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# Virtue, Body, Mind and Spirit in the *Shijing*: New Perspectives on Pre-Warring States Conceptions of Personhood and Virtue

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**Abstract**

This paper addresses the location of virtue within a virtuous person. It examines the relations of body (*shen* 身, *ti* 體, *xing* 形, *gong* 躬), mind (*xin* 心) and spirit (*shen* 神) in the *Shijing* 詩經, which describes virtue (*de* 德) in terms of the bodies and minds of virtuous agents. I argue that virtue is attributed to outward behavior, rather than inner state, and that that behavior is described via the performance of the *shen* or *gong* body.

**Keywords**

*Shijing* 詩經 – virtue – body – heart-mind 心 – spirit

What does it mean for a person to be virtuous? If we imagine ourselves asking this question out loud, it is easy to hear the question putting its emphasis on the last word. In this paper I shift the locution slightly and ask: what does it mean for a *person* to be virtuous? Is virtue particular to some part of a person, and if so, which, or does it pervade the whole? The *Shijing* 詩經 or *Book of Odes* (henceforward *the Odes*) is a useful place to ask this question for several reasons. The most obvious one is the high regard in which Confucius held it. In the *Lunyu* 論語 or *Analects*, when asked by his students what to study, Confucius places the greatest importance on the *Shijing* which, in his view, seem to have distilled moral wisdom – or virtue – of antiquity. Another testimony to the importance of *the Odes* is the frequency with which quotations from it appear in texts excavated from Warring States and Han tombs.

A different reason to ask this question of *the Odes* is that it forms a basis of comparison for the development of philosophical concepts in Warring States philosophy. It is one of the major – and unarguably pre-philosophical – texts of the Chinese tradition. As such, it can provide a baseline of sorts for key concepts before philosophers got to work on them. How does *the Odes* depict the virtue of its virtuous agents? Were they, as in *Mengzi* 孟子, individuals who had properly cultivated their heart-minds? To address this question, I examine accounts of relations between body, mind and spirit in *the Odes*, and how they relate to virtue.

Philosophical debates about the relationship between mind and body are often described in terms of mind-body dualism and its opposite, monism or some kind of "holism." Monist or holist views agree on the unity of mind and body, but with much debate about what kind, whereas mind-body dualists take body and mind to be metaphysically distinct entities.[1] The question is

1 Holist views include those of materialists, for whom mental states are simply physical states; and idealists, for whom physical states are really mental states. For dualists mind and body are both real and both different: neither can be assimilated into the other. There are multiple varieties of dualism, as well as multiple mind-body problems. Dualism refers to claims that for a given domain, there are two fundamental kinds or categories of things or principles, in contrast to monism: the theory that there is only one fundamental principle, kind or category of thing. The mind-body problem refers to problems of the relationship between mind and body, including the ontological problem

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important for several reasons. Several humanistic and scientific disciplines recognize embodiment as an important dimension of the human condition. Some account of relations between body and mind, spirit or soul is central to any understanding of the self, and of the nature of virtue or virtuosity (*de* 德).[2]

To address this question, I survey the representations of bodies, minds and spirits of some of the virtuous – and vicious – agents who populate *the Odes*. The dating of *the Odes* is a matter of scholarly disagreement, but the consensus seems to date the received text of the Mao edition to the Western Zhou or earlier. Excavated texts have suggested that multiple versions of *the Odes* were in circulation in Warring States China, but, for purposes of the present discussion, it is reasonable to infer that something fairly close to the received version of *the Odes* held this central role in Confucius's notion of virtue.[3] *The Odes* also presents a view of the mind that includes concepts of psychological interiority.[4]

The first section examines the account of human – and animal – bodies. The second examines uses of *xin* (the heart-mind), including the issue of psychological interiority, and the very limited ways I which the term *shen* (spirit or spirits) is used, and how its presence or absents relates to the question of psychological interiority. I argue that, although *the Odes* do show psychological interiority, they do not manifest any clear expression of dualism, nor do they manifest a strong distinction between mind and spirit. The "bodies" that appear in this text are not the physical form or limbs, but rather the socially articulated and constructed body. Nor are the "spirits" that appear there interior faculties in any sense. The third section returns to the issue of embodiment virtue by examining other accounts of "virtue" (*de*) in *the Odes*, which clearly base descriptions of an individual as "virtuous" to demeanor, conduct, and reputation (based on demeanor and conduct), rather than inner dispositions.

## 1 Virtuous Bodies in the *Shijing*

Chinese terms for "body" differ from the English notion important ways. Nathan Sivin and Deborah Sommer identify four major terms for the human body.[5] *Ti* 體, the concrete physical body, was distinct from *xing* 形, the body as a structural form; *gong* 躬, the body displayed in ritual conduct; and *shen* 身, the socialized and cultivated body person. *The Odes* is distinctive in its "body" language, in ways that have direct implications for the

of distinguishing mental states from physical states, causal questions of their mutual influence, and related issues. See Howard Robinson, "Dualism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edn.), ed. Edward N. Zalta. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/dualism/.

2 Debates about mind-body dualism have become important in Chinese and comparative philosophy because of claims that Chinese thought is "holist" – including claims that there was no mind-body dualism in early China – and contrasts between supposed Chinese holism and "Western" dualism. Several recent studies have argued for the importance of dualist views in early China. Elsewhere I have argued that dualist views tacitly conflate the categories of mind and spirit into one, which can be dualistically contrasted to the body. Instead, I have proposed a tripartite view of a person consisting of body, mind (*xin* 心) and spirit (*shen* 神), and have argued that in some early Chinese literatures, the mind or heart-mind (*xin*) is generally not identified with spirit (*shen*), nor is it presented as metaphysically distinct from the other organs of the body.

