, 長足鯀, 疾行先左, 隨以右, 勞左佚右也, 性長於行, 習地明水. 天將授湯, 主天法質而王, 祖錫姓為子氏, 謂契母吞玄鳥卵生契, 契先發於, 性長於人倫, 至湯體長專小, 足左扁而右便, 勞右佚左也, 性長於天光, 質易純仁. 天將授文王, 主地法文而王, 祖錫姓姬氏, 謂後稷母姜原, 履天之跡, 而生後稷, 後稷長於郃土, 播田五谷, 至文王形體博長, 有四乳而大足, 性長於地文勢.
>
> Thereupon when heaven was about to give the world to Shun, who followed the principle of heaven, imitated the way of Shang, and assumed the title of king, his ancestor was bestowed the surname Yao. When it came to Shun, his upper body was big and his head was round. He had double pupils in his eyes. By nature he was good at understanding the way of heaven, and excelled in being filial and loving. When heaven was about to give the world to Yu, who followed the principle of earth, imitated the way of Xia, and assumed the title of king, his

[112] Lai Yanyuan, p. 191.

> ancestor was bestowed the surname Si. When it came to Yu, he was born from the back of his mother. His body was tall and large. His legs were long. When he walked quickly, he first stepped forward with his left foot and his right foot followed. For this reason his left foot was tired and his right foot relaxed. By nature he was good at handling things. He was familiar with geography and was intelligent on the subject of rivers. When heaven was about to give the world to Tang, who followed the principle of heaven, imitated the way of *zhi* and assumed the title of king, his ancestor was bestowed the surname Zi. [His ancestor] Xue's mother swallowed the egg of the black bird and gave birth to Xue. Xue came out of her chest. By nature he was good at the way of man. When it came to Tang, his body was fat and short. His left foot stumbled but his right foot was dexterous. Therefore his left foot was tired but his right was relaxed. By nature he was peaceful and had a benevolent heart. When heaven was about to give the world to King Wen, who followed the principle of earth, imitated the way of *wen* and consumed the title of king, his ancestor was bestowed the surname Ji. [His ancestor] Houji's mother Jiangyuan stepped at the footprint of god and gave birth to Houji. Houji grew up at Tai and planted five grains. When it came to King Wen, his figure was big and tall. He had four nipples and his feet were large. By nature he was good at knowing land and geography.[113]

Certainly many myths about these sagely kings had already existed in oral or written traditions before Dong Zhongshu's time. The disposition of Shun, the unbalanced feet of Yu, the birth of Xue and Houji, and the body of King Wen are by no means stories created by Dong Zhongshu and can be found scattered in various early documents. What is important in Dong Zhongshu's writing is that these references are integrated together, organized neatly to serve an overall philosophical construction in which the correspondence between *tian* and man is highlighted.

Moreover, as seen from the above passage, the unique physical features of the sagely kings are associated with their talents. Their appearances seem also to imply the natures of their rules, which are categorized into four types (主天法商/文，主地法夏/

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[113] Lai Yanyuan, pp. 191-2.

質，主天法質/夏，主地法文/商). The body thus becomes a useful vocabulary in Dong Zhongshu's discussion of political legitimacy in which heaven's will is predeterminative. Because for Dong Zhongshu the body is created by heaven, observing the physical appearance leads to perceiving the way of heaven:

> 此皆暗膚著身,與人俱生,比而偶之合,於其可數也,副數,不可數者,副類,皆當同而副天一也。是故陳其有形,以著無形者,拘其可數,以著其不可數者,以此言道之亦宜以類相應,猶其形也,以數相中也。
> These [principles of heaven] secretly attach to the human body. They coexist and correspond with man. As for that which is countable, their numbers match with each other. As for that which is uncountable, their types accord one with the other. [No matter what the case is] they are all the same in corresponding to heaven. Therefore displaying those with shapes to illustrate those without shape, comprehending those that can be counted to demonstrate those that cannot be counted, this is to say that the way between heaven and man follows [the principle of] correspondence within the same category, just like their shapes and numbers correspond to each other.[114]

In this theory, not only is man the agent of heaven in the world, but also his physical body becomes a readable source for the purpose of comprehending the will of heaven.

Explanation of fate: Wang Chong and Wang Fu's discussions of physiognomy

Dong Zhongshu's discussion of the body is influenced by Warring States medical thought, but it also differs from it in several ways. Warring States medical texts utilize the Five Phases theory as the framework in explaining the body and defining its relation with the universe. In this system, the body is influence by a wide range of natural forces; there is no metaphysical arbiter that oversees the relation between man and the cosmos. In Dong Zhongshu's philosophy, this absent authority is fulfilled by an

[114] Lai Yanyuan, p. 328.

anthropomorphic *tian*, who grants the legitimacy of dynastic transition and makes its will perceivable upon the human body. A logical flow from *tian*, to *ming* (命) and to the body (including physical appearance) is thus systemized by Dong Zhongshu.

However, Dong Zhongshu's *tian* does not favor men equally. The mandate of heaven is only bestowed upon sages and rulers. To explain this bias, Dong Zhongshu adopts the *yinyang* theory: *tian* generates *yin* and *yang*; *yin* and *yang* are further divided into four different grades (少陰，太陰，少陽，太陽). Each subcategory selects a natural season to govern. Even within one season there are seasonal leaders such as *meng* 孟, *zhong* 仲, and *ji* 季 (defined as the three leaders, *sanzhang* 三長, by Dong Zhongshu). This hierarchical status of natural seasons demonstrates the mechanism of *tian*. Since man is created by *tian* and assumes bodily form according to this mechanism, each individual's *qi* is consequently dissimilar one from the other (人生於天，而體天之節，故亦有大小厚薄之變，人之氣也). The different endowments men receive from *tian* further determine their status in the political world: as *tian* differentiates the seasons, the sagely king ranks men according to their natural gifts.[115] The implication in Dong Zhongshu's argument is important. In his philosophy of *tian*, *ming* is not only a matter of the Mandate of Heaven that concerns exclusively dynastic change, it is also related to individual fate. Following his logic in which *tian* determines *ming* and the body reflects

[115] Lai Yanyuan, p. 196.

the will of *tian*, both dynastic fate and individual destiny become perceivable on the human body; physiognomy therefore receives support from philosophical argument.[116]

Dong Zhongshu's extension of the meanings of *ming* from a concern over dynastic change into the individual realm in his philosophical discussion of the body resonates and is further developed in the writings of the Eastern Han philosophers Wang Chong and Wang Fu. Both Wang Chong and Wang Fu wrote an essay on physiognomy that intends to promote the credibility of physiognomy. They also use physiognomy to explain fate to intellectuals who are frustrated at their own inability to move up the social ladder. By Wang Chong and Wang Fu's adoption and development of Dong Zhongshu's philosophy of the body, the pre-Qin ad hoc discourse of physiognomy is finally synthesized.

The "Guxiang" chapter (Physiognomy on the Bones, 骨相篇) in Wang Chong's *Lunheng* 論衡 explicitly addresses a concern with fate. The chapter begins with an assertion that fate can be easily known:

> 人曰命难知。命甚易知。知之何用？用之骨体。人命禀於天，则有表候见于体。察表候以知命，犹察斗斛以知容矣。表候者，骨法之谓也。
> Man says that fate is difficult to foresee, but fate is very easy to know. By what means can fate be known? By means of the body and its bones. Man receives his destiny from heaven; it has manifestations appearing on his body. By means of observing manifestations one knows fate, just as by means of observing measures, one knows capacity. Manifestations refer to bone configurations.[117]

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[116] Dong Zhongshu writes that because the correspondences between heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang* are often reflected by the human body, the body resembles *tian*. Its number matches to that of *tian* and man's fate is therefore related to *tian* (天地之符，陰陽之副，常設於身，身猶天也，數與之相參，故命與之相連也). Clearly here Dong Zhongshu is referring to individual fate rather than dynastic fate. See Lai Yanyuan, p. 328.

[117] Liu Pansui, *Lunheng jijie*, p. 52. Translation adopted from Alfred Forke, *Lun-Heng: Philosophical Essays of Wang Chong* (New York: Paragon Book Callery, 1962), p. 304.

The opening statement of the chapter alludes to a general concern with fate that prevailed in Wang Chong's time, an anxiety generated by Han social mobility as I have discussed in a preceding section. Wang Chong's response to this concern over the uncertainty of fate is distinctive and decided. He claims that fate can be easily known from observing bodily manifestations (*biaohou* 表候). To support his thesis, Wang Chong cites the legends concerning the unique physical appearances of ancient sages, from the Yellow Emperor to Confucius, to argue for the reliability of the physiognomic method. As Wang Chong indicates, these sagely bodies are known to the world and are discussed by scholars. Such a favorable view of physiognomy contrasts sharply with Xunzi's criticism. As I discussed above, Xunzi strongly denies the physiognomic tradition. Bodily divination, according to Xunzi, did not exist in the past and was not discussed by scholars. In contrast to this, Wang Chong's words, indicate that not only is physiognomy a common discourse among men of knowledge, it also is reported in Classics and Annals, which therefore makes its reliability unquestionable (世所共聞，儒所共說，在經傳者較著可信).[118]

Wang Chong gives the reader a sweeping presentation of physiognomic precedents. Tales and accounts concerning bodily divination from the Warring States period to the end of the Former Han are summarized and retold. These many references presented by Wang Chong in a painstaking manner testify to the conclusion he draws: "If one examines people's fate and disposition by judging the structure of their bones and by

[118] Liu Pansui, p. 52; Forke, p. 304.

examining the lines of their skin, there will be no case without a [physiognomic] correspondence" (案骨節之法，察皮膚之理，以審人之性命，無不應者).[119]

The physiognomic concerns as seen in Wang Chong's retelling of early sources focus on three issues: life span (*shouyao* 壽夭), wealth (*pinfu* 貧富) and rank (*guijian* 貴賤). These three are all determined by *ming* 命. Like Dong Zhongshu, Wang Chong also believes *ming* is granted by *tian*; but he differes from Dong Zhongshu in stressing *qi* as the media through which man receives *ming*. According to Wang Chong, peoples' different fates are due to the different levels of *qi* they absorb. Life will be strong and long if the *qi* is copious; it will be weak and short if the *qi* is scarce (強壽弱夭，謂稟氣渥薄也).[120] Since man obtains *qi* from *tian* and his body grows on earth (稟氣於天，立形於地), his fate is manifested on the body. Therefore Wang Chong argues that by observing the body on earth one could not fail to understand the fate determined by *tian* (察在地之形，以知在天之命，莫不得其實).[121]

To Wang Chong, the bone structure (*gufa* 骨法) most clearly demonstrates fate. An analogy between the body and a vessel is given in *Lunheng* to illustrate this:

> 人禀元气於天，各受寿夭之命，以立长短之形，犹陶者用土为簋廉，冶者用铜为枓杅矣。器形已成，不可小大；人体已定，不可减增。用气为性，性成命定。体气与形骸相抱，生死与期节相须。形不可变化，命不可减加。
> Men receive the vital *qi* from heaven. They are all given a fate of a long or short life and their tall or short bodies are formed accordingly, just like vessels are made out of clay by the potter and plates from copper by the founder. As the

[119] Liu Pansui, p. 55; Forke, p. 307.

[120] Liu Pansui, p. 16; Forke, p. 313.

[121] Liu Pansui, p. 56; Forke, p. 311.

> shape of a vessel, once completed, cannot be made smaller or bigger, thus the duration of the corporeal frame, having been settled, cannot be shortened or prolonged. *Qi* forms the constitution, and when it is formed then fate is settled. *Qi* and the body pervade each other; life and death correspond to fixed periods. The body cannot be transformed, and likewise fate cannot be lengthened or shortened.[122]

Because men's fates are different, their bodies, which are considered containers of *qi*, are not the same, just as each vessel has its own shape. Wang Chong affirms that a physiognomist can distinguish one's destiny, whether one will be rich, noble or poor and humble, by observing the bone structure and physical frame, just as a man upon seeing plates knows the use thereof.[123]

Wang Chong's discussions of physiognomy are addressed to a certain audience: incumbent government officials or scholars who intend to serve. An anxiety that seems to afflict these audiences is implied in Wang Chong's instructions on the topic of fate and that anxiety centers upon the need to explain differences in social and political rank. Discussion of fate in Wang Chong mainly concern official careers. In the chapter "Chubing" (Primary Formation, 初稟), Wang Chong speaks directly to this audience:

> 吏秩百石以上，王侯以下，郎将大夫，以至元士，外及刺史太守，居禄秩之吏，稟富贵之命，生而有表见於面。
> Officials with a yearly income of more than a hundred piculs, but of a lower rank than princes and counts, such as *langjiang, dafu,* and *yuanshi*, or provincial officials like intendants and prefects, in short, all salaried functionaries have obtained a fate predestinating them for wealth and honor, which after their birth is apparent in their faces.[124]

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[122] Liu Pansui, p. 30. Translation modified from Forke, p. 325.

[123] Wang Chong writes: "Therefore physiognomists examine the symptoms of the physical frame, and perceive wealth and honor, poverty and disgrace, just as we on seeing plates, know the use therof" (故知命之工，察骨體之証，賭富貴貧賤，猶人見盤盂之器，知所設用也). See Liu Pansui, p. 56; Forke, Vol. 1, p. 310.

[124] Liu Pansui, p. 58; Forke, Vol. 1, p. 130.

What is suggested by the above passage is that one should accept this predestinated fate and be content with one's current position. In the "Guxiang" chapter, this admonition is delivered again by the use of the analogy between fate and vessels. Wang Chong compares the nobles and high officials (*guiren* 貴人) with fine vessels (*shanqi* 善器) and the humble (*jianzhe* 賤者) with coarse vessels (*eqi* 惡器). Because the corporeal frame is settled as soon as one is born, its capacity for receiving *qi*, which decides one's fate, is consequently predetermined. In the case of a vessel, if its capacity is exceeded, the object will overflow and be cast aside. In the case of a rank, if one's fated deficiencies are exceeded, one will die and no longer exist (器過其量，物溢棄遺；爵過其差，死亡不存).[125]

To summarize, Wang Chong's discussions of physiognomy reveals a sense of fatalism. Such a fatalistic view in a philosopher like Wang Chong, who distinguishes himself for his strong skeptical mind, is both interesting and surprising. Although his skepticism leads Wang Chong to criticize a wide range of beliefs and popular traditions, he never questions physiognomy. Instead, in his discussion of physiognomy, the skeptic Wang Chong becomes an advocate of this popular practice. To understand such a conflict, we must look at his ideas in their social context. That is, Wang Chong's fatalism offers an explanation to frustrated Eastern Han intellectuals by addressing directly the way fate accounts for their unhappy careers. Moreover, Wang Chong warns them not to be ambitious. This admonition to be self-content in fact serves to eliminate a potential threat

[125] Liu Pansui, p. 56; Forke, Vol. 1, p. 130.

to the stability of the society that might be caused by political dissatisfaction among intellectuals.

Wang Chong's emphasis upon political fate in his discussions of physiognomy is explicitly identified as "*luxiang*" 祿相 (physiognomy of rank) in the writings of Wang Fu.[126] The "Xianglie" (On Physiognomy, 相列) chapter in *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 is organized around this central issue. However, in contrast to Wang Chong's fatalistic view, Wang Fu argues that physiognomy plays a limited role in the relationship between man and his fate.

Wang Fu agrees with Wang Chong that the physical body, especially the bone structure, demonstrates that man's nature and fate are bestowed by *tian* (天授性命). However, Wang Fu also emphasizes the importance of human efforts. According to him, men's various osseous structures indicate only that men fall into different categories. Each tree has its own shape and use; a good carpenter will make proper use of them accordingly. This, Wang Fu indicates, is the correct method and the universal principle of doing things. He then asks: if the tree has a good quality but the carpenter does not cut it, what can the tree do about itself? We see here an analogy is used by Wang Fu as well: the quality of the tree is linked to fate, and the pattern of wood is compared with man's physical body. But who is the carpenter that finalizes the destiny of the tree? The physiognomist, somewhat surprisingly, is immediately excluded from candidacy. Wang Fu points out that although a physiognomist can predict the ultimate fate of men, he

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[126] *Qianfu lun* (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), p. 130.

cannot make them achieve it (故凡相者，能期其所極，不能使之必至).[127] It is man himself who completes his destined life. As for intellectuals, no matter how great their fates are, they will not hold any position if they do not serve (士而弗仕，不成於位).[128] In addition to this, Wang Fu suggests that man can utilize a physiognomic diagnosis to avoid bad fortune:

> 智者見祥，修善迎之，其有憂色，循行改尤。愚者反戾，不自省思，雖休征見相，福轉爲災。於戲君子，可不敬哉！
> Upon seeing auspicious sign, the wise cultivates good actions to receive it. If there is an ominous color on the face, he cultivates his deeds and rectifies his wrongdoings. The fool is recalcitrant and never examines himself. [As a result] although a good symptom is seen on his appearance, he turns good fortune to calamity. Alas, gentlemen, can we not be reverent to this![129]

The above passage demonstrates that Wang Chong and Wang Fu have two totally different views of fate and physiognomy. While to Wang Chong the physiognomist is the absolute announcer of an unchangeable fate, Wang Fu considers physiognomy rather as a reference than as a life sentence. He believes that deeds can change one's life. Physiognomy only deciphers the sign, but moral efforts determine one's fortune.

Nevertheless, Wang Fu's emphasis upon morality does not mean that he doubts anthroposcopy. On the contrary, he is a serious advocate of this belief. Both the "Guxiang" and the "Xianglie" chapters can be regarded as encapsulations of early Chinese physiognomic thought. Wang Chong collects virtually all the references concerning physiognomy from pre-Qin to Han documents and stories and describes a rich

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[127] *Qianfu lun*, p. 131.

[128] *Qianfu lun*, p. 132.

[129] Ibid.

textual tradition in an almost encyclopedic presentation. A similar effort of classicizing is also found in Wang Fu's essay. The "Xianglie" chapter begins with a citation from *Shijing* to set up a theoretical tone for Wang Fu's promotion of anthroposcopy. This, again, is followed by a summary of physiognomic accounts that are also seen in *Lunheng*.[130]

In addition to this, Wang Fu's essay introduces physiognomic principles in considerable detail. According to Wang Fu, physiognomic inspections are based upon various physical features and bodily movements, including facial color, lines on the limbs, gestures in walking and voice:

> 人之相法，或在面部，或在手足，或在行步，或在声响。面部欲溥平润泽，手足欲深细明直，行步欲安稳覆载，音声欲温和中宫。头面手足，身形骨节，皆欲相副称。此其略要也。
> As for the methods of physiognomic inspection, some analyze the face, some the hands and feet, some the gait, and others the voice. The ideal face should have breadth, symmetry, smoothness, and a moist color. The lines on hands and feet should be deep, slender, clear and straight. The way of walking should be stable, secure and show the strength of bearing. The voice should be mild, harmonious and of middle range. All these features on head, face, hands, and feet should match with one's physical shape and bone structure; this is the essential principle of physiognomy.[131]

The above passage is probably the earliest expression of specific physiognomic techniques seen in the extant documents from pre-Qin to Han. The standards mentioned

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[130] Chapter "Xianglie" writes: The *Odes* says, "Heaven gives birth to people, there are objects and laws." For this reason the human body and physical appearance correspond to and manifest heaven. Each of the bone structures and formations of the forehead is patterned in order to match with a man's character and the length of his life, as well as illustrate the signs of nobility and humbleness 詩所謂"天生烝民，有物有則"。是故人身體形貌皆有象類，骨法角肉各有分部，以著性命之期，顯貴賤之表." See *Qianfu lun*, p. 130. Translation modified from Anne Behnke Kinney, *The Art of the Han Essay: Wang Fu's Ch'ien-fu lun* (Tempe: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1990), p. 115.

[131] *Qianfu lun*, p. 130. Translation modified from Kinney, pp. 115-6.

in the passage show a high level of sophistication. Not only are there specific requirement for each of the bodily parts, but also a balance is emphasized in the overall appearance. By nature, Wang Chong's introduction reminds us of a distinctive trend that persisted throughout the course of Han: an enterprise of categorizing and synthesizing previous philosophical and literary traditions that yields works as disparate as Sima Tan's 司馬談 "Lun liujia yaozhi" 論六家要旨 and Liu Xiang's 劉向 "Luelun" 略論. In addition to this, a lecture on bodily inspection presented in a philosophical text clearly indicates the influence of physiognomy in Han social and political life.

Conclusion

As a form of divination, physiognomy was deeply involved in the political world in early China. In the Spring and Autumn period, physiognomy was used to deal with the crisis generated by political succession. Examining the physical features and observing bodily movements provided hints to the political leaders of that time to predict the fate of their states and families. This political reading of the body was continued during the Warring States time. A new concern over evaluating and appreciating talent can be discerned in the use of physiognomy during this period. Moreover, an additional social function was added to divination concerning the body. Physiognomy offered a needed explanation of fate to intellectuals who were struggling for upward social mobility. Because of this social need, professional physiognomists began to appear in the documents of this period. Masters of this popular art served as pillars upon which a textual tradition of physiognomy was constructed.

Han China witnessed the prevalence of anthroposcopy in its political life. Physiognomy read imperial bodies as possessing signs of political legitimacy. Han imperial bodies from different generations were duplicated and reproduced by physiognomic description, testifying to an unchallengeable continuation of authority from the founder of the dynasty to his legal descendants. It was also during the Han that the female body was transformed into a form of political investment. The bodies of the daughters of eminent families became political capital that provided them immediate power and support.

Meanwhile, the physical bodies of Han officials and intellectuals were regarded as a manifestation of their morality and capacity. Physiognomy became involved in the selection of Han officials and solved the anxiety generated by upward social mobility.

This political adoption of physiognomy stimulated philosophical responses from the pre-Qin to the Han. Warring State philosophers such as Mengzi and Xunzi criticized the use of bodily divination. Moral effort and political doctrine were advocated by these two philosophers in order to replace the power of physiognomy and to provide an alternative solution to social anxiety. Nevertheless, their criticism reflected the popularity and influence of physiognomy during the Warring States time.

Physiognomy was philosophized and systemized by Han thinkers. Dong Zhongshu's bodily theory developed from pre-Qin thought concerning the mandate of heaven. Fate in Dong Zhongshu's philosophy of *tian* was extended to the individual realm. Since the body was formed in correspondence with heaven, fate as bestowed upon the body displayed itself in the physical appearance. Dong Zhongshu's acknowledgement

of physiognomy was fully elaborated by Wang Chong. An encyclopedic presentation of previous physiognomic sources provided by Wang Chong promoted the tradition of this popular belief. A fatalistic view characterized Wang Chong's bodily discourse in which physiognomic inspection announced an unchangeable fate. Such a theory of fate was revised by Wang Fu, for whom moral effort was more important in one's life than a prediction given by a physiognomist. However, Wang Fu never questioned the reliability of physiognomy. Instead, in his philosophical discussion we see for the first time a detailed introduction to the technique of anthroposcopy. The scattered references and discussions of physiognomy in pre-Qin sources were thus synthesized in the hands of these two Eastern Han philosophers.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND THE BODY

Introduction

This chapter examines the relationship between the body and politics in early China. It argues that from the period extending from the Warring States to the end of the Han discourse of the body formed an indispensable component of the political world. This was a time of political centralization, and the body was adopted as a metaphor to illustrate and legitimize new social and political institutions. The body was also used to evaluate the ethical basis of a polity and served in actual Han policy-making. To demonstrate this, I will organize the following chapter into three sections. Section one examines the way the body was used as metaphor in political discourse. I argue that the physical structure of the body was equated with the social structure of the state. Within such an equation, political legitimacy was best argued and manifested by linking the ruler's body with the body of the state. The authority of the ruler was accordingly demonstrated by the metaphorical dominance of heart over other interior organs. Section two looks at the ethical meanings the body acquires in the construction of an ideal polity. I argue that two different treatments of the body, burying the nameless corpses or damaging the body of the innocent, testify to the ethical nature of the state. The humane care of the body on the one hand and the violent abuse of the body on the other

distinguished an ideal governance from a corrupted one, arguing virtually for the legitimacy of dynastic change. The role of the body in actual policy-making is discussed in section three. I will single out Han China's relationship with the Xiongnu nomadic people to highlight the use of the body in creating efficient foreign politics.

The Body as Political Metaphors

This section focuses on the metaphorical meanings of the body in the political discourse of early China. In this section I will first discuss the problem of the word *shen* 身 and then introduce two ontological conceptualizations of the body and their political implications. This is followed by a discussion of the ruler-minister relationship that was explained by an analogical relationship between the heart (*xin* 心) and limbs (*gugong* 股肱). Different views of the metaphorical relationship between heart and limbs suggest the tendency toward a centralized power as well as the tension created by this tendency during the time from the late Warring States to the Han. In this equation between the structure of the body and the structure of society, the body of the ruler was integrated with the body of the state. The imperial body became a symbol of political legitimacy and was therefore mystified and reduplicated. Because of this association of the physical body and politics, in the mind of early Chinese, bodily dysfunction, it was believed, resulted directly from political disorder. In other words, the body and politics were too interdependent to be separated from each other.

Problem of the word "shen"

That both the body and the state are considered spatial objects enabled an analogy to be made between them in early Chinese correlative thinking.[1] In this mode of thinking, similarities between the two subjects were elaborated and their distinctions ignored. As a result, a constructed pattern based upon shared qualities was extended from one to the other, permitting the two mutually to explain each other. The body became a metaphor of the state and the state found its reflection in the body.

In the elaboration of the analogy of body and state, the moral quality of Chinese political concerns led to a belief that rectifying the body was the first step toward good government. In *Analects*, Confucius commented that "If his *shen* is correct, then there will be obedience without orders being given. If his *shen* is not correct, there will not be obedience even though orders are given (其身正，不令而行；其身不正，雖令不從)."[2]

A problem presented by this quotation is how to interpret the word *shen* 身, which means both the physical body and the self. However, traditional Chinese commentators of *Analects* spent no effort to explain which definition of the word Confucius had in mind in this context. This lexical indifference suggests an acceptance of

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[1] For a study of the body as the basic spatial unit, see Mark Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2006), especially chapter one on the human body.

