

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HUMAN BODY

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The smallest unit through which the early Chinese ordered their world was the body, including its physical and mental aspects. All peoples reveal much of themselves in methods of training their bodies, explanations of their workings, and applications of these to images of the world. Consequently, the body's transformations have become a major theme of modern historiography and social thought.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in the twentieth century the body has become central in Western philosophy and the cognitive sciences as a focus for understanding human thought, often emphasizing how people's bodies structure and shape the spaces that they inhabit.<sup>2</sup> The history of the body in China, a field that remains relatively undeveloped, is essential to both these projects.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will examine early Chinese ideas about the body as an aspect of their construction of orderly spaces. As described in the Introduction, early Chinese writers treated all entities as elements formed out of an initial unity/chaos through the process of division. These objects thus appeared as both compounds of diverse substances and as parts of a larger whole. As compounds of diverse substances, all spatial units were temporary and unstable confluences of disparate elements that tended to dissociate. As parts of larger wholes, they were dependent fragments that achieved stability and meaning only through incorporation into an encompassing structure. This recurring pattern already appeared at the level of the human body. In this chapter I will first examine how this pattern emerged in the fourth century B.C. in the earliest Chinese reflections on the nature and significance of the body. I will then show the consequences of depicting the body as a temporary compound of diverse elements. Finally, I will examine ways in which the body formed one element of a larger whole, with the skin figuring primarily not as a boundary but as an interface from which certain energies and substances were projected and through which others were absorbed.

DISCOVERY OF THE BODY IN THE  
FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

The body became a central issue in Chinese thought in the fourth century B.C., when the school of Yang Zhu and the practice of self-cultivation described in the “*Nei ye*” theorized it as the natural and necessary center for organizing space, and the *Mencius* and *Zuo zhuan* presented it as the source of virtue and ritual order. Several of these ideas, however, were anticipated in the *Lun yu*. First, some passages describing ritual and the true gentleman focus on the correction of the body. Second, other passages use the body and its parts as measures of value. Third, two passages assert that correcting the body is the basis of social order. I will discuss each of these in turn.

Performing rituals in early China required considerable bodily control. Texts emphasize specified positions, kneeling, bowing, turning, and so on. Consequently, the establishment of “ritual” as a fundamental category by Confucius and his followers gave the body a central role in their social program. Several passages in the *Lun yu* are based on paronomastic glosses or word play that link the term “ritual (*li* \**li*er 禮)” to words referring to the body or its manipulation. Thus, there is a close phonetic and graphic link between “ritual” and “body (*ti* \**ti*er 體),” a link noted in many texts. An essay in the *Li ji* places “bodiless ritual [*wu ti zhi li* 無體之禮]” in parallel with “soundless music” and “mourning without mourning garments,” thus indicating that the body was the defining substance of ritual.<sup>4</sup> Though this gloss is not yet suggested in the *Lun yu*, some passages indicate a connection between *li* “ritual” and the verb “to stand (*li* \**glie*p 立.)” as applied to taking up both a physical and a social position. One of these describes in the following terms the process by which a person employs the major Confucian educational disciplines to develop full humanity: “Inspired/initiated [*xing* 興] by the odes; established [*li* 立 “made to stand”] by ritual; completed in music.”<sup>5</sup> The significance of correct placement of the body, without use of the character *li* 立, also figures in the account of Shun’s ruling through simply “making himself reverent and correctly facing south.”<sup>6</sup>

The link between ritual and body also figures in the passage on the “recitification of names”: “If affairs are not completed, then ritual and music will not arise [*xing* 興]. If music and ritual do not arise, then punishments will not be correct. If punishments are not correct, then the people will have no place to set their hands and feet.”<sup>7</sup> Again, the definition of true humanity as “taming the self and restoring the rituals” defines this injunction through an itemized list of the control of the body by ritual: “If it is not ritual do not look at it; if it is not ritual do not listen to it; if it is not ritual do not say it; if it is not ritual do not move.”<sup>8</sup> This pattern of itemizing the body as a set of discrete units that had to be separately controlled became fundamental to Warring States accounts of both corporal and social order.

The clearest demonstrations that ritual was a bodily performance are the passages describing how Confucius, or, rarely, one of his disciples, held or

manipulated his body while performing rites. These detailed accounts of the proper manner of standing, bowing, or walking occupy a prominent place in several chapters. They show how early in China the belief in ritual as a foundation of social order developed into a concern for the training of the body. Some accounts of Confucius employ an elaborate series of descriptive binomes, reminiscent of the poetry of the period, to suggest the sage's deportment. Other passages simply assert the central importance of physical bearing and facial expression in ritual performances.<sup>9</sup> Literary passages describing Confucius's physical deportment also figured in several contemporary and later works, along with accounts of his unusual bodily features.<sup>10</sup>

Some passages in the *Lun yu* also use the body as a measure of value. These mark the supreme importance of certain values through asserting that the gentleman would sacrifice his body or his life rather than abandon them. Thus, one passage argues: "The determined man of service and the humane man would not seek life by harming their humanity. There are those who kill their own bodies/selves in order to complete their humanity."<sup>11</sup> The syntactic parallel with "life" and the description of it as something that could be killed suggest that here the character *shen* 身 refers to the body. Similar parallels with "life" or "lifespan," as well as a parallel between *shen* and *li* (力 "physical strength"), indicate that *shen* as a measure of worth in the *Lun yu* usually refers to the physical or organic body.<sup>12</sup> This celebration of the willingness to sacrifice oneself in the name of integrity is an extreme form of the anecdotes that demonstrate a scholar's virtue through his failure to eat or enduring the most limited diet in the pursuit of moral development.<sup>13</sup> Finally, two passages insist that correcting the body is the first step to good government:

The Master said, "If his self/body is correct, then his commands will be carried out without his even making them. If his self/body is not correct, even should he command others they will not obey.

If someone could correct his own self/body, then what problem would there be to his devotion to governing? If he cannot correct his self/body, then what has he to do with correcting/governing other people?<sup>14</sup>

The second of these passages is a direct parallel to the passage in the *Lun yu* that asks: "If someone can govern the state through ritual and yielding, then what problem is there? If he cannot, then what has he to do with ritual?"<sup>15</sup> The parallel between these two passages once again demonstrates the focus of ritual on correcting the body, since the two terms are treated as interchangeable. While these particular passages seem to employ *shen* in the broader sense of person, with the organic body as only one aspect, they merit mention because they closely link ritual with the body.

Although the *Lun yu* anticipated several major uses of the body in discussions of social order, it was only in the fourth century that this theme became central. In A. C. Graham's *Disputers of the Tao* this period is treated

under a series of rubrics such as “retreat to private life,” “idealisation of the small community,” “the sharpening of rational debate,” and “the discovery of subjectivity.”<sup>16</sup> The thread running through these intellectual developments is the discovery of the individual: as the ultimate ground of social values in the Yangist tradition, as the source of authoritative argument that confounded conventional wisdom for the “sophists,” as the autarkic producer of all his own needs in the tradition of Shen Nong, and as the basis of epistemology in Song Xing’s doctrine of the situational limits of all knowledge. This new interest in the individual also entailed a key social role for the manipulation of the body.

This is clearest in the tradition associated with Yang Zhu, which took the individual person as the basis of its philosophical program. Like many Warring States philosophical traditions, Yangist ideas are known only from accounts by their enemies, or summaries in later philosophical compendia. The earliest references to these doctrines are the hostile caricatures in the *Mencius*, which paired the supposed selfishness of the Yangists with the “universal love” of the Mohists as two equally incorrect extremes of teaching about relations of the self to others: “Master Yang adopted ‘being for oneself.’ If plucking out one hair would benefit the entire world, he would not do it. Master Mo espoused ‘concern for each and all.’ If shaving his body from head to heel would benefit the world, he would do it.”<sup>17</sup> While this cannot be accepted as an accurate presentation of Yangist teachings, it is significant that the contrast between Yang and Mo is framed in terms of their attitudes toward the body. Concern over the body, and the use of it as a marker of value, figure in all presentations of Yangist doctrines. Thus, a description of Yangist ideas in the Western Han *Huainanzi* states: “Keep one’s life/nature intact [*quan xing* 全性], guard one’s true self, and do not tie down one’s body with external objects. These are the doctrines established by Master Yang.”<sup>18</sup> These are elaborated in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Lü shi chun qiu*. Passages from the latter show that here 性 *xing* “nature” was still the same as 生 *sheng* “life” from which it derived. Thus, to “keep one’s life/nature intact” meant to live out one’s natural lifespan and preserve one’s physical health.

Passages in the *Lü shi chun qiu* also elaborate the third dictum previously listed, which enjoins the individual against allowing him or herself to be tied down by objects.

Man’s nature is to live out his lifespan, but things disturb him, so that he is unable to live out this span. Things are the means to nourish life; one does not use one’s life to nourish things. In the present age many of the deluded use their lives to nourish things. They do not recognize what is trivial and what is important, so the important is deemed trivial and the trivial important. . . .

When a myriad of men pick up their bows and together shoot at a single target, certainly any such target would be struck. When the

myriad things in all their splendor are used to harm a single life, any life would be harmed. If used to benefit a single life, then any life would receive benefit. Thus the sage's regulating of all things is used to complete what he receives from Heaven [life]. When what is received from Heaven is completed then the spirit is harmonious, the eyes clear, the ears acute, the nose keen, the mouth perceptive, and the 360 joints all supple.<sup>19</sup>

These and related passages demonstrate that the core of Yangist teachings was the supreme value of life and the human body. "Preserving one's nature" entailed nourishing bodily energies and developing bodily powers. The dictum against being trapped by objects enjoined people to use objects to nourish the body, rather than dispersing bodily energies in pursuit of objects. The ruler and his officials existed in order to protect the lives of their subjects and the well-being of their bodies.<sup>20</sup> The sage was marked by the perfection of every element of his own body.

While the Yangist chapters of the *Lü shi chun qiu* do not refer to the dictum on preserving one's true self or what is "genuine [*zhen* 真]," this principle is elaborated with reference to the body in a chapter of the *Zhuangzi* derived from the Yangist tradition. Hearing that Confucius has devoted his life to benefiting the world through the cultivation of moral virtues and the social arts, even though he is neither a ruler nor an adviser to a ruler, an old fisherman observes:

"He may well be humane, but I fear he will be unable to extricate from disaster his body/self. Causing his mind to suffer, exhausting his physical form [*xing* 形], and thereby endangering what is genuine in him, he is indeed very far from the true Way.

...

If you diligently cultivate your body/self, carefully guard what is genuine in you, turn back and give objects to others, then nothing will tie you down. Now you do not cultivate your own body/self but seek it from others, is this not indeed wide of the mark?" Confucius pensively said, "May I ask what you mean by 'genuine'?" "The genuine is that which is most essential and refined [*jing* 精] and most sincere [*cheng* 誠]. What is not essential and sincere cannot move others. Forced tears however mournful will not cause grief; forced anger however severe will not inspire awe; forced amity, however much you smile, will not produce harmony. Genuine sorrow without emitting a sound induces grief; genuine anger with no outward manifestation inspires awe; genuine amity with no smiles induces harmony. The most refined energies [神] act outside oneself, which is why we value the genuine."<sup>21</sup>

In the first extract the fisherman challenges Confucius's conduct from the Yangist perspective by pointing out that he is exhausting his physical body and thereby endangering his embodied self. In the second he sketches the three principles by which the *Huainanzi* defines the teachings of Yang Zhu. Finally, in response to Confucius's question he defines the "genuine" as the complete and undivided focus [*cheng* 誠] of the refined energies that make possible higher human functions. These energies are manifest in the emotions that animate the body's actions, and marked in the highest state of refinement by being able to shape other's actions.

The clearest demonstrations of the central role of the body in Yangist thought are assertions of the absurdity of exchanging bodily parts for external objects. One example of this, or rather a parody of it, was the passage from the *Mencius* cited earlier in which the willingness to sacrifice bodily hairs distinguished rival philosophical traditions. A more elaborate version couched in terms favorable to the Yangist teachings appears in the fourth-century A.D. *Liezi*:

Qin Guli asked Yang Zhu, "If you could save the whole world by giving up one hair, would you do it?" Master Yang replied, "The world could certainly not be saved by one hair." Master Qin said, "If it would be saved, would you do it?" Master Yang did not reply. Master Qin went out and spoke to Mengsun Yang. Mengsun Yang said, "You have not understood Master Yang's thoughts. Let me say them. If you could gain ten thousand in gold by having some of your skin peeled off, would you do it?" "I would." "If you could obtain a state by having one limb cut off at a joint, would you do it?" Master Qin remained silent for a while. Mengsun Yang said, "A hair is less than some skin, and some skin is less than a limb. This is plain. But if you accumulate individual hairs it forms a patch of skin, and if you accumulate skin it forms a limb. Even one hair is certainly a tiny part of the body, so how could you treat it lightly?"<sup>22</sup>

The relation between body and things is worked out in a set of hypothetical exchanges that mark the higher value of the former.

This demonstration of the supreme importance of the self through people's unwillingness to exchange their own life or body parts for other things also figures in anecdotes in the chapter "Rang wang" in the *Zhuangzi*. This begins with stories in which Yao or Shun offer world rulership to men who reject it because it could harm their health. One of these stories argues: "The world is extremely important, but he would not on account of it harm his life. How much less would he harm it for some other thing. Only one who would not take the world to govern it can be entrusted with it."<sup>23</sup> This insistence on bodily well-being as the highest good, and the consequent rejection of exterior things, follows the argument attributed to Yang Zhu. In the next story the man who rejects world rulership describes how he prefers

wearing simple, natural clothing and obtaining exercise while feeding himself through agriculture. He contrasts the health and sufficiency of his body [*xing* 形 and *shen* 身] in his humble station with the false lure of the world and its objects.<sup>24</sup> Other stories repeat this passage's argument, which also figured in the *Lü shi chun qiu* Yangist passages previously cited, that only the man who values life and the body above all else can be a ruler.<sup>25</sup>

A related story in the *Lü shi chun qiu* is preceded by the following elaboration of the idea that the body is more valuable than the world:

The body/self is that for which one acts; the world is the means by which one acts. Paying attention to your means, you will recognize what is important [the body] and what trivial [the world]. Now suppose there were a man who cut off his head to exchange it for a hat or killed his body [*sha shen* 殺身] to exchange it for some clothes. The world would certainly regard him as deluded. Why? Hats are the means of decorating the head, and clothes the means of decorating the body. To kill that which is decorated in order to secure the means of decorating it is not to understand the purpose of things. The present age's pursuit of profit often resembles this. They endanger their bodies/selves and harm their lives, slash their throats and cut off their heads. This likewise is not to understand the purpose of things.<sup>26</sup>

This passage anticipates the *Liezi* by ridiculing a hypothetical trade in body parts to demonstrate the supreme importance of the self. Similar passages pointing to the folly of exchanging parts of the body for external goods also figure in the *Zhuangzi*.<sup>27</sup> Thus, in the Yangist tradition, the insistence on preserving life, guarding one's nature, and avoiding the threat of external things was given its most dramatic expression in the repeated insistence that no sane man would exchange his life, or even a significant part of his body, for any external object, no matter how grand.

Rival intellectual traditions adopted this argument as a means of asserting their own programs. Thus, the *Mozi* appealed to a trade in body parts to demonstrate not the supreme value of the body itself, but rather the virtue of duty for which people would sacrifice their lives:

Among all things nothing is more valuable than duty [*yi* 義]. Now if you say to someone, "I will give you a hat and shoes, and then cut off your hands and feet. Will you do it?" They certainly would not. Why? Because hat and shoes are less valuable than hands and feet. If you further said, "I will give you the whole world and then kill your body. Will you do it?" They certainly would not. Why? Because nothing in the world is more valuable than the body/self. But if people kill one another in a quarrel over a single

word, this means that duty/honor [*yi*] is more valuable than the body/self.<sup>28</sup>

This adoption of the body as a marker of supreme value also figures in the *Mencius's* argument that just as one would give up good food for better, so one would give up life for moral virtue.<sup>29</sup> Thus, by the middle of the Warring States period the use of the body and of life as markers of supreme value had become conventional among all traditions.

When the body emerged in this manner as a theme in Chinese thought, it was defined in spatial terms, as a central self set against external objects. In the Western tradition the body usually figures in philosophy in terms of its dualistic opposition to the mind or the soul, as matter set against spirit. The Chinese, in contrast, accepted that the mind was part of the body, more refined and essentialized, but of the same substance.<sup>30</sup> Instead, the body became problematic as one spatial unit defined in opposition to others. Within the flux of ever-changing objects that emerged from chaos and ultimately returned to it, the body was a centered point whose well-being and efficacy depended on its relations to the objects and people surrounding it. Should it allow these objects to attain mastery through their powers of attraction, then the body/self would lose its genuine nature, become tied down by objects, and ultimately sacrifice itself for these external things. Should it defend its vital energies and genuine nature against the lure of objects, than it could generate a spirit-like power [*shen* 神] that commanded the feelings and actions of others without any visible manifestation. Thus, the dominant model of the body in early Chinese thinking portrayed it as a distinct center within a field of rival forces that could itself, if properly developed, radiate its own force outward. This model first appeared within the Yangist tradition, and was successively adopted by rivals to articulate their own positions.<sup>31</sup>

The earliest and most influential elaboration of the model of the embodied self as a center for the projection of cultivated energies was the program of self-cultivation elaborated in the fourth-century B.C. philosophical poem “*Nei ye* 内业 [Inward Training].”<sup>32</sup> The “*Nei ye*” describes a holistic transformation of the entire person. It begins with the physical body, works through the sense organs, and culminates in the perfection of the mind and spirit. Like the Yangist tradition, it places human vitality (*sheng* 生) at the center of its vision of the perfected self. It also resembles Yangist doctrines in its insistence on the pivotal importance of guiding the emotions and in stern warnings against the threat posed by external objects. The model developed in this text of the perfection of the mind and body through the regulation of emotions elicited by external objects became one of the dominant themes of Warring States thought.

Moreover, the “*Nei ye*” surpassed the Yangists by placing its program of self-cultivation within an overarching vision of a dynamic cosmos that, like the body, was constituted from a series of ever more refined vital energies—

*qi* 氣, *jing* 精, and *shen* 神. This model of energies or vital breaths shared by the body and the outer world permitted a more systematic exposition of the character of the body/self, the means of its perfection, and the consequences thereof. I will focus on the ways in which the text portrays the embodied self, and on the significant spatial aspects of this portrayal. The poem begins with a comprehensive vision of a world formed by vital energies.