3 See Martin Kern, "The Odes in Excavated Manuscripts," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).

4 For the importance of psychological interiority in *the Odes* see Slingerland's arguments against Herbert Fingarette's claim that the *Analects* had no notion of psychological interiority, a key claim in arguments for or against mind-body dualism. See Edward T. Slingerland, "Cognitive Science and Religious Thought: The Case of Psychological Interiority in the Analects," in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, ed. Dimitris Xygalatas and William W. McCorkle Jr. (London: Routledge, 2014): 197–212; Edward T. Slingerland, *Mind and Body in Early China: Beyond Orientalism and the Myth of Holism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 14, 101 and 143–46; and Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972).

5 Nathan Sivin, "State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55, no.1 (1995): 5–37 and Deborah Sommer, "Boundaries of the 'Ti' Body," *Asia Major*, 3rd Series 21, no.1 (2008): 293–324.

understanding of virtue. To clarify this point, it is necessary to distinguish between three important terms that referred to various aspects of the body.

The *ti* body, referred to the concrete physical body, including limbs and physical form, for example. It can refer to the four limbs or to the body as a concrete physical whole, for example in the *Lunyu*: Your four limbs do not labor and you cannot distinguish the five grains, so who is your master?[6] It also can refer to the undivided physical by, for example, in *Mencius*:[7] Intention is master of *qi*; *qi* is what fills the *ti* body.[8]

Sommer describes the *ti* body as being divisible into smaller units that are analogues of the whole.[9] When a *ti* body is fragmented, each part becomes a simulacrum of the whole. By contrast, *xing* and *shen* bodies occupy discrete physical frames with clear boundaries. She also associates *ti* bodies with roots and plants, especially plants that multiply through cuttings, rather than seeds.

By contrast, the *xing* body refers to form or shape, understood as visible, solid and three-dimensional, with clear boundaries, but has nothing to do with a person as a whole. *Xing* literally means "form" or "shape," and often refers to the body's outline rather than to its physical identity. While *ti* bodies involve relationships between parts and wholes, *xing* forms involve relationships between inner and outer. They are not divisible into parts that are analogues of a larger whole; they can be divided, but division typically results in death, rather than reproduction. Both *ti* and *xing* can refer to the embodiment of an abstract principle, such as ritual conduct.[10]

In contrast to both *ti* and *xing*, the *shen* body refers to a body, person, or "physical person"; *shen* can refer to the lived body or the physical person, but also to the personality. As physical bodies, *shen* have length (height) and duration (lifespan). The *shen* is the socially constructed self, and displays signs of status, personal identity, moral values, character, experience, and learning. Unlike the *xing* body, which exists below the level of conscious awareness, the *shen* body/person/self is self-aware and is the locus of inner reflection and self-cultivation. *Shen* bodies do not overlap boundaries with other *shen* bodies, but are socially permeable, and absorb dishonor, disgrace, pollution, honor and purity.[11]

The *gong* body is the body of displayed ritual conduct, within a discrete physical form, and embodies the deliberate public display of virtuous conduct. It is used of a body that is consciously performing an action that demonstrates visually and publicly the virtuous character of the agent, typically before an audience. Such actions include ritual performance and court appearances, which are stylized, non-spontaneous, and reflect traditional values and social obligations. *Gong* bodies also act in the more spontaneous contexts of enduring hardship or performing physical labor on behalf of others or society at large. But *gong* laborers do not personally enjoy the fruits of their efforts. Even rulers and culture heroes endure such suffering and perform such labors. In the broadest sense, the *gong* body refers to the entire self or person created by *gong* actions, and is often linked

6 四體不勤，五穀不分。孰為夫子？See *Lunyu* 18.7/52/25.

7 See *Mengzi* 2A2.

8 夫志，氣之帥也；氣，體之充也。See *Mengzi* 3.2/15/20 in *A Concordance to the Mengzi* 《孟子逐字索引》, edited by D.C. Lau, Ho Che Wah and Chen Fong Ching (ICS series. Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1995).

9 Deborah Sommer, "Boundaries of the 'Ti' Body," 294–296.

10 For example, "The great embodiment (*ti*) of all rituals is that they embody (*ti*) Heaven and Earth" (*fan li zhi dati, ti tiandi* 凡禮之大體，體天地). See *Liji* 50.1/74/18 (*Sangfu sizhi* 喪服四制) in *A Concordance to the Liji* 《禮記逐字索引》, eds. D.C. Lau, Ho Che Wah, and Chen Fong Ching (ICS Series. Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1992). For *xing*: "If you cling to *ren* with a heartmind of integrity, then you will (come to) embody (*xing*) it (誠心守仁則形). See *Xunzi* 3/11/4–5 in *A Concordance to the Xunzi* 《荀子逐字索引》, eds. D.C. Lau, Ho Che Wah and Chen Fong Ching (ICS series. Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1996).

11 Plant metaphors also inform understandings of the *shen* body. For example, the *Liji* compares the *shen* bodies of children to branches growing outward from the trunk of their parents' bodies. See *Liji* 28.2/135/27–29 (Ai Gong wen 哀公問). See Deborah Sommer, "Boundaries of the 'Ti' Body," 304–307.

with the character *qin* 親, "to do in person." By contrast, *ti* bodies also perform labor, but not in ritual contexts; and have indeterminate boundaries, while *gong* body boundaries are always clearly delimited. *Gong* persons, in contrast to *shen* persons, do not engage in self-reflection, and they are not spatially or temporally measurable.[12] One person has one *gong* body whose identity is discrete from others' *gong* bodies; by contrast, multiple *ti* bodies may inhabit one person and multiple human beings may participate in a common *ti* body.[13] *Shen* and *gong* refer only to persons; by contrast, the bodies – or roots or limbs – of animals and plants are *ti* bodies.