[2] Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* 13.6, p. 136. Translation modified from D.C. Lau, *The Analects* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 119.

the compound connotations of the word.[3] In other words, to the Chinese the physical body and the self are one integrated concept denoted by *shen* that should not be separated from each other. However, English translators of the book unanimously interpret *shen* as "conduct" or "person" and completely exclude its reference to the physical body.[4] In their readings, the etymological origin of the word does not fit into a discussion of political morality and should be consequently disregarded.

But is this dichotomous judgment correct? Was the word *shen* in early Chinese philosophical discussions alluding only to the self and conduct? The answer is negative. In understanding the meanings of *shen*, *Liji* 禮記 provides a clear example of the involvement of the physical body in state construction. The beginning statement of the "Daxue" 大學 chapter in *Liji* directly points to the idea that learning has a moral purpose. Learning is, according to the chapter, to display illustrious virtue and renovate the people. In order to achieve proper governance, rectification should first concern the smallest social unity, the *shen*, then extend to larger units (*jia* 家 and *guo* 國) and eventually to the whole world (*tianxia* 天下).[5] The concept *shen* in this discourse includes both the self and

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[3] The Qing 清 scholar Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791-1855) did not explain the word *shen* at all. Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) gave an interesting modern translation of the passage. He translated *shen* as "*ta shen* 他身". It seems that Qian Mu also thinks the word includes both the physical body and the self. See Liu Baonan *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933), Vol. 3, p. 90. Qian Mu *Lunyu xinjie* 論語新解 (Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965), p. 441.

[4] For example, James Legge, Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont translate the word as "conduct". See Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), Vol. 1, p. 268. Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 1998), p. 163.

[5] For a discussion of the construction of social unities, see Mark Lewis' *The Construction of Space in Early China*.

the body. To rectify the body, the mind should be cultivated. Accordingly, refined virtue glosses the body (*de run shen* 德潤身) and puts it at ease (*xin guang ti pan* 心廣體胖).[6] "This is to say," as the "Daxue" puts it, "that what truly is within the body will be manifested without (此謂誠於中，形於外)."[7]

Such a belief of a bodily manifestation of refined inner quality resonates clearly with Mengzi's theory of materialized virtue. As I discussed in chapter one, Mengzi argues that the transformation of a gentleman's inner state is displayed by a sleek, jade-like facial color.[8] The "Daxue" sentence therefore stays in line with Mengzi's idea. More importantly, in the "Daxue" passage the improved body adorned by outward virtue signifies the completion of rectifying the basic social unit, the individual. In this sense, the word *shen* as a fundamental concept in the overall scheme of social construction connotes both meanings of the physical body and the person.

This notion of cultivating the physical body as the first step toward an ideal governance was also explicated in the writings of *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋. Compiled around 239 BCE, before the Qin 秦 unification of China, *Lüshi Chunqiu* incorporated a wide range of popular thought to prepare a sweeping political ideology for the impending centralized power. The eclecticism that marked this compilation encouraged competition as well as mutual adoption among different political doctrines. The meanings of *shen* as both physical body and as self played a role in this political synthesis. For example, in an

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[6] Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, p. 367.

[7] Translation modified from Legge, ibid.

[8] D. C. Lau, *Mencius* 13: 21 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003), p. 295.

argumentation for the centralization of power that unfolds in the essay "Zhiyi" 執一, a conversation between a king of Chu 楚 and Master Zhan He 詹何 was reported. The king asked Zhan He about governing; Zhan He replied that the root of ruling a state resided in cultivating *shen* (爲國之本，在於爲身).[9] Zhan He's discussion followed the same pattern presented in the "Daxue" chapter, in which rectifying *shen* was advanced as the basic rule for governing the family, the state and the world. As for the matters that concerned a sage, Zhan He concluded that at the broadest they covered the whole universe at the narrowest they were within the boundary of the body (聖人之事，廣之則極宇宙，窮日月；約之則無出乎身者也). In other words, although the body/self, family, state and the world are concerns of different levels, the primary principle was rooted in cultivating *shen* (此四者，異位同本).[10]

The most convincing evidence of the combined meanings of the word *shen* is given in chapter three in *Lüshi Chunqiu*. In a discussion of proper governance, King Tang asks his minister Yi Yin how to control the world and is advised that the key is controlling the body. The author of this essay then argues that rectifying the body (*shen*) is the principle of doing things:

> 凡事之本，必先治身，嗇其大寶。用其新，棄其陳，腠理遂通。精氣日新，邪氣盡去，及其天年。此之謂真人。昔者先聖王，成其身而天下成，治其身而天下治。…為天下者不於天下於身。
> As a general principle, the foundation of all undertakings rests in the necessity of first governing your body and being sparing of your "great treasure." Use the

[9] Xu Weiyu, *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi*, chapter 17, pp. 32A-B.

[10] Ibid.

> new and expel the stale, so that the circulation within your veins remains free-flowing. Then the vital essence and the ethers will be renewed each day, and evil ethers will be completely expelled, and you will reach your natural life span. If you attain this, you will be called a "True Man." In The past, the first sage-kings perfected their bodies, and the world was made complete. They governed their bodies and the world became well-ordered. Thus...one who exercises control over the world works not on the world but on his body.[11]

A philosophical classification of this passage is difficult. The Daoist word "*zhenren* 真人" is a clear reference to a concept found in *Zhuangzi* 莊子. At the same time, it is also parallel with the Confucian sagely king. The essay in chapter three of *Lüshi chunqiu*, the source of the above passage, combines both the Daoist concept, "*wuwei*" 無爲, for example, and Confucian moral teachings (*qinqin zhangzhang* 親親長長).[12] As a result, the chapter reflects an eclectic philosophy that is typical of *Lüshi Chunqiu*, an eclecticism seen in many early Han texts such as *Huainanzi* 淮南子. Despite the philosophical ambiguity of the passage in question, the use of the compound meaning of the word *shen* is quite clear.

From the above examples, it is evident that Confucius' comment on proper governance includes correcting both the body and the self. The body is the trainable self and the self is the abstract body. They are inseparable. Moreover, from *Analects*, *Liji* to *Lüshi Chunqiu*, we see a coherent use of the two meanings of *shen* in pre-Qin philosophical texts. When *shen* is referred to as the basic unit of society, both meanings of the word are implied, as is the idea that there is a strong linkage between those

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[11] Xu Weiyu, chapter three, pp. 9B-10A. Translation modified from John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, ibid. p. 102.

[12] Xu Weiyu, pp. 10A, 12A.

meanings. The physical body thus serves as a metaphor in the dialogue of social construction. As *Lüshi Chunqiu* asserts, "As for governing the body and governing the state, the technique is of the same principle" (夫治身與治國，一理之術也).[13]

But what is the body? How was the body conceptualized and how exactly were the perceptions of the body connected with politics? To answer these questions, I will discuss two ontological concepts of the body in early China and explain their political implications in the following subsection.

Two ontological concepts of the body and their political implication

The last three centuries before the common era were an important time during which early Chinese understandings of the body developed. Warring States perceptions of the body were only hinted at and were scattered in various philosophical writings; and an examination of these references reveals a lack of a coherent conceptualization of the body. In an attempt to summarize these inconsistent views, the Japanese scholar Ishida Hidemi 石田秀實 categorizes early Chinese conceptions of the body into two types: the

[13] Xu Weiyu, chapter 17, p. 1A. The essay "Wuzheng" 五政 in the Mawangdui manuscripts provides another evidence of this: when asked by the Yellow Emperor the question from what matter governance should start, Yan Ran 閻冉 affirms that it must begin with governing the body. Only after correct rules are established within it, can others be commanded 黃帝問閻冉曰：“吾欲佈施五正（政），焉止焉始？”對曰：“始於身。中有正度，後及外人. See *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu jingfa* 馬王堆漢墓帛書經法, edited by Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 馬王堆漢墓帛書整理小組 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1976), p. 54.

fluid body (流動的身體) and the body as a spatial site (作爲場域的身體).[14] Focusing on theories of the formation of the fetus, Ishida points out that to early Chinese the body was produced by and contained within flowing *qi* 氣. Internal organs (*zangfu* 臟腑) were formed after *qi* created life; they were bodily sites where *qi* dwelled.

Yang Rubin defines Ishida's "fluid body" as the "*qi* view of the body" (氣化的身體觀) and attributes this theory to Taoism.[15] To Laozi, as Yang Rubin argues, the body was a substance that leant on *yin*, embraced *yang* and harmonized *qi* (負陰抱陽沖氣以爲和).[16] A balanced *qi* was essential to Laozi's body in the cosmological framework.

The notion of the body created by *qi* is confirmed by Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi understood the course of life as a transformation of *qi*: when *qi* gathers in the body, life emerges; when *qi* scatters, life disappears (人之生，氣之聚也。聚則為生，散則為死).[17] In these Taoist ideas, *qi* is a natural concept; it is the essence of life.

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[14] Ishida Hidemi 石田秀實, "You shenti shengcheng guocheng de renshi lai kan Zhongguo gudai shentiguan de tezhi" 由身體生成過程的認識來看中國古代身體觀的特質, in Yang Rubin 楊儒賓 ed., *Zhongguo gudai sixiang zhong de qilun ji shentiguan* 中國古代思想中的氣論及身體觀 (Taibei: juliu tushu gongsi, 1997), pp. 185.

[15] See Yang Rubin's introduction to *Zhongguo gudai sixiang zhong de qilun ji shentiguan*, ibid, p. 21. See also his book *Rujia shentiguan* 儒家身體觀 (Taibei: zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubichu, 1998).

[16] Yang Rubin, *Zhongguo gudai sixiang zhong de qilun ji shentigua*, p. 21.

[17] See chapter "Zhi bei you" 知北游 in Wang Xianqian's 王先謙 (1842-1917) *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解, (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), p. 138. Chapter "Shuidi" 水地 in *Guanzi* 管子 compares the human body with flowing water and regards it as a product of the uniting of male and female *jingqi* (精氣). See Zhou Hanguang 周瀚光, Zhu Youwen 朱幼文 and Dai Hongcai 戴洪才 ed., *Guanzi zhijie* 管子直解 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2000), p.334.

Warring States Confucian philosophers also believed that a circulating *qi* conceived and maintained the body. Mengzi and Xunzi both described that *qi* as filling the body and regarded it as the source of life.[18] Different from the Taoist natural concept, *qi* in Mengzi and Xunzi connoted profound moral meanings. While Mengzi's "flood-like" *qi* (浩然之氣) demonstrated his moral fortitude, Xunzi's discussion of "cultivating *qi*" was intended to "nourish the heart" (*yangxin* 養心) for the purpose of obtaining the ritually refined virtue.[19]

Despite their different understandings, the bodily *qi* in both Taoist texts and Confucian writings was viewed as an element of the cosmos. Not only did *qi* circulate inside the body, it also flowed beyond the bodily boundary and exchanged with other natural essences.[20] This notion that *qi* connects with the universe is explicitly stated in early medical texts. A chapter entitled "Shengqi tongtian lun pian" (Discussion on the Living *Qi* Connects the Universe, 生氣通天論篇) in *Huangdi neijing* argues that "from the antiquity people knew that the root of life lay in man's connection with the universe" (自古通天者生之本). All the nine orifices, five *zang* organs and twelve joints in the

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[18] Mengzi writes that *qi* fills the body (氣，體之充也), see Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu*, 3.2, p. 62. Xunzi also talks about cultivating *qi* in order to nourish life (治氣養生), see chapter "Xiushen" 修身 in *Xunzi*.

[19] The Mawangdui text "Wuxing pian" 五行篇 directly associates *qi* with virtues and defines *qi* as 仁氣，義氣 and 禮氣. See Pang Pu 龐朴 *Boshu wuxingpian yanjiu* 帛書五行篇研究 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1980), pp. 36, 50, and 51.

[20] For example, Mengzi distinguishes the *qi* in the morning (平旦之氣) and the *qi* at night (夜氣) and believes that the different qualities of these *qi*s influence one's innate *qi*/nature. See chapter "Gaozi shang" 告子上.

body connected with the cosmic *qi* (九竅，五臟，十二節，皆通乎天氣).[21] More explicitly, chapter five in *Huangdi neijing* associates each of the five organs with a specific *qi*: heavenly *qi* connects with the lung, earthly *qi* connects with the throat, the *qi* of wind connects with the liver, the *qi* of thunder with the heart, the *qi* of grain with the spleen, and the *qi* of rain with the kidneys (天氣通於肺，地氣通於嗌，風氣通於肝，雷氣通於心，谷氣通於脾，雨氣通於腎).[22] In this description, natural phenomena were categorized into different types of *qi*; the internal organs, as Ishida points out, become containers of *qi* and each of them executes a specific duty.

This imagination of the interior of the body is very unique in comparison with the European emphasis upon an anatomical bodily system. As Nathan Sivin argues, "The early Chinese body was composed mainly of vaguely defined bones and flesh traversed by circulation tracts."[23] Although there were names of internal organs, their locations and physical correlations with other bodily components "did not mandate diligent exploration;" therefore Sivin concludes that in classical Chinese medicine "structure did not matter."[24]

When Sivin is criticizing the lack of concern for the structure of the body in early Chinese medical thought, he probably is considering it from the perspective of the

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[21] Guo Aichun, *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu yuyi*, p. 14.

[22] Guo Aichun, p. 38-9.

[23] Nathan Sivin, "State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C." in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 55 (Jun., 1995) 5-37, p. 12.

[24] Sivin, ibid. pp. 12, 13.

European tradition. It is certainly true that anatomy had never been seriously explored by traditional Chinese physicians, but a concrete structure did exist in early Chinese descriptions of the body, although this structure was based upon a cosmological explanation. For example, chapter five in *Huangdi neijing* uses the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) theory to explain the body and the correlations of bodily organs. In this chapter, the correspondences between the body and natural elements are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Correspondence between the body and natural elements

East	Wind	Wood	Sourness	The liver (in charge of the eyes)	Sinews	The heart
South	Hotness	Fire	Bitterness	The heart (the tongue)	Blood	The spleen
Center	humidity	Earth	Sweetness	The spleen (the mouth)	Flesh	The lung
West	Dryness	Metal	Pungency	The lung (the nose)	Skin, hair	The kidney
North	Coldness	Water	Saltiness	The kidneys (the heart takes charge of ears)	Marrow	The liver

In this table, each of the elements generates the one that follows it and the correlation among the five internal organs can be defined as a circle of creation: the liver—the heart—the spleen—the lung—the kidneys—the liver. In addition to this, the five facial parts are also connected with the five internal organs. Within this link between inside and

outside bodily parts, the heart is given two responsibilities: it takes charge of both of the tongue and the ears—a superior status that I will discuss later.

Moreover, as the above passage shows, the natural types of *qi* were categorized into different ranks and were arranged by order: heaven, earth, wind, thunder, grain and rain. Internal organs were defined as receivers or containers of a specific *qi* and together they served to achieve an overall balance in the body. Indeed, in early Chinese medical thought, order and duty constructed the internal structure of the human body. In other words, the interior of the body was described as a hierarchical system within which organs executed particular roles in order to maintain the function of the whole body. Furthermore, because the microcosmic body was perceived as a counterpart of the macrocosm, the hierarchical bodily system can be explained as a political structure. Chapter eight in *Huangdi neijing* offers the best example of this.

In this chapter we read that when the Yellow Emperor asked about the functions of the twelve organs (*shi er zang* 十二藏), the physician Qibo 岐伯 associated each of the viscera with an official post: the heart, the source of intelligence, was the ruler, the lung was the premier and adjusted the activities of the body, the liver was the general, who derives strategies, the gallbladder was the official of the treasury and was able to make judgments, the pericardium (*shanzhong* 膻中) was the official of inner chamber, managing joys and pleasures. The spleen and stomach were the garnary officials (*canglin zhi guan* 倉廩之官), the source of the five flavors. In addition to these, the large and

small intestines, the kidneys, the triple-warmer (*san jiao* 三焦) and the bladder were all linked with official posts.[25]

In this conception, the bodily structure was analyzed with reference to the structure of the state; the political system was thus adopted as a metaphor for the articulation of the body. In return, the body as a microcosm explained the principle of governance. After elaborating the functions of the twelve organs, Qibo emphasized that a balance must be kept among them. He then concluded that if the ruler of the body, the heart, was wise, the whole body would be at ease. Cultivating the body in this way, a man will enjoy long life without danger. If the same principle is used in governing the world, the world will be prosperous. However, if the heart/ruler is not wise, the body will be greatly harmed, life will be calamitous and the world will collapse. Those ruling the world, as Qibo warned, must be careful about this (主不明則十二官危...以此養生則殃，以爲天下者，其宗大危，戒之戒之).[26]

As shown in this *Huangdi neijing* chapter, this perception of a hierarchical bodily structure had a profound political implication. Qibo's words compared the dominance of the heart in the body with the authority of the ruler in the state, an equation that also appeared in many early philosophical texts. At the same time, a balance between the ruler of the body (the heart) and its ministers (other organs) was emphasized equally (凡此十二官者，不得相失也).[27] In addition to medical documents, the same concern

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[25] Guo Aichu, *Huangdi neijing suwen jiaozhu yuyi*, p. 54.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

was evident in other early writings, in which balance was stressed between the heart and limbs (*gugong* 股肱).

This equation of the hierarchy of the society with the stratified structure of the body and the attention paid upon the relationship between the heart and other bodily parts provided early thinkers with a handy reference and a vivid vocabulary for their political discussions. The heart and limbs were especially adopted as metaphors in early Chinese argumentations of the ruler-minister relationship. The tension in the metaphorical relationship between the heart and limbs corresponded to and reflected the changes in the real political world.[28]

The tension between the heart and limbs and the battle of power

The relationship between the heart and limbs was repeatedly used to explain the ruler-minister relation in early texts. Mengzi compared the ministers to the hands and feet and the ruler to the belly and heart.[29] In *Zuozhuan*, ministers were often addressed as *gugong* 股肱, limbs, to the ruler.[30] A Zhou 周 scribe once read an omen as indicating

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[28] It is interesting to compare this metaphorical meaning of the body in the Chinese tradition to that in the Western culture. As Ernst Kantorowicz's famous study, *The King's Two Bodies*, illustrates, in the early West the king's body was also equated to the body politic. But in the Western political interpretation of the body, focus was given on the tension between the mortality and corruptibility of the body. Such a tension was resolved by identifying the "real" body of the King, which was equated to the body politic, while the spiritual body was understood to be eternal. In addition to the absence of Western dualist view of the ruler's body, the Chinese political conceptualization of the body also highlighted a tendency to see the particular parts of the body as analogies for particular units of government. For medieval Western political philosophy of the body, see Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[29] Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu* 8.3, p. 186.

[30] See Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Xi 9: 4, 26: 3, Duke Xiang 14: 8, and Duke Zhao 9: 5, pp. 328, 440, 1018, and 1311.

the death of King Zhao 昭王 of Chu 楚 and suggested to the king to offer a sacrifice and transfer the disaster to his ministers, the king rejected this and said that there was no use to move the illness of the belly and heart to the limbs (除腹心之疾，而寘諸股肱，何益).[31] Clearly, the king regarded his ministers as limbs and viewed himself as the belly and heart. In this episode, the body becomes a metaphor and a mutual reliance between the ruler and his subjects is emphasized. However, in early political writings the ruler/minister relationship as suggested by the reference to the heart and limbs did not commonly lead to the same conclusion we see in the *Zuozhuan* story. There always is a gap between the subject of metaphor and its object. Metaphor can be manipulated and used by people from opposite stands in any case of argumentation.[32] Because of this, although the same heart and limbs metaphor was used, different visions of the ruler/ minister relationship were advocated by early thinkers. Mengzi and Xunzi probably represented two different views of the relationship in question.

In a conversation between Mengzi and King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王, Mengzi warned the king that if the ruler regarded the ministers as his hands and feet, they would treat him as their belly and heart. If he regarded them as his horses and hounds, they would treat him as a mere fellow-countryman. Moreover, if the ruler treated them as mud and weeds, they would treat him as an enemy.[33] Mengzi's words here reject an absolute

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[31] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Ai 6: 4, p. 1636.

[32] For an important study of the body as a metaphor in Western thought, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *The Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[33] Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu*, p. 186. Translation modified from D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 173.

subordination of the subjects to the ruler and stay in line with Mengzi's general political philosophy in which people are valued above the ruler.[34] As for the ruler/minister relationship, Mengzi did not suggest a control of the limbs by the heart. Instead, he promoted a mutual respect between the ruler and the minister.

Mengzi's idea of a complementary relationship is elaborated in the "Ziyi" 緇衣 chapter in *Liji*. Presented in the voice of Confucius, a discussion of the rule-subject relationship unfolds through an analogy with the body:

> 子曰：“民以君為心，君以民為體。心莊則體舒，心肅則容敬。心好之，身必安之；君好之，民必欲之。心以體全，亦以體傷；君以民存，亦以民亡。”
> The master said, "The people treat the ruler as the heart and the ruler treats the people as the body. When the heart is composed, the body is at ease; when the heart is reverent, the appearance is respectful. When the heart loves something, the body is sure to rest in it. When the ruler loves something, the people are sure to desire it. The heart relies upon the body to be complete; it is also suffers when the body is wounded. The ruler relies upon the people to survive and perishes also through the people."[35]

The passage first acknowledges the ruler is the heart that guides the people. It then affirms that the state of the heart is crucial to the wellbeing of the body. However, a warning to the ruler/heart is also explicated at the end of the passage. That is, the heart will be intact if the body is healthy; it will be damaged if the body is wounded. As for the ruler, his survival or fall relies completely upon the people.

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[34] In *Mengzi* 14: 14, Mengzi says that "The people are of supreme importance; the altars to the gods of earth and grain come next; last comes the ruler." D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 315.

[35] *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 1514. Translation adopted from James Legge, *The Li Ki*, in Max Muller ed., *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885), Vol. 28, pp. 359-60. The date of the "Ziyi" chapter was problematic. However, in 1993 an early version of the chapter written on bamboo slips was unearthed from a Chu tomb at Guodian 郭店, Hubei Province. The tomb was dated around 300 B.C.E., because of this, the bamboo text must have been written earlier than *Mengzi*. A comparison of the Guodian text with the *Liji* chapter suggests that the later one is an elaborated writing of the Guodian "Ziyi". In general, the idesa in *Mengzi* and "Ziyi" are consistent.

Xunzi prescribed a different type of relationship between the heart and limbs than that found in Mengzi. Xunzi asserts the dominance of the heart over other corporeal parts, and by extension promotes the idea of the indisputable authority of the ruler. Xunzi defines the heart as the ruler of the body and the master of intelligence (心者，形之君也，而神明之主也).[36] According to Xunzi, the heart "issues commands but does not receive commands" (出令而無所受令). And "[On] its own authority it forbids or orders, renounces or selects, initiates or stops" (自禁也，自使也，自奪也，自取也，自行也，自止也). While other bodily organs can be forced to change, the heart is not influenced by outside forces. It accepts or rejects things according to its own decision.[37]

Xunzi's promotion of the authority of the heart resulted directly from late Warring State general concern of the power of the ruler (*jun quan* 君權). Chapter 21 in *Xunzi* begins with an assertion that the world does not have two Ways and the sage does not have two hearts (天下無二道，聖人無兩心).[38] To Xunzi, political disorder arises when the Way is not united and authority is divided. If power in a state is shared by the ruler and the minister then danger will occur. The solution to this crisis is that command comes only from the ruler just as bodily movements are decided by the heart.

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[36] See chapter "Jiebi" 解蔽 in *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 354.

[37] *Xunzi xinzhu*, ibid. Translation cited from Knoblock, *Xunzi*, Vol. 3, p. 105.

[38] Knoblock, p. 100.

Interestingly, Xunzi's idea of a controlling heart is found in a more articulated expression in the Mawangdui manuscript "Wuxing" 五行 and is contradicted by a probably earlier version of the text discovered in Guodian bamboo documents.

According to Pang Pu 龐朴, the Mawangdui "Wuxing" manuscript is composed of two sources: one is the classic text, the *jing* 經, and the other is the explanation of the classic, the *shuo* 說. *Jing* 經 22 in the manuscript states that ears, eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet are commanded by the heart. When the heart agrees on things, none of them dares disagree. When the heart commands them to move, none of them would disobey.[39] What is strongly argued by the passage is the absolute control of the heart over the body. The heart "*yi* 役", employs, other organs and its order must be followed.[40]

However, an earlier version of the "Wuxing" text found in Guodian documents presents a totally different conclusion. Slips 45 to 46 contain almost identical wording with the Mawangdui manuscript. In the passage, the six organs are employed by the heart and none of them dare to resist its order. Nevertheless, this affirmation of the governance of the heart is immediately followed by an emphasis upon the cooperation between the heart and the organs. As the Guodian text says, "[When the heart and the organs are]

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[39] The sentence reads: 耳目鼻口手足六者，心之役也。心曰唯，莫敢不[唯，心曰諾，莫]敢不[諾。心]曰進，莫敢不進。心曰淺，莫敢不淺. See Pang Pu, *Boshu wuxingpian yanjiu*, p. 60.

[40] This controlling and obedient relationship between the heart and the body is elaborated in the *shuo* part. It adopts Mengzi's concept of "big body" (*da ti* 大體) and "small body" (*xiao ti* 小體) to argue for the logicality of the command of the heart. In chapter "Gaozi shang" 告子上, Mengzi distinguishes bodily parts into two levels, important and less important, and uses this to argue for the distinction between men of different ranks and moral qualities. Mengzi does not seem to confirm the authority of the ruler in using these bodily metaphors. However, the Mawangdui *shuo* explanation revises Mengzi's acknowledgement of rank difference and makes it a reason for the obedience of the minister to the ruler. For Mengzi's concept, see Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu* 11:15, 11:16, pp. 270-1.

harmonious they are integrated. When they are integrated [the body] is good (和則同，同則善)."[41]

As scholars generally agree, the Guodian "Wuxing" was written around 300 B.C.E. and probably predates *Mengzi*. The Mawangdui "Wuxing" undoubtedly has a close textual relation with the Guodian document. The reason that it did not include the Guodian ending is hard to know. It could result from textual corruption or deliberate revision. In any case, despite the difference in the two versions, a tension in the ruler and minister relationship is apparent in these writings. In other words, from the early Warring States until its end there was a general debate about the ruler/minister relationship and how that might be most accurately compared to the relationship between the heart and other bodily organs. The Guodian text seems to present a balanced view on this issue: while admitting the authority of the heart, it emphasizes at the same time the importance of the other organs.