The vital essence [*jing* 精] of all things,  
 In attainment it produces life.  
 Below it produces the five grains,  
 Above it forms the arrayed stars.  
 Flowing between Heaven and Earth  
 It is called ghosts and spirits.  
 Stored in the human breast,  
 It is called the sage.

This asserts the central importance of refined energy, and also lays out the vertical zones that form the cosmos. Each of these zones is distinguished by the most refined beings that appear within it. This structuring of space through the distribution of energies carries forward in the next lines, which describe the vital energy (*qi*) in the highest heavens, in the deepest abyss, in the seas that mark the ultimate edges of the world, and at the very center within the self.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the embodied self emerges as the central focus within an extended spatial field, a field linked together through the movement of a common energy.

Having begun with the self and its relation to the world, the text then devotes several passages to the manner in which the vital energies that fill the cosmos can be secured within the body. This is followed by the first reference to the heart/mind (*xin* 心) at the core of the person:

All proper forms [*xing* 形] of the mind  
 Spontaneously fill, spontaneously suffuse [with vital energies],  
 Spontaneously give life [*sheng*], spontaneously complete [*cheng*].  
 The means of losing it  
 Must be sorrow, happiness, joy, anger, desire, and profit-seeking.  
 If you can remove sorrow, happiness, anger, desire, and profit-seeking,  
 Your mind will revert to completion [*ji* 濟].<sup>34</sup>

This introduces the emotions that threaten the mind's energies. Emotions, which in later texts will invariably be associated with the external things that elicit them, constitute the single greatest threat to self-perfection through the cultivation of mind and body. This theme recurs later in the text, and it became a commonplace in the Warring States and later China.<sup>35</sup>

After more descriptions of the mind, the text states that the Way “is that by which one fills the body [*xing* 形]” but that it is impossible to fix it in place. Having no fixed location, it can only be secured by the mind’s remaining still to regulate its vital energies. This introduction of the physical body as a central theme is followed by enumerations of the levels of the cosmos—Heaven, Earth, and man—which leads to the statement:

Therefore the sage:  
Changes with the seasons, but does not transform.  
Shifts with things, but does not move.<sup>36</sup>

Here, as in the Yangist tradition, physical and mental mastery allows the sage to confront the world without being altered in his essence, to deal with external things but not be tied down by them. This theme reappears a few lines later, including the often quoted proposition that “the true gentleman commands things and is not commanded by things.” A later passage states:

The numen [*shen* 神], none know its limits;  
It illuminates all things.  
Hold it at your center and do not alter.  
Do not agitate your senses with external things,  
Do not agitate your mind with your senses,  
This is called “obtaining it at the center.”<sup>37</sup>

This again shows the importance assigned to the contrast between the self and external objects, and the necessity of maintaining the proper separation between the two. It also defines this separation in terms of establishing the body as a secure center.

The distinction between self as center surrounded by external things takes on a more explicitly spatial form in a subsequent account of the perfection of the body:

Fix your heart at the center [*zhong* 中],  
Your ears and eyes will be acute,  
Your four limbs will be firm and fixed,  
You can thereby be a dwelling for the vital essence [*jing*].

The insistence that the heart/mind must be established at the center so that the self can be perfected appears several times in the poem. In one passage this act of centering begins a process that radiates outward to culminate in ordering the entire world. Others describe how the sage’s body is thereby protected from any menace whether human or natural, and how the freedom of properly centered mind manifests itself in the facial expression and the quality of the skin.<sup>38</sup>

The text thus insists that establishing the body as a center and a center within the body are pivotal to self-perfection and spatial organization. Since

Kant and Husserl, this role of the body in fixing the center around which people structure space has become a major theme of Western philosophy.<sup>39</sup> At each level of organizing space the establishment of a center—in the body, the household, the capital, the ruler in imperial ritual, or China itself as the “Middle Kingdom”—is an essential first step.<sup>40</sup> This constant return to the center culminates in an image of an ultimate center as the source of all well-being and power:

That which regulates them [sense organs] is the heart/mind.  
 That which pacifies them is the heart/mind.  
 The heart serves to store a heart;  
 At the center of the heart, there is yet another heart.  
 This heart of the heart,  
 Is an awareness that precedes all words.<sup>41</sup>

The inverse of this centripetal movement toward an ever-retreating center appears in depictions of the center’s influence radiating through the entire universe. Such phrases as Heaven and Earth; Heaven, Earth, and man; the Nine Continents; the Four Limits; or the Four Frontier Zones are employed to describe the range of the perfected bodily center. These schematic ways of ordering space—up and down, the four directions, the nine-square grid, concentric circles or squares—all depend on the prior establishment of a center as a point of reference. The centering mind establishes itself as a fixed point in terms of which the order of space is laid out and from which the regulation of the cosmos proceeds.<sup>42</sup>

Between the mind and the cosmos, the key recurrent unit is the physical body. The body is the first step in the path to self-perfection. One must first “correct” or “align” [*zheng* 正] the body to attain the tranquillity that allows the mind to become fixed and clear:

If your body [*xing* 形] is not correct,  
 The inner power will not come.  
 If at the center you are not tranquil,  
 Your mind will not be well ordered.  
 Correct [*zheng*] your body and gather in the power,  
 Then it [the power] will pour in of its own accord.<sup>43</sup>

The link of a correct body with tranquility explains an earlier passage introducing the fixed or settled heart/mind: “If able to be correct and tranquil, Only then can you be settled.” It also figures in another passage where the correction of the body leads to the perfection of the mind:

When the four limbs are correct [*zheng*],  
 And the blood and vital energy are tranquil [*jing* 靜],

Unify your thoughts, concentrate your mind.  
 Your eyes and ears will not be flooded,  
 And even what is distant will be like what is close.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, the correct positioning or disciplining of the body is the essential first step to the purification of the mind, the cultivation of the self, and, finally, the ordering of the cosmos.

However, the body is not only the *beginning* of the process of self-cultivation, but also its conclusion and fullest manifestation. The correct placement of the body ultimately results in a body that is completely correct.<sup>45</sup> This idea figured earlier in the description of the creation of acute senses and a firm body through the proper centering of the mind. It also appears in a passage quoted in note 33, in which the cultivation of refined energies results in the firmness of the four limbs and the openness of the nine apertures of the body. Moreover, passages in note 38 link a perfected or completed mind on the inside with a perfected body on the outside. Another passage proceeds directly from the correct placing of the body and consequent tranquillity of the mind to the perfection of every aspect of the physical body:

If people can be correct and tranquil [*zheng jing*],  
 Their skin will be ample and relaxed,  
 Their ears and eyes will be acute,  
 Their muscles supple and their bones strong.<sup>46</sup>

So central is the body to this vision of human perfection that the text ends with an account of a body that through its immersion in the Way has become invulnerable:

For people who attain the Way,  
 It permeates their skin and saturates their hair.  
 With the Way of restricting desires,  
 Nothing harms them.<sup>47</sup>

I have dwelt at length on the “*Nei ye*” because it announces many themes important to subsequent Chinese discourse on the body. Later texts often adopted the ideas that one first established the body at the center, drew in vital and refined energies, established a tranquil mind, avoided the disturbances produced by external objects and their associated emotions, and finally radiated influence out from the body through human society to the edges of the world.<sup>48</sup> Some texts adopted ideas about the body and its vital energies from the “*Nei ye*” while rejecting associated aspects of its philosophy. The clearest example of this is the discussion of the “flood-like [*hao ran* 浩然] *qi*” in the *Mencius*.

The links between the “*Nei ye*” and the *Mencius*’s discussion of the flood-like *qi* have been noted by several scholars, although they disagree over which

text was the original model and which derivative.<sup>49</sup> My analysis will begin with the passage in the “Nei ye” that links “flood-like” to the vital energies, and also insists on their all-encompassing spatial range:

When the refined energies are concentrated they spontaneously give life.  
 His exterior is peaceful and glowing.  
 Storing it [the refined energies] inside,  
 We use it as the wellspring.  
 Flood-like [*hao ran*] it harmonizes and balances;  
 We use it as the fount of vital energy.  
 If the fount does not dry up,  
 The four limbs will be firm.  
 If the spring is not exhausted,  
 The nine apertures will be completely open [to the flow of energies].  
 You can then exhaust Heaven and Earth,  
 And cover the four seas.<sup>50</sup>

Here the refined energies within the body act as a reservoir of vitality that, if properly nourished and employed, result in the physical perfection of the body and the extension of its influence to the limits of the universe. These ideas reappear in the *Mencius*.

The *Mencius*'s discussion of vital energy opens with a consideration of the problem of courage and the means of preventing the heart/mind from being agitated. In response to a disciple's question whether his heart would be agitated by worries if he were put in charge of the government, Mencius replies that his heart has not been agitated since the age of forty. Mencius then modestly notes that his intellectual rival Master Gao attained this state at an even earlier age. When then asked whether there was a method to achieve such imperturbability, Mencius describes two heroic warriors who cultivated absolute fearlessness through refusal to tolerate any insult or to retreat before any foe. He then contrasts this courage with that of Master Zeng, who quoted Confucius to the effect that if one were in the wrong, then one was bound to be afraid, but that if one were upright and correct then one would be without fear. In conclusion he notes: “Mengshi She's [one of the warriors] holding his *qi* was no match for Master Zeng's holding to what was essential.”<sup>51</sup> Here *qi* appears as the dynamic force that drives men to fight, in contrast with a heroic resolve based not on mere energy but rather on moral correctness.<sup>52</sup>

This contrast between energy and morality underpins Mencius's distinction of his own mastery of “flood-like *qi*” from that of Master Gao, and also from that of the “Nei ye.”

“According to Master Gao, ‘If you do not get it from the words, do not seek it in the heart/mind. If you do not get it from the

heart/mind, do not seek it in the vital energy [*qi*].’ If you do not get it from the heart/mind to not seek it in the vital energy is proper, but it is wrong to not seek it in the heart/mind if you do not get it from the words. The fixed intent [*zhi* 志, of the heart/mind] is the commander of the vital energy, while the vital energy fills the body. The fixed intent is supreme in this, while the vital energy is only secondary. Therefore I say, ‘Keep hold of your fixed intent, but do no violence to your vital energy.’” “Having already said, ‘The fixed intent is supreme in this, while the vital energy is only secondary,’ why further say, ‘Keep hold of your fixed intent, but do no violence to your vital energy?’”

“When the fixed intent is unified then it moves the vital energy, but when the vital energy is unified then it moves the fixed intent. Stumbling or hurrying are matters of energy/breath [*qi*], but contrary to what is proper they also affect the heart.”

“May I venture to ask what are your strong points?” “I recognize the true sense of words, and I am good at cultivating my ‘flood-like vital energy.’” “May I venture to ask what is meant by ‘flood-like vital energy?’” “That is difficult to speak of. Its character as vital energy is that it is supremely large and firm. If you nourish it with what is upright and do it no harm, then it will fill everything between Heaven and Earth. Its character as vital energy is that it is paired with rightness and the Way. Without these it will starve. It is produced by the accumulation of rightness; it cannot be seized through sudden raids in the name of rightness. Whenever your conduct has that with which the heart is ill at ease, then [the vital energy] starves. Hence I said that Master Gao never understood rightness, because he treated it as exterior.”<sup>53</sup>

This passage overlaps with that in the “*Nei ye*” in the use of the epithet *hao ran*, in its insistence that this vital energy is internal, and in the assertion that when properly cultivated it fills the whole universe. It differs from the “*Nei ye*” on the same grounds as Mencius’s contrast of himself from Master Gao. The precise meaning of the latter’s proposition about words, heart/mind, and vital energy is unclear, but Mencius understands it to indicate that for Master Gao *qi* is primordial. Mencius, in contrast, assigns this role to the mind. Thus, he criticizes Master Gao for not attributing ultimate responsibility to the mind, and he argues that the mind is the primary factor. It is the mind’s fixed intent that should control the movement of *qi*. This insistence on the primacy of the heart/mind is due to its role as the ground for the development of the sense of rightness and other virtues. Whereas *qi* in Master Gao’s argument refers simply to vital energies, Mencius insists that *qi*, as something controlled by the mind, can only flourish when fed on the moral virtues. This distinc-

tion between a purely physical *qi* and a moral *qi* guided by the human mind also underlies the celebrated debate about human nature between Mencius and Master Gao.<sup>54</sup> The debate as presented in the *Mencius* is thus between a vision of *qi* as simple animal energies and one in which it is an expression of man's moral character.<sup>55</sup>

This argument suggests that it is the *Mencius* that is adapting an idea of *qi* borrowed from the "Nei ye." In the latter the forms of energy—*qi*, *jing*, and *shen*—were the ultimate grounds of explanation for the vitality and efficacy of the human body. In the *Mencius*, in contrast, *qi* is subordinated first to the mind and ultimately to the moral virtues that develop therein.<sup>56</sup> In insisting that the *qi* that permeates the universe and fills men's bodies is ultimately moral, and without morality would starve and die, the *Mencius* is clearly adapting rival contemporary ideas about the nature of the body and the cosmos to defend its own insistence that humanity is morally good by nature.

Identifying the vital energies that form the body with moral virtues, the *Mencius* argues that the virtues are consequently parts of the body:

If one lacks a heart/mind of sympathy one is not a human. It is the same if one lacks a heart/mind of shame, yielding, or right and wrong. The heart/mind of sympathy is the sprout of humanity, that of shame is the sprout of rightness, that of yielding is the sprout of ritual, and that of right and wrong is the sprout of wisdom. People's having these four sprouts is like their having four limbs.<sup>57</sup>

The virtues that feed people's vital energies here become elements of their bodies like external limbs. The virtues also appear as parts of the body in passages that make them elements of the mind, which is an organ on a par with the eyes, ears, mouth, and nose.<sup>58</sup> The idea that the virtues are in the same class as attributes of other bodily parts also figures in the following passage:

Now suppose one's fourth finger was bent and could not be straightened. Although this causes no pain and does not interfere with performing tasks, if there were someone who could straighten it one would think nothing of travelling all the way from Qin to Chu [to find him]. This is because the finger is not as good as those of others. One knows enough to loathe a finger which is not as good as those of others. However, when one's heart/mind is not as good as those of others one does not know enough to loathe it. This is called "not knowing categories."<sup>59</sup>

This assumes that the finger and the heart/mind belong to the same category so faults in the one are in the same category as faults in the other. Here again the virtues are elements of the body.

This idea finds its clearest expression in a passage, which, like the "Nei ye," insists that cultivation of the self culminates in the physical perfection of the body. In the *Mencius*, however, this physical perfection is a direct conse-

quence of the perfection of the moral virtues: "That which a gentleman takes as his nature is the humanity, rightness, ritual, and wisdom which are rooted in his heart/mind. The complexion which these produce is visible in the shining radiance of his countenance. They also invigorate his back and extend to his four limbs. Without speaking he is understood."<sup>60</sup> Not only were the virtues in the same category as the limbs, but they were the ultimate source of the energies that perfected all parts of the body.

The location of virtues within the body also facilitated the *Mencius's* justification of hierarchy. The division of humans into higher and lower is justified by a parallel division within the body, where the mind represented the higher aspect and the muscles and limbs the lower.

Some toil with their minds, and some toil with their muscles [*li* 力]. Those who toil with their minds rule, while those who toil with their muscles are ruled.<sup>61</sup>

Bodies [*ti* 體] have what is noble and what is base, what is important and what trivial. Do not use the trivial to harm the important, nor the base to harm the noble. Those who nourish their trivial parts become petty men. Those who nourish their important parts become great men. . . . One who without realizing it nourished a single finger at the expense of his shoulders and back would be confused. If a man is devoted to eating and drinking then others despise him on account of his nourishing the trivial [stomach] and thereby losing the important.<sup>62</sup>

The organs [*guan* 官] of hearing and sight do not think and thus are obscured by objects. As objects in contact with objects, they [the external objects] simply attract them [the organs]. The organ of the heart/mind thinks. If it thinks then it gets it, but if it does not think then it does not get it. This is what Heaven has given me. If one first becomes established on the greater [the heart/mind], then the lesser [the senses] cannot seize it. This cannot but become a great man.<sup>63</sup>

As in the Yangist passages and the "Nei ye," the attraction of external things poses the chief menace to self-cultivation and the bodily hierarchy. Through their immediate links to external objects the sense organs become objects themselves, and thus reduce the body to servitude. Only the mind with its powers of reflection can escape the attraction of things and hence preserve an integral self.<sup>64</sup> The senses are lesser because they are obscured by their own partiality and limitations, while the properly functioning mind transcends such limits and encompasses the entirety of bodily experience.<sup>65</sup> The *Mencius's* distinction between the greater and lesser parts of the body, and its call for rule by the former, are thus yet another version of the early Chinese insistence on

the superiority of the whole to its parts. This model of the body as a state derived from the *Mencius's* commitments to the bodily origins of the virtues and to the social domination of intellectuals, who were the social equivalents of the mind. While such ideas were not universal in the Warring States and early imperial periods, the vision of the body as a state and the state as a body became standard in Chinese thought.

Another fourth-century B.C. text that emphasized vital energy and the body was the *Zuo zhuan*. It shared several images with the *Mencius*, such as that of the body as a state in which the limbs or the senses played the role of ministers.<sup>66</sup> However, the *Zuo zhuan* also disagreed on key points. Whereas the *Mencius* had argued that the mind's fixed intent (*zhi*) had to control the body's vital energy to guarantee people's moral character, the *Zuo zhuan* reverses this relation: "Flavors put in motion the energies, the energies provide the substance of the intent, the intent fixes speech, and speech issues commands. I am in charge of flavors. That these should fail in their posts and the ruler not command their punishment is my crime."<sup>67</sup> This speech by a minister in charge of the kitchen asserts that the body's energies inform its intent, so that the ruler's failings result from inadequacies of diet. This insistence on the importance of cuisine and those in charge of it is closely related to the central role of sacrifice.<sup>68</sup> Here and in related passages it indicates a model of the body in which vital energy is fundamental to all mental operations, and hence decisive in moral and ritual issues.<sup>69</sup>

The idea that the body's energies guide its intent also appears in military contexts. One ruler argues that the ancient rules of chivalrous combat dictated that one should not strike an opponent twice, kill the aged, attack when the enemy is penned in a narrow defile, or launch an offensive when he has not yet formed his lines. A minister rebuts him in the following terms:

You make clear what is shameful, instruct the people in warfare, and seek to kill the enemy. If you injure them but have not yet killed them, why should you not strike again? If you loathe to strike them twice, then you might as well not strike them at all. If you loathe to hurt the aged, then you might as well surrender. The army is employed for one's benefit. Gongs and drums use sound to stir up vital energies, and the sound at its fullest brings intent to its peak [*zhi zhi* 致志].<sup>70</sup>

Again the *Zuo zhuan* insists that bodily energies are prior to and control mental intent. The fact that the speaker here bases his argument on an appeal to "benefit" further highlights the dispute with the *Mencius*, which treats this term as an object of criticism.

