Part 1

Mapping the Body: Space, Time and Gender

2 Picturing the Body in Chinese Medical and Daoist Texts from the Song to the Qing Period (10th to 19th Centuries)

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This chapter considers visual images (*tu* 圖) of the human body created in China over the thousand years from the Song to the Qing period in the contexts of medicine and Daoist internal visualisation. In particular, it takes a closer look at the relatively neglected field of forensic medicine, and the contested issue of dissection. By focusing on the context in which body images were produced, and their textual and intertextual environment, it aims to arrive at a clearer and more nuanced understanding of the ways in which these images were intended to be read. In the process, it will challenge culture-specific assumptions about the construction of the body and the functions of illustration.

Despite much common theoretical background, bodily representation in medical and Daoist texts differs in function and intent. Different spheres of knowledge came to be associated with distinct accounts of the body. For medicine in general, this was the description of the viscera and the channels and tracts through which Qi and humours flowed; for forensic medicine, it was the description of the skeleton; for Daoism, it was the symbolic description of the body as the spatio-temporal locus of a system of significant correspondences that permeated the natural and spirit worlds.

The examples that I will discuss here include charts and diagrams as well as more figurative illustrations, embracing various aspects of the body and processes that take place within the body or relate to it. Body imagery in fine art, though clearly relevant to the discussion, lies beyond the scope of the present chapter. The choice of period is in part dictated by necessity, as very few images of the body survive from before the last millennium, but it also reflects a huge expansion in the use of graphic representations (*tu*) that took place in the Song.

Broadly speaking, the images fall into three categories, exemplifying three different approaches to the body: images of the whole body approached from the exterior, including gymnastic postures, locations on the body, somatic measurements, channels and tracts; images of the inside of the body, i.e. the internal organs and the skeleton (which raises issues regarding dissection); and images of the symbolic body, i.e. alchemical processes within the body and the true form of the allegorical body. They are almost always accompanied by text, and like text, they require to be *read* according to specific cultural codes. They reveal particular mental constructions of the body. They perform multiple functions, serving as proof of knowledge, teaching material, medium of transmission, memory aid, or graphic

presentation of a text; and for the Daoists, manifesting the form of the true body.

Images of the Whole Body

Representations of the whole body fall into five sub-categories: 1. illustrations of gymnastic movements; 2. illustrations of landmarks on the surface of the skin, i.e. acupuncture and moxibustion locations; 3. depictions of the paths of the channels and tracts; 4. illustrations showing the positions of the bones and somatic measurements, intended as a guide to the configuration and relative proportions of constituent elements of the body; 5. forensic charts of the body used for post mortem examinations.

The common feature uniting all these types of images is that the body – sometimes clothed and sometimes naked – is rendered in outline only, albeit with increasing sophistication. Elements inside the outline, if any, are confined to circles, black dots and simple lines. Measurements and proportions are not accurately reproduced. Often, though not always, the images bear captions.

Representations of Gymnastic Movements (*Daoyin* 導引)

The earliest known representations of gymnastic movements (*daoyin*) are contained in a silk scroll of the Han period (prior to 168 BCE), discovered in a tomb at Mawangdui 馬王堆, near Changsha (Hunan province), which is described in the preceding chapter.¹ Thereafter, we find no further gymnastic images for more than 10 centuries, even though we know from bibliographic catalogues that they continued to be produced.

Extant examples from the Song and Ming periods such as Zhou Lüjing's 周履靖 *Chifeng sui* 赤鳳髓 (Bone Marrow of the Red Phoenix), late 16th century,² or Hu Wenhuan's 胡文煥 *Shouyang congshu* 壽養叢書 (Collected Texts on Longevity and Maintaining Life), late 16th century (see Fig. 1), are undoubtedly more sophisticated and more elaborate than their Han counterparts; nonetheless they follow the

1 See Lo, Introduction, p. 8; Wang, Chapter 1, pp. 39–40, Fig. 1.1, in this volume.

2 Translated in Despeux 1988.

Figure 2.1 Gymnastic pose. From *Shouyang congshu* 壽養叢書 (Collected Texts on Self-Cultivation and Longevity) by Hu Wenhuan 胡文煥, late 17th century

Figure 2.2 Moxibustion points. From *Jiujing* 灸經 (Moxibustion Classic), anon., Tang period

same conventions and are codified in the same manner. The pictures are accompanied by text, either on the same page – above, beside or below the figure – or on the facing page, and they seem to be essentially didactic in intention, i.e. they provide the literate reader with a guide to the movements recommended to treat particular illnesses or to promote longevity. Most of the poses shown are static ones; some dynamic poses are suggested by depicting a single stage in the course of a movement, but they would be impossible to execute on the basis of the visual information alone. Here, the image is ancillary to the text; its function is to provide a schema enabling the user to orient his/her body in physical space.

Representations of Acu-Moxa Locations on the Body

These are labelled diagrams, consisting of a schematic outline drawing of a naked human figure, with a head, torso and four limbs. Acupuncture and moxibustion points are indicated by black or white circles, which are linked by lines to captions outside the outline, giving the name of the point and/or its location in relation to a bodily landmark (e.g. '3 cun [Chinese inches] below the navel', 'on the inside of the lower knee'). The earliest surviving images of this kind are the moxibustion charts in the Tang medical manuscripts from Dunhuang, rediscovered in the early 20th century

(Fig. 2).³ They differ from the image type discussed in the following section, where the points are shown strung out along lines representing the channels and tracts.⁴ These diagrams form a pendant to texts describing the points themselves, their location and their therapeutic uses. So far as we can tell, they served as a visual aid, complementing and supporting the oral transmission of medical knowledge and the practical training received from a master. They helped the apprentice physician to map the points on to physical space and to memorise their location.

Representations of the Channels with Acu-Moxa Points

Acu-moxa charts, showing the channels with the points located on them, are reliably attested from the 6th century CE. In tandem with canonical texts, they performed both a didactic and a normative function. The famous Tang physician Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682) writes in *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 (Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Gold Pieces), c. 652:

3 Most of them are now in the Stein collection (S.5737, S.6168, S.6262, P.2675); cf. Lo 2005. See also Lo and Yoeli-Talim, Chapter 19 in this volume, pp. 276–277, Figs 19.4 a and b.

4 Images of this type appear, for example, in *Zhenjiu zisheng jing* 針灸資生經 by the Song author Wang Zhizhong 王執中 and in *Zhenjiu jing* 針灸經, an anonymous text of the Song period.

