

ERKI LIND

The Concept of the Body in Chinese and
Indian Bodily Practices: Transformation,
Perspective, and Ethics



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Usuteaduskonna nõukogu otsusega on lubatud Erik Linnu doktoritöö „The Concept of the Body in Chinese and Indian Bodily Practices: Transformation, Perspective, and Ethics” (Kehakontseptsioon Hiina ja India kehalistes religiooni-praktikates: transformatsioon, perspektiiv ja eetika) kaitsmisele TÜ usuteaduskonna nõukogus filosoofiadoktori (usuteadus) kraadi saamiseks.

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INTRODUCTION

Bodily religious practices

Most if not all literary religious traditions have individual self-cultivating practices that can be described as bodily practices. With bodily practices I mean any religious practice that a) apply the body in it – for example by manipulating cosmological “energies” such as qi in the body, and b) that have also body-related aims. Different kinds of meditations, séances, and rituals meet these conditions, however, in the course of history a certain kind of bodily practices has developed that share many characteristics with each other. Such practices are most predominantly found in South and East Asian traditions, for instance Yoga, Tantric rituals, or Daoist meditation. The resemblance of these practices is evident at first sight, yet they may also be only external, as the sources, beliefs etc. of the traditions, where these practices can be found, vary significantly. Yet even if this is the case, the question remains, why and how have these practices developed to look similar, and what the ideas are behind the practice.

These practices have remained at the periphery in religious studies as historically more attention has been paid in the field to classical texts than practices and texts from esoteric schools, with Tibet being perhaps an exception, as Tantric traditions are part of the mainstream religion there. It is only recently that more attention have been paid to these traditions and practices in question. I am, however, firmly convinced that it is very important to study bodily practices. Not only are they important in themselves as part of the cultures and religiosity of several cultural areas, but they lead also to the bigger question of the role of the human body in religion or the embodiment of religious ideas. The religious narratives don't exist in an abstract vacuum as abstract ideas, but are embodied in religious practices and experienced via the human body. With this thesis I wish to contribute to the understanding of religiosity of humans in all its aspects by taking next to the textual and discursive side also the body, practice and performance into account. With this I hope to examine what are the personal motivations of people in practices and specific traditions, and how are they experiencing religion and participating in it.

The aim of this study

The aim of this thesis is thus to study Indian and Chinese bodily practices and techniques such as Yoga, Tantra, and Daoist meditation and alchemical practices. These practices as a rule formed both in India and in China in the Middle Ages. I am interested in the inner logic of the practice and the concepts of the body – how is the body perceived and what is the practitioner's declared goal regarding the body. For that I am mostly approaching the subject from the inner perspective of the practitioner, and am looking for the practitioner's personal motivation, which by no means excludes the social factor from the picture.

The point of departure is thus the bodily practices in Indian and Chinese traditions, as there are several traditions that have developed strikingly similar practices. It is clear that India and China have seen considerable cultural exchange throughout history, especially by the influence of Buddhism, but it is not very probable that the similarities can be traced down only to borrowing of ideas. There needs to be also some common presuppositions in these traditions. I aim to build a theoretical framework for the study of said practices and I assume that this could also be used for future studies of the body in other traditions. I call this framework that sums up the presuppositions for the bodily practices the *transformation of the body*.

The transformation of the body is the central topic of the thesis that allows to approach the role of the body in religion from different angles, such as intention, practice, or social relations. In this work I will argue that the transformation of the body is a specific motive in the religious practice of premodern traditions that is most articulate in the cultures that the present work focuses on.

The thesis aims to demonstrate firstly by looking at the inner logic and motivation in historical textual sources, what makes the transformation of the body a feature of premodern traditions, and offer an explanation of the practices through an argument that acknowledges the cultural construction of the body, as explained in the following chapters, and shows also how the shared features of the body allow the emergence for parallel forms of transformation.

Definition of “the Body” in this thesis

The first task, when writing about the body, is to define it. The problem by a possible definition is that it needs to combine both the concepts of what I am writing of, when I say ‘body’ in religion, and what is understood as ‘body’ in these historic religious traditions that are studied here. In these Indian and Chinese traditions ‘body’ is not a singular notion, for there are different concepts of the body, or more precisely, different bodies that are signified by different words. If one is to take one of these as a basis for the study, it would become very specific and change the whole topic so that it would become impossible to follow the original aim. Secondly, by choosing one specific word and concept of the body, it would still be impossible to remove the cultural background of myself and the reader, because these termini are not directly translatable, and if I were to write, for example, about Chinese ritualised *gong*-body or the physical *shen*-body, it would still be about the relation of the notions *gong* or *shen* to the abstract concept of ‘the body’, as I understand it. What needs thus to be done, is first to define what I mean when I write ‘body’, and only then it is possible to study, how the respective religious traditions saw it.

As it is the use of the body in cultural operations that is studied here, it is clear that the body in question is not a biological entity. The body in question is pluralistic, cultural and perhaps volatile. It is the *midpoint* of the self and the outer world (this includes the society, the cosmos and the sphere of tran-

scendence. The body is not a concrete object, but a process. This process is in turn two-way – both the environment (predominantly the society) and the person him/herself via his or hers actions participate in it.

The body as understood in this thesis is thus the cultural interpretation of the biological entity, a cultural or social construct that serves as the embodiment of personal identification and of the focal point of relations between the self and the environment.

Methodology and Sources

In this thesis I am studying the historical development of Chinese and Indian bodily religious practices using historical textual sources. I wish to cover a widest possible spectrum from the underlying traditions, which is why texts from different backgrounds are being taken into account. As some textual sources used are directly from the respective traditions, for example the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā, which is the basis for a case study, there are also texts used that cover the wider cultural background, such as the Journey to the West, which is a Chinese folk novel that is used to look how the human body was perceived in Chinese vernacular religiosity. Sources from outside the narrower tradition help to understand the wider cultural and social context where these practices evolved and developed.

This thesis is not a text critical or a philological study. This means that, although consulting the original language where possible, I am in text critical questions relying on the work of other researchers. Additionally I am mostly using existing critical translations where these are available, for example Ge Hong's "Traditions of Divine Transcendents" by Robert Campany (Campany 2002) or "The Way of Complete Perfection: A Quanzhen Daoist Anthology" by Louis Komjathy (Komjathy 2013). Next to primary sources there are also academic descriptions of textual sources used, for example Gavin Flood's work on Kashmir Śaivism (Flood 1993) or Isabelle Robinet's work on *Shangqing* Daoism (Robinet 1993), and ethnographic descriptions about different cultures and geographic areas, such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro about the Amazonian region (Viveiros de Castro 1998) or Poul Andersen about contemporary Daoist ritual (Andersen 1995).

I am studying the historical development of the bodily religious practices in a wider cultural context in order to see, what the concept of the body in these practices was. I am firstly looking at the declared religious goal of the practices, and secondly, what was the significance of these goals in the context of the respective society. After having described the concepts of the body in various case studies, both my own and of other researchers, I use these as a basis of comparison to find, what is the understanding of the human body that underlies the similarities in historical development of these practices, and on a wider scope, how the human body participates in religious practice.

Relying on existing theories about the human body in culture and society, I will draft a theoretic outline about the functioning of the bodily transformation practices and their role in human religiosity.

The studies regarding the body from the social sciences and humanities from Marcel Mauss (Mauss 1935/73) to Michel Foucault (2005) will be discussed in the respective chapter “Discourse of the body in the study of religions”, and the theories used to describe the bodily practices, namely Pierre Bourdieu’s *habitus* (1977/2008), *perspectivism* by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998), *material virtue* by Mark Csikszentmihalyi (2004). Additionally Steve Farmers model of the emergence of correlative cosmologies in the description of the bodily practices’ historical developments.

Difficulties and developments during research

In studying bodily practices, I came to the understanding that the body cannot be viewed separately from other dimensions of religion, exactly as other dimensions of religion cannot be viewed separately from the body, which was a mistake characterizing much of the early religious studies. As I at first concentrated on the transformation of the body, which remains the central theoretical focus of this work, I soon arrived at the conclusion that ethics and the social behaviour are directly linked to the concepts of the body and its transformation. As I started to work on the thesis, I assumed that the body can be observed in isolation, only in the context of ritual practice. This was however not the case. Although the studied practices are often very individual, it came out by a closer look that the prerequisites for those practices, including the body-concepts, are tightly connected to the social influences. I will later in this work demonstrate that social relations are a part of the individual body, and that the moral has a direct impact on the formation of the body. If the adept leaves the society to devote him- or herself to the practices in solitude, it doesn’t mean that the social relations and ethics cease to have an impact on the body, but rather that he or she attempts to control and direct these factors to transform the body.

The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first one is the theoretical part, and the second consists of three case studies. These are also published or under consideration for publishing as articles. The first part consists of introduction together with the historical and theoretical backgrounds for the study, and of the theoretical outline of the transformation of the body in ritual.

The case studies deal not only with different practices and ideas from different traditions but also have different research questions. However all three deal with the same topic which is the concept of the body in bodily practices and are presenting the idea that the underlying idea in these is the transformation of the

body. The different case studies are used to approach the topic from different angles and show that the culturally constructed human body is tightly linked to cosmology, ethics and the society.

The first case study “Bodily religious goals in Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā” deals with Haṭha Yoga, which serves as an example for a tradition, where the aim of the practice is the transformation of the body. In the second chapter of the second part “Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*” I take a theoretical excursion into the notion of perspectivism in order to broaden the view of how the body can be perceived, and to indicate that at the basis of the transformation idea is the concept of a body that is inconstant and unfixed. Perspectivism is a notion that describes the cosmologies of the Amazonian cultures, where the self and the humanity are dependent on the subject’s viewpoint, and in this case study I look for similar ideas in classical Chinese culture. It also introduces the notion of relations as a part of human body. The third case study “Transcendence and humanity in Ge Hong’s *Shenxian Zhuan*” continues with the social dimension of the body, and adds ethics to the factors that contribute to the construction of the body. Ge Hong was a 4th century Daoist alchemist and philosopher that has contributed a great deal in bodily practices and the view of the body in Chinese thought. I will, however, view his work from a different angle and will not concentrate on the techniques of the adepts that Ge Hong described in his works, but on how the adepts and the Daoist transcedents were perceived by the society.

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

I. HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE THESIS

I.1 Historical background

This thesis deals with the concept of the body in bodily religious practices from South and East Asia. The traditions examined are Yoga, and especially Haṭha Yoga, Hindu Tantra, and Daoist meditation and longevity techniques. Buddhism is omitted from the study only because it would have been impossible to discuss so many traditions in one work, and the line had to be drawn somewhere. For the same reasons I have left out other regions such as Japan, Korea, South East Asia, or Tibet. These regions and other religious traditions have been taken in the general consideration and mentioned briefly for comparison, but are not been thoroughly looked into.

Buddhism plays a role in the chapter “Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*”, as *Journey to the West* is a 16th century Chinese novel with a storyline of a Buddhist monk who travels to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures. It is, however, not a Buddhist text, but a novel that reflects Chinese popular religion. Although this thesis deals with textual traditions, I am sure that vernacular traditions have had a large part in the development of the body concepts and practices studied in this work. Sadly, these are historically hard to study, which makes folk novels such as the *Journey to the West* valuable sources.

As the study at hand is theoretical in nature, and explores for the internal logic of practice and the role of the body in religion, more than one traditions needed to be taken into consideration. Yogic, Tantric, and Daoist practices are the most articulate in this regard, so they will be described in the following passages.

I.1.1 Chinese traditions

Chinese religious landscape is very diverse. By the medieval times three main traditions or ‘religions’, Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, had established themselves. However, these three were not exclusive, and there was also a strong vernacular tradition that used and combined the ideas from literary traditions quite freely.

Narrowing the focus down to Daoism doesn’t make the picture much clearer, as it is a very diverse religion consisting of many traditions. Daoism started as one of many philosophical teachings in the Hundred Schools of Thought era (6. – 3. centuries BCE) and its founding texts are *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, two quite different texts in style and nature, but both dealing with the concept of

Dao and the cosmology and ethics derived from it. Daoist philosophy – both cosmology and ethics – centres on the natural course of things.

In early imperial era the most important developments were the evolution of complex correlative cosmologies and the search for immortality by the emperors. The latter was executed by *fangshi*, the “masters of techniques”, whose practices included alchemy, divination, exorcism, medicine etc. The first organized Daoism emerged in the second century CE as a result of millenarist movements – the Yellow Turban rebellion and the Five Bushels of Rice movement which became the school of the Celestial Masters (*Tianshi Dao*). The medieval developments are the most important in what concerns the bodily practices – the emergence of the *Shangqing* (*Maoshan*) and *Lingbao* schools in the early Middle Ages and the internal alchemy later on.

In this work the focus in Daoism lies on the *Shangqing* School, fourth century philosopher and alchemist Ge Hong, and the cosmological and social concept of man. I hold that this concept of that had established itself by the Middle Ages is a mixture of Han era cosmology (notably the ideas of the breath *qi*, the dualism of *Yin* and *Yang*, and the Five Phases *Wuxing*), Confucian ethics, and shamanistic background of Southern Chinese tradition. All of these three factors are present in the thought of Ge Hong, and the early medieval Chinese concept of man is discussed in chapter three of the second part, “Transcendence and humanity in Ge Hong’s *Shenxian Zhuan*”. The occurrence of traces of shamanistic thought in Chinese anthropology and cosmology is also examined in chapter two of the second part, “Chinese Perspecivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*” in the second part of the thesis.

Ge Hong (ca 280–343) is one the most interesting figures in the history of Daoism. He came from a southern Chinese aristocratic family that had lost its position because of political changes but he was able to receive academic education. Ge Hong is best known as an alchemist and by the name *Baopuzi* (Master Who Embraces Simplicity) which is also the title of his most famous work. And because alchemy was associated with Daoism, he is considered to be a Daoist. His work is however much more manifold, consisting of various genres and writings on several topics, and his own declared goal was to establish a new school (Puett 2007). Even *Baopuzi* is not an entirely Daoist work, but consist of two parts, the so called Inner- and Outer Chapters of which the first concentrates on techniques for achieving immortality or transcendence, that is mainly of alchemy, and the latter on various topics such as society and culture. The other surviving work of Ge next to *Baopuzi* is the *Shenxian zhuan* (The Lives of Divine Transcendents) which consists of hagiographies of Daoist immortals. The Chinese word for ‘immortal’ is *xian* 仙, which can also be translated as ‘transcendent’ or a ‘sage’. Transcendence or immortality is the main religious goal throughout the history of Daoism, but has an especially important part in Ge Hong’s thought. He was an avid collector of texts and, mostly relying on Han era *fangshi* ideas, his own work combines and sums up centuries of mainly Southern Chinese tradition, creating a new system of thought

where religious beliefs, cosmology and technical practices form a wholesome entity.

The *Shangqing* (Supreme Clarity) School, also known as the *Maoshan* School after the mountain where the seat of the school is. In description of *Shangqing* practices I am mostly relying on Isabelle Robinet's book "Taoist Meditation: The Mao-Shan Tradition of Great Purity" (Robinet 1993). The school is based on revelations of Yang Xi between 365 and 370, and the texts were codified and organized by Tao Hongjing (451–536) (Robinet 1993). The school came into being in a time when Northern China was invaded by nomadic peoples and there was a notable emigration from North to Southern China, and *Shangqing* School combines Northern- (Celestial Masters) and Southern (such as the tradition of Ge Hong) elements (van Ess 2011). It is thus this school that gave Daoism the characteristics by which it is known today, although there are certainly also later innovations, such as the integration of Buddhist influences in the *Lingbao* school, and the gradual development of inner alchemy.

Its main importance for the work at hand lies however in Daoist meditation stems from *Shangqing* tradition. The central element in *Shangqing* practice is visualisation, but this doesn't mean that the practice doesn't involve the body. The practitioner visualizes inner organs, the gods inside the body, and the movement of *qi* in the body. In general, *Shangqing* meditation encompasses all the main elements of transformation practices: the creation of sacred space, body-deities, microcosm-macrocosm analogy, circulation of breath, inner ascent and cosmic journey, and eventually changes in the physical body.

The human body has in Daoism an extremely important role and accordingly has a very complex body-imagery. Firstly, the material body is, as everything else, made of *qi*. This word probably doesn't need explaining. Its direct meaning is 'breath' but its range of meaning is much wider. Livia Kohn has summed it up nicely by saying that *qi* is the "fundamental energy of the universe, the basic stuff of the Dao, the life force in the human body, and the basis of all physical vitality" (Kohn 2006: 3) and "it is also the material energy of Dao, the underlying force that of the greater universe, the power that makes things happen in the cosmos." The body is also seen as a microcosm, or a state. This concept is relatively old in China and can be found in texts from the second century BC such as the *Huainanzi*.

In Chinese cosmology *qi* is divided into two forms, yin and yang, and these into five phases, *wuxing* (wood, fire, earth, metal and water). These five phases were associated with colours, cardinal points, seasons, heavenly bodies, and, in the body, with inner organs. This results in highly a correlative systems both within the body and in its connection to the cosmos. And as the body is a microcosm, the heavenly bodies and the gods are to be found in the body as well. And not only are the gods in the body and in the inner organs, but the inner organs are also deified. The inner organs, of which there are five, are in this system of thought understood differently as in modern thinking. They do not have the functions they have according to modern medicine, but are focal points of

channels or meridians of *qi*, which leads us back to the starting point. The free flow of *qi* in the body is essential for good health and virtually all Daoist practices.

The *qi* is in its densest form in the body the essence *jing*, and in subtlest form the spirit *sheng*. These three together constitute the so called ‘Three treasures’. This threefold motive is since the early Middle Ages translated into the body-schemata, resulting in three Cinnabar- or Elixir Fields (*dantian*) in the body. These are “located in the regions of the abdomen, the heart, and the brain, but devoid of material counterparts, they establish a tripartite division of inner space that corresponds to other threefold motives in the Taoist pantheon and cosmology.” (Pregadio 2014) They were used in early meditation techniques studied in this thesis, that is these of Ge Hong and *Shangqing*, where they are mainly as, Pregadio writes, “residences of inner gods visualized by adepts in meditation practices – in particular, the One (Taiyi), who moves through the three Fields within the human body. The best-known occurrence of the term *dantian* in this context is found in the *Baopu zi*. The *Shangqing* sources developed these meditation practices.” (Pregadio 2014) The passage of *Baopuzi* Pregadio had in mind, is as follows:

„The One has surnames and names, as well as clothes and colors. In men it is nine-tenths of an inch tall, in women six-tenths of an inch. Sometimes it is in the lower Cinnabar Field, at two inches and four-tenths below the navel. Sometimes it is in the middle Cinnabar Field, the Golden Portal of the Crimson Palace (*jianggong jinque*) below the heart. Sometimes it is in the space between the eyebrows: at one inch behind them is the Hall of Light (*mingtang*), at two inches is the Cavern Chamber (*dongfang*), and at three inches is the upper Cinnabar Field. This is deemed to be extremely important within the lineages of the Way (*daoia*). From generation to generation, they orally transmit the surnames and names [of the inner gods] after smearing their mouths with blood”. (Baopuzi 18; Pregadio 2006)

Over time the body-concept grew more and more complex as the role of the body-deities declined. The peak of the development was medieval Daoist alchemy. I will bring from an alchemical text a somewhat longer excerpt that is a good example of how the body was perceived and used in practice. The text is “Direct Pointers to the Great Elixir” (*Dadan zhizhi*) from the *Quanzhen* School, and taken from the book “The Way of Complete Perfection: A Quanzhen Daoist Anthology”. Selected, translated and with an introduction by Louis Komjathy.