Another passage that asserts the primacy of energy appears in a discussion of the nature of ritual attributed to Zi Chan, a celebrated intellectual hero of the *Zuo zhuan*:

Ritual is the guiding principle of Heaven, the true meaning of Earth, and the conduct [*xing* 行] of people. Since it is the guiding principle of Heaven and Earth, the people will pattern themselves on it. Patterning themselves on Heaven's brightness and following the nature of earth, they produce the "six energies [*liu qi* 六氣, glossed elsewhere in the *Zuo zhuan* as *yin* and *yang*, wind and rain, dark and light]" and use the Five Phases. The energies form the five flavors, emerge as the five colors, and find patterns as the five sounds. . . . The people have likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy. These are born from the six energies. Thus one examines patterns and accords with categories in order to control the "six intents [*liu zhi* 六志]." For sorrow there is formalized weeping, for joy there is music and dance, for pleasure there is bestowing gifts and rewards, for anger there is warfare and fighting. Pleasure is born from likes and anger from dislikes.<sup>71</sup>

Here the primary energies of the natural world manifest themselves within the body as emotions. These in turn provide the substance for all possible forms of intent that guide human action. Each of these forms of emotion/intent must in turn be guided by the appropriate form of ritual. Thus, whereas the *Mencius* derives intent from the sprouts of virtue in the human mind that must guide the body's energies to prevent them from withering, for Zi Chan intent is merely the mental expression of the energies, and both of these must be guided by rituals. This idea that rituals are the source of life and fundamental to human existence is a recurring theme in the *Zuo zhuan*, which routinely links ritual to the human body and its energies.<sup>72</sup>

The previous speech concludes that ritual is the means by which people are born, and that only one who can "bend and straighten" in accord with ritual is a "complete human [*cheng ren* 成人]." Other speeches state that ritual is the trunk of the body/self [*shen*], the means by which people stand, and the key to self-preservation.<sup>73</sup> These links between ritual, vital energies, and the body also figure in the use of ritual failings to predict death. Some ritual errors demonstrate the moral or political failings that will lead to death, but at least one passage articulates the links between ritual and physical existence:

I have heard that people are born through the harmonious joining of Heaven and Earth. This is called *ming* [命 "appointed lifespan"]. So there are patterns for actions, ritual, duty, and awesome deportment in order to fix this *ming*. The capable nourish it and thereby obtain blessings; the incompetent destroy it and thus obtain calamity. Therefore the gentleman is diligent in ritual, while the petty man uses up his physical strength.<sup>74</sup>

People's bodies are formed through the interaction of Heaven and Earth, but they can only be preserved by means of the patterns dictated in ritual. Hence, ritual failings become a direct cause of death. The passage also echoes the Mencian distinction between those who labor with their minds and those who labor with their bodies, but here it is between those who devote themselves to ritual and those who devote themselves to work. Thus, once again the *Zuo zhuan* places ritual and its regulation of bodily energies in the position that the *Mencius* assigns to the mind.

Prophecies of death due to failings in ritual also figure in explicitly medical contexts. Here again the vital energies, which constitute both exterior nature and the body, provide the link between ritual and death. The most elaborate medical prophecy is a pair of diagnoses of the lord of Jin. Diviners seeking the name of the spirit that had caused the ruler's illness obtained two names that none could recognize. Zi Chan identified the spirits as gods of a star and a river, but then asserted that such deities "do not affect the ruler's body." River gods cause droughts or epidemics, while astral gods produce untimely weather:

As for the ruler's body [*shen*], it is a matter of his comings and goings, his diet, and his emotions. What have gods of mountains, rivers, or stars to do with this? I have heard that the ruler has four times: morning to attend court, daytime to pay visits, evening to write decrees, and night to give peace to his body. Therefore he is restrained in dispersing his energies [*qi*], and he does not allow anything to block their flow and thus weaken his body [*ti* 體]. Now is it not the case that the ruler of Jin puts all his energies into one thing, and thus produces sickness?

I have also heard that the harem should not include those of the ruler's surname, for their children will not grow and multiply. When all beauties are consumed by one man, then this produces illness. So the true gentleman loathes such conduct, and the *Records* says, "If you purchase a concubine whose surname you do not know, then divine for it." The ancients were always careful not to violate these two principles. The separation of men's and women's surnames is the great principle of ritual. Now in your harem there are four women with your surname. Is not this the reason for your illness?<sup>75</sup>

Zi Chan's speech once again explains death as a product of ritual failure. He even extends the physical consequences of ritual failings to include sterility and perhaps even miscarriages. Moreover, Zi Chan here pairs the ritual explanation of ailment with an explanation based on the improper dispersion of bodily energies or the failure to maintain their circulation. This pairing of ritual with bodily energetics figures even more prominently in the second diagnosis.

After the Jin ruler praised and rewarded Zi Chan, he summoned a doctor from Qin for a second opinion. The doctor agreed that the disease was due to overly close relations with women, but he ignored the issue of sexual relations between those sharing a surname. Instead he reverted to Zi Chan's first point of the need for moderation or restraint in all things:

The true gentleman approaches relations with women by means of the restraints of ceremony. He does not thereby cause any excess in his heart/mind. Heaven has the "six energies" which descend to form the five flavors, emerge to form the five colors, and gather to form the five musical tones. When in excess they produce six diseases. The six energies are *yin*, *yang*, wind, rain, dark, and light. When divided they form the four seasons [or the above mentioned "four times of the day"], and when properly ordered they form the five restraints. In excess they produce calamities. *Yin* in excess produces cold diseases, *yang* in excess hot diseases, wind in excess peripheral diseases, rain in excess diseases of the stomach, darkness in excess diseases of delusion, and brightness in excess diseases of the heart/mind. Women are creatures who go to the *yang* and whose time is the dark, so excess with them will produce a disease of internal heat and delusional *gu* [蠱, a category of disease derived from poisonous insects that was often associated with women]. Now the ruler is not restrained and does not observe the proper times. How could he not have arrived at this condition?<sup>76</sup>

Zi Chan's two themes, unrestrained expenditure of energies and improper relations with women, form a single explanation. More significantly, the body's energies are explicitly identified with those that fill the external world. External energies in the form of sound and color attract the senses through their shared nature, and excessive emotions excited by the senses produce disease. Whereas Zi Chan combined discussions of proper use of the body's energies with the question of ritual decorum, the doctor appeals entirely to control of the vital energies. Ritual appears only in the modified form of "ceremonial [*yi*]" as a means of restraining energetic expenditure.

This story is also notable for contrasting the literary generalist with the technical specialist.<sup>77</sup> The lord of Jin praises Zi Chan as a "true gentleman broadly versed in things" before doubling his parting gift. In contrast, a minister praises the doctor as a "fine doctor" before treating him generously and sending him back home. While the text treats both figures as worthy of respect, and even portrays the doctor doing graphic analysis and citing the *Yi jing*, it privileges the status of Zi Chan as marked by his appeal to a wider range of principles to explain disease.

Zi Chan explicitly paired the social and bodily consequences of ritual failings to predict death. In other anecdotes, medical diagnosis and the obser-

vation of ritual failings become indistinguishable, as errors are read as symptoms of physical collapse:

Viscount Shan met with Viscount Xuan of Han at Qi. He gazed downward and his speech was slow. Shu Xiang said, "Viscount Shan will soon die. At court gatherings locations are fixed by screens and at interstate assemblies positions are marked by banners. Robes have prescribed collar-joins and belts prescribed knots. Words at these assemblies and courts must be heard in all the positions marked by screens and banners. This is the means of making clear the sequence of tasks. The gaze should be between the collar-join and the belt knot. This is the means of controlling the facial demeanour. Words are to give those at court commands, and demeanour to make them understand the significance of these commands. Any failing and there will be omissions. Now Viscount Shan is the chief minister of the king, but in giving commands at assemblies his gaze does not reach above the belt, and his words go no further than one pace. His facial expression is not a controlled demeanour and his words are not clear. If demeanour is not controlled, the others will not be respectful. If the words are not clear, they will not be obeyed. He lacks the protecting energies [*shou qi* 守氣]."78

Here the minister's imminent death is explained by his lack of energy, and this lack is demonstrated through his inability to carry out ritual protocol. Assemblies, like all rituals, are bodily acts, so failure to perform them can be evidence of bodily weakness and impending death.

The image of rituals as bodily performances is not merely a presupposition of a few anecdotes but a consciously articulated principle. Indeed, given the graphic and phonetic links noted earlier, the two characters could be interchanged.<sup>79</sup> The equivalence of "body" and "ritual" also figures in the passages previously mentioned that argued that ritual was the "trunk" of people's bodies. Other passages argued that ritual protected the body, or that it was the "carriage" of government, which in turn protected the body. This linkage of ritual to bodies through the medium of the government was elaborated in a speech on the loss of dynastic power in Lu:

Ritual is the means of protecting the state, carrying out the government's decrees, and not losing the people. Now the decrees of the government are in the ministerial houses. . . . The lord's house is divided into four [by the ministers], so the people draw sustenance from others. None of their thoughts are on the lord, and he himself thinks nothing of how he will finish. As ruler of a state calamity reaches his body/self [*shen*], and he takes no heed of his position. How could a proper understanding of what is truly important in ritual lie in this?<sup>80</sup>

Here ritual's basis is the preservation of the state and thus of the person of the ruler. This makes explicit the assumptions underlying predictions of imminent death due to ritual errors.

This idea is developed in the opposite direction in passages that make a man's valuing of his body the basis of his care for the people: "Youshi will perish. A true gentleman values his body/self and only then can extend it to others. By means of this one has rituals. Now this noble holds his fellow hereditary officials in contempt and debases his ancestors. This is to devalue his own body/self. Could he have rituals? Without rituals he will certainly perish."<sup>81</sup> These ideas resemble the Yangist arguments that a man becomes qualified to rule by placing supreme value on his own person. However, the Yangist argument is modified by insisting that care for one's body is expressed through ritual.

The link between bodies and ritual also figures in accounts of alien customs. Zhou people are contrasted with southerners who cut their hair and tattoo their bodies, which demonstrates that they lie beyond the reach of ritual. Thus, in discussing ritual failure, Zi Gong draws an example from the history of the establishment of Zhou rule in the regions of Wu and Yue: "Tai Bo [when enfeoffed in Wu] wore the proper robes and cap in order to bring order through the rituals of Zhou. Zhongyong inherited his position. He cut off his hair and tattooed his body, using his naked body as his ornament. How could this be ritual?"<sup>82</sup> Here the founder attempted to employ Zhou ritual, as marked in his clothing, to bring order to this distant land. His successor, however, "went native" and adopted the practices of the people he ruled. Zi Gong describes this contrast, between covering the body with clothes and going naked while ornamenting the body with tattoos, as marking the presence or absence of ritual. The fullest discussion of ritual as a form of body is also written in the voice of Zi Gong:

In the fifteenth year Lord Yin of Zhu came to Lu's court. He held his ceremonial jade high and turned his gaze upward. The lord of Lu received the jade low and turned his gaze down. Zi Gong said, "Viewed from the point of view of ritual, the two rulers will both perish. Ritual is the embodiment [*ti*] of life and death, survival or perishing. It is selected in moving left or right, circling, advancing and retreating, gazing up or down. It is observed in court assemblies, sacrifices, mourning, and military actions. Now in the court assembly of the first month both rulers lack proper measure. Their heart/minds have already lost all rituals. If auspicious affairs are not given proper bodily form, how can one last long? To hold the jade high and gaze up is arrogance. To receive the jade low and gaze down is deterioration. Arrogance is close to rebellion; deterioration is close to disease. Since our ruler is the host, he will perish first."<sup>83</sup>

Zi Gong describes ritual as the bodily form of human fate. It is defined by people's movements, and can be observed as a physical phenomenon whenever people gather. The specific actions of the rulers reveal their characters, which in turn show their destinies. As in the cases of the lord of Jin and Viscount Shan, the lord's ritual behavior manifests symptoms of the disease that will kill him. Just as the Zhou odes quoted in court ceremonial allowed a form of divination through listening to words, so court ritual allowed divination through observing the body.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, the *Zuo zhuan* assigned to the ritualized body the role that the *Mencius* attributed to the mind. The body, as guided by rituals, was the source of morality and order, while the intent was subordinated to the body and its energies. Although no passage in the *Zuo zhuan* explicitly argues that the ritualized body serves as the mind's guide, a text found at Guodian concludes with such a statement: "The gentleman in holding to his intent [*zhi*] must have a vast heart/mind, in speaking must have straightforward good faith, in guest ritual must have a respectful demeanour, in sacrificial ritual must have solemn reverence, and in observing mourning must have afflicted sorrows. The gentleman's body serves to control his heart/mind."<sup>85</sup> The idea that the ritualized body could guide the mind grows directly out of the aforementioned discussions of ritual bearing in the *Lun yu*. This led in turn to substantial, sometimes poetic, accounts in the *Xunzi* and ritual texts of how the gentleman or some historical exemplar guided his body while performing rituals. The *Rituals of Zhou*, for its part, describes officials who were responsible for teaching people the bodily deportment involved in rituals. In addition, a few passages in the *Li ji* insisted that the basis of ritual lay in the cultivation of bodily correctness: "That which makes people human is ritual decorum. The origins of ritual decorum lie in correcting the appearance and the body, arranging the facial expression, and putting in proper order one's words. Only when the appearance and the body are correct, the facial expression arranged, and the words in order are ritual and decorum completed."<sup>86</sup> The notion that bodily correctness could guide the mind derives from these repeated accounts of the training of the body as the foundation of ritual and thus the basis of the social order.

The historical significance of this identification of ritual with the body, both as the guide for proper bodily actions and the means of reading a body's condition and fate, is indicated in the previously mentioned diagnoses of the ruler of Jin. The explanations of the disease in terms of the wasting of bodily energies, and the closely related violation of ritual restraints, both offer alternatives to the traditional attribution of disease to hostile spirits. In the latter model, which appears in the Shang oracle inscriptions and still underlies the fourth-century B.C. divinations discovered at Baoshan, disease was cured through divining the identity of the hostile spirit and making offerings to it. In the former, which first appears in the fourth century B.C., disease is treated through identifying improper actions and correcting

them. The contrast between an earlier medicine based on countering demonic attack and a new medicine based on the harmonization of bodily energies and their correspondences with cosmic energies has served as the organizing principle for accounts of the history of medicine in early China.<sup>87</sup> This anecdote gives a dramatic expression to this tension, and it highlights the manner in which the new theory was based on a reinterpretation of the human body.

However, within the *Zuo zhuan* this medical dispute is part of a larger critique of religious practices. Several *ru* texts argued that the perceptions or will of Heaven were those of the people, that to know human nature was to know Heaven, and that the will of the people was the mandate of Heaven. This idea appears in the *Zuo zhuan* in criticisms of the belief that one could discern the will of Heaven in omens and secure the support of spirits through sacrifices. Rather than seeking support from Heaven or celestial spirits, the *Zuo zhuan* argues that the ruler should base his power on the people. Instead of attributing prodigies of nature to spirits, he should recognize that they reflected disturbances in the human realm. One speaker even argues that people generated prodigies through their *qi*, the same vital energies invoked to explain diseases.<sup>88</sup> Just as the critique of omens and sacrifice took the form of replacing the spirits with physical and mental aspects of the human body, so the reinterpretation in the *Zuo zhuan* of divination took the form of replacing the will of the spirits as manifest in yarrow stalks with a future determined by human character and perspicacity.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the *Zuo zhuan* offers a systematic transformation of every aspect of the role of the spirits in ancient religious practice, reinterpreting each of them as a function of human character and conduct. Crucial to this new explanation of cosmic patterns was the vision of the mind and body as composites of the same energies that formed Heaven, Earth, and everything within them. Through the new vision of *qi* and the integrated cosmos articulated in the “*Nei ye*,” the *Mencius*, and the *Zuo zhuan*, the human body came to occupy the center of Warring States visions of ordered space.

#### THE COMPOSITE BODY

These texts introduced many of the fundamental themes for discussions of the body in Warring States and early imperial China. Throughout this period, people wrote of the body as a measure of value, the smallest unit on which to base the social order, the potential center of the cosmos, the substance of ritual acts, the source and image of hierarchy, and an energetic compound exchanging substances with the surrounding environment. One image that became central to Chinese discussions of the body was the idea that it was a composite entity formed from materials of different character and quality. Much Chinese religious and medical practice adopted this image, along with the consequent idea that the body could be transformed through the augmentation of certain substances and the elimination of others. This is most

notable in later Daoist alchemy, which aimed to fashion a new crystalline body through the incorporation of incorruptible substances and sloughing off of corruptible ones. Such controlled metamorphosis also figured in ancestor worship, which aimed to convert dead bodies into usable ancestors. Even Buddhism, which in its orthodox teachings developed to the highest degree the idea of the body as a temporary composite, elaborated visions of bodily metamorphosis. This was clearest in the tradition that the accumulated virtues of eminent monks turned their bodies into imperishable mummies.<sup>90</sup> In this section I discuss several ways in which the composite nature of the body and its progressive recombinations figured in early Chinese philosophic and medical discourses.

A common image of the composite body figures in discussions of the relation of the mind to the senses. As the senses were and still are called *guan* 官 “officials,” this relation is often patterned on that of officials to their ruler. This turned the body into a reduced model of the polity. This image—anticipated in the fourth-century texts—was elaborated at the beginning of “Techniques of the Heart/Mind,” a third-century B.C. commentarial elaboration of the “*Nei ye*”:

The heart/mind in the body has the position of the ruler. The roles of the nine openings are shared out as those of the officials. If the heart/mind holds to the Way, then the nine openings will follow their natural pattern. But if tastes and desires give way to excess, then the eyes will no longer see and the ears no longer hear. So it is said, “If the superior diverges from the Way, then the subordinates will fail in their tasks.”<sup>91</sup>

Here again the functioning of the mind is threatened by desires for external objects. If such desires are indulged, then the mind in its obsessions will block the senses in their role of perceiving, and the possibility of accurate perception will disappear.