Figure 2.3 *Jing fahui* 十四經發揮 (Exposition of the 14 Channels) by Hua Shou 滑壽 (13th century). © Library of China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences

Figure 2.4 Composite chart of the channels and tracts. From *Zhenjiu dacheng* 針灸大成 (Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) by Yang Jizhou 楊繼洲, 1601

The practitioner can familiarise him/herself with the points through the engravings and find out their distances from one another from the text; thus the doctor becomes imbued with the knowledge of them and can locate them effortlessly.⁵ (Fig. 3)

This dual function was reinforced in the Song period by an official standardisation project that involved not only two-dimensional charts of the body but also three-dimensional 'Bronze Man' figurines showing the channels and acu-moxa locations,⁶ which were used as a teaching aid at the Imperial College and for official examinations. It should be noted that the Bronze Man opened up to reveal a set of wooden viscera within.⁷ This initiative was followed

by various other such projects in the course of the Song and Ming periods.⁸

The illustrations that have come down to us include both diagrams of individual channels and composite charts offering an overview of several channels, as in *Zhenjiu Dacheng* 針灸大成 (Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion), 1601, by Yang Jizhou 楊繼洲 (see Fig. 4).⁹ Each figure is drawn in a posture designed to show the course of the channel with maximum clarity, according to whether it runs along the inside or outside of the limbs, for example.

5 *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, juan 29, p. 508; see also Despeux 1985, p. 134.

6 See also Goldschmidt 2004.

7 See Ma 1993.

8 Ma 1993.

9 This work contains two charts, a front view and a back view. *Zhenjiu dacheng*, juan 6, pp. 189–90.

Representations Showing the Positions of the Bones and Somatic Measurements

Whereas the three types of representations discussed above have existed since antiquity, somatographic charts providing information about the relative proportions of the parts of the body, and the distances between them, are a relatively recent phenomenon. One of the earliest known charts of this kind can be dated to the 14th century.¹⁰ From that time onward, we begin to see images of the body with inscriptions inside the outline, giving the names of the bones and their measurements according to the two relevant chapters of the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor).¹¹ Such images became increasingly common in the late Ming (17th century).¹² These somatographic charts show a two-dimensional arrangement of a series of terms, which are also given in the accompanying text. They are clearly not to be read as a literal rendering of visible objects, but as a kind of mnemonic route-map facilitating the acquisition of knowledge.

Images of the Body as Forensic Documents

Forensic body charts consisted of a schematic outline drawing of a human body, to be filled in with notes on injuries, diseased parts etc. Charts showing the back and front view of the body were included in case documents, and used in drawing up death certificates. These charts were first circulated in 1211 at the suggestion of Xu Sida 徐似道, a judge from Jiangxi. Initially, they were printed and distributed in Hunan and Guangxi.¹³ They were subsequently revised by the Minister of Punishment, who had them disseminated throughout the legal circuits.

Shortly after this, we find an edict in the early 14th-century *Yuandian zhang* 元典章 (Compendium of Statutes and Sub-Statutes of the Yuan Dynasty) establishing a standard

Figure 2.5 Model representation of the body used in forensic medicine. From *Yuandian zhang* 元典章 (Compendium of Statutes and Sub-Statutes of the Yuan Dynasty), 1322

format for the documents to be completed and submitted by the coroner (Fig. 5).

For the examination of injuries to the corpse, a standard format already exists. Nowadays, the officials who govern the people have no regard for human life... After deliberation, we have instituted two engravings of the dead body, a front view and a back view. We command the government of each circuit (*lu* 路) to print a reproduction of the master copy and to mark [the reproductions] with a sign. After checking that the seals and inscriptions correspond [to the original], [the government of the *lu*] will send the copies to the prefectures and sub-prefectures, which will set up an archive where they will keep them locked away. If there should be [a case requiring] the examination of a corpse, the precise time [of death] will immediately be established, and notification will be sent to the nearest official Bureau that it is not otherwise engaged. The latter will, as a matter of urgency, designate someone to convey the official documents and will also assign a senior official, who will be accompanied by an employee and a forensic expert; the official will bring three copies of the picture of the corpse (*shizhang* 屍帳) that was received previously and will proceed rapidly to the place where the corpse is laid out... He will describe the [state of the] entire body. As for any injuries to the corpse, he will record on the previously drawn [engraving of the] body, in the places corresponding to the injured parts, whether the wounds are wide or narrow, deep or superficial.¹⁴

A master copy of these engravings, dated 1304, is preserved in the Yuan Statutes.¹⁵ The images themselves are crudely

¹⁰ It is entitled *Yangren chicanzhi tu* 仰人尺寸之圖 (Image of Measurements on the Recumbent Person) and is found in *Shisi jing fahui* 十四經發揮 by Hua shou 滑壽.

¹¹ *Huangdi neijing*, Lingshu 靈樞, ch. 14, 'Gudu pian' 骨度篇 (Measurements of the Bones); *Suwen* 素問, ch. 60, 'Gukong lun' 骨空論 (Interstices of the Bones).

¹² See for example: *Leijing tuyi* 類經圖翼 by Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (1624); *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (1607) by Wang Qi 王圻 and Wang Siyi 王思義, and the engravings edited in 1731 by Wuying dian 武英殿.

¹³ Cf. *Jianyan zhengbei renxing* 檢驗正背人形圖 by Xu Sida 徐似道. These models are described in the Southern Song period, in *Qingyuan tiaofa shilei* 慶元條法事類. They are not the earliest known representations of the corpse; this work is predated by *Jianyan gemu* 檢驗格目 by Zheng Guangshang 鄭光尚 (see Jia Jingtao 1983, p. 7).

¹⁴ See Ratchewsky 1937, vol. 4, p. 224.

¹⁵ *Yuandian zhang*, juan 43 on the Minister of Punishment, pt 5 on homicide.

executed and devoid of captions, but they are prefaced by a list of the main parts of the body that had to be examined and reported on. In the Qing period, the Bureau of the Ministry of Punishment had in its possession an official annotated edition of *Xiyuan lu* 洗冤錄 (Treatise for Washing Away Injustice), which incorporated the engravings.¹⁶ This work re-appears as an appendix to *Da Qing lüli* 大清律例 (Code of the Great Qing), in a version made in 1740 with captions above the images rather than beside them. As we have seen, these forensic images served a clearly defined purpose; though they indubitably facilitated the transmission of knowledge, their primary function was as official and legal documents.

Inside the Body: the Organs and Skeleton

Internal Organs and Dissection

The late Five Dynasties (mid-10th century) and Song periods saw the rise of an image type that does not set out to depict the body as a self-contained whole with head, trunk and limbs outlined; instead the torso and internal organs are drawn without any surrounding contours. These images are sometimes accompanied by details of individual viscera.

The torso is shown from three angles: from the front, back and side. At first sight, it is not recognisable as a human body at all, although its identity becomes clear once one notices the rather realistic internal organs. The captions and accompanying texts are very helpful, if not indispensable, in reading the image.

In most cases, we know the circumstances in which the images were produced and the purpose for which they were intended, i.e. they were created by official request in the context of dissections. In this regard they are comparable to anatomical drawings made in the West. However, one cannot but be struck by the diversity of the finished products.