In the *Shijing* only two of these terms refer to the bodies of humans (*xing* does not appear at all). *Shen* and *gong* appear as the body and person of (usually virtuous) human beings. In contrast to later literature, The *Shijing* never refers to human bodies as *ti*; *ti* bodies do appear, but they are the limbs or roots of plants, animals, and inanimate objects.

### 1.1 *Shen Persons*

The poem "Swallows" (*Yanyan* 燕燕) describes the lady Zhong Ren 仲氏任, the Shang princess given in marriage to King Ji of Zhou and the mother of King Wen:

> 仲氏任只、其心塞淵。終溫且惠、淑慎其身。先君之思、以勗寡人。
>
> The lady Zhong Ren, her heart-mind is sincere and deep; she is mild indeed and kind, she is good and careful *of* her *shen* person.[14]

This brief mention underscores the extent to which virtue may be identified with the physical person. The term *shu* 淑 refers to purity and clarity, and is gendered as a term for virtue in ways that *de* is not.

"Yellow Birds" (*Huangniao* 黃鳥), one of the few dateable poems in *the Odes*, praises the three men who were buried alive with Prince Mu of Qin 穆公 at his death in 621 BCE:

> 誰從穆公、子車奄息。維此奄息、百夫之特。臨其穴、惴惴其慄。彼蒼者天、殲我良人。如可贖兮、人百其身。
>
> Who follows Prince Mu? Now this *Yansi*, he is the champion among a hundred. Looking down on the pit (grave), terrified his trembling. That blue Heaven, it destroys our good men. If we could redeem him, a hundred men (would be worth the life of) his *shen* person.[15]

The context of the poem equates the three men's *shen* bodies or physical persons with their lives, as they stand literally on the brink of death. But the bodies that are praised are not their physical form (*xing*) or even their living limbs (*ti*), but their virtuous, socially constructed persons, who accompany their lord into death. *Shen* has a similar – if less dramatic – meaning in two other poems. "Rain without Uprightness" (*yu wu zheng* 雨無正) complains that rulers' words are not reliable and do not respect each other or fear heaven, admonishing them to "each be reverent in your person" (*ge jing er shen* 各敬爾身). "What Kind of Man is That" (*he ren si* 何人斯) complains of an unseen visitor, "I hear his voice but do not see his *shen* body."[16]

12 Deborah Sommer, "Boundaries of the 'Ti' Body," *Asia Major*, 3rd Series 21, no.1 (2008): 307–309.

13 Ibid., 294–95 and 307.

14 Citations from *the Odes* are from *Maoshi yinde* 毛詩引得. *A concordance to Shih Ching*, ed. William Hung. Harvard-Yenching Institute sinological index series Suppl. 9. (Cambridge: Harvard Yenching Institute. rpt. Tokyo, 1962.) Translations are from Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes* 《诗经》 (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), sometimes modified.

15 *Maoshi yinde*, 131: 1, 27. Stanzas 2 and 3 repeated the same refrain for the other two: Ziche Zhonghang 子車仲行 and Ziche Zhenhu 子車鍼虎.

16 我聞其聲、不見其身. Ibid., 199: 2, 47. Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, 149. considers the poem to be a complaint by a prince of Su against the slanders of the prince of Bao, phrased in the voice of a woman whose love no longer comes to see her.

The poem "Great Brightness" (*Da ming* 大明) describes the marriage of Zhong Ren 仲任 to King Ji 王季 of Zhou and the birth of King Wen 文王. Here her *shen* body refers to its state of pregnancy:

> 摯仲氏任、自彼殷商、來嫁于周、曰嬪于京。乃及王季、維德之行。大任有身、生此文王。
>
> The lady Ren of the Zhong clan of Ji came from Yin-Shang. She came and married in Zhou; she became a bride in the capital. Together with (her husband) Wang Ji, she practiced virtuous conduct. Tai Ren became pregnant (*you shen*), and gave birth to King Wen.[17]

Lady Ren is explicitly described as virtuous (*de*) in her conduct, and this virtue is closely linked to her *shen* person in a double sense: her ongoing practice of virtue in her physical person, and specifically in the pregnancy that resulted in the birth of King Wen.

The poem "The Multitude" (*Zheng min* 烝民) describes the virtue (*de*) of the minister Zhong Shanfu 仲山甫:

> 仲山甫之德、柔嘉維則。令儀令色、小心翼翼。
>
> The virtue of Zhong Shanfu is mild and kind and just; He has a good deportment, a good appearance, he is careful and reverent.[18]

His "good appearance" refers to the coloration (*se* 色) of his face, his mind is described as attentive (*xiao xin* 小心). He is also virtuous in obeying his ruler and in promulgating bright decrees (*ming ming* 明命). Finally, he protects the king's *gong* person (*wang gong shi bao* 王躬是保); he so much embodies the king's decrees that he serves as the king's throat and tongue (*wang zhi houshe* 王之喉舌). He carries out the king's decrees (*wang ming* 王命) and:

> 邦國若否、仲山甫明之。既明且哲、以保其身。
>
> In the States, the princes, good or bad, Zhong Shanfu enlightened them. Intelligent and wise, he protected his *shen* person.[19]

This poem twice refers to protecting someone, but the body of the "protected" king is a *gong* body, while Zhong Shanfu, protecting himself, protects a *shen* person. Finally, Fang Luo 訪落 seeks his father's counsel at the beginning of his reign and prays to him to "preserve and enlighten his person" (*yi baoming qi shen* 以保明其身). Here, even a ruler has a *shen* body.