Indeed, this argument of the indispensable role of ministers is not a lonely voice. Even when Xunzi stresses the authority of the ruler, he also makes it clear that the ruler should not intervene in the duties of the ministers. In chapter 12 in *Xunzi*, the ideal ruler is described as being able to see without looking, to hear without listening, to know without thinking and to accomplish without moving. He simply sits and the world follows him as the limbs follow the heart (塊然坐而天下從之如一體，如四肢之從心).[42] To

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[41] See *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), p. 150.

[42] Chapter "Jundao" 君道. See Knoblock, *Xunzi*, Vol. 2, p. 185.

achieve this, the ruler/heart dwells within the central cavity and allows the ministers/organs to carry out their individual function (耳目鼻口形能，各有接而不相能也，夫是之謂天官。心居中虛，以治五官，夫是之謂天君).[43]

What is suggested in the above passages is the following: as each bodily organ has its own capacity, each minister has his own duties.[44] A ruler supervises his ministers but leaves them to fulfill their own roles. To a ruler, the key to success lies in the proper use of "method" (*shu* 術).[45]

This Taoist-Legalist view was continued in *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 and *Guanzi* 管子.[46] For example, essay 36 in *Guanzi* compares the position of the heart in the body to the throne of the ruler and equates the duties of the nine orifices to the divisions of office (心之在體，君之位也。九竅之有職，官之分也). It then argues that if the heart does not intervene in the affairs of the ears and eyes, each official is able to maintain his own duties (心而無與視聽之事，則官得守其分矣).[47] Elsewhere in *Guanzi* this principle is more clearly announced: "The heart does not do the work of the nine orifices but the nine

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[43] Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 16.

[44] These none-interchangeable capacities/duties are defined by Xunzi as "the faculties given by heaven" (天官). Knoblock, ibid.

[45] *Shu* seems to be a popular word in Warring States and early Han political discussions. It appears repeatedly in *Xunzi*, *Hanfeizi*, *Guanzi*, *Lüshi Chunqiu* and *Huainanzi*.

[46] See Knoblock, Vol. 2, note 82, p. 323. For *Hanfeizi*, see chapter fourteen "Jianjie shichen" 姦劫弒臣", in Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1963), p. 247.

[47] See "Xinshu shang" 心術上 in Zhi Weicheng 支偉成 *Guanzi tongshi* 管子通釋, (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1996), pp. 258, 260.

orifices are in order; the ruler does not do the work of the five offices but the five offices are in order" (心不為九竅九竅治，君不為五官五官治).[48]

Considering the long textual history of *Guanzi*, which extended probably from the fifth century B.C.E. to the early Han, this promoting of the power of the ministers while acknowledging the authority of the ruler indicates that a debate on this issue probably had been going on during these centuries. Furthermore, if we consider as well the same emphasis presented in the Guodian "Wuxing" text, in *Xunzi* and *Hanfeizi* and compare these with *Mengzi* and "Ziyi", we see that among Warring States philosophers there was an effort, expressed through their use of heart-body metaphors, to restrain the power of the ruler while at the same time defending his authority.

This tension between restraining and defending the power of the ruler continued from the Warring States to Han time. For example, despite preparing for the impending unification, *Lüshi Chunqiu* nevertheless warns the ruler not to take over the duties of the officials (君代有司爲有司).[49] Even when power centralization was finalized during Emperor Wu's 武帝 era, the battle for power between the ruler and the ministers still continued. For instance, many chapters in *Chunqiu fanlu* speak of the ruler as the heart of the people and the people as the body of the ruler. The ruler/minister relationship seen in "Ziyi" and *Mengzi* is developed in *Chunqiu fanlu*.[50] At the same time, the Taoist-Legalist ideal ruler is also described in the text. In this description, the metaphor takes on a

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[48] See essay "Jiu shou" 九守 in Zhi Weicheng's *Guanzi tongshi*, p. 352.

[49] Xu Weiyu, *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi*, chapter 17, p. 11B.

[50] See Lai Yanyuan, *Chunqiu fanlu jinzhu jinyi*, p. 285.

somewhat different emphasis. The Taoist-Legalist emphasizes that the ruler should be hidden, just as the heart hides in the chest (隱居深宮，若心之藏於胸).[51] What follows this is an emphasis that the ruler should trust the rights of the minister. To a ruler, he should take the state as his body and rely upon the ministers to form his heart (因國以爲身，因臣以爲心).[52]

The ruler's body: integration and reduplication

Despite the different types of ruler/minister relationships described in early texts, the analogy between the authority of the ruler and the dominance of the heart in the body was commonly accepted by philosophers and was expressed in their writings. With the movement toward political unification and the development of a centralized power, the advocacy of an undivided and unchallengeable authority was intensified. As *Huainanzi* wrote: "heaven, earth and the universe reside in one man's body and all in the world are under the governance of the ruler" (天地宇宙，一人之身也；六合之內，一人之制也).[53] In this configuration, the entire universe is compared to a single body—the body of the ruler in whom all power is centralized.

This affirmation of the power of the ruler found its most explicit expression in *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan* 春秋公羊傳. In this text the ruler and the state are regarded as

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[51] Lai Yanyuan, *Chunqiu fanlu jinzhu jinyi*, p. 432.

[52] Ibid, p. 165.

[53] Chapter eight "Benjing xun" 本經訓. See Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, Vol. 2, p. 80.

an integrated unit (*guo jun yiti* 國君一體).[54] What is implied in this assertion is a notion of consistency between the ruler's body and state politics. When the structure of the body is paralleled to social institutions and the ruler is equated with the dominative heart, the principle of managing the body became part of statecraft. Following this logic, the way of cultivating life and the way of ruling the state became compatible and are condensed in the body of the ruler.[55] Because of this analogy, the opening essays in the twelve *ji* 紀 sections in *Lüshi Chunqiu* give detailed injunctions to the ruler on how to nourish his body in accordance with the seasonal changes in order to maintain the harmony of nature and ensure prosperity of the state.[56] These injunctions concerned such things as which imperial hall should be the ruler's place of residence at any given time, what clothes he should wear on various occasions, the food he should eat and many other bodily movements. The idea behind this was that such choices on the part of the ruler were necessary to balance and transform the forces of the universe.[57] Any violation of these rule (*ling* 令) will cause disasters both in the natural world and in human society.[58]

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[54] *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊傳註疏, (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), Duke Zhuang 莊公 4, p. 123.

[55] See the *Huangdi neijing* passage cited on page 13.

[56] See the first essays in each chapter in the *ji* section in *Lüshi Chunqiu*.

[57] For example, the essay on the second of summer months indicates that during the month *yin* and *yang* forces compete with each other, and because of this, a gentleman should keep his body still, restrain his desire and settle his heart. These are followed by a prohibition of the use of legal punishment in order to finalize the achievement of *yin* and *yang*. See Xu Weiyu, *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi*, chapter five, pp. 3B-4A.

[58] These regulations in *Lüshi Chunqiu* were adopted by *Huainanzi*; they appear also in the "Yueling" 月令 chapter in *Liji*. See chapter five in Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, Vol. 3, pp. 20-41; *Liji zhengyi*, pp. 438-565.

Since natural disaster resulted directly from the failure of the ruler in balancing the relationship between the human society and the natural world, according to the notion of *guo jun yi ti* (國君一體), the state could redeem itself from the natural punishment by offering a symbolic sacrifice of the body of the ruler. The sagely King Tang's self-sacrifice to end a drought is probably the most famous story reflecting this notion. As related in *Lüshi Chunqiu*, after Tang conquered Xia, the kingdom suffered from a five-year drought. Tang pleaded with the god and the spirits, claiming that the people were innocent and that he was the only one to blame. Cutting his hair and binding his hands, Tang offered himself as a sacrifice to bring rain. The people were greatly pleased by this and rain came immediately.[59]

What is clearly reflected in this story is the integration of the body of the ruler with the body of the state. By damaging his own body, Tang repays the damage in the natural world caused by state politics. In this sense, Tang transforms himself to become a mediator who connects heaven, earth and man and negotiates with the universe on behalf of human society. Furthermore, Tang's self-sacrifice demonstrates as well the symbolic meaning of his body: similar to his claim as the only representative of the people, Tang

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[59] Essay "Shunming" 順民. See Xu Weiyu, *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi*, chapter nine, 6A-B. This story also appears in chapter "Zhushu xun" 主術訓 in *Huainanzi*, see Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, Vol. 3, p. 6. It is also discussed by Wang Chong, who believed that Tang did sacrifice his body but doubted the immediate arrival of the rain, see *Lunheng*, chapter "Gan xu pian" 感虛篇, pp. 111-3.

offers his body as the single legitimate redemption that the state can pay for its fault. His body therefore represents the state and manifests his authority as a ruler.[60]

This integration between the body of the ruler and the body of the state strongly promoted the political legitimacy of the ruler. According to the notion of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), the ruler was chosen by heaven as the agent who carried out its will in the human world. Because the ruler's body was regarded as a symbol of the state, its physical connections with heaven was then understood as a necessary proof of the ruler's legitimacy. Consequently, the ruler's body was often mystified in order to promote this idea.[61]

The mystification of the ruler's body seems to have undergone three steps of development in early China which roughly correspond to the Warring States, the Former Han, and the Later Han. If we chose *Xunzi*, *Huainanzi* and Later Han *chenwei* texts as the representative of each period and compare their relevant passages, we see some interesting changes in the development of the mystification of the body.

First, qualified candidates for this new myth of the ruler's body were selected by different criteria in each period. As indicated in the "Feixiang" chapter in *Xunzi*, Warring States attention on this matter was centered upon descriptions both of the unusual physical appearances of legendary sages in high antiquity and also the bodies of famous

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[60] This symbolic sacrifice of the ruler's body was continued through Chinese history. Whenever there was a natural disaster, the emperor would issue a self-blaming decree and practice physical restraint, abstaining temporarily from meat, wine and sex.

[61] For mysticism in facilitating and consolidating kingship in early China, see Julia Ching's book, *Mysticism and Kingship in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially the first two chapters.

officials in the recent past.[62] However, in *Huainanzi* ministers were deprived of this attention and the body of the ancient kings was deified, which goes well beyond the earlier concept seen in *Xunzi*. This change defined explicitly the rulers' body as the only legitimate object of mystification, which further reflects the ideology concerning the centralization of power that predominated during *Huainanzi*'s time. In Later Han apocryphal texts, sage kings still occupied the center of this type of bodily description. However, the definition of sage kings was broadly extended so that it included as well mythical rulers such as the Three Emperors (*san huang* 三皇) created by people during the Han. In addition to this, Confucius and his major disciples were also granted this honor due to the dominance of Confucian ideology. In the view of the people of the Later Han, Confucius and his leading students were *shengren* 聖人 who were equal or superior in stature to political leaders. Confucius, especially, was the "uncrowned king".[63]

Second, the descriptions of extraordinary bodies in Han texts were systemized well beyond what one finds in *Xunzi*. In the "Feixiang" chapter, physical appearance seems to be randomly described with no logical link between the subjects' abnormal bodies and their stories. For example, it is impossible to understand why Gaoyao's 皋陶 face was like that of a shaved melon or why Fuyue 傅說 looked like he had a fin

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[62] These men include King Yan of Xu 徐偃王, Confucius, Zigong 子弓, Gongsun Lü 公孫呂, Sunshu Ao 孫叔敖, and Duke of She, Zigao 葉公子高. See *Xunzi xinzhu*, pp. 51-3.

[63] For the changing meanings of *sheng*, see Gu Jiegang's "Chunqiu shidai de Kongzi he Han dai de Kongzi" 春秋時代的孔子和漢代的孔子, in *Gushi bian* 古史辯 (Hong Kong: Taiping shuju, 1962), Vol. 2, pp. 131-2. See also Zhu Pingyi's discussion on the notion of *shengren bu xiang* 聖人不相 in his *Handai de xiangren shu*, pp. 84-93.

emerging from his back. It is also hard to believe that a minister Gongsun Lü 公孫呂 in Wei 衛 was seven feet tall and had a three-foot long face with a forehead three inches across and nostrils, eyes and ears all pushed together.[64] *Xunzi* offers no clue to fathom the ideas behind these strange physical appearances.

In contrast, *Huainan zi* provides explanations that link the sages' physical features with their merits. For example, the three ear channels of Yu 禹 is termed "great passableness" (*da tong* 大通) and they symbolize his achievement in controlling the flood and dredging the rivers. The fact that King Wen had four nipples is called "great humaneness" (*da ren* 大仁) and represent his benevolent governance.[65] In these accounts, the symbolic meanings of the body are the central focus. The additional ear channels are equated with the river channels Yu dredged. King Wen's extra nipples allude clearly to his ability to nourish people. In other words, political merits are recognizable in the bodies of the sagely rulers.

A further comparison between *Xunzi* and Han texts shows that many of the ad hoc bodily features in *Xunzi* disappear in Han records. Instead, *Huainanzi* and *chenwei* texts present a new set of vocabularies to describe unusual sagely bodies. As a result, there was a certain degree of consistency in the Han creation of divine bodies. The head and face became the focus of the descriptions, and, at the same time, more and more animal features and natural objects appeared on the bodies of the sages.

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[64] See *Xunzi xinzhu*, pp. 51-3; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, p. 204.

[65] See "Xiuwu xun" 脩務訓 in Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, Vol. 3, p. 40.

In *chenwei* texts, "Tiger nose" (*hu bi* 虎鼻), "bird mouth/forehead" (*niao hui/ting* 鳥喙/庭), "ox head" (*niu shou* 牛首) and, especially, "dragon face" (*long yan* 龍顏) frequently appear. The reflection of these powerful animals or divine creature on the bodies of the legendary rulers clearly suggests the supernatural power these rulers possessed. In addition to this, their facial characteristics also resemble natural objects such as a mountain (nose, *shan zhun* 山準), river (eye, *he mu*, 河目), sun (forehead *ri jiao* 日角), and constellations (eyebrow bone, *zhu heng* 珠衡). Such features again point to the mighty power that Heaven has bequeathed upon them. *Liji* presents the theory behind this: "[Therefore] in making principles [of the world], a sage must model heaven and earth as the foundation, *yin* and *yang* as the beginnings, the four seasons as the handles, and the sun and stars as the order" (故聖人作則，必以天地為本，以陰陽為端，以四時為柄，以日星為紀).[66] In *chenwei* texts, this imitation of the heavenly and natural principles is corporealized on the faces of the sagely rulers.

The Han creation of sagely bodies also demonstrates a temporal continuity. Despite their time differences, legendary rulers in *chenwei* texts share many similar physical features. The Yellow Emperor, Fuxi, and Yao are all portrayed as having a dragon face and a sun-shaped forehead. Both Fuxi and Yu are depicted either as possessing a mountain-shaped nose or a nose resembling that of a tiger. And Yao and Yu are similar in having foreheads that resemble a bird. These shared facial characteristics make their appearances identical in one way or another, creating a physical continuity

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[66] Chapter "Liyun" 禮運 in *Liji zhengyi*, p. 698.

from one ruler to his successor. In return, their bodily resemblances were promoted as an evidence of their political legitimacy. The sagely bodies were reduplicated in order to illustrate a genealogical line for the succession of power. Moreover, this reduplication of the body was extended to the portrayals of Han emperors. Liu Bang, the founder of Han dynasty, shared many physical features with Yao, who, in the view of Han people, was the very ancestor of the Liu family. Both Yao and Liu Bang had a dragon-like face, a sun-shaped forehead, and black dots on their bodies.[67] In addition to this, the appearance of Emperor Ming of the Later Han was said to "resemble the ancestor Yao."[68] The reduplicated body of Yao illustrated clearly that the political legitimacy of the Han emperors was genetic. As *Chunqiu fanlu* argues, "[the ruler] imitates his ancestors' appearance and takes their great virtues as his model" (法太祖先人之容貌, 則其至德).[69]

Political disorder and bodily dysfunction

This discursive integration of the ruler's body with the body of the state presented strong support for the political legitimacy and authority of the ruler. In such an extension of the metaphorical meanings of the body into the political realm, a ruler governed the state in the way he nourished his own body, making sure that all the organs functioned in an orderly fashion, that *qi* flew smoothly within the body and that the

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[67] See *Chunqiu hecheng tu* 春秋合誠圖, in Yasui Kozan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shohachi 中村璋八 edit., *Chōshū isho shūsei* 重修緯書集成 (Tokyo: Meitoku Press, 1971), Vol. 4, p. 5.

[68] Wu Shuping annotates *Dongguan Hanji jiaozhu*, p. 55.

[69] Lai Yanyuan, *Chunqiu fanlu jinzhu jinyi*, p. 245.

exchange of energy within the universe was well balanced. As illness would occur when the order and circulation of *qi* inside the human body were interrupted, so the body of the state would be affected if the ruler did not govern it properly. This illness within the political realm was defined in *Lüshi chunqiu* as "the blockage of the state" (*guo yu* 國鬱).[70]

In the "Da yu" 達鬱 essay of *Lüshi Chunqiu* it first states that if the bones and sinews are strong, the heart is at peace; and if the blood and *qi* circulate smoothly, the body is healthy. However, when the essential *qi* (*jing qi* 精氣) stagnates, it causes illness and malevolence (病之留、惡之生也，精氣鬱也).[71] The text draws a parallel to this stagnancy of *jing qi* in the natural world, using such images as sewage in water, wood-boring insects on a tree and the withering of a plant.[72] As for the state, the ruler's *de* 德 is equated with *jing qi* and is vital in maintaining the health of the state. When the ruler's *de* does not circulate or when the people's desires are frustrated, blockages appear (主德不通，民欲不達，此國之鬱也).[73]

Furthermore, evils and catastrophes arise if proper governance is not reestablished and the blockages within the state continue.[74] *Lüshi Chunqiu* interprets

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[70] Xu Weiyu, *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi*, chapter 20, p. 17 A.

[71] Xu Weiyu, chapter 20, p. 16B.

[72] Xu Weiyu, ibid. John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, p. 527.

[73] Xu Weiyu, chapter 20, p. 17A. Knoblock and Riegel, ibid.

[74] Xu Weiyu, ibid. Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, ibid.

ominous signs and evil happenings as misfortunes sent down by heaven to warn the ruler about his corruption. As an important component of the state, the bodies of the people unavoidably become the victim of the improper governance:

> 故子華子曰：“夫亂世之民，長短頡牾，百疾，民多疾癘，道多褓繈，盲禿傴尪，萬怪皆生。”
> Thus, Master Huazi said: “Among the people of a disordered age there are no rules, everything is confused, and thence, all manner of illness arises. The people suffer numerous illnesses and afflictions. On the roads are abandoned infants. The blind, the bald, hunchbacks, and swaybacks—a myriad of prodigies appears.”[75]

Influenced by this understanding of the relationship between politics and the body, in the mind of early Chinese, bodily dysfunction resulted directly from political disorder. Because of this, Han omenological documents pointedly discuss bodily dysfunctions and the abnormalities of the body as omens that signify political mismanagement.

The“Wuxing zhi” 五行志 chapter in *Hanshu* warns the ruler to be cautious about five deeds: his demeanor must be reverent (*mao gong* 貌恭), his orders in accordance with the people's heart (*yan cong* 言從), his inspection intelligent (*shi ming* 視明), his receiving admonitions impartial (*ting cong* 聽聰) and his thoughts open-minded (*si rui* 思睿).[76] Violations of these principles on the ruler's part not only cause natural and political disasters, they also cause the bodies of the people to become dysfunctional. If the ruler's demeanor was not reverent, the people would suffer from legal punishments or their appearance would be ugly (民多被刑，或形貌醜惡). If the

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[75] Xu Weiyu, chapter 6, pp. 19A-B. Translation modified from Knoblock and Riegel, p. 170.

[76] *Hanshu* 27: 1351.

ruler's commands were improper the people would have an illness of tongue and mouth. If the ruler was unwise in judging his ministers the people would suffer from eye sickness. Dysfunction in the people's ear was caused when the ruler listened to his ministers in a partial way. Heart and abdominal pains would afflict the people when the ruler was intolerant to his officials.[77] What is articulated in this admonition is that the defect and disabilities of the ruler's governance directly cause the bodily dysfunctions among his people.

In addition to this, the "Wuxing zhi" chapter also interprets bodily abnormalities and transfigurations as omens that indicate disorders in state politics. For example, citing Jing Fang's 京房 commentary on *Yijing* 易經, the chapter explains that if a woman transforms into a man it suggests the *yin* force overcomes the *yang* force and the power is controlled by women. On the other hand, a man transforming into a woman signifies that *yang* is defeated by *yin*, and this, with regard to the state, implies the absence of a successor to the throne.[78]

The case of a man changing into a woman was reported to have happened during the reign of Emperor Ai's 哀帝 (r. 26-1 BCE). The explanation of this oddity is linked to Emperor Ai's failure to produce an heir apparent and his indulgence of male favorites. Similarly, a strange birth recorded in Emperor Ping's 平帝 reign (r. 1-5 CE.) was also

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[77] *Hanshu* 27: 1353, 1376, 1405, 1421, and 1441.

[78] *Hanshu* 27, 1472-3. A later Han apocryphal text titled *Chunqiu qian tan ba* 春秋潛潭巴 also explains a woman changing into a man as indicating the dismissal of a virtuous man and the ruler's lack of proper assistance. As for a man transforming into a woman, the text writes it suggests the rise of *yin* force and the gathering of petty men (女子化為丈夫，賢人去位，君獨居；丈夫化為女子，陰氣淖，小人聚). See Yasui Kozan and Nakamura edit., *Chōshū isho shūsei*, Vol. 4, p. 96.

believed to indicate problems in the government. In the sixth month of the first year of the common era, a woman in the capital gave birth to a son who had two heads, four arms and eyes on his bottom. The "Wuxing zhi" chapter cites Jing Fang and argues that eyes growing on the lower body suggests that there is no ruler and that power will change hands (茲謂亡上，正將變更). This occurrence of such an oddity, Jing Fang asserts, negatively points to the loss of authority. In fact, Jing Fang argues that each evil happening indicates a loss of rectitude and in all cases has an appropriate symbol in the corresponding category in the governance. As he concludes, "In general the surfacing of oddities is to criticize the wrongdoings in the government, for each of the prodigies has a likeness [in the political sphere]" (凡妖之作，以譴失正，各象其類).[79] Because of this way of thinking, the two heads of the boy indicates the disloyalty of ministers and the four arms suggest the ruler is making use of evil men.[80] The abnormal birth, noted above, probably points in this type of omenology to Wang Mang's usurpation. The dislocation of the head or facial organs on the body of the infant clearly alludes to the dislocation of authority. His two heads symbolizes as well the division of power.

Such readings of physical malformations presents from a specific aspect a central characteristic in Han cosmology: that is, in Han cosmological thinking the world was made up of a series of categories, and whatever happened to one element within that category reverberated throughout other elements or units of that category. In this type of thought, the physical body was clearly connected with the body of the emperor and the

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[79] *Hanshu* 27: 1473-4.

[80] *Hanshu* 27: 1474.

state. In addition to this, readings of physical malformations reflect as well the popularity of omenology in Han China.[81] In Han political thinking, the most important responsibility of the emperor and his prime minister was to maintain the balance of natural forces, especially the *yin* and *yang* ethers. This idea was expressed in numerous imperial decrees and memorials. The best example of this political thought was probably the anecdote of the Han prime minister Bing Ji 邴吉. As *Hanshu* reports, Bing Ji once ignored a deadly group of men fighting on the road but stopped and made inquiries when he saw an ox breathing heavily on the roadside. His clerks felt that this behavior was curious and inquired as to why he had ignored the one event and asked about the other. Bing Ji explained in response that it was the local officials' duty to arrest the street fighters but that it was the responsibility of the Three Excellencies to assume responsibility for harmonizing *yin* and *yang* (三公典調和陰陽).[82] According to Bing Ji's words, the failure of the government in balancing *yin* and *yang* was manifested in natural disasters or oddities, omens sent down by heaven as a warning. Because in early Chinese medical thought, the body was a microcosm that contained both *yin* and *yang* forces and exchanged energies with the universe, it could be affected as well by the corruptions in

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[81] In *Lunheng*, Wang Chong criticized a common saying of his time: "People say that men in high antiquity were tall and beautiful. Their bodies were strong and their lifetimes were long, averaging one hundred years. People in the recent past were short and ugly and they died young. Why was this? [It was said that] in high antiquity the *qi* was harmonious, rich and pure. People were married in time and were conceived by good *qi* and born. When they grew up they were not harmed and their bones were strong. For these reasons they were tall, enjoying old age and beautiful looks. The recent generations were opposite to this, therefore the people were short and died young, and their figures and faces were ugly. These are absurd sayings." See Liu Pansui, *Lunheng jishi*, p. 381.

[82] *Hanshu* 74: 3147.

the politics. As a result, bodily abnormalities were read as the illustration of political disorder.

The Body as Political Ethics

This section discusses the ethical meanings of the body in early Chinese political ideology. It argues that, in addition to functioning as a political metaphor, the body in early Chinese philosophical discourse also describes the ethical foundation of politics. In order to do so, virtuous and ruthless rulerships were stereotyped and exemplified through the different ways they treated the bodies of the people they ruled. The humane care or the violent abuse of the body testified to the ethical nature of the state and could even be used as an argument for the legitimacy of dynastic change. The discussion that follows will be divided into three subsections: first, ruthless governance and its damaging of innocent body; second, burying the corpse and the creation of sagely kings; and third, Han China's institutionalization of returning home the bodies of dead soldiers as seen in the Xuanquan zhi 懸泉置 documents.

Damaging the innocent body: ruthless governance embodied

The vicious rulers as presented in early Chinese writings shared a set of immoral behaviors: they pursued unrestrained material desires, indulged in sensual pleasures, and favored evil men while oppressing the virtuous. They were also condemned for their neglect of ritual and their betrayal of the proper way. As negative historical precedents, vicious rulers were repeatedly referred to in political argumentation and remonstrance.

Their stories were exaggerated and patterned. From the late Warring States, the stereotyped stories of wicked rulers began to focus more and more on their violent physical abuse of the bodies of the people they ruled. Damaging the innocent body became an evidence of ruthless politics.

In early Chinese writings, the most infamous rulers were Jie 桀 of the Xia dynasty and Zhou 紂 of the Shang. Stories of their moral corruption are found in many pre-Qin and Han writings.[83] If we compare *Mengzi* with late Warring States texts, we see an emerging focus on the physical torture of the people in the condemnations of these unworthy rulers.