In China, dissection had far less impact than it did in the West – albeit at a rather late date. In fact, the first Western anatomical illustrations showing the human body are crudely executed and rather naïve.¹⁷ Dissection only really developed with the rise of the school of Padua in the 16th century. The Church is often unjustly accused of preventing dissections, but this was by no means the case. If anything, it played the role of facilitator in the development of anatomical knowledge. In a papal bull issued in 1472, Pope Sixtus IV acknowledged anatomy as

a discipline ‘useful to medical and artistic practice’. The teaching of dissection, hitherto merely tolerated, was formally authorised by Pope Clement VII (r. 1523–34), after which dissection became more generally practised.¹⁸ Thus the 16th century marked a turning point in the knowledge of the body in Europe, thanks to an increase in dissections, coupled with increasingly sophisticated representational techniques, as displayed in the drawings of da Vinci, for example. Throughout the century, ‘new relationships between painting and nature, precise observation and a demand for accuracy played a vital role both in anatomy and in natural history’.¹⁹

It is often said that dissections were rarely carried out in China because Confucian society attached such high importance to keeping the body intact, considering entry into the otherworld with a mutilated body to be an act of filial impiety, which might have all manner of evil consequences. This does not seem to me to be an adequate explanation. If dissection had been seen as particularly useful, in the first place more dissections could have been performed on condemned criminals (a documented practice); and in the second place, people would have overcome their scruples, leading to a general shift in attitudes.

The earliest recorded dissection in China took place in 16 CE, during the reign of Wang Mang 王莽, when a certain Sun Qing 孫慶 was captured and executed. According to the biography of Wang Mang, he personally ordered Shang Fang 尚方, a physician of the Imperial Academy (*taiyi* 太醫), to have the corpse dissected by skillful butchers, in order to measure the size and capacity of the organs, and to trace the course of the vessels (*mai* 脈) with slivers of bamboo to find out where they began and ended, so as to be able to treat illnesses more effectively.²⁰

Thus it seems that Chinese people were aware, from antiquity, of the advantages that could accrue to medicine from improved knowledge of the body, and of the progress that could thereby be achieved in treating disease. Nonetheless, we have no definite evidence of any further dissections until 1041, even though it is likely that others took place in the intervening centuries. For instance, Hua Tuo 華佗 (?–208? CE), the personal physician of Cao Cao 曹操, father of the future ruler of Wei, may well have carried out dissections,²¹ and if so, he would presumably have done so in an official capacity.

16 *Lüliquan jiaozheng Xiyuan lu* 律例館校正洗冤錄 in *juan* 4, dated 1694 (ed. Fu Sinian).

17 Grmek and Bernabeo 1997, pp. 10–11.

18 Ibid., p. 8.

19 Ibid., p. 11.

20 *Hanshu*, *juan* 99, biography of Wang Mang 王莽, p. 4,145.

21 A text entitled *Hua Tuo neishi* 華佗內視 is listed in the Liang catalogue (see *Suishu*, *juan* 34, p. 1,041). In the opinion of Ma Jixing, it is the work of one of Hua Tuo's disciple, and *neishi* sig-

In 1041, 56 rebels led by Ou Xifan 歐希范 were captured and put to death by Du Qi 杜杞, the Imperial Commissar (*anfushi* 按撫史) charged with pacifying the circuits of Guangnan and Guangxi. He had their abdomens dissected and directed an official of the Prefecture called Wu Jian 吳簡 (or Lingjian 靈簡 according to some sources) to commission artists to make drawings of the internal organs. These were published as *Ou Xifan wuzang tu* 歐希范五臟圖 (Images of the Five Viscera of Ou Xifan). These events are described by several contemporary writers;²² and Shen Gua 沈括 (1033–97) criticises the drawings and points out an error in them,²³ implying that he actually saw them. This dissection, like the one ordered by Wang Mang in the Han period, was carried out by official command on executed war criminals. The crucial difference is that it was attended not only by doctors but also by officials and artists, who were required to draw the internal organs. Regrettably the drawings have not survived.

Another series of dissections took place in the Chongning 崇寧 era (1102–6) under similar circumstances, and once again anatomical drawings were made. In Sizhou 泗州 (in the modern province of Jiangsu), a group of rebels were executed, and the Prefect Li Yuxing 李夷行 summoned doctors and artists to examine the bodies. They dissected the tissues, removed the diaphragm and sketched the curves and meanders of the inside of the body. They were allowed to examine and draw everything in detail. Yang Jie 楊介, a famous doctor from Sizhou,²⁴ known to have treated the Emperor Huizong (r. 1101–25),²⁵ corrected the engravings from the original drawings and pronounced them far superior to those created from the

Figure 2.6 Representation of the trunk and its organs according to Yanluozi. From *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Books on Cultivating Perfection), c. 1250. DZ 263, juan 18

Ou Xifan dissections.²⁶ In the preface to Yang Jie's *Cunzhen huanzhong tu* 存真環中圖 (1118) by Jia Weijie 賈偉節 of Luoyang, we read:

Yang Jie, styled Jilao 吉老, observed and drew the actual form of the five viscera. He examined the depictions of the viscera made by Yanluozi 煙蘿子, arranged and amended them; he then added the 12 channels and entitled his work *Cunzhen huanzhong* 存真環中.²⁷

These images by Yanluozi – the ‘Master of the Smoke Curtain’, who was active during the Tianfu era (936–41) of the Later Jin dynasty,²⁸ are preserved in the 13th-century Daoist encyclopaedia *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Books on Cultivating Perfection), c. 1250 (see Fig. 6).²⁹ There are six altogether, including, notably, a front view and a back view of the trunk and its viscera. Their titles contain the term *neijing* 內境 (internal view, inner landscape, inscape), and they were presumably intended for people who practised internal visualisation techniques (the images are accompanied by a text by Yanluozi on inward contemplation, *neiguan* 內觀). We know nothing of the background to the creation of these images, which are exactly reproduced in an illustrated commentary on *Bashi yi nanjing* 八十一難經 (The Classic of 81 Difficult Issues [in the Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor]) by Li Jiong 李駒 (1269).³⁰ They coincide with Yang Jie's engravings in all respects but one,

nifies ‘observe and examine the form of the internal organs’, indicating the practice of dissection. See Ma Jixing 1990, p. 136.

22 The sources are: *Dongzhai jishi*, juan xia; *Mengqi bitan*, juan 26, art. 480, pp. 827–9; *Yanxia fangyan*, ed. in *Shuofu*, juan 29, vol. 5; *Bintuilu* ed. in *Shuofu*, p. 234, where the official is named as Lingjian 靈簡 of Yi Zhou; *Jutan lu*, 32–33. On all these sources, see Okanishi 1958, p. 297.

