**body/身(Shēn)**

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The Chinese character “Shen”（身） refers to the whole body of a person, and scholars also pointed out that the shape of "Shen" is like a person being pregnant. In *the Book of Songs*（11th century B.C.- 6th century B.C.）, it is said that “Tai Ren is pregnant(Shen)”, and here the body refers to the pregnancy. In the first Chinese dictionary *Erya*( 3th Century B.C.), it also use “body” to explain self or personal. For these meanings， you could refer to the explanation of “Ji”. In Chinese Buddhism, Body (Shen) also means “one generation” in the reincarnation. Another Chinese characters related to body is “Ti”(体), “Ti” is often used together with the word “Shen” in modern Chinese to mean human body; “Ti” means body and its extended meaning “material object”, In addition, it is also used as a verb, means to act, to observe, and to experience personally. When emphasizing to use your own body to perceive, to experience, this word “Ti” is often used to gain experience through your personal practice.

Body (Shen) is an important concept in Chinese cultural tradition, no less than the concept of heart（Xin）. First of all, As for as the origin of body is concerned, Chinese cultural tradition does not regard body as an independent individual body, but emphasizes that body is given by your parents. Confucius said: “The human body, as well as every hair and every piece of skin, are given by parents, and you should carefully protect it and don’t dare to slightly hurt it. This is the beginning of the practice of filial piety.” In Chinese cultural tradition, the most important virtue is filial piety, which reflects this connection between generations. The Chinese character “filial piety”(孝) is composed of the two parts, the words “old” and “son”, and the “body” precisely embodies this connection. Therefore, among the many objects which the gentleman should respect for, respect for one's own body is the most fundamental. Confucius said: “A gentleman always respects himself, but it is especially important to respect himself (Shen), because oneself (Shen) is the key to inheriting the past and linking the future, and one's own body is the branch and leaf of one's parents. Can it be disrespectful? Even if the root is damaged, the root is shoveled out, the branches and leaves will die along with it.” Obviously, my body is the pivot of various relationships.

Secondly, it is emphasized that body is made of Qi (air). Before a person is born, this Qi is accumulated in the parents, which is the innate Qi. After a person is born, this Qi is transformed into my own body, which is the acquired Qi. From this perspective, the understanding of human body is linked with the creation of all things in the universe. According to Chinese traditional philosophy, all things are generated by “Qi”, and Qi also constitute the human body. According to *Guanzi·Neiye* (475 B.C.-221B.C.): “The essence of Qi exists in the heart, and people grow naturally. When it is expressed outside, the human body has a calm demeanor and bright colors. When it is hidden inside, it is an inexhaustible source. It is vast and peaceful, forming the source of Qi. If the source is not exhausted, the limbs will be strong; if the source is not blocked, the nine orifices will be accessible.” The constant source of Qi supports the life of the body. At the same time, the flow of “Qi” in the body can also reach the appearance of the body, so it can be diagnosed by “looking, smelling, asking, and feeling”. Traditional Chinese medicine nurse one’s health and treat one disease based on “Qi”.

Thirdly, in the Chinese cultural tradition, the body and mind are not separated, emphasizing that unity of body and mind. The body is not my property, I am my body, but there is a difference between inside and outside. *The Doctrine of the Mean* (3rd Century B.C.) says “sincere inside, and express it outside”. Philosopher Wang Yangming (1472-1529) in Ming Dynasty also emphasized the unity of body and mind. “Wherever one can perceive is his heart, such as eyes can see and ears can hear, such as hands and feet know pain, the perception of the body is just the heart.” Wang Yangming used the bodily sense of human body to explain the mind, it means that the body and mind are not separated, the mind flows freely through the limbs of the body, and the embodied knowing is the mind. Related to the unity of body and mind, the cognitive function of body is highlighted in Chinese cultural tradition. In Chinese, there are a series of characters with “Ti”, which is the sum of the twelve parts of the body, such as knowledge, perception, taste, and recognition, experience, etc., are beyond the pure mind, and the way to obtain knowledge by personal experience, as embodied knowledge is not just personal feeling, but has the publicity of knowledge.