Early Warring States writings present general, less detailed criticisms of Jie and Zhou. Mengzi's attack on Jie and Zhou primarily focused on their violations of Confucian principles such as benevolence and rightness.[84] According to Mengzi, the reason Jie and Zhou lost the empire was because they lost the people (桀紂之失天下也，失其民也).[85] However, little detail was provided in *Mengzi* on how they lost the support of the people. Moreover, Mengzi did not seem to view Jie and Zhou's brutality as a primary expression of their ruthlessness, even though their bad deeds probably had

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[83] See *Mozi* 墨子, chapter "Fayi" 法儀, *Liji*, chapters "yong bing" 用兵, "Shao xian" 少閒 and "Bao fu" 保傅, *Hanfei zi*, "Shi guo" 十過, "Nan shi" 難勢, and "Ren zhu" 人主, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, essays "Gong ming" 功名 and "Shen da" 慎大, *Huainan zi*, "Ben jing xun" 本經訓, *Lunheng*, "Yu he" 遇合 and "Qi shi" 齊世.

[84] In Mengzi's words, Jie and Zhou were mutilators of benevolence and cripplers of rightness (殘賊之人). See Yang Bojun, *Megnzi yizhu*, 2.8, p. 42. D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 43.

[85] Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu*, 7.9, p. 171. D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 159.

already been exaggerated in the Spring and Autumn time.[86] Similarly, criticism in *Mozi* also showed a general condemnation of Jie and Zhou's hostility toward the people as well as their disrespect of gods and spirits. *Mozi* only briefly mentioned that Jie and Zhou cruelly oppressed many people.[87]

Nevertheless, in late Warring States texts, physical torture of innocent people became a recurrent theme of the stories of bad rulers. Starting from *Xunzi*, Zhou was said to have created the notorious *pao luo* 炮烙 torture, by which he forced people to walk on a hot metal beam above burning coals. In addition to this, *Xunzi* claimed that Zhou cut open the Shang prince Bigan's 比干 body, which, as explained in later texts, was for the purpose of examining his heart.[88] While strongly arguing for the absolute power of the ruler, *Hanfeizi* continued *Xunzi*'s accusations against Zhou and repeatedly mentioned the *pao luo* punishment and the ripping out of Bigan's heart as examples that a wise ruler should not follow.[89] In *Lüshi Chunqiu*, more details of Zhou's extreme brutality were added. In addition to the accounts found in *Xunzi* and *Hanfeizi*, *Lüshi Chunqiu* claims Zhou had executed the daughter of the Marquis of Gui (*Gui hou* 鬼侯) to confiscate her jade disk, cut open the calf of a man to examine his marrow, murdered the Earl of Mei (*Mei bo* 梅伯) and sent a mincemeat pie made from his remains to the Earl's father King

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[86] Zigong 子貢 said that the wickedness of Zhou was not as extreme as it was said (紂之不善，不如是之甚也). See Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* 19. 20, p. 210.

[87] *Mozi jinzhu jinyi*, p. 13.

[88] *Xunzi xinzhu*, pp. 244-5.

[89] See Chen Qiyou, *Hanfei zi jishi*, essays "Nan yan" 難言, "Yu lao" 喻老, "Nan yi" 難一, and "Nan er" 難二, pp. 49, 400, 812 and 823.

Wen, and also cut open the womb of a pregnant woman to look at the fetus.[90] A stereotyped tyrant and his unethical deeds were thus portrayed through stories that depicted him damaging people's bodies and tearing apart their flesh.

Han documents continued this Warring State's textual creation of unworthy rulers.[91] A slightly different account of the above records was repeated in *Huainan zi*.[92] The criminals in this account were not only Zhou but also the last Xia king Jie. The accusations against Jie for cruel tortures, which earlier texts do not say that he committed, and the exaggerated wickedness of Zhou reflect the fear of the ministerial class of imagined vicious rulers.[93] As *Lüshi Chunqiu* asserts, "The rulers of doomed states are all pearls on a single string" (亡國之主一貫).[94] Jie and Zhou thus represented the stereotype of wicked rulers.

This late Warring States and early Han intensive condemnations of physical torture and brutality resulted directly from the political realities of those times. Consistent warfare during the Warring States period caused the loss of many lives, and the Qin was notorious for its severe legal punishments, especially corporal punishments. A general concern over the ethical degeneration in the political world often found expression in the

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[90] Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, p. 596.

[91] Sima Qian accepted many early stories of Zhou. Although in "Basic Annals of Yin" 殷本紀 Sima Qian did not repeat Zhou's cutting open a man's calf and a woman's womb, he added Zhou's mincing of the bodies of two earls. See *Shiji* 3: 31.

[92] See "Shu zhen xun" 淑真訓 in Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, p. 50.

[93] Zigong 子貢 said that the wickedness of Zhou was not as extreme as it was said (紂之不善，不如是之甚也). See Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* 19. 20, p. 210.

[94] Knoblock and Riegel, p. 596.

philosophical writings of these periods. In many cases, this ethical corruption was manifested by the rulers' inhumane treatments of people's bodies. For example, *Lüshi Chunqiu* listed seven ruthless rulers in the past and described that:

> 此七君者，大為無道不義：所殘殺無罪之民者，不可為萬數；壯佼老幼胎殰之死者， 大實平原；廣堙深谿大谷，赴巨水，積灰，填溝洫險阻，犯流矢，蹈白刃，加之以凍餓饑寒之患。
> These seven rulers surpassed all other men in acting without the Dao and in being immoral. The innocent people they slaughtered and murdered were so numerous, they cannot be counted even by the tens of thousands. The corpses of the strong and feeble, the old and young, and the miscarried and stillborn filled the flat plains and dammed up the deep gorges and great valleys. Those who drowned in large floods or huge conflagrations filled ditches and ravines. Yet others faced flying arrows or walked on bare blades. And to these we should add the sufferings of those who froze or starved.[95]

Lüshi Chunqiu further lamented that in the contemporary time "[E]xposed skeletons too numerous to count form a mound as massive as a mountain." And when a good ruler encounters this it would pain his heart and he would be saddened by this. The reason for such a tragedy, as *Lüshi Chunqiu* points out, was because of the demise of "those who possess the Dao and the licentiousness of those who lack the Dao."[96] In this conclusion, the Dao was clearly understood as an ethical principle and was violated by the physical abuse of the body.[97]

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[95] These seven rulers are: Jie, Zhou, King Fuchai 夫差 of Wu 吳, Zhibo 智伯 and Duke Li 厲公 of Jin 晉, Duke Ling 靈公 of Chen 陳 and King Kang 康王 of Song 宋. Translation cited from Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, p. 183.

[96] Knoblock and Riegel, p. 183.

[97] A passage in *Huainan zi* confirms *Lüshi Chunqiu*'s description of late Warring State's massive killing of people. Chapter "Lan ming xun" 覽冥訓 writes: "Near the end of the era (late Warring States), the seven states... assembled troops to fight each other. They attacked cities and killed people at random. They toppled those on high and endangered those who were safe. They dug out tombs and exposed corpses 晚世之時，七國... 舉兵而相角，攻城濫殺，覆高危安，掘墳墓，揚人骸." Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, Vol. 2, p. 55.

Burying the corpses: the manifestation of virtuous rulership

Despite their different political ideologies, Warring States and Han writings commonly present King Wen as a virtuous ruler and an ideal sovereign. The images of King Wen in Warring States and Han texts were of a loyal earl to the Shang king, a wise ruler who followed the Way, a generous patron of the talented and a humane king who cared for his people.[98] The depictions of King Wen in Warring States and Han texts also highlight his disapproval of using violence and warfare. He conquered his enemies through moral force rather than defeat them on the battlefield. When he had to attack other states, stories often portrayed him as a liberator who saved the people from evil kings in accord with the will of heaven. Such an anti-war, humanist image of King Wen in the Warring States period posed a sharp contrast to his character seen in *Shijing*. In addition to being a great, kind ruler, King Wen in *Shijing* is also a mighty, revered figure of majesty. For example, one poem praises King Wen's military achievement of conquest of the state of Chong 崇.[99] Another poem states that when the people of Mi were disobedient, King Wen "rose majestic in his wrath" (王赫斯怒). He marshaled his troops and defeated his foes. This poem also describes that after King Wen conquered Chong, "captives were brought in one after another; the left ears [of the slain] were taken leisurely" (執訊連連，攸馘安安).[100]

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[98] As Sima Qian summarized in *Shiji*, King Wen was fond of *ren* (*du ren* 篤仁), he showed respect to the elders and affection to the young and treated the worthy with respect and utilized them properly. *Shiji* 4: 16

[99] See the poem "Wen wang you sheng" 文王有聲, Cheng Junying 程俊英 *Shijing yizhu* 詩經譯註 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), p. 520.

[100] Poem "Huang yi" 皇矣, Cheng Junying, pp. 510, 512.

This portrayal of King Wen as an awe-inspiring, mighty monarch was erased in Warring States textual presentations. Instead, a humane, prudent and tolerant King Wen emerged as a commonly accepted image of a virtuous ruler who contrasted sharply with the wicked stereotypes of rulers such as Jie and Zhou. King Wen in Warring States and Han writings dominated the world by his moral power. He conquered the world by winning the hearts of the people. His humane treatment of the people's bodies played a significant role in these later descriptions of his moral character.

For example, *Lüshi Chunqiu* reports the following story: King Wen sent someone to dig a pond and the worker found the skeleton of a dead man. King Wen ordered it to be buried. When the clerk objected to this because there was no officiating host of the skeleton, King Wen replied by saying that the ruler of the world/state was the host of the world/state, and therefore he was the host of the dead man. He then commanded the clerk to rebury the skeleton in a shroud and coffin. The power of such a humane deed, as *Lüshi Chunqiu* says, was so great that the whole world admired him: "When the world heard of it, all said, 'King Wen is worthy. His generosity extends to the remains of flesh and bone. How much more do the living benefit!'"[101]

Highlighted in this story are two important political messages: burying the anonymous body is a political and ethical demonstration, and such an act increases the

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[101] Essay "Yi yong" 異用. Summary and translation adopted form Knoblock and Riegel, p. 238. This story probably derived from an anecdote in the *Analects*: Whenever a friend died who had no kin to whom his body could be taken, the master said, "Let him be given a funeral from my house" (朋友死，無所歸，曰：於我殯). Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* 10.22, D.C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 104.

ruler's power because the entire world would come to support a humane king.[102] These messages are made clear in *Huainanzi* that "King Wen buried the skeleton of a dead man and the Nine Yi changed their loyalties to him" (文王葬死人之骸，而九夷歸之).[103]

The word *gui* 歸 (to follow, to yield, to submit) was a recurrent theme in Warring States stories of King Wen's humane treatment of the people's bodies. In *Mengzi*, the following story was told twice: when Po Yi 伯夷 heard of the rise of King Wen he said, "Why not go home? I hear that Xibo takes good care of the aged" (盍歸乎來！吾聞西伯善養老者). When Taigong 太公 heard of the rise of King Wen he repeated Po Yi's words, "Why not go home? I hear that Xibo takes good care of the aged."[104] It is clear here that the reason that people thought of coming to King Wen's state as if they were going home is because he nourished their bodies. As Mengzi concludes, "When there is someone in the world who takes good care of the aged, benevolent men will look upon him as their refuge."[105]

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[102] This story is retold in *Xinxu*, chapter "Za shi" 雜事.

[103] Chapter "Renjian xun" 人間訓, see Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*., Vol. 5, p. 27.

[104] Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu*, 7.13, 13.22, pp. 174, 310. D.C. Lau, *Mencius* pp. 83, 149.

[105] D.C. Lau, p. 149. This winning the heart of people through humane treatment of their bodies was repeated in other Warring States texts. *Da Dai Liji* writes that King Wen requested Zhou to abolish the *pao luo* punishment and the people of Yin followed him. Similar accounts of the story also appear in *Hanfeizi* and *Lüshi Chunqiu* in which it says that King Wen's appeal of abolishing the punishment won the heart of the people. See *Da Dai Liji*, p. 44. *Hanfeizi jishi*, "Nan er", p. 823. Liu Wendian, *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi*, chapter nine, p. 7B.

Xuanquan zhi documents and Han China's institutionalization of buring corpses

The idea of humane treatment of the corpse as a manifestation of the ethical nature of the state was institutionalized by the Han government. The earliest Han record of this is found in *Hanshu*. The "Basic Annals of Emperor Gaozu" 高祖本紀 reports that in the eleventh month in year 199 BCE, when Liu Bang was attacking King Xin of Han (韓王信) he decreed that "soldiers who died in the army should be given a small coffin and returned to their home counties. The counties must provide shroud, coffin and other funeral material. They should be offered the *shao lao* 少牢 sacrifice and senior clerks should attend their funerals."[106] A Han document discovered in Xuanquan zhi 懸泉置, a Han military site, shows the continuation of this tradition to Emperor Xuan's (r.73-49 BCE) era. Slip I 0309 of the Xuanquan zhi manuscripts contains the following record:

> 神爵四年十一月癸未，丞相史李尊，送獲（護）神爵六年戍卒河東、南陽、潁川、上黨、東郡、濟陰、魏郡、淮陽國詣敦煌郡、酒泉郡。因迎罷卒送致河東、南陽、潁川、東郡、魏郡、淮陽國并督死卒傳（槥）。
> Fourth year of Shenjue era (58 BCE), eleventh month, day *Guiwei*, Li Zun, clerk of prime minister, escorted garrison soldiers, who should serve until the sixth year of Shenjue era, from Hedong, Nanyang, Yingchuan, Shangdang, Dongjun, Jiyin, Weijun and Huaiyang kingdom to Dunhuang Commandery and Jiuquan Commandery. Taking this opportunity he received retiring soldiers, sending them to Hedong, Nanyang, Yingchuan, Dongjun, Weijun and Huaiyang kingdom. At the same time he supervised escorting the carriages that carry the small coffins of the dead soldiers.[107]

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[106] *Hanshu* 1: 65. This record is not included in *Shiji*.

[107] Hu Pingsheng 胡平生 and Zhang Defang 張德芳 ed., *Dunhuang Xuanquan Hanjian shicui* 敦煌懸泉漢簡釋粹 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), p. 45. See also Qiu Xigui's 裘錫圭 discussion of the word "hui" 槥, in Qiu Xigui *Gu wenzi lunji* 古文字論集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), p. 567.

According to this record, returning soldiers' bodies from the border area to their hometowns seems to have been a regular duty of the government.[108]

This responsibility of the government to take care of the remains of the people of the state is also evident in a Han decree written on a painted wall at the Xuanquan zhi site. The decree, titled *Sishi yueling zhaotiao* 四時月令詔條, was publicized in the fifth year of the Yuanshi 元始 era (5 CE), which was the last year of Emperor Ping's 平帝 reign, a period when Wang Mang actually held power. It was issued by the great grand empress dowager Wang Zhengjun 王政君 and it began with a discussion of a recent imbalance of *yin* and *yang*. The decree then cites a passage from the "Yue ling" 月令 chapter in *Liji*, which warns people not to get pregnant when thunder is coming: "Three days before thunder, [officials] wave the bell and command the people, saying, 'Thunder...(one character missing) pregnant, until the whole day'" ([先雷]三日，奮鐸以令兆民曰：雷口懷任（妊），盡其日). The missing character in the sentence makes it difficult to understand; however, on the painted wall there is a new line written next to it that interprets for the readers the meaning of the sentence: "It means that thunder will sound in the day of... (a character missing). Three days earlier the government shakes bells in order to warn the people of impending thunder. These who do not restrain their behavior (getting pregnant), their children [will be imperfect]. There certainly will be disasters

[108] The record ends with Xiao Wangzhi's 蕭望之 comments that Li Zun's delegation should lodge at the government posts along the road, as the law prescribes. See *Dunhuang Xuanquan Hanjian shicui*, p. 45.

from this" (謂雷當以春□之日發聲，先三日奮鐸以令兆民，養<雷>且發聲。□不戒其容止者，生子□□，必有凶[栽]).[109]

This decree clearly reflects a popular Han belief that for someone to become pregnant during a time of thunder could cause both physical and mental defects to an infant. Wang Chong's *Lunheng* provides more information on this. The physical defects, according to Wang Chong, include deafness, muteness, being crippled, and blindness. Wang Chong believes that human life is formed by *qi* and that in a day of thunder the *qi* is so excessive that it harms the conception of the fetus.[110]

This concern that the health of the fetus would be affected by excessive natural energy derived unquestionably from the early medical notion concerning the formation of life. In the Chinese medical tradition, the unstable balance between *yin* and *yang* impacted directly upon the human body, causing disease, death, bodily abnormalities and other physical symptoms. Because in early political thought a ruler was responsible for maintaining the balance between *yin* and *yang*, it was thus his duty to keep the people safe from natural disasters. This notion of the ruler as a nurturer of the people, with its strong ethnical connotations, had been articulated in texts describing virtuous political leaders and ideal society long before the Han dynasty. However, the *Hanshu* passage and the Xuanquan zhi documents show that the Han government had made an effort to

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[109] *Dunhuang Xuanquan Hanjian shicui*, p. 192-4. Since the decree cites from the "Yueling" chapter, the missing characters can be easily supplemented by the "Yueling". Thus the two characters following 生子 must be "bu bei" 不備, which mean physical and mental imperfection. See traditional commentaries on this "Yueling" passage in *Liji zhengyi*, p. 476.

[110] *Lunheng jijie*, p.156.

institutionalize this ethical idea as a part of official policy. To the Han government, the body was not just a metaphysical concept that facilitated the construction of political ideology, it was, more importantly, a social substance that could be utilized, controlled, and displayed for various political purposes.

From Metaphor to Actual Policy—the Body in Han Foreign Policy

So far in this chapter we have considered how the body is used as a metaphor for the relationship of the ruler to the ruled, and also how the care of the peoples' bodies became a critical sign of how effectively the ruler was actually governing. In addition to this, the body was also turned into a political tool through imposing display and ceremony—something I shall refer to here as a "bodily politic" in that the bodies of Chinese soldiers and ministers were organized and presented ceremonially to secure a favorable foreign relationship. For an example of how this worked in the early Chinese political world, we turn now to a specific example: the bodily politic as it played out in Chinese-Xiongnu 匈奴 relationships during the Han dynasty. To do so, I will first review previous Xiongnu policies carried out by Han China and then discuss the creation of a bodily politics by Han elites in dealing with the nomadic people. This section therefore follows a roughly chronological order.

Military campaigns and marriage alliances: unsatisfactory Xiongnu policies

Throughout the years of Western Han rule, relationships with the Xiongnu remained the most important issue of foreign policy. For over a hundred years the Han

court struggled to maintain peace with, as well as occasionally to fight against, its strong northern neighbor. In 51 B.C. the court saw its first Xiongnu *shanyu* 單于, chieftain of the Xiongnu people, Huhanye 呼韓邪, arrive at the capital. The homage that the *shanyu* paid to the Han court thus may be seen as having symbolized the submission of the Xiongnu to the Han. However, this turning point did not guarantee that the Chinese court would be free from worry at its northern border. Tension and distrust often challenged an already fragile relationship. The Xiongnu's own succession process was one such tension. Any Han emperor would view a new *shanyu* with suspicion, since the latter might easily deny his submission and invade the border. To confirm his own suzerainty, the Han Emperor had to show that he was able to summon the *shanyu* to his court. Rendering homage then provided a certain testimony of the *shanyu*'s loyalty, as well as emboding a moment of ritual, splendor, and parade, in which the Han state demonstrated its power and ensured loyalty from the Xiongnu. Not only were the visits of the various *shanyu* entered in the Basic Annals of the emperors, but also they were the most important episodes in the political careers of the officials who participated in these events. As shown in the relevant biographies collected in *Han shu*, the Han court had a fascinating awareness of the significance of the physical appearance, demeanor, and actions of its own officials in the enactment of Xiongnu diplomatic affairs. The Han court's triumph over the Xiongnu was secured in great measure through the display of the grand and masculine bodies of its officials. In the world of Xiongnu relations, making an impression with bodily size or gestures served the Chinese as a successful tool for creating a convincing and dramatic body-politic.

During the Western Han period Xiongnu policy had gone through three stages. In each stage, certain policies that were determined by changes in military equilibrium between the Chinese court and the Xiongnu had been adopted by the Han government. In the first stage, the Chinese used military force to drive the Xiongnu out of its northern frontier. In the winter of 200 BCE, the Han emperor Liu Bang launched a campaign against the Modun *shanyu* 冒頓單于, in order to dispell the latter's border invasion. Liu Bang's ambition proved unrealistic: he was besieged in the city of Pingcheng 平城 for seven days and seems to have escaped capture quite ignobly.[111]

After this humiliation, a military solution was abandoned; instead, accepting the court advisor Liu Jing's 劉敬 suggestion, Liu Bang established a new Xiongnu policy. This second policy stage has been called the "Harmonious Kinship" policy (*he qin* 和親). It contained two major items: first, a Han court princess would be married to the *shanyu*; second, the court would give the Xiongnu "gifts" several times each year. While the "princesses" were not always true daughters of the Han emperors, the "gifts", such as silk and food, were real and valuable spoils.[112] Peace thus was maintained until the early period of Emperor Wu's 武帝 reign (141-87 BCE).

The *he qin* treaties were an effective if not totally satisfying policy. After the first treaty of 198 BCE, although there was no major invasion, raids still frequently

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[111] Pingcheng is located near modern-day Datong 大同 in Shanxi 山西. The doubtful scheme Emperor Gaozu used to escape is not preserved in any Han document. Later texts report the rumor that the emperor dressed in women's clothes to escape.

[112] Of the Chinese princesses married out to nomadic rulers in early and medieval Chinese history, only a few of them were true daughters of the emperors. See Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 152.

occurred along the frontiers. In Emperor Wen's 文帝 reign (179-156 BCE), even the Han capital Chang'an 長安 was not safe from the threat of the Xiongnu cavalry. In addition to the fact that the *he qin* treaties did not stop the Xiongnu's continuous attacks, the policy was ideologically unacceptable to many at the court. Holding the traditional idea that China was the center of the world and the only world power, Han officials felt the Han's passiveness and deference to the "barbarian" were humiliating.[113]

Jia Yi's 賈誼 (200-168 BCE) words demonstrate this anger. In a memorial to Emperor Wen, Jia Yi wrote:

> 天下之勢方倒懸。凡天子者，天下之首，何也？上也。蠻夷者，天下之足，何也？下也。今匈奴謾侮侵掠，至不敬也，為天下患，至亡已也，而漢歲致金絮采繒以奉之。夷狄徵令，是主上之操也；天子共貢，是臣下之禮也。足反居上，首顧居下，倒懸如此，莫之能解，猶為國有人乎？
> Now the situation in the world is upside-down. Why in fact is any emperor the world's head? Because he is superior. Why are Man and Yi the world's feet? Because they are inferior. In our day, the Xiongnu are haughty and arrogant and invade us. This is extremely disrespectful. The sufferings they have caused to the world are countless. Yet every year the Han send them gold, cotton, and colored silk as tributes. To summon and command barbarians are powers the emperors should wield. The Son of Heaven's offering tributes is in fact a ritual that defines a subject. Perversely, the feet occupy the top and the head occupies the bottom. The world has been turned upside down like this yet no one is able to save it. Does there exist any man who acts for the nation?[114]

Jia Yi also pointed out that Emperor Wen, with such a worldly title, was in fact acting as a noble of the Xiongnu and his status was thus inferior. Furthermore, Jia Yi criticized the

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[113] For a good study of Han-Xiongnu relationship, see Nicholas Di Cosma's *Ancient China and Its Enemies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[114] *Han shu* 48:2240.

inefficiency of ministers who had advised Emperor Wen on how to control the Xiongnu, because none of their schemes worked.[115]

Although Jia Yi does not tell us what these latter schemes were, his criticism simply shows us that proposals at court were frequent and numerous, and that the problem endured. When its military force waned in ability, the court, it seems, then began exploring ways to dominate the Xiongnu culturally. They kept trying to bolster the notion of China culturally superior. We see such cultural attitudes in the revealing story of a Han traitor Zhongxing Yue 中行說, who lived in Xiongnu territory, and his disputes with frequent arrivals from China.

An emissary from China usually delivered the silk, wine and food the court paid to the Xiongnu. They were executants of the *he qin* treaties, policies designed for appeasement rather than provocation. However, they seemed to have a cultural task to achieve—convincing the Xiongnu that the Han was culturally superior. The "Xiongnu zhuan" 匈奴傳 chapter in *Han shu* reports in detail Zhongxing Yue's disputes with Han emissaries on the issue of cultural superiority.

A Han emissary criticized the Xiongnu for being disrespectful to their elders people. He also condemned the Xiongnu's tradition of incestuous marriage. These criticisms are clearly driven by Han moral standards, because the emissary concluded that the Xiongnu did not have the morals of gentlemen and lacked the rites used at court (無冠帶之節，闕庭之禮). In his response, Zhongxing Yue first pointed out that the

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[115] *Han shu* 48:2240.

Xiongnu's living environment was not the same as that of the Han, thus the cultures should be classified differently. The custom of the Xiongnu, as Zhongxing Yue argued, was indeed more effective in assisting in governance than were the false rituals of the Chinese. Even the tradition of incestuous marriage was praised as crucial for the Xiongnu preserving the purity of their lineage and securing the continuous succession of the ruling family.[116]

Even though this emissary failed to accomplish his cultural mission and only succeeded in escorting goods to the Xiongnu, the Chinese did not then abandon their policy. Later arrivals to the steppe capital desired to argue with the Xiongnu, but they were dismissed by Zhongxing Yue, who commanded that these emissaries should deliver goods only and should not argue anymore.[117] The strategy to convince the Xiongnu to modify their own culture, which was a part of the *he qin* stage, was thus totally destroyed.

As summarized by Yu Yingshi 余英時, this second stage also featured "the use of Han China's superior material culture."[118] Ban Gu 班固 attributes the strategy to Jia Yi, naming Jia Yi's policy the "Five Baits" (*wu'er* 五餌). The details of the "Five Baits" are gained only by way of Yan Shigu's 嚴師古 (581-645CE) commentary:

> 賜之盛服車乘以壞其目；賜之盛食珍味以壞其口，賜之音樂婦人以壞其耳；賜之高堂邃宇府庫奴婢以壞其腹；於來降者，上以召幸之，相娛樂，親酌而手食之，以壞其心；此五餌也。

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[116] *Han shu* 64: 3760.

