A Textbook of Physiognomy: The Tradition of the Shenxiang quanbian

By

LIVIA KOHN
Kyoto

Chinese physiognomy as the study of the manifestations of man’s fate in his body is not well known in the West. All that has been generally accepted are early traces concerning the principles and basic notions of this divinatory practice, mostly found in philosophical treatises and biographies of ancient China. Manuals or textbooks of physiognomy, however, which give concrete and detailed instruction on how to judge a person’s character and fate from his body are not found before the Tang. Dated textbooks are only extant from the 10th century onward. Later there is a great variety of physiognomical manuals, but only a limited number of these texts survive today.

Hardly any of them have been brought to scholarly attention. It is the aim of this article to trace the material found in the Shenxiang quanbian, the most complete and most widely available textbook of Chinese physiognomy, to earlier, still surviving materials. The study is not primarily concerned with physiognomy as such; it does not describe either the theory or practice of body divination. Rather, it limits itself to an attempted delineation of a tradition of physiognomy from the earliest manuals of the late Tang to the Shenxiang quanbian of the early Ming. The major patriarchs and masters of the trade are described; the main characteristics of the standard type of physiognomy transmitted to the present day are outlined.

It is found that the physiognomy still practised today can be characterized by three features:

1. It presupposes a theory on the interaction of body and spirit.
2. It gives detailed rules for analysis of body types and features according to the theory of the five phases as well as according

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to animal types.

3. It uses facial complexion analysis, again in accordance with the five-phases-theory.

Manuals belonging to the main, i.e., still active, tradition of Chinese physiognomy inevitably follow this pattern in their description of how to practise body analysis. The earliest text extant of this type is the *Yuguan zhaoshen ju* attributed to Song Qiqiu of the 10th century. While individual methods of analysis can be traced back much further, it seems that the streamlined tradition still alive today goes ultimately back to the Five Dynasties period.

**The Text**

The *Shenxiang quanbian* 神相全編, "Complete guide to spirit physiognomy," is the leading standard textbook of the Chinese traditional way of reading a person's health, character, and—most of all—fate, in his physical appearance. Originally compiled by Yuan Zhongche 袁忠徹, alias Gongda 公達 or Jingsi 靜思, of the early Ming dynasty (1367–1458), who was a well-known physiognomist in his days, the book is now extant in a late Ming edition preserved in the National Central Library in Taipei, Taiwan. In addition, it has been reprinted in the great Chinese encyclopedia *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (chapters 631–644). This latter text in turn served as a basis for modern Taiwanese pocket-book editions such as the one prepared by Liang Xiang-run (Liang 1980).

The fact that the Principles of the *Shenxiang quanbian* are still applied today is apparent in William Lessa's work on Chinese physiognomy, or rather "body divination" or "somatomancy," as he prefers to call it (Lessa 1968). An anthropologist, himself without any more than a basic working knowledge of Chinese, Lessa gained his insights through the active cooperation of prominent practising physiognomists of Taiwan, such as Zhang Shingu. Thereby he made sure that he dealt with an active practice of the present, not a dead remnant of the past. His book, *Chinese Body Divination*, is entirely based on the *Shenxiang quanbian* as far as the description of Chinese practices and concepts goes.

Yet another indication of the present-day importance of the *Shenxiang quanbian* can be found in the fact that the standard Japanese manual of physiognomy edited by the Tokyo Shrine Administration is merely an abridged Japanese translation of the old Chinese text (Jingu-kan 1982).

The text itself divides into twelve chapters in the old Ming edi-
tion, and into fourteen in the reprint made on the basis of the *Tushu jicheng* which follows the latter's division (chapters 631–644). The order of the material and the material itself, however, are quite the same. There are only three instances in which illustrations in the original have been omitted in the reprint:

1. In chapter 4 of the Ming edition eight basic human dispositions are diagnosed with pictures of typical faces attached, but these pictures are not integrated in the reprint edition (Liang 1980: 111).
2. In the same chapter, six standard conditions of life, such as wealth, nobility, poverty, loneliness, long life, and early death, are exemplified in text and illustrations, but only the text is found in the reprint (Liang 1980: 112–115).
3. In the last chapter, there are twenty-four different kinds of energy analyzed, described, and illustrated, but the illustrations do not appear in the reprint (Liang 1980: 344–345).

Looking now at the old edition, one finds that the first and second chapters deal mainly with physiognomic principles in general featuring treatises ascribed to such venerable personages as Lü Dongbin, Guiguzi, Tang Ju, Xu Fu, Guan Lu, and even Bodhidharma. There are also simple expositions on the nature of spirit 神, energy 氣, body 形, and their interrelation with man and the universe. In addition, about forty basic physical types are outlined.

Beginning with chapter 3, physiognomic details are analyzed: the face, the hair, the eyebrows (30 kinds), the eyes (36 kinds), the nose (24 kinds), the ears (14 kinds), then the mouth (14 kinds) together with details like the lips, teeth, etc. With chapter 4, the whole body is gradually explored: the back, breasts, hips, legs. Then physical details such as body movements and activities are interpreted: eating, walking, standing, sleeping, etc. Basic human dispositions are diagnosed, man is understood in terms of the theory of the five phases and their respective geographical directions as well as in terms of the three realms of heaven, earth, and man.

Chapter 5 sees a return to general expositions which are continued through chapters 6 and 7. Various methods according to different masters are given. Chapter 8 discusses the shapes, lines, and signs on hands and feet, chapter 9 deals with women, children, and with types of bodies in general (50 kinds). In chapter 10, the meaning of black spots on different parts of the body is explained along with an exposition on complexion 色. This is continued into chapter 11. The work ends
with the diagnosis of diseases by means of complexion analysis and a
description of different types of energy in chapter 12.

This great compendium of theoretical concepts, detailed analysis,
and systematization of Chinese physiognomy can be rightly viewed as
heir to a long tradition. It cites works of all the great masters of phy­
siognomy and uses earlier manuals, thus summarizing the experience
of ages. The richness gained thereby is what has enabled it to remain
a guide for actual practice down to the present day. Historically speak­
ing, what can we say about this tradition? How much of the material
presented in the Shenxiang quanbian can be traced back how far in
Chinese history? Can we delineate a tradition of physiognomy through
the ages in terms of historical scholarship, i.e., by citing and dating
earlier material still extant? In order to provide the beginning of an
answer to these questions five different aspects shall be considered:

1. The orthodox tradition—authorship and line of transmission
as claimed in the text itself.
2. Materials from old masters—works cited in the text under
specified names of authors.
3. Comparison to earlier manuals—works used in the text without
any ascription, but found in earlier texts.
4. Forerunners of the tradition—single systems of analysis as
presented in physiognomic texts discovered in Dunhuang.
5. A different system—physiognomy as described in the Yue-
   bodong zhongji.

THE ORTHODOX TRADITION

The text itself yields some formal information on its origin. Whereas
we know that it was compiled by Yuan Zhongche, the Ming edition
claims Chen Tuan 陳搏 of the 10th century as its author, with Yuan
Liuzhuang 袁柳莊 as the main transmitter. What do we know about
these men?

Liuzhuang is the alias of Yuan Gong 袁珙 also called Tingyu 廷玉
(1335–1410). He was the father of Yuan Zhongche. Both Yuans were
well known as physiognomists in the early Ming period, both served as
government officials and did numerous prognostications for prominent
personages. Gong even persuaded the monk Yao Guangxiao 姚廣孝
to come out from his monastic seclusion and serve the state. He sup­
posedly recognized Zhu Di 朱棣, later Yongle 永樂 emperor, at an early
age and thereby encouraged him to usurp the throne. Strongly favored
by this emperor, Gong also had a hand in selecting the heir-apparent
(Goodrich, Feng 1976: 1638–1641). After his death in 1410, his son
Zhongche became the most influential physiognomist at the imperial court, accompanying the emperor on the expedition against the Mongols in 1422, where he made some correct predictions about battle situations and outcomes. Serving under the subsequent emperors, he retired in 1439 to write and compile several books on physiognomy, including the *Shenxiang quanbian* (Goodrich, Feng 1976: 1629–1632).