Fourth, many of Confucius' manners and behaviors are recorded in *The Analects*, because in the Confucian tradition, the body is disciplined through ritual propriety（Li）, and this bodily discipline is also a moral exercise. At the same time, Confucianism emphasizes “setting an example by yourself”, taking body as a yardstick, and practicing a kind of “influencing others by one’s deeds”, thus showing Confucius' manners in speech, clothing, eating, housing, and behavior, and the body embodies a humanistic cultivation here. For the ruler: Confucius said: “If one's behavior is correct, things can be carried out without issuing orders; if one is not correct, even if one issues orders, the people will not obey.” Body here refers to a kind of behavior. Due to the characteristics of body in the Chinese context, cultivation has a strong moral connotation in Chinese cultural traditions. In the saying, Cultivating the self, regulating the family, governing the state, then leading the world to peace, the self-cultivation is a starting point. Because body and mind are the same, self-cultivation can improve one's moral cultivation and realm. Self-cultivation directly leads to the “Kung Fu” theory in Song and Ming Confucianism. In addition to the moral and political meaning of the body, the body also has divine meaning. Spirit (Jing 精) is the essence of Qi. Traditionally, Spirit is always used to express that human body is the essence of the spiritual energy of heaven and earth, especially in Song and Ming Confucianism, which emphasizes that the Benevolence is completely the heart between heaven and earth. Body is not to be free from the world, but to live freely between heaven and earth.

Fifth, Taoism's attitude towards body is different from that of Confucianism. The first is to emphasize the need to “cherish your body”, and then you can be safe. The Thirteenth Chapter of *Lao Tzu* says: What does it mean to pay attention to the body as much as to serious illness? The reason why I am in great trouble is because I have this body. If I do not have this body, what kind of serious illness will I have? Therefore, if you can take care of the world with an attitude of “cherishing your body”, you can entrust the world to him; only if you can take care of the world with an attitude of cherishing your body can you entrust the world to him. The second is to oppose the shackles of various rituals on the body, emphasizing the naturalness of the body. The human body was originally integral, and then the body and mind were separated. When the seven orifices (sensory organ) were separated, although the hearing and seeing became clear, what waiting for was the death. Zhuangzi's body should be free from various socialized disciplines and be in a state of freedom.

In Western philosophy, the understanding of the body has always been related to the soul. Since Plato's Idea world is recognized by the intellectual eye, and the sensible world is recognized by the bodily perception, so as for the problem of mind and body, the body has always been in a weak position. For Aristotle, mind and body are the relationship between form and matter. In Descartes' philosophy, thinking is the starting point. Thinking is the only essence of I, while body belongs to the material world, which only appears until the sixth meditation, and does not belong to the essence of I. The structure of Descartes’s *Meditation* constitutes a very prominent question of “body and mind” in modern philosophy. How do body and mind interact? Is the mind just living in the body? Descartes believed that I not only live in my body, as a shipman is to a ship, but I have a much closer relationship with the body. But in any case, such a body is always objective and passive; the relationship with the mind is the relationship between the promoter and the driven, the relationship between the active agent and the tool, and Descartes even used clocks to analogize the body.

Heidegger criticized the Cartesian concept of mind and body, and believed that cognition is not a kind of cognition that the mind stand by. Dasein first is being-in-the-world, man has an internal relationship with the world, and objects in the world are not only the objects of theoretical contemplation, also something that is at hand and ready to hands. In the process of dealing or practicing, the concept of body emerges. Merleau-Ponty emphasized in his *Phenomenology of Perception* that we are thrown into the world as a physical being, existing and participating in all the activities around us in a physical way. Therefore, the body as the subject is of extreme importance, it is the foothold from which we intervene in the world and see the object in the world, and it is also the place where the spirit can have a certain physical and historical situation. At the same time, the world depends on our bodies to be understood. Modern Western philosophy's understanding of embodiment echoes the Chinese cultural tradition's understanding of body.