The image of the body as a state plays several roles. As Unschuld has pointed out, elements of the body in the *Huang Di nei jing*, in contrast to the earlier medical texts found at Mawangdui, were patterned on features of the imperial realm.<sup>92</sup> This indicates the increasing importance under the Han of the new form of polity as a model for structuring space through controlling the flows of substance.<sup>93</sup> Some passages elaborate the model of the body as state in parallel to the bureaucratic division of labor, where each bodily part is assigned a distinctive task. Others, however, present the mind and other organs as rivals for supremacy. In such a rivalry, the victory of the mind, which is the natural ruler, creates order, but the victory of other organs leads to chaos, ill health, and death. These two contrasting uses of state-body imagery lead to two different lists in which the heart/mind appears. In one list the heart/mind is one of the internal “viscera” or “depots [*zang* 藏]” along with the kidneys, liver, lungs, spleen, the heart-enclosing network, and sometimes

the stomach and intestines. These lists emphasize the harmonious distribution of roles between the heart/mind and the other organs. The second type of list places the mind together with the sense organs. These usually emphasize the would-be independence of the senses, their challenge to the mind, and need to impose a proper hierarchy.<sup>94</sup>

Lists of the viscera are most common in the *Huang Di nei jing*. The most elaborate one, completely developing the analogy with the state, appears in the *Su wen*:

The Yellow Emperor asked, "I would like to hear about mutual control of the twelve viscera. What manner of hierarchy have they?" Qi Bo replied, "What a question! Allow me to account for them in sequence. The heart/mind has the office of the ruler. The most refined spirit-intelligence comes from it. The lungs have the office of the chief minister. Rules and regulations come from it. The liver has the office of the general. Stratagems and plans come from it. The gall bladder has the office of the selector. Decisiveness comes from it. The heart-enclosing network has the office of carrying out commands. Joy and happiness come from it. The spleen and stomach have the office of controlling the granaries and warehouses. The five flavors come from them. The large intestine has the office of transmitting messages along the roads. Changes and transformations [digestion] come from it. The small intestine has the office of receiving and filling. The transformation of external objects comes from it. The kidneys have the office of exerting strength. Crafts and skills come from it. The triple-burner has the office of opening up the channels. The waterways come from it. The urine bladder has the office of controlling provincial capitals. The saliva is stored in it. When energy [*qi*] is transformed then it can emerge from it.

None of these twelve offices can be set aside. So if the ruler is enlightened then the subordinates are at peace. Using this to nourish life one attains longevity. To the end of one's life there will be no peril. Using it to order the world means that there will be great flourishing. If the ruler is benighted then the twelve offices will be in danger. Causing roads to be closed up and not open, the body will be seriously damaged. Using this to nourish life creates disaster. Using it to administer the world means that one's lineage will be in great danger.<sup>95</sup>

This correlates organs with offices of government, and argues that fixing the proper division of labor within the body is the basis of government in the world. Here the heart/mind's command of the other organs is the key to universal order based on the distribution of administrative tasks.

This example is unusual among the *Huang di nei jing* organ lists in insisting that the heart/mind is the ruler. Although a few passages state that the heart/mind is the “master of the five depots and six storehouses,” most lists of the internal organs treat them as roughly equal. Some lists correlate each organ with a direction, season, or one of the five phases; some make each of them the storehouse of a different substance; some assign to each of them a type of energy; and others state that each organ is the “master [*zhu*]” of some other part of the body, such as the sense organs.<sup>96</sup> None of these treats the body as a microcosm of the state with the mind as ruler.

In contrast with the *Huang Di nei jing*, where the heart/mind figures largely as one in a series of internal organs and a storehouse of substance, discussions of the mind’s relation to the senses in philosophical texts usually insist on hierarchical control. They describe the mind as a ruler while the senses are ministers who try to act on their own authority. This vision of the senses as rebellious elements within a larger unity figures in a passage from the *Lü shi chun qiu*: “Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things [the cosmos] or one person’s body, these are called ‘grand unities [*tai yi* 太一].’ Grouped eyes, ears, nose, and mouth or the grouped ‘five grains’ and ‘cold and hot,’ these are called the ‘grouping together of different things [*zhong yi* 眾異].’”<sup>97</sup> While the universe and the body treated as wholes are unities, they contain clusters of objects marked by their otherness [*yi* 異]. Within the body, for reasons discussed later, the clearest image of otherness is offered by the senses.

This threat of the senses is prominent in early Chinese philosophy. Unlike Western philosophy, which treats the senses as suspect because unreliable in their perceptions, early Chinese texts usually treat them as dangerous in their reckless desire for sensual stimulation: “There are innumerable sounds, colors, flavors, and precious and unusual things from distant lands which are sufficient to change the mind and alter the intent [*zhi*], to destabilise the refined spirit energies [*jing shen*], and disturb the blood and energy.”<sup>98</sup> Sensual stimulation, associated with the exotic goods so prized in the Han dynasty, disturbs every dynamic aspect of the body: the mind, the mental energies, and the blood and vital energies.

Other texts attribute the threat to the sense organs. They portray these as agents with their own motives that they will recklessly pursue unless forced by the mind to serve the collective good. Examples of this appeared earlier in the “*Nei ye*” and the Yangist chapters of the *Lü shi chun qiu*. The latter is rich in discussions of the tensions between the mind and the senses:

The ears, eyes, nose, and mouth are the servants of life. Even though the ears desire sounds, the eyes colors, the nose fragrances, and the mouth tastes, if these are harmful to life then you stop. Among those things desired by the four senses/officials [*guan*], those which are not beneficial to life will not be done. Seen from this point of view, the ears, eyes, nose, and mouth cannot act on their own authority. There

must be something controlling them. They are just like officials who cannot act on their own authority, but must have someone controlling them.<sup>99</sup>

Here the political image of the body suggests that certain parts of the body would, like certain officials, do as they pleased and create chaos if not rigorously controlled. The sense organs were, like officials, limited in their range. Noting only the objects of the world, the senses were unable to perceive the highest truths and actions, those of Heaven.<sup>100</sup> The *Zuo zhuan* presented this idea in a passage that described the senses as potential traitors (see note 66). Within the body, the control of the senses marked the proper functioning of the mind, just as in society it revealed the presence of the sage:

Heaven gives life to people and causes them to have desires. These desires have their essential nature, and this nature has its limits. The sage cultivates these limits in order to halt his desires. Therefore he only carries out his essential nature. The ears' desire for sounds, the eyes' for colors, the mouth's for taste, these are essential nature. The desires of noble and base, stupid and clever, worthy and unworthy are all identical; even Shen Nong and the Yellow Emperor are therein identical to Jie and Zhou. What distinguishes the sage is that he attains his essential nature. When actions are based on valuing life, then one attains one's nature. If not, then one loses one's nature. . . . The common rulers [*su zhu* 俗主, see chapter four] harm their essential nature, so all their actions result in loss and defeat. Their ears cannot be satiated, their eyes satisfied, or their mouths filled. So their bodies are all decaying and swelling, their sinews and bones stiff, their blood channels blocked up, and their nine openings void.<sup>101</sup>

Failure to control rebellious organs ruined the body, which here marks absolute failure.<sup>102</sup>

Suspicion of the senses appeared in a late fourth-century text discovered at Guodian, where it is part of a larger concern about the fate of the body under the threat of stress and exertion:

For agitation of the heart/mind, longing is the worst. For stress in planning, [worry about] calamities is the most serious. In the utmost use of emotions, joy and sorrow are the greatest. In disturbances of the body, that which pleases is the most extreme. In exhausting physical strength, the pursuit of profit is worst. The eyes' love of colors and the ears' joy in sounds result in accumulated, repressed energies. These can easily cause a person's death.<sup>103</sup>

While worries over the senses and their desires do not appear in the proto-*Laozi* discovered in the same tomb at Guodian, it does figure in the received version.<sup>104</sup>

This tension between the senses and the mind also occurs in a discussion in the *Xunzi* of the relation of proper education to the body:

The learning of the true gentleman enters through his ears, is stored in his mind, spreads through his four limbs, and is embodied [*xing* 形] in his movements and repose. . . . The learning of the petty man enters through his ears and comes out through his mouth. Since the distance between ear and mouth is only four inches, how could it be sufficient to make excellent the seven-[Chinese] foot body of a man?

Transforming the body is the ultimate goal of learning. Only by inserting the heart/mind between the gates to and from the outside world can learning transform the body. Otherwise it exits even as it enters, leaving the body unchanged. This chapter concludes with a reference to the *Lun yu*'s assertion that educated sense organs perceive nothing contrary to the dictates of what is right.<sup>105</sup>

The need to discipline the senses led to the elaboration of a theory of ritual and music as the bases of physical and social well-being. This topic forms the subject of a separate monograph that I am in the process of writing. Here it is only necessary to note that ritual and music provided a frame within which the desires of the senses could be given proper form. Colors, sounds, tastes, and smells that the senses desired all appeared within ritual and music, but were kept in the bounds of proper pattern. When ritual completely guided the body, then "his caution will not go against his body, nor his eyes and ears against his mind."<sup>106</sup> This theory developed ideas from the *Zuo zhuan*, in which ritual was the necessary form for the perfection of the body and the channeling of its energies.<sup>107</sup>

Texts in the Daoist tradition sometimes proposed the more radical alternative of renouncing the senses entirely:

If he can be like this, then [the perfected man] forgets his internal organs and leaves his senses behind. His mind's intent [*zhi*] is completely focused within, attaining to a coupling with the One. Staying in place he does not know what he does; travelling he does not know where he goes. Muddled, he departs; abruptly he returns. His body is like dried out wood, his mind like dead ashes. He forgets his five depots and renounces his form and skeleton.<sup>108</sup>

Another passage in the *Huainanzi* states that blocking the senses allows one to enter into the Way and "return one's refined spirit energies to their ultimate genuine state." Senses can be renounced because ultimate things lie beyond vision or hearing.<sup>109</sup> While a program of abandoning the senses is radically at odds with the idea of perfecting them through ritual or music, the two share common ground in their suspicion of the sense organs.

In addition to its image as a state, the body was also depicted as a replica of the cosmos. This resemblance was hereditary, for the analogy of the body and the cosmos often figured in association with the idea that the union of Heaven and Earth produced all life, including the human body. This union, and the resultant bodies, were described in terms of the interaction of vital energy (*qi*). Like the body/state, which contained elements that would rebel unless curbed, so the body/cosmos was formed from disparate substances that were coarse or refined, noxious or beneficial. Just as the perfection of the body as a state required the discipline of ritual and music, so the perfection of the body as energetic world system required the expulsion of coarse or noxious substances and the incorporation of refined and beneficial ones.

The union of Heaven and Earth to produce life figured in accounts of both the origins of the cosmos and of the annual cycle that in spring reenacted the emergence of things. The latter appears in the “Monthly Ordinances” calendar’s account of spring: “Heaven’s energy descends, while Earth’s energy leaps up. Heaven and Earth join together, and all the plants flourish and stir.”<sup>110</sup> Here the descent of Heaven’s energy to link up with the rising energy of Earth results in an act of mating that generates the return of life. The “Li yun” chapter of *Li ji* similarly states: “Humans come from the generative power of Heaven and Earth, the mating of yin and yang, the coming together of the spirits, and the finest energies of the Five Phases.”<sup>111</sup> Imperial decrees consequently attributed prodigies to “*yin* and *yang* energies being separated.”<sup>112</sup>

These abstract accounts become more graphic and explicitly sexual in two passages from the “Record on Music” that describe the generation of animal bodies and then human procreation:

When Heaven and Earth stimulate and join, while yin and yang attain one another, then they illumine, protectively cover, and nourish all things. Only then do plants flourish, buds emerge, wings begin to beat, horned animals procreate, and hibernating insects come into the light and return to life. Winged creatures cover and protect their eggs, while furry animals couple and then nurse their young. Neither animals born in wombs nor those born in eggs perish.

The energy of Earth rises up and that of Heaven descends. Yin and yang rub together. Heaven and Earth agitate one another. Drumming it with thunder and lightning, arousing it with wind and rain, setting it in motion with the four seasons, warming it with the sun and moon, all forms of fertilization [*hua* 化] arise. Thus music/joy is the harmony of Heaven and Earth. If the fertilization is not timely there will be no birth, and if men and women are not properly distinguished [through having different surnames] then chaos will arise. This is the nature of Heaven and Earth.<sup>113</sup>

The same essay provides another account of the fecundating process, although it invokes the work of powerful spirits who join together as intermediaries of Heaven and Earth: "Ritual and music rely on the nature of Heaven and Earth. They communicate with the generative power of the spirit intelligences. Causing the celestial spirits to descend and the earthly spirits to rise, they congeal [*ning*] in these refined and coarse bodies, and put in order the divisions between father and son, ruler and subject."<sup>114</sup> In the light of the other passages, the link between the rising and descending spirits and the formation of the bodies clearly echoes the mating of Heaven and Earth to generate life.

It remains uncertain whether the refined and coarse bodies are two categories of beings, as suggested by a syntactic parallel with the celestial and earthly spirits, or whether bodies are composed of both refined (celestial) and coarse (earthly). Both readings are supported by the "Jing shen" chapter of the *Huainanzi* that states that after the division into Heaven and Earth:

It then divided into yin and yang and separated out into the eight extremities [of the Earth]. Hard and soft emerged together, and the myriad objects then took shape. Gross energies formed the creatures while refined energies formed people. Therefore the refined spirit energies belong to Heaven while the bones belong to the Earth. When the refined spirit energies enter their gate [of Heaven] and the bones return to their roots [the Earth], what will then remain of me?<sup>115</sup>

This posits both a hierarchy of creatures based on the refinement of their energies, and a human body formed from combining more and less refined substances derived from Heaven and Earth.

The idea of a body composed of refined and coarse substances was elaborated by Wang Chong in the late first century A.D. He also argued that life depended on the opposed substances remaining together, while death was a consequence of their separation:

What people call spirits and ghosts are all made from the great yang energies. These are the energies of Heaven. Heaven can produce people's bodies, so it can also imitate their appearances. That from which people are born are yin and yang energies. The yin are responsible for making the bones and flesh; the yang are responsible for making the refined spirit energies [*jing shen*]. When people are alive, the yin and yang energies are both present. Therefore the bones and flesh are strong, and the refined spirit energies are full. The refined spirit energies form the intelligence; the bones and flesh form physical strength. Therefore the refined spirit energies speak, while the body holds firm. Bones, flesh, refined energy, and spirit energy mingle together and cling to one another. Therefore one can live a

long time without dying. When the great yang energies are isolated and without the yin, then they can only form images. They cannot form a body. They lack bone and flesh, while possessing refined spirit energies. Therefore they are only seen briefly flickering, and then return into nothingness.<sup>116</sup>

Life requires the union of complementary energies and is necessarily limited because such unions are brief. Bodies without refined energies are lifeless skeletons, while refined energies without a body are insubstantial, flickering ghosts. The text also posits a full hierarchy of substances rising from the most solid, the bones, to the most refined, the spirit energies. However, just as the fleshy, material substances lack all dynamism without the admixture of the more refined energies, so these energies lack any fixed substance without being joined to the bones and flesh.

Producing the human body from the union of Heaven and Earth also led to a point-by-point correspondence between the structure of the body and that of the cosmos. The refined and elevated parts of the body matched elements of Heaven and the less refined those of Earth.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, they shared a common energetic substance. Thus, one essay in the *Huainanzi* remarks: "Heaven, Earth, and the cosmos are one human body. Everything within the three dimensions is a single human frame. . . . The men of ancient times shared a common energy with Heaven and Earth."<sup>118</sup>

This parallel between the cosmos and the body is also indicated in the usages of the term "conjoining energy [*he qi* 合氣]." This term, which appears in both philosophical and medical texts from the late Warring States and Han periods, refers either to the union of the energies of Heaven and Earth that engendered all living things, or to the sexual union of a man and a woman that engendered offspring. Wang Chong explicitly put these two uses in parallel:

When Heaven and Earth conjoin energies, people are born. It is like when husband and wife conjoin energies, offspring are spontaneously born. When husband and wife conjoin energies, it is not the case that at that moment they desire to obtain a child. Moved by emotional desires, they join, and thus generate children. Since husband and wife do not deliberately generate children, we know that Heaven and Earth do not deliberately generate people.<sup>119</sup>

This argument is based on the assumption that human mating is identical in form to the original union of Heaven and Earth, and that the former is fundamentally a direct extension of the latter. Ideas of bodies formed from conjoining energies and the ranking of those energies in a hierarchy of refined and coarse lead directly to theories of the emergence of human hierarchies. Passages in the *Li ji* proceed from the generation of life by Heaven and Earth to the emergence of the household and the lineage as units of human repro-

duction, and then to the state.<sup>120</sup> Several passages assert that the life of the state depends on the union of the energies of Heaven and Earth, just as do the body and the household.

Sacrificing to the ground at the altar of the soil, one guides the yin energy. . . . The sacrifice is made on a *jia* day, in order that one uses the origin of the days. The Son of Heaven's great altar of the soil must be open to frost, dew, wind, and rain in order to bring the energies of Heaven and Earth into contact. Therefore one builds a roof over the altar of the soil of a state that has perished, so it can no longer receive the yang energies of Heaven.<sup>121</sup>

The vitality of the state depends on the ruler's sacrifices joining the energies of Heaven and Earth. This is a ritual and to a certain extent sexual form of the idea that the ruler acted as a link between Heaven and Earth. Here that linkage appears as an organic process modeled on the primal conjoining of energies that first generated life.

The notion of maintaining life by preserving the energetic links between Heaven and Earth, and ending life by cutting those links, also figured in ideas about human immortality. In an anecdote preserved in the *Lü shi chun qiu* and later criticized by Wang Chong, the physician Wen Zhi deliberately offends the king of Qi in order to produce strong emotions that will cure his illness. The outraged king orders that Wen Zhi be boiled alive. However, when the latter is tossed into the boiling liquid of a tripod, he remains there unaffected and totally composed for three days and three nights. Wen Zhi then remarks: "If you truly desire to kill me, then why not cover the tripod, in order to cut off the connection of the yin and yang energies? The king ordered them to cover it, and Wen Zhi thereupon died."<sup>122</sup> Wang Chong argues that the death resulted from suffocation, but the story explicitly states that covering the tripod "cut off the yin and yang energies," a fate identical to that of the altar of the soil. According to the text, it was the joining of those energies that allowed Wen Zhi to survive in the boiling liquid, just as masters of the Way become immune to harm from water or fire.<sup>123</sup>

Just as the ruler maintained his state through rituals that replicated the generation of the human body, he also helped in his rituals to produce the cosmos. Furthermore he surrounded himself with a corps of officials who formed a surrogate body for which he acted as mind:

Sacrificing to god on high at the suburban altar is the means of fixing the position of Heaven. Sacrificing to the altar of the soil within the capital is the means of laying out the benefits of the Earth. The ancestral temple is the means of providing a root for true humanity. Sacrifices to the mountains and rivers are the means of guiding the spirits. The five domestic sacrifices are the means of providing a root for service. Therefore the invocators are in the ancestral temple, the

Three Lords in the court, and the Thrice Venerable in the schools.  
The king places the shamans in front, the astrologers behind, the  
diviners and blind musicians to his left and right, so that the king in  
the middle as the heart/mind will perform no actions.<sup>124</sup>

This maps the state's ritual sites onto the cosmos, so that their rituals help maintain the cosmic structure. At the same time, the masters of state ritual and religion form a four-sided mandala around the king, echoing the four directions of the earth, while he resides unmoving at the center as the heart/mind. This provides another version of the model in which a correct mind establishes a perfected body that propagates order to the edges of the earth.

