

A Textbook of Physiognomy: The Tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian*

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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

- 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 Xiangrun (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 (Jingukan 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).¹ 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 physiognomy 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 speaking, 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 *Yuebodong 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 supposedly 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 practised 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 種放, 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). Lü 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 Lü 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 唐舉 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* quotes 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, 薄, 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 “perpendicular 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 nannü 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).⁴

Guan Lu 管輅 (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);

Xiang ying’er 相嬰兒, “Analyzing children” (chapter 9, Liang 1980: 264).

Guiguizi 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 at 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.⁵

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.⁶ 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 達磨, 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 470 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.⁷ 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 songlun 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);

Furen xiang 婦人相, "Analyzing women" (chapter 9, Liang 1980: 251).

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 pei wuxing 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

T'ang 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 Qiqiu 宋齊邱 of the Southern T'ang. 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.⁸ 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 陸心源 *Shiwan 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 Qiqiu of the Southern T'ang, 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

(*Siku tiyao* III, 2264). 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);

Xiangxin 相心, "Analyzing the heart" (chapter 4, Liang 1980: 105–106).⁹

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 *Yuguan* (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 *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan*, 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 *Yuguan* (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 glimmering 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* 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.¹¹ 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 *Qianqing 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 shiji* 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*

(Liang 1980: 199–200). 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 *Yuguan*, this supposition could not be substantiated, at least for the edition of the *Yuguan* 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 Yuans 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	<i>Xiangfa</i> 相法 chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 184–186)
Luo Zhenren	羅真人	<i>Xiangfu</i> 相賦 chapter 7 (Liang 1980: 198–199)
Qiu Tanyue	秋潭月	<i>Lun nüren</i> 論女人 chapter 9 (Liang 1980: 251–253) <i>Shuo furen ge</i> 說婦人歌 chapter 9 (Liang 1980: 254–255) <i>Qise ge</i> 氣色歌 chapter 10 (Liang 1980: 306–308)
Taiyi Zhenren	太乙真人	<i>Shu</i> 書 chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 182)
Wu Xinjian	吳心鑑	<i>Tongyuan fu</i> 通元賦 chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 193–194)
Yandian Daoren	巖電道人	<i>Shenyan jing</i> 神眼經 chapter 5 (Liang 1980: 154–156)
Yang Shi	楊氏	<i>Lun shenqi</i> 論神氣

- chapter 7 (Liang 1980: 199)
 Yao Kuazang 姚括蒼 *Yuguan jue* 玉管訣
 chapter 6 (Liang 1980: 182–185)

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 parantheses)

Texts

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| Bijue | 秘訣 | (45) |
| Boyue | 伯樂 | (1) (also quoted by Xue Yannian) |
| Dingjue | 定訣 | (1) |
| Fengjian | 風鑑 | (16) (Chen Tuan's manual) |
| Hunyi jing | 混儀經 | (1) |
| Linfeng ji | 麟鳳記 | (1) |
| Lingtai jing | 靈臺經 | (1) (also quoted by Xue Yannian; not identical with DZ 288) |
| Mingdu jing | 冥度經 | (2) |
| Nüxin jing | 女心鏡 | (1) |
| Pinnü jinjing | 貧女金鏡 | (1) |
| Qingjian | 清鑑 | (2) (also quoted by Xue Yannian) |
| Renling shujing | 人靈樞經 | (1) |
| Renlun fu | 人倫賦 | (1) (<i>Renlun datongfu</i>) |
| Shengfan lun | 聖凡論 | (1) |
| Shenji | 神機 | (3) |
| Shenjie | 神解 | (1) (also quoted by Xue Yannian) |
| Tongxian lu | 通仙錄 | (2) (also quoted by Xue, and in the <i>Taiqing shenjian</i>) |
| Tongyuan fu | 通元賦 | (1) (by Wu Xinjian) |
| Wuxing (ge) | 無形(歌) | (2) |
| Xinjing | 心鏡 | (1) (A <i>Xinjing</i> 心鏡 is quoted by Xue Yannian) |
| Yijing | 易經 | (1) |
| Yuanshen lu | 元神錄 | (1) |
| Yuantan | 元談 | (1) |
| Yuchi | 玉筮 | (1) |
| Yuguan jue | 玉管訣 | (1) (by Yao Kuazang) |