“*Qi* scatters to the Nine Cavities. Inhalation and exhalation enter and exit through the nose and mouth. This is the *qi* of Later Heaven. One *cun* and three *fen* inside the navel is where the original yang and perfect *qi* are stored. When [these types of *qi*] are not in a mutually beneficial relation, delusion causes you to forget your original face. This eventually leads to dissipation and exhaustion and results in disease and early death, sorrow and anxiety, worry and vexation, joy and anger, as well as sorrow and happiness.

The navel at the center of the human body is called the Central Palace, Repository of Life-destiny, Primordial Chaos, Spirit Chamber, Yellow Court, elixir field, Cavern of Spirit and Qi, Cavity of Returning to the Root, Pass of Retrieved Life-destiny, Cavity of the Primordial, Cavern of the Hundred Meetings, Gate of Life, Divine Furnace of the Great Monad, and Original Face. There are many other names as well. This location contains and stores vital essence and marrow. It connects the hundred meridians and nourishes the entire body. Completely pure and simple, it cannot be grasped.

Ordinary people are unable to get close to it because they are pulled along by the seven emotions and six desires. In confusion, they have forgotten this original place, and the qi from respiration only reaches the Ocean of Qi [translators note: The Ocean of Qi is located above, in the repository of the diaphragm and lungs]. Since it does not reach the Central Palace and Repository of Life-destiny to unite with the original qi and perfect qi, Metal and Wood remain separate. How then can the dragon and tiger commingle to generate the pure essence? In addition, they do not know the pivot of movement and circulation. How can the qi and ye-fluids flow and revolve to refine spirit and form?

The heart is associated with Fire. Its center stores the vital essence of aligned yang. It is called mercury, Wood, and the dragon. The kidneys are associated with Water. Their center stores original yang and perfect qi. It is called lead, Metal, and the tiger. First, guide the qi of water and fire to commingle by ascending and descending. When they rise and sink, joining together, use your intent to entice perfect essence and perfect qi to emerge. Mix and unite them in the Central Palace. Use the spirit fire for decoction, and guide the qi to circulate through the entire body. When qi is abundant and spirit is strong, you coalesce and complete the great elixir.” (Komjathy 2013: 120–121)

I.1.2 Indian traditions

The religious landscape in Indian subcontinent is even more diverse than in China, and India has various ritual and meditation practices in a multitude of traditions, schools or belief systems. The practices that fall under the spectrum of this thesis fall mainly under two denominations – Yoga and Tantra.

Yoga has had throughout history various meanings and can signify different practices in several traditions, or an independent branch of Hinduism – itself not a singular religion but an umbrella notion. The meaning of Tantra can vary from practices and theologies based on texts known as Tantras to any non-Vedic mantras, or practices and techniques that resemble those in the Tantras. The Oxford Dictionary of Hinduism states that “since such elements may be thought to inform, to a greater or lesser extent, all Hindu practice, the term ‘Tantra’ or ‘Tantrism’ becomes, at its loosest, almost synonymous with ‘medieval and modern Hinduism’.” Such definition brings us of course not further, so the term ‘Tantra’ needs a more narrow definition. This is offered by David White:

“Tantra is that Asian body of beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the universe we experience is nothing other than the concrete manifestation of the divine energy of the godhead that creates and maintains that

universe, seeks to ritually appropriate and channel that energy, within the human microcosm, in creative and emancipatory ways.” (White 2000:9)

The advantage of this definition is that it includes theology, practice and the concept of the body and its role in the practice as well. As for Yoga, the word itself comes up already in the Vedas (White 2011 (1)), and in Mahabharata it is used as a name for practices that aim for liberation and active use of magic powers in this world (Fitzgerald 2011: 46). In its broadest sense, the term ‘Yoga’ is used in Indian history as ‘practice’. In this thesis, the term ‘Yoga’ is used as one of the six orthodox philosophical schools, or *darśana*, of Hinduism, and for lineages of belief- and practice systems identifying themselves as ‘Yoga’, such as, for example Haṭha Yoga.

Throughout their long history, Yoga and Tantra have produced numerous branches that in turn have again merged into another. The two are historically linked closely together and have borrowed ideas and practices from each other, and overlap also with other Indian religious traditions. That concerns especially Śaivism, as Śiva is among other things the yogic god with the epithet Mahāyogi (the Great Yogi). Śaivism, however, is not the only branch of Hinduism (in lack of a better term) that has yogic undercurrents. A very important trait of Yoga and Tantra surfaces here – the tradition is connected to practice and not to ‘religion’ as a denomination. Yogic and Tantric practices exist not only in different Hindu lineages – such as Śaiva, Vaiśnava, or Śākta –, but also in Buddhism and Jainism, which shows also how the Western definition of religion cannot be applied to India without restrictions.

Both Yoga and Tantra have nowadays reached worldwide popularity. How many yoga practitioners there are today in the world is impossible to estimate as both Yoga and its practice have become undefinable through the emergence of modern Yoga and the explosion in its popularity. It is clear, however, that they can be counted in millions, for example, in the United States there is said to be about 16 million people practicing Yoga. (White 2011 (1): 1) Both Yoga and Tantra are largely associated with New Spirituality and wellness movements. Whilst Yoga is in popular opinion mainly understood as a form of gymnastics that aim to harmonize the mind and the body, Tantra has come to be associated with sexual techniques. These perceptions differ decisively from the earlier esoteric Indian practices, but it doesn’t mean that they’re necessarily wrong. It rather demonstrates the versatility and ability to adjust to different times and societies.

It is thus difficult (and meaningless) to describe *all* of Yoga and Tantra, but it would be also of little value for the present work to take one fixed point in history as basis for description. It is the historical development as a process as well as the ideas driving this process that is important for this thesis. That is why I will only give a brief overview of the history and main ideas of Yoga and Tantra, and a brief view into these two traditions mainly used in this thesis, classical Haṭha Yoga and Kashmir Śaivism.

The origins of Yoga are not exactly known. The word itself occurs already in the Vedas, but the Yoga as a distinct practice probably emerged as a result of influences from outside the Vedic culture and Brahmanism. Although yoga is a very heterogeneous tradition, its later development can roughly be divided into two (not taking into account modern yoga), that is, Pātañjala yoga and Haṭha yoga (Larson 2011: 72).

The Yoga Sūtras traditionally attributed to Pātañjali (Pātañjali; Bryant 2009) are probably compiled approximately between 360–450 CE (Larson 2011: 72). The text is divided into four parts dedicated to Samādhi (concentration, meditative absorption), Sādhanā (practice), Vibhūti (magical powers), and Kaivalya (detachment, independence). The development of Haṭha Yoga may be divided into two stages. First, around the 12th–13th centuries, the emergence of Haṭha Yoga as a sect of Nāth yogis (Mallinson 2011), which is deemed to be founded by Goraksnāth (White 2011 (1): 17). The idea expressed in this early Haṭha Yoga is, in short, that liberation can be attained by breath control. Diet, postures and *Kuṇḍalinī* stimulation are means to aid breath control (Mallinson 2011: 258). This was the basis from which classical Haṭha Yoga developed at the second stage, in the 14th–15th centuries. Classical Haṭha Yoga is foremost represented by *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*. This text is deemed to be authored by Svātmārāma, and the writing of the text is dated at around 1450. The title means Haṭha Yoga “lamp” or “commentary”, and it is a collection by which the author tries to synthesize from different traditions a unified form of yoga.

Tantra – or more precisely Tantric practices and texts – originated in India in the middle of the first millennium CE, and in relatively short time spread into other Asian regions as well. This development was a result of mixing different influences. White writes that “Tantra was an orthogenic development out of prior mainstream (but not necessarily elite) traditions, that nonetheless also drew on both foreign (adstratal) and popular (substratal) sources (White 2000: 18). Tantra was from the very beginning a heterogeneous tradition consisting of a multitude of independent beliefs and practices that share some basic ideas and vocabulary.

Kaśmir Śaivism is used in this work for describing Tantric ritual practice. In this I am relying on Gavin Flood’s book “Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism” (Flood 1993). Kaśmir Śaivism is a Tantric tradition which flourished in Kaśmir in the Middle Ages, between the 9th and 11th century CE, and has also influenced other branches of Śaivism. It is also known as *Trika* after its ritual system referring to three goddesses Parā, Parāparā and Aparā. It has a non-dualistic theology arguing for the identity of the individual with Śiva. The practice aims for the realization of this, which leads to union with Śiva as a version of Tantric self-deification.

I now come to the concept of body in Indian yogic and tantric traditions. As the body-imagery in China was complex, it was still relatively uniform. This uniformity doesn’t only concern Daoism but Chinese culture in general, and the same body concept is also shared for example by Chinese medicine. The details

differ from text to text and from one teaching lineage to another, but the main structure remains the same. Such uniformity is in India harder to find as the theologies *cum* cosmologies vary according to the tradition, where the bodily practice is adopted. There are, however, some basic traits the Indian yogic and tantric body concepts share with each other and with that of Daoism.

These basic concepts create the basis for that particular kind of practices, and a common denominator for all traditions with these kind of practices, is that the understanding of the body is a combination of different systems and notions. The yogic and the tantric body is layered and exists in a cosmos that repeats this schemata. During the ritual or practice, there is an upward movement that can involve the rise of some cosmic or bodily principle in the body, as well as the rise of the practitioner himself in the universe. The body has a system of channels, and winds and drops that flow within these. The focal points of the channels are signified by *cakras*. The body has many cosmological correlations, which is how bodily practices can have results in the cosmic scale. The human body and the cosmos meet in tantric traditions in form of mandala.

The concepts that are historically newer, are usually more complex, as they have combined ideas from more sources. The Haṭha Yoga body is a good example, as *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* is a relatively late text (from mid-15th century) that combines several older branches (*nāth*, *lāya*, *kuṇḍalinī*) of Yoga, and *Śākta*, as demonstrated by Mallinson (Mallinson *Śaktism and HaṭhaYoga*, unpublished) David White summarizes the very complex Haṭha Yoga body concept and the set of exercises based thereupon very clearly, so I will use his description here, as well as in the second part of the thesis, in the chapter “Bodily religious goals in Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā”. White writes:

“In a novel variation on the theme of consciousness-raising-as-internal-ascent, haṭha yoga also represents the yogic body as a sealed hydraulic system within which vital fluids may be channelled upward as they are refined into nectar through the heat of asceticism. Here, the semen of the practitioner, lying inert in the coiled body of the serpentine *kuṇḍalinī* in the lower abdomen, becomes heated through the bellows effect of *prāṇāyāma*, the repeated inflation and deflation of the peripheral breath channels. The awakened *kuṇḍalinī* suddenly straightens and enters into the *suṣumṇā*, the medial channel that runs the length of the spinal column up to the cranial vault. Propelled by the yogi’s heated breaths, the hissing *kuṇḍalinī* serpent shoots upward, piercing each of the *cakras* as she rises. With the penetration of each succeeding *cakra*, vast amounts of heat are released, such as the semen contained in the *kuṇḍalinī*’s body becomes gradually transmuted.” (White 2011 (1): 16)

In sum, the yogic, and especially the tantric body are very similar to the Daoist body. Geoffrey Samuel writes that “One could read the development of the new system [of tantric body and practices] in either of two ways, as an indigenous inspiration suggested by continued yogic practice in *mahāyoga* style, or as a set of concepts and processes incorporated from another source into the more basic sexual yoga discussed here. To me, the second alternative seems more likely,

especially given the presence of such ideas in the cognate Chinese practices” (Samuel 2008: 289). I, on the other hand, hold the other opinion. I believe that these similar ideas are the result of the inner logic of the traditions that is driven by parallel historical developments and the nature of religion and ritual, which aim for the transformation of the self. I hope to demonstrate how the transformation of the self and the body is intrinsic to religious practice in further on in this thesis.

By the similar historical development in India and China, I meant combining different influences and commentary traditions. The growth of textual corpus leads to the need of making the ideas in different textual lineages within one tradition compatible with each other, which leads to correlative thinking, and the agglomeration of cosmological notions to correlative cosmologies. Correlative thinking will be addressed in the next chapter of the thesis, as the human body is in case of correlative cosmologies a part of the universe, and this in turn leads to bodily practices where the correlations are employed.

Tantra draws, according to Samuel, from two types of sources – these are the nonelite or vernacular magical practices or rituals described as “shamanic”, and the speculative and scholasticist traditions described as “clerical” (White 2000: 18; Samuel 2008: 193–228). This is exactly how one could describe Daoism, and why the historical development of Daoism is similar to Yoga and Tantra, and not, for example, Brahmanic Hinduism. And in Europe too, it is Dante’s *Inferno* that is the most famous example of correlative cosmology, and practice is added to correlative systems in renaissance and early modern magic.

I.2 Discourse of the body in the study of religions

Although the body has become an important subject in the religious studies, it is still difficult to break from the Cartesian dualism that is deeply rooted in the religious concept of man in the West, and from the Christian – or rather Protestant – notion that religion is concerned with the soul. The body plays a major part in every religion, because people are defined by their body and the body separates a person from and simultaneously connects him to the rest of the world. Additionally, the body carries a semiotic value expressing the social status (the difference between the self and the other, gender, class, etc.). Thirdly, a significant part of religion is experienced through the body, especially the ritual part such as dancing, ecstasy, meditation, etc. Thus, the body carries the religious system of symbols – if one is to use the definition by Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1972: 90) – by no means to a lesser extent than speech and the written word.

The body is not only an important factor in human culture, but it also influences it and participates in it in numerous ways. This makes the cultural study of the body accordingly diverse. There is no one comprehensive theory of the body, because the ways of viewing and reviewing the body are manifold. Social sciences and philosophy interdependently have had the most impact on

the theoretical approach on the body. The basic overview of it is summed up by Bryan Turner as follows:

“Within a broader theoretical perspective there are basically four views of the body in modern social theory. First, following Foucault, the body is an effect of deeper structural arrangements of power and knowledge. Secondly, the body is a symbolic system which produces a set of metaphors by which power is conceptualized. Thirdly, the body can only be understood as a consequence of long-term historical changes in human society. In short the body has a history.”

All three “challenge any assumption about the ontological coherence of the body as a universal historical phenomenon. The fourth approach derives partly from the philosophical anthropology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty; this approach is concerned to analyse the body in the context of the lived experience of everyday life.” (Turner 1997: 15; see also Merleau-Ponty 1962)

The human body has gained in humanities and social sciences a lot of attention recently, but there is already a long history of research on this topic. Some important notions are almost as old as the scientific study of religion. In the beginning of the 20th century we find Marcel Mauss and Rudolf Otto, who both, from completely different backgrounds, draw the attention to the fact that culture, practice, and ritual (Mauss), and religion (Otto) are experienced and reproduced by the medium of the body. Mauss introduced the notion “body techniques” (Mauss 1935/2006) to express the idea that culture is not merely verbal and said that “the body is man's first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body.” (Mauss 2006: 75) Otto did not explicitly concentrate on the body, however, he argued from the theologian's perspective that the Western Christian tradition has only laid worth to rational and linguistic thinking (Otto 1923: 3), whereas he argues that it is the experience that counts. The emphasis on nonverbal though leads to the realm of embodiment. The holy that was the central idea in Otto's theory, doesn't have to be ethical or good, but it is an awe inspiring experience, hence the use of the word *numinos* instead of *heilig*. He does speak of the experience, according to the *Zeitgeist* of the early 20th century, as psychological state, but his description of the experience uses vocabulary that is loaded with bodily references:

“It is a remarkable fact that the physical reaction to which this unique dread of the uncanny gives rise is also unique, and is not found in the case of any natural fear or terror. We say: my blood ran icy cold, and my flesh crept. The cold blood feeling may be a symptom of ordinary, natural fear, but there is something non-natural or supernatural about the symptom of creeping flesh.” (Otto 1923: 16)

A third early classic is Arnold van Gennep's “The Rites of Passage” (van Gennep 1909/2004), which is important for the present work because it already combines body and practice, demonstrating the transformation of the body in ritual in a different context than the practices studied in this thesis.

Throughout most of the 20th century, sociology and anthropology have contributed most to studies of the human body in cultural processes. Especially French sociologists and poststructuralism have been ground-breaking in the field of body theories. The present work is influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, as explained in the next chapter, however, possibly the most influential thinker in the field has been Michel Foucault, whose main topics sexuality and power (Foucault 2005) have remained central ever since. Feminist researchers above all and the gender studies in general (Grosz 1994; Butler 1990) have made a considerable contribution relating to these themes. Although their topics are not directly related to the present thesis, their contribution is pointing out that people are embodied beings, laying thus aside the dualism of body and mind in cultural studies.

I will now move on from the general theory of the body to more specific studies. In the religious studies body has mainly been studied within one tradition or within a certain practice, especially within meditation, and in most cases within these two combined.

A non-tradition specific classic is “Purity and Danger” by Mary Douglas (Douglas 1978) that studies the concepts of purity and pollution that exist in some way in most traditions. The way in this book culturally installed and perceived bodily attributes are linked to human thought, has been very important for the development of the present work.

From the tradition-specific works the “Taoist Body” by Kristofer Schipper (Schipper 1993) is ground-breaking in many ways and overseen as such. Not only is this book the first scholarly insight into the esoteric traditions of Daoist practices, but it is the first book that sets the concept of the body into the centre of religious ritual practice.

Overall there are too many case studies of body imagery or bodily practices in a certain tradition to be able to give a thorough overview of these, and I will present only some of the most important works for the present thesis. The books I have profited from the most are Gavin Flood’s “Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism” (Flood 1993), Isabelle Robinet’s “Taoist Meditation. The Mao-shan Tradition of Great Purity” (Robinet 1993), and Susanne Mrozik’s “Virtuous Bodies. The Physical Dimensions of Morality in Buddhist Ethics” (Mrozik 2007). From the field of anthropology I wish to mention the works of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2008) and the theory of perspectivism, which will be addressed also in the next chapter, of Thomas Csordas (1997, 2005) on charismatic healing, and the notion of open body in the context of magic by Laura Stark (2006).

Several collections have been published on the subject of body and religion, for example “Religious Reflections on the Human Body” (1995, Ed. Jane Marie Law), “Religion and the body” (1997, Ed. Sarah Coakley), “Self and Self-Transformations in the History of Religions” (2002, Ed. David Shulman, Guy G. Stroumsa). An important collection is “Images of the Body in India” (2011, Ed. Axel Michaels, Christoph Wulf) with articles regarding Śaiva Tantrism (Flood 2011), Yoga (White 2011 (3)), the open body and the macrocosm-micro-

cosm analogy in India (Böhler 2011), and the creation of identity in ritual performance (Sax 2011).

Two excellent collections are “Tantra in Practice” (2000) and “Yoga in Practice” (2011), both edited by David White, who has probably contributed the most to the study and also to the popularity of the study of Yoga in the last decade. Yoga is, in fact, surprisingly little studied considering its popularity in the modern world. There is a decades-long silence after Mircea Eliades classic work “Yoga: immortality and Freedom (in English 1958) until only recently new work has been done on the field. Especially neglected was Haṭha Yoga, which is probably also due to Eliade’s book, because it rejects bodily and magical practices as secondary. Fortunately, the gap has begun to be filled by James Mallinson (2011, 2012 and yet unpublished works “Translation of the Dattātreya-yogaśāstra, the Earliest Text to Teach Haṭhayoga”, Conference presentation “Śaktism and Haṭhayoga”) and Jason Birch (2011). Alexis Sanderson (1999) and Glen Hayes (2003; 2012) are also writing about Yoga and Tantra, while Dominik Wujastyk (2009) has discussed the topic of the body in Hindu traditions.