From this basic information one may rightly conclude that Zhongche, the compiler of the *Shenxiang quanbian*, learned his skill and received the tradition from his father. Yuan Gong, however, does not seem to have stood in a family tradition. According to legend, a monk physiognomist named Bieguyai 別古崖 induced him to take up the art (Goodrich, Feng 1976: 1639).²

Our historical knowledge of Chen Tuan, alias Tunan 圖南 is even less than that concerning the two Yuans. He was born in the latter half of the 9th century in Henan. Between the years 900 and 930, he spent much time wandering around famous mountains. During this period he stayed for a longer while on Mount Wudang where he practiced Taoist techniques of mediation, including breathing exercises and fasting. In 937 he is found in Sichuan where he leaves an inscription. It may be assumed that he then resumed his migrations to settle eventually on Mount Hua in Shensi. Here he spent the rest of his life—a considerable span, since he supposedly died at an age of 118 in 989.

Between the 940s and his death in 989 he visited the imperial court twice, once in 956 under Zhou Shizong, and another time in 984 under Song Taizong. At this latter occasion he was honored with the title *Xiyi xiansheng* 希夷先生. In addition, a few other reports on Chen Tuan can be considered within the range of historical authenticity. He once gave a prophesy for Qian Ruoshui 錢若水, stating that this high-ranking official would end his career far before the expected time. He recognized that Zhang Yong 張詠 would have a splendid military career despite his failure in the official examination. His methods of prognostication were mainly those of the *Yijing* 易經 and of physiognomy. He passed these methods on Chong Fang 种放, from whom they were eventually transmitted to such eminent Song dynasty philosophers as Shao Yong 邵雍 and Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (Knaul 1981).

From the stories relating Chen Tuan’s prognosticatory activities, a picture quite similar to that of the two Yuans is drawn. However, legend has it that his skill in physiognomy was not that of a professional (*fangshi* 方士), rather it is described as being part of his oneness with the Tao. As a Taoist saint he could recognize the flow of energies before they became manifest, he could feel the trends of the universe
in his body and act accordingly.

Chen Tuan himself was allegedly taught by the famous immortal Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓 and a rather obscure Taoist named Mayi 麻衣. The latter is reported to have given prognostications on the basis of energy analysis and physiognomy; a work entitled Xinfa 心法 has been ascribed to him (Knaul 1981:76). Lu Dongbin is a very colorful figure who has been made into the patron saint of various Taoist practices and sects. Most of his fame seems to be legendary, since relevant sources on him dated before the Song are scarce (Baldrian-Hussein 1986).

According to the tradition claimed by the Shenxiang quanbian itself, the methods of physiognomy set down in this text go ultimately back to the legendary Lu Dongbin and to the saint Chen Tuan of the Five Dynasties and early Song. From biographical information on these early masters of physiognomy the claim of the Shenxiang quanbian could not be substantiated. Chen Tuan is not officially credited with a work on physiognomy, even though he is famed for his successful application of this art.

Historically speaking, all that can therefore be said so far is that the text was compiled by the younger of the two Yuans in the early Ming who considered themselves heirs of the 10th century sage.

Materials from Old Masters?

Looking now at the various texts contained in the Shenxiang quanbian, one finds that those attributed to a particular author can be divided into four groups:

1. Texts attributed to famous physiognomists before the Tang, in which cases the attributions are likely to be groundless. There is no evidence that these texts were really written by the authors to whom they are ascribed. Rather, the authors themselves often turn out to be physiognomists only according to legends. To this group belong texts attributed to Tang Ju, Xu Fu, Guan Lu, Bodhidharma, and Guo Linzong.

2. Texts attributed to physiognomists of the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Northern Song. Again, these may be nothing but inventions, but here the possibility of finding circumstantial evidence for their authenticity—or at least earlier attributions—may not be excluded. In this group we are dealing mainly with the three figures mentioned above, i.e., Lü Dongbin, Mayi, and Chen Tuan. In addition, there are two minor personages, Xiyu Xiansheng and Hu Seng.
3. Texts listed under the name of some later, i.e., Southern or post-Song author who can be positively identified and in whose case the text might actually be found in another edition. Here the two Yuans are included as well as Zhang Xingjian, the author of the Renlun Datongfu.

4. Texts quoted under the name of personages who cannot yet be identified, such as Luo Zhenren, Yan Shi, Yandian Daoren, Guiyan Xiansheng, as well as Qiu Tanyue, Taiyi Zhenren, Wu Xinjian, and Yao Kuazang.

Pre-Tang

Tang Ju 唐駢 was one of the most famous physiognomists under the Han. She lived in the third century b. c. and is reported to have made a prediction for Li Tuo, prime minister to the first Chinese emperor Qin Shihuang. "Within a hundred days you will obtain the power of the empire" (Shiji 79, Qianfu lun 潛夫論 27).3 Tang Ju, who was originally from Liang, is also mentioned in the "Feixiang pian" 非相篇 of the Xunzi 荀子, an essay critical of "the nonsense of physiognomy" (3.5). None of her works—if there were any—survive or are mentioned in the bibliographical section of the Hanshu. Yet the Shenxiang quanbian credits two titles in her name:

- Xiang shenqi 相神氣, "Analyzing spirit and energy" (chapter 1; Liang 1980: 21–24);
- Xuantan shenmiao jue 玄談神妙訣, "Secret exposition of the wonders of spirit" (chapter 7; Liang 1980: 186).

Xu Fu 許負 has been credited with many short concrete explanatory sections rather than with theoretical discussions. About this greatest physiognomist of the Han two stories have been transmitted. In both cases Xu Fu makes a correct prediction about the future of a noble person. Zhou Yafu 周亞夫, he said, would attain a high rank, yet end up dying of starvation (Shiji 49; Qianfu lun 27; Lunheng 3; Forke 1907: 308–309). Princess Bo, 溥, he predicted, would give birth to an emperor (Shiji 49; Qianfu lun 27). In the former story concrete indications are mentioned for the first time in Chinese literature: the sign of future starvation is found in the "prependicular lines converging at the corner of the mouth" (Forke 1907: 308).

The fact that the first mention of concrete indications is made in relation to Xu Fu may have established a tradition of attributing concrete and detailed information to this particular master of old. The Shenxiang quanbian credits him with the following sections:

- Xiang deqi 相德器, "Analyzing the vessel of virtue" (chapter 1,
Liang 1980: 24–28);
*Lun nannii wuguan* 論男女五官, “On the five senses in men and women” (chapter 2, Liang 1980: 58);
*Tingsheng pian* 聽聲篇, “Hearing and voices” (chapter 2, Liang 1980: 69);
*Xiang kou pian* 相口篇, “Analyzing the mouth” (chapter 3, Liang 1980: 98);
*Xiang chun pian* 相唇篇, “Analyzing the lips” (chapter 3, Liang 1980: 100);
*Xiang chi pian* 相齒篇, “Analyzing the teeth” (chapter 3, Liang 1980: 101);
*Xiang shou pian* 相手篇, “Analyzing the hands” (chapter 8, Liang 1980: 239);
*Xiang zu pian* 相足篇, “Analyzing the feet” (chapter 8, Liang 1980: 249).

Guan Lu 管辂 (209–256) was one of the most famous fate-calculators and prognosticators of his time. One of a group of diviners at the court of Cao Cao, he performed many oracles for various high officials. In his official biography (*Sanguo zhi* 29) his methods are in two cases related to physiognomy. In general he relied more on stem-branch calculation in association with the theory of the five phases, a method closely linked with his name (Needham 1956: 358). Once when visiting Li Guo, he recognized the signs of future death through execution in two of his other guests from the energy between their “celestial court” (天庭, the area between the eyebrows) and their ears. In another case he used physiognomic rules to interpret a dream.

As concerns his works, only one text bearing his name is extant today, the *Guanshi dili zhimeng* 管氏地理指蒙, “Mr. Guan’s geomantic indicator.” The *Shenxiang quanbian* attributes two works on physiognomy to him:

*Renlun yuan’ao fu* 人倫淵奧賦, “The depth of man” (chapter 7, Liang 1980: 195–196);

Guiguzi 鬼谷子, according to standard transmission, was originally named Wang Xiang 王詡 and lived toward the end of the Zhou dynasty. He received the Tao directly from the Highest Venerable Lord 太上老君 and withdrew to Mount Yunqi 雲氣山 where he managed to retain extraordinary youthfulness while living only on herbs. As his dwelling was situated in a deep demonic valley he came to be known as the Master
of the Demon Valley, Guiguzi. He had two famous students, Zhang Yi 張義 and Su Qin 蘇秦.