23 He writes: ‘Human beings are said to have three orifices in the throat: one for fluids, one for solid food and the third one for air. This is completely wrong. The true images of the five viscera of Ou Xifan, which are widely transmitted, do indeed contain drawings of three orifices. Probably the examination was not carried out thoroughly enough. Solid and liquid foods are actually swallowed simultaneously, so how could they possibly enter the gullet separately? In fact, the human body has only two orifices [in the throat]: the larynx (*yan* 咽) and the pharynx (*hou* 喉). The pharynx is the conduit for liquid and solid food-stuffs, and the larynx allows air to enter...’. *Mengqi bitan*, juan 26, art. 480, pp. 827–9.

24 See *Gujin yitong daquan*, juan 1. Compare *Xu wenxian tongkao*.

25 See *Xu wenxian tongkao*.

26 This is recorded in *Junzhai dushu houzhi* 郡齋讀書後志, juan 2, 31a–b (in *Siku quanshu*, 674, pp. 405–6).

27 Miyashita Saburo 1968, pp. 148–9.

28 See Chen 1963, p. 284.

29 DZ 263, *Xiuzhen shishu*, juan 18, 2a–3b.

30 *Huangdi bashi yi nanjing zhuyi tuxu lun* 黃帝八十一難經注義圖序論 preserved in the Daoist Canon, DZ 1024.

Figure 2.7 Representation of the trunk and its organs. From *Hua Tuo xuanmen neizhao tu* 華陀玄門內照圖 (Hua Tuo's Images for Internal Visualisation According to the Mystery School) 13th century

which is however extremely significant: the liver is shown on the left, in keeping with the theory of correspondences with the Five Agents and Five Directions, whereby the liver corresponds to 'spring' and 'the left'. Yang Jie placed the liver on the right after attending dissections; this is one of the amendments to which Jia Weijie alludes in the preface quoted above.

It is worth noting that a text entitled *Zhu tidian neijing lun* 朱提點內經論 (Treatise on the Internal View [of the Body] According to Intendant Zhu) appears in *Daozang* directly after Yanluozi's work. The unknown author, who probably lived during the Song period, prior to 1250, seems to have seen examples of anatomical drawings of dissected bodies. In his treatise, he states that the therapeutic location for the liver is on the left, but the liver itself is located on the right (*qi zhi zai zuo, qi wei zai you* 其治在左, 其位在右). He draws a comparison with the images of Yanluozi, which he says tally with his own observations. He adds that the bodies of criminals have recently been dissected and examined in the marketplaces, making it possible to ascertain that the throat does not, as erroneously supposed, contain three orifices, one for fluids, one for solid food and one for air.³¹

Yang Jie's images of the viscera were incorporated into a version of *Hua Tuo xuanmen neizhao tu* 華陀玄門內照圖 (Hua Tuo's Images for Internal Visualisation According to the Mystery School), published by Sun Huan 孫煥 in 1273 (see Fig. 7). This work was composed in 1095 by Shen Zhu 沈銖, a proofreader in the Imperial library and archives, and subsequently appeared under various titles. Though no editions survive from before the Ming dynasty, they

become numerous from that period onward, indicating that the text was widely read. Wang Huling 汪琥 of Wu (Suzhou) writes in his preface of 1668:

For a long time, this work was conserved in the Palace, and few people were able to consult it. But in the Jiajing era (1522–66), an administrative assistant of the Imperial Academy of Medicine named Zhu Yuguo 周與國 made a copy of it, which he kept secretly at his home. From his grandchild Zhu Daozhou 周道州, I obtained a copy which was in poor condition and not easily legible. The book was in four *juan*, the first two containing Hua Tuo's work, and the second two containing additions by Guo 郭 and Yu 禹.³²

It should be noted that Yang Jie's images were republished in Japan in 1304, in *Ton-isho* 頓醫鈔 by Kajiwaraseizen 梶原性全.³³

In these images, unlike those of Yanluozi as reprinted in *Nanjing tuyi*, the liver is shown in its actual location, on the right. The first part of the text seems to have been written as a commentary on the Ou Xifan engravings, which it criticises on three main counts.

The first criticism echoes that of Shen Gua: there are only two orifices in the throat, whereas the Ou Xifan engravings show three.³⁴ We might note here that Shen Gua justifies his assertion by reasoned argument: it would be mechanically impossible to keep solid food and liquids apart, and therefore there cannot be two separate openings for them. The second criticism relates to the position of the liver: *Hua Tuo's Images for Internal Visualisation According to the Mystery School* states, without further explanation, that the liver is located on the right, in front of the right kidney and beside the stomach.³⁵ The third criticism concerns the kidneys: in the engravings, they are shown higher in the body than the traditionally accepted location – instead of being low down and close to the sides, they are underneath the diaphragm, right next to the middle of the spinal column; and they are surrounded by a membrane with two vessels, the upper one connected to the heart and the lower one joining the two kidneys together.

Sometimes quite separately and sometimes in conjunction with these global representations of the trunk, we also find depictions of the individual viscera. They are attested in the Tang period (7th–10th centuries), i.e. even earlier than the former type of image. The bibliographic

³² See the manuscript edition preserved in Zhongyang tushuguan 中央圖書館, Taiwan. See also *Daozang jinghua*, vol. 14–2.

³³ In ch. 44 of this text, preserved in Neikaku bunko in Kyoto, we also find images of the 12 channels and the viscera after Wu Jian 吳簡.

³⁴ *Hua Tuo xuanmen neizhao tu*, 7a.

³⁵ *Hua Tuo xuanmen neizhao tu*, 8b.

³¹ DZ 263, *Xiuzhen shishu*, *juan* 18, 3b–5b.

catalogue of the *History of the Tang* lists the titles of five sets of illustrations of the viscera, all of which are repeated in the Song bibliographies.³⁶ Only one of them is still extant: *Huangting wuzang liufu buxie tu* 黃庭五臟六腑補瀉圖 (Illustrations of the Reinforcement and Purging of the Organs According to the Tradition of the Yellow Court) by Hu Yin 胡愔 (preface dated 848), preserved in the Ming Daoist Canon. The author, a female Daoist of the Shangqing sect, states in her preface that she has consulted various depictions of the viscera.³⁷ The text gives a rudimentary anatomical account of the viscera, based on the ancient medical texts, chiefly the late Han *Nanjing* 難經 (Classic of Difficult Issues). However this merely serves as an introduction to her main subject: the spirits which reside in the organs according to the Shangqing tradition and which the adept must visualise and inwardly nurture, to maintain good health and achieve longevity. Strangely enough, although the author is at pains to point out that she has consulted several depictions of the viscera, the existing version of the text contains no images.

During the Song period, drawings of individual viscera are associated with dissections and are found in conjunction with general views of the trunk and its viscera, especially those from *Hua Tuo's Images for Internal Visualisation According to the Mystery School*, which were recycled without major changes throughout the Ming and the Qing (see Fig. 8).³⁸ These images are particularly elaborate in their treatment of the connections and junctions between organs, illustrating an attempt to reflect upon and reproduce physiological mechanisms.