These passages use the term *shen* to describe the body/person of virtuous individuals. The *shen* body can be measured, both in its length and in its duration (its lifespan). It can feel pain and be injured, but it is primarily the socially constructed self that bears status and personal identity. It embodies the accumulation of a person's moral values, character, experience, and learning.[20]

### 1.2 *Gong Persons*

*Gong* bodies or persons appear ten times in the *Shijing*, as both men and women who have been rejected by a superior or by a husband. In several poems, a woman laments that her *gong* person (*wo gong* 我躬) is rejected by a former husband or lover. In "Valley Winds" (*Gu feng* 谷風), a woman addresses the husband she had thought to spend her life with:

> 習習谷風、以陰以雨。黽勉同心、不宜有怒。采封采菲、無以下體。德音莫違、及爾同死

17 Ibid., 236: 2, 59.
18 Ibid., 260: 1, 71
19 Ibid., 260: 2–4, 71.
20 Deborah Sommer, "Boundaries of the 'Ti' Body," 1-3-6.

> Gusts, gusts the valley winds, bring clouds and rain. I strove to be of the same (as you) in heart-mind; you should not feel anger. They gather the *feng* plant, gather the *fei*, without regard to their lower part (*ti*). In my reputation for virtue (*de yin*), nothing is contrary (to what it should be); I should die with you.[21]

But he has rejected her for a new wife: "My *gong* person is now not liked; how should I have leisure to be anxious for my future?"[22] Similarly, in "Vagabond" (*Meng* 氓), a women laments to a former husband who has rejected her: "Silently I think of it, and bemoan my *gong* self (*gong zi* 躬自)."[23]

Elsewhere, *gong* is used of persons who labor in the face of misfortune. "The Milky Way" (*Yun han* 雲漢) describes a drought, in which all sacrifices have been offered to the spirits, to no avail; Hou Ji 后稷 is powerless and Shangdi 上帝 "wastes and destroys the earth below; why does he strike my *gong* person?"[24] Similarly, another poem describes a famine that has been made worse by the misbehavior wicked officials: "will they not bring calamity on our *gong* persons?"[25] In "Crest-like is the Southern Mountain" (*Jie Nanshan* 節南山), a minister is faulted because: "you do not appear (as a *gong*) person, you do not act personally (*fu gong fu qin* 弗躬弗親); the people do not trust you."[26] This is someone who shirks *gong* labor. By contrast, the official of "Rain without Uprightness"[27] tries to labor on behalf of his state, but his advice is not heeded:

> 哀哉不能言、匪舌是出、維躬是瘁。哿矣能言、巧言如流、俾躬處休
>
> Alas, I am unable to speak! I cannot bring out my tongue; I only exhaust my *gong* body; How suitable to be able to speak! The artful words (of court sycophants) are like a flow; it makes their *gong* bodies rest in comfort.[28]

Finally, the *gong* body, especially a ruler's, must be preserved and protected. The poem "King Wen" (*Wen Wang* 文王) admonishes its eponymous subject: "the mandate is not easy (easily preserved), do not cause the extinction of your own *gong* body."[29] In "The Multitude", Zhong Shanfu protects the *gong* person of the king:

> 王命仲山甫、式是百辟。纘戎祖考、王躬是保。
>
> The king charged Zhong Shanfu be a model to those many rulers; continuing (the services of) your ancestors and protecting the king's *gong* person.[30]

### 1.3 *Nonhuman Ti Bodies*

In several *Shijing* poems, *ti* refers to the body in the sense of its limbs. According to "Valley Winds," gathered plants are not rejected because of their roots, literally their "lower limbs" (*xia ti* 下體). The comparison is between the roots of the plants, which are not rejected and the wife who is. "Regard the Rat" (*Xiang shu* 相鼠) compares the rat, whose body always has four limbs (*you ti* 有體), with a human being, who can exist without ritual propriety (*wu li* 無禮).

21 *Maoshi yinde*, 35: 1, 7.
22 我躬不閱、遑恤我後. Ibid., 35: 3, 7. Some take *wo hou* 我後 to refer to descendants, rather than the general future. See Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, 22. The same lament occurs in another poem in what appears to be the voice of a dissatisfied officer who has been rejected by his superior. See *Maoshi yinde* 197: 8, *Xiao pan* 小弁.
23 靜言思之、躬自悼矣. *Maoshi yinde*, 58: 5, 13.
24 耗斁下土、寧丁我躬. Ibid., 258: 2, 69.
25 不棘我躬. Ibid., 265: 6, 73. In the two-stanza poem "It's No Use" (Ibid., 36), the speaker addresses the prince with whom he shared exile and hardship: "If it were not my lord's *gong* person, why be out here in the mire?" (*Wei jun zhi gong, hu weihu nizhong* 微君之躬、胡為乎泥中). *Shi Wei* 式微, Ibid., 36.2, 8.
26 弗躬弗親、庶民弗信. Ibid., 191: 4, 45.
27 Ibid., 194.
28 Ibid., 194: 5, 45
29 命之不易、無遏爾躬. Ibid., 235: 7, 58.
30 Ibid., 260: 3, 71.