[117] Ibid.

[118] See his chapter, "Han Foreign Relations," in *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. by Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 388.

> We give them ornate clothes and carriages to corrupt their eyes; we give them sumptuous meals and delicious food to corrupt their mouths; we give them music and girls to corrupt their ears; we give them lofty buildings, large mansions, granaries and slaves to corrupt their stomachs. As for Xiongnu who surrender to us, Your Majesty summons them, entertains them, and personally pours wine to them and feeds them in order to corrupt their hearts. These are the five baits.[119]

Using China's luxurious goods to corrupt the non-Chinese invaders was a traditional strategy that was often proposed by Chinese court officials in earlier times. The first anecdote of this is found in *Hanfeizi*; it narrates the story about Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 and his use of music and dancing girls to corrupt the King of the Rong tribe 戎王 and conquer his land.[120] The anecdote was adopted into important Han texts such as *Shiji*, *Han shi wai zhuan* 韓詩外傳, and *Shuo yuan* 說苑; its repetition attests the impact that the notion of corruption through culture had in the minds of elite writers. Jia Yi's "Five Baits" perhaps was just another repetition of this theory. Moreover, the notion of using one's culture to corrupt an inferior enemy remained more ideal than practicable. As Thomas Barfield convincingly discusses in his book, *The Perilous Frontier*, the "Five Baits" could not bring substantial harm to the Xiongnu because of the latter's political and economic structure.[121] In other words, it was a failed strategy that had attempted to use superior material culture to weaken the Xiongnu's martial qualities.

The third policy stage occurred under the leadership of the ambitious Emperor Wu. The *he qin* treaties were abandoned and an offensive military policy was adopted.

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[119] *Han shu* 48: 2265.

[120] Chen Qiyou, *Hanfeizi jishi*, pp. 186-7.

[121] Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, pp. 51-52.

After war broke out in 133 BCE, the Han court combined military and diplomatic schemes to destroy the Xiongnu. The war lasted over forty years and was both costly and devastating for China and the Xiongnu. In spite of the loss of troops and resources, the war against the Xiongnu forced the Han government to become politically and economically more centralized. Emperor Wu received criticism for his arbitrary rulings and the damage he caused to China's finances.

The damage the war brought to the Xiongnu was even more serious than the damage suffered by the Chinese. They were forced to retreat far north from the frontier and their traditional way of raiding the border areas to supply their economy therefore became infeasible. The war ended the *he qin* treaties, and the *shanyu* had no Han goods to redistribute among tribal leaders. He was cut off from an important source by which to manipulate his powerful followers, as Thomas Barfield argues.[122] In addition to the military attacks launched by the Han and even by other nomadic nations, the Xiongnu also suffered from natural disasters. Blizzard and famine brought major loss to people and stocks. The immediate consequence of these political and natural deficits was the instability of the *shanyu*'s governance. Internal power struggles broke the Xiongnu empire into parts. For a certain period of time there were even five *shanyu* who claimed the Xiongnu throne.[123]

The struggle for the throne soon became a war between two brothers, Zhizhi 郅支 and Huhanye. After destroying other competitors, Zhizhi defeated Huhanye and forced

[122] For detailed discussion on Han China's war against the Xiongnu see Barfield, pp. 51-59.

[123] See *Han shu* 94: 3795-6.

him to flee to the Han administrative border. This pushed him into a desperate situation, making it virtually unavoidable that he would seek an alliance with the Han.

In order to gain support from the Chinese court, Huhanye had to abandon the symbols of equal political status implicit in his titles and statements, a symbolism that previous Xiongnu leaders had enjoyed, and finally to yield to the Han tributary system. This deliberation about possibly submitting to the Han, as had actually first been suggested by a king of Huhanye, was immediately rejected by other Xiongnu nobles. After protracted debates, however, Huhanye ultimately took the side of the king and sent his own son as a hostage to the Han court in 53 BCE. In the next year, Huhanye approached the border administration and asked to render homage as a vassal to the Han court in 51 BCE. By doing this, as Yu Yingshi summarizes, Huhanye "thus fulfilled in minutest detail all the forms required under the Han tributary system" and formally submitted his state to Han China[124].

The creation and practice of the bodily foreign policy

To the Han government, Huhanye's submission was unprecedented, because never before had the Han seen a *shanyu* surrender. In order to deal with this new relationship, the previous policies used in the *he qin* and the war stages had to be adjusted, and a new strategy conceived. This new strategy, I argue, was the bodily politic, in which massive bodies of Han people were displayed in order to impress the *shanyu*. The following event reported in *Han shu* shows this bodily politic:

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[124] Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, p. 395.

明年，呼韓邪單于款五原塞，願朝三年正月。漢遣車騎都尉韓昌迎，發所過七郡郡二千騎，為陳道上。單于正月朝天子于甘泉宮，漢寵以殊禮，位在諸侯王上，贊謁稱臣而不名。賜以冠帶衣裳，黃金璽盭綬，玉具劍，佩刀，弓一張，矢四發，胥戟十，安車一乘，鞍勒一具，馬十五匹，黃金二十斤，錢二十萬，衣被七十七襲，錦繡綺穀雜帛八千匹，絮六千斤。禮畢，使使者道單于先行，宿長平。上自甘泉宿池陽宮。上登長平，詔單于毋謁，其左右當戶之群臣皆得列觀，及諸蠻夷君長王侯數萬，咸迎於渭橋下，夾道陳。上登渭橋，咸稱萬歲。單于就邸，留月餘，遣歸國。

The next year (52 BCE), Huhanye *shanyu* made his presence known at the Wuyuan Pass and issued his intention to go to court to render homage on the New Year's of the third year of the Ganlu reign (53-49 BCE). The Han sent General of Chariots and Cavalry Han Chang to receive him. In each of the seven commanderies through which the *shanyu* passed, the commandery cavalry of two thousand horsemen were dispatched and displayed along the road. On the New Year's the *shanyu* was received in audience by the emperor at the Ganquan Palace and was treated with special ritual. He was ranked above nobles and princes. In introductions he was addressed as a minister and not by his given name. He was bestowed a cap, a belt, clothes, a golden seal, a *li* cordon, a sword with jade handle, a knife, a bow, four sets of arrows, ten halberds with black cloth draped over, a carriage, a saddle set, fifteen horses, twenty *jin* gold, two hundred thousands cash, seventy seven pieces of clothing and bedding, eight thousand bolts of brocade and silk fabrics, and six thousand *jin* of cotton. After the ceremony, the emperor sent envoys to lead the *shanyu* by going ahead on the road. The *shanyu* lodged at Changping. The emperor returned to Chiyang Palace from the Ganquan Palace. The emperor arrived at the Changping Palace and decreed that the *shanyu* should not bow to him. All the *shanyu*'s ministers at left and right were allowed to observe in lines. Including several ten thousands of kings and chiefs of various Man and Yi nations, they all welcomed the emperor beneath the bridge of the Wei River, squeezing along both sides of the road. The emperor ascended the Wei bridge, and all the people shouted "long live the emperor." The *shanyu* was accommodated at his residence. He stayed at the capital for a month and was sent to return to his state.[125]

In addition to giving a long list of the gifts that the Han emperor granted to the *shanyu*, the *Han shu* narrative also highlights the great number of people that participated in this event. In each of the seven commanderies through which the *shanyu* was to pass, two

[125] *Han shu* 94: 3798.

thousand horsemen were dispatched to receive him. The amount of troops was considerable, totaling fourteen thousand men and horses for the seven commanderies. Traditionally, China measured its military strength by its number of infantry and associated laborers and porters. Cavalry was the particular advantage of the Xiongnu. In order to defeat the Xiongnu on the steppe, Emperor Wu had encouraged local officials to raise horses in the border area. His major campaigns would not be possible until he had trained enough soldiers and raised enough horses. However, the Han court had lost most of its horses in warfare during Emperor Wu's time. In fact, the reason that after Emperor Wu's reign China had been unable to launch major military campaigns against the Xiongnu was because of the insufficiency of horses. In this context, marshalling fourteen thousand horsemen and dispatching them for a diplomatic reception, instead of assembling them for battle, was indeed an unusual effort on the part of the Han court.

As the word *chen* 陳 indicates, these cavalry troops were "displayed" along the road. They were used in order to make a visual impression rather than to secure the safety of the *shanyu*. The intention behind lining the road with fourteen thousand horsemen was to demonstrate China's might. Mounted on the back of the horse, the bodies of the soldiers were taller and more awe-inspiring than infantry.[126] Wearing armor and the Han uniform, holding weapons, bars and flags, the soldiers' bodies became amplified, and taken as a unity, they could encapsulate the military strength of the Han. The assembled and enhanced bodies symbolized the power of the nation.

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[126] Cavalry rather than infantry was precisely the power that Xiongnu most understood, since their military force relied solely upon cavalry.

Another massive display of bodies was carried out at the Wei River bridge, where a ceremony was held to welcome Emperor Xuan's return to the capital. The event was as dramatic as a luxurious Broadway show, with Emperor Xuan performing as the leading actor while the Xiongnu people were his audience. The *Han shu* description says that the Huhanye and his companions were sent to Changping, a place near the Han capital, before the Han emperor returned. As any audience at a play, they waited outside the theater for the show to start. The Han emperor returned to the Chiyang Palace and ascended the upper bank of the Jing River 涇河 at Changping. At this high place, he granted the *shanyu* status as a distinguished guest and permitted other Xiongnu nobles the right of observation, announcing the opening of the show. The narrative then draws our attention to the stage. Several tens of thousands of non-Chinese chieftains, kings and marquises, acting en masse in their supporting roles, were lined up along the road and waited beneath the Wei River bridge for the entry of the leading actor, Emperor Xuan. Again, he *ascended* the bridge and all people on the "stage" saluted him, shouting "Your Majesty." It is easy to sense that the visual effect of the performance was extraordinary. More Han and non-Han people were on display, positioned at a lower place, beneath the bridge as well as at circumambient locations at both sides of the road. The highest and most central position was reserved for the emperor.

Ascending the bridge, Emperor Xuan was highest of all and the only one whose physical gestures were decidedly masculine. The thousands of others had to bend their bodies humbly before him, ritually displaying their powerlessness. The supremacy of the Han emperor could be appreciated through his power to cause people, especially non-Han

people, to prostrate their bodies in front of him. A unique factor of this show was that the Xiongnu were not only the intended audience. They were also actors. They too had to bend themselves in a submissive gesture.

The bodily politic seemed to have been coordinated so successfully that when Huhanye came again to the capital two years later, no massive display of such physical pomp was organized to impress him. Instead, the court seemed to be confident using only material goods to reward his loyalty.[127]

However, trust between Han China and the Xiongnu remained fragile. In Han China's view, the Xiongnu were capricious and unfaithful, an impression that came from the Xiongnu's alternative use of war and peace to demand benefits from China. The court always kept a vigilant eye on the Xiongnu. Even Huhanye, who paid homage to the Han court three times, was considered a potential threat.[128] Anxiety grew when the Xiongnu became stronger and more independent, especially when the new leader, Fuzhuleiruodi 復株絫若鞮, succeeded Huhanye in 31 BCE.

Unlike his father, Fuzhuleiruodi belonged to a younger, more diplomatically distant generation. At the time when he ascended the throne, both Huhanye and Emperor

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[127] See *Han shu* 64: 3798-9.

[128] Two anecdotes in *Han shu* demonstrate Han China's precautious attitude towards Huhanye: When Han Chang and Zhang Meng 張猛 arrived in Huhanye's territory as emissaries, they saw his tribe was in fact very strong. Being afraid that he would become impossible to control, Han and Zhang made a covenant with Huhanye, swearing that forever Han China and the Xiongnu would not deceive and attack each other. After his rival Zhizhi was killed, Huhanye paid his third homage to the Han court and was given a court lady as his wife. Huhanye was delighted by this and sent a memorial to Emperor Yuan 元帝, requesting dismantle all the border fortresses. A court official Hou Ying 侯應 listed ten reasons to oppose this proposal. The key point Hou Ying made in his argument was that the Xiongnu was a hostile country to China. See *Han shu* 64: 3801, and 3803-4.

Xuan, founders of the new China-Xiongnu relationship, had died. Even Emperor Yuan, whom his father had also seen in person, died two years previously. Fuzhuleiruodi probably had never been to China and his Chinese rival, Emperor Cheng 成帝(r. 32-8 BCE) was established only one year preceding Fuzhuleiruodi's succession. With the death of the older generation, the emotional bond between the two nations waned, a bond typified, as demonstrated above, by face-to-face posturing and physical gestures.

His alienation from Han China caused Fuzhuleiruodi to probe the court's policy, as well as to test its attitude towards him. In 28 BCE, he sent a Xiongnu prince to the Han capital to pay tribute. The prince allegedly claimed that he wanted to surrender to China. A survey was made among the court officials on how to respond. While some officials suggested accepting the prince, Gu Yong 谷永 and Du Qin 杜欽 strongly opposed this. Gu Yong and Du Qin suspected that the surrender was a trap conceived by Fuzhuleiruodi. If China provided refuge to his prince it would give the *shanyu* an excuse to alienate himself from China and attack the border. Gu Yong and Du Qin's suspicion proved to be true. When the emperor sent an official to investigate in detail the prince's submission, the latter immediately denied his claim and returned to Xiongnu lands.[129]

To Chinese officials, the prince's sudden turnaround was a manifestation of the fact that China-Xiongnu relationship established in Huhanye's time had to be constantly consolidated and concretized. To secure the relationship, successful diplomatic precedents would have to be followed. Thus, another choreography of the bodily politic was carried out.

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[129] *Han shu* 64: 3808.

The homage Fuzhuleiruodi rendered in 25 BCE provided an opportunity for the court to impress the *shanyu* with the able body of the typical Han official. Instead of the massive display, this time the power of Han China was symbolized by the Prime Minister Wang Shang's 王商 body. The following episode in Wang Shang's biography in *Han shu* articulates how the *shanyu* was frightened and spiritually defeated by Wang Shang's great physical appearance:

> 爲人多質有威重，長八尺餘，身體鴻大，容貌甚過絕人。河平四年，單于來朝，引見白虎殿。丞相商坐未央廷中，單于前，拜謁商。商起，離席與言，單于仰視商貌，大畏之，遷延却退。天子聞而嘆曰："此真漢相矣！"
> As a person, [Wang Shang] was substantial and dignified. He was more than eight *chi* high and his body was tall and large.[130] His looks far surpassed others. In the fourth year of the Heping era, the *shanyu* came to the court and was presented to the emperor at the Baihu Hall. Prime Minister Shang sat in the center of the court of the Weiyang Palace and the *shanyu* came forward to pay respects to him. Wang Shang stood up, left his table and talked with the *shanyu*. Looking up at Wang Shang's features, the *shanyu* greatly feared him, turned away and retreated. The emperor heard this and sighed, "This is a true Prime Minister of Han!"[131]

The narrative of Wang's life first gives us descriptions of his body, emphasizing its unusual height and size. He was dignified and his looks were extremely impressive. We can see once more the choreographic strategy in Xiongnu relations. The *shanyu* was led to the Baihu Hall, where he would be received in audience by the emperor. He passed the court of the Weiyang Palace and met Wang Shang there. Just as Huhanye was accompanied by fourteen thousand horsemen on his journey to the capital, Fuzhuleiruodi had to encounter Wang Shang before he saw the emperor. While

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[130] Eight *chi* roughly equals 1.84 meters.

[131] *Han shu* 82: 3370.

Fuzhuleiruodi was led into the palace as a guest, Wang Shang sat in the center of the court. In this scene, the physical position of the two was not equal. Wang Shang possessed the dominant position—the center of the court, which functioned as both a spatial and political center. He also dominated by remaining seated waiting for the *shanyu* to come forward and pay respect to him.

All the physical signs and symbols were orchestrated so as to make explicit Wang Shang's dominance and the *shanyu*'s weakness. This relationship becomes more clear as we read that Wang Shang did not stand up until the *shanyu* paid respect to him. The narrative then focuses on the *shanyu*'s reaction to Wang Shang's body. The *shanyu* had to "look up," *yang shi* 仰視, at Wang Shang. The different heights of the two men determined who was psychologically more powerful in this encounter. Wang Shang's able body caused the *shanyu* "greatly to fear" Wang (*da wei zhi* 大畏之). The *shanyu* turned away and moved backward. He dared not to challenge Wang Shang. We have no record of any conversation between the two men and no performance of grand court rituals is mentioned. Instead, the competition between the leaders of the two nations was condensed into a single physical confrontation. In addition to this, no third-party body or person was presented. The narrative portrays the way in which Wang Shang's imposing physical stature overshadowed the *shanyu*'s more common physical characteristics. The martial quality of the nomadic people was thus stripped away and the *shanyu* was spiritually defeated by a Han minister's physical body. Emperor Cheng's words, "This is a true Prime Minister of Han ," announces his success in using a bodily politic to humiliate and psychologically defeat the Xiongnu leader.

The above choreography of the bodily politic in Emperor Cheng's reign contrasts sharply with an episode during the era of Empress Lü's 吕后 (r. 187-180 BEC), in which the body was also used as a political component but in a different way.

In the peak of his power, the Xiongnu leader Modun 莫頓 demanded in a letter not only material goods from China but also the marital hand of the ruler of China, Empress Lü. So furious was the empress that she wanted to attack the Xiongnu. She soon realized that China's military force was no match for the nomadic cavalry and sent a letter to Modun begging for peace:

> 年老氣衰，髮齒墮落，行步失度，單于過聽，不足自污。弊邑無罪，宜在見赦。
> My age is advanced and my vitality is weakening. Both my hair and my teeth are falling out, and I cannot even walk steadily. The *shanyu* must have heard exaggerated reports. I am not worthy of his lowering himself. But my country has done nothing wrong, and I hope he will spare it.[132]

Although the descriptions of her body were probably exaggerated, such an old, weak and unattractive body symbolized the submissive and unthreatening stance of her nation.

From the weak and vulnerable Empress Lü to the strong and awe-inspiring Wang Shang, the changing images of the body show us the changes in the power relationships between China and the Xiongnu. The growing strength of Han China was symbolized by the able bodies of its soldiers and ministers. In fact, politicizing the body—using the body to create a political effect, to demonstrate power and to act properly in a hierarchical world—has had a long tradition in Chinese history. It was especially an important component of court culture and was facilitated by sets of rules,

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[132] Translation cited from Yu Yingshi, *The Cambridge History of China*, p. 387.

including those concerning rituals and clothing. However, Han court elites seemed to feel that the bodily politic was most important and efficient in handling international affairs, especially in dealing with the Xiongnu. Yang Xiong's 扬雄 memorial to Emperor Ai 哀帝 (r. 6-1 BCE) illustrates the Han elites' perception of the Xiongnu's bodily culture and their strategy of using the Han bodies to create grand ritual display in conquering the Xiongnu's heart.

The background of Yang Xiong's memorial can be summarized as follows: in 3 BCE, Wuzhu *shanyu* 烏珠單于 made a request to render homage to the court the following year. Emperor Ai had been sick at that time. Some of his officials said that the Xiongnu brought ill-omen to China, since every time a Xiongnu leader came to the capital a Han emperor died. Emperor Ai therefore did not want to invite the *shanyu* to visit. Yang Xiong sent a memorial arguing against this decision.

In the memorial, Yang Xiong first looked back on past Han-Xiongnu history, pointing out that using only military force to control the Xiongnu was a failed strategy. In the current situation the Xiongnu had already submitted themselves to the court, and thus, in Yang Xiong's opinion, China must secure their loyalty by conquering their spirit. As Yang Xiong articulates in his words, the body weighs heavily in the overall equation:

> 外國天性忿鷙，形容魁健，負力怙氣，難化以善，易隶以惡，其強難詘，其和難得。故未服之時，勞師遠攻，傾國殫貨，伏尸流血，破堅拔敵，如彼之難也；既破之後，慰薦撫循，交接賂遺，威儀俯仰，如此之備也。
> Those foreign people [the Xiongnu] are irascible and ruthless. In form and appearance they are imposing and strong. They rely on their strength and presume upon their power. They cannot be civilized by kindness but can easily be governed by dignity of demeanor. It is hard to bend their power to our will; it is difficult to gain peace from them. Therefore when they had not yet submitted to us, we tired our troops by mounting long-distance attacks. We

> exhausted our country's resources and drained our materials, our soldiers' bodies piled up and their blood flowed, we broke into their fortress and defeated the enemy. It was so difficult to conquer them! After they have submitted, we console them, recommend them and comfort them, we make contact with them and send them gifts, bending and lifting our bodies, we show them dignified demeanor—Our preparation should be of this type.[133]

Yang Xiong here highlights the more imposing physique of the Xiongnu. They were taller and stronger than the Han Chinese and had more martial qualities. These physical characteristics created a bodily culture among the Xiongnu people that was quite different from what existed among the Chinese. They were proud of their strength and admired those who were more powerful than they. Because of this, Yang Xiong suggested, the court must use *e* 惡 and *weiyi* 威儀—a dignified, awe-inspiring demeanor created by the body and body performance—to conquer their heart.

Yang Xiong's advice was accepted by Emperor Ai. Two years later, when Wuzhu finally came to the court he faced again the able bodies of Han ministers. An anecdote in the *Dongguan hanji* 東觀漢紀 demonstrates the recurrence of the bodily politic:

> 哀帝時為漁陽太守，有名於邊。容貌飲食絕眾。是時單于來朝，當道二千石皆選容貌飲食者，故宏徙為雲中太守。
> [Peng Hong] was the Grand Administrator of the Yuyang commandery in emperor Ai's reign and was famous among the people at the border. His looks and capacity for eating and drinking were peerless. At the time when the *shanyu* came to pay homage to the court, officials, ranking two thousand *shi,* and having outstanding looks and great capacity for eating and drinking, were chosen to be [Grand Administrators] of commanderies through which the *shanyu* passed. For this reason Peng Hong was transferred to be the Grand Administrator of the Yunzhong commandery.[134]

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[133] Han shu 64: 3814. Yan Shigu glosses the word e 惡 as *wei* 威。

[134] Wu Shuping, *Dongguan hanji jiaozhu*, pp. 273-4.

The strategy we see in this event resembled that was used in Huhanye's time. The only difference was, instead of the massive display of the bodies of horsemen, Han officials' bodies were presented along the road. Not only did these grand bodies show the power of China, but also they covered up the weak body of the emperor—emperor Ai was physically weak through his life. Using the bodily politic to conquer the nomadic people was by no means Yang Xiong's personal insight. On the contrary, it was a general belief among the court elites of the western Han and was inherited by the eastern Han ministers. Du Shi 杜詩 (?-38 CE) praised Fu Zhan's 伏湛 (?-37 CE) outstanding looks as the illustration of the greatness of the nation (容貌堂堂，國之光輝).[135] In Emperor Ming's 明帝 era (r. 58-76 CE), Cheng Gong 承宮 was so admired by the Xiongnu that the *shanyu* even sent an emissary to the court in order to see Cheng Gong. Emperor Ming ordered Cheng Gong to dress up to meet the emissary, but Cheng Gong refused. Cheng Gong told the emperor that he was ugly and should not to be seen by foreigners. He then suggested that the emperor choose a minister who was tall and of dignified appearance to meet the Xiongnu. The emperor therefore replaced him with another court official.[136]

As I have pointed out above, politicizing the body had deep roots in earlier China court culture and was adopted by the Han government to control the Xiongnu. When the *he qin* policy and the military campaign failed or proved ineffective in dealing with the changing relationships with the Xiongnu, the Han court developed this body-politic and employed it along with material subsidies to secure loyalty from the

[135] Wu Shuping, p. 476.

[136] Wu Shuping, *Dongguan hanji jiaozhu*, p. 529.

nomadic people. This new strategy resulted also from Han elites' improved understanding of the Xiongnu customs, as articulated in Yang Xiong's words. The lessons learned from past experiences and the knowledge accumulated from contact with the Xiongnu drove Han court elites to be more creative and practical in making their foreign policy. The body-politic seemed to be a successful strategy to the court elites; they repeatedly used it to conquer the Xiongnu's spirit. In its foreign policy, the politicized body of Han people became a powerful means to help Han China control the Xiongnu.

Conclusion

Warring States and Han China witnessed a rapid growth of traditional Chinese political thought. Early political ideas were broadened and enriched by Warring States thinkers' different, often competitive, theories and doctrines. A general interest in the state structure as well as a common concern for power relationships in the political body of the state characterized the political philosophies produced during this period. These interests and concerns were adopted and further developed by Han thinkers in a time when consolidating a centralized power was in immediate demand. In this development of early Chinese political thought, the body was used as an important metaphor in political discussions, and the perception of the body also became a significant consideration in policy making.

Early Chinese philosophers understood the body from a moral perspective. While the self was the subject of individual moral cultivation, its improvement was

nevertheless displayed by the physical appearance of the person. This emphasis on moral demonstration gave political significance to the body, since morality was a major concern in Chinese political thought. Cultivating the body therefore became the first step towards the proper governance of the world; the body was thus politicized.

Chinese medical theories of the body further strengthened the relationship between the body and politics. Two ontological concepts of the body, the fluid body and the body as a spatial entity, carried strong political implications and enabled a mutual correspondance between the physical body and the body of the state. In these medical concepts, the body was given a cosmological reading, and the state and governance too were examined by the same principle—that harmony should be maintained between the body/state and the universe in order to keep the body/state healthy. At the same time, the hierarchical structure of the society found a perfect equation in the stratified internal structure of the physical body, when each organ was given a specific duty and served together the command of the heart.

The hierarchical relationship between the heart and other bodily parts was conveniently adopted as a metaphor by Warring States and Han philosophers in their argumentation concerning the ruler-minister relationship. The changing voices from Mengzi's advocacy of a mutual reliance between the heart/ruler and the limbs/minister to Xunzi's emphasis upon the absolute control of the heart/ruler tell of a tendency towards a centralized power that had become popular in late Warring States political thought. Although concern for restraining the power of the ruler was never absent from the minds of late Warring States thinkers, they unanimously promoted the authority of the ruler by

referring to the commanding rule of the heart in the human body. This consequently highlighted the symbolic meanings of the ruler's body and integrated the body of the ruler with the body of the state, as the famous *Gongyang* phrase "*guo jun yi ti*" illustrates. On a "physical" level, the ruler's body was mystified and reduplicated in order to argue for his political legitimacy. Han documents pointed to physical resemblances between Han emperors and legendary kings in high antiquity as a genetic evidence for the unquestionable legitimacy of the Han emperors.