Zhouhou jing	肘後經	(3)
Zhudan jing	燭膽經	(1) (full text in Liang 1980: 196–197)

Unspecified texts

ge	歌	(1)
jing	經	(6)
yu	語	(1)

Personages

Baige Daozhe	白閣道者	(3) (acc. to <i>Fozu tongji</i> 43/396 identical with Mayi)
Baohezi	葆和子	(2)
Chen Tunan	陳圖南	(13) (Chen Tuan)
Chenghezi	成和子	(5) (also quoted by Xue Yannian)
Guan Lu	管輅	(1)
Gui Jian	鬼箭	(2)
Guo Linzong	敦林宗	(1)
Hu Seng	胡曾	(2)
Kongzi	孔子	(1)
Laihezi	來和子	(2)
Li Jing	李靖	(1)
Liuzhuang	柳莊	(3) (once cited as Yuan Liuzhuang)
Lü Shang	呂尚	(2)
Mayi	麻衣	(2) (Chen's teacher)
Mengzi	孟子	(1)
Pei Xingjian	裴行儉	(2)
Song Qiqiu	宋齊岳	(1) (author of the <i>Yuguan</i>)
Taizhongzi	太沖子	(2)
Wang Shuo	王朔	(1)
Xie Lingyun	謝靈運	(2) (fifth c. poet; also cited by Xue Yannian)
Zhuizi	朱子	(1)

COMPARISON TO EARLIER MANUALS

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 zhaoshen 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 *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan* and the *Shenxiang quanbian* editions of this section. Firstly, the *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan*.

Second, another long section has been taken over from the *Yuguan*. 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 *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan* 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 *Yuguan*, 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 *Yuguan*. 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" 單, "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*

<i>Shenjian</i> ch/p	Title	<i>Shenxiang</i> ch/Liang 1980
2/1a-2a	Zalun 雜論 (Miscellanea)	7/199-200
2/12b	Sidu 四讀 (4 Streams)	2/58
2/13a	Wuxing xiangsheng ge 五行相生歌 (Song of five elements producing)	4/117
2/13b	Wuxing xiangke ge 五行相克歌 (Song of five elements overcoming)	4/117
2/13b	Wuxing bihe xiangying 五行比和相應 (Five elements in harmony and correspondence)	4/117
2/13b-14a	Sixuetang lun 四學堂論 (On the four halls of learning)	1/41
2/12b	Wuguan 五管 (five senses)	2/47-57 (w. comm)
3/4a	Lun shenyouyu 論神有餘 (On surplus of spirit)	1/42
3/4b	Lun shenbuzu 論神不足 (On deficiency of spirit)	1/43
3/13b	Qingse chumo 青色出沒 (Coming and going of green complexion)	11/329
3/13b-14b	Qingse jixiong ge 青色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to green complexion)	11/329-330
3/14b	Huangse chumo 黃色出沒 (Coming and going of yellow complexion)	11/335
3/14b-15b	Huangse jixiong ge 黃色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to yellow complexion)	11/335-336
3/15b	Chise chumo 赤色出沒 (Coming and going of red complexion)	11/339
3/15b-16a	Chise jixiong ge 赤色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to red complexion)	11/339
3/16ab	Baise chumo 白色出沒 (Coming and going of white complexion)	11/331
3/16b-17a	Baise jixiong ge 白色吉凶歌 (Fortune according to white complexion)	11/331
3/17a	Heise chumo 黑色出沒 (Coming and going of black complexion)	11/332