As for Daoism, Livia Kohn is the editor for several collections on the topic of body and its cultivation, such as “Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques” (1989) and “Daoist Body Cultivation” (2006). Also S. Huang (2010) and D. Sommer (2008; 2010) have written about the body in Daoism, and R. Campy (2002) and F. Pregadio (2014) about alchemy and bodily practices.

Another way to study the relation between the body and religion is through physiological processes, such as brain activity, during religious practices, especially during meditation. This approach is not used here, as the topic of this study is the religious motivation of the practitioners themselves. And also, as Sebastian Schüler (2012) points out, concentrating on brain activity during ritual practice, again neglects the body.

This short overview covers naturally but a fragment of all the research in that direction, but it should give an outline of how the body is perceived in humanities and social sciences, and what are the general directions of inquiry and the questions being asked. In conclusion the following points can be taken along for this study:

- 1) The body is an important factor in religion for various reasons:
 - a) It is a means of perceiving and experiencing both culture and environment
 - b) It embodies social norms
 - c) It is a means of communication
 - d) It is a means of participating in religious practice
- 2) The body perceived through culture is a cultural construction
- 3) In premodern traditions there are several body concepts existent at once

From this point of departure, I will now move on the theoretical approaches directly used as prerequisite for my thesis.

I.3 Theoretical background

I.3.1 Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus'

The body that participates in religious practices is best understood through Bourdieu's notion of habitus, as formulated in his book "Outline of a Theory of Practice" (Bourdieu 2008). If the body is regarded as a habitus, it enables to comprise the different properties of the cultural body, as it explains how different meaning attributed to the body emerge, it links individual to society and the past to the present, and it also is a concept that is about practice.

Bourdieu defines habitus as "A structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices" (Bourdieu 1984: 170), or as a system of dispositions. About dispositions in turn he said: "the word disposition seems particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus. It expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination (Bourdieu 2008: 214). These definitions may, however, be too abstract and broad for a point of departure. The idea of viewing the body as habitus stems from Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and so it would perhaps be best cite him to show what I mean when I am saying the body is habitus:

"Animals see in the same way as we do different things because their bodies are different from ours. I am not referring to physiological differences – as far as that is concerned, Amerindians recognize a Basic uniformity of bodies – but rather to affects, dispositions or capacities which render the body of every species unique: what it eats, how it communicates, where it lives, whether it is gregarious or solitary, and so forth. The visible shape of the body is a powerful sign of these differences in affect, although it can be deceptive since a human appearance could, for example, be concealing a jaguar-affect. Thus, what I call 'body' is not a synonym for distinctive substance or fixed shape; it is an assemblage of affects or ways of being that constitute a habitus. Between the formal subjectivity of souls and the substantial materiality of organisms there is an intermediate plane which is occupied by the body as a bundle of affects and capacities and which is the origin of perspectives." (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478)

Viveiros de Castro is talking here about perspectivism, a notion that itself also became part of this dissertation's theoretical background and will be more closely examined in the next chapter. Because he is writing about a specific case – the ontology and cosmology of Amazonian Indians – the body in question is also specific. What is not specific is the body's central role in the subject's relation to the surroundings which has cognitive reasons (Lizardo 2009), as humans perceive their environment through the body. My conclusion is that perceiving the body as form of habitus is not intrinsic only to the Amazonian cultures but is something that can help understand the perception of the body in various premodern societies and religious traditions. This understanding of the body is the presupposition for the bodily religious practices. Bourdieu's

“Outline of a Theory of Practice” showed me that the body and practice are linked to each other in more ways than I thought. Not only participates the human in a practice through the body, but the body and practice are connected conceptually through the habitus. The body habitus is thus the “affects, dispositions or capacities which render the body of every species unique: what it eats, how it communicates, where it lives, whether it is gregarious or solitary, and so forth”.

Another notion to take along from the Amazonian perspectivism, is how the body is the centre of relations and perceptions. The relations between the body and its surrounding (or the cosmos) are interpreted through properties attributed culturally to the body. These properties differ according to the cultural background and comprise thus different habitus.

The body is according to Bourdieu constructed through different details such as bearings, postures and dress:

“In all societies and, significantly, all the “totalitarian institution“, in Goffman’s phrase, that seek to produce a new man through a process of “deculturation” and “reculturation” set such store on the seemingly most insignificant details of *dress, bearing*, physical and verbal manners, the reason is that, treating the body as a memory, they entrust to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e. mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of the culture. The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more precious, than the values given body, *made* body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, apolitical philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as “stand up straight” or “don’t hold your knife in your left hand”.(Bourdieu 2008: 94)

Several points at once are discussed in this passage such as the role of the body habitus in both perceiving and creating culture, as well as the transformation of the body habitus. According to Bourdieu, it cannot be consciously transformed. However, in the context of bodily transformational practices it may be that it is this that becomes the motivation of transformation. Tantra with its use of unpure substances in its ritual practice, is an extreme example. David Kinsley writes that “living one’s life according to rules of purity and pollution and caste and class that dictate how, where, and exactly in what manner every bodily function may be exercised, and which people one may, or may not, interact with socially, can create a sense of imprisonment from which one might long to escape. Perhaps the more marginal, bizarre, “outsider” goddesses among the Mahāvidyās¹ facilitate this escape, as social antimodes who can effectively dislocate an individual. By identifying with one of them, the adept may experience expanded or liberated consciousness; by identifying with the forbidden or

¹ These are ten goddesses or aspects of Devī that are worshipped in Śakta tantric practices.

the marginalized, an adept may acquire a new refreshing perspective on the cage of respectability and predictability.” (Kinsley 2008: 251)

Mostly it is change in these seemingly trivial details such as clothing that the transformation practices start with. The monks and nuns, adepts, hermits and yogis don't wear the same clothes or hair as other members of the society. They do, however, wear clothes that are *expected* from them. Changing the bodily habitus is accepting a new one. Bourdieu explains that the habitus is a “product of a chronologically ordered series of structuring determinations [...] which at every moment structures in terms of the structuring experiences which produced it the structuring experiences which affect its structure, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences.” (Bourdieu 2008: 86) Starting with the transformational practices by, for example, finding a guru, or joining a monastery, is building new layers of habitus. The things that Bourdieu claimed cannot be changed, are the ideas behind the wish for transformation, as these are learned by inculturation as the first layers of habitus, or as Bourdieu put it “series of structuring determinations.” The simplest example is the concept of ritual purity. The idea that some substances or even times and thoughts are pure or unpure is present in most cultures and cosmologies and it is through these small rules of conduct Bourdieu described in the passage above how a person learns this. If one thus has acquired the idea of unpurity of certain part or functions of the body, he or she may wish to change it by purification rites, what he or she can't change, is the framework, i.e. the cosmology that dictates what is pure and what is not.

The habitus also connects the past and the present:

“The habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities [...] – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis.” (Bourdieu 2008: 82)

The practices that are taking place in the present repeat, or rather mimic, these of the past. The habitus doesn't only translate the past to the present but is constantly and actively reproducing itself. The culturally constructed body or the body-habitus is never complete and needs to be constantly and regularly (ritually) renewed. This is why habitus is such a suitable concept for describing the body in premodern cultures.

1.3.2 'Perspectivism' and 'Material virtue'

1.3.2.1 Perspectivism by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro

Another theoretical presupposition for the study is the notion of perspectivism, introduced by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in 1998 with the article "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism." Perspectivism is the name given to indigenous Amerindian cosmologies and ontologies from the Amazon region, and it states that all beings see themselves as humans or persons, and other species according to their importance in relation to the species in question. So perspectivism can prove itself important in understanding and explaining the relations between humans, animals and spirits, and also regarding the conceptions about the human body.

The term 'perspectivism' and a coherent theory accompanying it stems from Viveiros de Castro but other researchers had also noticed this phenomenon, notably Århem (1993) as "perspectival quality" or Gray (1996) as "perspectival relativity" (Viveiros de Castro 2012). A different approach in its definition is used by Tânia Stolze Lima, yet she describes the same phenomena: "Point of view implies a particular conception according to which the world only exists for someone" (Lima 1999: 117). This is also reflected in the grammar of some languages. In the Jurúna language one says, for example: "This is beautiful to me", and "To me, it rained". (Lima 1999: 117) Lately perspectivism has become an important topic in anthropology and many researchers have written about perspectivism; for example, Broz (2007), Silva Guimarães (2011), Lima (1999), Londoño Sulkin (2005), Kristensen (2007), Pedersen (2001), Rasmussen (2011), Rival (2005), Turner (2009) and Vilaça (2005).

Viveiros de Castro explains perspectivism as follows:

"Typically, in normal conditions, humans see humans as humans and animals as animals; as to spirits, to see these usually invisible beings is a sure sign that the "conditions" are not normal. Animals (predators) and spirits, however, see humans as animals (as prey), to the same extent that animals (as prey) see humans as spirits or as animals (predators). By the same token, animals and spirits see themselves as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture – they see their food as human food (jaguars see blood as manioc beer, vultures see the maggots in rotting meat as grilled fish etc.), they see their bodily attributes (fur, feathers, claws, beaks) as body decorations or cultural instruments, they see their social system as organised in the same way as human institutions are (with chiefs, shamans, ceremonies, exogamous moieties etc.)." (Viveiros de Castro 2012)

Perspectivism is thus a way of viewing how a person is related to cosmos. The question of identity of a person/subject, species or category on a cosmological scale leads to the concept of body, which is what makes perspectivism important for any study of the body in religions. In the previous section I already briefly approached the body in perspectivist worldview, as I mentioned

that the body in Amazonian region is understood as habitus. Viveiros de Castro describes it as follows:

“In sum, animals are people, or see themselves as persons. Such a notion is virtually always associated with the idea that the manifest form of each species is a mere envelope (a “clothing”) which conceals an internal human form, usually only visible to the eyes of the particular species or to certain trans-specific beings such as shamans. This internal form is the soul or spirit of the animal: an intentionality or subjectivity formally identical to human consciousness, materialisable, let us say, in a human bodily schema concealed behind an animal mask.” (Viveiros de Castro 2012)

It is clear that perspectivism is a specific phenomenon and by referring to it as theoretical presupposition for the study of the body in certain practices, I am not assuming that all cultures perceive the body and humanity in such a way. Instead I am using this notion as an extra viewpoint for completing the background needed for understanding different ways of understanding or perceiving the human body. Perspectivism is useful for demonstrating how the body in cultural processes is not concrete but inconstant, open (Stark 2006), and volatile (as is also the viewpoint of feminist theory) (Grosz 1994). It is not an independent entity but depends on outer factors, such as connections to the community or cosmic agents. It also shows that the way of viewing the body is dependent on cognition.

As it was Viveiros de Castro’s article that lead me to the conclusion that the body can function as a habitus, or that the habitus forms the body image, then it is natural that perspectivism can be made more easily comprehensible by Bourdieu’s work. Some observations Bourdieu made, are really not far from persectivism:

There are interactions with the relatives, which lead them to explore the structured space of objective kin relationships in all directions by means of *reversals* requiring the person who saw himself and behave as a nephew of his father’s brother to see himself and behave as paternal uncle towards his brother’s son, and thus to acquire mastery of the transformational schemes which permit the passage from the system of dispositions attached to one position to the system appropriate to the symmetrically opposite position. There are the lexical and grammatical communications (“I” and “you” designating the same person according to the relation to the speaker) which instil the sense of the interchangeability of positions and reciprocity as well as a sense of the limits of each.” (Bourdieu 2008: 89)

The use of the theory in other contexts still presumes that similar phenomena to the Amerindian perspectivism are existing independently in other parts of the world, and preferably also in these cultural areas that are in focus of this thesis, that is India and China. This has indeed proved to be the case. Perspectivism has lately been studied among Northern- and Central Asian cultures. With the

article “Chinese perspectivism: Perspectivist cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*” and chapter two with the same title in the second part of the thesis I studied the occurrence of perspectivist ideas in Chinese thought and demonstrated that these can be found throughout Chinese history from the antiquity to Early Modern times.

1.3.2.2 Material virtue by Mark Csikszentmihalyi

Another helpful concept – and also taken from a case study – is ‘material virtue’. Material virtue is a term coined by Mark Csikszentmihalyi to describe the physical effect of behaviour and ritual on the human body in early Chinese thought:

“The material virtue tradition, defined through the set of fourth through second century B.C.E. texts examined in this book [Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China], relates virtue to human physiology in a way that explains the effect of practice in terms of concrete physiological changes. A central assumption of its core texts is that authentic moral motivation corresponds to specific bodily states. As the tradition developed, the normative picture of a balance of the virtues was transformed into the imperative to maintain an equilibrium of *qi* of the virtues.”(Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 253)

The concept of material virtue stems from a specific context, it originated as an early *ru* or Confucian answer to the – mainly Daoist – critique on ritual behaviour. So the behaviour that has physical effects on the body was ritual behaviour, and the virtues in question were the Confucian virtues. The concept however prevailed in Chinese culture and can afterwards be found throughout the history (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 253). As it is primarily rooted in Zisi’s treatise of *Wuxing*², that is the Five Agents, an important cosmological concept that builds the basis for many Daoist and alchemical bodily practices, material virtue needs to be taken in to consideration in studying these.

In this dissertation the last chapter, “Being human: A bodily- and an ethical concept in Ge Hong’s early medieval Daoism”, deals with the concept of material virtue. The chapter examines the concept of man in early medieval (Jin dynasty) China according to Ge Hong’s “Biographies of Divine Transcendents” (*Shenxian zhuan*). Ge Hong (ca 283–343) was a philosopher and an alchemist who has both influenced later tradition, and was a studious collector of texts and gives with his work thus a fairly adequate picture of the culture of Early Medieval China. With this chapter I wish to argue that material virtue was an important factor in Ge Hong’s body concept and possibly also in China in general.

² Wuxing is a Warring States Period text regarding the five phases. The text from the Guodian find is added as appendix to Csikszentmihalyi’s book

It is possible that like perspectivism, or possibly even more, material virtue might also be useful for religious studies in general, as it casts light on how the body is perceived in relation to culture and morale, and on how practice influences embodiment. Csikszentmihalyi explains it as follows:

“The material virtue tradition in early China is a valuable historical example and case study of a nuanced view of ethics and the body as two aspects of the same thing. Indeed, the sage with the “jade speech” of the *Wuxing*, a “glossiness,” and the telltale appearance of the “four limbs” of the *Mengzi*, fits well into Pierre Bourdieu’s description of embodiment “turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking.” In this way it provides a theory of embodied ethics that is both historically prior to and culturally distant from the rigid mind/body dualism against which so much of the current scholarly work is reacting.” (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 252–53)

Indeed, the connection to Bourdieu’s work is evident. Csikszentmihalyi also points out that: “In religious studies, most attention has been paid to the social dimensions of ritual that were first accentuated in the work of Émile Durkheim. The claims of the material virtue tradition, however, centre on the impact of ritual on the body of the individual participant and on ritual’s role in self-cultivation practice.” (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 251) This I believe is a very important point in dealing with most religious practices, as any practice can be described as a ritual. Also one should take into consideration that the everyday life in premodern societies was much more ritualized than in contemporary ones. And if ritualized everyday behaviour brings forth concrete changes in the body, it leads again to the concept of habitus.

Another interesting question of more speculative nature is, does it have overlapping points with perspectivism? Perspective is in traditional Chinese culture certainly linked to morale and ethics. Csikszentmihalyi mentions that the chief concern of *Wuxing* “is developing a moral psychology that substantiates the claim that a sage acts spontaneously, without being influenced by external considerations.” (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 82) Spontaneity, which is one of the core concepts of ancient Chinese philosophy gets here linked to the perspective’s independency. The role of perspective here is different from that of Amazonian perspectivism, where the question is whether the origin of the perspective stems from a human being, an animal or a spirit. This is to be expected, as the two societies differ from each other considerably, however, we can find moral and human behaviour linked to perspective and the human body in the Amazonian region as well. Londoño Sulkin writes that “in the narratives I heard, Real People are intrinsically moral because the substances that constitute their bodies and subjectivities are moral; they are so because they originated in the very bodies of the creator and other cool mythical beings, in those felicitous circumstances in which they succeed in creating things truly human” (Londoño Sulkin 2005: 12). Animals constitute “failures in moral sociality” (Londoño

Sulkin 2005: 13). This is dangerous for humans because animals try to destruct or sabotage the true human perspective and impose their own immoral views on them (Londoño Sulkin 2005: 15).

It is precisely through perspectivism, as I came to the conclusion that morality may be directly linked to the body, or even be a bodily category. After I touched upon this topic in the article “Chinese perspective”, I decided to look into it and took Ge Hong’s *Shenxian zhuan* as basis for studying the relation between the body and morality in classical Chinese culture and this way I came upon Csikszentmihalyi’s book.

These three notions, habitus, perspectivism and material virtue constitute the theoretical point of departure from which I approach the body in East- and South Asian bodily practices. Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is the basis on which the other two lean on. Together they build a coherent explanation of how the body is in cultural processes – Bourdieu wrote about practice in general, I would in this context focus upon ritual – influenced both by deliberate self-guided processes, and by processes driven by outer agents such as the community.

1.3.3 Steve Farmer et al.: Correlative thinking as a result of commentary traditions

The habitus together with perspectivism and material virtue are relevant to the body-concepts. Another theoretical background concerns the practices of the self-cultivation techniques, and more precisely, how the theoretical backgrounds of the traditions in question are formed. Here I use the idea of correlative cosmologies and their development as a consequence of commentary traditions as formulated by Steve Farmer in collaboration with Michael Witzel, John B. Henderson and Peter Robinson. I have mainly referred the article “Neurobiology, Layered Texts, and Correlative Cosmologies: A Cross-Cultural Framework for Premodern History” by Steve Farmer, John B. Henderson, and Michael Witzel (Farmer et al. 2002), but other papers such as “Neurobiology, Stratified Texts, and the Evolution of Thought: From Myths to Religions and Philosophies” (Farmer 2009), “Computer Models of the Evolution of Premodern Religious, Philosophical, and Cosmological Systems” (Farmer et al. 2002), and “Commentary Traditions and the Evolution of Premodern Religious and Philosophical Systems: A Cross-Cultural Model” (Farmer et al. 2002) also deal with this topic. All of these articles can be found online at www.safarmer.com.

The bodily practices are based on cosmological presuppositions, it means that these practices operate within the framework provided by the cosmology of the respective tradition – they use the narrative or the system of symbols (Geertz) given by the cultural background. On one side, the premise of these techniques is cosmological, on the other, they operate with cosmological processes, using them to manipulate the body, as the body is part of the cosmos and the same principles apply to it as on the macrocosmos. A perfect example

can be found in the Indian tradition, where the philosophical schools of Yoga and Sāṃkhya form a pair. As Yoga centers on self-cultivation, Sāṃkhya deals with cosmological speculations.

Indian and Chinese bodily practices are part of traditions with different theologies and different concepts of man and the human body (not only are there differences between Indian and Chinese traditions but also within separate schools of thought within these cultural areas), but they have remarkable similarities in their composition (see chapters 1.1 and 2.3.1) and underlying cosmologies. Moreover, similar practices alongside similar cosmologies, such as for example European alchemy and magic, can be found in other cultures as well. This leads to the assumption that the development of these techniques is connected to the emergence of a certain kind of cosmologies.