In early Chinese political discussions, the body was also used to evaluate the ethical nature of politics. Stereotypes of good and evil rulership found their dividing line in their treatment of the bodies of the people. Stories of a good ruler burying a nameless corpse and bad rulers damaging the body of the innocent became recurrent themes in political argumentation. The body thus served as a touchstone that testified to the ethical nature of the state. This ethical meaning of the body that had remained largely on a theoretical level in Warring States philosophy then became institutionalized by the Han government. Documents found in the Xuanquanzhi Han military site provide concrete evidence that show the Han efforts to actualize bodily theories in the real political world.

In addition to adopting and systemizing extant bodily theories, the Han government also utilized concepts of the body in other political practices. In Han foreign policy, the different perceptions of the body held by the Han Chinese and the Xiongnu nomadic people helped the Han to adopt a more creative and efficient bodily politics, employed together with traditional material subsidies and military preparations, to maintain a relationship favorable to Han China. In this Han creation of a bodily politics,

the relationship between the body and the politics moved beyond metaphorical realm and participated in the real political world.

CHAPTER IV

RITUAL AND THE BODY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship between ritual and the body. It argues that in early Confucian texts ritual was defined as both an ideological concept and the coded human behaviors that were integrated by bodily performance. In early Confucian philosophy, ritual addressed the issue of constructing social order by means of regulating individual acts. In other words, ritual trained the body to be acceptable to the society and the society needed the normalized body to maintain its hierarchical order. In this sense, ritual was both meaning and action, a system of belief and ceremonies of performance. To demonstrate this, I will organize my chapter according to the following sections. Section one looks at how the perfomative body integrates ritual theories and ritual practice and directs them to a social ending with an emphasis upon ritual's moral value. Section two presents a close examination of the issue of ritualization. I argue that, in order to maintain a hierarchical social order, relationships among different social groups must be normalized, manifested and reconfirmed by training the body and displaying properly regulated bodily movements. From this perspective, ritual must be performed. Section three attempts to demonstrate the pedagogical nature of early Confucian ritual texts. I argue in this section that, by prescribing detailed instructions of bodily

movements for a sweeping range of ritual settings, ritual texts function as manuals that train the body to be acceptable to society. The essential concern of ritual theories and practices points to their public nature. At the same time, individual moral improvement achieved through ritual practices serves ultimately for the maintenance of social hierarchy.

Principle and Practice in Early Confucian Ritual Discourse

From Confucius to Xunzi: philosophical foundations of li and the role of the body

Confucius' philosophy was centered on *ren*. As the most important virtue in Confucian teaching, *ren* was not only desirable for good rulership, it was also the highest moral quality one should seek. To Confucius, *ren* meant the power of empathy. It suggested an ideal human relationship in which one cared about the feelings of others and did not impose one's self interest upon others. By extension, *ren* described a perfectly harmonious society in which every social member was self-restrained and willing to help each other and in which the state was governed by the ruler's moral power. Ritual, *li*, served *ren* and was secondary to it. In *Analects* 3.3 the master said that "Being a human but not humane, of what use is ritual" (人而不仁，如禮何)?[1] This comment points out explicitly that *ren* is the root of *li* and moral pursuit is both a prerequisite and goal of ritual exercise. At the same time, *li* is the approach through which *ren* can be achieved. In *Analects* 12.1, when asked by Yan Yuan about *ren* Confucius asserts that "To restrain

[1] Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, p. 26.

yourself and to return to the rites constitutes *ren*" (克己復禮，為仁).[2] At the surface level, *li* seems to be the external regulation that disciplines people. However, at the same time Confucius believes that self-restraint directed by ritual is indeed an action of *ren*. He thus internalizes *li* and regards it as a part of inner virtue. Performing ritual is therefore understood as a way of moral cultivation.

Then what is *li* to Confucius? Apparently, Confucius rejects the definition of *li* as ceremonial performance. In *Analects* 17.11 he questions the simple equation of ritual to material sacrifice that lacks emotional commitment (禮云禮云， 玉帛云哉？).[3] Indeed, to Confucius formality is less significant than the expression of sincerity in ritual practice. What is important to Confucius are the moral attitudes expressed and developed in ritual exercise. Because of this, *jing* 敬 (reverence) and *rang* 讓 (deference) become two standards he applies in judging ritual conduct.[4]

Clearly, this internalized *li* carries a strong moral emphasis and it stays in line with Confucius' overall political doctrines. To a certain extent, the ideal society Confucius envisions is a moral community in which each member is morally refined and the state is guided by the ruler's exemplary deeds rather than by political forces. By defining *li* as a way of improving inner qualities, Confucius provides a theoretical basis for maintaining social order through enhancing people's moral consciousness. Therefore

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[2] Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu.*, p. 130.

[3] Yang Bojun, p. 192.

[4] See *Analects* 3. 26, 4.13, and 11.26. Yang Bojun, pp. 36, 41, and 127.

to Confucius the perfect state is not governed by coercive regulations (*zheng* 政) and punishments (*xing* 刑) but by virtue and *li*.[5]

Confucius strongly emphasizes the relationship between individual action and ritual's social function. As a moral concept, ritual must be carried out and accomplished by people (禮以行之).[6] For this reason, human behavior as a part of social exchange needs to be guided by *li*. In *Analects*, Confucius repeatedly instructs that one must establish (*li* 立) himself through ritual.[7] Ritual, in this sense, is the rule of daily conduct that ensures that each individual acts appropriately. Confucius warns that, in addition to broadly learning culture, a gentleman must restrain his conduct by the rites in order to avoid going astray (君子博學於文，約之以禮，亦可以弗畔矣夫).[8] This admonition, again, is confirmed by Yan Yuan who says that Confucius broadens him with culture but restrains him with the rites (博我以文，約我以禮).[9]

In prescribing specific rules for restraining individual conduct by ritual, Confucius focuses primarily on control of the body. When Yan Yuan, in a famous passage found in *Analects*, asks the details of how to restrain oneself and return to the

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[5] *Analects* 2.3, Yang Bojun, pp. 12-3. See also Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), p. 8.

[6] *Analects* 15.18. Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, p. 172.

[7] See *Analects* 8. 8, 16. 13, 20.3. Yang Bojun, ibid., pp. 87, 185, 218. That people must be refined by ritual is explicitly stated in *Analects* 8.2, in which Confucius says: "If you are respectful but lack ritual you will become exasperating; if you are careful but lack ritual you will become timid; if you are courageous but lack ritual you will become unruly; and if you are upright but lack ritual you will become inflexible." Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, p. 78.

[8] *Analects* 6.27. Yang Bojun, p. 68.

[9] *Analects* 9.11. Yang Bojun, p. 97.

rites, Confucius gives the following advice: "Do not look unless its is in accordance with ritual; do not listen unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not speak unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not move unless it is in accordance with ritual" (非禮勿視，非禮勿聽，非禮勿言，非禮勿動).[10] The body, as conceptualized in this passage, seems to be driven by unrestrained desires that are potentially dangerous to the social order. When bodily action is spontaneous and not subject to self-conscious control it is inevitably transgressive. As a conscious moral practice, ritual regulates the body by determining beforehand which of its actions are appropriate and which inappropriate. When individual bodies are disciplined through adherence to ritual, the result is a harmonious society. As Confucius' disciple Youzi 有子 says, "Of the functions of ritual, harmony is the most valued" (禮之用，和為貴).[11]

In contrast to the emphasis upon *li* in the Confucian *Analects*, ritual did not occupy the center of Mengzi's philosophy. Only on a few occasions did Mengzi talk about ritual. This peripheral status of *li* in Mengzi's philosophy derived directly from his belief in the goodness of human nature. Since human nature was innately good, there was no need to control people's behavior by external regulations. To Mengzi, problems occurred when environment corrupted people and caused them to give up their good

[10] *Analects* 12.1. Yang Bojun, p. 130.

[11] *Analects* 1.12. Yang Bojun, p. 8.

nature. Thus Mengzi urged people to regain their good heart (求其放心).[12] However, Mengzi did not view ritual as an indispensable way to rediscover one's good nature.

In Mengzi's view, *li* was the heart of respect and reverence that was possessed by all men.[13] *Li* was not acquired from knowledge and training, because Mengzi believed ritual, as well as humanness, rightness, and wisdom, is rooted in a gentleman's heart (君子所性，仁義禮智根於心).[14] Mengzi also says that "Humanness, dutifulness, ritual and wisdom do not give me luster from outside, they are in me originally" (仁、義、禮、智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也).[15] However, we should not conclude that Mengzi understood *li* as a part of one's inner virtues. Instead, in Mengnzi's view, *li* is an external manifestation of *ren* (仁), *yi* (義) and *zhi* (智). Mengzi warned a gentleman to be aware of whether people's reaction towards him was ritually appropriate, because if the gentleman was reverent in his own heart, he would be respected by others. And when one is the recipient of a disrespectful attitude from others, it indicates problems in his own moral cultivation.[16] As the body illustrates a gentleman's virtue through a sleek facial appearance, *li* provides for a gentleman an intelligible reference that could be used to examine his morality.

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[12] *Mengzi* 11.11. Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu* 11.11, p. 267.

[13] In *Mengzi* 11. 6 it writes: 恭敬之心，禮也 and 恭敬之心，人皆有之. See Yang Bojun, ibid., p. 259.

[14] *Mengzi* 13.21. Yang Bojun, p. 309. In 11.6 Mengzi says that "humaneness, dutifulness, ritual and wisdom do not give me a luster from the outside, they are in me originally."

[15] *Mengzi* 11.6. Yang Bojun, p. 259.

[16] See *Mengzi* 8.28. Yang Bojun, p. 197.

However, the external *li* does have some important influence upon the internal virtues. This is due to the fact that in Mengzi's philosophy *ren* and *yi* are not only conceptual, they are actions too. According to Mengzi, humaneness and dutifulness are revealed in such behavior as serving parents and obeying elder brothers.[17] Ritual, in this sense, is to "regulate and adorn" these deeds.[18] To fulfill such a purpose of ritual, the body and bodily movements must be controlled. Mengzi directly associated ritual with the bodily actions of *jin* (进, to move forward) and *tui* (退, to move back).[19] The finest control and adornment of the body in accordance with ritual, as Mengzi claimed, manifestes the highest of virtue (動容周旋中禮者，盛德之至也).[20]

Among early Confucian philosophers, Xunzi was the most serious advocate of *li*. Xunzi's promotion of *li* is constructed by his theory of the three roots (*san ben* 三本) of ritual: heaven and earth were the root of life, ancestors are the root of kinship, and rulers and teachers the root of order.[21] Ritual serves heaven above and earth below and functiones first as a natural principle. According to Xunzi, it is because of ritual that

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[17] *Mengzi* 7.27: 仁之實，事親是也； 義之實，從兄是也. Yang Bojun, p. 183.

[18] *Mengzi* 7.27: 禮之實，節文斯二者是也. Yang Bojun, ibid.

[19] *Mengzi* 7.1. Yang Bojun, p. 162.

[20] *Mengzi* 14.33. Yang Bojun, p. 338.

[21] *Xunzi xinzhu*, chapter "Li lun", pp. 310-1. Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 58. For a good discussion on ritual in Xunzi, see Scott Cook, "Xunzi on Ritual and Music," *Monumenta Serica* 45 (1997), pp. 1-38. For a comparative discussion of ritual in Confucius and Xunzi, see Michael Martin, "Ritual Action (*Li*) in Confucius and Hsün Tzu," *Australian Journal of Philosophy* 73.1 (1995), pp. 13-30.

heaven and earth are conjoined, the sun and moon are brightened, and the order and movements of the four seasons, the stars and the rivers are maintained.[22]

In addition to being the cosmic rule, ritual also serves as the dominant ethical law in the ideal society Xunzi envisioned. Xunzi considered ritual as the highest principle of governance and believed that the state must be rectified by ritual.[23] This understanding of ritual as the foundation of the state derives from Xunzi's belief that social disorder was generated by the people's evil nature.[24] In the chapter "Li lun" 禮論 (Discussion on Ritual), Xunzi asserted that the creation of ritual was necessary because people have selfish desires, which, when not satisfied, led to contention and social disruption. In order to stabilize society and maintain its order, ritual was created to differentiate people's rights in accordance with their class differences and to prescribe for them the proper means to satisfy their needs. Here Xunzi did not condemn people's natural emotions (*qing* 情) and desires (*yu* 欲) but advocated moral scrutiny of each of these by means of ritual. Instead, Xunzi argued that the purpose of ritual is to "nurture the desires of men" and "supply the means for their satisfaction."[25] Thus, perfect ritual in

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[22] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 313. Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 60.

[23] Chapter "Yi bing" 議兵 reads, "禮者，治辨之極也，強固之本也。" Chapter "Wang ba" 王霸 writes: 國無禮則不正. See *Xunzi xinzhu*, pp. 244, 169.

[24] Chapter "Qiang guo" 強國 reads: 國之命在禮. *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 253.

[25] "養人之欲，給人之求。" *Xunzi xinzhu*, chapter "Li lun" 禮論, p. 308. Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 55.

Xunzi's thought is the full realization of both human emotion and the artificial forms of *li*.[26]

While emotions and desires were acknowledged by Xunzi, he does emphasize the idea of social distinction enforced by ritual at the same time. Xunzi pointed out the difference between music and ritual in the following words: "Music harmonizes and unites, while ritual distinguishes and stresses difference" (樂合同，禮別異).[27] The differences emphasized by ritual were clearly based upon social hierarchy, as Xunzi affirmed that ritual meant the rankings of the noble or the base, the disparities between old and young, and the distinctions among poor and rich, insignificant and significant.[28] From this perspective, Xunzi concluded that ritual was the "model for the primary social distinctions and the categories used by analogical extension for the guiding rules and ordering norms of behavior" (法之大分，類之綱紀也).[29]

In consolidating social hierarchy and providing order to norms of behavior, ritual serves as a ubiquitous ethical principle that directs all human relationships. According to Xunzi, the proper role each individual performes in society must be guided by ritual. Xunzi differentiated people according to their social relationships with others and prescribed for them ritual principles on how to interact with each other. The relationships

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[26] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 313. Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 60.

[27] See "Yue lun" 樂論 chapter in *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 338. Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 84.

[28] The sentence reads, "禮者，貴賤有等，長幼有差，貧富輕重皆有稱者也." *Xunzi xinzhu*, chapter "Fu guo" 富國, p. 141. Knoblock, Vol. 2, p. 122.

[29] Chapter "Quan xue" 勸學, *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 7. Knoblock, Vol. 1, p. 139.

of the ruler and minister, father and son, brother and brother, and husband and wife all should be perfected by ritual. A harmonious society would therefore be created when people's morality is refined by *li*.[30] The power of ritual, as Xunzi concluded, is to determine ethical relationships among men (禮以定倫).[31]

In order to achieve the ethical qualities implicit in ritual, human behavior must be regulated. Different from Mengzi, Xunzi strongly insists that people must learn ritual. This understanding of the acquired nature of ritual stayed in line with Xunzi's general emphasis upon learning. In fact, to Xunzi learning would not be complete without the study of ritual ([學] 終乎讀禮).[32] At the same time, ritual would not be complete without a gentleman's active practice of it. Because of this, Xunzi argued that the gentleman is the beginning of ritual and moral principles: he must act with *li*, actualize it and accumulate it over and over (為之，貫之，積重之).[33]

The above argument clearly reveals the performative nature of ritual in Xunzi's theory. Ritual must be performed and actualized by human conduct; at the same time, it regulates and refines human behaviors. Chapter "Xiu shen" 修身 (Cultivating the Self) thus points out that:

> 食飲，衣服、居處、動靜，由禮則和節，不由禮則觸陷生疾；容貌、態度、進、趨行，由禮則雅，不由禮則夷固、僻違、庸眾而野。

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[30] See *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 193.

[31] See Chapter "Zhishi" 致士 in *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 226.

[32] *Xunzi xinzhu*, chapter "Quan xue" 勸學, p. 7.

[33] *Xunzi xinzhu*, chapter "Wang zhi" 王制, p. 126. Knoblock, Vol. 2, p. 102.

> When one's food and drink, clothing and dress, dwelling and home, activity and repose follow the dictates of ritual, they are harmonious and measured. But when they do not, they become offensive and excessive and so will produce illness. If one's manner and appearance, bearing and deportment, entrances and exits, and one's rapid steps proceed according to ritual principles, they will be cultured. But when they do not, they will seem arrogant and obstinate, depraved and perverted, utterly commonplace and savage.[34]

It is apparent from this passage that the purpose of ritual is to perfect human actions and make them harmonious (*he* 和), measured (*jie* 節) and cultured (*ya* 雅). In other words, ritual rectifies people's bodily movements in order for them to be accepted by the society.[35]

Indeed, the body was an important component in Xunzi's ritual theory. Xunzi explicitly defined ritual as "to nurture" (故禮者，養也).[36] The idea of nurturing is defined as a comprehensive care of the body: using delicate foods to nurture the mouth, fragrances to nurture the nose, decorated objects to the eyes, music and sounds for the

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[34] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 17. Knoblock, Vol. 1, pp. 152-3.

[35] The understanding of the body in ritual context between the Chinese tradition, as represented here, and the Hebrew tradition, that was to have such a profound impact on Christianity, are significantly different. Early Chinese philosophical discussions of the body show an attempt to turn the body into a harmonious part of society. In doing so, specific focus on the body and its physical characteristics became absent; instead, the body was de-individualized and transformed into a smoothly functioning part of the social body. In other words, early Chinese ritual discussions emphasize the performative, trainable nature of the body while the physical functions of the body were deemphasized. Contrary to this, Western ritual texts, especially the Hebrew Bible, show a strong awareness of the polluting danger of the body. *Leviticus*, for example, is dominated by the concerns of pollution and purification in ritual activities. In this text, the body, from its surface (skin disease) to the inside (physical discharges) becomes the source of pollutants that undermine the service of God in purity. Many regulations prescribed in *Leviticus* draw a boundary between the contaminative physical conditions of the body and the health of the society. See, for example, *Leviticus* 13. 40-45, 15. 19, in Everett Fox trans., *The Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), pp. 570, 582.

[36] *Xunzi xinzhu* p. 308.

ears, and rooms, couches and cushions to nurture the body.[37] Ritual therefore became a method in the popular late Warring States technique of controlling *qi* and nourishing the mind (治氣養心之術).[38] More importantly, the principle of ritual in the art of nurturing the body was to ensure that good order would penetrate every aspect of people's activities and prevent the occurrence of unreasonable, dilatory and negligent actions (凡用血氣、志意、知慮，由禮則治通，不由禮則勃亂提慢).[39] Thus the body must be trained by ritual in order to comply with social standards. At the same time, Xunzi also maintained that ritual should be embodied by the body:

> 君子之學也，入乎耳，著乎心，布乎四體，形乎動靜。端而言，蝡而動，一可以為法則。
> The learning of the gentleman enters through the ear, is stored in the mind, spreads through the four limbs, and is visible in his activity and repose. In his softest word and slightest movement, in one and all, the gentleman can be taken as a model and pattern.[40]

We see an agreement between Xunzi and Mengzi in the above passage—that is, the refined moral quality, no matter by means of learning or through the rectification of the strayed heart, was materialized by the human body and became visible in bodily activities. Thus, in Xunzi's philosophy a materialization of virtue was realized by ritual. A

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[37] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 308. Knoblock, Vol. 3. p. 55.

[38] Xunzi suggested that "of all the methods of controlling the vital breath and nourishing the mind, none is more direct than proceeding according to ritual principles (凡治氣養心之術，莫徑由禮). See *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 18. Knoblock, Vol. 1, p. 154.

[39] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 17. Knoblock, Vol. 1, p. 152.

[40] *Xunzi xinzhu*, p. 9. Knoblock, Vol. 1, p. 140.

gentleman's learning of ritual, as Xunzi concluded, was to refine his body (君子之學也，以美其身).[41]

Early ritual texts: the concern of ritual practicability and the use of the body

The philosophical foundation of *li* established by Confucius, Mengzi and Xunzi was developed in Warring States ritual texts. In early Confucian ritual texts, there are two issues to deal with: the first is to confirm the purpose of ritual and the second is the question of the practicability of ritual. In other words, how to conceptualize ritual and make ritual practicable became the dominant concerns of early ritualists. The following discussion will be organized around these two questions by examining closely the major ritual text *Liji*.

The first chapter in *Liji* begins with the theme of ritual "giving peace to people" (*an min* 安民).[42] This statement explicitly confirms the value of ritual in consolidating the social order advocated by Confucius and Xunzi. As the chapter continues, ritual is promoted as the highest principle that completes and finalizes the cultivation of virtue,

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[41] *Xunzi xinshu*, p. 9. Knoblock translates the word *shen* as "character." However, in the sentence immediately before this Xunzi criticizes the learning of petty men as entering the ears but coming out the mouth. Since the distance between the mouth and ear is less than four *cun*, Xunzi questions that how this kind of learning could be sufficient to refine the seven *chi* body of a man (小人之學也，入乎耳，出乎口。口耳之間則四寸耳，曷足以美七尺之軀哉). Because of this, I think the word *shen* connotes the same meaning of human body.

[42] See *Liji zhengyi* (thereafter *LJZY*), p. 7.

the establishment of custom, the rectification of human relationships and the functioning of government.[43]

This emphasis in *Liji* upon ritual as the most authoritative law guiding all aspects of society clearly reflects the influence of Xunzi more than that of *Analects* or *Mengzi*. Still, the role of ritual in individual moral improvement, which is given equal attention in *Liji*, may show influence from the Mencian branch of Confucianism.[44]

In explaining ritual's importance in refining people's morality, early Confucian ritualists had to confront the question of how to conceptualize ritual. Since Confucius, Mengzi and Xunzi presented different views on this matter, their theories become both a challenge and an opportunity to develop new ideas. *Liji* picks up and revises a crucial issue concerning *li*, that is, whether ritual was internal (*nei* 內) or external (*wai* 外).

As I have discussed above, Confucius suggested that ritual was both an action of as well as an approach to *ren*. In Confucius' teaching, the inward attitudes of *jing* (reverence) and *rang* (deference) formed the substance of ritual. At the same time, ritual served to rectify human behavior by consciously restraining improper desires. Somewhat different from this, Mengzi viewed ritual as simply an external manifestation and decoration of internal virtues. To Mengzi, ritual did not have ethical power but provided a visible reference for examining one's inner moral quality. In Xunzi's philosophy, the

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[43] See *LJZY*, p. 14.

[44] Many scholars have pointed out the close relationship between Xunzi's theory and *Liji*. Some examples of this argument include Feng Youlan's 馮友蘭 *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 中國哲學史 (Hong Kong: Taipingyang tushu gongsi, 1961), p. 369, Yang Junru's 楊筠如 *Xunzi yanjiu* 荀子研究 (Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1968), pp. 21-7.

learning of ritual also pointed to a moral ending: it was through learning that a gentleman "refined his person/body" (美其身). What makes Xunzi important to Warring States ritualists is his emphasis on ritual nurturing and differentiating human desires and emotions.

Liji synthesizes these three philosopher's ideas while showing a strong characteristic of Xunzi's views. Similar to *Analects*, *Liji* also requires moral sincerity in ritual performance. *Liji* cites Confucius that in the rites of mourning "reverence is the most important thing" (敬為上) and "facial expressions should agree with the emotion" (顏色稱其情).[45] What is important in this sentence is the idea that ritual corresponds to what is in the heart. Sincerity and reverence are thus given priority over external expressions. However, the notion of a natural flow from inside to outside is equally stressed in *Liji* chapters. For instance, chapter 48 indicates that in mourning for a parent, what is bound up in a filial son's heart is manifested in his countenance (結諸心，形諸色).[46] The explanation for this is that the internal grief and sorrow produce a change on the appearance of the filial son (夫悲哀在中，故形變於外也).[47]

This idea of ritual as a secondary manifestation of the inward state was further complicated in *Liji* by an emphasis upon ritual's impact on the heart and emotions. Since human nature could either be good or bad and people have all kinds of emotions, there is

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[45] *LJZY*, p. 1200.

[46] Ibid., p. 1344.

[47] Ibid., p. 1535.

a need to control excessive feelings and rectify the heart. Ritual fulfills this responsibility. For this reason, when Youzi 有子 praised a child's crying for his parents as a sincere expression of feeling and considered it as sufficient for ritual, Ziyou 子游 disagreed with him by pointing out that restraining and regulating emotions is the real ritual.[48] In addition to this, ritual also rectifies people's heart. For example, although the chapter "Yue ji" 樂記 writes that the sphere in which ritual governs is exterior (禮也者，動於外者也), it warns that indifference and rudeness would invade people's heart if for a moment the outward demeanor was not respectful and reverent (外貌斯須不莊不敬，而易慢之心入之矣).[49]

We see two important points in the above example. First, although ritual is external it has an impact upon internal virtue and emotion. This view of ritual is certainly not bifunctional. In fact, in traditional Chinese thought, *nei* and *wai* are never two separated worlds. There are always links connecting these two spheres and ritual is only one of them. Second, the above example suggests that normalized demeanor in ritual practice could prevent the corruption of the heart. Because normalizing demeanor is closely related with corporal control, the body therefore becomes an indispensable component in ritual discourse. Furthermore, the involvement of the body in ritual discussion is necessary for the consideration of the practicability of ritual. In order to sell their doctrine, Confucian scholars had to make ritual theoretically sound as well as

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[48] *LJZY*, pp. 283-4.

[49] Ibid., p. 1140.

"feasible" in real world situations. *Liji* and other ritual texts therefore create ritual systems for the state, local community and family, trying to institutionalize ritual in the social sphere. At the same time, ritual as a moral guide demands a practicable system for each individual to follow. A set of coded behaviors is thus created to carry out ritual ideas. *Liji* writes: "The beginning of ritual and its principle lies in the correct arrangement of the body and demeanor, the proper adjustment of the countenance and in the natural order of the speech" (禮義之始，在於正容體，齊顏色，順辭令).[50] From this perspective, the body is a handy material that enables ritual to be practicable. Because of this, *Liji* claims that ritual is comparable to the human body (禮也者，猶體也).[51] As the human body must maintain its integrity, so is the rule of ritual to be completed. The most important way to do this is to manipulate the body and train it to carry out the meanings of ritual. Ritual, in this sense, is distinctly performative. It is a social and individual system actualized by encoded bodily movements. It is meaning and action, integrated by the emblematic display of the body. *Huainanzi* thus concludes, "Ritual means the body/embodiment (禮者體也)."[52]

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[50] *LJZY*, p. 1614. Translation adopted from James Legge, *The Li Ki*, ibid., p. 425.