Stories concerning Wang Xiang are first found in Shihji 69, but the name Guiguzi is not mentioned here. On the other hand, there is a text of this name preserved in the Taoist Canon (DZ 1025), but it deals mainly with methods of meditation and Taoist concepts of the mind. According to Hu Yinglin’s 胡應麟 Sibu zhengwei 四部正偽, this text probably goes back to the works of Zhang Yi and Su Qin mentioned in the bibliographical section of the Hanshu. Only a rather indirect reference to physiognomy is found in the text Guiguzi: “Disregarding the beauty or ugliness of appearance, one can recognize people’s feelings from their features” (DZ 1025; 2, 28b). The commentator adds, “One should analyze people’s features to know their feelings.”

Guiguzi is usually associated with astrology rather than with physiognomy. Some astrological methods have been transmitted under his name. But at least there is some relation according to the traditional image of Guiguzi to the sciences of fate-calculation. The Shenxiang quanbian claims three texts go back to him:

- Xiangbian weimang 相辨微芒, “Analyzing and judging the subtle and the vast” (chapter 1, Liang 1980: 17–19);
- Xiang furen ge 相婦人歌, “Analyzing women” (chapter 9, Liang 1980: 253–254);
- Yuchang tu 玉掌圖, “Jade palm chart” (chapter 8). In Liang 1980: 217, as well as in the Japanese edition (Jingukan 1982: 124), this chart of the lines and mounts of the palm is found under the title Bagua shiergong zhi tu 八卦十二宮之圖, “Chart of the eight trigrams and twelve palaces,” without the ascription to Guiguzi.

Even more obscure is the relation of Bodhidharma 達摩, the semi-legendary founder of Chinese Chan 禪, to the science of physiognomy. According to the account generally accepted, Bodhidharma came from India in about 480 and propagated Buddhism. His most famous accomplishment is the meditation of wall-gazing (biguan 壁觀) which he supposedly practised for nine years without interruption. His life and death began to be embellished by legend from a very early time (Yampolsky 1967: 7–10).

As his legend spread, his venerable name was also cited by other traditions. In Song dynasty Taoism, for example, several methods of meditation were transmitted under his name. It might therefore be assumed that physiognomists, too, wanted to profit from the widely-spread fame of the first Chinese patriarch of Chan. They attributed
the following texts to him in the *Shenxiang quanbian*:

*Wuguan zonglun* 五管總論, “All about the five senses” (chapter 1, Liang 1980: 46);

*Xiang zhushen youqi* 相主神有七, “Seven ways to analyze mastery and spirit” (chapter 2, Liang 1980: 66–67);

*Yan you qixiang* 眼有七相, “Seven ways to analyze the eyes” (chapter 3, Liang 1980: 85; Japanese Jingukan 1982: 168);

*Dongjing lun* 動靜論, “Activity and rest” (chapter 7, Liang 1980: 199);


Guo Linzong 郭林宗 was an official of the latter Han dynasty, his proper name was Guo Tai 郭泰 or Tai 太. He was well versed in different walks of life, but one finds he had no specific reputation as a fate-calculator or physiognomist (*Hou Hanshu* 98). In the *Shenxiang quanbian*, only one text is ascribed to him:

*Xiang wude peiwuxing* 相互德配五行, “Analyzing the five virtues in correspondence to the five phases” (chapter 1, Liang 1980: 19–21).

In all, the study of the attributions of texts made by the *Shenxiang quanbian* to personages before the Tang reveals six famous masters. Two of them, Tang Ju and Xu Fu, are known as physiognomists, two others are semi-legendary religious masters, i.e., Guiguzi and Bodhidharma, one is a famous fate-calculator with occasional recourse to physiognomy (Guan Lu), and Guo Linzong, finally, is an official with no known relation to divinatory practices. Although none of the attributions can be substantiated historically, one gains some idea of how the tradition imagined its forefathers. In the case of Xu Fu, for example, the credit which the *Shenxiang quanbian* has given him for concrete instructions on the analysis of individual parts of the body is true to the image found in other stories about this diviner. All the material, furthermore, ascribed to Bodhidharma is rather aphoristic and slightly obscure—just as befits the traditional image of the venerated founder of Chinese Chan. Guiguzi, finally, though traditionally more famous as an astrologer than as a physiognomist, is credited with a chart of the human palm where mounts and lines are patterned according to various constellations of the stars.

The conclusion that we may draw here is therefore that while the ascriptions made by the *Shenxiang quanbian* to personages before the
Tang are not historically verifiable, they are yet very much in line with the image of the authors found elsewhere in Chinese folklore and religion. We could not establish an early historical tradition of physiognomy on the basis of this material, but we could gain a feeling for the identity of the later masters in terms of tradition.

_Tang-Northern Song._

Before dealing with the various texts ascribed to the group associated with Lü Dongbin, Chen Tuan, and Mayi, let me briefly introduce the two major textbooks of physiognomy which may provide some circumstantial evidence for the allegations of the _Shenxiang quanbian._

First, there is the _Yuguan zhaoshen ju_ 玉管照神局 (hereafter abbreviated _Yuguan_), attributed by all sources to Song Qiéliu 宋齊邱 of the Southern Tang. Song was a high official versed in various sciences of divination, yet the authors of the _Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao_ 四庫全書總目提要 (hereafter _Siku tiyao_) thought it doubtful that he wrote the text himself (III, 2263). The work, which cites Chen Tuan but never uses his honorific title and might therefore be dated to before 984, was found in various libraries during the Song.² The edition published in the _Siku quanshu_ goes back to the _Yongle dadian_ 永樂大典. This seems quite identical with the edition available today, i.e., the one contained in Lu Xinyuan's _Shiwcm juanlou congshu_ 十萬卷樓叢書 of about 1880. This edition in turn served for the reprint by Sunny Books in Taipei, 1982.

As extant today, the _Yuguan_ consists of three chapters. The first (26 Chinese pages; Sunny Books ed., 3–54) mainly gives theoretical accounts. The second (36 pages; Sunny Books ed., 55–126) deals with details of body analysis, and the third (27 pages; Sunny Books ed., 127–180) describes the appearance of different types of energy in the complexion. Although the text itself might not stem directly from Song Qieliu of the Southern Tang, it is very probable that it goes back to the early Song period. Even the critical _Siku tiyao_ authors admit that it quotes only material from before the Song and was obviously well known in this period.

More doubts have to be entertained in connection with the other manual in which materials of the _Shenxiang quanbian_ can be located: the _Taiqing shenjian_ 太清神鑑 in six chapters. Allegedly by Wang Pu 王朴, a high official under Shizong of the Latter Zhou (_Jiu Wudai shi_ 128, _Wudaishi_ 31), this text is not mentioned in any of the bibliographical sources of the Song. In addition, its introduction claims that Wang compiled it in a grotto on Mount Linwu 林屋 in Jiangsu, but detailed study of his life reveals that he never went south of the Yangze
Similarly any connection of Wang with the arts of prognostication belongs in the realm of legend. One must therefore assume that this text stems from the late Song, if not Yuan, period. It existed in a Yongle dadian edition, the one accessible to the Siku tiyao authors. Today two editions can be found: One in Zhang Haipeng’s 張海鵬 Mohai jinhu 墨海金壺 (1920 ed.; reprint in the Congshu jicheng 叢書集成); another in Qian Xizuo’s 錢熙祚 Shoushange congshu 守山閣叢書 (ed. 1844). In addition, the edition of the Siku quanshu might be available by now. The text is usually ranked under “philosophers” 子部, whereas the author is given as “anonymous.”

Coming now to the texts ascribed in the Shenxiang quanbian to personages of the Tang or Northern Song periods, one finds that only two items are attributed to Lü Dongbin. Firstly, the Xiangfa rumen 相法入門, “Introduction to physiognomy,” is found as the first text in chapter 1 (Liang 1980: 15–17). This text could not be located in any other physiognomic manual. Secondly, there is the Xiangfu 相賦, “Physiognomy,” in chapter 5 (Liang 1980: 156–158), found also under the title Lü Dongbin fu 呂洞賓賦 as the first text of the Yuguan. One might surmise that the claim of a tradition going back to Lü Dongbin, expressed in both the Shenxiang quanbian and the Yuguan by placing a work of his at the very beginning, seems to be rather old in physiognomic circles.