- 3/17a-18a Heise jixiong ge 黑色吉凶歌 11/333
(Fortune according to black complexion)
- 3/18a Zise chumo 紫色出沒 11/337
(Coming and going of purple complexion)
- 3/18ab Zise jixiong ge 紫色吉凶歌 11/337
(Fortune according to purple complexion)
- 4/3a Lun xingbuzu 論形不足 1/43
(On deficiency of form)
- 4/3b Lun xingyouyu 論形有餘 1/42
(On surplus of form)
- 4/7b Lun sheng 論聲 (On the voice) 2/68
- 4/9b Wuyin 五音 (The five tones) 2/68
- 4/9b-10b Xingbu 行部 (On walking) 4/107
- 4/10b-11a Lun zuo 論坐 (On sitting) 4/107-108
(quoted under *youyun* 又云)
- 4/11ab Lun e 論臥 (On sleeping) 4/108
- 4/11b Lun shiyin 論食飲 4/108
(On eating and drinking)
- 5/2b Lun ebu 論額部 (On the forehead) 10/278
- 5/4a Zhentou 枕頭 (The back of the head) 10/285
(similar)
- 5/5b Meibu 肩部 (On the eyebrows) 3/81 (similar)
- 5/6b Yaobu 腰部 (On the hips) 4/103-104
- 5/8ab Lun shou 論手 (On the hands) 8/216
- 5/9ab Xiang changwen 相掌文 8/239-240
(Analysis of palm patterns) (from *youyun* 又云 onward)
- 5/9b-10a Shoubeiwen 手背文 8/240
(Patterns on the back of the hands)
- 5/10ab Guabu 瓜部 (The nails) 8/248
- 5/10b-11a Lun zu 論足 (On the feet) 8/248
- 6/1a Heizhibu 黑痣部 (Black spots) 10/295
- 6/7a Nüren jiushan 女人九善 9/262
(Nine good points in women)
- 6/7b Nüren jiue 女人九惡 9/262
(Nine bad points in women)

The wealth of material of the *Shenxiang quanbian*, which is found in earlier manuals, and especially in the *Yuguan* 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.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Title</i>		<i>Translation</i>
3	Xiang wuguan bu	相五官部	The five senses
4	Xiang liufu bu	相六府部	The six departments
5	Xiang mian bu	相面部	The face
6	Xiang fa bu	相髮部	The hair
7	Xiang e bu	相額部	The forehead
8	Xiang mei bu	相眉部	The eyebrows
9	Xiang yan bu	相眼部	The eyes
10	Xiang bi bu	相鼻部	The nose
11	Xiang erlei bu	相耳類部	Types of ears
12	Xiang bi renzhong bu	相鼻入中部	The nose as the human center
13	Xiang chun bu	相唇部	The lips
14	Xiang kou bu	相口部	The mouth
15	Xiang chi bu	相齒部	The teeth
16	Xiang sheng bu	相聲部	The voice
17	Xiang she bu	相舌部	The tongue
18	Xiang yihan bu	相頤頷部	The chin
19	Xiang yuzhen ding	相玉枕頂	The back and top of the head
20	Xiang bei xiongyi	相背脅臆	Back and breast
21	Xiang xie fu	相脅腹	Ribs and stomach
22	Xiang nai du zi	相姝肚臍	Women's breasts, abdomen, and private parts

23	Xiang yuchui daiqi	相玉臺袋器	Men's penis and testicles
24	Xiang pi?	相脾	(Abdomen?)
25	Xiang jiaohuai	相脚踝	Legs and ankles
26	Xiang xing bu	相行步	Walking
27	Xiang bishou	相臂手	Arms and hands
28	Xiang haomao	相毫毛	Fine body hair
29	Xiang renmian bu santing		The three facial sections
		相人面部三亭	
30	Xiang nanzi	相男子	Male children
31	Xiang nüren jiue	相女人九惡	Nine bad points in women
32	Xiang ewen	相額文	Lines on the forehead
33	Xiang shou changwen	相手掌文	Lines on the palms
34	Xiang jiaozu xiawen	相脚足下文	Lines on the soles of the feet
35	Xiang renmian seqi	相人面色氣	Facial complexion

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 *Yuguan*, 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 is 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 張中遠 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 鐘離權 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 *Tongzhi yiwen lue* 通志藝文略 and Chao Gongwu’s 晁公武 *Dushu zhi* 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.¹⁵ 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 江; nose—Ji 濟; eyes—Wei 渭; mouth—He 河) 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 “品 (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 (south-east and south-west) and the temples or “halls of longevity” (north-east 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” 顴, “post house” 驛, “general” 將軍, i.e., the nose, “sun horn” 日角 above the left eye, “moon horn” 月角 above the right

eye, "dragon palace" 龍宮, "rhinoceros horn" 伏犀, "sea turtle" 巨鰲, 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 瞻視, 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 lacunae 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.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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,