Another passage depicts how the ruler draws on the powers of the cosmos to generate the state/body, and then helps reproduce the cosmos in his sacrifices. This again links the body of the ruler, the elements of the cosmos, and the key sites of the state's ritual program:

Government is the means of hiding the body/self of the ruler. So government must be rooted in Heaven. It imitates Heaven to send down commands. When commands are sent down from the altar of the soil, this is called imitating Earth. When sent down from the ancestral temple, this is called humanity and duty. When sent down from the altars of the mountains and rivers it is called summoning up [spirits]. When sent down from the five domestic sacrifices it is called the institutions. This is the means by which the sage can hide his body in complete security.<sup>125</sup>

Such accounts of the origins of the body, the household, and the state are linked in several texts to the origins of ritual. This again demonstrates the close ties between ideas about the body and those about rites. In lists of the "roots" from which ritual emerged, the *Xunzi* states twice that "Heaven and Earth are the root of life."<sup>126</sup> One list next names the ancestors as the root of "kind [*lei* 類]." This progression, which again traces a line from the initial generation of the human body by the cosmos to that of the household, recurs in a discussion of the suburban altar sacrifice: "The myriad things are rooted in Heaven, while humans are rooted in their ancestors. This is the reason for a human co-recipient to the High God. The suburban sacrifice is the great means of repaying one's roots and returning to one's beginnings."<sup>127</sup> The human co-recipient was the dynastic founder, so in this highest regular sacrifice the ruler made offerings to the two sources of his physical being, which were also the twin origins of human ritual. A related passage connects the cosmic origins of humanity and its rituals to the health of the body:

Ritual must be rooted in the Grand Unity [*tai yi* 太一]. Dividing, this forms Heaven and Earth. Revolving, it forms yin and yang. Changing, it forms the four seasons. Laid out, it forms the spirits.

Descending, it is called *ming* ["destiny," "allotted lifespan"]. Its organ/officers [*guan*] are in Heaven. Ritual must be rooted in Heaven. Moving, it reaches the Earth. Laid out, it reaches service. Changing, it follows the seasons. It accords with social roles and arts. Among humans it is called "nourishing." It is practiced in goods [gifts], toil, yielding, drinking, eating, capping, marriage, mourning, sacrifice, archery, charioteering, court assemblies, and visits. So the duties of ritual are the great beginnings of humanity. They are means of keeping faith and cultivating amity. They make firm the connections between skin and flesh, and the ties between tendons and bones. They are the means of nourishing the living and seeing off the dead.<sup>128</sup>

Here the perfection of ritual culminates in the perfection of the body and of the body politic.

Links of the perfected body to contact with the highest divinities figure in an account from the *Huainanzi* of the origin of omens in the energetic links between Heaven and the sage:

The sage is the one who contains the heart/mind of Heaven, who can thus thunderingly move and transform the whole world. When the total focus of his refined energies stimulates from within [his body], then the form-giving energies move in Heaven. Then brilliant stars appear, yellow dragons descend, the auspicious phoenixes arrive, sweet springs emerge, auspicious grains are born, the Yellow River does not flood, and no great waves well up in the oceans.<sup>129</sup>

This develops the idea in the *Zuo zhuan* that the energies of people produced anomalies, but it substitutes the sage for the collectivity. The passage also echoes accounts of the creation of all things through the interaction of the energies of Heaven and Earth, but the perfected energies of the sage join with those of Heaven to produce magical beings, rather than ordinary creatures.

These passages on the congealing of the energies of Heaven and Earth treat the human body as a composite of substances of contrasting degrees of refinement. A passage from the *Huainanzi* further suggests that such a fusion is inherently unstable and dangerous:

If Heaven has two types of energy then there will be a rainbow [an inauspicious sign]. If the Earth has two types of energy then it will let what it stores leak out. If men have two types of energy then this produces sickness. Yin and yang cannot be both winter [yin] and summer [yang]. The moon is not acquainted with the day, nor the sun with the night.<sup>130</sup>

Yin and yang are adversaries, as in the model of the annual cycle where the rise of one entails the decline of the other. Fusing the two produces illness.

Most texts do not argue for a program of purification by eliminating one or another substance. The energies of Heaven and Earth are correlates, both equally necessary to human health.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, a small number of passages identify the energies of Heaven with life and those of Earth with death, and argue that one should expel the latter. Thus, the “Death Signs of the Yin and Yang Vessels” discovered at Mawangdui begins with the statement:

All three yang vessels are the energies of Heaven. Of their ailments, only those where bones break or the skin tears lead to death. All three yin vessels are the energies of Earth. These are the vessels of death. When yin diseases create disorder, then death occurs within ten days. The three yin [vessels] rot the depots and putrefy the intestines. They control death.<sup>132</sup>

Here the yin vessels and energies of Earth are not only specifically tied to death, but they are held responsible for the decay of the body’s organs. While the energies of Heaven are not here linked with life, they lead to death only when parts of the body suffer serious physical damage.

The association of the yin vessels with death is described at length in the “Cauterization Canon of the Eleven Vessels of the Foot and Forearm.” After listing the conditions that indicate death due to yin vessel diseases, the text adds: “When the ailments of the three yin vessels are mixed with ailments of the yang vessels, then they can be treated. . . . In yang vessel ailments where bones are broken and muscles severed, but there are no yin vessel ailments, one does not die.”<sup>133</sup> Again the yin vessels are linked to death, while diseases of the yang vessels can even reduce the mortality of yin diseases. Other passages in which the term “yin” refers to the phallus note that it departs, (i.e., becomes impotent and therefore “dead”) prior to the body itself. Impotence as death appears in a Mawangdui text that describes formulas for improving virility as the “way to raise the dead.”<sup>134</sup>

Associating death with Earth and life with Heaven also appears in the Mawangdui text “Eliminating Grain and Consuming Energy.” This is an early discussion of one of the most important techniques of immortality, replacing grain in the diet with herbs and breathing exercises.<sup>135</sup> Near the end of this heavily damaged text, it states: “One who eats grain eats what is square; one who eats energy eats what is round. The round is Heaven; the square is Earth.”<sup>136</sup> This associates with Heaven the vital energies that secure life, and with Earth the grain whose consumption leads to death. To avoid grain and consume energies is to turn the body toward Heaven and life and away from the Earth and death.

A final link of yin with death and yang with life comes from a second-century B.C. lacquered human figurine discovered in Sichuan. This has what appear to be the body’s main channels drawn as red lines.<sup>137</sup> However, the lines on the figurine do not correspond to any system of channels described in the received or discovered medical literature. One feature, pointed out by

Vivienne Lo, is the absence of the major yin channels, particularly those on the legs. Instead the channels largely converge on the sense organs. Lo has suggested that the figurine may depict a body perfected through breathing and gymnastic exercises described in the self-cultivation literature.<sup>138</sup> One aspect of this process is the elimination of corrupting yin elements. If this speculative reading proves to be correct, it would be another piece of evidence for a link between yin energies and death in early Han medical thought.

Although advocacy of accumulating aspects of Heaven and reducing those of Earth is rare, the idea that life could be extended through ingesting some energies and expelling others was widespread. Beginning in the late Warring States period, poetic, philosophical, and medical texts all mentioned breathing exercises that accumulated beneficial energies and eliminated harmful ones.<sup>139</sup> The rubrics for the beneficial and harmful energies that coexist in the body vary from text to text. Some contrast “true” or “correct” energies with “deviant” ones. Others contrast “new” with “old.” However, they agree that the body contains both helpful and harmful energies and that one should augment the former and eliminate the latter.

In most cases these techniques consist of breathing exercises, often performed at specified times when beneficial energies in the environment were abundant and could be drawn into the body.<sup>140</sup> The aforementioned “Eliminating Grain and Consuming Energy” contains a breathing exercise coordinated to the time of day as a way of eating energy.<sup>141</sup> “Ten Questions,” found in the same tomb, also discusses controlled breathing and repeated swallowing of saliva as means of expelling old substances, incorporating new energies, and circulating them through the body. Thus, one passage describes the “way of the Heavenly Teacher to eat spirit energies”:

The Yellow Emperor asked the Heavenly Teacher, “What do the myriad things get so they can move? What do the plants get so they can grow? What do the sun and moon get so they are bright?” The Heavenly Teacher replied, “If you examine the nature of Heaven and Earth, then yin and yang are the essential. If the myriad creatures lose them, then they have no progeny. If they gain them they thrive. Consume the yin to congeal [reading 凝 as *ning* 凝] the yang. Match it against the spirit illumination.

The way of consuming yin: Empty your five depots and disperse your three malignancies, as though you could not eliminate them. This is what is most prized in consuming the simple/undivided [*pu* 樸, following an emendation suggested by Donald Harper]. Still your spirit wind, secure your ribcage, triply pound [an irregular pulse] but do not carry it to completion, then the spirit wind is born and the five tones respond. Suck it in not more than five times, bring it to your mouth, receive it into your heart/mind. This is prized by the

four limbs. The ‘dark cup [saliva]’ then arrives. Drink it not more than five times. The mouth invariably finds it sweet. Bring it into the five depots. The body will then be extremely relaxed. Spread it to your flesh and skin, so that it reaches the tips of your hairs. Then the hair vessels are permeated. The yin water then arrives, soaking into the yang blaze. Firm and sturdy, one will not die. Food and drink accord with the body.”<sup>142</sup>

Many points here are obscure, and I have relied on Donald Harper’s translation and commentary. What is clear is that once again the passage describes a process of emptying out certain parts of the body to remove destructive forces and then replacing them with new energies drawn in from the outside or from other parts of the body. In fact, as other passages in the same text show, the saliva that was swallowed was thought to be generated by inhaling exterior energies.<sup>143</sup> These energies ingested in the form of the saliva then had to be circulated through the body, reaching to its outermost tips.

Two other points are significant. First, yin energies must be consumed in order to strengthen the body. This seems to contradict the association of yin with death. However, all the Mawangdui macrobiotic texts and especially the “Ten Questions” repeatedly insist that the yin element of the body is the most subject to decay and death. Thus, one reply states, “If life suffers a calamity, it is invariably because the yin essence [*jing* 精] leaks out, so the hundred vessels grow clogged and abandoned.”<sup>144</sup> It is precisely because yin, particularly in the male body, is prone to disease and death that it must be specially nourished. Second, yin and yang figure here under the emblematic elements water and fire. These two potentially warring elements must be brought together in the body as complementary powers to secure health and longevity. Yang “fire” seems to be preexisting, while yin “water” must be created through breathing and swallowing saliva. Apparently the cooling power of this newly generated liquid allows the yang energies to “congeal” and hence provide sustenance for the body.

Other discussions suggest similar models. A reply to a question about life-spans notes that Heaven is long-lived because its energies are exhausted and then recharged with the cycles of the moon. Earth similarly does not decay because it passes through seasonal cycles of hot and cold. The speaker then argues, “You must examine the true nature of Heaven and Earth, and practice this with your body.” The program for bodily practicing the nature of Heaven and Earth consists of concentrating essential energies [*jing*] through breathing and swallowing exercises:

Those skilled at regulating their energies and concentrating essential energies accumulate the signless [energies of Heaven and Earth]. Essence and spirit well up like a spring. Breathe in the “sweet dew” [some kind of energy or vapor] and accumulate it. Drink the “blue-gem spring” and “numinous cup” [saliva] and make it circulate. Elim-

inate the fowl and love proper habits. The spirit will then flow into the body.

The way to breath in energies: You must cause it to reach the extremities, then essence will be generated and not lacking. The upper and lower body will both be essence. Cold and warm will tranquilly generate [like Earth]. Breathing must be deep and long, so that new energies will be easily retained. Old energies create aging; new energies create longevity. Those skilled in regulating the energies cause old energies to disperse at night and new energies to gather in at dawn, so that the latter will penetrate the nine opening and fill the six storehouses.<sup>145</sup>

The text then gives rules for varying these procedures depending on the season and the time of day. These variations are necessary in order to guarantee that one draws in only the proper energies and expels all noxious influences, in accord with the ambient conditions.

A key development of the image of the body as a fusion of celestial and earthly energies appears in uses of the terms *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄 (or *humpo* as a synonym compound), loosely translated as “souls.” In the dominant interpretation of Western Sinology, these were twin components of a human being. One was an active yang element (*hun*) that at death returned to Heaven, and the second a passive yin element (*po*) that returned to Earth. The fate of these two souls was supposedly central to Han funerary cult.<sup>146</sup> Scholars who focused on evidence from tombs rather than scholastic texts have challenged this interpretation, and an article by Kenneth Brashier has effectively refuted it.<sup>147</sup> The materials collected and issues raised in this debate shed considerable light on early Chinese conceptions of the body and its constituent elements.

The clearest link between the cosmic image of the body and the discourse on *hun* and *po* appears in the “Zhu shu” chapter of the *Huainanzi*: “Heaven’s energies become the *hun*, and Earth’s energies become the *po*. Guide these back to their mysterious home, where each occupies its own dwelling. Guard them so they are not lost, and thus ascend to communicate with the Grand Unity.”<sup>148</sup> Another passage indicates that the “mysterious home” referred to here is in the human body: “The *hun* and *po* occupy their dwellings, and the refined energies guard their root. Death and life will work no transformation within the self, so it is called the supreme spirit.”<sup>149</sup> These passages employ the model of the body being produced through the union of Heaven and Earth, but they introduce the terms *hun* and *po* as equivalent to the energies referred to elsewhere.

As Brashier has pointed out, the central point here is the necessity of keeping the *hun* and the *po* within the body. The self is perfected by preserving these two entities that came, respectively, from Heaven and Earth in their bodily dwellings. The medical texts of the period evince the same atti-

tude, associating the *hun* and *po* with other dynamic components of the body that are essential to health. Their chief worry is that the *hun* and the *po* will disperse and depart from the body.<sup>150</sup> Thus, the *Huang Di nei jing ling shu* argues: “When the blood and energies are in harmony, the constructive and defensive circulation completely open, the five depots completed, the spirit energies lodged in the heart/mind, and the *hun* and *po* both present, this forms a complete person.”<sup>151</sup> Elsewhere in the medical literature *hun* and *po* appear in lists of rarefied entities that are stored within the five depots, or of the coarser dynamic substances of the human body.<sup>152</sup>

As Brashier has demonstrated, failing to concentrate the *hun* and *po* or losing them results in mental disturbances such as bad dreams, confusion, loss of memory, or madness.<sup>153</sup> The most common cause for loss of the *hunpo* was some extreme emotion, usually fright.<sup>154</sup> Loss of the *hunpo* thus is related to the English phrase “frightened out of one’s wits.” This identification of the *hunpo* with mental faculties is already demonstrated in anecdotes from the *Zuo zhuan*, wherein loss of the *po* or the *hunpo* leads to disrespectful behavior in rituals or to inappropriate responses such as weeping at a joyful celebration.<sup>155</sup> In one anecdote an observer states: “I have heard, ‘Mourning at the joyful and finding joy in the mournful are both cases of losing one’s mind.’ The mind’s essential brightness [*jing shuang* 精爽] is called the *hunpo*. If their *hunpo* departs, how can they survive for long?”<sup>156</sup> This is another prophecy of death based on ritual failings, but it traces the inappropriate conduct to the loss of the essential mental powers here identified as the *hunpo*.

The retention of the *hunpo* is also central to the use of the term in Han funerary practice. In Han funerary inscriptions the *hun* or *hunpo* is said to linger in darkness in the tomb, while the more refined and ethereal spirit [*shen* 神] soars up to Heaven or moves freely through the world. References to the *hunpo* descending into the tomb, the earth, or the Yellow Springs appear in protective texts buried in tombs, in divinatory texts, and in the dynastic histories. Within the tomb, the *hunpo* is still linked with mental functions. Thus, the hymns that conclude inscriptions often pose the question of the consciousness or awareness of the *hun*.<sup>157</sup> Because the *hun* was the locus of the deceased’s consciousness, efforts were made to try to keep it in the tomb. The late Eastern Han text *Feng su tong yi* reports that spirit masks could be placed on the corpse to keep the *hun* within.<sup>158</sup> Sealing its orifices with jade or covering it in a jade suit likewise kept its lingering energies from dispersing. This would prevent the corpse from disintegrating and returning into the earth from which it had emerged. The *Lun heng* states that people placed models of servants and stockpiles of food in the tomb in order to pacify the *hun*, here again identified as the element of consciousness.<sup>159</sup> The exposure of the skeleton in a tomb robbery could pollute the *hun*, indicating that the latter remained connected to the bones.<sup>160</sup> In short, the main goal of Han funerary rituals was to keep the lingering energies in the body to prevent its complete dissolution back into the elements whose union had led to its birth.