Ascriptions to Mayi, however, appear to be of a later date. There is no text found under his name in the Yuguan, and in the Shenxiang quanbian there are only two:

Zalun 雜論, “Miscellanea” (chapter 7, Liang 1980: 200–201);

In the Tushu jicheng edition of the Shenxiang quanbian, a third text is ascribed to Mayi, the Jinsuofu 金鎖賦, “Rhapsody of the golden lock” (Liang 1980: 158), but the text is not cited under his name in the old Ming edition of the text. On the other hand, it is attributed to Mayi by the Yuan dynasty commentator on the Renlun datongfu, thus showing that it was at least extant and associated with Mayi at that time.

More complex is the situation in the case of Chen Tuan, not only because there are different texts attributed to him, but also because the Shenxiang quanbian contains one text which quotes his name in the introduction, and cites him in numerous commentary sections.

The main text by Chen Tuan is the Fengjian 風鑑. This is quoted as Fengjian ge 風鑑歌 arranged in verse, in the Shenxiang quanbian (chap-
ter 6, Liang 1980: 178–181). It is also found as Chen Tuan xiansheng fengjian 陳搏先生風鑑 in the Yuguang (1, 4b-9b; 10–20) as well as under the title Shenbi lun 神秘論 in the Taiqing shenjian (1, 3b–8a). In addition, it is frequently quoted in commentary sections of the Shenxiang quanbian and other physiognomic manuals.

The two main editions of the Fengjian, the one in the Yuguang and the one in the Shenxiang quanbian, are not identical. The former is in prose, the latter in verse. But in content they are rather similar, giving a general survey of the theory and practice of physiognomy. The Fengjian as quoted in the Yuguang can roughly be divided into eighteen sections, most of which are also found in the edition of the Shenxiang quanbian, though not in the same order. The eighteen sections are:

1. Definitions of main terms, such as energy, body, essence, and spirit;
2. Physical appearance according to the five phases;
3. Types of bodies according to animal morphology;
4. The appearance of the "wood" type;
5. Impure, i.e., mixed forms;
6. Mixtures according to the "overcoming" of phases;
7. Spirit as deep or shallow;
8. Energy as strong and weak;
9. Complexion as full or transparent;
10. Complexion as young or old;
11. Body and spirit in terms of surplus and insufficiency;
12. Interaction patterns of the various forces;
13. Thin appearance;
14. Signs of long life;
15. The importance of mental states;
16. Forms of obstruction;
17. Women and men;
18. Noble and humble.

While the order of topics does not seem very clear in this text, the three main themes of standard physiognomy are obvious: theoretical discussions of the principal forces analyzed in physiognomy, typologies of the human body in terms of the five phases and of animal morphology and analyses of complexion. However, the text does not give an exhaustive survey of physiognomy. Rather, it exemplifies the basic principles and main characteristics in discussing specific types, such as the "wood type" with its developments and the type of thin appearance.

Having already been edited in the beginning of the Song in the Yuguang, this text might actually go back to the teachings of Chen Tuan. Moreover, the fact that it is extensively quoted in all the physiognomic manuals since the Song shows the importance of Chen Tuan's teachings in the modern tradition of physiognomy.

In the Tushu jicheng edition of the Shenxiang quanbian, Chen Tuan is credited with the Dongxuan jing 洞玄經 (Liang 1980: 257–259). In the Ming edition (chapter 9), however, this text is cited without any author's name under the title Dongxuan jing xing you qixiang 洞玄經形有七相, "Seven types of bodies according to the Dongxuan jing." Under the title Dongxuan jing zaduan ge 洞玄經雜斷歌 a completely different text is found in the Yuguang (1, 11b-12b; 24–26). It is not ascribed to
anybody.

In addition, the *Shenxiang quanbian* contains a text on energy and complexion, *Qise lun* 氣色論, attributed to Xiyizi 希夷子 (Liang 1980: 325–326). Chen Tuan might be referred to by this name, as he was given the title Xiyi xiansheng in 984. However, this text is not found in any earlier manual. The *Yuguan*, on the other hand, cites Chen Tuan as the author of two treatises which are not mentioned in later texts:

*Xiuli jin* 袖裏金, “Gold up the sleeve” (1, 9b-11a: 20–23);
*Xiang ge* 相歌, “Physiognomy” (1, 11ab: 23–24).

Another mention of Chen Tuan is made in the *Shenyi fu* 神異賦 (chapter 5, Liang 1980: 125–133), which figures as the first as well as the longest of the theoretical treatises contained in the central part of the *Shenxiang quanbian*. Here Chen Tuan is described as receiving the physiognomic tradition from Mayi “in mid-winter sitting around the earth stove in Mayi’s grotto on Mount Hua.... There were no words used in the transmission of the teaching. Mayi gave it to him in secrecy.” As the commentator explains, “he used glimming sticks of wood and wrote characters into the ashes of the fire” (Liang 1980: 125). The text *Shenyi fu* then consists of these very instructions first given with so much obscuring effort by Mayi. The attribution of the text to Chen Tuan represents another milestone on his way to becoming the founding saint of modern standard physiognomy.10

With the three great masters of the 10th century, Lü Dongbin, Mayi, and Chen Tuan, our picture of the tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian* has moved into a somewhat more concrete framework. The *Yuguan* of the early Song has helped to date several ascriptions to the 10th century, and it now seems probable that the standard modern tradition of physiognomy does indeed go back to Chen Tuan whose main physiognomic work *Fengjian* is quoted again and again in the textbooks since the Song.

*Southern and Post-Song.*

This section will deal with two kinds of texts: The *Renlun Datongfu* 人倫大統賦 by Zhang Xingjian of the Jin and its commentary of the Yuan, on the one hand, and the texts ascribed to the two Yuans of the Ming, on the other.

The *Renlun datongfu* 人倫大統賦 is found in entirety but without the commentary in chapter 6 of the *Shenxiang quanbian* (Liang, 1980: 161–178). It is also found in three *congshu* collections, in each case...
accompanied by the commentary. The author, Zhang Xingjian 張行簡, alias Jingfu 敬甫, was an official in the Ministry of Rites under the Jin. He graduated to the civil service in 1179 and was well known for his proficiency in various divinatory sciences, such as astrology and numerological speculation. He left behind several works, notably one compendium on ritual matters, but there is no mention in his biography of any work on physiognomy (Jinshu 106). On the other hand, the Renlun datongfu is mentioned in Huang Yuji's 黃虞稷 Qiangqing tang shumu 千頃堂書目. Here, however, no author's name is given. The author and title are connected only from the Yongle dadian edition onward (Siku tiyao III, 2265).

The extensive commentary to the Renlun datongfu stems from an official of the Yuan named Xue Yannian 薛延年. It is dated to the year 1313, which supports the claim that the text goes back to the Jin (Siku tiyao III, 2265). The commentary with its precise dating is useful in judging the existence and popularity of physiognomic texts under the Yuan.

In content the Renlun Datongfu, a short treatise of no more than 2000—3000 characters, follows the standard pattern of modern physiognomy. First it gives a general exposition on the interrelatedness of body and spirit, then it recounts detailed methods of analysis of the human body based on the system of the five phases. Finally, it discusses colors and complexion.

As the text stands therefore directly in the line of tradition leading from Chen Tuan's Fengjian to the Yuguan, on to the Taiqing shenjian, and later to the Shenxiang quanbian, its commentary also quotes the same texts and authorities found in the other textbooks of physiognomy. About 70% of the texts and authorities quoted by Xue Yannian are the same as those found in the Shenxiang quanbian.12

As concerns the texts left behind by the two Yuans, one notices first that the name of the latter Yuan, Zhongche, identified by historical sources as the actual compiler of the Shenxiang quanbian, is not mentioned in the text itself. On the other hand, several texts are ascribed to his father, Yuan Gong, usually called Liuzhuang, who is also quoted occasionally in commentary sections.

First there is the Shiren ge 識人歌, "Song on knowing man," in chapter 6 of the Shenxiang quanbian (Liang 1980: 181–183). But we know nothing of this text other than its title. Yuan Gong's only extant work today is a collection of poetry, the Liuzhuang xiansheng shijji 柳莊先生詩集, wherein no reference to physiognomy is made.