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.¹⁹ 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:

<i>Ming chapter</i>	<i>Tushu chapter</i>	<i>Liang 1980: pages.</i>
1	631	15-45
2	632-633 middle	46-78
3	633 middle—634 latter half	78-103
4	634 first half—635	103-125
5	636 + two sections of 637	125-158
6	637-638	158-187
7	639	188-215
8	640	216-251
9	641	251-277
10	642	278-308
11	643	309-333
12	644	334-356

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);

Xiang xing pian 相行篇, "Analysis of walking" (chapter 4, Liang 1980: 107).

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);

Xiang she pian 相舌篇, "Analyzing the tongue" (chapter 3, Liang 1980: 102).

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

Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian 歷世眞仙體道通鑑 (DZ 296) 6, 6a;

Luyiji 錄異記 (DZ 591) 1, 1a;

Xuanpin lu 玄品錄 (DZ 781) 1, 8b;

Sandong qunxian lu 三洞群仙錄 (DZ 1248) 14, 8b;

Xiaoyao xujing 逍遙虛經 (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 鬼夷區, a minister of Huangdi, alias Dahong 大鴻 (*Shiji* 28). Dahong in turn is found as the chief astrologer of Huangdi (*Hanshu* 20, 30) also under the name of 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* 道樞 (DZ 1017) 14, 8b; *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (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 Lü Dongbin's Taoist biography (DZ 305) and in the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖通記 of 1250. The text *Xinfa* is today found as *Mayi daoze zhengyi xinfa* 麻衣道者正易心法 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 Yijing 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 *Yuguan*. 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; *Yuguan* 1/14b-15a; pages 30-31). Again, the Barbarian Monk, Hu Seng 胡曾, with a text called *Xiangjue* 相訣, "Physiognomic secrets" (chapter 6, Liang 1980: 197-198). However, the text attributed to him in the *Yuguan* (1/15a-16b: 31-34) is entirely different. It bears the title *Hu Seng lun yuguan xiangshu zongyao jue* 胡曾論玉管相書總要訣, "Hu Seng on general and particular secrets of the physiognomic manual *Yuguan*," which does not sound as if it was part of the original *Yuguan* 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 玲瓏山官叢書, 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 yujian* 洞微玉鑑; *Dongyuan jing* 洞源經; *Guijian* 龜鑑; *Jinshu baoyin* 金書寶印 (also quoted in *Taiqing shenjian*); *Jinsuo jing* 金鎖經 (ascribed to Mayi); *Qunpin guangjian* 群品廣鑑; *Lingtai bijue* 靈臺秘訣 (quoted also in the commentary to the *Shenxiang quanbian*; a *Lingtai jing* 靈臺經 is found in DZ 288 and 289, but this text is an astrological treatise); *Qingjian* 清鑑 (quoted 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* 心鏡 (as *Xinjing* 心經 in the commentary to the *Shenxiang quanbian*); *Yuebodong zhongji* 月波洞中記 (cf. below); *Yuguan zhaoshen lun* 玉管照神論 (i.e., the *Yuguan*, also cited as *Yuguan zhaoren lun* 玉管照人論); *Zaoshen lun* 造神論;

Names of authorities quoted: Chen Xun 陳順; Chenghezi 成和子; Guan Lu 管輅; Guiguzi 鬼谷子; Guiyan 鬼眼; Song Qiqiu 宋齊邱 (author of the *Yuguan*); Tang Ju 唐舉; 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^o 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 *Zhengyi fawen xiuzhen yaoshi* 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 劉晚榮 *Shugu congchao* 述古叢鈔 (1885).

16. It can be considered a forerunner of the *Taiqing shenjian* in its systematization of body analysis according to animal morphology. It gives five basic 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 *Xinmu lun* 心目論 (DZ 1038), as well as sections of Sima Chengzhen's 司馬承禎 *Tianyinzhi* 天隱子 (DZ 1026; sect. 5) and his *Zuowanglun* 坐忘論 (DZ 1036; 4b).

18. For the mystical process in Taoism see *Zuowanglun* 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 jingzhi* 靈信經旨 (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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