In "Vagabond" narrator recalls her husband's promises of marriage. He prognosticates with both bones and stalks, and "their *ti* bodies had no inauspicious word."[31] Here, *ti* could refer to their bodies as a whole, or to the "limbs" of the cracks on the bone or the "branches" of the yarrow stalks. Either way, the reference is to the (now) dead bones and stalks of formerly living animals and plants. "Rushes by the Road" (*Xing wei* 行葦) compares the complete limbs of the fast-growing plants to the unity of brothers in a family. The plants "become ample and take shape," literally, "become ample, become limbed" (*fang bao fang ti* 方苞方體).[32]

In summary, these examples show that the "body" described in *the Odes* is not the form of the physical body – the frequent object of "mind-body" contrasts, nor is it the limbed body of plants and animals. In other words, it is a human and social body, the body that possesses – or lacks – virtue.

That *shen* should be prominent in *the Odes* is not surprising. What is somewhat surprising is that *xing* is absent, and that *ti* is only applied to non-human living things. In other words, even in the description of human bodies, *the Odes* are moving toward a normative description of specifically human behavior. This consistency is all the more noteworthy given the probable heterogeneous origins of the text. One possible explanation is a strong editorial hand, such as that ascribed by tradition to Confucius himself.

These references make it clear that an important aspect of virtue in *the Odes* is what we might call embodied virtue, in the sense that a virtuous agent is virtuous in her physical person. Lady Zhong Ren is sincere and deep in her mind, but she is also careful of her *shen* person (*shen qi shen* 慎其身). The *shen* person of Ziche Yansi, who follows Prince Mu in death, is worth a hundred men. The virtuous conduct (*de zhi xing* 德之行) of Lady Ren and the good deportment and appearance of the virtuous minister Zhong Shanfu refer to the actions of their *shen* persons, and Zhong Shanfu explicitly protects his, as does Lady Zhong Ren. (Virtuous agents protect their own *shen* bodies, but protect the *gong* bodies of others, discussed below.) The *shen* person is what embodies a person's moral values, wisdom, and learning. In *the Odes*, virtue can hardly exist without it.

But what happens to the *shen* bodies of Odes agents whose virtues are unrecognized, or are rejected by others? They tend to describe their own bodies not as *shen* but as *gong*, often in the context of a lament for their mistreatment by others.

## 2 Hearts, Minds and Spirits

The term *xin* 心 appears a hundred and sixty-eight times in seventy-four of *the Odes*. Often it is the seat of the emotions in first-person accounts of grief and sorrow especially, but also of love, pleasure, and calm. Examples include references to "my heart" (*wo xin* 我心) or "my sorrowful heart-mind" (*youxin* 憂心) in statements such as: (a) *youxin chongchong / youxin chuochuo / woxin shangbei*, 憂心忡忡 / 憂心惙惙 / 我心傷悲 (my sorrowful heart is agitated /very sad /wounded with grief);[33] (b) *youxin qiaoqiao* 憂心悄悄 (my anxious heart is full of trouble);[34] (c) *xin zhi youyi* 心之憂矣 (the sorrow of my heart);[35] (d) *zhanyi junzi, shilao woxin* 展矣君子、實勞我心 (that princely man afflicts my heart).[36]

As Michael Carr notes in an important but little circulated study, the word heart is a semantic hyponym for "mind"; and perhaps for this reason, Karlgren typically *xin* as "heart" ninety-six percent of the time, and only rarely renders the term as "mind." Although other viscera are associated with emotions and consciousness, they are almost never mentioned in the *Shijing*, and physical pain is synonymous with mental pain.[37]

31 爾卜爾筮、體無咎言. Ibid., 58: 2, 12–13.

32 Ibid., 246: 1, 63.

33 See *The Odes*, *Cao chong* 草蟲.

34 See *The Odes*, *Bai zhou* 柏舟.

35 See *The Odes*, Lü *yi* 綠衣.

36 See *The Odes*, *Xiong zhi* 雄雉.

37 Michael Carr is interested in instances where *xin* means "mind," rather than heart, in order to apply the *Shijing* to the "bicameral mind" hypothesis of Julian Jaynes, which is not a concern of the present study. For

So it is not surprising that in many instances, it is open to question whether *xin* primarily refers to the emotions or to cognition. For example, in "What Kind of Man is That" (*He ren si*), the (presumably female) speaker is perturbed because of a man who returns to her house but does not announce himself or come in. His heart-mind is full of dangerous devices (*qi xin kong jian* 其心孔艱); he does nothing but perturb her heart-mind (*qi jiao wo xin* 祇攪我心), yet had he come into the house, her mind would have been relieved (*wo xin yi ye* 我心易也). In another example, "Great Brightness" (*Da ming*), King Wu is urged to have no doubts in his heart-mind (*wu er er xin* 無貳爾心).

### 2.1 *Psychological Interiority*

One area where the boundary between feeling heart and thinking mind is difficult to draw is in the phrase *zhongxin* 中心: "the center of the heart-mind." But is this inmost faculty a feeling heart or a judging mind? In some cases the "inmost *xin*" is linked to the "grieving heart" that is so prevalent in the *Shijing*. For example, the narrator of the short poem "Strong Winds" (*Zhong feng* 終風) complains of such arrogant treatment: that "at the core of my heart I am grieved."[38] Similarly the rejected wife of "Valley Breeze" (*Gu feng* 谷風) describes her inner state as: "unwilling in the core of my heart" (*zhongxin you wei* 中心有違). Slingerland argues that her expression of reluctance (*wei*) – literally physical "opposition" or "going against" – conflicts with her "inner heart-mind" (*zhongxin*), and provides clear evidence of conflict between inner psychological state and outer behavior.[39] In "Glutinous Millet" (*Shuli* 黍離), a sorrowful poet compares his own bowed head a millet stalk bent by ripening grain:

> 行邁靡靡、中心搖搖。知我者、謂我心憂、不知我者、謂我何求。
>
> I walk slowly, in my innermost heart I am shaken. Those who know me say my heart is grieved; Those who do not know me, ask what I am seeking.[40]

Observers of his bowed head and slow pace think he is looking for something, and do not see that what bends him double is not a lost object, but inner sorrow. The contrast is less extreme than in *Maoshi yinde* 35, but his outer behavior does not clearly mirror his inner feelings.