Another text ascribed to Yuan Gong is the Zalun 雜論, "Miscellanea," in three sections found in chapter 6 of the Shenxiang quanbian
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This, surprisingly enough, is identical with the Zalun contained in the Taiqing shenjian (2, 1a-2a). Even though the commentator claims that this Zalun is already found in the Yuguang, this supposition could not be substantiated, at least for the edition of the Yuguang extant today. Nevertheless, the ascription to Yuan Gong must be regarded as fictional.

A third text ascribed to Yuan Gong is the Renxiang fu人象賦, "On the image of man," found in chapter 7 of the Shenxiang quanbian (Liang, 1980: 188–192). This is probably identical with the Renxiang fu by Yuan Zhongche, a text appended to his collection of popular stories on physiognomy, the Jingu shijian今古識鑑. This text, although contained in the Siku Catalogue, was not available to me (see, however, Goodrich, Feng 1976: 1632).

To summarize, after the heyday of physiognomic systematization in the 10th century, one finds the tradition continued in the Renlun datongfu of the Jin, its commentary of the Yuan, and through the two Yuyans of the early Ming, to culminate in their grand physiognomic collection, the Shenxiang quanbian. All these texts belong to the standard modern tradition of physiognomy and share the same organizational pattern.

Unidentified Authors and Their Texts.
The following authors to whom certain materials contained in the Shenxiang quanbian were ascribed could not be further identified:

- Guiyan xiansheng 鬼眠先生
  - Xiangfa 相法
  - chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 184–186)
- Luo Zhenren 羅真人
  - Xiangfu 相賦
  - chapter 7 (Liang 1980: 198–199)
- Qiu Tanyue 秋潭月
  - Lun nüren 論女人
  - chapter 9 (Liang 1980: 251–253)
  - Shuo furen ge 說婦人歌
  - chapter 9 (Liang 1980: 254–255)
  - Qise ge 氣色歌
  - chapter 10 (Liang 1980: 306–308)
- Taiyi Zhenren 太乙眞人
  - Shu 書
  - chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 182)
- Wu Xinjian 吳心鑑
  - Tongyuan fu 通元賦
  - chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 193–194)
- Yandian Daoren 崖電道人
  - Shenyans jing 神眼經
  - chapter 5 (Liang 1980: 154–156)
- Yang Shi 楊氏
  - Lun shenqi 論神氣
In order to complete this survey of texts given with a specific title and/or attributed to a certain authority in the *Shenxiang quanbian*, a list of all the materials quoted in the commentary to the first five texts of the *Shenxiang quanbian* (chapter 1; Liang 1980: 15–28), presumably by the editor Yuan Zhongche, is given here.

### Texts and Personages Quoted in the Commentary to *Shenxiang Quanbian* Chapter 1. (Number of times in parentheses)

#### Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Quoted by</th>
<th>Number of Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bijue</td>
<td></td>
<td>(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyue</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (also quoted by Xue Yannian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingjue</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fengjian</td>
<td></td>
<td>(16) (Chen Tuan's manual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunyi jing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linfeng ji</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingtal jing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (also quoted by Xue Yannian; not identical with DZ 288)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingdu jing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nüxin jing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinnü jinjing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qingjian</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) (also quoted by Xue Yannian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renling shujing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renlun fu</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) <em>Renlun datongfu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shengfan lun</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenji</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenjie</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (also quoted by Xue Yannian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongxian lu</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) (also quoted by Xue, and in the <em>Taiqing shenjian</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongyuan fu</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (by Wu Xinjian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuxing (ge)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinjing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) <em>A Xinjing 心鏡 is quoted by Xue Yannian</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yijing</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuanshen lu</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuantan</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuchi</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuguan jue</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (by Yao Kuazang)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So far our concern has been limited to texts that were ascribed to an author in the *Shenxiang quanbian*. By comparison to earlier manuals of physiognomy several texts could be found to date back as early as the beginning of the Song dynasty. The three texts used for comparison were the *Yuguan shaoshen ju* of the early Song, the *Taiqing shenjian* of the late Song, and the *Renlun datongfu* of the Jin with its commentary of the Yuan dynasty. In this section, material of the *Shenxiang quan-
bian without ascription to any author which can yet be located in any of these earlier texts will be discussed.

Upon closer inspection, two sections of the Yuguang have been integrated into the Shenxiang quanbian. First, the whole chapter on the lines and signs of the palm (2, 17a-35a; 87–123) is found in chapter 8 of the Shenxiang quanbian (Liang 1980: 221–238). This section consists of altogether seventy-two pictures of hands with lines and signs, in each case accompanied by an explanatory poem of four lines of seven characters. There are mainly two differences between the Yuguang and the Shenxiang quanbian editions of this section. Firstly, the Yuguang gives a short prose description of the signs and lines which is placed above the picture. This is not found in the Shenxiang quanbian. Secondly, the order of the seventy-two pictures is the same in the Yuguang and in the Ming edition of the Shenxiang quanbian, but it differs from the order given in the Tushu jicheng reprint and therefore in Liang’s edition of the text. The summarizing translation of Lessa (1968: 99–112) follows the latter version, its content, however, goes back to the Yuguang.

Second, another long section has been taken over from the Yuguang. This is the part on different types of bodies according to animal morphology (3, 3a-15a: 131–155) which appears in chapter 9 of the Shenxiang quanbian (Liang 1980: 266–275). Similar differences as found above apply here. The Yuguang edition is more detailed in its prose description, but the poems are found in both texts equally. The order of the material differs. Yet in this case, a more decisive difference is to be discovered in that the Yuguang has only thirty-one types of bodies in comparison to fifty-one types listed in the Shenxiang quanbian. The types not mentioned in the earlier edition are the dragon and the phoenix, and there are only about half as many bird types in the earlier text. Also, many domestic animals, such as the pig and the cat, do not figure in the Yuguang, and finally, there are fewer sea creatures. Only two are added in the older edition, the “dark warrior” and the “sea turtle.”

In summary, it can be said that the types of hands and kinds of bodies found in the Shenxiang quanbian go back to the Yuguang. The system applied in these two texts is the same, but differs from the method set forth in the Taiqing shenjian. Here we do not find any list of lines and signs of the palm at all; the hand is only discussed theoretically. Only seven types of bodies are given in the Taiqing shenjian, i.e., crane, phoenix, turtle, rhinoceros, tiger, lion, and dragon. Each type is, however, subdivided according to categories like “straight” 正, “small” 小, “simple” 単, “sick” 病, etc. (Taiqing shenjian 4, 3b-7b).

In many other instances, however, the Shenxiang quanbian owes
much to the systematization of the *Taiqing shenjian*, especially in the general expositions on single parts of the body. Moreover, the sections on energy and complexion stem from this late Song dynasty manual. A full list of comparison is given below:

**Shenxiang quanbian Texts Found in the Taiqing Shenjian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shenjian ch/p</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shenxiang ch/Liang 1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/1a-2a</td>
<td>Zalun 雜論 (Miscellanea)</td>
<td>7/199–200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12b</td>
<td>Sidu 四讀 (4 Streams)</td>
<td>2/58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13a</td>
<td>Wuxing xiangsheng ge 五行相生歌 (Song of five elements producing)</td>
<td>4/117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13b</td>
<td>Wuxing xiangke ge 五行相克歌 (Song of five elements overcoming)</td>
<td>4/117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13b</td>
<td>Wuxing bihe xiangying 五行比和相應 (Five elements in harmony and correspondence)</td>
<td>4/117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13b-14a</td>
<td>Sixuetang lun 四學堂論 (On the four halls of learning)</td>
<td>1/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12b</td>
<td>Wuguan 五管 (five senses) 2/47–57 (w. comm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4a</td>
<td>Lun shenyouyu 論神有餘 (On surplus of spirit)</td>
<td>1/42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4b</td>
<td>Lun shenbuzu 論神不足 (On deficiency of spirit)</td>
<td>1/43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13b</td>
<td>Qingse chumo 青色出沒 (Coming and going of green complexion)</td>
<td>11/329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13b-14b</td>
<td>Qingse jixiong ge 青色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to green complexion)</td>
<td>11/329–330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14b</td>
<td>Huangse chumo 黃色出沒 (Coming and going of yellow complexion)</td>
<td>11/335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14b-15b</td>
<td>Huangse jixiong ge 黃色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to yellow complexion)</td>
<td>11/335–336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15b</td>
<td>Chise chumo 赤色出沒 (Coming and going of red complexion)</td>
<td>11/339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15b-16a</td>
<td>Chise jixiong ge 赤色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to red complexion)</td>
<td>11/339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/16ab</td>
<td>Baise chumo 白色出沒 (Coming and going of white complexion)</td>
<td>11/331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/16b-17a</td>
<td>Baise jixiong ge 白色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to white complexion)</td>
<td>11/331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/17a</td>
<td>Heise chumo 黑色出沒 (Coming and going of black complexion)</td>
<td>11/332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The wealth of material of the Shenxianquanbian, which is found in earlier manuals, and especially in the Yugujuan of the early Song, to a certain extent substantiates the claim of the physiognomic tradition that it ultimately goes back to the 10th century.
Forerunners of the Tradition