The aforementioned models of the body as a fusion of disparate energies advocated extending life through ingesting beneficial substances and removing harmful ones. However, in discussion of the *hunpo* both medical procedures and funerary rites tried to resist the natural tendency of disparate substances to separate and resolve back into their original condition. This theme of death as the separation of substances that had been temporarily joined figures in numerous texts. Thus, the frequently cited passage from the “Jiao te sheng” in the *Li ji* on the *hun* and *po* states: “The *hun* energies [or “*hun* and energies”] return to Heaven, and the bodily *po* [or “body and *po*”] return to Earth. Therefore one seeks the meaning of sacrifices in the principle of yin [Earth, body, and *po*] and yang [Heaven, the energies, and *hun*].”<sup>161</sup> Here death is the dispersal or separation of temporarily joined energies. It is significant that *hun* is not opposed to *po*. Instead *po*, linked with the body, is in syntactic opposition to the vital energies (*qi*). *Hun* is linked to the vital energies, and opposed to the body. The same linkages and oppositions, as well as the association of *hun* with refined spirit [*shen* 神], figure in other *Li ji* chapters that identify death with the return of the body’s constituent elements to Heaven and Earth. The same idea also appears in other Han writings such as the *Yilin* and the *Lun heng*.<sup>162</sup>

However, most texts say that the *hun* remains with the body in the tomb, while the more refined *shen* separated at death and moved freely. Thus, in Han funerary practice the *shen* received offerings at the ancestral temple, rather than the grave.<sup>163</sup> The *Huainanzi* combines this idea with the aforementioned image of a battle for mastery between the mind and the senses:

When the ruler of a great state dies, they bury his skeleton amid the vast fields, but sacrifice to his spirit in the Bright Hall [see chapter five]. This is because the spirit is nobler than the bodily form. Thus if the spirit rules then the bodily form will obey, but if the bodily form conquers then the spirit will be exhausted. Although acute hearing and vision are employed, one must lead them back into the spirit.<sup>164</sup>

Defining death through the separation of the body and the spirit also figures in the poem “Guo shang,” which likewise invokes the theme of the *hunpo* existing in the realm of ghosts:

Bodies having perished, spirits become numinously potent;  
Your *hunpo* become ghost heroes.<sup>165</sup>

The adjective *ling* applied to the *shen* in this passage functions elsewhere as a synonym for *shen*. Its possession distinguished powerful and efficacious spirits from harmless ghosts.<sup>166</sup> Moreover, Zi Chan in the *Zuo zhuan* defended the belief that spirits could return from the dead and kill people by explaining how an ordinary *hunpo* could achieve the status of *shen ming*.<sup>167</sup> According to Zi Chan, it was as a *shen* and not as a ghost that the dead could wreak havoc

among the living. Death was also identified with the loss of the *shen* in the *Huang Di nei jing ling shu*:

The one who loses his *shen* dies; the one who obtains his *shen* lives. . . . At fifty the energies of the liver begin to decline, so the “leaves” of the liver grow thin, fluids of the stomach reduce, and eyesight fades. At sixty the energies of the heart begin to decline, so one suffers, worries, and grieves. The energies of the blood grow lazy, so one loves to sleep. At seventy the energies of the spleen are void, so the skin dries out. At eighty the energies of the lungs decline, so the *po* departs, and therefore one is prone to garble one’s words [associating absence of *hunpo* with mental confusion]. At ninety the energy of the kidneys is scorched, and the channels of four of the depots are empty. At one hundred all five depots are empty, the spirit energies [*shen qi*] all depart, and the physical body [*xing hai* 形骸 “form and skeleton”], left all alone, dies.<sup>168</sup>

The body’s decline is a stripping away of ever higher substances: the physical energies, then the *hunpo*, and finally the spirit *shen*. The departure of the *shen* leaves only a dead, skeletal body.

The separation of spirit and body as the key moment in departing from the world figures also in the poem “Far Roaming,” which tells of a Daoist adept’s ascent to the realm of nondifferentiation and eternal existence. One couplet reads, “The spirit suddenly departs and does not return; The body dries out and all alone remains behind.”<sup>169</sup> Although it shares images with the description of death in the *Huang Di nei jing ling shu*, this passage is not an account of death. Instead it tells how the adept escapes from the world of bodies formed from the mingled energies of Heaven and Earth. The process resembles dying in that it separates the temporarily conjoined substances and returns each to the cosmic realms from which they had emerged, but the culmination of the process is not the separation of the two kinds of energy. Instead it leads to an ultimate return to the “‘Grand Primordium’, the realm of space and time prior to the differentiation of physical phenomena.”<sup>170</sup> However, such an ultimate destination also figures in certain accounts of dying, particularly those described by critics of elaborate burials. In such arguments the goal is often the dissolution of bounded existences back into the unbounded. Thus, one Han speaker argued that the energies that made up the body returned not to Heaven and Earth, but to the primal realm of nondistinction that preceded all divisions: “As for those who die, their primal energies [*yuan qi* 元氣] depart the body, and their pure *hun* disperses. These go back to simplicity and return to their origins, going back to the limitless. Having already dissolved, [the body] rejoins the manure and soil.”<sup>171</sup> Here, as in “Far Roaming,” the result of the dissolution of the human body into its elements is a return to the primal, undivided simplicity prior to the separation of Heaven and Earth.

Thus, during the late Warring States and Han, the terms *hun* and *po* did not generally refer to a pair of “souls” that divided at death, but rather to a refined bodily substance associated with mental faculties. The loss of this substance or substances led to mental disturbance or decline, rather than death. Moreover, they could continue to adhere to the body and function as mental powers even after death. They were in turn linked to other substances, the essential energies [*jing*] and spirit energies [*shen*], in a hierarchy of ascending refinement. The human body emerged from the fusion of all these energies, as well as the coarser energies that formed its physical structures.<sup>172</sup> The life cycle sketched in the *Huang Di nei jing ling shu* consisted of the sequential development of these substances followed by their progressive loss. The hierarchy could for rhetorical purposes be reduced to the simple polarity of Heaven and Earth, but in full versions it consisted of a series of substances and structures arranged on a scale from the most coarse and dense to the most ethereal and refined.

Within the body the most solid and coarse was the skeleton. In some accounts the key division in the body lay between the more refined and dynamic substances—*hunpo*, *qi*, *jing*, and *shen*—and the coarser flesh and bone. In this context, bones played two major roles. First, bone defined the body in images of the grave and the afterlife. Second, bones also defined the body as an element of the kin group. Kin were linked bodily as “bone and flesh [*gu rou* 骨肉].” These two closely related roles in burial and kinship suggest yet another aspect of the Chinese vision of the body as a temporary composite of opposed substances.

The skeleton endures in the ground longer than any other corporal substance. Consequently, the use of bones or the skeleton as a marker of death and funerary ritual occurs in many cultures. In the West the skeleton appears as the embodiment of death, the ultimate *memento mori*, and the image of the deceased in such works as the fifteenth-century “transi” tombs whose lower register depicted a rotting skeleton gnawed by vermin. In early Chinese texts the skeleton also marked death. Thus, the “Tan gong” and “Ji yi” chapters of the *Li ji* state:

That the bone and flesh return to the Earth is destiny. As for the *hun* energies, there is nowhere that they do not go.

All living things must die, and the dead must return [*gui* 歸] to the Earth. This is called a ‘ghost [*gui* 鬼]’. The bones and flesh end down below. As yin they form the soil of the fields. The body’s energies soar up on high to become shining light.<sup>173</sup>

The link also figured in denunciations of elaborate funerals: “[The wise] thought elaborate funerals beggared people and destroyed their livelihoods, while providing no benefit to the dried bones and rotting flesh. Therefore burials were sufficient to gather in and lay out the corpse, cover it, hide it, and that was all.”<sup>174</sup> Only bones and flesh were buried, and these in turn rotted

away and returned to the earth. Attempts to defer their decay with coffins and jade suits were doomed to failure.<sup>175</sup>

The association of the skeleton with death is even clearer in Wang Chong's critique of "liberation through the corpse." In this practice the devotee developed a new body in which he departed as an immortal, leaving behind his fleshly body like the castoff skin of a snake. The impossibility of such a practice, according to Wang Chong, was demonstrated by the lingering presence of the skeleton:

What is this so-called "liberation through the corpse"? Does it mean that the body dies and the refined, spirit energies depart? Or does it mean that the body does not die but is able to escape from its skin? If it means that the body dies and the refined, spirit energies depart, this would be no different from death. All people are then immortals. Does it mean that the body does not die but escapes from the skin? All those who study this method and die leave their bones and flesh completely present. They are no different from ordinary corpses. When cicadas depart and are reborn, turtles shed their shells, deer shed their antlers, or any shelled thing sheds its shell, they all take their bones and flesh to depart. This could be called "liberation through the corpse." Now as for those who die through studying the Way, the corpse and that which is to be reborn are virtually identical. This cannot be called "liberation through the corpse."<sup>176</sup>

The presence of the skeleton demonstrated that what had taken place was an actual death and that what was left behind was a genuine corpse. Thus, the presence of a skeleton defined a corpse. Wang Chong likewise denied the possibility of altering the body's form to extend life. While hair and skin could undergo minor changes, such as the whitening and wrinkling that accompany an extended life, the bones are beyond change and hence mark the certainty of ultimate death.<sup>177</sup>

Since skeletons marked death, their presence in the world was a sign of social breakdown. In lesser cases a skeleton that had not been properly buried, or whose burial had been disturbed, appeared to a ruler in a dream to seek redress.<sup>178</sup> More serious were piles of "dried bones and rotting flesh" littering the countryside.<sup>179</sup> These demonstrated the horrors of war, the cruelty of rulers, or the barbaric nature of early times. Such was the importance of removing the bones of the dead that the *Zhou li* charged an official with the task of interring all skeletons left unburied. The "Monthly Ordinances" stipulated it as a duty of the first month to "cover bones and bury rotting flesh."<sup>180</sup> Moreover, these ideas were carried out. An Eastern Han commentator identifies an office that in his day performed the function of the *Zhou li* official. Furthermore, Han dynastic histories record many cases in which the govern-

ment assumed the task of collecting and burying skeletons, or of providing subsidies so that impoverished families could inter the skeletons of their dead.<sup>181</sup> Finally, some wealthy families or individuals charitably organized burials for families that were too poor, or for whole families wiped out in floods and plagues.<sup>182</sup>

One writer justified this policy as a public health measure because corpses left unburied at the New Year caused plagues in the summer.<sup>183</sup> However, he also argued that one had to bury corpses in order “to give peace to the wandering *hun*,” so there was clearly also a religious aspect. The *Zhou li* official gathered skeletons prior to major sacrifices, and elsewhere the burial of abandoned corpses preceded sacrifices to secure rain.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, stories show that the failure to bury corpses resulted in unhappy spirits who manifested themselves in strange phenomena:

South of the city wall of Luoxian whenever it rained there was a wailing sound that was heard in the government offices. This had gone on for decades. [Chen] Chong, having heard of this, wondered about the reason for it. He sent some minor officials to investigate. They returned and said, “As the age has declined and the times grown chaotic, many people have died there without their skeletons being buried. Might the reason lie in this?” Chong mournfully gave a pitying sigh. He then ordered the district officials to collect and bury them. From this time the wailing sound ceased.

Wang Chong also mentions such wailing produced by unburied bodies, although he rejects the idea that these sounds are the mourning of unhappy spirits.<sup>185</sup>

Some stories state that corpses not buried could become “flying corpses” capable of killing people.<sup>186</sup> Stories in the post-Han *Sou shen ji* also show that improperly buried corpses could harm people, and that such corpses might appeal to officials to give them a proper burial.<sup>187</sup> The ideas underlying such government policies, ritual practices, and stories are clear. Bones and the flesh that clings to them were the parts of the body that belonged to the dead. Since the dead and the living should not mingle (see chapter two), the presence of skeletal bones in the world collapsed essential distinctions. The consequent pollution threatened the performance of rituals and even threatened life.

However, there was at least one context in which skeletons emerged in a licit manner: reburial. Han people usually buried husband and wife together, an act sometimes called “joining the bones.”<sup>188</sup> Thus, most tombs were reopened and entered by the living, who would then witness the skeletal condition of human remains. Although the procedure was widespread, the propriety of resultant contact with corpses was sometimes still a matter of debate.<sup>189</sup>

Although the skeleton is paired with flesh in these passages, the bones were the ultimate foundation of the body and the locus of mortality. The

dependence of flesh on bone is shown by early texts that describe returning the dead to life as “giving life to the dead and putting flesh on white bones.”<sup>190</sup> Bones provided a frame on which the flesh could be restored. The reliance of flesh on bone is also indicated by medical texts’ emphasis on maintaining the closeness of the former to the latter.<sup>191</sup> This same idea, with the valuations reversed, figures in the description of supple female dancers as “rich in flesh and minute (or ‘lacking’) in bone.”<sup>192</sup>

While “bones and flesh” were both the image of death and the ground of mortality, they were also the substance of kin ties. They were the bodily element common to all kin who shared what in the West are called “blood ties.” This use of the phrase “bones and flesh” is common in early literature, particularly figuring in such phrases as the “closeness [*qin* 親]” of kin, kin “ties [*shu* 屬],” or “separating [*shu* 疏]” kin.<sup>193</sup> The *Lun heng* opposes *gu rou* to *ta zu* 他族 “other lineages,” using “bone and flesh” to describe members of a patriline.<sup>194</sup>

While most texts use “bone and flesh” as an idiom, the *Lü shi chun qiu* provides a gloss that offers insight into early Chinese ideas about the body. This follows a story in which a man long separated from his mother hears a beggar singing at the gate, is extraordinarily moved by the song, and discovers that it is his mother. This leads to the observation:

Relations of parents to children or children to parents is like two parts of a single body or the same breath/energy being separately breathed. It is like plants having flowers and fruits, or trees having roots; even though they are in different places they remain linked. Hidden intents reach from one to the other, they rescue one another from pain or suffering, and they are moved by the other’s worries or longings. In life they take joy in one another, and in death they mourn. This is called “the closeness of bone and flesh.” Their spirit energies emerge from full devotion and find a response in the other’s mind. Their refined energies attain one another, so what need is there of words?<sup>195</sup>

Here the “closeness of bone and flesh” denotes a shared substance that makes kin part of a single body. This substance provides a physical substrate joining kin together in the same manner that roots connect to plants or stems to flowers and fruits. Kin are further joined at every stage from the breath energy of *qi* to the refined energies *jing* and even the supreme spirit energies *shen*. But it is the bone that is the ultimate foundation and the locus of these shared energies.<sup>196</sup> The idea that kin share a common body is also expressed in the statement that the imperial heir “continued the body [*ji ti* 繼體]” of his predecessor.<sup>197</sup>

The idea of *gu rou* as a common body did not usually apply to relatives by marriage, who had no shared substance.<sup>198</sup> Although one imperial decree

states that “husband and wife are a single body,” this statement is used to justify a joint burial, which as previously noted could be called “conjoining the bones.”<sup>199</sup> Thus, husband and wife, who shared no substance by birth, became a single body when their bones joined in the tomb. Once again it is in funerary rites, the central ritual for defining and preserving lineages, that bodies came to be defined through their core elements of “bone and flesh.”

Another phrase identifying the skeleton with kinship is a formula that describes the request to retire from government as “begging for one’s skeleton.”<sup>200</sup> This formula reflects the idea that the early imperial world was divided into two spheres, the state and the family. Those who entered state service rose out of their households into a sphere defined by loyalty to the ruler who embodied universal order. Upon retirement they returned to a household realm defined by particularist kin ties. Biographies of officials were structured in terms of the movement between these two realms (see the Conclusion section).<sup>201</sup> In this context, possession of the skeleton that linked the body to a given kin group marked movement between the household and the state.

The skeleton as physical foundation of the body’s energies also figures in early Chinese beliefs relating to the location of the *hunpo*.<sup>202</sup> Stories from the late Warring States and Han periods show that many Chinese believed that the *hunpo* resided in the skeleton, or, more precisely, the skull. The ritual expressions of this belief were noted earlier, in discussing the use of coffins, jade suits, and masks to keep the *hun* within the body while preventing the latter from rotting. However, the idea that the *hunpo* resided in the bones led to more unusual behavior.

The most dramatic case is that of Liu Qu, a grandson of Emperor Jing (r. B.C. 157–141) who became enamoured of his concubine Zhaoxin. Discovering that two earlier favorites were planning to eliminate this new rival, he and Zhaoxin murdered them and three of their maids. Zhaoxin subsequently fell ill and saw the murdered women in her dreams. To destroy the unhappy spirits, Liu Qu had their bodies dug up and burned them to ashes. After being promoted to official wife, Zhaoxin had all rivals murdered. One named Wangqing was tortured by Liu Qu, Zhaoxin, and the assembled concubines until she threw herself into a well and drowned:

Zhaoxin fished her out, sealed her vagina with small wooden stakes, cut off her nose and lips, and cut out her tongue. She said to Liu Qu, “Previously when we killed Zhaoping, she came back to frighten me. I want to reduce Wangqing to a gruel to prevent her from becoming a powerful spirit [*shen*].” With Liu Qu she removed Wangqing’s limbs, placed her body in a large pot, where she boiled it together with peach tree ash and poisons. She summoned all the concubines to observe it. It went on for several days and nights until the body was completely reduced to a gruel.<sup>203</sup>

In a later case the victim's corpse had its limbs cut off and was buried wrapped in brambles.

The apparition of the murdered women in dreams showed that their spirits were still conscious and active. To end this posthumous existence, their bones had to be pulverized. In the next case the process went further, boiling the corpse in poisons and demonifugic substances until the skeleton was reduced to the consistency of a gruel. This annihilation of the vestiges of the body, above all the skeleton, prevented the energies of the deceased from turning into a powerful spirit that could harm her killers. The rendering of the body into a gruel echoes the Yellow Emperor's disposal of the body of his rival Chi You, who also in certain versions of the myth returned after death. In some accounts the king of Yue boiled Wu Zixu's corpse to prevent his spirit from returning to wreak vengeance.<sup>204</sup> The boiling of the corpse in a pot for several days and nights also recalls the execution of Wen Zhi, perhaps explaining why the king of Qi chose such an unusual method in his attempt to eliminate a reputed master of esoteric techniques.

This treatment of the corpses of the murdered concubines was not unique. When Dong Zhong was executed for plotting a rebellion during the annual military training session, Wang Mang had his own personal guard chop up Dong Zhong's body in order to "suppress inauspicious events," and had the remains placed in a bamboo container: "He arrested all of Zhong's lineage and ground them into a meat sauce which was mixed with poisons. He placed the remains together in a pit lined with foot-long sword blades and ringed with bunches of brambles."<sup>205</sup> This combines the procedures employed by Liu Qu: first rendering them into a gruel mixed with poisons to neutralize any lingering energies, and then surrounding them with brambles to immobilize whatever remained. The aim was to destroy the powers of the deceased by pulverizing flesh and bone, and then confining in the tomb whatever energies survived.

Some believed that the skeleton with its *hun* could not only change into an evil creature, or allow the dead to haunt survivors, but also grow back flesh to return to life. This is discussed in Zhuang Zhou's address to a skull that subsequently appeared to him in a dream. In response to the skull's claim that death was the highest happiness Zhuang Zhou replied: "If I had the Master of Lifespans restore your body to life, to recreate your skeleton and flesh, and restore your parents, wife, children, and neighbors, would you desire this?"<sup>206</sup> The skull acted like the skeletons of the deceased concubines, using its *hun* to invade dreams. Zhuang Zhou's question also hints that the skeleton could through the intervention of a powerful spirit have its muscle and flesh restored and once again form a living body.

A text found at Fangmatan demonstrates that Zhuang Zhou's suggestion was not merely a literary conceit but an actual belief.<sup>207</sup> A man who had died and been buried for three years was brought back to life by the Master of Lifespans, and then dug up from the tomb. He remained on the tomb for three days, and only after four years was he able to hear and to eat the food

of the living. Even then he still lacked hair, had black skin, and could not readily move his limbs. The long period before the dead man could return to the human world, even then lacking features of a living body, suggests that he had been reduced to a skeleton that only gradually grew back its exterior. Stories of skeletons at least temporarily reassuming a fleshly body also appear in later fiction.<sup>208</sup> Thus, not only could life be extended through methods of holding the body and spirit together, but even after death a form of existence continued so long as the *hun* and the skeleton remained united. In rare circumstances the continued union of the skeleton with the *hun* could even allow the resurrection of a living body.