[51] Ibid., p. 740.

[52] Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, p. 62.

Ritualizing the Body

Ritualization of space and the body

In their book, *Thinking from the Han*, David Hall and Roger Ames characterize the Chinese conceptualization of the self as a focus-field model that emphasizes the relationship between self and society. According to Hall and Ames, the self is the focus that constitutes and is constituted by the field, which, as the authors describe, is a "variety of specific contexts defined by particular family relations, or sociopolitical orders." The field shapes the self but in return the self constructs the field. Without the connection between them, either part of the model would become meaningless. For this reason Hall and Ames define the model as the "art of contextualization." In other words, the Chinese focus-field model "results from the understanding of one's relation to the world to be constituted by acts of contextualization."[53]

There is no doubt that when Hall and Ames use the word "field" they are talking about a social network such as complicated human relationships and interpersonal rules. Although this is so, it is still interesting to note that Hall and Ames use "field", a word carrying a strong spatial connotation, to interpret the society in which the self obtains its full meaning. Admittedly, a society cannot exist if there are no accepted rules, customs or clearly defined relationships that bond its members together. Nevertheless, we should also consider the fact that in its physical form a society is a "territorial space" with a division between center and periphery and with an opposition between inside and outside.

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[53] David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 39-43.

Probably in ancient time the spatial form of society was of equal importance to any abstract notions that may have identified that society.

Understanding society as a space does not contradict Hall and Ames' view of society as rules and connections. Because not only is space a form but it also a concept. In fact, similar to his interpretation of time as "an order of successions," Leibniz understands space to be "an order to things which exist at the same time."[54] Following this assertion, Mark Edward Lewis makes a suggestion that space implies relations, order and division.[55] From this perspective, Hall and Ames' term "field" clearly shares the same meaning with the word "space" explained by Leibniz and Lewis. To be sure, space is both material and metaphysical.

This understanding of society as constructed by space permeated early Chinese thought. As Lewis points out, early Chinese myths tell of the beginning of the world in terms of the creation of space, the emergence of objects from formless chaos.[56] Because the formation of space began with a primal chaos, the concern with constructing spatial order dominated the mind of Chinese for over a thousand years. To maintain an orderly world, it was important to construct boundaries and divisions both in physical forms and at the conceptual level. From an early time the Chinese had a strong consciousness of center and periphery, interior and exterior, and selves and others.

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[54] Cited from Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China*, p. 1.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 2.

Ritual facilitated the construction of spatial order. Early ritual texts show a strong awareness of space and an effort to structure space by controlling the body and bodily movement. Although the ultimate goal of ritual was to regulate social relationships, it nevertheless began with clarification and definition of spatial units. The idea behind this was that in early Chinese thought the world was constructed by spatial units/communities of different levels: household, city, region, state and the world. The boundary of each unit clarified what was inside and what was outside. Within each unit smaller segments of space were further divided into center and periphery; and various locations within this enclosed unit were further differentiated as superior and inferior according to their distances from the center and their directions from the center in terms of *yinyang* cosmology.

Ritual recognized this hierarchical order of space by assigning each place, location and direction specific symbolic meaning.[57] These symbolic meanings were closely associated with the ethical relationships existing within the spatial unit but were beyond the limitations of that unit, because within the same unit relationships varied due to the change of participants. To construct order and regulate the activities within a given space, ritual first needed to discern the current agenda and its agents in that space—that is, to understand what the event was and who the people involved were. For example, a family compound could be a place for family members' daily activities; but it could also

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[57] Chapter "Yi ji" in *Liji* reads: "The relation between ruler and minister was determined from a consideration of heaven being honorable and earth being mean. The positions of noble and mean were fixed with a reference to the heights and depths displayed by the surface (of the earth)," ritual was "framed after the distinctions between heaven and earth." (天尊地卑，君臣定矣。卑高已陳，貴賤位矣.... 如此，則禮者天地之別也). See *LJZY*, pp. 1094-5. Translation adapted from James Legge, *The Li Ki*, p. 103.

become a public place when a wedding or a funeral was held and guests from other clans came to attend. Once the agenda and agents were recognized, with reference to the symbolic meanings of each spatial component, ritual actualized the agenda by arranging spatial sequences of the event and by locating the participants in proper positions in accordance with their social hierarchy. The "Ritual of the Drinking Festivity in the Districts" (*xiang yin jiu li* 鄉飲酒禮) described in *Liji* provides a good example of this.

According to Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (127-200) commentary to *Liji*, the *xiang yin jiu li* was a ritual performed at local schools to manifest the idea of honoring the virtuous and the elderly. The details of the festival display a careful arrangement of spatial sequence and designate the proper locations for each participant. As seen in *Liji*, the ritual begins with a reception of guests outside the school gate. This is followed by a series of movements from outside to inside and by repeated bodily acts of bowing, ascending and descending: the host leads the guests in entering the gate; they bow to each other three times while walking to the steps; they yield precedent to the other three times before ascending the steps; they enter the hall, sitting at their proper locations; they descend the steps, take off their shoes, then ascend the steps, and sit properly again. In each sequence, the position of each person is deliberately assigned and their social roles match the symbolic meaning of the position. For example, in regard to the seating arrangement, *Liji* prescribes that the host should assign the guest a seat on the northwest while the host himself sits on the southeast. The reason for this is that the northwest represents the righteous *qi* of heaven and earth, and the host should seat the guest there in order to honor him, for the guest represents the treatment of others according to justice. Moreover,

because southeast represents the warm and genial *qi*, it is the place where the host sits since he represents the treatment of others according to benevolence and genial kindness.[58]

While the host and the guest are seated at the center of the hall, other participants in the festival are designated lower and circumambient locations: the musicians enter the hall to sing songs but are expected to descend from the hall after their performance is completed. The organists can only play below the hall. When all the music performances are completed, the musicians walk to the west steps, and stand there facing northeast until the ritual is completed.

In this arrangement of positions, ritual stratifies space so as to embody the social hierarchy. Space is organized by ritual in the same way as social relationships are normalized. The following passage from *Liji* demonstrates how ordering space and regulating the society are equalized by ritual:

> 目巧之室，則有奧阼，席則有上下，車則有左右，行則有隨，立則有序，古之義也。。。昔聖帝明王諸侯，辨貴賤、長幼、遠近、男女、外內，莫敢相逾越，皆由此涂出也。
> A house made by a good eye will yet have the corner of honor, and the steps on the east for the host to ascend by; every mat has its upper and lower end; every chariot has its right side and left; walkers follow one another, and those who stand observe a certain order—such were the right rules of antiquity.... Anciently the sage rulers and intelligent kings and lords, in making a distinction between noble and mean, old and young, remote and near, male and female, outside and inside, did not presume to allow any to transgress the regular rule they had to observe, but all proceeded in the part which has been indicated.[59]

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[58] See *LJZY*, p. 1630. Summary adopted from James Legge, *The Li Ki.*, pp. 437-8.

[59] *LJZY*, p. 1390. Translation modified from Legge, pp. 276-7.

In this equation, relationships became discernible by observing hierarchical spatial units determined by the ritual context. For example, according to *Liji*, Confucius mourned the dead in various places: the ancestral temple was the place to wail for brothers, outside of the temple was for friends of his father, the chamber was for his teacher, outside the door of the chamber was for friends, and the open country was the proper place to wail for an acquaintance.[60] According to this reference, ritual locations were determined by relationships among the participants and in return they became material parts of those relations.

In ritual's construction of spatial order for the purpose of affirming social relationships, the human body, which is the smallest spatial unit in traditional Chinese thought, is also regulated in order to facilitate the normalization of space.[61] In early ritual texts, great attention was paid to prescribe detailed rules for people's facial expressions, gestures, and actions in various ritual environments. For example, there are numerous instructions in early ritual texts on how to behave and act in a funeral ceremony, the most important ritual event to Confucians throughout Chinese history. As seen in the chapter "Ben sang" 奔喪 in *Liji*, the ritual of "hurrying to a funeral" was a complicated procedure of repeating bodily actions in selected places. Upon hearing the news of a

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[60] *LJZY*, P. 201. Another passage about funeral ritual in the text describes different locations for crying depending on the relationship between the person and the dead: "One hurrying to mourning rites, if they were for a parent, wailed when he looked towards the district; if they were for a relation for whom nine months' mourning was due, he wailed when he could see the gate of his house; if for one to whom five months' mourning was due, he wailed when he got to the door; if for one whom but three months' mourning was due, he wailed when he took his station." See Legge, *The Li Ki.*, p. 372. *LJZY*, p. 1532

[61] For the notion of the human body as the basic spatial unit, see Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China*, ibid.

parent's death, a filial son should first react with a cry before asking the reason for the death. The action of crying was repeated in his journey back home: traveling in a foreign state, he should cry only when he came across the border of the state, but he should keep crying once he sees the border of his home state. When he arrives at his home, he must enter it from the left side of the gate and ascend to the hall from the west steps (east steps were reserved for parents when they were alive). Sitting on the east side of the coffin, the filial son fully expresses his sorrow by crying. After this he ties his hair in a knot, bares his arms and goes down from the hall, standing on the east, where he cries towards the west. Having completed the leaping, he covers his arms and puts on his sash in the corridor on the east. In this procedure, the filial son is positioned in the east, a direction equated with superiority and authority. This arrangement symbolizes the son's heritage of his parent's status as the host of the household, but at the same time, he must demonstrate his sorrow by taking off his cap, stripping off his clothes, leaping and crying consistently. In other words, the chapter "Ben sang" gives strict details for a filial son on the performance appropriate for his body in each spatial unit during the whole course of preparation for the funeral.

In the above example, we see a very mechanical division of space and location and patterned display of actions. The body and bodily movements were highly codified by ritual and this codification was to a considerable level determined by the ritual function of space and the social status of the people involved. Chapter "Yu zao" 玉藻 in *Liji* provides good material to demonstrate this.

Concerning the rite of offering sacrifice in the ancestral temple, the chapter "Yu zao" gives rules on many specific bodily performances, including the way one should walk during this ritual event. According to the chapter, the ruler and the representative of the dead (*shi* 尸) should walk in step (君與尸接武), a Grand Minister should step along, one foot after the other (大夫繼武), a *shi* 士 should keep the length of his foot between his steps (士中武). Their speeds were different due to the differences in their social status and their significance in this ritual event. In addition to ancestral sacrifices, the chapter describes different styles of walking for other occasions and gives precise rules for each of them. For example, *duan xing* 端行 required one to walk erect while the chin projects forward like the eaves of a house and the advance is straight as an arrow. In the case of what is called "*bian xing*" 弁行, one must walk rapidly while the body has the appearance of rising constantly with an elevation of the feet. In addition to prescribing choreographed bodily movements, the chapter also regulates the demeanor appropriate to walking in different places: on the road the carriage of the body should be straight, in the ancestral temple it should be reverent and grave, in the court it should be exact and easy (行容惕惕，廟中齊齊，朝庭濟濟翔翔).[62] As for a gentleman, his demeanor and bodily movements must be strictly controlled:

> 君子之容舒遲，見所尊者齊。足容重，手容恭，目容端，口容止，聲容靜，頭容直，氣容肅，立容德，色容莊，坐如尸，燕居告溫溫。
> The carriage of a man of rank is easy, grave and reserved when he sees anyone whom he wishes to honor. He does not move his feet lightly, nor his hands irreverently. His eyes looks straightforward, and his mouth is kept quiet and

[62] *LJZY*, p. 925. Summary adopted from Legge, *The Li Ki.*, Vol. 28, p. 25.

> composed. No sound from him to break the stillness, and his head is carried upright. His breath come without panting or stoppage, and the way he stands gave an impression of virtue. His looks are grave, and he sits like a personator of the dead. When at leisure and at ease, and in conversation, he looks mild and bland.[63]

In this passage, the body of a gentleman must display a respectful air that is appropriate to his social status and his role in the ritual event. In addition to this, the chapter "Yu zao" also requires that the performing body of a gentleman exemplify his moral superiority:

> 立容辨，卑毋諂，頭頸必中，山立時行，盛氣顛實，揚休玉色。
> He [a gentleman] stands with an appearance of lowliness, but with no indication of subservience. His head roises straight up from the centre of the neck. He stands as firm as a mountain, and his movements are well timed. His body is well filled with the volume of his breath, which comes forth powerfully like that of nature. His complexion shows the beauty and strength of a piece of jade.[64]

From the above examples, we see that space was socialized to serve for ritual purposes; at the same time, the human body was equally socialized in order to manifest the ritual meanings of the space. Ritual carefully positiones the body, strictly controlles it and deliberately designes choreographic movements for it to construct and actualize order and display ritual value projected in social space. The body is thus ritualized as a spatial unit.

Interplaying socialized body: the notion of wei yi 威儀

In socializing the human body for the purpose of constructing order in space and society, ritual must deal with conflicts generated by class difference and social hierarchy.

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[63] See *LJZY*, p. 925. Translation modified from Legge, ibid., p.25.

[64] *LJZY*, PP. 926-7. Legge, *The Li Ki*, p. 26.

Ritual recognizes social conflicts and solves them by enforcing the acceptance of differentiated bodily demeanor among social groups. In other words, ritual attempts to create a harmonious society through the interplay of properly socialized bodies. It promotes a ritualized, awe-inspiring demeanor for the upper class while encouraging other social members to accept this dignified body as a manifestation of political authority. In early texts, *wei yi*, the awe-inspiring demeanor, best exemplifies the ritualized interplay of the social body. The following discussion examines closely the meaning and social function of *wei yi*.

The notion of creating an awe-inspiring demeanor, *wei yi* 威儀, first appeared in early texts as an indication of aristocratic identification. In two of the Wei 微 family vessels discovered in 1976 in Fufeng 扶風 County, Shannxi Province, Weibo 微伯, son of the famous Scribe Qiang (*shi qiang* 史墻), identifies his family with the duty of *wei yi*. In two bronze inscriptions Weibo mentions that his ancestors took charge of or helped the Yin 尹 clan to take charge of *wei yi* and thereby serve the previous kings (皇且考，司威義，用辟先王. 丕顯高祖、亞祖、文考，克明厥心，疋尹典厥威義，用辟先王).[65] In these records, the family merit of helping cultivate and sustain *wei yi* for generations serves to define the Wei clan's elite status. *Wei yi* in these bronze inscriptions appears to be a court ceremony and does not have any moral implication.

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[65] Zhou Fagao 周法高, *Sandai jijin wencun bu* 三代吉金文存補 (Taibei: Tailian guofeng she, 1980), pp. 103, 104. Cited from Yang Rubin, *Rujia shentiguan*, pp. 31-2.

The association of *wei yi* with aristocratic identification is most frequent in *Shijing* poems, especially those found in the *Ya* 雅 and *Song* 頌 sections of the text. Many of these songs are either descriptions of court banquets, admonitions directed to the Zhou kings or portrayals of virtuous ministers. In these songs *wei yi* is presented as an expected deportment of a noble and begins to carry moral meanings. For example, poem 256 ("Yi" 抑) says: "An outward demeanor, cautious and grave, is an indication of the inward virtue (抑抑威儀，維德之隅)."[66] Poem 253 ("Min lao" 民勞) also advises that a noble should be reverently careful in demeanor so as to cultivate associations with the virtuous (敬慎威儀，以近有德).[67] This connection of *wei yi* with inward virtue is further advocated in *Shijing* poems as a behavioral doctrine that was taught by the ancients. In poem 260 ("Zheng min" 烝民), the poet describes the virtues of the minister Zhong Shanfu 仲山甫 in the following:

> 仲山甫之德，
> 柔嘉維則，
> 令儀令色，
> 小心翼翼；
> 古訓是式，
> 威儀是力。
> 天子是若，
> 明命使賦。
> The virtue of Zhong Shanfu
> Is mild and admirable, according as it ought to be.
> Good is his deportment; good his looks;
> The lessons of antiquity are his law;
> He is strenuously attentive to his deportment.

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[66] Translation adopted from James Legge, *The She King* (Taibei: Wenzhi chubanshe, 1981), p. 406.

[67] See Legge, ibid., p. 396.

In full accord with the Son of Heaven,
He is employed to spread abroad his bright decrees.[68]

In this poem, Zhong Shanfu is praised as a virtuous minister who austerely controls his body and behaviors in accordance with the rule of *wei yi* and consequently reveals himself as a qualified minister of the king. The merit of Zhong Shanfu, as admired by the poet, lies in his exemplary demeanor refined by the principle of *wei yi*.

Indeed, in many *Shijing* poems *wei yi*, a demeanor originally identifying aristocratic status, is transformed into a political symbol. It carries the power of governance by displaying an authoritative deportment that is to be taken as an example for the rest of the society to imitate. The *Shijing* poems "Yi" (#256) and "Pan shui"泮水 (#299) thus admonish the nobles to be reverent in their outward demeanor because it will become a pattern for the people (敬慎威儀，維民之則).[69]

Undoubtedly, the moral implications of *wei yi* contribute greatly to its political effect. In this integration of moral significance with political symbolism in such a bodily performance, we see a transformation of *wei yi* from a signifier of class to a concept meaningful for ritual discourse. Many discussions of *wei yi* in early ritual texts continue this understanding of *wei yi* as both moral demonstration and political method, which is implied in *Shijing* poems.

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[68] Translation modified from James Legge, ibid., p. 428.

[69] See James Legge, *The She King*, pp. 406, 484.

A passage in the chapter "Yue ji" 樂記 in *Liji* provides a good theoretical explanation of the dual powers of *wei yi*. In discussing the difference between music and ritual, a passage in this chapter makes the following argument:

> 致禮以治躬則莊敬，莊敬則嚴威。心中斯須不和不樂，而鄙詐之心入之矣。外貌斯須不莊不敬，而易慢之心入之矣。故樂也者，動於內者也；禮也者，動於外者也。樂極和，禮極順，內和而外順，則民瞻其顏色而弗與爭也；望其容貌，而民不生易慢焉。故德輝動於內，而民莫不承聽；理發諸外，而民莫不承順。
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> When one has mastered completely the principle of ritual so as to regulate his body accordingly, he becomes grave and reverential. Grave and reverential, he comes to be regarded with awe. If the heart for a moment is without the feeling of harmony and joy, meanness and deceitfulness enter it. If the outward demeanor is for a moment without gravity and respectfulness, indifference and rudeness show themselves. Therefore the sphere in which music acts is the interior of man, and that of ritual is his exterior. The result of music is a perfect harmony, and that of ritual a perfect observance of propriety. When one's inner man is harmonious, and his outer man thus docile, the people behold his countenance and do not contend with him; they look to his demeanor, and no feeling of indifference or rudeness arises in them. Thus it is that when virtue shines and acts within a superior, the people are sure to accept his rule, and hearken to him; and when the principles of propriety are displayed in his conduct, the people are sure in the same way to accept and obey him.[70]

This passage begins with a strong declaration of the power of ritual in dignifying one's body. It articulates the principle that ritual generates a grave and reverential appearance and enables one to make an awe-inspiring impression. Such an impression is only possible when one's inner heart is harmonized by music and his external appearance is refined by ritual. According to the passage above, the power of music lies in creating a harmonious state while that of ritual is *shun*, a word that denotes multiple meanings such as "to follow," "to submit," and "to obey." *Shun* also means to be agreeable, indicating

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[70] *LJZY*, PP. 1140-1. James Legge, *The Li Ki*, Vol. 28. pp. 125-6.

strongly the feeling of acceptance. These meanings of obedience and acceptance, which are conveyed by the word *shun,* are confirmed by the *Liji* passage: when people observe the dignified demeanor of a gentleman they perceive his virtuous inner heart, accept his moral authority and abandon their own desire to contend. Therefore the passage concludes that when a gentleman's virtue is illuminated by his external demeanor people will heed and obey him.

There are two important notions in the quotation above that deserve closer examination. The first is the belief in a physical manifestation of inward virtue, the idea that a gentleman's *de* 德 will infuse his face. Here we see a clear influence from Mengzi, who maintains that virtue will be materialized in a gentleman's physical appearance. The second concerns the sentence "*li fa zhu wai*" 理發諸外 ("the principles of propriety are displayed in his conduct"). The word *li* 理 contains such variant meanings as "reason" and "principle." What is interesting is that the Han scholar Zheng Xuan interprets the word here as referring solely to "the advance and retreat of deportment" (理，容貌之進止也).[71] If we consider the whole passage together, it is clear that Zheng Xuan explains ritual to be closely related to bodily movement and demeanor.

Moreover, Zheng Xuan also adopts Mengzi's idea of a corporalized virtue when he renders the word *de hui* 德煇 as a sleek color (德煇，顏色潤澤也).[72] As Mengzi

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[71] *LJZY*, p. 1140.

[72] Ibid.

proclaims, "What is within someone will be shown without" (有諸內，必形諸外).[73] From this perspective, both the *Liji* passage and Zheng Xuan's commentary teach the same lesson—that is, they both claim a dignified demeanor is a manifestation of the great virtue of superior men and treat it as evidence of their natural leadership. As for the people, both the passage and the commentary suggest that they understand this to be a physical manifestation of the greater morality of a superior man and then accept his political authority just as they accept his moral superiority.

This treatment of *wei yi* as an important part of ritual and an indication of political authority is also evident in a *Zuo zhuan* passage. In Duke Cheng 成公 13. 2, Marquis Liu (劉子) gives the following comments:

> 吾聞之：民受天地之中以生，是以有動作禮義威儀之則，以定命也。 能者養之以之福，不能者敗以取禍。是故君子勤禮，小人盡力。
> I have heard that people receive the harmonious *qi* between heaven and earth and conceive life, this is called destiny. For this reason there are rules for actions, rites and *wei yi* to secure their destinies. The able men cultivate these destinies and find ways to fortune; yet the unable men ruin these destinies and receive disaster. Thereupon a gentleman is austere in practicing ritual but a common man in action.[74]

The word *wei yi* in this paragraph is clearly associated with the *junzi*. Considering the context in which Liuzi's comments are made, *junzi* must refer to the ruling class of the state. For them, *wei yi* is a part of their destined authority and carries with it the requirement that they must be austere in the performance of ritual.

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[73] Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu*, p. 284.

[74] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, pp. 860, and 861.

Probably the clearest instruction concerning *wei yi* is presented in Duke Xiang 襄公 31.13 of *Zuo zhuan*. After observing the *wei yi* of the Chu 楚 prime minister Wei 圍, Beigong Wenzi 北宮文子 delivers the following comments:

> 公曰：「善哉！何謂威儀？」對曰：「有威而可畏謂之威，有儀而可象謂之儀。君有君之威儀，其臣畏而愛之，則而象之，故能有其國家，令聞長世。臣有臣之 威儀，其下畏而愛之，故能守其官職，保族宜家。順是以下皆如是，是以上下能相固也。衛詩曰：『威儀棣棣，不可選也』，言君臣、上下、父子、兄弟、內外、大小皆有威儀也……故君子在位可畏，施舍可愛，進退可度，周旋可則，容止可觀，作事可法，德行可 象，聲氣可樂；動作有文，言語有章，以臨其下，謂之有威儀也。
> The Duke [of Wei] said, "Excellent! What is *wei yi*?" [Biegong Wenzi] replied, "To have the dignity that is awe-inspiring is called *wei*; to have the demeanor that is imitable is called *yi*. A ruler should have a ruler's *wei yi*, for which his ministers revere him and love him. They will take it as a model and imitate it, and thus the ruler is able to possess his state and make his reputation last over generations. A minister should have a minister's *wei yi*, for which his subordinates will revere and love him. He thus is able to preserve his office, protect his clan and benefit his family. Those who are inferior to a minister should all follow this, for by this the relationship between superior and inferior can be solidified. A poem of Wei says, "My deportment is dignified and peaceful and my dignities are too many to be counted." This is to say that whether it is the relationship between ruler and minister between superior and inferior, between father and son, between older and younger brothers, between insider and outsider, or between the important and the insignificant, there is *wei yi* for each of them.... Thereupon a gentleman is reverent when he is in his office, is admirable when he bestows, is measured when he advances or retreats, is imitatable when he moves, and his appearance and demeanor are observable, deeds can be followed, virtues can be modeled, sound and voice are joyful, his actions are patterned and words are orderly—using these to govern his subjects is called having *wei yi*. [75]

There are several important concepts conveyed in the above *Zuo zhuan* text. The first is that *wei yi* serves as a principle for the people to follow. Beigong Wenzi twice cites the *Shijing* sentence "be reverent in outward demeanor because it will become a pattern for

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[75] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, pp. 1194-5.

the people (敬慎威儀，維民之則)." Second, not only does *wei yi* cause the people to revere the ruler, but it also makes people emotionally and behaviorally attached to him. They feel grateful to him and are delighted by him. They observe and imitate his movements and actions. *Wei yi* therefore becomes a controlling force by which a collective behavioral normalization can be carried out. In this sense, *wei yi* consolidates the social hierarchy by setting up the superiors' dignified bodily demeanor as the example for all the inferiors to take as a model. Social harmony is therefore achieved when this bodily display of hierarchy is accepted, admired and found desirable by the people.