If the assumption that the modern tradition of physiognomy began in the 10th century is correct, there should be some evidence of different types of body analysis before this time, i.e., types which were either compatible with the later standard system and therefore integrated into it, or types entirely different from modern physiognomy so that no mention of them has been made after the 10th century. Physiognomic manuals before the 10th century can indeed be found. Two main sources can be distinguished, the material discovered in Dunhuang and a text entitled Yuebodong zhongji 月波洞中記. It turns out that the Dunhuang texts can be considered forerunners of the later tradition in that the systems presented therein are similar, if not identical, with later methods, whereas the theories and patterns of the human body set forth in the Yuebodong zhongji are not compatible with the later tradition. Let us first look at the forerunners.

Physiognomic manuals discovered at Dunhuang can be divided into three groups:

a. those dealing mainly with the complexion of the face systematized according to colors and five-phases-theory;

b. overall surveys of the human body and the meaning of individual features;

c. texts on the significance of moles or black spots 黑子 on different parts of the body.13

a) P. 3589 (in part) and P. 3390. The latter text has been studied in great detail by Hou Ching-lang (1979). Dated to the first half of the 10th century (around the year 950), this text already contains the standard nomenclature used for the different parts of the face in the later tradition. In addition, it systematizes the various colors of types of complexion as they appear on different parts of the face and gives their respective significance in terms of ensuing good or bad luck. The terminology as well as the system of colors can be traced back to sources on Chinese medicine (Hou 1979: 63), the latter is also found in a Taoist scripture on exorcism.14 The main colors used here are yellow 黃, red 赤, white 白, black 黑, blue or green 青, i.e., the colors of the five phases. In addition, more specified tints are given, such as “peach-blossom” 桃花, “blue-black” 青黑, “dried flesh” 乾脯, etc. (Hou 1979: 63). The most auspicious color is yellow, whereas blue-green, red, white, and most of all, black indicate unfortunate occurrences (Hou 1979: 64).

The terminology used for the different parts of the face—thirty terms have been translated and illustrated by Hou (1979: 68 and 69)—
can certainly be found in the later tradition. Here, however, the terms and their respective facial points have increased considerably.

The division of colors is also present in the *Shenxiang quanbian*. However, no specified tints like "peach-blossom" can be found. On the other hand, "purple" 紫 has been added to the basic five colors of the phases, a color which is most auspicious, as it corresponds to yellow on a higher level (Porkert 1961: 443). Notwithstanding these minor differences, P. 3390 can be considered a direct forerunner of modern standard physiognomic treatises.

b) P. 2572, P. 2797, and P. 3589. Together with S. 3395 and S. 5969, these texts are different versions of a text entitled *Xiangshu* 相書, "Physiognomy," and ascribed to Xu Fu. It gives a survey of the human body from top to bottom, explaining the significance of its different features (Hou 1979: 57). The order of the survey is basically the same as found in the *Shenxiang quanbian* and other later manuals. As an example, the list of contents of P. 2572 is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Xiang wuguan bu 相五官部</td>
<td>The five senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Xiang liufu bu 相六府部</td>
<td>The six departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Xiang mian bu 相面部</td>
<td>The face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Xiang fa bu 相髮部</td>
<td>The hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Xiang e bu 相額部</td>
<td>The forehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Xiang mei bu 相眉部</td>
<td>The eyebrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Xiang yan bu 相眼部</td>
<td>The eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Xiang bi bu 相鼻部</td>
<td>The nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Xiang erlei bu 相耳類部</td>
<td>Types of ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Xiang bi renzhong bu 相鼻人中部</td>
<td>The nose as the human center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Xiang chun bu 相唇部</td>
<td>The lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Xiang kou bu 相口部</td>
<td>The mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Xiang chi bu 相齒部</td>
<td>The teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Xiang sheng bu 相聲部</td>
<td>The voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Xiang she bu 相舌部</td>
<td>The chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Xiang yihan bu 相顙頦部</td>
<td>The back and top of the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Xiang yuzhen ding 相玉枕頂</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Xiang bei xiongyi 相背腎臆</td>
<td>Back and breast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Xiang xiefu 相脅腹</td>
<td>Ribs and stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Xiang nai duzi 相妳肚腈</td>
<td>Women’s breasts, abdomen, and private parts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The major differences to the later tradition are obvious. Firstly, not only those parts of the human body generally visible to the public are analyzed. Mention is also made of “women’s breasts, abdomen, and private parts” as well as of “men’s penis and testicles.” In P. 3589, illustrations of naked male figures are included. Secondly, the number of lines and signs identified on the soles of the feet according to P. 2572 and P. 2797 is significantly higher than that found in the Yuguans, which in turn gives about three times as many signs as are noted in the Shenxiang quanbian. It seems that the later tradition was limited much more strictly to parts of the body generally visible and as a rule excluded private parts and the soles of the feet from its analysis. Earlier relations of physiognomy and the medical sciences might be speculated on in this context.

More than that, these two major differences between the Dunhuang texts and physiognomic manuals since the Song mirror important changes in Chinese culture. While “the Chinese of the Tang period did not object to women showing their bare throats and bosoms, during the Song and after, bosom and neck were covered by the upper rims of the robe, and then by the high, tight-fitting collar of an under-jacket” (van Gulik 1961: 186). The fact that less and less emphasis is placed on the lines on the soles of the feet, moreover, might be related to the introduction of the custom of binding women’s feet, dated to the first half of the tenth century. “All literary and archeological evidence points to the custom having begun . . . in the intervals of ca. fifty years
that elapsed between the Tang and Song dynasties” (van Gulik 1961: 216). In due course, “women's feet came to be considered the most intimate part of her body” and were thus “strictly taboo” (van Gulik 1961: 218). The emergence of a modern standard tradition of physiognomy in thus to be understood in the context of the development of new Chinese customs and ethical feelings which have persisted into the twentieth century.

**A Different System: the Yuebodong Zhongji**

The *Yuebodong zhongji* 月波洞中記 is of rather obscure origins. The preface is dated to the year *chiwu* 赤烏 20, the alleged transmitter of the text is Zhang Zhongyuan 張仲遠 of the Wu 吳. Although there is a reign period called *chiwu* in the Wu kingdom of the Sanguo era, this only lasted fourteen years (238–251). It is therefore probable that this reign title is mythological. According to the *Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊, *chiwu* is a reign period or a kalpa in the era of the Earthly August One 地皇 (DZ 1139; 8, 29a). Rather than giving information on the actual date of the text, the reign title *chiwu* is therefore an indication for its high standing according to Taoist mythology.

The preface of the *Yuebodong zhongji* claims that the teachings of the text stand in the Zhong-Lü tradition, i.e., the tradition which claims Zhongli Quan 鍾離權 and Lü Dongbin as its patriarchs (Baldrian-Hussein 1984: 23). This claim is not very likely to go back to before the Song and thus throws some doubts on the antiquity of the preface, if not the text itself.

Another lineage outlined in the preface goes back to the Highest Venerable Lord himself. In one of his revelatory phases he supposedly descended into the Moon-Wave Grotto 月波洞 on Mount Taibai 太白 in Shensi and transmitted this text, duly called the “Record of the Moon-Wave-Grotto,” to a recluse not specifically named. This latter account is also mentioned in Song dynasty catalogues, such as Zheng Jiao's 鄭樵 *Tongzhì yìwén lüe* 通志藝文略 and Chao Gongwu's 晁公武 *Dushu zhì* 讀書志. Here the name of the recluse is given as Ren Xiaoyao 任逍遙 of the Tang, but—as almost everything regarding the origins of this text—this man cannot be further identified.