Such cosmologies are described as ‘correlative’, and because the first and most influential studies on this way of thinking were written by sinologists, notably “*La Pensée Chinoise*” (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1934) by Marcel Granet and Science and “*Civilisation in China, Vol. 2: History of Scientific Thought*” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) by Joseph Needham, correlative thinking is largely considered a Chinese phenomenon. However, as Farmer et al. point out, “similar tendencies can be identified in every traditional civilization known. Correlative structures show up world wide in premodern magical, astrological, and divinational systems; in the designs of villages, cities, temples, and court complexes; in abstract orders of gods, demons, and saints; in formal numerological systems; in hierarchical and temporal cosmologies; and in many similar phenomena. The idea that reality consists of multiple “levels,” each mirroring all others in some fashion, is a diagnostic feature of premodern cosmologies in general.” (Farmer et al. 2002 (1): 49)

Farmer, Henderson and Witzel trace the emergence of correlative cosmologies back to commentary traditions, explaining that:

„Many of the most distinctive features of high-correlative systems can be modeled as syncretic byproducts, or “exegetical artifacts,” of repeated attempts to reconcile conflicts in heavily layered textual traditions. That conclusion holds for early anticipations of high-correlative systems in Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions, for the pan-Eurasian explosion of high-correlative thought in the last half of the first millennium BCE, and for the vast correlative cosmologies that emerged cross-culturally from late-ancient to early-modern times. Variations in the levels of abstractness, formality, and complexity in different high-correlative systems can be tied to the complexity of the traditions synthesized in those systems, to the degree to which later systems were built on the structural foundations of earlier ones, and to the influence of various dissipative forces in traditions that we note later.” (Farmer et al. 2002 (1): 64)

And further:

„One consequence of layering processes was that the texts available in this period were increasingly loaded with contradictions; ironically, authorship of

those texts was typically ascribed to ancient seers, sage-kings, “school” founders, mythic heroes, prophets, or divine forces, implying exactly the reverse—that those texts could not be contradictory; that every apparent conflict hid secret truths. That assumption led to the application of a broad spectrum of exegetical tools to unveil those truths, resulting in predictable correlative transformations of earlier sources”.(Farmer et al. 2002 (1): 69)

According to Farmer et al., the expansion of (textual) tradition leads to emergence of correlative cosmologies on neurobiological grounds, as the brain architecture is organized similarly. The cortex of the brain is described as “a hierarchical stack of topographic maps in which sensory data are processed in posterior and cognitive data in anterior regions,” and “More sophisticated models stressed the distributed nature of neural processing, in which perception and cognition arise out of synchronic firings of widely distributed neural assemblies, coordinated by re-entrant (looplike) feedback and/or feedforward links.” (Farmer 2009)

When approaching bodily religious practices from this background, it needs to be mentioned that in this work I do not have an external view on religious practice, that is, I am not trying to explain religion through non-religious causes. On the contrary, this work deals with the internal and personal motivation within the logic of respective religious traditions. The work of Farmer et al. presents a useful background for the composition of these practices and an explanation for the apparent similarity in the form of the techniques by different religious ideas, leaving at the same time room for internal logic.

Commentary and exegetic traditions do not only explain the emergence of correlative structures, but also its timespan. If correlative cosmologies develop with growing textual tradition, the timescale can be mathematically modelled. Farmer’s work group uses computer models simulations of growth and decline of these premodern religious and philosophical systems. (Farmer et al 2002 (2); Farmer et al. 2002 (3)) This is one reason why these similar ideas have appeared in different cultures with similar intervals.

This is helpful in defining my research topic, as it gives a more specific historical timeframe. East- and South Asian bodily practices is a rather vague description, but adding historical dimension to the topic, sets it into a clear context. The practices or techniques examined in this thesis stem from the Early Medieval period and were developed further through the Middle Ages, and are based on cosmological and anthropological concepts developed in the first centuries BCE. For example, Haṭha yoga is a complex system of practices, synchronized from various yogic, tantric, and Śaiva traditions that in turn developed over centuries, and were based on cosmological speculations that evolved in the Indian subcontinent in the first millennium BC. This not only resulted in a practice that comprises of a great number of different techniques, but in a highly complex body concept. The human body is simultaneously seen as a pneumatic, hydraulic and thermodynamic system (White 2011 (1): 15), which means that different ideas of breath and breathing exercises, of the

system of fluids in the body, and of inner fire accompanied by an alchemical transformation were combined and made interdependent. Moreover, this concept of the body is incorporated into different cosmological ideas – a layered cosmos, a dualism of the male- and female principles *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, and the feminine divine power *Śakti* in the form of the serpentine *Kuṇḍalinī*.

2. TRANSFORMATION OF THE BODY IN RITUAL³

2.1 Introduction

I will now come to the notion of transformation of the body, which is a term I use to describe the religious idea in bodily practices. There is a significant variability in bodily religious practices and thus it raises a question, can they be compared and if yes, then on what basis? For example, in European languages the single word “meditation” is used to translate several different Indian and Chinese terms. Sanskrit dictionaries give dozens of equivalents for the English word “meditation”, of which *dhyāna*, *samādhi* and *yoga* are perhaps the best known, yet they all indicate different practices. To confuse things even more, there are also Christian practices, that are similar to these, but do not fall under the Christian definition of meditation, for example the Eastern Orthodox Jesus Prayer (see Tamcke 2007). I have chosen the practitioners’ declared goals and how they interpret the practice themselves as the basis for description. The goals related to the body help to shed light on how the human body is seen in a specific culture. I found in the motif of the transformation of body a goal recurring in various traditions and practices.

The body participates in religion primarily through rituals in its broadest sense⁴. Additionally, as shown in previous chapters of this work, the human body itself is constructed in the ritual. It is widely accepted that rituals are of transformative character (Stolz 2001: 100; 115). One can thus assume that, as humans are embodied beings and participate in rituals by means of the body, the body gets transformed in the ritual. I will study the relation of the popular motif of the transformation of body to achieving religious goals. The aim is, firstly, to understand the role of the body in religion in connection with religious goals, and secondly, to set a framework for case studies and propose some notions. As such it would be the first attempt in the religious studies to establish a general theory about the participation of body in religion which could be used to interpret different practices.

³ Parts of this chapter have been published in the article „Keha religioonis: Inimkeha transformatsioon kui religioosne eesmärk.” *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri*, 2, 2013, pp 118–135.

⁴ I am using the notion „ritual” here in the broadest possible sense as any formal repetitive action as defined by Gavin Flood. (Flood 1993: 233)

I see three principal ways for approaching the body in religion. These are 1) preserving the body (also containing the neutral attitude: not using the body in religious practices and in achieving religious goals), 2) overcoming the body (asceticism), and 3) transformation of the body. This is by no means a classification of religions, for all three of these possibilities can be and mostly are present in one religious tradition.

The transformation of the body can be understood in a broader and in a narrower sense. In a broader sense it means any positive changes to the body that help to achieve a religious goal. A number of negative qualities are attributed to the body, some of which are more or less universal, while others are dependent on cultural context. Mortality illustrates the former, as it is the essential body-related issue in every religion. All the three possibilities mentioned above are among other things designed to cope with mortality. In the present thesis I will call these minus qualities and their positive counterparts plus qualities and bodies carrying these qualities minus and plus bodies, respectively. In a ritual the minus bodies are transformed into plus bodies.

In a narrower sense the transformation is a certain motif which can be seen in meditation and ritual practices in Indian (see Flood 1993 about Kashmir Śaivism) and Chinese traditions, such as *Shangqing* Daoist meditation (see Robinet 1993), but also in other traditions. This includes creating a sacred area, analogising the body with Cosmos, descent of god(s) into the body and/or ascent to the higher spheres; additionally also using the “energies” or “breaths” of the body (*prāna*, *kundalinī*, *qi*) and attributing religious significance to internal organs.

There is also a third possibility, which is transformation as a change of perspective. In this case it is the perception of the body and not the body itself that changes, presupposing that all phenomena are intrinsically the same. This possibility can accompany the other two.

I will now briefly try to examine different aspects of the transformation of body, such as its manifestations, its connection with the personal religious objective, and the social meaning of the plus body. The topic will be discussed in five sub-chapters, the first of which focuses on the cultural construction of the human body; next, I will write about the idea of the transformation of body and I will provide examples from different religions; following, I will focus on the aim of transformation, and finally on its social role.

2.2 Cultural construction of the human body

Before moving on, one question needs to be solved, what does the human body and being human signify in religion? In brief – who is a human?

Next to being a biological entity, the human body is culturally or socially constructed (Asad 1997: 50). Further, it is common that in history only the members of one's own group have been considered as human beings (Lévi-Strauss 2010). This can be found both in tribal societies as well as in civili-

zations of the antiquity where only civilized people were seen as real people and civilization ended with the boundaries of the empire. This is illustrated by the creation myths, where creation of man equals the origin of the people whose myth it is. For example in the Indian Ṛgveda different castes are established right from the start which shows that the people outside the caste system that is from other nations are not part of the humankind (Ṛgveda 10.90). The same can be read in the Law code of Manu: “[...] for the growth of these worlds, moreover, he produced from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet, the Brahmin, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra.” (Manusmṛti 1.31) All those people in the world “who are outside [the community of] those born from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet [of the divine body] are non-Aryans.” (Holdredge 2008: 27)

But if the other people are not humans, who are they? From the point of view of ancient civilizations the answer would be simple: barbarians. Such an answer, however, does not serve as a solution when talking about the human body, because the term used to denominate others does not change the question. Hence, who are the barbarians? What is their body like and was body relevant for the ancient people in defining the species?

The modern definition of biological species is based on the capability of having viable and fertile offspring. Whereas to a smaller or larger extent different groups have always intercommunicated, it should have been clear also in pre-modern societies that other nations are also humans. But if one takes a look at different mythologies, it can be seen that producing offspring did not define boundaries between human and non-human. In the mythologies of different cultures humans have had children with gods and demons, with spirits and animals. Thus we could conclude that the difference between “proper people” and “barbarian people” does not lie in the body and that on the whole all living creatures such as gods, humans, spirits and animals ought to have an identical body.

This conclusion, however, seems to be faulty. In the understandings of tribal societies it is the body that distinguishes humans from other living creatures. This paradox that tribal societies are simultaneously characterised by ethnocentrism – considering only the members of one's own group as humans – and by animism, which attributes qualities inherent to humans also to the rest of the nature, is overcome by the perspectivist theory of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. (Viveiros de Castro 1998).

In brief it means that the nature of each object is dependent on the perspective of the onlooker. Thus ‘human’ or ‘person’ is not considered a species but a state; namely ‘human’ is a “me” or “us” perspective of being. According to this, animals see themselves as humans, whereas they view humans as spirits, predators, or prey, depending on the onlooker. Correspondingly, the whole cosmos is seen from the perspective of humans, which means that things change according to the audience. For jaguars, for example, blood is beer (Vilaca 2005). This means that not objects are compared, but their relations; the change in perspective causes a transformation or metamorphosis of the object. In such an unstable world, where transitions are vague, it is precisely the body that

distinguishes species and categories. The body, whilst being an attire, is seen as the whole complex which constitutes the way of being or *habitus* (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478).

In a situation where on the one hand all living creatures seem to have a similar body and on the other hand it is the body that distinguishes humans from non-humans, we can make only one conclusion: the body in premodern way of thinking was not defined biologically. Or rather, different conceptions of the body exist simultaneously. For example in Chinese antiquity there were at least the ritualised body *gong*, the physical body *shen* which is both a living body and a relative body, the form *xing*, and *ti* which is the part of body that forms a part of a bigger whole (Sommer 2010).

Thus the body simultaneously connects and differentiates the categories of living and non-living nature. What is seemingly a contradiction ceases to be one in the light of religious cosmologies. Irrespective of whether the world is said to consist of atoms, elements, breath, or something else, as a rule, all classical cosmologies enable to reduce different phenomena on the same basis. What counts is not the matter but the form.

The reason, why human body is specifically human and why it is the body that differentiates people from the others is the fact that unlike other physical world *the human body is constructed* in a ritual. And by ‘ritual’, as already said, I mean, following Gavin D. Flood, any formalized, repetitive action. This is similar to the notion of *habitus* by Pierre Bourdieu, and Viveiros de Castro already argued that the Amazonian people see the body as *habitus*. Simply put, a human is who behaves like one.

And further: different social status is interdependent with a different body. Susanne Mroczek states that in Mahāyāna Buddhism the bodies are seen as “largely the products of our own actions” (Mroczek 2007: 31). In the Buddhist context the “products of our own actions’ means above all the impact of Karma. But it also includes the choices people make during their life, the social role, and visual signs. Features such as shaven head, robes, begging bowl, and decorous gait are, as Mroczek states, “not added to monastic bodies but constitute these bodies as monastic bodies in the first place”. And the most significant aspect at this point: because bodies are largely the products of our own actions, they are subject to transformation (Mroczek 2007:31).

Thus it is important to keep in mind two things while studying the role of the human body in religion: in religious sense (or in premodern or pre-scientific way of thinking) the human body is constructed in a ritual and it is not merely physical, but it is a complete set with cultural connotations.

I will now arrive at the actual topic, which is the transformation of body. When a human body is constructed or created, then logically also the opposite process should be possible: a de-construction of the human body. And if one looks at the Amazonian perspectivism, this indeed is the case. There, metamorphosis is a constant threat that originates from spirits. Aparecida Vilaca calls such a condition “chronically unstable bodies” (Vilaca 2005). In the organized

religions of written cultures which is the main interest of this study, the focus has shifted from negative to positive; the transformation of body is no longer a threat nor does the threat originate from outside. The possibility exists also in Amazonian perspectivism – there the shamans are people, who are able to control transformations and at the same time retain their own perspective. That also applies to the transformation in organized religions, the only difference being that it now appears as a religious objective related to the body. The issue is no longer whether there is a risk of losing one's humanity, but whether it is possible to become something more than human.

2.3 Transformation of the body in ritual and meditation

By the transformation of body I mean the alteration or changing of one type of body into another type of body. In lack of better terms I call these two types of bodies the “plus-bodies” and the “minus-bodies”. The minus-body does not necessarily need to be negative but only perceived as such in a specific context. Depending on context the qualities of the body can be divided into bipolar pairs of positive and negative; for example pure-impure or stable-unstable. In respect to bodies the objective of religious practices is to achieve the plus-qualities and to that end the transformation of body is needed.

The religious goal is achieved through religious practice and this also applies to the plus-body. The transformation of the body occurs through ritual and/or meditation. The composition of meditation and ritual practices are often identical. The difference again lies in the body – meditation occurs only in the individual body, whereas a ritual can simultaneously also occur in a social body.

Altering the qualities of the body is the objective of transformation. These qualities can be relative in their nature, as Mary Douglas in her book “Purity and Danger” (Douglas 1978) has shown regarding purity and impurity. Something can be seen as more or less pure as something else. Let me bring a simple example: when we compare Indian varnas then the Kṣatriyas could be impure, when compared to the Brahmans, yet they are pure compared to the Śūdras. Although in such a way there can theoretically be an endless number of purity levels, it constitutes a binary system, which only has two options: pure or impure. What makes it binary is the comparison, because due to the comparison there exist no option for something to be “slightly impure” or “rather pure”.

Relativity does not apply only to ritual purity, but to the human body in general. If humans are seen as culturally constructed objects, it means that human body, because it only exists in comparison to others, is relative. One can define his “self” only through equaling and opposing. The result of the former is the category “us” and that of the latter “you” and “they”, which includes both non-humans like animals and spirits as well as other people, who generally are not defined as humans in traditional cultures. Equaling and opposing is comparing, which again presumes that there are certain qualities being culturally attributed to the bodies, what makes the comparison possible.

The binary nature of bodily qualities is compatible with religious practice as Roy Rappaport claims that rituals are, among other things, binary systems: “The occurrence of a ritual transmits a binary (yes/no, 0/1, on/off., either/or, boy/man, war/peace etc.) signal. Indeed, binary signals are intrinsic to ritual occurrence, and they are, in their very nature, free of ambiguity.” (Rappaport 2010: 89)

Summarising the aforesaid, the following can be pointed out:

1. Most qualities of the body, like purity or beauty exist only in relation to others (relative system)
2. The relation with others makes the qualities binary (binary system within the relative system)
3. The ritual operates with binary systems, switching one situation into another. What does that mean in respect to participation of the body in religion? If the body exists only in comparison or in concurrence with other bodies, then this should also be true for religiously defined qualities of the body. As the relative system includes – as demonstrated – a binary system then the bodies and the qualities of bodies can be labelled with + and –. And if the ritual is using the binary system for the transition from one state into another then regarding the body it would mean that a transformation of body would take place. Such a transformative role of rituals is clearly visible in rites of passage, or perhaps an even better example would be religious healing, in the process of which the sick minus-body is transformed into a healthy plus-body (see Csordas 1997; Csordas 2005; Shaked 2002).

While rituals are engaged in transforming the qualities of the body from minus to plus, religion as the system of symbols transforms in the given system the qualities of the body into binary opposites, which is a prerequisite to transformation. The qualities that carry the minus sign in the system are not absolutely negative; they are so in comparison with the religious objective.

2.4 Transformation in a narrower and broader sense

2.4.1 Transformation of body in a narrower sense.

Indian and Chinese traditions

It is in Daoism where the motif of the transformation of body has gained most attention from the researchers and Daoism is where I too start. Poul Andersen describes in his article “The transformation of the body in Taoist ritual” (Andersen 1995) the *jiao* liturgy of Zhengyi tradition in Taiwan. I chose this particular rite to be the example out of many possibilities for several reasons. Firstly, in the given tradition it is an important ritual; secondly, it refers both to the social body as well as the individual body of the priest; and thirdly P. Andersen has already treated it in respect to transformation.

The *jiao* ritual takes place once in every few years. The event lasts for several days and the closed rite in the temple is accompanied by simultaneous

performances for the wider public. The program has three main parts, which in case of a five-day ceremony last for two, one, and two days respectively. In the first part the sacred area is established and purified, then communication with the deities takes place in the sacred area and finally the sacred area is closed.

A separate sacred area is required to communicate with gods and to give offerings. In Chinese cosmology the body and universe are interrelated and it is no surprise that in order to enter the sacred area and to contact the gods, the priest himself also must change himself and: “set aside his usual, limited identity, associated with the ordinary body (fanshen), and assume an immortal, cosmic identity.” (Andersen 1995: 193)

Thus the priest’s body also becomes a sacred area. Both, the sacred area in the temple and the body of the priest constitute a microcosms, whereas the whole universe in its turn is a body. During the ritual, the priest identifies his body with the cosmic body, in which the gods dwell:

“My body is no ordinary body.
My head is like black clouds.
My hair is like wild stars.
My left eye is like the sun.
My right eye is like the moon.
My nose is like a fire-bell.
My ears are like golden gongs.
My upper lip is the Rain Master (Yushi)
My lower lip is the Earl of Winds (Fengbo)
My teeth are like a forest of swords.
My ten fingers are like Inspectors of Merit (gongcao).
My left side is the Lord of Mount Min (Minshan jun).
My right side is the Lord of Mount Lu (Lushan jun).
My left foot is the General of the Thunders to the Left (Zuolei jiangjun).
My right foot is the General of the Lightning to the Right (Youdian jiangjun).
My spine is the Lord of Mount Tai (Taishan jun).
The thirty-six animals and the twenty-eight constellations all correspond to my body.
Hastily, hastily (let it be so), as commanded with the force of law” (Andersen 1995: 195).

Transformation takes place on three levels: the priest, the community, and the universe (because the body is analogized with the universe). In case of the given ritual the most important dimension is the community, as “it is the means by which a Chinese community defines itself on the religious level” (Andersen 1995: 187). But this is possible only synchronously with the priest’s body and the cosmic body.