#### INTERFACES OF THE BODY

The idea that the body emerged temporarily from diverse energies entailed not only that it was a composite, but also that the divisions between interior and exterior were not absolute. Early Chinese treated the limits of the body not as rigid boundaries but rather as permeable or extendable membranes. This already figured in the “*Nei ye*,” which argued that self-cultivation could extend the body’s influence from its own center to the edges of the world. Inversely, the desires of the senses for external objects could lead to the occupation of the human interior by the external world. Constant exchange through porous boundaries between the body and the outer world also figures prominently in early Chinese discussions of “wind” and “breath/energy (*qi* 氣).” These provided a medium for the transmission of influences between the bodily microcosm and the greater world.<sup>209</sup>

While the self endured by maintaining a separation between inner and outer, this division could never be absolute. Rather than denying the flow of energies between the person and the outer world, the dominant early Chinese model of the self demanded the regulation of such flows. It paid great attention to the interface of body and outside world, where dynamic exchanges took place. Like state frontiers, these were not fixed limits, but rather flexible zones that extended outward when the inner realm was well regulated, and collapsed inward when it was not.

This section deals with early Chinese accounts of the interfaces between the self and the outer world, and of the privileging of the body’s surfaces as sites of meanings and zones of control. The topics are the skin as a means of diagnosis and a site of therapy, the physiognomy, shadows, and finally hair and clothing. Each of these has been the topic of essays or monographs in its own right. Here I will simply sketch those aspects that indicate how the body was understood as part of a larger whole within which the divisions between internal and external remained fluid and shifting.

Chinese medicine has always focused in diagnosis and therapy on the body’s surface as a zone of exchange between internal and external forces. The organs, so central to the Western medical body, are ill-defined material

substrata to what Manfred Porkert calls “orbs of functions” defined by energy flows.<sup>210</sup> As John Hay has argued, the system of acupuncture meridians posits that the patterns of energy within the body and including what we define as internal organs are palpable and manipulable at its surface. An energy identified with the wind circulated between the human body and the outer world, but also penetrated the body through the skin and its pores.<sup>211</sup> Finally, several of the major therapies, notably moxibustion and acupuncture, applied substances to the skin or pierced it with needles. The body’s surface offered signs for reading its condition and provided a key therapeutic site. While important therapies involved ingesting medical recipes, the central concerns of Chinese medicine were more often than not focused on the boundaries of the body and the outer world.

Diagnosis through examining surfaces took several forms. In late imperial China these were hierarchically ranked in a series based on the senses employed in examining the patient. From lowest to highest these were touch, questioning, listening and smelling, and gazing. This sequence corresponds to a pattern found in many cultures in which the more immediate and physical senses, taste and touch, are inferior to those with a wider range that do not depend on contact, hearing, and sight.<sup>212</sup> However, for all senses with the exception of hearing, the object remained the body’s surface.

The sense of touch read the body in a science of pulses.<sup>213</sup> One feature of the Chinese science of pulses that contrasts with that of the West is that each pulse point can provide information about different organs and conditions depending on the degree to which the doctor presses down.<sup>214</sup> This idea is part of a broader complex of notions that depict a “body structured by the logic of depth.” In addition to diagnosis that proceeded from the outside inward, a common explanation of diseases described them as exterior energies, most often identified with the wind as the macrocosmic form of human breath, that progressively penetrated inward.<sup>215</sup> Both medical literature and literary anecdotes described diseases that moved from the outside inward, growing more difficult to cure as they penetrated more deeply. The skill of physicians depended on the stage of the disease’s penetration at which they could recognize it.<sup>216</sup> Therapies also moved from the outside inward in the form of needles, and the texts emphasize the depth and frequency of needling in therapies for different diseases. Thus, while the skin divided self from world, it also constituted a zone of mutual influences that passed in both directions. Diagnosis, etiology, and therapy all moved inward and outward through this zone.

While the interior of the body was manifest at the surface in pulses that were read by touch, it was also *visible* to the expert gaze in its color and facial expressions.<sup>217</sup> Medical literature pairs the “colors (*se* 色)” of the complexion with the pulses as primary modes of diagnosis.<sup>218</sup> As Kuriyama Shigehisa has pointed out, there is considerable overlap between the vocabulary and practice of diagnosis through colors and certain divinatory procedures. Similarly, Warring States philosophers linked examining facial expressions (*se*) with lis-

tening to words to recognize true character or intent hidden behind overt declarations.<sup>219</sup> In some stories keen observers were able to detect secret plans in the expressions of those who had just made them.<sup>220</sup> More broadly, the people's facial colors could be used to diagnose the health of the body politic.<sup>221</sup> Thus, throughout the Warring States period, *se* figured in several contexts as the prognosticatory form of vision. Through the "colors" or "expressions" that moved across the surface one could detect the hidden or subtle aspects of a physical phenomenon.

Several passages pair *xing* 形 "physical form" with *se*.<sup>222</sup> Kuriyama posits a link between this pairing and phrases such as *xing shen* 形神 "form and spirit energies," *xing sheng* 形生 "form and vitality," or *xing qi* 形氣 "form and energy/breath." In each case the second element is lighter, more refined, more dynamic, and thus more liable to rapid change. A passage from the *Huang di nei jing ling shu* shows its medical significance:

The Yellow Emperor asked, "When a pathogen strikes someone, what form does the illness take?" Qi Bo said, "When an empty pathogen strikes the body, there is trembling and moving. When a correct pathogen [seasonal wind] strikes someone, it remains minute. It is first perceived in the color/complexion, but not recognizable in the body. It seems to be present yet absent, existing yet vanishing, formed yet formless. No one can perceive its true nature."<sup>223</sup>

Unlike the physical form, which reveals ailments in visible trembling or movement, the complexion or expression provide fleeting hints noticed only by a skillful physician. Thus, the text argues that one who can perceive an ailment from complexion is "enlightened (*ming*)" while one who can do it from the pulse is "spirit-like (*shen*)." Recognition of disease from these fleeting signs at the body's surface marks a true physician, because only such perception enables the identification of diseases while they are still incipient and hence susceptible to treatment.

Diagnosis from complexion or expression was closely related to physiognomy, the recognition of character and prediction of fate through examining the body, above all the face.<sup>224</sup> Physiognomy was extremely influential in early China, where it was applied not only to human beings but also to animals. The latter was best known in the received literature through references to Bole, a physiognomist of horses.<sup>225</sup> The practice has been confirmed by the discovery at Mawangdui of a manual on the art. The *Xunzi* also makes sneering references to men famous for physiognomizing chickens and dogs.<sup>226</sup>

However, the most important form of physiognomy was the reading of human character and fate. The best known discussion is the first section of the chapter "Contra Physiognomy" in the *Xunzi*. This denounces physiognomy's privileging of the body over the heart/mind in the determination of human destiny. To refute this belief, the *Xunzi* lists examples of the divergence

of physical appearance and moral character. However, the fact that the authors devote so much effort to refuting physiognomy indicates its prestige, also shown by numerous references in Warring States and Han literature.<sup>227</sup> Physiognomists were employed by leading political figures to evaluate their sons, and they recognized the unique destinies of anonymous people who would later rise to greatness. The most notable example of this deals with the Han founder, but many others appear in the histories.<sup>228</sup> In the Age of Disunion, the literature accompanying the establishment of a new dynasty routinely noted the extraordinary physiognomy of the founder.<sup>229</sup> This proves that despite some scholars' scepticism, powerful political figures routinely employed physiognomy, which became an element of the state's institutions.

The most valuable discussions of physiognomy and related matters are those of the great fatalist Wang Chong. One chapter of his work is devoted to justifying the practice:

People say that destiny is hard to know. In fact it is very easy to know. How do you know it? You know it from the structure of the bones. People receive their destiny from Heaven, and there are outward signs in the body. One examines these outward signs to know destiny. It is like examining units of volume to recognize capacity. The outward signs are the models for the bones.<sup>230</sup>

This chapter consists largely of pre-imperial examples of the extraordinary appearances of sages, and of Han examples demonstrating the accuracy of predictions based on physiognomy.<sup>231</sup>

This shows only that Wang Chong, like many people of his day, believed in a fate inscribed in the body.<sup>232</sup> However, an earlier chapter explains the reasoning that he believed underlay physiognomy. "There Is No Shaping" denies the possibility of changing one's form to alter one's destiny. It criticizes the belief that bodily cultivation would allow one to sprout wings and become an immortal. In the process of denouncing this belief, Wang Chong developed a theory of how destiny was fixed in external form. He also argued that only the ability to alter that form, an ability beyond human powers, could allow one to alter that destiny. The chapter begins:

People receive their primal energies from Heaven. Each thus receives a predestined lifespan, which fixes the size of the body. It is like a potter using clay to make bowls or tiles, or a caster of metal using bronze to make drinking vessels. Once the vessel's form has been completed, it cannot be shrunk or enlarged. Likewise once the human body is fixed, it cannot be reduced or increased. Having used energy to form inborn nature, when the nature is complete then destiny is fixed. The body's energy and the skeleton cling to one another; life and death are fixed by the allotted lifespan. Bodily form

cannot be changed, and the allotted lifespan cannot be reduced or increased.<sup>233</sup>

It also discusses how some animals could change form and why men could not do likewise. Wang Chong then elaborates the link between endowment of energy and physical form:

The body's containing blood and energy is like a sack's storing grain. The size of a sack with one *dan* exactly matches one *dan*. If one increased or reduced the grain, the sack would likewise increase or reduce. People's longevity is fixed by their primal energies. These energies are like grain, and the body is like the sack. If you increase or reduce the longevity, you also would increase or reduce the body. How could the form remain as it was before?<sup>234</sup>

The quantity of energy received at birth determined lifespans and other aspects of destiny. Since these energies filled and animated the body, a notion that goes back at least to the *Mencius*, they determined the person's size and shape. While the analogy with the sack cannot be pressed too far, for it implies that longevity is directly proportional to size, it provides a physical model for directly linking form to lifespan, and by extension to other aspects of an individual's fate.

In addition to justifying physiognomy in a model related to the medical traditions through its appeal to *qi*, this chapter also suggests how the extension of life was possible through the alteration of form. While denying that humans could metamorphose like certain animals, except in prodigies produced by poor government, one passage suggests limited possibilities for change:

That which changes as a person grows old is the hair and the skin. When people are young their hair is black. When they grow old the hair grows white. When it has been white for a long time it turns yellow. The hair changes, but the body does not change. When people are young their skin is white. When they grow old it becomes black. When it has been black for a long time it becomes pitch black, as though covered with dirt. . . . Therefore people can grow old and die later [than they otherwise would]. But the bone and flesh cannot change, so when the limit of longevity is reached one dies.<sup>235</sup>

The substances forming the core of the person cannot alter, so radical extension of lifespan is not possible. However, limited changes occur in the skin and hair, and these changes permit people to defer death. Should one be unable to alter through the lightening of hair and darkening of skin, then one would die much younger. Here the physical aspects of aging manifest a limited capacity for metamorphosis that permits a modest extension of lifespan. The medical theories, as noted earlier, linked the reading of signs at the surface to

the application there of therapies, and the therapies were directly linked to the signs. Similarly, in Wang Chong's theory of the inextricable linkage of form and longevity, the surface was both a visible sign of energetic endowment and, to a limited extent, a site of changes allowing a modest extension of lifespan.

Fluid boundaries between body and environment also appear in early Chinese ideas about the shadow.<sup>236</sup> Although the later Mohists had explained shadows as a result of blocking light, other texts treat the shadow as an extension of the body, sometimes associated with its refined energies.<sup>237</sup> The earliest examples of the latter approach are passages from the *Zhuangzi*:

The penumbra asked the shadow, "A moment ago you looked down and now you look up. A moment ago your hair was bound and now it is untied. A moment ago you were sitting and now you are standing. A moment ago you were walking and now you have stopped. Why?" The shadow said, "Chatter, chatter, why bother to ask? I do these things but do not know why. I am the cicada's outer shell, the shed skin of the snake, something that resembles [the original] but is not. In fire or sunlight I come together, but in darkness or night I temporarily depart. But could they be that on which I depend? How much less could this be, when they are themselves dependent? When they come, then I come with them. When they depart then I depart with them."<sup>238</sup>

Scholars read this as a reflection on the idea of dependence or cause. The penumbra depends on the shadow, which depends on the body. Likewise the shadow depends on the penumbra, which defines its limits, and the body on the shadow. Nothing is an absolute and independent cause.

Less often noted are the references to the cicada's shell and the snake's skin. These are bodily coverings that in molting are left behind. They are empty forms of their former bodies, "something that resembles but is not." The shadow resembles them to the extent that it is the substanceless form of its body. However, the analogy implies that the shadow is part of the body, an outer limit like the skin. Also implicit is the possibility that the shadow could separate from the body if the latter mutated into something else. In fact, several Han stories indicate that the shadow *was* understood as an element of the body, and that the body might lose its shadow under certain circumstances. These suggest ideas about the nature of both the body and its shadow.

The clearest example of those who shed their shadows were immortals. The *Lie xian zhuan*, a work first compiled in the Han although later expanded, demonstrates this. One story tells of Xuan Su, who in the city market sold medicine that cured the king by expelling a dozen snakes that had formed a conglomeration in his stomach. The story continues: "An ancient retainer in the king's household said that in his father's time he had seen Su, and that

Su's body had no shadow. The king then called for Su and had him stand in the sunlight. Indeed he had no shadow."<sup>239</sup> Several post-Han texts record the idea that immortals had no shadows.<sup>240</sup>

As to why immortals lack shadows, Li Jianmin follows several modern scholars in arguing that since their bodies were purged of cruder substances, immortals were composed entirely of refined energies and hence were transparent. This is supported by the poem following the story of Xuan Su that states, "His substance emptied, this destroyed his shadow." Another possibility is suggested by a passage in the post-Han *Baopuzi*:

Take the pill twice a day. After thirty days it cures all the diseases in your belly, and the Three Worms depart. Take it one hundred days, and your flesh and bones will become firm. After one thousand days, the Master of Lifespans will remove your name from the register of mortality. You will live as long as Heaven and Earth, see all that is illumined by the sun and moon, alter form and visage, and transform with no constant shape. In the sunlight you will have no shadow, for you will separately have a light.

"Separately having a light" refers to the fact that, as shown in the self-cultivation texts from Mawangdui, those who repelled old age glowed with their own radiance. Indeed, the "light" is regularly used in the Mawangdui texts to describe such people's skin.<sup>241</sup> Since immortals generated a light of their own, blockage of the sun's light would not produce a shadow.

Immortals' lack of a shadow suggests another aspect of the earlier reference to cicadas and snakes. The sloughing off of outer layers by these creatures was a standard image for "liberation through the corpse." (See the passage cited at note 176.) In this practice, the adept cultivated a new, inner body in which he or she ultimately departed, leaving the old body behind like the skin of the snake or the shell of the cicada. Thus, shadows, snakes, and cicadas all converge in ideas about the transformed bodies of immortals. It is also significant that a self-cultivation texts from Mawangdui that described the glowing skin of those who warded off old age also spoke of becoming a spirit [*shen*] and being able to achieve "liberation through the body." Although Donald Harper argues that these two practices were not identical, they were certainly close. The *Shi ji*, for example, treats "liberation through the body" specifically as an aspect of the "way of the immortals," and hence basically equivalent to "liberation through the corpse."<sup>242</sup>

Other transformed bodies that lacked a "shadow," or rather a reflection that in this period was also called a *ying* 影, were ancient animals who were able to adopt human form. Stories from the *Feng su tong yi* show that Han people already believed in such creatures.<sup>243</sup> The *Baopuzi* states that they menaced adepts who entered the mountains to cultivate their arts:

Therefore Daoist masters who in ancient times entered the mountains all took with them a mirror of more than nine inches in diam-

eter. They hung it from their backs, so that ancient demons would not dare approach them. Sometimes a demon approaches people to test them, so you look in the mirror. If they are immortals or good spirits of the mountains, then in the mirror will be a human form just as it appears to you. If it is a perverse demon bird or beast, than its true appearance will be revealed in the mirror.<sup>244</sup>

Just as the immortals' altered body lacked the negative image that is the shadow, so the animals' altered state lacked the positive image of a reflection. In the case of demons, the reflection was the true body, which, unlike the physical body, could not be altered.

Immortals' lack of a shadow testifies to the heightened powers of their transformed bodies. However, in other contexts the absence of a shadow indicated that the body was diminished or lacked a key feature. Specifically, several texts suggest that the shadow either was a person's spirit (*shen*) or closely related to it. Wen Yiduo argued that the penumbra in the *Zhuangzi* stories was the person's spirit.<sup>245</sup> The link between spirits and shadows figures in the story of Shao Weng's conjuring up the spirit of a deceased concubine of Emperor Wu: "At night he set out lamps and candles, hung up curtains, laid out wine and meat, and had the emperor sit behind another curtain. Gazing from a distance the emperor saw a beautiful woman who resembled Lady Li walking back behind the curtain."<sup>246</sup> Several modern authors have argued that Emperor Wu saw only shadows cast on the fabrics, and that this was an early version of shadow puppet theater.<sup>247</sup> That the emperor believed that visions of a shadow were the spirit of the deceased shows that many people in Han times imagined the spirit in the image of the shadow, or understood the shadow as a visible form of the spirit.

This link between shadows and spirits also figures in the taboos associated with the height of summer on the fifth day of the fifth month.<sup>248</sup> Han texts indicate that a taboo on this date forbade going up on the roof for fear of encountering ghosts. A Tang work, the *You yang za zu*, explains this taboo through appeal to the themes of shadows and spirits: "Customs taboo going up on the roof in the fifth month. They say that in the fifth month 'People molt.' If they go up on the roof and see their shadow, their *hun* will depart."<sup>249</sup> The *Zhuangzi* already linked molting with shadows, and some modern scholars believe that the reference here to molting, the sight of the shadow, and the loss of the soul indicate that the shadow was also lost like the snakeskin or cicada shell with which it had been identified.<sup>250</sup> Calendrical literature from the Han also preceded accounts of the taboos with the statement that in the fifth month "yin and yang struggle, and life and death separate"; or "yin and yang struggle, and blood and energy disperse."<sup>251</sup> The fear that the shadow or the spirit might likewise separate or disperse fits closely with other ideas about the period of the solstice. Moreover, as Li Jianmin has pointed out, in early China, ascending the roof was an element in the ritual of calling back a departed soul.<sup>252</sup> Thus, this taboo clearly indicates that the shadow and the

spirit are elements of the body that could possibly become detached, if not that the two are one and the same.