What is certain about the *Yuebodong zhongji* is that a text of this title in one scroll and nine sections existed under the Song. This makes—as the *Siku tiyao* authors note (III, 2263)—a pre-Song dating probable. Today the text is found in two editions. It is twenty-seven Chinese pages in length.

The *Yuebodong zhongji* is a complete guide to physiognomic analysis. In several instances the information it provides resembles the
methods of the *Yuguan* and the *Shenxiang quanbian*, but in most cases, the system of the *Yuebodong zhongji* differs considerably from the kind of body analysis practised since the tenth century.

Four major resemblances can be noted:

1. The five sacred mountains and four streams of the human face (forehead—north; left cheek bone—east; right cheek bone—west; nose—center; chin—south; and ears—Jiang; nose—Ji; eyes—Wei; mouth—He) are the same in the *Yuebodong zhongji* and the *Shenxiang quanbian*, with the qualification that the last two items are reversed in the later text i.e., mouth—Wei and eyes—He (*Yuebo* 4b; *Shenxiang* chapter 2; Liang 1980: 58).

2. Five-phases-theory is found in the relation seen by the *Yuebodong zhongji* between the heart and the phase fire, on the one hand, and the eyes and the phase wood, on the other. Inasmuch as wood produces fire, the eyes reveal the heart (5a).

3. The five basic colors of human complexion are mentioned with the same interpretations as given in P. 3390 and in the later manuals (7ab).

4. Among the different bone shapes to be detected in the "jade pillow," i.e. the occipital bone, of which the *Yuebodong zhongji* (8a) gives eighteen, sixteen are also found in the *Shenxiang quanbian* (chapter 10; Liang 1980: 287–288; Lessa 1968: 86–88). The latter text gives a total number of 35 different shapes. The two items mentioned in the *Yuebodong zhongji*, but not in the *Shenxiang quanbian*, are the "八 (eight) character pillow" and the "十 (ten) character pillow." Among the items mentioned in both texts, in some cases the *Shenxiang quanbian* gives a more fanciful name, such as e.g., "three frontier pillow" for "三 (three) character pillow," or "three star pillow" for "三 (rank) character pillow."

Whereas in the four instances given above, the *Yuebodong zhongji* can be considered as another forerunner of the later standard tradition, in all other instances it represents a different system of physiognomy.16

First, the basic pattern of analysis is given in terms of nine (1a–3a). The human head is mapped out as if seen from above with the jade pillow in the north, the nose in the south, and the two ears as east and west. The other directions are defined by the cheekbones (southeast and south-west) and the temples or "halls of longevity" (northeast and north-west). The center would accordingly be the top of the head.

Next, nine different bones are given as the mainstays of analysis: "cheek bone" 颧, "post house" 駱, "general" 將軍, i.e., the nose, "sun horn" 陽角 above the left eye, "moon horn" 月角 above the right
eye, "dragon palace" 龍宮, "rhinoceros horn" 伏犀, "sea turtle" 巨龜, and "dragon horn" 龍角. Although not in all cases the position of these bones is positively established, they all refer to the skull as seen from above. It is therefore probable that the first two form a pair, i.e., that the "post house" refers to a cheek bone. Furthermore one might speculate that the "dragon palace" and the "rhinoceros horn" have corresponding positions, possibly indicating the bones of the temples. The two final items must then refer to some bones toward the top of the head.

These nine bones are then set into correspondence with nine psychological and physiological characteristics of man, to be judged according to the elevation and strength of the skull bones. Spirit 精神, judged by the cheek bone, is evaluated in terms of clarity. The soul 魂魄, judged by the post house, is ranked according to nobility. Body stature 形貌, parallel to the nose, should be erect. Complexion 氣色, evaluated by the sun horn, is measured in terms of radiance. Body movements 動止, related to the moon horn, are judged according to their calmness. Man's activity 行藏, in correspondence to his dragon palace bone, should be proper. His glance 膽視, as identified in his rhinoceros horn, should be full of clarity. Furthermore, perception 才智, as judged by the sea turtle bone, is evaluated according to swiftness. And demeanor 德行, finally, judged by the dragon horn, should be law-abiding (3ab).

After a lacunæ between pages 8b and 10b, the text thirdly describes eight limits 八限. These are the ears, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, upper and lower lips, and the chin. The term "limit" refers to their function as limiting a certain period of human life. The theory behind this notion holds that the spirit gradually moves from the top of the human face to its lower parts; therefore the later years of life can be analyzed through the chin, the earlier in the forehead (25b). The nose in the center of the face is the human center 人中 and represents the most productive years of man's life. The eight limits are as follows: Ears: 15 years; forehead: 10 years; eyebrows: 4 years; eyes: 6 years; nose: 10 years; upper lip: 10 years; lower lip: 10 years; chin: ca. 5 years (10b-15a).

This makes a total average lifespan of 70 years, with the most productive years between the ages of 35 and 45 signified by the nose. The chin here corresponds only to the last five years of life, but in older texts one finds the chin as an indicator of man's posterity (Zuozhuan, Wen 1). Though therefore the system of the Yuebodong zhongji is not compatible with the later tradition and cannot be found in any of the later manuals, its basic concepts go back very far in Chinese history.
The most outstanding characteristic of the Yuebodong zhongji is its close relation to Taoism. Not only is nine the sacred number of the Taoists, but the nine palaces 九宮 of the human head play an important role in Taoist meditation, where they are visualized inwardly rather than being outwardly visible (Robinet 1979: 195). As noted above, the text claims that the Highest Venerable Lord himself descended to reveal it to mankind in a mythological age. More than that, almost all sections of the text are summarized in poems entitled Laojun ge 老君歌, “Song of the Venerable Lord.” These verses are unique to this text and could not be identified with any of the numerous poems in the later manuals. Another point in which the systems of the Yuebodong zhongji resembles Taoist theories is the connection it postulates between the mind and the eyes, a notion elaborated in Taoist mystical texts. Furthermore the general theory underlying the system of the Yuebodong zhongji with its claim that wholeness 全 of the body 形 causes wholeness of the blood 血 which in turn ensures wholeness of the energy 氣, and finally of the spirit 神 (25a) closely resembles the Taoist understanding of the mystical process.

Conclusion
Following the tradition of the Shenxiang quanbian from the beginning of the Ming dynasty to the earliest extant manuals of Chinese physiognomy, it has become clear that there is a standardized type of physiognomical analysis. This type is still being practised today, as can be seen from the popularity of the Shenxiang quanbian in Taiwan and Japan. The texts contained in this compendium can be traced to several earlier physiognomic treatises, especially to the Renlun datongfu of the Jin, the Taiqing shenjian of the late Song, and the Yuguan zhaoshen ju of the 10th century. The date of this latter text gives the beginnings of modern physiognomy. By tracing the material of the Shenxiang quanbian back to the tenth century, the claim by its authors that their tradition goes back to the saint Chen Tuan could be substantiated to a certain degree. It is within the range of historical probability that the text Fengjian, which is already contained in the Yuguan zhaoshen ju and which can be considered the first example of the later standardized type, does indeed go back to Chen Tuan.

In contrast to the established tradition from the tenth century onward, earlier materials tend to represent only parts of later integrated methods. The manuals found in Dunhuang can generally be considered forerunners of the later tradition, but some of them are still written in a quite different cultural atmosphere, i.e., under less restrictions regarding physical exposure. The Yuebodong zhongji, finally,
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with its explicit connection to the Taoist tradition gives systems entirely different from those that make up the standard tradition.

In conclusion one may not only say that standard modern physiognomy indeed goes back to the tenth century and is rightfully connected with the name Chen Tuan, also but that physiognomy, before being established as a standard tradition, was transmitted under the auspices of Taoism. As is physiognomy itself, Taoism is seriously concerned with the human body and closely related to the various sciences of divination. However, when in the tenth century physiognomy began to stand on its own feet, its interrelatedness with the Taoist tradition became less obvious. Thus modern physiognomy claims a unique position of its own.

NOTES

1. References to the Shenxiang quanbian will always give the chapter number of the old Ming edition together with the page number of the 1980 reprint by Liang. To make cross-references easier—also with the Tushu jicheng edition—a list is given below:

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<th>Tushu chapter</th>
<th>Liang 1980: pages.</th>
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2. Another very famous physiognomist with the name of Yuan is found in the records of the Tang dynasty (Tangshu 95; Jiu Tangshu 61; Taiping guangji 221; Tushu jicheng 647). His name is Yuan Tiangang 袁天綱 and he was originally from Sichuan. He occupied several official posts during the seventh century and made numerous prognostications for high officials. According to standard legend, he even recognized the later Empress Wu when she was just an infant.