The priest further uses breathing exercises and other techniques common in Daoist meditation, such as associating internal organs with deities and sending the souls out from the body on a journey. During the ritual he moves around in the sacred area established in the temple as in the cosmos.

This takes place in the second phase, the others being the setting up and closing of the sacred area at the beginning and at the end of the ritual respectively. This follows the typical pattern of Daoist ritual as described by Kristofer Schipper. The only difference being that he divided the middle or the main part in two, which left him with four phases: 1) installation of the ritual area 2) fast – journey in this closed universe 3) offerings 4) dispersal of the ritual area (Schipper 1993: 76).

In its organisation the Daoist meditation is analogous to ritual, since for the priest carrying out the ritual, the process is a meditation, because what happens in the temple, simultaneously takes place also in his body. In individual meditation the focus is even more immediately on the body, I chose a liturgy as an example, because in addition to individual body, the social body also participates in it.

The motif of the transformation of body can be found not only in the aforesaid liturgy but is very common in all Daoist traditions. Already among the many techniques described by Ge Hong in the 4th century there were also several for invocation of deities into the body (Robinet 1997: 110) whilst meditation itself has been mentioned as early as in Zhuangzi (Zhuangzi 21.4). The Daoist liturgy and the transformational techniques that are known today originate to a greater part from the Shangqing and Lingbao schools. The metamorphoses and transformations constitute a central part of Daoism, because according to Isabelle Robinet: “Hua [transform] is the natural Tao and the movement of yin and yang.” (Robinet 1997: 154) The idea of transformations – not only of the body – is a concept that is important for the Daoist philosophy and is derived from the cosmology, according to which the cosmos consists of the constantly moving and changing *qi*, and the interactions and transformations of *yin* and *yang*.

Yet we find the same motifs also in a completely different cosmology in India. Let us have a look at Kashmir Śaivism, which has been covered in the aforementioned book by Gavin D. Flood. Similarly to Daoism, the transformation in Kashmir Śaivism is also a part of both liturgy and meditation, both of which can be defined as ritual. The actual practices differ, but the principles of the process of transformation in both cases are similar to Daoist rituals consisting of the purification of body and its unification/ homologizing with the universe, of the ascent to higher spheres and moving around in the cosmos, invocation of gods into the body and also of the direct contact with god.

“Transformation,” writes Flood: “means in the Trika context going beyond the limitations of individuality and limited social identity.” (Flood 1993: 229) It occurs through religious action, which can either be meditation, or more precisely yoga, or liturgy. Flood explains, that “through liturgy and yoga the body is purified and divinized, becoming, for the Trika ritualist and yogi, homologous with the essential and manifest cosmic bodies.” (Flood 1993: 233)

In case of transformation techniques, purification is no longer a sheer mechanical process, but it rather expresses the practitioner’s advancement on

the religious path and presupposes an intellectual engagement with the teachings of the religion. In Daoist *jiao* ritual the purification of the body went hand in hand with the unification and homologizing of the individual body with the cosmic body, and this also applies to Kashmir Saivist yogi: “purification of the body is realization, that it is co-extensive with the essential and manifest cosmic bodies.” (Flood 1993: 239) If the yogi’s body is equated with the body of cosmos, he understands that all the gods are present in his body. The yogi must understand that his body already is connected with the cosmic body and that gods already are in his body and do not need to be summoned there. Such a transformation of body as an intellectual process is in its nature a change in perspective reminding closely of perspectivism.

Indian traditions offer a rich arsenal of transformation techniques. Yoga and Tantra offer a set of bodily and meditative practices to transform the body, such as *āsana*, yogic postures and *mūdra* or visualising the body deities. These practices are rather similar to Daoist meditation, especially the part which refers to the understanding the processes taking place in the body. In both traditions great importance is attributed to breath, *qi* and *prāna*, respectively, the usage of which is a way of accessing higher vertical shared realities.

Although the cultural exchange between India and China has a long history, the similarities between the two examples are nevertheless remarkable, since the basic concepts of Hindu and Daoist traditions differ in two very substantial points:

- a) In Śaivism there is a god-absolute, this being the core of both theology and the practices. In Daoism the transcendental truth or unity is to be found outside the gods, instead there are cosmological and philosophical concepts such as Dao or One.
- b) The other difference lies in the concept of body. The Hindu, including Śaiva, idea of the human being can be described as a body-soul dualism, whereas Daoism takes a holistic view. Humans are of course also in China believed to have souls and in India the approach to the topic of body is still relatively holistic (otherwise there would be no need for transformation), yet the important difference lies in the fact that in Hindu traditions the unity of man and god and man and universe is based on soul, while in Daoism it is based on body. This means that the common idea, which has led to formation of similar religious practices in both traditions, is the transformation of body.

This model of the transformation of body can also be found in Buddhism, especially in Mahāyāna and in the tantric tradition of Vajrayāna. In the latter the “body is the basis of enlightenment because it bears the channels, winds, and drops.” (Williams 1997b: 221) These are a part of a specific understanding of the body, similarly to Daoist and Hindu ideas, which through specific techniques enable the practitioner to transform the body, which in Vajrayāna tradition equals the Enlightenment.

The similarities are not surprising, since throughout its history Buddhism has been influenced by Hinduism (and vice versa). The historical Buddha originally

rejected the idea of bodily transformation. Buddhism started as a reformation movement which reevaluated several religious concepts common in India at the time, like the existence of the Absolute and the immortality of human soul. This fundamental reformation had a definitive impact on the concept of body. In Indian context of that time the most important topic related to body was ritual purity and thus purification remained a central practice in Buddhism, although with its meaning redefined. However, purity remained an important factor also in Buddhism alongside with the possibility of achieving it. At least the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were believed to have a pure plus-bodies, for example Mahāvādāna-Sūtra (Pāli Mahāpadāna-Suttanta), which talks about former Buddhas claims that Bodhisattva Vipāśyin was already in his mother's womb completely pure and untouched by bodily fluids. (Mahāvādāna-Sūtra 4c)

I will now summarise the points, which such a transformation of body comprises. Firstly, it has the form of a ritual, independent whether it is a public ritual or individual meditation. This means that the practice has a specific structure, in which at least the following parts can be recognized: introductory phase, main phase and final phase. The ritual includes establishing a sacred area, purification, analogising the body with the cosmos, descent of a god or gods in the body and ascent to higher spheres (mystical flight or journey of the soul); additionally also using the “energies” of the body (*prāna*, *kundalinī*, *qi*). These points may overlap and intertwine with each other, creating new connections: the rising of the aforementioned “energies” in the body may simultaneously be the ascent of the practitioner into higher spheres. And while the body is homologous with the universe, everything happening during the ritual takes also place in the human body, resulting in the transformation of the latter.

These points overlap in most parts with a shamanistic ritual or séance, as can be described in the classic works on shamanism by Mircea Eliade (Eliade 1972) or Hans Findeisen (Findeisen; Gehrts 2007). But, although the techniques are similar, a significant difference can be pointed out, namely it is problematic to talk about plus-bodies in shamanism. The reason is that the plus- and minus-bodies are related to the individual religious goal, which does not exist in the same fashion in traditional cultures. In traditional societies the minus-qualities such as impurity are seen as a threat to the group, not as an obstacle for an individual in achieving his or her religious goals.

2.4.2. Transformation in a broader sense

Next I will show that the motif of the transformation of body can also be found in the Abrahamic religions. In Christianity and Islam the transformation of body is strongly related to eschatology. According to mainstream teaching of all the widespread Christian confessions, humans have a plus body at the beginning and in the end of history, that is before the Fall and after resurrection. The plus body was already in the first monotheistic religion – Zoroastrianism – inter-

preted eschatologically. Alan Williams claims that “The very goal of the religion [Zoroastrianism], eschatologically, is the attainment of bodily perfection and fullness in a state of spiritual harmony and freedom from evil in the resurrected ‘Future Body’ (Pahlavi *tan ī pasēn*) at the end of time when the spiritual world is finally able to coalesce with a renovated material world.” (Williams 1997a: 156)

In Christianity, the pre-Fall state can undoubtedly be seen as a plus body. For example, according to Andrew Louth, Origen regarded the pre-Fall state as “a primal state of pure spiritual beings (with, perhaps, pure spiritual bodies) freely and perfectly in contemplating the primal unity of God: but these beings turned away from God and fell; in their fall they became souls and were provided with bodies (or terrestrial bodies)”. (Louth 1997: 114)

However, it is clear that a religion cannot afford to have plus-bodies only in the past, for such a religion, which does not offer opportunities for positive transformation, would lose its meaning. Thus the Abrahamic religions offer the possibility to restore the original state and return to god. As already said, the emphasis thereby lies on eschatology. However, ever since Paul the resurrection has been understood as clearly physical in Christianity (Weinrich 2006). People are not able to transform their bodies by themselves for this kind of power is only attributed to god, because transformation of the body is seen as an act of creation. Therefore the role of man is obeying god's laws so that he would grant an eternal life in himself.

However, also in these religions transforming the body in mortal life is not unknown. Kallistos Ware, writing about the body in Greek orthodox Christianity, says that for Paul “the terms ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ indicate, not components of the person, but relationships embracing personhood in its totality. ‘Flesh’ is the whole person as fallen, ‘spirit’ the whole person as redeemed. As Paul sees it, the mind can become ‘fleshly’ or ‘carnal’ (Colossians 2:18), just as the body can become ‘spiritual’ (Corinthians 15:44).” (Ware 1997: 93)

Thus the words ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ indicate the same ideas that I earlier called ‘plus-’ and ‘minus bodies’. Randar Tasmuth points out that the theme of anthropological transformation in Paul is rather voluminous, containing both changes in earthly life as well as that related to death and resurrection: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor 5:17). (Tasmuth 2010: 4)

At least since the time of Augustine the motif of inviting God inside the body is also present in Christianity. (Louth 1997: 117) Its theological explanation is based on the idea that God is everywhere, whilst the body is like a temple where God could be invited. The divine or angelic possession, which Moshe Sluhovsky interprets as self-transformative, became the main theme of catholic mystic from the twelfth century onwards (Sluhovsky 2002: 152).

The idea of the transformation of man in this world is not unfamiliar to Islam either, although there too it is clearly shadowed by eschatology. Yet in the Islamic mysticism the transformation is experienced and achieved during one's lifetime (Sviri 2002: 197). In the mystical dimension of Islam – Sufism –

transformation is denoted by “true man”; a term, which in its content is similar to Paul’s “soul”. The concept of transformation was rather important for the most renowned Sufi mystic and poet Rūmi and according to Annemarie Schimmel also the idea of changing minus body qualities into plus qualities can be found in his work: “Durch die Liebe können alle niederen Qualitäten des Menschen verwandelt werden: was Rumi lehrt ist nicht Askese um der Askese willen, sondern Verdrehung der negativen Qualitäten durch die Erfahrung dieser – freilich oft schmerzhaften Liebesalchimie.” (Schimmel 2003: 175)

These examples from Daoism and Hinduism on the one hand and from Christianity and Islam on the other have one fundamental difference, because the approaches to the human body in these religions are different. Unlike in Hinduism and Daoism, in Abrahamic religions there are no specific guidelines and techniques for achieving the plus-body.⁵ On the other side, Christian sacraments such as baptism, confession, and communion are indisputably vital in changing the “body” into “soul” and these can and have been interpreted as inducing qualitative changes in the body. This is also related to the fact that the transformation of body in this life is considered as peripheral compared to eschatology. Transforming the body is not an important goal for most of the practitioners of religion but rather a co-product of religious practices and the plus-body is more an idea than an actual goal.

2.5. The goal of transformation and the attributes of the plus body

The essence of the idea of transformation is, firstly, that there are two types of bodies, which I call plus-body and minus-body, and secondly, these two types of bodies have plus- and minus-qualities, respectively. This becomes possible because a body is culturally constructed and is connected to other bodies. The evaluation of the bodies’ qualities is in a broader sense culturally determined, but their meaning is directly religious. Thus the religious goal is turning the body’s minus qualities into plus qualities and this is achieved by the transformation of the body in ritual.

The argument does not apply merely to evidently transformative rituals such as rites of passage, where the transition can be for example from boy to man, or healing rituals, where the change is from sickness to health, but it is related to achieving religious goals in general. Or, it could also be rephrased as follows: in some cases achieving the religious goal is through transforming the body. What the religious goal consists of differs depending on both the tradition and the individual, it is also determined by the cultural background, how human body

⁵ This goes, however, to the mainstream teachings of the organized religion, but there are also folk traditions, magic, and alchemy. These all have a major part to play in the cultural history of both the Christian and Islamic worlds of Middle Ages and the Early Modern.

and its specific qualities are perceived: which are the minus qualities and also what the medical and physiological understanding of the body is like.

There are four main minus qualities that are to be changed through transformation. These are a) the mortality of the body, b) the impurity of the body, or rather that of its different parts, c) the physical limitation of the body, which fixates the body in time and space, and d) the separateness of the body.

Bodies are physically separated from the holy or the transcendent, they are separated from each other, separated from the social body, the cosmic body, and the god's body. Whilst there are specific purification rituals to overcome impurity, which are often prerequisite to other religious practices, overcoming separation could be seen as the central theme of the whole of religious practices: at festivals or rituals that involve the whole community, such as the Daoist *jiao* liturgy in Taiwan, the separation of individual bodies is overcome by uniting them into a single social body and also the separation of the social body from the holy is overcome either by creating a sacred area, by giving offerings to gods, or by communicating with them through religious specialists such as shamans or priests. In meditation and prayer the social dimension could be omitted, even if the meditation is collective, the objective being personal contact with the transcendent.

These minus-qualities are interrelated and thus it is not surprising that through the transformation of body all of them are to be changed at the same time. The most obvious connection is that between physical limitation and separation. The fixated body with set boundaries is inevitably separated from other – also fixated – bodies, not to mention the absolute, which, being outside of time and space, differs from it in its nature and is thus separated from the limited body. Limitation has causal relations with impurity and purification is an important prerequisite for overcoming separation, mostly serving as the introductory part of a ritual or a meditation. Purification might also be the result of overcoming separation. When a Trika Śaivist practitioner understands the unity of his body with the universe and ascends the limits of the physical body, it is also a simultaneous purification.

However, the body is also the unifying entity. That is why bodies have a relatively important role to play in religions, as it is through body how the interactions take place.

Health and beauty are also attributed to the plus body. This also a major topic in today's wellness-movement, but it should not be forgotten that in earlier times, there were more problems with proper hygiene, medicine and food and people were continuously faced with bodily discomforts, disease and death. Beauty is a social currency and can act as a visual sign of the practitioner's prowess or favour of the gods.

The idea of transformation of the body in a narrower sense depends on cosmology. If a tradition sees the existence of more than one world – at least the physical and the spiritual world – then these two can be neither isolated nor different in their entities; otherwise would every communication between them be impossible. Most religions, though, presume that the contact is possible and

communicating with the other world and its inhabitants – the spirits, gods, or angels – constitute the basic part of the practices. The difference between the physical and spiritual world lies in their “density” and it is the same difference as in body and soul, in human body and the spirits’ body, or in human body and god's body. This is precisely that, what makes moving between these worlds – the ascent and descent – possible. Through meditation the “density” of the body can be changed and so the meditator can either ascend into higher spheres by himself or make it possible for gods, spirits or angels to descend into his or her body and communicate with them. Thus the transformation of body is basically synonymous to journey or flight.

Journey and ascent are also characteristics of shamanism and according to Eliade the determinant ones (Eliade 1972: 182; 505). For shamans the journey of the soul is a means of communicating with spirits. However, journey is not an idea inherent only to shamanism, but it can be found in very different places. An excellent example is the Night journey of Mohammad (The Koran Sura 17) when he journeyed to Jerusalem and back in one night.

Of the major religions the motif of journey is perhaps most distinct in Daoism. In Daoist meditation, the journey is a part of communicating with gods and harmonizing the body with the universe. In the meditation of the *Shangqing* tradition, for example, the adept’s transformation is accompanied by mystical flights, journeys to the corners and to poles of the earth, to the sky, to mountains and to the stars (Robinet 1993). Since the journey takes place in such a way that the adept turns itself omnipresent, that is analogises his or her body with the universe, transformation of the body and the journey are one and the same thing. In case of the soul’s journey to the sky or stars one does not actually go anywhere but already *is* there.

Transformation and the journey are merged into one also in the meditation techniques of the Indian yogic tradition. The connecting link or the place where all the processes occur is the body of the yogi. Cosmology and physiology meet there in the breath *prāna*; the transformation of *prāna* in meditation involves the transformation of body and the simultaneous ascent to cosmos. “Gross breath gives way to subtle breath, as the yogi rises higher within his body, which is also a journey through the cosmos.” And “Breath is, in fact, a manifestation of vibration within the body, as all manifestation is a form of breath (*prānarūpa*). The yogi must realize this in order to transcend limitation.” (Flood 1993: 262) The idea is very similar in other yogic and tantric traditions, especially in Haṭha yoga (White 2011 (1): 16).

This is not a one-way movement. Since the body is analogized with universe, it means that the gods existing in the universe also exist in the body. And as a meditator, priest or a shaman may ascend to the skies, the god or gods may descend into the body. In order to have gods descending into one's body it is necessary to change the body. Gods will not descend into a coarse body so it will have to be made subtle. Here the link between different qualities can be seen, because in addition to the physical limits the coarse body entails, gods will

not descend into an impure body, thus in order to invoke gods into the body, it must be purified.

Inside the body, gods are often linked to internal organs. This motif is especially characteristic to Daoism, but it can also be found elsewhere. In addition to being the dwelling places (or the palaces) of gods in the body, the organs may be themselves deified. The techniques that aim at the transformation of body often focus on internal organs. These are either visualised or bodily energies, breath or light is channelled into them to induce their transformation.

So far I have been talking about only one type of transformation, which is the transforming of the minus body changing into a plus body. But there is also another type of transformation – the metamorphosis. To understand metamorphosis, let's take a look back to the shamanism of the Amazon region. In the Amazonian conception there is a danger of being transformed from humans into other creatures, but the shamans are masters of transformation and thus it does not present a danger to them, but they can use it on behalf of the community and themselves.

It could be assumed that metamorphosis is not bodily or physical in its nature, but it rather manipulates the viewer's perspective. For both the Amazonian and North-Eurasian shamans metamorphosis is a matter of changing clothes. And the metamorphosis of Daoist masters too is that of a chameleon. The master simply fits in the environment and may appear to others the way he wants or how the others want to see him. A great example are the words of Laozi in the "Zhuangzi" (Zhuangzi 13.8) in Richard Wilhelm's German interpretation: "Hättet Ihr mich einen Ochsen genannt, so wäre ich eben ein Ochse gewesen; hättet Ihr mich ein Pferd genannt, so wäre ich eben ein Pferd gewesen." (Zhuangzi 13.8)

Such a transformation is not technical but intellectual in nature, and requires intellectual understanding of the nature and mutual relationship of things, as these are understood in the respective tradition. So I would say regarding the question, whether and how the two versions of transformation are connected, that the transformation from minus to plus is a prerequisite for the metamorphosis. The relation of the two transformations is well illustrated in Siberian shamanism, where shamans master the art of metamorphosis, and one becomes a shaman through the transformation of body. During the initiation, the shaman is disassembled and his or her internal organs removed by the spirits and then put back together, new and purified.