These same images of the viscera reappear, with a few variations, at the end of the 17th century in *Yixue yuanshi* 醫學原始 (Origins of Medicine) by Wang Honghan 王宏韓

Figure 2.8 Representation of the lung. From *Hua Tuo xuanmen neizhao tu* 華陀玄門內照圖 (*Hua Tuo's Images for Internal Visualisation*) 13th century

(fl. 1688–92). Thus, despite the growth of dissection in the Ming period, and despite the spread of Western anatomical knowledge, rudimentary though this may have been, the format remained substantially unchanged right up until the beginning of the 19th century.

It was not until the early 19th century that the images were revised and various errors were amended in *Yilin gaicuo* 醫林改錯 (Corrections of Errors in the Forest of Medicine), 1822, in light of Western anatomical science and findings from further dissections (which had to be carried out in secret because, officially, they were still banned). The author, Wang Qingren 王清任 (1768–1831), embarked on his work only after 42 years of detailed observation. It contains a section on the viscera and their functions, illustrated by labelled diagrams. He states explicitly that greater knowledge of the internal organs is necessary to avoid clinical errors. He was present at several executions, and was able to examine the bodies.³⁹ During a visit to Luanzhou (Hebei province) in the second year of the Jiaqing reign period (1797), he tells us that he saw the bodies of numerous children who had died in epidemics of measles and dysentery, as well as hundreds of disembowelled corpses in mass graves, their internal organs exposed to view. He says:

39 In 1799, he attended the execution of a woman by dismemberment. However, because of his gender, he was not allowed to approach the corpse, and had to view from afar the organs that the executioner held up to show him. In 1820, he attended the execution of a man found guilty of matricide. Unfortunately, he writes, the diaphragm tore before he had time to examine it. See Unschuld 1985, pp. 212–13.

36 These are: *Wuse bangtong wuzang tu* 五色傍通五臟圖 by the Tang author Pei Wangting 裴王廷, catalogued in *Tangshu* 唐書, medical section (juan 59, p. 1,571), *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目, juan 3, medical section 3, *Tongzhi yiwenlüe* 通志·藝文略 (with the author named as Pei Guangting 裴光廷), and *Songshi yiwenzhi* 宋史·藝文志; *Wuse bangtong mingjian tu* 五色傍通明鑑圖 by Pei Yuanling 裴元靈 in one juan, listed in *Chongwen zongmu* and *Tongzhi yiwenlüe*, with the author named as the Tang Daoist Pei Xuanling 裴玄靈; *Wuzang bangtong daoyang tu* 五臟傍通導養圖 by Sun Simiao 孫思邈, listed in *Bishusheng que shumu* 祕書省. 闕書目, *Tongzhi yiwenlüe* and *Songshi yiwenzhi*; and *Huangting neijing wuzang liufu tu* 黃庭內景五臟六腑圖, by the Tang author Hu Yin 胡愔, the only one to have survived.

37 DZ 432, *Huangting wuzang liufu buxie tu* 黃庭五臟六腑補瀉圖, 2a.

38 See for example *Sancai tu hui* 三才圖會 (1607) and *Leijing tuyi* 類經圖翼 (1624) by Zhang Jiebin.

I went past every day. At first, I had to hold my nose. But then, considering how the ancients committed errors in their treatment of the viscera because they had never seen them for themselves, I no longer sought to avoid the filth and stench. Early each morning, I made my way to the mass graves and closely examined the abdomens of the corpses. After the dogs had eaten their fill, there was generally nothing but the stomach and the intestines left; as for the liver and the heart, scarcely three in 10 remained intact. Thus in the course of 10 days, I was able to examine no less than 30 corpses.⁴⁰

It is significant that these dissections yielded only drawings of the viscera; there are no depictions of the skeleton, nor do we find any mention of the limbs or head. Undoubtedly, Chinese doctors tended to operate within the intellectual framework provided by the system of correspondences of the five agents, in which a crucial role is assigned to the 'five viscera and six bowels' as the functional organs which store or distribute the stuff of life. The muscles and tendons had little relevance to their clinical practice. Nor was the head of great interest, since the seat of the individual self was considered to be the heart. When, in the mid-19th century, the theory that the soul resides in the brain reached China from the West, it provoked much controversy in medical circles.

The Skeleton in Forensic Medicine

In the Chinese medical literature, there are no illustrations of bones, let alone the whole skeleton. The one exception is the spinal column; partly because it provides the armature to which the organs are attached, but partly also because it was seen as a repository of vital forces, since spinal fluid was considered to partake of the same nature as sperm and brain tissue. Therapy literature scarcely mentions the bones and skeleton, not even in relation to the treatment of fractures, which was not completely assimilated into the learned tradition until the 13th century. Thus, references to the bones are essentially confined to the literature of acupuncture, where they function as landmarks, making it possible to locate the acu-moxa points and also, if required, to puncture the joints deeply without causing bone damage. In this context, which involved a practitioner acting upon the body from outside, some visual images were produced, but no actual drawings of the bones; as mentioned previously, bone names were simply inscribed on various parts of the body.

The first representations of the skeleton appear in the context of forensic medicine, where the examination of the skeleton figured largely. This eventually gave rise to sets of engravings of the skeleton that were incorporated into

the Qing editions of the essential text of forensic medicine *Xiyuan lu* 洗冤錄 (Treatise for Washing Away Injustice) by Song Ci 宋慈.⁴¹ Reports from judges of fraud and negligence in the conduct of post-mortem examinations prompted the Qing government to intervene by decreeing a new official document representing the skeleton, aimed at reducing judicial errors (see Fig. 9).

Like the acupuncture charts, images of the skeleton were produced by order of the emperor. On the 19th day of the 5th intercalatory month of the 35th year of the Qianlong era (1770), an edict was proclaimed requiring the Minister of Punishment to have model engravings made for the forensic examination of the bones, and to arrange for them to be distributed in the various provinces.⁴² The resulting document consisted of a text entitled *Jian guge* 檢骨格 (Norm for the Autopsy of the Bones) with engravings for the autopsy of the bones (*jiangutu* 檢骨圖). The latter were probably printed in Wuyingdian 武英殿 (the Hall of Martial Valour) in the emperor's palace, which functioned as the imperial press. Four acupuncture charts, one including depictions of the viscera, had already been printed here in 1731; and in 1742, it saw the publication of *Yizong yindian* 醫宗金鑑 (The Bronze Mirror of Medicine), a medical encyclopaedia compiled by the Imperial Academy of Medicine, which is referred to in Qing commentaries on the *Treatise for Washing Away Injustice*.