The *Zuo zhuan* passage explicitly states that in each social relationship, no matter whether it is between a ruler and minister, a father and son, or a superior and inferior, there is a proper *wei yi* for each person to follow. As the chapter "Qu li" 曲禮 explains, the demeanor of the Son of Heaven should be characterized by majesty; that of the lords, by gravity; that of the ministers, by a regulated composure; that of the officers, by an easy and rhythmic step; and that of the common people, by simplicity and humility (天子穆穆，諸侯皇皇，大夫濟濟，士蹌蹌，庶人僬僬).[76] Thus the demeanor of people in different social groups varies accordingly. Even in the case of a single person, deportment should change according to the nature of his relationship with others. According to Xunzi, when a scholar or a gentleman plays the role of a father or an elder brother, his demeanor should be relaxed, dignified, grave, inspiring, correct but

[76] *LJZY*, p. 146. James Legge,*The Li Ki*, Vol. 27, p. 112.

comfortable to be around, noble and imposing, broad-minded, enlightened, and calmly at ease (其容良，儼然，壯然，祺然，薆然，恢恢然，廣廣然，昭昭然，蕩蕩然，是父兄之容也); however, when he plays the role of a son or a younger brother, his demeanor should be attentive, temperate, confident, helpful, honest, constantly striving, respectful, exemplary, and unassuming (其容悫；儉然，恪然，輔然，端然，訾然，洞然，綴綴然，瞀瞀然，是子弟之容也).[77]

In *Xunzi*, what is elsewhere called "dignified demeanor" is labeled *rong*, a word denoting a strong sense of decorated appearance, codified gesture, or public performance. It is no doubt that these decent demeanors are exaggerated by Xunzi in a way that makes them appear more like lofty ideals rather than actual norms of conduct. This might also be true of the duty of Baoshi 保氏 as reported in *Zhou li* 周禮, which includes teaching sons of the king six kinds of demeanor: that in sacrifice, in receiving guests, in court, in funeral, among the troops and in driving a carriage (教國子六儀：一曰祭禮之容，二曰賓客之容，三曰朝廷之容，四曰喪紀之容，五曰軍旅之容，六曰車馬之容).[78]

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[77] See *Xunzi xinzhu*, ibid., chapter "Fei shi'er zi" 非十二子, p. 74. Knoblock, *Xunzi.*, Vol. 1, p. 228.

[78] See Lin Yin 林尹 annotates, *Zhouli jinzhu jinyi* 周禮今註今譯 (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), p. 139. The relationship between *rong* and *li* 禮 deserves serious scholarly attention. *Rong* frequently appears in early ritual texts but it is uncertain as whether it just remained at theoretical level or it was actually performed. It is also unclear how did the idea of *rong* participated in the development of ritual discourse in early China. It seems that in the early period in western Han *rong* was separated from the scholarly concept of *li*. As reported in chapter "Rulin zhuan" 儒林傳 in *Shiji*, a certain Confucian scholar Xu 徐生 from Lu 魯 was good at acting *rong* (善為容). He was appointed grand minister of *li* in Emperor Wen's era. His grandson Xu Xiang 徐襄 was also good at acting *rong* due to his looks but he could not master *Li jing* (其姿善為容，不能通《禮經》). See *Shiji* 121: 3126.

Despite the question of how real these ritual requirements might be, the idea expressed in these writings is clear: in any social context there is a specified conduct for all members of society. One must understand the relationship in which he engages and adjust his action to be acceptable to society. In other words, a hierarchical social network is constructed and stabilized by performing normalized bodily actions. The body is thus trained by ritual in order to meet social expectations. But there is a symbiosis here, for just as the body is trained by ritual, so ritual in an important way constitutes the body. From this perspective, ritual texts are instructions concerning bodily movements and their value is realized by the trained body.

Embodying Ritual

The "Xiang dang" chapter in Analects

The above discussions lead to the issue of the practical value of ritual texts. In competing with other philosophical teachings and doctrines, Confucian ritualists do not only advocate *li* at the theoretical level. In order to promote ritual as the most authoritative principle that governs every aspect of human society, ritual texts must serve as a guide or a manual in which the norms for doing things can be found. This is to say, ritual needs to be practiced and ritual texts should function as handbooks to teach the people the art of embodying ritual. It is in this regard that chapter ten of *Analects*, "Xiang dang" 鄉黨, finds its significance.

In many ways this chapter is different from the rest of the *Analects*. It does not contain oral teaching from Confucius nor is it composed of exchanges between the

master and his disciples. Its descriptive but injunctive language and the implied subject of Confucius leads some scholars to question the authenticity of the chapter, especially since it contains descriptions that parallel other early ritual texts. Arthur Waley reflects this skepticism and concludes that the chapter is "a compilation of maxims from works on ritual" and does not belong to the rest of the book.[79]

Probably because of the canonical status of *Analects*, traditional commentators nevertheless maintained the integrity of the text. In defending the reliability of all chapters, they explain the chapter "Xiang dang" as truthful observations of Confucius' daily ritual activities recorded by his disciples. Traditional commentators argue that the effort of consistently realizing one's belief and principle is the true teaching of Confucius; the chapter "Xiang dang" faithfully demonstrates this Confucian doctrine. Whatever opinion we hold on the date and ultimate authenticity of this chapter of *Analects*, there is no doubt that it reflects the same attitudes toward ritual and its bodily expression that we have seen in the texts examined above.

A close examination of the chapter agrees with the traditional commentarial view. Although descriptions of Confucius in the chapter are diverse, readers can still organize them by content. Bruce Brooks suggests that these descriptions can be divided into four categories: those about public occasions, about clothing and food, about visits and gifts and about the master's private behavior.[80] Brooks' division is clear but not very convincing, for clothing, food, visits and gifts would be matters of both public occasion

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[79] Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 21.

[80] See *Confucius and the Analects*, edited by Bryan Van Norden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 188.

and private life. In fact, what bring the passages together are two issues: the exemplary deeds and speeches of the master. The chapter pays great attention to how Confucius acts and it presents his actions as the real life demonstration of a true ritual master. No matter on what occasion, the Confucius in this chapter displays the virtues of timeliness and appropriateness by handling his body with great elegance. When receiving a guest, Confucius' countenance was grave and serious and his steps hastened. When bowing, his robes remained perfectly arrayed. When he moved quickly, his gesture resembled wings gliding.[81] In private life, his demeanor was perfectly controlled. He never talked while eating, did not sit if the mat was not correctly placed, and he did not sleep like a corpse.[82]

In reading these descriptions, we are introduced to a different Confucius. The images of Confucius as seen in other chapters portray a frustrated politician, a devoted scholar, an amiable teacher, and a person whose strong personality and weaknesses were equally revealed. Nevertheless, the Confucius in chapter ten is a ritualist who trains himself austerely. His speech and attire are appropriate to the requirements of the social situations, no matter at court or at home, his actions are always flawless for public scrutiny, and his demeanor is symbolically profound. His body is perfectly ritualized so that embodies his teachings imparted throughout *Analects*. Compiled at the end of the "Shang lun" 上論 section, the first ten chapters that are traditionally believed to be the earliest layer of the book, the chapter "Xiang dang" function, in Slingerland's words, as a "capstone" and suggests the importance of embodying ritual in the teaching of

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[81] See Slingerland's translation, *Confucius Analects*, pp. 98-9.

[82] Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, 10.10, 10.12, 10.24, pp. 111, 113.

Confucius.[83] The chapter serves as a handbook for those who admire the master and desire to imitate him, to train their own bodies and to improve themselves as social beings.

Ritual texts as manuals

This pedagogical function of the "Xiang dang" chapter also characterizes the Warring States and Han ritual texts. To their core, these ritual texts were compiled as manuals for the use in the real political and ethical world, as well as being blueprints for the creation of an ideal society. Among the three major ritual texts, *Zhouli* 周禮, *Yili* 儀禮 and *Liji*, which were finalized during the Han but contain large amounts of Warring States material, this instructional function is most clearly demonstrated in the first two—*Zhouli* and *Yili*.[84] Five of the six extant sections in *Zhouli* are definitions of various governmental offices and descriptions of their duties. Its systematic structure and detailed explanations of the names, organization, and responsibilities of government offices at all levels make the book appear as a sort of constitution for an ideal state. A similar attribute is also seen in the content and structure of *Yili*, which is comprised of comprehensive descriptions of ritual ceremonies of the *shi* 士 class. The seventeen chapters in *Yili* cover ceremonial rules from capping rites (*shi guan li* 士冠禮) and marriage rites (*shi hun li* 士昏禮) to funeral and sacrificial rites (*shi sang li* 士喪禮 and *shaolao kuishi li* 少牢饋

[83] See Slingerland, introduction to chapter 10, p. 98.

[84] In his recent book, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC)*, Lothar von Falkenhausen describes *Zhouli* as "one of the three ritual compendia in the Confucian classical canon; compiled in the fourth and third centuries BC, partly based on earlier records." See *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC)* (Los Angles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006), p. 554.

食禮). These were presumably compiled together as a handbook for the ritual practices of the *shi* class.

In comparison with these two other texts *Liji* lacks a systematic structure and its contents are miscellaneous and styles diverse.[85] However, it contains records of numerous ritual rules that might have been followed and practiced in different periods in early time.[86] From this perspective *Liji* might be valuable for its preservation of raw ritual materials and its encyclopedic collection of ritual discourse, prescriptions and anecdotes. This unpolished, documentary nature of *Liji* is most evident in its first chapter, entitled "Quli" 曲禮.[87]

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[85] In an effort to systematize the text, Liu Xiang 劉向 (?77-6 BCE) divides the 49 chapters into nine categories such as "Weights and Measures" (*zhidu* 制度, "Comprehensive Discussions" (*tonglun* 通論) and "Auspicious Affairs" (*jishi* 吉事). This categorization is problematic because of the uncertainty of the dividing principle. Sometimes Liu Xing categorizes a chapter by its content, but sometimes he labels other chapters by style. For a criticism of Liu Xiang, see Yang Tianyu's 楊天宇 *Liji yizhu* 禮記譯註 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), "Introduction," pp. 15-7.

[86] The Tang scholar Lu Deming 陸德明 believes that *Liji* reports what have been left by *Zhouli* and *Yili*. He thus considers the passages in *Liji* as raw ritual materials. See *LJZY*, p. 1.

[87] The chapter is titled by the first two characters that appear in the first paragraph. The word *quli* also appears in the chapter "Liqi" 禮器, which writes that "the principles of ritual are three hundreds in number; the items of ritual are three thousands in number (經禮三百，曲禮三千)." The interpretation of *jingli* and *quli* is problematic, because both words can refer to a text. It seems in chapter one the word *quli* refers to an ancient text and the lengthy remainder of the chapter could be contents cited from this ancient book. Some scholars associate this ancient book with the Han scholar Hou Cang 后蒼's *Qutai ji* 曲臺記 (also named *Qutai Hou Cang* 曲臺后蒼). See Jeffrey Riegel's introduction to *Liji* in Michael Loewe ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, 1993), p. 296; Yang Tianyu, ibid., p. 1.

Despite the complicated nature of the chapter, "Quli" contains, in its fragmentary passages, comprehensive presentations of ritual activities.[88] It also contains ritual instructions that are not specifically targeted at specific social groups or social occasions. In this it stands in contrast to *Zhouli,* which describes a mainly bureaucratic system, and *Yili*, which is strongly oriented to the *shi* class. Moreover, the descriptions in "Quli" reveal a strong pedagogical sense. Similar to what we encounter in chapter "Xiang dang," these descriptions promote the idea of ritualization by means of bodily training. When putting these scattered passages together, we found this chapter is largely composed of manuals of ritual performance.

To demonstrate this, we shall examine closely some passages in this chapter. Following several brief opening discussions of the importance of ritual, paragraphs thirteen to twenty-eight are mostly instructions for daily ritual activities that can be categorized in what Zheng Xuan called *jiali* 嘉禮 (Auspicious Ceremonies). Paragraphs thirteen to seventeen are behavior and clothing regulations for a son, including a son of a very young age. Paragraph eighteen is about the proper demeanor a student shows to his teacher when they are traveling. This is followed by a segment of rules concerning when

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[88] "Quli" contains 104 entries that are miscellaneous and unrelated to each other. From the Eastern Han period scholars have tried to explain why these ostensibly unrelated passages were put together in a single chapter and have attempted to organize them into reasonable categories. Zheng Xuan argued that the chapter contains passages relating to the traditional five ceremonies: *jili* 吉禮 (auspicious ceremonies), *xiongli* (inauspicious ceremonies), *binli* (the rites of hospitality), *junli* (the rites of war) and *jiali* (festival ceremonies). Zheng Xuan's theory was accepted by all traditional commentators. However if we examine the "Quli" paragraphs carefully Zheng Xuan's divisions are still problematic, because in this chapter there are many discussions of the value of ritual and numerous regulations do not belong to any of the five rites. Probably we should treat the chapter as a primary collection of various ritual materials completed by different hands. The passages in this chapter thus can be divided into two major categories: theoretical argumentations about ritual and instructions on specific ritual behaviors. For Zhuang Xuan's theory, see *LJZY*, p. 6.

a person should or should not speak with a loud voice. The correct manner of entering a room is described in paragraph twenty and is followed by another fragment concerning how a *shi* official should enter his ruler's house. This switch to a court setting is continued in paragraph twenty-three, which contains rules of official gift exchange, but is then interrupted by paragraph twenty-two relating the rules of receiving guests. Paragraphs twenty-four, twenty-six, twenty-seven and twenty-eight introduce the rules for sitting in attendance before a teacher, a gentleman or a senior. Finally, paragraph twenty-five is about correct manners at a banquet.[89]

There are several dominating characteristics found in these seemingly random paragraphs. The first characteristic one notices is the comprehensiveness of the ritual matters with which these paragraphs deal. The prescriptions summarized above cover almost all social relationships (between father and son, ruler and minister, student and teacher, young and old and host and guest) and occasions (at home, on the road, receiving guests, attending teachers and elders, walking, eating, and speaking). Since people all live in society and are part of the overall social network, ritual applies to everyone regardless of age or sex. For example, paragraph seventeen prescribes that a young boy must stand straight and square, and not incline his head when listening. When an older is holding him by the hand, he should hold the elder's hand with both his hands. When the elder is speaking to him with the side of his face bent down, he should cover his mouth with his hand in answering.[90]

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[89] These paragraphs are numbered by their sequence in *LJZY*.

[90] Summary cited from James Legge, *The Li Ki*, Vol. 27, p. 70. See also *LJZY*, pp. 32-3.

In the above paragraph, bodily gestures between the elder and the child are of important symbolic meaning. When the elder offers his hand to the child, he is accepting the child as a member of the family or the society at large, and thereby shows him affection. In order to honor this acceptance the child must hold the elder's hand with both his hands. The bodily gesture of the child on this occasion directly expresses his respect and appreciation to the elder; and his desire to be accepted is clearly manifested by using both hands. In addition to this, his willingness to join the relationship and subordinate himself to the elder is explicitly demonstrated by the action of covering his mouth. The child should control his body, in this case his breath, to avoid offending the elder and to make himself an acceptable part of the elder/child relationship.

In reading the above prescriptions, traditional commentators emphasize a related message that is conveyed by this paragraph. According to Zheng Xuan, the prescriptions for the child's behaviors—standing straight, holding the elder with both hands and covering his mouth—are for the child to *xi* 習 how to interact with the elder.[91] The word *xi* denotes learning and practicing and it suggests strongly the sense of training. In other words, the child has to repeatedly train his body through learning and practicing in order to be accepted.

This discussion leads to the second characteristic found in these paragraphs: they contain detailed rules on training the body for ritual purposes. For example, paragraph eighteen instructs that when a student meets his teacher on a road, he should

[91] Zheng Xuan comments that to let a child stand straight is to train his own dignity, to require a child to hold in both hands is to train him from a young age how to assist and take care of an elder, to prescribe a child to cover his mouth is to train him hold his breath in front of an elder. See *LIZY*, pp. 32-3.

hasten forward to him and stand with his hands joined across his breast. When in the company of an elder, he must keep his face towards the direction in which the elder himself is looking. In addition to this, paragraph twenty-eight requires that when a young person is leaving from attending an elder he should kneel down, take up his shoes, move them to one side, turn his face towards the elder, stand by his shoes, then kneel again, and then after moving away from the elder some distance, stoop down and then put his shoes on.[92] A young person, following this complicated and subtle procedure, is thus trained to ritually perform his subordinate status by removing and bending his body in front of a superior.

Observing the detailed prescriptions contained in these paragraphs, one notices that numerous rules are designed to teach how to control the body for the subordinates, whether they are students, descendants, or youngsters. The "Quli" chapter, as well as other portions of *Liji* and other ritual texts, lists many bodily prohibitions for the subordinates in order to maintain the hierarchical social relationships in a ritual context. For example, paragraph twenty-seven teaches that when one is sitting in attendance on a superior, one should not listen with the head inclined to one side (毋側聽), nor hold the body in a slouching position (毋怠荒); he should not saunter about with a haughty gait (游毋倨), stand with one foot raised (立毋跛), nor should he sit with his knees wide apart

[92] Summary adopted from James Legge, *The Li Ki*, Vol. 27, p. 70. See also *LJZY*, pp. 35, 50.

(坐毋箕).[93] These bodily prohibitions are also strictly applied to women. The chapter "Neize" 內則 gives the following instructions:

> 在父母舅姑之所，有命之，應"唯"， 敬對，進退，周旋慎齊。升降、出入、揖游不敢噦、噫、嚏、咳、欠、伸、跛、倚、睇視、不敢唾、洟。寒不敢襲，癢不敢搔。
> When with parents, [a wife] should immediately respond and reverently proceed to do whatever she is ordered to do. In going forwards or backwards or turning round, she should be careful and grave; while going out or coming in, while bowing or walking, she should not presume to eructate, sneeze, or cough, to yawn or stretch herself, to stand on one foot, or to lean against anything, or to look askance. She should not dare to spit or snivel, nor, if it be cold, to put on more clothes, nor, if she itch anywhere, to scratch herself.[94]

What is striking in the above passage is the emphasis upon rigorous control of the body. The thirteen actions prohibited above are indeed instinctual behaviors. By forbidding these natural human actions, ritual transforms people from biological beings into social beings. For this purpose, ritual texts teach people what to do and what not to do. The "Neize" passage, for example, is in fact a training list for a wife to follow, and at the same time it is also a check list for the parents and others to judge her.

This pedagogical function of ritual texts is designed to establish proper social relationships by normalizing the body. It eliminates unacceptable bodily actions to ensure people's right to social participation.[95] It regards the body as the embodiment of ritual

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[93] James Legge, *The Li Ki*, p. 76. *LJZY*, p. 48.

[94] Translation modified from James Legge, ibid., Vol. 27, p.453. See also *LJZY*, p. 835.

[95] Paragraph 19 in chapter "Quli" describes that when a person is about go up to the hall of a house, he must raise his voice. When about to enter the door he must keep his head low and his eyes cast down. The purpose of raising the voice is to announce his arrival to the people inside the hall. He thus requests by voice his participating in the relationships in the hall and avoids to be considered an intruder. By lowering his head, he humbly and ritually displays his status as a newcomer to the already established relations in the hall. His voice and bodily gesture are thus ritualized to ensure his acceptance. See *LJZY*, p. 36.

and accordingly determines a person's acceptability to society. In other words, the body must be disciplined in order to be accepted. Moreover, this training of the body, as reflected in ritual texts, does not distinguish ritual between public and private ritual environments. Rather, it deconstructs private space and treats all individual activities as public presentations. In the "Quli" paragraphs discussed above, many prescriptions concern ostensibly trivial matters that occur in private, familial settings, but people's behaviors in these environments are still highly regulated as if they are performances in a public ceremony. Indeed, early ritual discussions are especially cautious about people's private behaviors and argue explicitly the necessity of self-ritualization. For example, the "Daxue" 大學 chapter of *Liji* repeatedly warns a gentleman to be watchful over his behavior when he is alone (君子必慎其獨). He must act as if he is under consistent public observation and judgment, as Zengzi 曾子 laments, "What ten eyes behold, what ten hands point to, is to be regarded with reverence [when a gentleman is alone]" 十目所視，十手所指，其嚴乎).[96] In other words, a gentleman has to keep regulating his behavior no matter when and where he is because his body is no longer an individual's body, it has become a social subject. Ritual thus destructs the boundary between public and private and prescribes obligatory rules for one to refashion himself into an acceptable social member.

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[96] *LJZY*, p. 1593.

Conclusion

Ritual, *li*, was a major concern in Confucian thought. Early Confucian philosophers Confucius, Mengzi, and Xunzi all advocated the social importance of ritual. Although these three Confucian masters presented different understandings of *li*, they nevertheless all treated the body as an important issue in their ritual discussions. Different from Western emphasis upon the physical features of the body in ritual activities, early Confucian ritual thought attempted to erase the physicality of the body and to transform the body into being a meaningful social member that could be trained to demonstrate social relationships. The body was thus conceptualized as performative and its movement to be normalized.

Warring States and Han ritual texts continued the early philosophical conceptualization of the body. In *Liji*, ritual was further discussed with clear reference to the body, that is, in terms of whether ritual is internal emotion or external demeanor. In addition to the theoretical discussions, the practability of *li* formed another major concern of early Confucian ritualists. To them, ritual as a moral guide required a system to direct individual behaviors for the purpose of maintaining social stability. Because of this, bodily movements were codified by ritual in order to carry out symbolic meanings indispensable to stabilizing and regulating social relationships. For this reason, *Huainanzi* concludes that ritual means the body.

The ritualization of the body took it first step by treating the body as a spatial unit. Ritual texts show a strong awareness of space as stratified units that construct, as well as resemble, the hierarchical structure of the society. Ritual as a moral guide

projected symbolic meanings to spatial units, including the basic unit, the human body, and integrated them with ethical rules in human relationships. Again, the bodily movements were choreographed so as to facilitate and manifest the normalized social/spatial order; at the same time, the normalized body, demonstrated by its codified deportment, became acceptable to society.

It is in this sense ritual texts functioned as manuals for individual behavior in social contexts. The earliest handbook of this type was probably chapter ten, the "Xiangdang" chapter, in *Analects*. Although the descriptions in this chapter are probably late representations of Confucius, the purpose of including them in the text is clear: they were collected as demonstrations of exemplary deeds performed by the ritual master, Confucius, and they were meant to be imitated and followed.

Such a pedagogical function of ritual texts was designed to discipline the body for the purpose of social acceptance. In doing so, it eliminated unacceptable bodily actions to ensure that interactions between people would be predictable and, consequently, stable. As behavioral guides, ritual texts were comprehensive in the sense that they treated the body completely as a social subject. The training of the body, as reflected in ritual texts, did not distinguish ritual environments as public or private. Instead, it deconstructed private space and conceptualized all individual activities as public presentation. In other words, ritual texts attempted to train the body to be an embodiment of ritual in any time and place.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The body was an important concept in early China that integrated early Chinese natural philosophy and sociopolitical thoughts. In the discussions of the body produced from Warring States to Han times, the body was never simply understood as a medical substance separated from the political and social world. Instead, it was politicized and ritualized, serving both as a metaphor and a tool for political needs, as well as functioning as a basic unit for the maintenance of a hierarchical society.

The political conceptualization and social use of the body unfolded in many different ways in early China. Physiognomy, a technique of bodily divination, read the body for political purposes. In pre-Qin China, physical features of the body were interpreted by a gradually systemized physiognomic knowledge in order to address political problems of the state and alleviate individual anxiety generated by social mobility. In Han China, this political reading of the body became prevalent when it connected the Han imperial body with political legitimacy, transformed female body into a form of political investment and became deeply involved in the selection of Han officials.

This political reading of the body stimulated philosophical responses from the pre-Qin to the Han. Warring State philosophers such as Mengzi and Xunzi criticized the

use of physiognomy and attempted to replace its power in the political world by promoting a politics based upon ethics. However, because physiognomy still exercised its strong influence in Han society, Han thinkers focused their interest upon how to philosophize and systemize it. Dong Zhongshu linked bodily theory to the notion of the mandate of heaven and extended his philosophy of *tian* to the individual realm by arguing that a heavenly bestowed fate left physical marks upon the human body. Wang Chong and Wang Fu continued Dong Zhongshu's adoption of physiognomy and made efforts to synthesize and systemize previous scattered physiognomic discussions in their philosophical writings.

As an important period to the development of Chinese physiognomy, the Warring States and Han times were valued as a crucial time during which Chinese political thought grew. A tendency towards political centralization and consolidation from late Warring States to early Han made the concerns of state structure and the ruler-minister relationship become dominant in the mind of political thinkers of this time. The body, in this transitional time, was used as an important metaphor in political discussions. The hierarchical relationship between the heart and other bodily parts was used to describe proper relationship between the ruler and ministers as the authority of the ruler and the restraint of his power weighted equally heavy. Consequently, symbolic meanings of the ruler's body were highlighted; his body was mystified and reduplicated in order to argue for his political legitimacy. As the same time, the indispensable role of the ministers to the state was made clear by highlighting the indispensable function of internal organs and limbs to the body.

As generally agreed, morality formed the foundation of traditional Chinese political thought. In early Chinese political discussions, the body was used to evaluate the ethical quality of politics. The different treatment of the people's body in early records testified to the ethical nature of the state, virtually indicating the legitimacy of the rulership. This ethical meaning of the body, which remained largely on a theoretical level in Warring States philosophy, was institutionalized by Han government, as demonstrated by Han military documents found in its border area. In addition to this adoption and systemization of earlier bodily theories, the perception of the body was also utilized by the Han government in its policy making, especially in shaping its foreign relationship with the Xiongnu nomadic people.

In addition to serving as a political metaphor, the body had also become an important social concept in early China through the process of ritualization. As a major issue in Confucian teachings, ritual and its social significance were advocated by Confucius, Mengzi and Xunzi. These three Confucian philosophers all emphasized the role of the body in ritual practice. In their discussions of ritual, the body was conceptualized as performative and its movement needed to be normalized. Such a understanding of the performative body in ritual context was continued by late Warring States and Han ritualists. The regulated body was indispensable to maintaining social stability. Bodily movements were ritualized in order to make interaction between different social groups predictable and practicable. The choreographed bodily movements thus facilitated and manifested the normalized social order, the ultimate goal of ritual, and trained the body to be acceptable to the society at the same time.

Because of this, ritual texts functioned as manuals for individual behaviors in social context. They were designed to discipline the body in a comprehensive way for the purpose of social acceptance. That is, ritual texts deconstructed private space and treated all individual activities as public presentations. The body was thus trained by ritual to become a qualified social member in all social circumstances to sustain the hierarchical social order.

The political conceptualization and social function of the body in early China is a complicated topic. In many ways this present dissertation is a primary study. There are many other issues that require further investigations. One of these issues is how the body participated in the Confucian discourse of filial piety and what the social meanings of bodily mutilation were. In addition to this, a comparative study of the conceptualization of the body in the early Chinese tradition and in the Western tradition would be most welcome. All in all, I hope this present study demonstrates the significance of the issue of the body in the study of early Chinese philosophy, politics and society.

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