As I said before, one of the objectives of the transformation of body is to abolish the bodily limits in order to achieve unity with the absolute or the universe. From the point of unity of all phenomena the meditator may move back to multiplicity, acquiring whatever shape he wishes. It follows that the ability to perform metamorphosis is an attribute of a plus body. Yet it is a rather particular attribute, which is not directly related to the religious goal, neither is it something that is essential to the plus body. Speaking of the attributes of the

plus body, one ought to start with more general and important basics. It should be noted that the short list I will present is only preliminary and serves rather as an illustration of what I understand under the term plus body.

A transformed body is, first and foremost, pure and subtle in its consistence. These are manifested also in bodily functions, which are often seen as impure and thus also causing the body's impurity. A common motif is for example that the transformed adept feeds on light, which is also subtle and thus fitting for a plus-body. Excrements are impure, thus regular food causes impurity. As it is said in the "Visuddhi magga": "When it [the food] has been completely cooked there by the bodily fires, it does not turn into gold, silver etc., as the ores of gold, silver, etc., do [through smelting]." (Visudhi magga 11.20)

The transformed body is, contrary to the deficiencies stated above, either in contact with the absolute and/or the universe or is able to contact gods and spirits and to move with no physical limits both in the physical world as well as between different worlds. Unification with god is the principal way in religions for overcoming death, which would also be the next attribute of the plus body.

All the plus body's principal attributes can be found listed in the Haṭha Yoga Pradipika. It says there, for example: "A yogī's body becomes divine, glowing, healthy, and emits a divine smell." (Hatha Yoga Pradipika 4.71) he becomes beautiful (2.54) and young (2.47). He also becomes immortal (3.46) and divine: "He is really the guru and to be considered as Īśvara in human form who teaches the Mūdras as handed down from guru to guru," (3. 129) or: "The Yogī becomes the creator and destroyer of the universe, like God." (4.77)

There are some other attributes, which may or may not accompany the plus body and which can exist also independently from it. One thing is definitely the inner heat of the body, which is also a classical feature of magicians in different cultures (Eliade 1972: 474). Yet in addition to magic the motif of inner heat is often also to be found in bodily practices, such as meditation. Heat is connected with the bodily processes and emotions; in short, with life as such.

Another frequent motif is the dual nature of religious authorities with plus bodies. Often, the regular body and the physical sphere are not rejected completely in transformation. That way the transformed being may simultaneously be human and non-human or human and "true human" as in the Sufis' case. Such *Doppelwesen* may acquire the role of a mediator, but the ambivalence is felt by a certain degree as danger for the community and religious authorities, such as Siberian shamans, for example, often live on the outskirts of the community or outside of it. The motif of the dual nature is not limited to the plus body and in other contexts such beings are always dangerous as in werewolves and the living dead.

There are also various wondrous qualities attributed to plus bodies. The most vivid beliefs about it can be found in Daoism. According to I. Robinet, the following beliefs were held about Daoist saints: "Besides the essential characteristics of longevity and the ability to fly to heavens, the saint also obtains power over the spirits, invulnerability, luminosity, and the power of rapid

displacement. In fact, all of these powers are linked with the possibility of metamorphosis and transformation. It is by transforming himself that the adept becomes light; by making himself into breath, a cloud or bird, he flies away and rapidly displaces himself; and by becoming invisible and imperceptible, he becomes invulnerable.” (Robinet 1993: 161)

Such qualities are understandably attributed to plus-bodies, but especially in China it might incur very curious and striking qualities: “Some saints are, however, described as having square pupils, having ears that reach to the top of their heads, or having a scale-covered body and a snake head,” (Robinet 1993: 44) and also about adepts: “[...] the image of the Mao-shan adept as an accomplished man closely resembles the popular figure of the saint. When he achieves salvation, the adept will wear a feathered garment, will ride on light and straddle the stars, or will float in empty space. He will have wind and light as a chariot and dragons as steeds. His bones will shine like jade, his face will be resplendent, his head will be circled with a halo, and his whole body will radiate a supernatural light as incandescent as the sun and moon,” (Robinet 1993: 45) and so on.

2.6. Individual body and the social body

Could achieving a plus-body also be significant in the social context, serving as a social currency? Presuming that there is a binary system with positive and negative bodies, which in turn are a part of a relative system, where + and – express comparison with other bodies (which can also be one's own transformed body), it could be presumed that a plus-body could be placed on a socially higher level. Hereby I deliberately exclude all ways of marking the body, like tattoos for example, and focus on the transformation of body, which is related to the religious goal.

If one looks at the bodily qualities separately, one can easily find examples of how a quality with a positive value is expressed also in social relationships. This applies to ritual purity in particular. In case of the Brahmins, the higher degree of purity is accompanied by an equally higher social status. Yet in most cases the individuals, who strive for the transformation of the body, detach themselves from the society. Furthermore, Brahmins, similarly to other individuals with special bodily qualities accompanied by a high social position – for example kings – have acquired their special body through birth, thus it could not be considered as the transformation of body.

Transformation of the body in the narrower sense as a set of techniques, as it can be found in Indian and Chinese traditions is clearly the religious practice of a small minority. People are neither equally religious nor is there any single way of expressing religiousness. Is this one way of expressing religiousness then, because it serves the purpose of attaining the practitioners' objectives, only relevant to the practitioners themselves or also in some way to the community? This question could be viewed along with the context of relations

between asceticism and the society, although the transformational techniques do not have to be ascetic nor does the ascetic need to strive for the transformation of body. However, both the transformation and the asceticism have a focus on the body and both are practiced by small minorities within the society. Speaking of the ascetic's role in the society I would like to quote Steven Collins who claimed in his essay about Theravāda Buddhism that a monk or nun is "a visibly clean, pure, and decorous object. It is only in an ideological sense that they can be said to 'leave society'" (Collins 1997: 199). What they basically do with their body is a "deconstruction and rejection of the body in meditative analysis with the construction of it in social behaviour as a unified and valued public object." This too can be seen as a transformation with the plus body being the 'public object'.

The social aspect of the transformation of the body can also be viewed from another angle. A social factor is always present in religion and everything that can be said about the individual body can also be claimed about the social body. Here, the opposite is actually the case, since the role of religion, or rather a ritual in transforming the social body is generally accepted, if we are to count construction, defining and renewal of the group as transformation. In all these cases the objective is, using the present essay's terminology, a social plus body. The religious goals of both the group and the individual are the same: to attain the holy or the unity and to contact gods and often these three are the one and the same thing.

So when the goals of the individual and the social body are the same, then what are the relations between these two? In order to contact gods, the group needs a representative or a mediate, that is a priest. As I argued before, one needs a plus-body to be able to contact gods, which would correspond to the consistence of the spiritual sphere and enable the individual to ascend into and move in this sphere. The plus body cannot be achieved by everybody nor do they need it when there are specialists such as priests.

This shows that a part of a priest's job is to have a plus body or the ability to achieve it during a ritual which indicates that in the priests' profession the bodily part is as important as the intellectual one. This is an important fact that has previously often been overlooked.

Both the individual- and the social body are constructed in ritual. These two meet in the person of a priest. All the processes that happen to the priest's body also happen to the social body – in *jiao* liturgy the communal ritual and the priest's meditation take place simultaneously. As can be seen in this Daoist ritual, the social and individual body do not yet constitute the entire system. Earlier the relation between the individual and the cosmic body were discussed, now that of the individual and the social body. Only when these three are put together the picture becomes complete. The number of different bodies in this schema could of course differ depending on the cosmology; for example the cosmic body and the god's body do not need to be the same. However, the relationship between the cosmos and god's body is a theological problem and thus does not carry significance at this point. What is important, is that the third

body – let us call it the cosmic body – comprises both the holy and the profane and it contains both the individual and social body thus enabling their unification with the holy.

The important thing is that the cosmic, the social, and the individual body are seen as a) connected and b) analogous. Since they are connected, they can exert influence on each other, but as they are also analogous, it is possible to control this influence. For example, in Gandhi's autobiography it can be read that he fasted in order to prevent the Indian people from falling into chaos during times of political turmoil (Gandhi 5.32).

A person, who has devoted himself to religion, may wish to transform his or her body in order to help others. This applies especially to Mahāyāna Buddhism. Susanne Mrozik writes that it can be concluded from the Śāntideva's *Compendium of Training* (Śikṣāsamuccaya) that the person, who has given the Bodhisattva oath, transforms his body in order to help all living beings (Mrozik 2007: 21). Furthermore, the plus body can also spread through "infection"; there is not always a direct action needed to benefit others. Haṭha Yoga Pradīpika, for example, claims that "Fortunate are the parents and blessed is the country and the family where a Yogī is born. Anything given to such a Yogī, becomes immortal." (3.46)

2.7 Summary

This chapter dealt with the transformation of the body in religious practice as one possibility of treating the body in religion. The other possibilities are preserving and overcoming the body. In a broader sense the transformation can be viewed as a thought pattern intrinsic to religion and ritual and in a narrower sense as a set of bodily practices in South- and East Asian traditions.

There are unlimited ways of understanding the body, yet these can in a closed system be reduced to two. I have called them the plus-body and the minus-body. If there exists an idea of the body's negative qualities such as impurity or isolation from god, and that of a situation without these negative qualities, there must also be a way of moving from one state to the other. That is the transformation of the body.

In a narrower sense the transformation of the body is a specific motif, which is present in the meditational and ritual practices of Indian and East Asian traditions. It includes establishing a sacred area, analogising the body with the universe, the descent of god(s) into the body and/or the ascent of the adept into the higher spheres; additionally also using the "energies" of the body (for example *prāna*, *kundalinī*, *qi*). The goals to be achieved through the transformation differ in India and in China, because Hindu traditions are god-centred and the Chinese Traditions are not. The transformation practices are in their structure very similar to shamanistic séances.

The difference is that in these religions achieving of the plus body is an individual religious goal, but in shamanism it is a means of serving the interests

of the group. However, the group interests play an important role also in the Indian and Chinese traditions. Firstly, the plus body is for the society a visible pure and holy object, which helps to concentrate and direct the religiousness of the community. Secondly, the practitioners themselves consider the individual and the social body to be connected and thus through the transformation of the one they wish to achieve the sanctification and renewal of the other as well.

PART II: CASE STUDIES

I. “BODILY RELIGIOUS GOALS IN HAṬHA YOGA PRADĪPIKĀ”⁶

I.1 Introduction

The present chapter discusses the body-related religious goals found in the classical Haṭha Yoga text Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā, hereinafter HYP. The western or, more accurately, modern man has a very ambivalent idea of the Yoga-body relation. On the one hand, there is a multitude of modern Yoga practitioners for whom Yoga is solely a set of bodily exercises practiced to enhance one’s bodily welfare, which encompasses both physical and psychological welfare, be it a good health, physical form or mental balance, peace of mind or development of cognitive capabilities. On the other hand, there is a long-standing discourse in science pursuant to which Yoga is a purely spiritual discipline. The bodily goals formulated in Yoga texts, beginning with good health and ending with magic powers (*siddha*) and physical immortality, are seen as mere corollaries. This idea dates back to the late 19th century, when Yoga and Hindu spirituality began to be popularized in the Western world by Indian religious innovators, such as Svami Vivekananda (White 2011; Vivekananda 2008). Influential in academic circles has been Mircea Eliade’s first in-depth work on Yoga (Eliade 2009), which to date is one of the few books dealing with Yoga in a holistic manner. In his book, Eliade focuses on Pātañjala’s “Yoga Sutras”, namely on its theology section. This has resulted in “Yoga Sutras” being regarded to this day as the fundamental work representing the phenomenon of Yoga in its entirety.

In order to clarify which idea is correct or how they reconcile with each other, we need to examine the relations between the body and a religious goal. In the present study, I do not focus on how the human body is perceived in the Yoga tradition and how it can be used to attain a religious goal but on what body-related goals are described in HYP. Today, Haṭha Yoga is the form of Yoga most widespread in the West, yet has been regarded, and still is regarded – again due first and foremost to Svami Vivekananda’s influence – as inferior to other, mystical styles of Yoga.

The present study has two objectives: first, to collect and systematize bodily religious goals in HYP in order to demonstrate that in Yoga the human body is important also from religious perspective, not merely as a means for an end. Second, I want to propose a hypothesis that body transformation is the ultimate goal of liberation. To this end, I first introduce Yoga and Haṭha Yoga in general and then proceed with human body in Haṭha Yoga and the bodily goals specified in HYP.

⁶ This chapter has been published as an article „Kehalised religioossed eesmärgid Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikās.” Idakiri, 2014, pp 95–106.

In this chapter, the Sanskrit text of the bilingual HYP version issued by Pancham Sinh in 1914 is used.⁷ The text has been translated into several European languages, yet there is no scientific text-critical translation of HYP.

I.2 Haṭha Yoga and HYP

Although Yoga is a very heterogeneous tradition, it can roughly be divided into two (not taking into account modern Yoga), that is, Pātañjala Yoga and Haṭha Yoga (Larson 2011: 72; Birch 2011: 547). Haṭha Yoga emerged in the Middle Ages, developing hand in hand with (first and foremost Śaivite) Tantra. The main difference from Tantra practice is that in Śaivite Tantra ritual unclean substances⁸ are taken literally whereas in Haṭha Yoga they are found within a human (Mallinson 2011: 257). (Such internalisation of alchemy is common in religious history, with parallels from China and Europe alike.) For the purposes of the present work, however, the common goal of Haṭha Yoga and Tantra is more important than the rituals and techniques they share. In medieval India, a new idea emerged in Tantras – both Hindu and Buddhist ones –, according to which the goal was no longer liberation from suffering, which was seen to be reached in unification with god, but becoming god or divine oneself. Specifically, it means that “in a universe that is nothing other than the flow of divine consciousness, raising one’s consciousness to the level of god-consciousness – that is, attaining god’s eye view that sees the universe as internal to one’s own transcendent Self – is tantamount to becoming divine.” (White 2011: 12) In Haṭha Yoga, liberation, or *mukti*, became a thing attainable in this life and in human body (Mallinson 2011: 257). Actually, Yoga has had a very earthly tendency all along; as early as in Mahabharata, it served two purposes – liberation plus active use of magic powers in this world (Fitzgerald 2011: 46).

The development of Haṭha Yoga itself may in turn be divided into two stages. First, around the 12th-13th centuries, the emergence of Haṭha Yoga as a sect of Nāth yogis (Mallinson 2011), which is deemed to be founded by Goraksnāth (White 2011: .17) Texts of this early, or proto, Haṭha Yoga, such as *Gorakṣaśataka*, have not yet been scientifically studied (Mallinson 2011: 262) and consequently various dates are provided in literature.⁹ In fact, the same applies to the whole of Haṭha Yoga; fortunately, the gap has begun to be filled

⁷ Hatha Yoga Pradipika. tr. by Pancham Sinh. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/hyp/index.htm> (25.09.14)

⁸ So-called „five Ms“, or *pañca makāra*: meat, fish, wine, *mudrā*, which means both yogic hand positions and roasted grain, sexual liquids.

⁹ For instance, White dates the innovations found in *Gorakṣaśataka* and *Yogavāsiṣṭha* back to the 10th-11th centuries (White 2011: 15) while Mallinson holds that *Gorakṣaśataka* was composed around 1400 AD and later attributed to Goraksnāth (Mallinson 2011: 263).

by James Mallinson, who in recent years has penned several articles on Haṭha Yoga.¹⁰

The idea expressed in *Gorakṣaśataka* is, in short, that liberation can be attained by breath control. Diet, postures and *Kuṇḍalinī* stimulation are means to aid breath control (Mallinson 2011: 258). This was the basis from which classical Haṭha Yoga represented by HYP developed at the second stage, in the 14th-15th centuries.

HYP is deemed to be authored by Svātmārāma, and the writing of the text is dated at around 1450. The title means Haṭha Yoga “lamp” or “commentary”. The text quickly became one of the most influential works on Haṭha Yoga, in part because it was the first text devoted wholly to Haṭha Yoga (Mallinson: Śaktism and HaṭhaYoga).

In HYP, verses from at least twenty different texts are used. The most important of these is the aforementioned *Gorakṣaśataka*, from which 28 verses are borrowed directly (Mallinson 2011: 262). The texts used come from various backgrounds – incl. both Vaiśṇava and Śaiva. Compared to earlier Haṭha Yoga, some items are missing in HYP while others, such as *Kuṇḍalinī*, are fully transposed from Laya Yoga (Mallinson: Śaktism and HaṭhaYoga).

Consequently, HYP represents a collection by which the author tries to synthesize from different traditions a unified form of Yoga, which he calls “Haṭha Yoga”. The result is fairly hectic and not the best fit. At the same time, as Mallinson indicates, the main goal of such texts and especially anthologies is not to clarify Yoga techniques but rather to render the school and the techniques more authoritative, for instance in the eyes of the patron (Mallinson 2011: 264). The meanings of Haṭha Yoga and Rāja Yoga have altered, too, so the latter is not so much a form of Yoga than a state, and the former the pathway thereto (Birch 2011: 546) At the same time, however, Haṭha Yoga is also the general title of that synthesized system. Another innovation is the removal from HYP of all references to certain religious traditions (Mallinson: Śaktism and HaṭhaYoga) (first and foremost to tantric Śaivism, in which Haṭha Yoga is rooted), so it may be said that HYP deliberately strives for universality.

The text is composed of four parts. They deal respectively with *āsanas*, *prāṇāyāma*, *mudrās* and *samādhi*. *Āsanas* are Yoga postures, *prāṇāyāma* signifies breathing exercises, *mudrā* means a ‘seal’ and is mostly understood in Yoga and Tantra as special hand positions, and *samādhi*, or concentration, stands for

¹⁰ James Mallinson. Translation of the DattātreyāYogaśāstra, the Earliest Text to Teach HaṭhaYoga. Not yet published, can be read at https://www.academia.edu/3773137/Translation_of_the_DattatreyāYogasastra_the_earliest_text_to_teach_ha%E1%B9%ADhaYoga

Conference presentation „Śaktism and HaṭhaYoga“, not yet published, can be read at www.khecari.com.

James Mallinson. Haṭha Yoga. – Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism Vol 3, 2011, p. 770-781.

James Mallinson. Siddhi and Mahāsiddhi in Early HaṭhaYoga. – Yoga Powers: Extraordinary Capacities Attained Through Meditation and Concentration, ed by Knut A. Jacobsen. Leiden. Boston: Brill, 2012.

meditation or meditative state. In the form presented in HYP, *mudrās* and *prāṇ-ayāma* were new to Haṭha Yoga. *Āsanās*, likewise, are treated in HYP from a new perspective, for in *Gorakṣaśataka* there are only two āsanās – *padma* and *vajra* – which, in short, means that the yogi simply was to sit comfortably (Mallinson 2011: 258).

Chapter 1 first speaks about preparing oneself, beginning with what a yogi's house should be like (1.12) and what the injurious (1.61) and beneficial (1.64) foods are. Then it comes to āsanās. The reasons given for exercising them are gaining a good posture, health and lightness (1.19).

When the proper posture is attained and appropriate food is eaten, the yogi may proceed with practicing the pranayama described in Chapter 2. Breathing exercises go with *āsanās*. The chapter delineates various exercises that still promise good health.

The techniques in Chapter 3 are again related to breathing exercises and now also with awakening *Kundalinī*. This represents a goddess in the form of a serpent sleeping at the base of the spine. More about this in the next subsection. In large measure, Chapter 3 describes bodily practices based on Yoga physiology and on the idea of connection between different things. This means that by manipulating a spot in the body the Yoga also influences something else. For instance, there is connection between language and mind.