3. All the various chapters in Wang Fu's Qianfulun dealing with divination have been translated by Anne Behnke in her doctoral thesis at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

4. In addition, there are two sections attributed to Xu Fu in the Ming edition, but not in the Tushu jicheng reprint:

   Xiang renzhong pian 相人中篇, "Analyzing the human center" (chapter 3; Liang 1980: 95);


Furthermore there are two texts ascribed to Xu Fu in the later edition, but not in the
Ming original:

Xiang er pian 相耳篇, “Analyzing the ears” (chapter 3; Liang 1980: 95);

5. There are several biographies of Guiguzi found in the Taoist Canon (abbreviated DZ and cited after Schipper 1975):

Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian 历世真仙体道通鉴 (DZ 296) 6, 6a;
Luyiji 録異記 (DZ 591) 1, 1a;
Xuanpin lu 玄品錄 (DZ 781) 1, 8b;
Sandong quxian lu 三洞群仙錄 (DZ 1248) 14, 8b;
Xiaoyao xujing 逍遥虚经 (DZ 1465) 1, 12a.

6. The role of Guiguzi as an astrologer becomes clearer when one remembers that Guigu is the name of a star in the North Culmen 北極, traditionally the place where the demons meet (Shiji 117). In addition, Guigu during the Han was seen as closely related to Guiyuju 鬼臾區, a minister of Huangdi 大鴻, alias Dahong 大鴻 (Shiji 28). Dahong in turn is found as the chief astrologer of Huangdi (Hanshu 20, 30) also under the name Hongmeng 鴻蒙, “Great Concealment” (Zhuangzi 11). In this latter role he plays the part of a rather mysterious minister of Huangdi in a dialogue with “Cloud Chief,” Yunjiang 雲將, the master of rain. Guigu is therefore the name of a star, the minister of astrology under Huangdi, and the mysterious grand-master of this science. A Taoist recluse, living presumably in a place called Guigu would therefore be easily associated with astrology and fate-calculation in Han dynasty folklore.

7. These are one called “wall-gazing” and another ranked as “embryonic respiration.” See Daoshu 道枢 (DZ 1017) 14, 8b; Yunji qiqian 雲窟七籤 (DZ 1032) 59, 14b; Chu zhensheng taishen yongjue 諸眞聖胎神用訣 (DZ 826) 5b-6a.

8. It is mentioned in the bibliographical section of the Songshi 宋史, in Chen Zhensun’s 陳振孫 Shumu 書目, as well as in Wu Renchen’s 吳任臣 Shiguo chunqiu 十國春秋. The information given on number of chapters, length, and organization of the text does not correspond in all these sources. The Shiguo chunqiu, for instance, relates that the text consisted of ten chapters, and was on the whole divided into a former, yang and a latter, yin part. The yang section supposedly gave the analysis of concrete outer signs of the human body, while the yin part described all those human features which are not at once obvious to the eye (Siku tiyao III, 2264).

9. This latter text might be related to a text called Xinfa 心法 traditionally associated with Mayi. This association is first found in Lu Dongbin’s Taoist biography (DZ 305) and in the Fosu tongji 佛祖通計 of 1250. The text Xinfa is today found as Mayi daoze shengyi xinfa 僧衣道者正易心法 in a Jindai bishu 津逮秘書 edition. However, as Hu Yinglin says in his Sibu zhengwei, it deals mainly with inner alchemy and Yi Jing philosophy and probably stems from a later date.

10. There are two minor personages claimed as authors of texts in the Shenxiang quanbian who can be dated with the help of the Yuguanchuan. First, the Master of the Western Peak, Xiyu xiansheng 西嶽先生, with a text called Xiangfa 相法, “Physiognomy” (chapter 6, Liang 1980: 186-187; Yuguanchuan 1/14b-15a; pages 30-31). Again, the Barbarian Monk, Hu Seng 胡僧, with a text called Xiangjue 相訣, “Physiognomic secrets” (chapter 6, Liang 1980: 197-198). However, the text attributed to him in the Yuguanchuan (1/15a-16b: 31-34) is entirely different. It bears the title Hu Seng lun yuguanchuan xiangshu zongyao jue 胡僧論玉管相書總要訣, “Hu Seng on general and particular secrets of the physiognomic manual Yuguanchuan,” which does not sound as if it was part of the original Yuguanchuan of the early Song. Our information on Hu Seng therefore remains scarce.

11. Shiwan juanlou congshu 十萬卷樓叢書 by Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 around 1880.
Linglong shanguan congshu 玲瓏山齋叢書, alias Yiyatang congshu 益雅堂叢書 by an anonymous author of the Qing; 1889.  
Baibu congshu 百部叢書 chapter 591.

12. Texts quoted by Xue Yannian of the Yuan:
   Boyue jing 伯樂經 (also found in the commentary to the Shenxiang quanbian); Dongwei yuyian 洞微玉鑒; Dongyuan jing 洞源經; Guijian 顧鑒; Jinxu baoyin 金書寶印 (also quoted in Taiqing shenjtan); Jinxu jing 金鑒經 (ascribed to Mayi); Qunpin guangjian 群品廣鑒; Lingtai bijue 灵臺秘訣 (quoted also in the commentary to the Shenxiang quanbian); Sanfu xinshu 三輔新書; Shenjie 神解 (quoted in the commentary to the Shenxiang quanbian); Shiren lun 識人論, Tongxian jing 通仙經 (also quoted by the Yuguan); Xinjing 新經 (as Xinxing 心經 in the commentary to the Shenxiang quanbian); Yuebodong zhongji 月波洞中記 (cf. below); Yuguan zhaoren lun 玉管照人論; Zaoshen lun 造神論.

Names of authorities quoted: Chen Xun 陳順; Chenghezi 原及和; Guiguzi 鬼谷子; Guiyan 鬼眼; Song Qiqiu 宋齊邱 (author of the Yuguan); Tang Ju 唐擧; Xie Lingyun 謝靈運. Except for Chen Xun, these personages are also cited in the Shenxiang quanbian.

13. Among the various Dunhuang manuscripts dealing with physiognomy the following were not available to me. S. 3395 and S. 5969, both variant versions of the Xiangshu discussed under b) below; P. 2829, P. 3492 V° 1, and S. 5976 mentioned in Hou 1979: 57. These three latter texts are different versions of a work on the significance of moles or black spots, a type of body analysis which figures prominently in the Shenxiang quanbian (chapter 10, Liang 1980: 290-295) as well as in other physiognomic manuals after the tenth century.

14. The Zhengyifawen xiuzhen yaozhi 正一法文修真要旨 of the sixth century (DZ 1270; 13b-14a) gives various colors signifying a good complexion. Variants are mentioned of the five basic colors: red, white, yellow, black, and blue (Strickmann 1985).  

15. Li Tiaoyuan 李調元, Hanhai 函海 (eighteenth century) and Liu Wanying 劉晚營 Shugu congchao 述古叢鈔 (1885).

16. It can be considered a forerunner of the Taiqing shenjtan in its systematization of body analysis according to animal morphology. It gives five basics types, i.e., monkey, ox, elephant, bear, and tiger, with the specifications of ‘straight,’ ‘simple,’ etc. (23b-24b).

17. There are mainly Wu Yun’s 吳筠 Xinxing lun 心經論 (DZ 1038), as well as sections of Sima Chengzhen’s 司馬承禎 Tanyinzi 天任子 (DZ 1026; sect. 5) and his Shouwanglun 坐忘論 (DZ 1036; 4b).

18. For the mystical process in Taoism see Zuwanglun 坐忘論 (DZ 1036), 15a and Dingguan jing 定觀經 (DZ 400), 6b-7b. Gradual refinement here begins with the body being purified to energy, energy to spirit, and spirit to the Tao itself.

19. There is only one work on physiognomy in the Taoist Canon today, the Lingxin jingzi 靈信經子 (DZ 1425; variant DZ 1481). Here most emphasis is placed on the significance of the eyes, ears and the mind which are called the ‘three lights’ 三明 of man. The close relation between the eyes and the mind is noted. A new element is added to types of physiognomic analysis studied so far in that facial symptoms are linked with certain periods of time (Kalinowski 1985).
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