This project was set in train by Zeng Fu 增福, a provincial judge from Anhui. Having noted that coroners' reports were often falsified, and in view of the rapid onset of putrefaction, he submitted a memorial to the emperor requesting the provision of a standard chart of the skeleton with the status of a legal document, to curb fraudulent practices. Apparently, Zeng Fu was personally entrusted with the task of devising the engravings and the accompanying text describing the skeleton, which he accomplished with the help of a team of experts:

In the 35th year of the Qianlong era, the provincial judge of Anhui received the imperial command to publish standard engravings for the autopsy of the bones, and to have them appended to the *Treatise for Washing Away Injustice*.... The plates are not the work of a single individual, and since each member of the team followed a particular master, opinions differed on some points.⁴³

The earliest known exemplar was edited by a certain Wang Youhuai 王又槐 (1796) (Fig. 9). The bones are roughly drawn, and are separated from one another, giving the impression that they have been found scattered at a crime

⁴⁰ Yilin gaicuo.

⁴¹ See *Xiyuan lu*, ch. 29, *juan* 4.

⁴² See *Chongkan buzhu xiyuan lu jizheng*, *juan* 5, 15a–19b.

⁴³ Preface to *Xiyuan lu jie* (1831), *juan* 6, 1.

Figure 2.9 *Xiyuan lu jizheng* 洗冤錄集證 (Treatise on the Washing Away of Wrongs with Collected Evidence) by Wang Youhuai 王又槐 (1796).
© Library of China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences

scene and reassembled. There are captions written on the larger bones and beside the smaller ones, connected to them by lines. In some places, it is possible to see small white circles, which have been interpreted by later commentators as the locations of vital points, fatal or otherwise. Depictions of the skeleton were constantly refined in the course of the Qing, and from the mid-19th century, they begin to show the influence of Western styles of illustration.⁴⁴

These engravings of the skeleton reappear in the 19th century in two texts on traumatology. In fact, from the late Ming onward, there was a gradual *rapprochement* between coroners (*wuzuo* 仵作) and physicians.⁴⁵ Moreover, interest in precise knowledge of the skeleton began to extend beyond medical circles, to men of letters who associated with missionaries and physicians. One of these was Shen Tong 沈彤, the author of a short treatise entitled *Shigu* 釋骨 (Exposition of the Skeleton) composed between 1736 and 1782, who was a friend of the renowned physician Xu Dachun 徐大椿. Nonetheless, it was forensic medicine that provided the motive force for the development of

descriptions and depictions of the skeleton, which made their belated appearance in the 18th century.

The model engravings of 1770 soon came under criticism, eliciting written commentaries, exposing and correcting various errors, as well as new drawings. A gulf opened up between text and images. Over the next century, numerous commentaries on the *Treatise for Washing Away Injustice* were published, reproducing the engravings of 1770, while also criticising them and providing more accurate descriptions of the bones of the skeleton, based not only on the first-hand observations of coroners, but also on philological and terminological studies of the ancient texts with special reference to medicine. There was thus a constant interaction between image, personal experience and first-hand observation, and text.

The Symbolic Body and Transformative Processes within the Body

If the body is fundamental to medicine, it is just as central, if not more so, to Daoist practices. This is because the body is not only the microcosm in which the adept must create order, but also the habitation of the gods who must be mastered and meditated upon, and the site of the transformations that lead to immortality and spiritual fulfilment. *Daozang* 道藏 – The Daoist Canon, an anthology of Daoist texts compiled in 1445 – contains several images

44 On this subject, see Catherine Despeux 2007.

45 For instance, the physician Sun Yikui 孫一奎 (c. 1522–1619) incorporated the chapter from *Xiyuan lu* on the examination of bones into his *Yizhi xuyu* 醫旨緒餘. Influence in the opposite direction is shown by the increasing frequency with which Qing commentaries on *Xiyuan lu* cite from medical sources.

of the body, all symbolic and all dating from no earlier than the Song.⁴⁶

Alchemical Diagrams of Processes Taking Place Inside the Body

I would like first of all to draw attention to a group of images involving a very familiar motif, which is however so habitually considered in a philosophical context as to have lost all associations with the body. I refer to the *Taiji* symbol (*Taiji tu* 太極圖, lit. Image of the Great Ultimate). The cosmological model of the *Taiji* became established in the Song period, giving rise to various types of images all based on the motif of the circle.⁴⁷ In the context of Daoist internal alchemy, various images similar to the famous *Taiji tu* of Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–73), though sometimes bearing different titles, are to be found incorporated into Ming and Qing texts. They show in diagrammatic form the main transformative processes that take place within the body in internal alchemy.⁴⁸ One such diagram, which unmistakably refers to the body, is the *Taiji shunni tu* 太極順逆圖 (Chart of the Normal and Contrary Direction of the *Taiji*), found in a 14th-century text on internal alchemy, *Shangyangzi jindan dayao tu* 上陽子金丹大要圖 by Chen Zhixu 陳致虛 (see Fig. 10).⁴⁹

Without entering into details, let us merely recall that Zhou Dunyi's diagram is believed to have been adapted from an image by Chen Tuan 陳搏 (c. 906–89), a Daoist of the Five Dynasties period, which was entitled *Xiantian tu* 先天圖 (Image of Former Heaven) according to some sources or *Wuji tu* 無極圖 (Image of the Boundless) according to others. As no examples of this putative original have survived, we have no definite proof that Chen Tuan's image was a representation of the body and its processes, but it seems highly likely that this was the case, and that Zhou Dunyi and the Neo-Confucians turned it into a general cosmological model when they transposed it into a different context.

All the available versions of this image, whether they go by the name of *Taiji tu* 太極圖, *Wuji tu* 無極圖 or *Xiantian tu* 先天圖, have certain features in common. First, the design

Figure 2.10 *Taiji tu* 太極圖 according to Chen Zhixu 陳致虛. From *Shangyang zi jindan dayao tu* 上陽子金丹大要圖 (Images of the Golden Elixir of the Master of Upper Yang) by Chen Zhixu, DZ 1068

is placed vertically on the page, although no hierarchy is thereby implied. It mingles visual elements and text, with a circle motif representing completeness and generally suggesting the idea of unity. The bipolar contrast of Yin and Yang is conveyed through the use of black and white. Written characters relate iconically to their referent – in the case of the Zhou Dunyi's image, the five agents of the five viscera, or in the Daoist images, the five ingredients of internal alchemy (cinnabar, silver, mercury, lead and earth). Connections between different elements of the image (viscera or agents) are shown by lines joining them together.