Chapter 4 deals with *samādhi*, or concentration. *Samādhi* is concentration in the sense that in this state the diversity of things disappears, the influence of the senses and the karma is lost and the level of higher consciousness is attained. This may also occur in the form of understanding. In practice, it looks like this: one focuses, for instance, on *nāda*, or sound, which is the audible manifestation of the absolute. Verse 4.102 says that it is Śakti, or the feminine element, which suggests Śakta influences. *Samādhi* in Patanjali Yoga is the goal as well as a synonym of Yoga. In addition, it is equated with liberation, or *mukti*. In HYP, liberation is mostly understood as overcoming conflicts and as getting united. It is not always specified what they are that get united, and mention is made of various things. First and foremost, however, the unification of *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* is meant, which in turn leaves room for interpretation. *Jīvātmā* means 'the living self' and *paramātmā* means 'the superself', which may be the non-material self or even a god or the absolute.

1.3 Human body in Haṭha Yoga

There is no unified and concrete description of the human body in the HYP text. On the one hand, the text presupposes background knowledge from the reader, on the other there are contradictions and inconsistencies in various places, which indicates that the text has been composed using different sources. Nevertheless, HYP appears to have its own concept of the body. In addition, consideration must definitely be given to the other traditions related to Yoga in general and Haṭha Yoga in particular. These are Sāṃkhya, Śaivism and Tantra.

Yoga shares a common cosmology with Sāṃkhya, having derived its religious part, in the narrower sense of the word, from Śaivism (Śiva is the Yogic god), and Haṭha Yoga is related to Tantra via similar techniques.

Yoga is one of the six orthodox philosophical schools, or *darśana*, of Hinduism, and in pair with another one of these, Sāṃkhya. Sāṃkhya is a philosophical school in which cosmological speculations play a very important role. The cosmology part of the philosophy is largely the premise of Yoga practices. Both share the notion that the world and man alike are composed of strata of existence like a “ladder”. These originate from a single source and in most cases a lower stratum comes from an upper one and they differ from each other by density (Fitzgerald 2011: 49). An important place in the cosmology is occupied by the dualism between the masculine spirit *puruṣa* and the feminine matter *prakṛti*. These two are in constant interaction, leading to constant change and development.

The same applies to Yoga in more general terms, but there are a number of Yoga systems. As mentioned above, Haṭha Yoga and, specifically, HYP, were innovative in several respects. HYP’s innovation with respect to the concept of the body was combining different systems, leading to the perception of the body as a pneumatic, hydraulic and thermodynamic system at the same time (White 2011: 15). This means that the notions of breath in the body and breathing exercises, circulation of liquids within the body and inner burning with alchemic transformations were unified and rendered interdependent.

Such a body concept presupposes certain postulates on human physiology. In the following, I briefly introduce the key definitions of this physiological concept.

Nāḍī are hidden channels in the body permeating the subtle body and connecting chakras. Through these flows *prāṇa*, which gives life to the body. Their number varies in the texts, but in most cases the Yoga and Tantra physiologies include three important channels: *Piṅgalā*, *Iḍā*, and the central channel running along the spine, *Suṣumnā nāḍī*. HYP 4.18 says that there are 72,000 *Nāḍīs* in the body but that *Suṣumnā* is the only important one, “the rest are useless”.

The *prāṇa* that is conducted by these channels is breath. Apart from animating the body, it also constitutes the subtle body, or *sūkṣma śarīra*. *Suṣumnā nāḍī* is the vertical axis of the subtle body. On this axis, cakras (wheels, discs) are located. Cakras are the nodes of the channels, and the goal of Haṭha Yoga is their penetration by *Kuṇḍalinī*. The latter is individualised *Śakti*, or power, personified as the feminine element or a goddess in the form of a serpent in the hypogastric region.¹¹ In addition to these, the seed ‘*bindu*’ and the wind ‘*vāyu*’ also play a role in Haṭha Yoga physiology.

David White summarizes the Haṭha Yoga body concept and the set of exercises based thereupon as follows: “In a novel variation on the theme of consciousness-raising-as-internal-ascent, haṭha Yoga also represents the yogic

¹¹ The definitions are based on Oxford Dictionary of Hinduism by Will Johnson. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

body as a sealed hydraulic system within which vital fluids may be channelled upward as they are refined into nectar through the heat of asceticism. Here, the semen of the practitioner, lying inert in the coiled body of the serpentine *kuṇḍalinī* in the lower abdomen, becomes heated through the bellows effect of *prāṇāyāma*, the repeated inflation and deflation of the peripheral breath channels. The awakened *kuṇḍalinī* suddenly straightens and enters into the *suṣumṇā*, the medial channel that runs the length of the spinal column up to the cranial vault. Propelled by the yogi's heated breaths, the hissing *kuṇḍalinī* serpent shoots upward, piercing each of the *cakras* as she rises. With the penetration of each succeeding *cakra*, vast amounts of heat are released, such as the semen contained in the *kuṇḍalinī*'s body becomes gradually transmuted." (White 2011: 16)

1.4 Bodily goals in HYP

The text of HYP consists of descriptions of exercises, often accompanied by a mention of their particular effects on the yogi. This enables to deduce the goal the author of the text hoped to attain through Haṭha Yoga, or rather, the promises he gave to the reader. I divided the bodily goals stated in the text into categories. It must be emphasised here that it represents my own classification for the purpose of obtaining a better overview, and that in HYP the goals are not categorised.

The categories are as follows: a) health/disease-free state, b) amiable physical properties (e.g. beauty or pleasant smell), c) youth, d) ritual purity, e) miraculous powers, f) overcoming death, and g) becoming a god or divine, h) ecstasy and enjoyment, and i) liberation.

The last two items, enjoyment and liberation, are included on the list of bodily goals but conditionally and require some explanation. The state of ecstasy or enjoyment is undoubtedly a bodily experience; according to the HYP text, however, it seems to be a corollary rather than goal. Enjoyment is a sign of the attainment of a new state or of the fact that something that was pursued has transpired in the body.

Before dealing in-depth with liberation, which in itself is already synonymous with a religious goal, a few more details on the other categories.

Complete riddance from diseases is a goal most recurrent in HYP, and it is treated in all the chapters. This suggests that health was very important in medieval Haṭha Yoga, vividly demonstrating that physical welfare is related to religion and is a goal of religious practices. HYP promises good health in general, i.e. if one practices Yoga one gets rid of diseases, and connects concrete techniques and diseases in particular, mainly in case of *prāṇāyāma*.

Likewise, it is *prāṇāyāma* that provides the body with a pleasant appearance. A yogi is depicted in HYP as a beautiful person with a good or radiant complexion and a pleasant smell. In addition, practicing Yoga also provides the

yogi with youth: verse 3.82 promises the disappearance of wrinkles and grey hair, and 2.47 even that the yogi becomes young as if he or she were sixteen.

Another goal is purity. Ritual purity is one of the most important themes in Hindu traditions, and purity is often synonymous with the category “holy”. Purity is extensively covered also in HYP, where it features as both a goal *per se* and a prerequisite for other things. For instance, verse 2.5 says that *nāḍis* need to be cleansed to enable *prāṇa* control while a few lines later purity is the goal, not a prerequisite, as 2.75 states that *Kuṇḍalinī* awakening frees *Suṣumṇā* from impurities. Verse 2.37 tells that some teachers do not advocate any other practice, being of the opinion that all uncleanness or impurities are dried up by the practice of *prāṇāyāma*. This line includes two important things: first, purification here is *the* only goal of Yoga, and second, purification is connected with *prāṇāyāma*.

Several times in HYP, miraculous powers are mentioned. Part of them are related to other goals, such as health and immortality; for instance, the text refers to invulnerability, that a yogi cannot be harmed by any weapon (4.113), or that any poison acts like nectar on him or her (3.16). On a more general note, it says that *prāṇāyāma* produces extraordinary attributes (*vicitra guṇa*, 2.23). What these extraordinary attributes are is not specified. Mention is also made of *siddhis* (3.29, 4.8). *Siddhis* in Hindu traditions are miraculous capabilities attainable through spiritual and religious practices. What these capabilities are is not specified in HYP, but presumably they are understood as the most common list of eight powers, as given in Yoga Sūtra¹², all the more likely because elsewhere mention is made in turn of eight celestial powers (*aiśvarya*) (3.8).

Overcoming death is promised in a total of seventeen places. All the places are in chapters three and four, i.e. related to *mūdras* and *samādhi*. Where there are simple statements about death being “overcome” or “conquered”, however, they leave room for interpretation whether this is meant in physical sense or not. It is an important question, since overcoming death in one way or another is a goal for religions in general, not only for Yoga; therefore it is necessary to know what exactly is meant by that. Again, HYP is inconsistent on overcoming death. Apparently, the terms do not always denote anything concrete in the text but rather may be intended to signify some abstract idea or universal promise. A second set of verses, however, refer explicitly to immortality and specific ways of how and what to attain. For instance, lines 3.44 and 3.49 talk about the elixir of immortality obtained by means of inner alchemy. As well, immortality may be connected with the attainment of youth and health.

HYP, however, goes even further than overcoming death and miraculous powers by promising that with the help of Yoga one can become divine, i.e. if not a god oneself then at least like one. The term employed in this regard is

¹² Yoga Sūtra 3.45. The eight are: 1) becoming as tiny as an atom, 2) becoming weightless, i.e. being able to levitate, 3) enlarging one’s body or penetrating any object, 4) reaching anywhere over any distance, 5) exerting irresistible will, 6) gaining mastery over the elements, 7) achieving unlimited power to create and destroy, 8) getting anything one wants.

Īśvara, meaning “lord”. It is most frequently used in the Śaivite tradition to denote Śiva; hence one may assume that it has made its way into Yoga from there. More specifically, HYP states that a yogi becomes *Īśvara* in human form (3.129), and that a yogi becomes the creator and destroyer of the universe like *Īśvara*. At this point, it must be mentioned that one of the miraculous powers, or *siddhas*, was the ability to create and destroy, so conditionally *siddhas* may also be connected with becoming divine. The regular world for god, ‘deva’, has been used comparatively – a yogi becomes wise like a god (4.72).

1.5 Liberation in HYP

Liberation is fairly extensively discussed in HYP. Use has been made of the words ‘*mukti*’ and ‘*mokṣa*’, which are synonymous and derived from the stem ‘*muc*’, meaning “liberation”. This is a regular concept in Hindu religions; what it consists in or what one is liberated from, however, is dependent on the particular tradition and school. In yogic tradition, this normally denotes unification with a god or the absolute, which in most cases is the god Śiva as the tradition is rooted in Śaivism.

In this respect, David White’s language is very resolute. In the book “Sinister Yogis” he writes that the religious content of Yoga systems can be reduced to the doctrine of the oldest Śaivite school Pāśupatas: “Doctrinally, the Pāśupatas took the yogic god Śiva to be their model, and accordingly, Yoga was defined by them as the union or contact of the individual soul with god, by virtue of which the human practitioner [of Yoga] partook of the attributes – that is, the eight supernatural powers or “masteries” (*aiśvāryam*) – of the Great Master (Maheśvara). In all of the tantric systems that follow – Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Śākta, Buddhist, and Jain – this is the reading of Yoga that remains operative: Yoga is a soteriological system that culminates in union or identity with a supreme being. Accordingly, yogis are persons whose religious vocation is the quest for such a union or identity, including the power to enter into, to permeate, the creator’s every creature.” (White 2009: 29)

For the most part, the words ‘*mukti*’ and ‘*mokṣa*’ are used in HYP without explanation, just to say that a particular technique leads to liberation. This presumably shows that they are common terms expected to be already familiar to the potential reader of the text. At this point it must be remembered that HYP, just like other Yoga manuals, is not intended for reading on one’s own but for learning under a teacher’s guidance. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that the idea of liberation in HYP does not differ from that in the wider yogic tradition, all the more so because Chapter 4 of HYP refers explicitly to unification with the absolute, when explaining the state of *samādhi* instead of *mukti*. As mentioned above, the unification occurs between either *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* (4.7) or the mind, ‘*manas*’, and *ātmā* (4.5).

1.6 Conclusions

Thus it may be seen that liberation in HYP is understood as the yogi's unification with the absolute, which is also the religious goal of Haṭha Yoga. At the same time, HYP sets or promises numerous other goals related to human body. This prompts the question of how they can be reconciled with one another. The hitherto popular opinion that Yoga is a spiritual discipline and everything bodily is only a by-product is not satisfactory, for these bodily things are clearly too numerous for that. In addition, Svātmārāma has constructed a system in his collection by unifying various traditions. Although, as mentioned above, the text declares concerning a number of techniques that just exercising them is sufficient, the structural logic of the work suggests that it is still intended to be read from front towards back, i.e. that one thing leads to the other. HYP begins with general recommendations on appropriate nutrition and the creation of a suitable environment for exercise and ends with the state of complete concentration, *samādhi*, and with the unification of the absolute.

Although the text is somewhat irregular and not all parts are fully congruous with one another the things asserted therein are not fortuitous. If we examine the list of bodily goals I compiled, it can be seen that these are not isolated items. The different categories described herein are directly related to one another. For instance, there is a direct relationship between good health and youth, which the yogi can maintain or even recover by means of the exercises. Likewise related are eternal youth and immortality. Hence, the goal of the practitioner of Haṭha Yoga, according to HYP, is not acquiring different attributes but attaining a perfect body via bodily transformation, and these items indicate what in medieval Haṭha Yoga was conceived as a perfect body.

Svātmārāma did not construct a new Haṭha Yoga system on the basis of early Haṭha Yoga alone but combined Haṭha, Laya, Mantra and Rāja Yogas. The new system was named Haṭha Yoga, and in it the practice of Haṭha Yoga leads to the state of Rāja Yoga (Birch 2011: 546). From this sequence, it is easy to derive a hierarchy in which spiritual Rāja Yoga ranks superior to bodily Haṭha Yoga. Such an interpretation of Rāja Yoga is common in the west ever since Svami Vivekananda's Yoga-promoting works. At least with reference to HYP, however, it is not correct. First, in HYP Rāja Yoga is a state, as it is identical with *samādhi* (4.3). *Samādhi*, in turn, is understood in HYP as a clearly bodily state, wherein the yogi feels nothing (4.109; 4.111) and his breathing has stopped (4.112); however, although he appears to be sleeping he is still awake (4.112). As such, *samādhi* is the ultimate goal and also equated with liberation.

If we proceed from the premise that HYP is to be read from front towards back, it can be concluded that no one state or goal is superior to the other but that Haṭha Yoga has one single goal for which certain stages need to be completed. The text, likewise, states that all Haṭha resources are but means for the attainment of Rāja Yoga (4.103).

Thus, if the goal of the exercises is a superhuman or super body for the attainment of liberation – which in religious sense is unification with god – then it means that the yogi’s goal is to attain a divine body to enable unification with god. Consequently, it is not possible to be united with god directly; therefore unification with god is also bodily. The process is bidirectional – unification with god also makes one divine, one attains miraculous powers and becomes a living god on earth. The goal is gradual elimination of differences between oneself and god. Liberation, magic powers and becoming divine is one thing. Liberation is unification with god while spirit possession is one of the magic powers. This is mastered by the yogic god Śiva, who enters into the yogi’s transformed and pure body, and now also mastered by the yogi who is in union with Śiva.

It may be said that the religious goal in HYP is bodily and connected with body transformation. However, a more accurate assessment would be rather that Cartesian dualism, which is the automatic conceptual model in the mind of the western man, is not suitable for interpreting Yoga, which, although actually encompassing spirit and body as separate concepts, construes them not as opposites but as constituting a cosmological continuum. The bodily and the spiritual goal of the religion are inseparable, as they constitute one single goal.

1.7 Summary

Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā is the best-known classical text on Haṭha Yoga. It is a compilation dating from the mid-15th century, into which the author of the text Svātmārāma has concentrated descriptions of Yoga practices from various earlier texts and, based thereupon, has constructed a new holistic system, calling it Haṭha Yoga.

The objective of the present study was to collect and systematize the bodily religious goals specified in HYP and to examine the role of human body in Haṭha Yoga. In the text, the following bodily goals are described: health or release from diseases, amiable physical properties, youth, ritual purity, miraculous powers, overcoming death and becoming a god or divine, ecstasy and enjoyment and, as a separate religious goal, liberation. The items on this list are not isolated from one another but form a single bodily goal, namely a superhuman body.

Neither are the ‘super body’ and liberation, or mukti, isolated religious goals but are inextricable from each other. Body transformation is a prerequisite for liberation, and liberation and unification with the absolute provide the practitioner of Yoga with divine bodily attributes and enable the conquest of death.

2. CHINESE PERSPECTIVISM: PERSPECTIVIST COSMOLOGIES IN *ZHUANGZI AND JOURNEY TO THE WEST*¹³

2.1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, the notions of animism and totemism¹⁴ have regained importance in anthropological discourse (see Halbmeyer 2012, Willerslev & Ultrasheva 2012; Costa & Fausto 2010: 16–17), and a new theory, perspectivism, has been introduced. Perspectivism originally dealt only with South America, but has now been extended to include some other cultural areas as well. Here I wish to examine whether perspectivism can also be applied to classical China.

When speaking about perspectivism, I do not refer to the philosophical term, but to the theory by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, which describes the peculiarities of Amazonian cosmology and anthropology. It states that all beings see themselves as humans or persons, or other species according to their importance in relation to the species in question. So perspectivism can prove itself important in understanding and explaining the relations between humans, animals and spirits, and also regarding the conceptions about the human body. In addition to Viveiros de Castro (1998), other researchers have written about perspectivism; for example, Broz (2007), Silva Guimarães (2011), Lima (1999), Londoño Sulkin (2005), Kristensen (2007), Pedersen (2001), Rasmussen (2011), Rival (2005), Turner (2009) and Vilaça (2005; 2008).

My aim is to bring closer together anthropology and religious studies or history of religions as a historical discipline that operates with texts. Of these two, anthropology has laid more emphasis on theoretical approach, and I believe that some of the theories can also be helpful for studying organised religions and written texts. Viveiros de Castro (2010) has said that anthropology compares anthropologies, and this is why I dare to compare two very different anthropologies – those of the Amazonian region and classical China.

¹³ This chapter has been published as an article „Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*.” *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 59, 2014, pp 145-164.

¹⁴ The notion of animism differs from the classical understanding and is mainly influenced by P. Descola. As there is not much of his work to be found in English, I would like to cite E. Viveiros de Castro (2012) instead. Descola distinguishes between three modes of “objectifying nature”: (1) Totemism, in which the differences between natural species are used as a model for social distinctions, i.e., in which the relationship between nature and culture is metaphorical in character and marked by discontinuity (both within and between series); (2) Animism, in which the “elementary categories structuring social life” organise the relations between humans and natural species, thus defining a social continuity between nature and culture, founded on the attribution of human dispositions and social characteristics to “natural beings”; (3) Naturalism, typical of Western cosmologies, which supposes an ontological duality between nature, the domain of necessity, and culture, the domain of spontaneity – areas separated by metonymic discontinuity.

I will first examine Chinese texts from a perspectivist point of view and then discuss what perspectivism can offer to Chinese studies and vice versa. The Chinese texts I used for comparison with perspectivism are *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*. These two texts stem from different epochs, have a completely different cultural background and are composed with different objectives. *Zhuangzi* is a philosophical and religious text from the 4th–3rd century BCE and one of the founding texts of Daoism, whereas *Journey to the West* is a folk novel from the 16th century CE¹⁵. It was a deliberate choice to use texts that were composed in different eras and belong to different genres. By doing this, I wish to encompass the widest spectrum possible with as few texts as possible, because I do not wish to show a perspectivist nature of one particular tradition, but to demonstrate the possibility of perspectivism in other cultural areas and to prove that it may be a much more widespread phenomenon than previously thought. These two texts have their influence and famousness in common, which makes them both relevant and exemplary.