In both cases, the conflict between inner state and outer behavior seems to be more emotional than cognitive. The term *zhongxin* appears sixteen times in *the Odes*. Three things are especially interesting about them. First is the evidence they provide for psychological interiority. Secondly, as metaphors, they are container metaphors, in that the *zhongxin* is contained within the *xin*, which is contained within the body. These are one of several metaphors for *xin* in early Chinese texts, and in particular, they contrast with ruler metaphors in which the *xin* rules the body as a ruler rules a state. Finally, they also contrast to a very different trope in later Warring States thought in which the exterior manifests the interior.

The accounts of psychological interiority in the *Shijing* contrast to a later qi-based view of a person in which a person's "inner" qualities inevitably manifest externally. Mark Csikszentmihalyi describes a fourth-century "material virtue" tradition, exemplified in the *Mencius* and two versions of the *Wuxing* 五行 ("Five Kinds of Action") recovered from Guodian and Mawangdui. Csikszentmihaly argues that these texts provide "a detailed moral psychology describing the process

statistical data on "grieved hearts" see Michael Carr, "Sidelights of *Xin*: 'Heart, Mind' In the *Shijing*." (Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 31st International Congress of the Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa. Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan, 1983): 4 and 8–15.

38 中心是悼. *Maoshi yinde* 30: 1, 6.

39 Edward T. Slingerland, "Cognitive Science and Religious Thought: The Case of Psychological Interiority in the Analects," 199–201. See also Slingerland, "'Of What Use are the Odes?' Cognitive Science, Virtue Ethics, and Early Confucian Ethics". *Philosophy East & West* 61 no. 1 (2011): 80–109.

40 *Maoshi yinde*, 65: 1, 14.

of the cultivation of the virtues."[41] He argues that material virtue is an important part of the description of a sage; and that this "material virtue" tradition developed as a *Ru* response to criticisms (initially in the *Mozi* and *Zhuangzi*) of their claims that "archaic" rituals were effective for either self-cultivation or in the creation of social order.

Csikszentmihaly argues that for Mencius and a group of thinkers associated with Zi Si 子思 and found in excavated texts, virtue manifested physically in the body, and was inseparable from it. Central to this view is an account of a material virtue grounded in the transformation of *qi*. According to both texts, the cultivation of the virtues transforms the body and appearance, and is visible in a jade-like countenance and the appearance of the eyes. This view of *qi* is significantly grounded in late Warring States physiognomy and medicine. Other excavated texts on physiognomy show its importance in practical contexts, for example, a text from Yinqueshan on the physiognomizing of dogs, a Han sword physiognomy text from Juyan and a text on the physiognomy of horses from Mawangdui. All share the view that internal *qi* is reflected in appearance and makes it possible to judge character or potential. In economic and military contexts this meant judging the "character" of an animal or weapon. For Mencius, this theory of *qi* linked together the development of virtue and the transformed appearance of a sage. Xunzi by contrast- rejected physiognomy as based on endowments received at birth, and thus not an indicator of self-cultivation.

### 2.2 *Mind and Virtue*

In other cases *xin* seems to clearly refer to the mind, rather than the emotions. Carr has shown that these instances increase diachronically in the historically later sections of *the Odes*: the *Daya*, *Xiaoya* and *Guofeng*.[42] But instances are not limited to the later poems. Here are a few examples:

> 我心匪石、不可轉也。我心匪席、不可卷也。
>
> My mind is not a stone; it cannot be rolled about.
> My mind is not a mat; it cannot be rolled up (*Bai zhou* 柏舟).
> (Husband and wife) should strive to be of the same mind;
> And not let angry feelings arise (*Gu feng* 谷風).

By contrast, the poem "Jienan Mountain" (*Jienanshan* 節南山) describes a dysfunctional kingdom and criticize the king's inability or unwillingness to "reprimand his mind" (*cheng xin* 懲心) or "change his mind" (*e xin* 訛心):

> 不懲其心、覆怨其正。家父作誦、以究王訩。式訛爾心、以畜萬邦。
>
> He will not correct his mind, and is resentful and angry at their (attempts at) rectifying (him). (I) Jia Fu have composed this chant, to examine the king's disorders. Ah, that you transform your mind, and nourish the myriad states![43]

"Clever Language" (*Qiao yan* 巧言), another lament at injustice, contrasts appearance and reality, including the distance between others' thoughts and actions:

> 奕奕寢廟、君子作之。秩秩大猷、聖人莫之。他人有心、予忖度之。躍躍毚兔、遇犬獲之。
>
> 荏染柔木、君子樹之。往來行言、心焉數之。

41 Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004): 7.

42 Michael Carr, "Sidelights of *Xin*: 'Heart, Mind' In the *Shijing*", 7–8 and 15–23. Carr also discusses the detailed semantic field of other mental vocabulary in the *Shijing*, including lexical subfields for thinking and thought, for planning and pondering, for thinking broadly or worrying, and for knowing and understanding.

43 *Maoshi yindi* 191: 9–10, 43.