There is nothing in the title or appearance of the image to suggest that it has anything to do with the body; this transpires from the nature and composition of the texts that accompany it. The image itself shows only the main elements involved in the alchemical process: the spatio-temporal collocation, the trajectory to be followed, the dynamics of the process, and the means of setting it in motion. The images are not susceptible to interpretation without an oral commentary or supporting text. Apart from the different kinds of inscriptions that they bear, Zhou Dunyi's *Taiji tu* and the images from the internal alchemy tradition differ fundamentally in the direction in which they are required to be read: the former is read from top to bottom, the latter from bottom to top. This is confirmed in a commentary by Huang Zongyan 黃宗炎 (17th century)⁵⁰ on an image named as *Wuji tu* and attributed to Chen Tuan.

It would be a task far beyond the scope of this chapter to compile an exhaustive list of all the images from the Daoist Canon representing alchemical processes within

46 For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see Despeux 2006.

47 On the concept of *Taiji* in internal alchemy, see Robinet 1990.

48 The main diagrams of this kind are *Taiji miaohua shenling hundong chiwenzhi tu* 太極妙化神靈混洞赤文之圖. They were inserted into *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing tongyi* 元始無量度人上品妙經通義 by the Ming author Zhang Yuchu 張宇初, a commentary on the Song text *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing neiyi* 元始無量度人上品妙經內義 蕭 (Scripture of Universal Salvation) by Xiao Yingsou 蕭應叟 (Preface of 1226), DZ 89 (fasc. 41–2), 1b.

49 DZ 1068 (fasc. 738), 3a.

50 See *Yixue bianhuo*, juan 2, 39b.

Figure 2.11 *Lianxing mijue tu* 煉形秘訣圖 (Secret art of cultivating the body) *Taiji hunyuan zhixuan tu* 太極混元指玄圖 (Images Illustrating the Mysteries of the Chaotic Origin of the Great Ultimate) by Xiao Daoxun 蕭道存 (13th century), in *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書, *Zhentong Daozang*, Taipei Xiwenfeng, vol. 7, 1977, p. 511

Figure 2.12 *Dao de zhen jing ji yi da zhi tu xu* 道德真經集義大旨圖序, DZ 723 in *Daozang zhen jing ji yi da zhi* 道德真經集義大旨, *Zhentong Daozang*, Taipei Xiwenfeng, vol. 23, 1977, pp. 571–2

the body. I will confine myself to citing the most important ones, which are contained in two texts dating from the Song and Yuan periods. The schema adopted here is particularly important: once again the contours of the body are not shown. The first of these texts is *Xiuzhen taiji hunyuan tu* 修真太極混元圖 (Images of the Chaotic Origin of the Great Ultimate for Cultivating Perfection), with its sequel *Xiuzhen taiji hunyuan zhixuan tu* 修真太極混元指玄圖 (Images Illustrating the Mysteries of the Chaotic Origin of the Great Ultimate for Cultivating Perfection), by Xiao Dacun 蕭道存,⁵¹ which contains numerous diagrams illustrating various processes, most of which take place within the body. The same representational elements are used here as in the *Taiji* diagram: a circled character stands for an object (internal organ, sensory organ, location on the spinal column, etc.); the contrast between black and white symbolises the duality of Yin and Yang; there are lines showing connections; and there are occasional figurative elements (see Fig. 11). The second text is *Daode zhen jing ji yi da zhi tu xu* 道德真經集義大旨圖序 (Collected Exegesis and Main Principles of the Authentic Scripture of the Dao and its Virtue with an Illustrated Preface)⁵², a collection of miscellaneous commentaries, some of them on alchemical subjects. It is certainly not earlier than the Yuan period. It contains illustrations based on maxims in *Daode jing*, which represent alchemical processes inside the body (see Fig. 12).

The True Form of the Symbolic Body

In Daoist ceremonies and individual practices, the body figures as a sacred space, often visualised as a mountain or cave-womb complete with labyrinths, mansions and in-dwelling spirits. It is essential that the adept should understand the true form of this symbolic body and possess maps to guide him or her through it. Daoist depictions of the body give information on the names of the principal spirits, key locations, processes and itineraries. The physical body gradually becomes the duplicate, or rather the Shadow, of the inner body, which constitutes the real or true (*zhen* 真) being as revealed through numinous visual imagery.⁵³ The symbolic body is represented by the figure of a mountain, or in a form that suggests a human body seen in profile or half-profile, with an arc representing the spine on the right-hand side and an open space on the left: it is not bounded by any kind of outline, and the distinction between inside and outside is almost effaced.

Diagrams, inscriptions, scraps of text, even some figurative elements, all intermingle in a way that is richly suggestive of the ritual and magical function of visual images in Daoism. Far from being mere diagrams or maps, they possess the double force of word and image, conferring power on those who possess them or meditate upon them. They are thus akin to sacred scriptures and talismans, and to the models of the world that were entrusted to virtuous rulers, such as the *Hetu* 河圖 ([Yellow] River Diagram) and *Luo shu* 洛書 (Luo [River] Document) (See Yoeli-Tlalim, Chapter 30 in this volume, pp. 436–8, Fig. 30.6).

We know of three representations of the body in the form of a mountain, all of them very similar.⁵⁴ The body is

⁵¹ DZ 149 and 150.

⁵² DZ 723.

⁵³ Compare Despeux 1996, pp. 87–118.

⁵⁴ 1) *Ti xiang yin yang sheng jiang tu* 體象陰陽升降圖 (Chart of

Figure 2.13 Image of the body as a mountain showing alchemical processes. From *Daoyuan yiqi* 道元一氣 (The One Breath of Daoyuan) by Cao Yuanbai 曹元白, late 16th century

shown from the side or in half-profile, and seems to be cut in half. It appears in the guise of a mountain with rivers running through it and a sea at its feet, symbolising the ocean of suffering. Two figurative elements may be noted: the 12-tiered pagoda corresponding to the trachea, and a palace with several storeys in the head, representing one of the celestial palaces (see Fig. 13).

There are also more complex drawings of the inscape of the body, including alchemical symbols and depictions of the spirits residing in the body. One of the earliest examples is by Yanluozhi 煙蘿子, of the Five Dynasties period, and it accompanies his chart of the viscera. As mentioned above, both this image and the chart were reprinted in a 13th-century commentary on the *Canon of Eighty-One Problems*.⁵⁵

At a much later period (late 19th–early 20th century), we see representations that combine the symbolism of the body as a mountain with that of the body as inner landscape. Chief among these is *Neijing tu* 內景圖 (Image

of the Internal Landscape). The extant versions of this image date from the end of the 19th century at the very earliest, and are therefore too recent to provide information about the context in which it was originally created. One engraving conserved in Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Temple) in Beijing was made in 1886 on the instructions of Liu Chengyin 劉誠印, 20th abbot of the temple, who is supposed to have discovered the image on an old silk scroll that he saw at the house of a certain Gao Songshan 高嵩山.⁵⁶ Another important Daoist image is *Xiuzhen tu* 修真圖 (Image for Cultivating Perfection) (Fig. 14). Seven exemplars have been discovered so far, the earliest dating from 1812. Even more than in the schema discussed above, these images combine visual and verbal signs to represent the body as physiological locus, internal landscape and habitation of the gods and demons.⁵⁷

Conclusion

As I emphasised at the outset of this chapter, although there are few extant images of the body predating the Song period, this does not mean that others never existed, but simply that they have not survived into the present. Chinese people had begun to feel the need for such images by the Han period at least. Nonetheless, the Song period clearly marks a turning point in the graphic representation of the body as in the use of graphic representations (*tu*) in general. From this time forth, visual imagery comes to play a more significant role, not only as a record of knowledge, but also as a teaching aid, a mode of transmission, a mnemonic device, a visual translation of a text, and a representation of a certain approach to reality.