Another indication that a shadow, or, in this case a reflection, could act as a spirit or shape a body derives from a version of “fetal instruction” described in the Jin dynasty *Bo wu zhi*. Early Han versions of this theory argued that the character of the fetus could be shaped by controlling the environmental stimuli to which the mother was subjected. In the *Bo wu zhi* it was the body of the fetus that was thus shaped, and the shaping was done by gazing at a reflection: “When a woman has been pregnant for less than three months, if she puts on her husband’s clothing and hat, and at dawn circles leftward three times around a well, casts her reflection/shadow in the well, looks at the reflection and departs, does not look back, and does not let her husband see this, she will invariably give birth to a son.”<sup>253</sup> Before the sex of the fetus becomes fixed, the woman shapes it by dressing as a man whom she absorbs into herself by gazing at its reflection. Thus, the reflection of the mother shapes the body of the unborn child, which in turn possesses a shadow/spirit shaped by that reflection.

A final piece of Han evidence linking the body’s energetic spirits and its shadow appears in the *Feng su tong yi*. A ninety-year-old man took a new wife, had sex with her once, and then died. When she subsequently gave birth to a son, the daughter of the deceased challenged the paternity of the child, arguing that such an old man could not have produced a son in one night of sex. After years of legal battles over the inheritance, the chief minister was called upon to settle the case. His decision stated:

“The children of aged men have no shadows, and furthermore they fear the cold.” At that time it was the eighth month (middle of autumn). They took [the disputed child] and a child of the same age, and stripped them naked. Only the old man’s son cried out that it was cold. Again they had them walk side by side in the sunlight, and he had no shadow. Consequently they awarded the property to the son.<sup>254</sup>

Sons of old men lack a shadow because the father’s lack of energy (*qi*) results in a son who is similarly bereft. Two facts show this. First, the father died because “after one act of intercourse his energy/breath was cut off [*qi jue* 氣絕].” Second, the unique susceptibility to cold of such children indicates that they lack the energy to keep their bodies warm. Thus, this story again indicates the belief that the shadow was a visible manifestation of the body’s spirit or energy.<sup>255</sup>

Another extension of the skin that was closely linked to the body was hair. Hair is a key social marker and symbol in most cultures, indicating gender, class, age, character, social role, and degree of civilization.<sup>256</sup> Hair was just such a polyvalent marker in early China. First, like skin, it was a visible surface on which one could read the internal state of the body. Medical texts

frequently describe conditions of hair and what these indicated about health.<sup>257</sup> Sometimes the hairs formed channels along which diseases or external energies moved into the body, or needles were manipulated.<sup>258</sup> Long hair indicated a vigorous old age, so later depictions of immortals often portrayed the length of their hair.

In these contexts, hair was largely an extension of the skin. It was distinctive largely in its mobility and capacity for growth. More important was the belief that great anger manifested itself in hair “standing on end,” which in the modern West is read as a sign of fear. The *Huang Di nei jing ling shu* describes the physical state of the brave man thus:

The brave man’s eyes are deepset and fixed. The hairs of his long eyebrows rise up. His Triple Burner is ordered and horizontal. His heart/mind is straight and direct. His liver is big and sturdy. His gall bladder is full to overflowing. When angry then his energies [*qi*] overflow and his chest swells. His liver rises and his gall bladder moves horizontally. His eyes bulge from their sockets, his hair rises up, and his face flushes. This is the manner of the brave man.<sup>259</sup>

Bulging eyes with hair standing on end as an expression of rage appears also in a description of Fan Kuai during his confrontation with Xiang Yu at the Hongmen banquet.<sup>260</sup> Hair raised by heroic rage could knock the hat off the head, as when Lin Xiangru threatened to smash the jade coveted by the king of Qin.<sup>261</sup> Hair rising straight up also figures in collective scenes of heroic sentiment, as in the account of the witnesses to Jing Ke’s departure on his attempt to assassinate Qin Shihuang.<sup>262</sup> This idea also was depicted in Han art, as in the representation at the Wu Liang shrine of Jing Ke’s attempted assassination. Here the assassin’s hair sticks straight up as he hurls his blade at Qin Shihuang.<sup>263</sup> In these scenes the overflowing energies of heroic warriors spilled out of their skin and through their hair out into the larger world. Hair was particularly suited to the expression of mental states because the *hun* resided in the skull. Consequently, the hairs on the head were virtually direct extensions of the body’s spiritual energies.

Because movement of hair expressed dangerous emotions, its binding defined civilization and even humanity. Children wore their hair in fashions not employed by adults. Adulthood for men and women was marked by binding the hair, for men in the capping ceremony and for women in a parallel ritual involving the pinning of hair. Moreover, different genders and statuses among adults each had distinctive manners of wearing hair. Attention devoted to the binding of hair is particularly striking in the terra cotta army, whose soldiers and officers all feature elaborate hair styles. It is uncertain to what degree these complicated plaitings were utilitarian (to prevent the enemy from grasping hair), to what degree aesthetic, and to what degree a display of virility. In any case, it shows that styles of hair binding were of great interest, even among those engaged in the most masculine of activities.

Since the binding of hair marked adulthood and civilization, leaving hair unbound was characteristic of barbarians, madmen, and ghosts.<sup>264</sup> Not only was untied hair characteristic of ghosts, but the “Demonography” discovered at Shuihudi stipulates that, if the path is blocked by a ghost, one should undo one’s hair, vigorously advance, and the trouble would cease.<sup>265</sup> Unbinding the hair might have unleashed some of the individual’s spirit power, like the warriors’ hair standing on end. Alternatively, unbinding the hair could have transformed the individual into a peer of the ghost who thus ceased to cause trouble. In any case, this apotropaic technique shows how binding and unbinding hair could alter one’s status and/or generate power.

Clothing was closely related to shadows and hair as an interface between body and outside world. Attached to the fleshly body, it acted like hair style to define gender, status, age, or office. By putting on a particular costume, one adopted a social role and assumed its powers. Thus, it became a cliché that the sages had created clothing in order to distinguish people according to their rank and character.<sup>266</sup> The role of costume in delineating the self was particularly important in government service, where every official from the lowest local administrator to the emperor himself was distinguished by costumes and insignia. These became the topic of a considerable literature. The *Zuo zhuan*, *Xunzi*, and other early *ru* works contain numerous discussions of the significance of costume. The early ritual classics likewise frequently discuss what should be worn by whom. They even have specialized chapters on the significance of particular items of clothing, such as the “Meaning of Hats” chapter of the *Li ji*. Many of the later dynastic histories also included chapters on court costumes. Outside the court, all kin ties were defined by obligations of mourning measured in terms of types of garments worn and the periods of time for which they were worn. Thus, as Marcel Granet argued, it is significant that the term *fu* 服 meant on the one hand “clothing” or “to clothe,” and on the other “to submit, to accept a role.”<sup>267</sup> In correctly clothing themselves, people passed from the wild to the domestic and assumed appropriate social roles.

While clothing as an extension of the body plays a key role in all cultures, at least three features of the early Chinese understanding of clothes deserve note. First, as Roel Sterckx has noted, the “*Xi ci*” chapter of the *Yi jing* established the idea that all aspects of human civilization were derived from patterns observed in nature. The origins of human clothing were traced back to the bodies of animals that provided both material and inspiration. Thus, the *Hou Han shu* chapter on court clothing begins:

In high antiquity people lived in caves or in the wilds. They wore clothing of fur and hats of hides, and did not yet have any institutions or measures. Sages of later generations changed this by the use of silk and hemp. They observed the patterns on the variegated pheasant and the colors of blossoming flowers, and then dyed their silk to imitate these. They first made the five colors, and then fin-

ished the process by making them into clothes. They saw that birds and beasts had a system of crests, horns, whiskers, and dewlaps, so they followed these in making hats, ceremonial caps, throat-bands, and fringes to make decorations for the head.<sup>268</sup>

This account, which recurred in other dynastic histories, traces an evolution from a primitive state where people clothed themselves with animal skins to a civilized state where they wore artificial fabrics patterned on the forms, colors, and functions of animal coverings. Clothing thus offered man-made bodies to make up for the vulnerable nudity of the original human condition.

In addition to providing artificial versions of the bodies of birds and beasts, clothing was also an extension of the body that served to express character. Thus, the *Guo yu* says: "Clothes are the outward patterning of one's heart/mind. It is like the tortoise [shell]. If you apply heat to its interior, a meaningful pattern will appear on the outside."<sup>269</sup> Here clothing is the human equivalent of the turtle's carapace, an outer covering whose meaningful patterns reveal hidden truths. This analogy is extended by reference to divination through cracking tortoise shells, suggesting that the energies of a person's character will produce outward visual signs like the heat applied to a shell to induce cracks. The expression of character in clothing took many forms. The wearing of animal hides by warriors or barbarians revealed their savage natures or their ferocity.<sup>270</sup> Similarly, the universality of the emperor's rule, both its lordship over all of nature and its complementary employment of civil power and punishing force, was indicated by the symbols woven into his robes.<sup>271</sup> In these and other cases clothing defined the person who wore it.

The interplay between body and costume is particularly notable in depictions of human figures in Chinese art. The general absence of the nude in Chinese art, in contrast with its centrality in the West, is a cliché, but nonetheless largely true. The body in Chinese art, as John Hay has argued, is unmistakably social.<sup>272</sup> Its meanings derive from its surroundings, from associated people, and above all from its clothing. The erotic attraction of images of the female body appears at its highest in the swirling lines of diaphanous robes, robes whose lightness and mobility express the Chinese ideal of the feminine. Similarly, the ferocity of warriors as depicted in art is expressed in the armor and skins that encase their bodies. In contrast to certain strains in Western thought, which seek truth in the act of stripping away coverings, the truth of the body in early Chinese literature and art had to be clothed in order to be expressed.

This idea also appears in Audrey Spiro's discussion of portraiture in early China.<sup>273</sup> As she argues, even portraits of specific individuals tended to be "ideal" portraits that communicated not a physical reality of face or form but a person's character, role, or conduct. This art aimed at defining people through placing them within the proper social context, clothing them with the appropriate garments, and demonstrating through gesture or pose the

manner in which they related to others. As Nagahiro Toshio argued, the purpose of Han portraiture was to make the essence of the person's character and social role manifest in the "visible symbol of his person." The depiction of clothing was central to such a task.<sup>274</sup> When new ideals of human excellence developed in the Age of Disunion, as indicated in the collective portraits of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, their character and conduct were still formulaically expressed in the lineaments of their clothing and their manner of wearing it. Through all the changes in artistic practice, the self depicted was still largely through the second skin formed by clothing.

### CONCLUSION

The body came to the fore in Chinese thought in the fourth century B.C. In that first emergence of Chinese philosophy, the body became a shared topic of discourse in which different traditions articulated their values. The theme was established as central by the Yangist tradition, which made the proper valuing of the self the premise of its arguments. Their central doctrines included protection of one's life as a chief value, respecting one's spontaneous inclinations, and avoiding the attractions of external objects that could damage life. Within these arguments the body and its various parts figured as markers of the supreme value placed on life and self.

In the same period the self-cultivation described in the "Nei ye" also made the body central to its concerns. Correct physical placement of the body was the first step in the mental disciplines demanded of its devotees. These mental disciplines included a rigorous focus on establishing the mind as the center of the body and the body in turn as the center of the world. The successful execution of the program of self-cultivation resulted in a perfected body marked by supple muscles and glowing skin. The influence of this body in turn was projected to the edges of the world. Like the Yangists, the authors of this text insisted on the necessity of avoiding the sensual spell cast by external objects; yielding to the desire for such objects granted them effective possession of the mind and body.

The *ru* tradition made the body central in its insistence on the importance of rites. In accounts of rituals, and the masters who exemplified their highest forms, the placement and movement of the body became a topic of central concern and careful attention. While attacking the philosophy of the Yangists, the *Mencius* also adopted its practice of making life and the body the measures of highest values, but the *Mencius* used these markers to assert the value of moral virtues. The text also adopted the "Nei ye"'s account of the body's vast energies that could potentially reach the edges of the earth, but as in its critique of the Yangists it moralized this idea by insisting that these energies derived from virtues. Strikingly, however, it insisted that these virtues were parts of the physical body in the same manner as limbs.

Another *ru* text, the *Zuo zhuan*, developed the idea that the perfection of the body is central to ritual. It includes stories in which ritual failings fore-

told imminent death as well as those in which bodily weaknesses explained ritual failings. One story linked new medical theories based on bodily energetics to an etiology of disease based on ritual failures and the social breakdowns that these engendered. The *Zuo zhuan* also challenged the *Mencius* by arguing that moral intent was ultimately derived from physical energies, so that correctly channeling these energies in ritual was prior to and determinative of the development of virtues. This same idea also figured in the concluding passage to one of the texts recently discovered at Guodian.

A discourse on the body in the late Warring States emerged from these foundational texts. It featured at least two major characteristics that recur at all levels of spatial organization. First, it insisted that the body was a composite of diverse and sometimes antagonistic substances. Some programs for the perfection of the body argued for the accumulation of some of these substances and the expulsion of others. Alternative programs insisted on holding the disparate elements together for as long as possible. Second, diverse intellectual traditions argued that the body was not itself an autonomous entity but rather an element of a larger whole. While it was necessary to maintain boundaries defining the body, these boundaries remained both mobile and permeable. Diverse substances, energies, and signs moved outward from the body, or inward from the larger world. Through this flow back and forth, the interface between body and world became an extended zone of progressively radiating influences. In this model the interface between the body and the world consequently became particularly important, and much attention was devoted to such features as skin, face, shadow, hair, and costume.

In the discourse on the divisions of the body, the most important models were the body as state and the body as cosmos. The former dealt primarily with relations between the heart/mind that played the role of ruler and the other organs. The most important of these were the sense organs, which were identified by a graph that also meant "officials." Most texts from the late Warring States and early imperial periods inherited ideas about the senses that had been developed in the fourth century B.C. Senses naturally desired to seize external objects that gratified them, and consequently they were prone to be trapped by the external world. The mind alone could restrain this tendency and thus preserve the integrity of the body. Consequently, the mind and the senses engaged in a constant struggle for mastery that determined the health of the individual and the ability to command the loyalty of others.

In the second model of internal division the body was a fusion of the energies of Heaven and Earth. The former were more refined, the latter coarser and more substantial. Some traditions of self-cultivation argued that one had to draw in new and more refined energies while expelling old and crude ones. Others developed the idea that death and decay derived from the yin energies of the earth. One either had to eliminate such energies by not eating grain, or to supplement them to counteract their tendency to rot away and perish. Other traditions, represented in the medical literature and accounts

of funerary practice, argued that the body had been formed by the progressive accumulation of a gamut of energetic substances. Dying consisted of gradually stripping these away until nothing remained but the physical form. Writers in this tradition emphasized holding together the opposed substances for as long as possible, first to preserve life and then to keep the dead at peace in the tomb. Within this discourse the skeleton, or the “bone and flesh,” was the coarsest and hence most enduring substance. As such, it came to define what endured in the tomb, and what was physically shared by kin.

The body as part of a larger whole figured in the discourse on “winds” and “breath/energy [*qi*].” In this model, outer world and human body shared dynamic energies that on the outside formed wind and on the inside breath or its vital energy. These two constituted a single system in which winds became a major source of disease if they were able to penetrate a body that was lacking in internal breath/energies. Such invasions took place at the skin, and the body was particularly susceptible to them when the pores were opened through exertion and sweating. While such diseases began at the surface, they progressively moved deeper into the body and, in the process of doing so, became ever more serious until they reached the bones and became mortal. At the same time the internal energies moved within the body, but their condition was known through manifestations at the surface in pulses and complexion. Major elements of therapy in turn were conducted at the surface in the form of moxibustion and acupuncture. The latter, however, like the winds operated within an extended transitional zone defined by progressive deepening, so the depth of needling was discussed at length in the medical traditions.

The focus on the body’s interface with the outside world also manifested itself in physiognomy, the belief that a person’s character and destiny were determined by the shape of the body, especially the face. This technique was widely practiced in Warring States and early imperial China, where it was applied to both animals and men. It was patronized by the political elite, and even incorporated into such state practices as the selection of heirs and the dynastic transitions of the Age of Disunion. As a correlate to the idea that destiny was determined by exterior form, exponents of the traditions of self-cultivation argued that destiny, above all longevity, could be altered through the transformation of the body. This idea was criticized in the first century A.D. by Wang Chong, but he still accepted that destiny was determined by exterior form, and that the limited changes of that form in the aging process extended life.

Another form of interface between body and world was the shadow. The *Zhuangzi* described this as the human version of the shell of cicadas or the skin of snakes, a substanceless copy of external form that had adhered to the body but could separate from it. One example of such separation was becoming an immortal, for Han and later texts state that immortals lost their shadows. Similarly, the shadow and the body’s spirit with which it was associated could be lost through violation of the taboo against climbing on roofs

at the peak of summer in the fifth month. This taboo derived from the belief that this period witnessed a struggle between the yin and yang energies that together formed the body, and perhaps by links with the practice of climbing on the roof to ceremonially call back a departed spirit. Finally, the shadow also figured as the visual manifestation of the body's energies in the belief that children sired by extremely old men would have no shadows.

The final aspects of the body's interface with the greater world were hair and clothing. Both were bodily extensions whose patterns distinguished people according to culture, gender, age, status, and rank. Hair was particularly important in this regard, because in growing from the head or skull it was a direct extension of the *hun* spirit energies. Energies generated by strong emotions, particularly rage, came out through the hair and caused it to stand on end. Because of the violence and passions marked by loose hair, its binding was crucial to rituals that marked the transition to adulthood of both men and women. As a correlate of this, unbound hair came to be a hallmark of barbarians, madmen, and ghosts.

Clothing similarly marked the transition between a state of savagery, when people had worn the skin of animals, and that of civilization, where they decked themselves in what several texts described as artificial versions of the coverings of birds and animals. More significantly, the body as depicted in Chinese art was almost invariably a clothed body. This, as several scholars have noted, reflects the fact that the body in early China, and indeed in all of Chinese history, was a social object. Its truth was not revealed in stripping away the costume to reveal the naked body beneath, for the naked body was not the true nature of man. Nudity demonstrated the unaccommodated condition in which men had lived as animals, and the return to which was a sign of social collapse in which people ceased to be human. As part of a society, a necessary condition of being human, one had to be clothed, for clothes generated or marked the diverse roles that made up the social order. Only in suitable attire marking social position, or status in the kin group distinguished by categories of mourning garments, did isolated people find their humanity within the broader order formed by the family and the state.