> Grand, grand the ancestral temple, a *junzi* (君子, moral person) made it. Orderly the great plans, sages made them. Others have their minds, I can guess and measure them. Swift run the crafty hare, but a stupid dog catches it. Tender are the soft trees, a junzi planted them. The words of those who come and go, the mind can calculate their sense.[44]

These brief references use *xin* to refer to faculties of perception and judgment. In some cases the term goes farther, and points to an "innermost" mind or heart, where the focus is on the interiority, and hiddenness of one's true judgment or feelings.[45]

Several of the later poems praise rulers for their qualities of mind, and explicitly link mind (*xin*) to virtue (*de*). The poem *Huang yi* 皇矣 describes Huangdi intervening to create the Zhou dynasty, beginning with Taibo and Wang Ji. Wang Ji was friendly in his heart-mind (*yin xin ze you* 因心則友) and gained possession of the four quarters.

> 維此王季、帝度其心、貊其德音。其德克明、克明克類、克長克君。
>
> Now this Wang Ji, Di measured his mind, and established his reputation for virtue.
>
> In his virtue he was able to be enlightened; being capable of enlightenment he was able to be good; he was able to preside, to be ruler.[46]

"Demeanor" (*Yi* 抑) argues that outwardly dignified bearing (in the sense of being repressed or restricted, *yi*) is the counterpart of inner virtue, and compares these qualities to fine wood suitable for making a *qin*:

> 荏染柔木、言緡之絲。溫溫恭人、維德之基。其維哲人、告之話言、順德之行。其維愚人、覆謂我僭。民各有心。
>
> Tender is the soft wood, they string it with silk. The mild and courteous are the foundation of virtue. Those who are wise – tell them lessons and they follow the path of virtue. Those who are stupid – they say I am untruthful: The people, each have their own minds.[47]

In "Great Heaven Has a Firm Decree" (*Haotian you chengming* 昊天有成命), King Cheng's 成王 virtuous practices are closely linked to his heart-mind: "continuously bright, he made his mind generous, and so he could secure tranquility."[48] Similarly, "Circling Water" (*Pan shui* 泮水) praises a ruler's officials, who "are able to enlarge their virtuous minds" (*ke guang de xin* 克廣德心).

Carr's study describes the *Shijing* semantic field of specifically mental activity as complex, and includes thinking and thought (e.g. *si* 思 *nian* 念, *you* 悠), planning and pondering (e.g. *mou* 謀, *you* 猷, *du* 度), and knowing and understanding (e.g. *zhi* 知, *shi* 識). But it is also important to note a different aspect of the mind in the *Shijing*: its consistent linkage with virtuous conduct in both thought and action.

### 2.3 *Spirit(s)*

Another conspicuous absence in the *Shijing* is the term *shen* 神 (spirit) in the sense of a component of a person. External spirits appear as beings who appear to humans in various circumstances,[49] including as recipients of sacrifice[50] and the spirits of ancestors,[51] though not the "souls" of dead

44 Ibid., 198: 4–5, 47.

45 Several other poems refer to comforting or pacifying the heart-mind. *Shijing* 260 (*Zheng min* 烝民) ends with a statement that the poem is intended to comfort the heart-mind (*yi wei qi xin* 以慰其心) of the minister Zhong Shanfu 仲山甫, who is plagued by many anxieties. Ibid., 262 (*Jiang Han* 江漢) ends with a statement when the country was settled and free from strife, the king's heart-mind was at peace (*wang xin zai ning* 王心載寧).

46 Ibid., 241: 4, 61.

47 Ibid., 256: 9, 68.

48 於緝熙、單厥心。 肆其靖之. Ibid., 271: 1, 74.

49 *Maoshi yinde* 165: 1, 166: 5, 207: 4–5, 212: 2, 258: 1, 2, 6, 264: 5.

50 Ibid., 209: 2–6, 212: 2.

51 Ibid., 240: 2, 252: 3.

bodies. By contrast, spirit as an internal capacity of a person never appears in the *Shijing*. In marked contrast to later literature, *shen* is not a locus of human virtue in the *Shijing* because it is not a human capability.

This striking absence gives added force to arguments on self-divinization made by Michael Puett, who argues that Bronze Age sacrificial ritual was fundamentally agonistic because of the capricious nature of spirits; and was used to transform ancestors into gods and create a divine hierarchy that humans could understand and manipulate.[52] Warring States thinkers sought to reshape dominant attitudes, and to reduce the distance between humans and gods through self-cultivation practices that allowed a person to become a *shen*. "Self-divinization" increased individual human control and made it possible to bypass divination and sacrifice. This view of self-divinization offers a very different view of the Confucius's famous advice to keep a respectful distance from gods and spirits, and to concentrate on human concerns.[53] That attitude is entirely absent from the *Shijing* and its account of virtue.