What is immediately apparent from the images presented here is that they do not set out to reproduce visible, contingent reality. They are not pictures but diagrams or emblems, in which figurative concerns are subordinate to an ordered schematic arrangement, steering us towards an interpretation – a reading. For these coded representations, composed of conventional signifying elements, are meant to be *read*, in the same way that one reads a Chinese character. Indeed, all the examples that we have explored so far include some form of lettering, and there is no clear demarcation between graphics and graphs. In *Xiuzhen tu* – the concluding example – in particular, word and image are intimately intertwined.

the Rise and Fall of Yin and Yang in the Image of the Body), taken from *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing neiyi*, in which this chart was preceded by a design similar to the *Taiji tu*. 2) *Yuanqi tixiang tu* 元氣體象圖 (Image of the body of Original Qi), from *Shangyangzi jindan dayao tu*, which also included a design similar to the *Taiji tu*. 3) A representation of the *Daoyuan yiqi* by Cao Yuanbai (17th century), which offers a more detailed illustration of the energetic processes that take place within the body at different stages in the alchemical procedure.

55 *Nanjing yiyi xulun*, DZ 1024. See note 30 above.

56 See Despeux 1994, pp. 44–8; Sakade 1991.

57 On these images, see Despeux 1994; Lagerwey 1991, pp. 127–30; Komjathy 2008 and 2009.

Figure 2.14 *Xiu zhen tu* 修真圖 (Image for Cultivating Perfection) 19th century. Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Temple), Beijing. Photo courtesy of Baiyun guan, © David Dear

The nature of representation is closely dependent on its function and utilisation. Thus, the human body is represented with a complete outline when the divisions and sectors of the body are considered as parts of the whole, when it is important to identify exact locations in relation to the whole body, or when movement is involved (external movement in *daoyin*, or internal movements through the channels and tracts).

An image of the body must be meaningful to its users, giving them a clearer understanding of their situation in space. A complete outline is useful to the practitioner, making it possible to locate the part of the body to be treated in physical space. It is required in general when the body is considered as a unit – as a self-contained universe wherein Qi, blood and other humours circulate. In these cases, there is a clear division between inside and outside.

A bounded view of the body becomes inevitable if one sets out to describe the circulation of matter in a closed, oriented space or to locate, on a spatio-temporal map, the points at which an external action or interpretation can be brought to bear.

But these images are also the spatio-temporal mapping of a discourse, which must be read in context and in a genealogy of transmission. For instance, the first representations of the skeleton did not emerge from the field of medicine, but of forensic science; for the purposes of acupuncture treatment, it was sufficient to approach the bones from outside, and plot their approximate position on a chart of the body. Advances in knowledge of the skeleton and in techniques of illustration derived from forensics were adopted by physicians in the late Ming period. From a technical perspective, these representations are primarily memory aids. They are integral to a text and do not set out to be true to life. Chinese artists were perfectly capable of rendering physical objects faithfully and drawing an accurately proportioned human body: in the fine art tradition, virtuoso examples abound. But an artist-craftsperson required to execute a schema, a *tu*, of the skeleton for forensic purposes would operate within the conventions of the genre, producing a stylised, generic image.

With representations of the viscera, both individual and composite, the didactic function of the image takes centre stage in the Song period, not only as an instrument for the transmission of knowledge but also as a means of proving a thesis, just as dissections in Europe served to demonstrate the ability of the practitioner. No doubt viscera charts were cited in the debates on the number of openings in the throat and the position of the liver. One might however wonder how useful this information could have been in clinical practice, since diagnostic and therapeutic principles did not adapt to accommodate the revised position of the liver, for example, and the liver pulse continued to be taken on the left. Surgery, which was almost non-existent, could not have stood to benefit from such advances in anatomical knowledge. No doubt all this intellectual activity reflects a desire to increase and enhance the sum of theoretical knowledge, but it also betrays a sense of dissatisfaction with the theoretical apparatus of medicine, which was unable to respond appropriately to some pathological conditions; the same dissatisfaction is articulated in other contexts by various physicians of the Song period, a time of acute analysis and reflection for Chinese thought in general.

Whereas depictions of the body in the technical domain are an adjunct to a textual exposition (medical, divinatory or forensic as the case may be), in Daoism, the graphic representation (*tu*) becomes the true image (*xiang*) or icon of the body, realised according to the systems of the

various schools. It is an object of power, like the talismans and diagrams used in rituals and individual practices.⁵⁸

As we have seen, images of the body are not mere representations of physical corporality. Like a written text, they act as carriers for a specific kind of knowledge and they are aimed at a specific user or readership. We lose sight of the body itself, as the spotlight falls on certain locations or landmarks in the reader's journey through the image, making sense of the inner world of the body or its relationship with the external world, and allowing the mechanisms and operations underlying physical reality to come to the fore.

When one comes to consider the way in which the body is depicted, one is struck by the absence of flesh and muscle. We should certainly take into account the different relationship to the flesh that obtains in the West, due partly to ideas from classical Greece on the role of muscle in the affirmation of personhood and nationhood,⁵⁹ and partly to Christian thinking. However, this difference is a matter of degree: Western attitudes have fluctuated over the course of history. To see the truth of this, one need only look at medieval images of the body. It was not until the 16th century that flesh and the body regained the importance they were accorded in ancient Greece and Rome, in sculpture in particular. But generally speaking, in China, flesh and muscle have had far less significance than Qi, the invisible pneuma that brings life and motion. Chinese artists set out to represent, not the movement of Qi as such, but the arrangement in a given space of the viscera in which Qi was present, together with their principal characteristics.

The treatment of the dichotomy between inside and outside does not constitute a distinguishing feature in Chinese images of the body. What really matters is not the physical object we see before our eyes, but the multiple possibilities of transformation afforded by a dynamic vision of life. The body is recast in terms of motion, as the site of the circulation of Qi and blood, resonating with the transformative mechanisms of Yin and Yang and the Five Agents; the inner landscape; the world of the spirits and demons.

⁵⁸ Cf. Baptandier, 1994.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ulmann's work (1990) work on gymnastics in the West and the role of the Olympic Games.

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