## 3 More on Embodied Virtue

We have already seen a suggestion that *the Odes* depict virtue as a visible, external quality, rather than a quality of the inner mind. This view of virtue is also apparent in the ways in which the term *de* 德 is used in *the Odes*. In some poems, it simply refers to or asserts the virtue of an individual, often King Wen, or of someone "having virtue," but says nothing about how virtue manifests or is apprehended.[54] Other poems link virtue to appearance and conduct, and conspicuously to one's *reputation* for virtuous behavior and conduct. The most frequent mention of virtue is in the phrase "reputation for virtue" (*de yin* 德音), for example, the "reputation for virtue" of the female narrator of *Shijing* 35 (*Gu feng* 谷风), discussed above. The same phrase is used by a male admirer who praises the beautiful Meng Jiang (*mei Meng Jiang* 美孟姜) for a reputation for virtue that will never be forgotten (*de yin bu wang* 德音不忘).[55] Another man longs a beautiful woman and "for such a reputation for virtue to come and join with me" (*de yin lai gua* 德音來括).[56] Men also have reputations for virtue. An unnamed woman praises the martiality of her absent husband and ends: "so serene is my good man, so pure his reputation for virtue."[57] *The Odes* uses the phrase of a duke whose reputation for virtue is flawless,[58] of a man praising his admirable guests,[59] and of the reputation of a gentleman or *junzi*.[60] The phrase is a refrain of praise to noble men in "There are Medlars on South Mountain": "may your virtuous fame have no end" and "may your virtuous fame be abundant" (*Nanshan you tai*

52 See Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-divinization in Early China* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. 2002): 31–79, cf. David N. Keightley, "The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture," *History of Religions* 17, no. 3/4 (1978): 211–225 and "Shamanism, Death and the Ancestors: Religious Mediation in Neolithic and Shang China (CA. 5000–1000 B.C.)," *Asiatische Studien* 52, no.3 (1998): 774–93; and Mu-chou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998).

53 *Lunyu* 6/22, cf. Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-divinization in Early China*, 97–101.

54 References to "the virtue of King Wen" (文之德) appear in *Maoshi yinde* 262: 6 (72), 266: 1 (74), and 267: 1 (74), and the eponymous poem Wen Wang 文王 (King Wen, Ibid., 235: 6, 58) describes him as always mindful of his ancestor and cultivating his virtue (*yu xiu jue de* 聿脩厥德). Other odes refer to the hereditary virtue of King Wu (Ibid., 243: 2, 62), the undeflected virtue of Jiang Yuan (Ibid., 300: 1, 80), the virtue of the rulers of antiquity (Mao 208: 2, 50), the virtue of a chief of Shen (Ibid., 259: 8, 71), and to Marquis Lu displaying and brightening his virtue (Ibid., 299: 4, 79).

55 Ibid., 83: 2, 17–18. She also appears in *the Ode* 49.

56 Ibid., 218: 1, 53.

57 厭厭良人、秩秩德音. Ibid., 128: 3, 26.

58 Ibid., 160: 2, 33.

59 Ibid., 161: 2, 34.

60 Ibid., 228: 3, 57.

南山有臺).[61] Other poems praise individuals for "virtuous conduct" (*de xing* 德行).[62]

The Odes also uses the term "virtue" (*de*) for *bad* behavior. Women use the phrase *ersan qi de* 二三其德, literally "his virtue is in twos and threes," to dispraise men who behave badly,[63] or who are simply no good (*wu liang* 無良, *Bai hua* 白華, "White Flowers").[64] The poem "Guests" (*Bin zhi chu yan* 賓之初筵) describes guests who "harm their virtue" (*fa de* 伐德) by becoming drunk and not knowing when to go home. Most striking is the poem "Grand" (*Dang* 蕩), King Wen's critique of the last Shang king. The poem excoriates him for employing violent and oppressive ministers who never should have been given power because "Heaven made them with insolent dispositions" (*tian jiang tao de* 天降慆德): literally, Heaven caused insolent or dissolute virtue to descend on them.[65] To put it differently, rather than being "good" they are "good at" and what they good at is insolence and dissolution.

Finally, two poems associate *de* with one's appearance or demeanor. The speaker of "The People Are Burdened" (*Min lao* 民勞) urges his fellow officials "Then let us be reverently careful of our demeanor, to cultivate association with the virtuous" (*jingshen weiyi, yi jin youde* 敬慎威儀、以近有德).

The poem "Demeanor" (*Yi*) begins with the assertion that outward demeanor is a sign of inner virtue. In summary, these poems perceive virtue through the performative actions of the *shen* and *gong* bodies of their virtuous agents. Nothing in the *Shijing* describes virtue as internal.

## 4 Conclusion

In summary, *the Odes* presents a very different body-mind-spirit landscape than do later Warring States philosophical texts three major ways. First, spirit is not part of the picture, because spirits in *the Odes* are all external objects of prayer and sacrifice, and never internal capacities. The issue of the boundary between *xin* and *shen* thus does not arise.

Second, most accounts of *xin* in *the Odes* are the "feeling heart," and the feelings felt are primarily ones of grief, anger, and powerlessness. At the same time, *the Odes* clearly describe a "thinking mind," and in particular, a deeply inner or inmost mind, which does not necessarily manifest externally, including its virtue. Some poems link mental character to virtue, but that virtue is manifested by action, rather than by the visibly apparent *qi* so characteristic of later accounts.

Finally, the landscape of bodies is more diverse, but also more slanted toward the social and ritual person than the formal body. The human body of *the Odes* is the ritual and social *shen* or *gong* body of virtuous persons, not the form of the physical *xing* body of mind-body contrasts or the articulated *ti* bodies of plants and animals. In other words, even in the description of human bodies, *the Odes* are moving toward a normative description of specifically human behavior. But *the Odes* does not locate virtue in the mind or soul, but distributes it among the *shen* and *gong* bodies and virtuous actions of men and women who are also virtuous in their inmost minds, especially in the later poems. Given the heterogeneous origins of the poems, this consistency is all the more striking.

61 德音不已；德音是茂. Ibid., 172: 3 and 172: 4, 37.
62 Ibid., 33: 4, 7 (*Xiong zhi* 雄雉) and Ibid., 288: 1, 77 (*Jing zhi* 敬之).
63 Ibid., 58: 4, 13.
64 Ibid., 229: 7, 57
65 Ibid., 255: 2, 67.