2.2 Amerindian perspectivism

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro introduced the notion of Amerindian perspectivism in 1998, with the article “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism“. The role of the ‘point of view’ in Amazonian cosmologies was also examined by Tânia Stolze Lima (Lima 1999).

Perspectivism deals with “ideas in Amazonian cosmologies concerning the way in which humans, animals and spirits see both themselves and one another” (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 469). In normal conditions, humans perceive humans as humans, animals as animals and spirits (if they see them) as spirits (ibid.: 470). What makes it special is the fact that animals and spirits also see themselves as humans:

They perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture – they see their food as human food, they see their bodily attributes as body decorations or cultural instruments, they see their social system as organized in the same way as human institutions are. (ibid.: 470)

Thus they see things as ‘people’ do, but the things that they see are different (ibid.: 478). For example, blood is beer for jaguars (Vilaça 2005: 457) and the

¹⁵In this study I have used the following translations: for *Zhuangzi* Richard Wilhelm’s German translation (1981 [1912]), James Ware’s (1963) and Burton Watson’s (1968) English translations, as well as consulted the Chinese text from the two-language text of the Chinese Text Project together with an English translation by James Legge (1891). For the *Journey to the West* I used the abridged translation by Arthur Waley, titled “Monkey: A Folk Novel of China” (1958 [1942]), and an abridged version of the scholarly translation by Anthony C. Yu (2008). The ethnographic data about South America and North Asia used in this study are derived solely from secondary sources.

tapirs see a muddy waterhole as a great ceremonial house (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478).

A different approach in its definition is used by Lima, yet she describes the same phenomena: “Point of view implies a particular conception according to which the world only exists for someone” (Lima 1999: 117). This is also reflected in the grammar of some languages. The Jurúna say, for example: “This is beautiful to me“, and “To me, it rained” (ibid: 117)

Perspectivist cosmology is essentially connected with the concepts of body, for the body is the origin of perspectives (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478). The body itself is seen, on the one hand, as an envelope or clothing (ibid.: 471), on the other hand, as an assemblage of affects or ways of being that constitute a habitus (ibid.: 478). It is largely accepted in anthropology that the body is a concept that is culturally constructed (Asad 1997) and in South American indigenous cultures it is literally the case. Vilaça writes about the Wari that their bodies are continually fabricated and also comprised of affects and memories (Vilaça 2005: 449). The ‘soul’, Vilaça explains, enables one “to change affection and to adopt other habits, thus enabling the person to be perceived similar to other types of beings” (ibid.: 452). Thus the body and the perspectives that are derived from it are processes, and as processes they can undergo transformations. I believe that the potential transformation plays a crucial role in the understanding of perspectivism. For shamans, transformation is an essential means for performing their tasks. For everyone else, however, it poses a danger of losing one’s human perspective.

The importance of the body also builds a basis for Terence Turner’s argumentation in his critique of Viveiros de Castro’s article (Turner 2009). According to him, Viveiros de Castro dismisses the outward forms as mere “envelopes” (ibid.: 19), and both the body and the perspective are conceived as “singular, unchanging entities” (ibid.: 38). So he proposes that the “notion of the body as the origin of perspectives [---] should be substituted by a conception of both bodies and perspectives understood as sequences of multiple transformations. [---] conceiving the body in appropriate structuralist terms as such a series of transformations opens a perspective on bodiliness as a process of interaction of the physical body, social body, and person, stimulated and guided by relations with other embodied actors filtered and regulated by formal treatments of their bodily surfaces (“social skins“)” (ibid.: 38). However, this is also how I understood Viveiros de Castro’s perspectivism. The body is seen as habitus, thus produced as a process and subject to potential transformation.

In addition, Turner writes that humans do not share culture with animals and that the creation myths tell us how humans attained culture and how the differentiation of the species, and with that their respective subjective identities and perspectives, came about as a “corollary result of the one-sided possession of culture by humans” (ibid.: 19). This does not necessarily invalidate the theory of perspectivism, but rather adds an extra dimension to it. With examples from China it will be shown how perspectivism can also describe this process of differentiation. By acquiring a human perspective, the animals may try to

reconquer culture. This is what makes the change of perspective and transformation dangerous to humans.

It must be noted that the precondition for these considerations is that the human perspective and culture are the same. However, it would be reasonable to drop the nature-culture opposition, because perspectivist cosmology and anthropology do not need the opposition and, moreover, it would be rather difficult to integrate this opposition in the schemata of perspectivism.

As the Amazonian region is not homogenous but has a multitude of different cultures, so does perspectivism have several forms. It becomes most apparent in an article by Carlos Londoño Sulkin about perspectivism among the Muinane people (Londoño Sulkin 2005: 24). It diverges from the schemata of Viveiros de Castro in two aspects: firstly, humans and animals are not equal and, secondly, being human is being moral.

Perspectivism has been one of the most discussed topics in South American studies and thus different views have been expressed about it. The most prominent alternative has been P. Descola's animism. The two scholars, Descola and Viveiros de Castro, have even held public debates about the topic (Latour 2009). More recently, many anthropologists have held the view that neither of the two models are fully applicable and argued that choosing only one ontological model is too much of a simplification and does not describe the world-views of different indigenous Amazonian cultures adequately (Willerslev & Ulturgasheva 2012: 50; Halbmeyer 2012: 14).

What are the outcomes if we look for perspectivism in other cultures? Two questions must be answered for that: Is perspectivism limited to the Amazonian region? and: What are the socio-cultural preconditions of perspectivism? To the first question Viveiros de Castro answered that "it can also be found, and maybe with even greater generative value, in the far north of North America and Asia, as well as amongst hunter-gatherer populations of other parts of the world" (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 471).

Since then several articles have been published that deal with Northern and Inner Asian perspectivism (Pedersen 2001; Broz 2007; Kristensen 2007). Before moving on to China, which is the aim of this study, I would like to point out that analogous notions can also be found in other cultures and religions; for example, in Mahāyāna Buddhism (Mrozik 2007). Mrozik describes a situation where one's identity depends on another's perspective in monastic life:

It is important to note that bodies change not only over time, but also according to circumstance. For instance, junior monks must engage in physical displays of respect such as bowing when in the presence of senior monks. A monk might be junior in one relationship and senior in another. His body language will change accordingly. (Mrozik 2007: 32)

Two further things can be pointed out here: the instability of the body, which has been described as a feature of perspectivism by Vilaça (2005), and relationships of dominance or seniority, which is a feature of Duha perspectivism (Kristensen 2007).

Further on, there is a very interesting passage in the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra (2006: 1.16). A man called Śāriputra says to Gautama Buddha that his Buddha-field must be impure, because the world we live in is impure. To that a Brahmā answers that it is Śāriputra's mind that is impure, because he sees the world as magnificent as the celestial dwellings of gods.

Now, as we have seen that the occurrence of perspectivism is not geographically limited, let us turn to the socio-cultural presuppositions and compare these to the situation of Classical China. Relations between predator and prey are intrinsic to Amazonian perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 471); this would require a hunter-gatherer society. This is a major difference and could be a decisive factor, if it were not proven by Pedersen (Pedersen 2001) that perspectivism occurs also in pastoral Mongolia. For him, the presuppositions of perspectivism are the classical anthropological notions 'animism' and 'totemism'. However, he did not define totemism narrowly as kinship with animals, but as a categorised cosmology. Yet, the latter is especially well-developed in China.

Next to the relations between predator and prey, Viveiros de Castro (1998: 472) mentions that "Amerindian perspectivism has an essential relation with shamanism". Shamanism, which is the essential basis of perspectivism, is the connecting link between the Americas and East Asia and especially China, for shamanism has been historically present there (Robinet 1997: 37; Schipper 1993: 6) and can be still found, especially in Korea (Kim 2003), but also in Chinese folk religion (DeBernardi 1995).

2.3 Perspectivism in China: *Zhuangzi*

Zhuangzi is, besides the *Daodejing*, one of the founding texts of Daoism. This book and the philosopher with the same name from the ca 4th century BC make use of many literary devices, and perspectivism is one of them. However, mainly it is perspectivism in its wider or philosophical sense: "Zhuangzi uses perspectivism, the claim that all knowledge is relative to the observer's point of view, to undercut our normal standards for making value judgements" (Ivanhoe 1993: 645). Perspectivism is also used in *Zhuangzi* for epistemological arguments. Zhuangzi distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge: greater knowledge (da zhi 大知) and lesser knowledge (xiao zhi 小知) (Connolly 2011: 495), and D. Sturgeon (2013: 14) argues that "greater knowledge is the kind of knowledge that holds from a greater range of perspectives". In the text, perspectives change constantly, and as T. Connelly says, the "person who can shift perspectives simply knows more about things than the one who does not" (Connolly 2011: 502).

As the change of perspective is one of the central themes in *Zhuangzi*, he uses it mainly to transmit philosophical and moral ideas.

Already the first chapter of the book tells us a parable of the giant bird Peng and a small dove, which shows how the value of things depends on the point of

view. Another good example of such philosophical perspectivism is chapter 2.8., where Zhuangzi demonstrates the subjectivity of knowledge through examples, which show how notions like ‘beauty’ or ‘convenience’ mean different things to different species. This chapter takes us already closer to Amazonian perspectivism, because this is a case of “one culture, different natures”, as Viveiros de Castro called it (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478), because different species share the same categories, but not the things that belong to them. This is, however, no perspectivism in a cosmological or anthropological sense, but an epistemological argumentation.

So the question remains whether cosmological perspectivism as that in Amazonian region is to be found in *Zhuangzi*. I found six episodes altogether that can be interpreted as such. These are some of the most important and famous episodes of *Zhuangzi*, which do not, by any means, much consider the volume of the text.

First of all, I regard the probably most famous chapter in *Zhuangzi*, entitled “The Butterfly Dream” (2.12), as perspectivist. The story reads as follows:

Once Zhuangzi dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuangzi. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuangzi. But he didn't know if he was Zhuangzi who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuangzi. Between Zhuangzi and a butterfly there must be some distinction! This is called the Transformation of Things. (Watson 1968: 49)

This famous tale has had many interpretations through centuries, but the last sentence, “This is called the Transformation of Things“, gives a hint which interpretation might be correct. In this tale, both the transformation and the change of perspective are present. This could mean that Zhuangzi may have wanted to say that transformation, which has a central role to play in Chinese cosmology, is nothing else than a change of perspective, or that a change of perspective can help one to understand transformations. Both possibilities can be reduced to the Daoist idea of the unity of cosmos, which states that all phenomena are the transformations of One and in constant change and movement: “Hua [transform] is the natural Tao and the movement of yin and yang” (Robinet 1997: 154). This makes it clear that when discussing transformation, Zhuangzi talks about cosmology.

The aforementioned “different natures” by Viveiros de Castro is by no means contradictory to the Daoist notion of the oneness of nature. Moreover, “The Butterfly Dream” explains why it is like that. The many worlds that depend on the perspective of the beholder come into being from the One through transformations. One world or the One, Dao or *qi*, is constantly transforming, bringing forth countless different worlds.

What is missing here is the perspective of the other, which is, according to Viveiros de Castro, important for the transformation (Viveiros de Castro 1998:

483). Only two 'I'-perspectives are being compared in this tale, but the other, for whom Zhuangzi would be either himself or the butterfly, is absent. This could mean that Zhuangzi himself was also the other perspective. This would correspond to the role of the shaman in the Amazonian region, for a shaman is able to transform and thereby preserve his own perspective. It is also important to note that the transformation occurred in a dream, because "particular elements that are preserved in some dreams in Chinese folklore are similar in structure and form to shamanic experiences as elaborated by Mircea Eliade, and that this similarity allows for an analysis of these elements as genuine representations of a type of shamanic experience" (Giskin 2004). Dreams are equally important for the change of perspective in Amazonia. Lima (1999: 114) writes that dreams are the primary plane of communication between 'real' humans and various animal species (and other ontological categories such as ogres and spirits).

In this story, perspectivism is the cosmological presupposition, possibly derived from the shamanic tradition of South China, for transmitting a Daoist message. In another famous chapter, perspectivism is also the message of the story. In chapter 17.13., Zhuangzi and his friend, philosopher Huizi, are walking by the water, and Zhuangzi tells his companion that the fish are enjoying themselves. To the question how he knows that, he answers that he knows it by how he himself enjoys walking by the water. Playing in the water is thus the same as walking by the water for Zhuangzi, a human.

Let us take a look at some other chapters as well. A very interesting idea is expressed in chapter 22.11.: "The ancients, amid (all) external changes, did not change internally; now-a-days men change internally, but take no note of external changes. When one only notes the changes of things, himself continuing one and the same, he does not change." (Legge 1891)

The changes, *hua*, as in "The Butterfly Dream", could also be translated as transformations. Here, the shamanic properties of keeping their own (internal) perspective while changing or transforming their appearances are attributed to the ancients, whilst nowadays men act according to Vilaça's notion of 'chronically unstable bodies', i.e., they can be transformed by an outside power without themselves even noticing.

A similar case of transforming the outer form and keeping the perspective is presented in chapter 13.8., where Laozi is the one transforming. However, the Chinese text leaves room for different interpretations. For example, in translation by Legge (1891), Laozi says: "Yesterday if you had called me an ox, you might have done so; or if you had called me a horse, you might have done so", whereas Wilhelm's German translation is much more interesting: "Hättet Ihr mich einen Ochsen genannt, so wäre ich eben ein Ochse gewesen; hättet Ihr mich ein Pferd genannt, so wäre ich eben ein Pferd gewesen" (Wilhelm 1981 [1912]: 151) ('Had you called me an ox, I would have been one; had you called me a horse, so I would have been one). A parallel to that can be found in *Zhuangzi* 7.1., where the sage sleeps in tranquillity and awakes in simplicity, then appearing as an ox and as a horse, because of his knowledge of the nature of everything.

These are clearly Daoist passages and are conveying Zhuangzi's Daoist ideas. Yet the change of perspective is mostly interpreted as being of purely philosophical nature. I would, however, like to emphasise that the philosophy of an ancient philosopher, who lived in the 4th century BC, cannot be viewed separately from cosmology. Due to Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism it is easier to understand. Essentially, perspectivism in *Zhuangzi* is a cosmological notion similar to that of the Amazonian peoples, and part of the Daoist idea of reducing the whole of cosmos to one common principle, and of its constant transformation. To master that, true knowledge is required, which is also the Daoist goal in *Zhuangzi*.

2.4 Perspectivism in China: *Journey to the West*

Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West* represents the plurality of religious ideas in Ming China in the 16th century. In this book Daoist, Buddhist and folkloristic material is found and made fun of. The focus lies on Buddhism, because the main story is bringing Buddhist scriptures from India to China, and thus the concepts of humans and spirits are also Buddhist. The Buddhism in the *Journey to the West* is, however, Chinese folk Buddhism mainly associated with magic powers.

This book offers many things that are of interest for the current study. For one thing, transformations and metamorphoses constitute an intrinsic part of its plot. The main character, Monkey King Sun Wukong, who accompanied monk Tripitaka on his journey, is said to possess 72 transformations as part of his magical powers, which he had acquired from a Daoist immortal called Bodhi. The other companions were transformed from celestial beings to evil spirits and back again.

Yet, most remarkably perspectivist in the *Journey to the West* is the transformation of animals into dangerous spirits, thus in the following chapter I will concentrate on this theme.

In chapter 22 in Waley's translation and chapter 20 in Yu's, begins an episode where Tripitaka and his companions reach the Country of Cart Slow. In this land Buddhism is oppressed and Daoism flourishes because three alleged Daoist immortals, Tiger Strength Immortal, Deer Strength Immortal and Ram Strength Immortal, have won the king's favour. Sun Wukong then competes with them in various dangerous tasks, in which all the three find their end and are revealed as animals – as actual tiger, deer, and ram.

It all started as these animals managed to appear as Daoist immortals to the king. But why did he see them as humans? By way of comparison, I would like to bring a fairly similar story of the Wari' people in Brazilian Amazonia, written down by Aparecida Vilaça:

“While the human form is a strong indication of a human being, it may nonetheless be deceptive. It is always best to distrust one’s own eyes. An event which befell some of my Wari’ friends provides a perfect example. A child is invited by her mother to take a trip to the forest. Many days go by as they walk around and pick fruit. The child is treated normally by her mother until one day, realizing just how long they have spent away from home, the child starts to grow suspicious. Looking carefully, she sees a tail discreetly hidden between her mother’s legs. Struck by fear, she cries for help, summoning her true kin and causing the jaguar to flee, leaving a trail of paw-prints in its wake. One woman, telling me about this event, said that, after finding her, the girl’s true mother warned her to always distrust other people. Whenever she went far from home, either with her mother or father, she should take along a brother or sister as company (in order, I assume, to secure her point of view).” (Vilaça 2005: 451)

Both the king and the Wari’ child were turned into the objects of the other, in both cases this subject was an animal. Viveiros de Castro writes that “he who responds to a ‘you’ spoken by a non-human accepts the condition of being its second person. [---] The canonical form of these supernatural encounters, then, consists in suddenly finding out that the other is ‘human’, that is, that *it* is the human” (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 483). Lima (1999: 124) makes it even clearer: “The animal should not be given a chance to speak“.

The second question related to the first is why the king saw them after their death as animals that they really were. The situation is described as follows:

“‘How can you be so deluded?’ said Monkey, coming up to him. ‘Have you not seen that the first Immortal’s corpse showed him to have been merely a tiger? The second has turned out to be a common deer. And if you have the bones of the third fished out of the cauldron, you will find that he was nothing but a ram, the bones of which could never be mistaken for those of any human being.’” (Wu 1958 [1943]: 247)

Most importantly, it shows that the transformation was not bodily or physical because the animals only appeared human to the king. This means that it is precisely the body that differentiates between the species, as Viveiros de Castro claimed about the Amazonian perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478). To illustrate this, he used the anecdote from Lévi-Strauss’s famous speech. A short time after the discovery of America, the Spanish on the Greater Antilles were trying to find out whether the natives had a soul or not, whereas the natives were at the same time busy drowning the white people they had captured in order to find out whether or not the corpses were subject to putrefaction (Lévi-Strauss 2010; Viveiros de Castro 1998: 475). The reason, according to Viveiros de Castro, was that, unlike Europeans, they believed that animals and spirits had souls as humans did, and their objective was to find out whether Europeans had the bodies of humans or the bodies of spirits.

But let us return to the *Journey of the West*. After leaving the Country of Cart Slow, the travelling party met another monster. In chapter 25 in Waley’s

translation, Tripitaka and his companions reached a river that led to the heaven. There was a temple of the Great King of Miracles, a wrathful deity, who, as a price for sending rain and fertility, demanded a boy and a girl as yearly sacrifices and devoured them. Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie defeated the monster, who then retreated into the river. However, when the party tried to cross the river, Tripitaka fell into the water and got captured by the Great King in his underwater palace.

After he was defeated, yet again it appeared that the monster was just an animal, namely a goldfish. So this episode can also be compared to the Amazonian notions. In Amazonian perspectivism it is believed that animals see the places they live in as villages. Here we have fish that lived in a palace. The question is, whether there actually was a palace underwater, or the goldfish and his followers perceived it as a palace. In the text there is one strong hint that the underwater kingdom was a matter of perspective, namely what the Bodhisattva Kuanyin said about the monster:

“It is a goldfish that I reared in my lotus pond. Every day it used to put its head out and listen to the scriptures, thus acquiring great magical powers. Its mallet was a lotus stalk, topped by an unopened bud.” (Wu 1958 [1943]: 275)

Thus the goldfish became Great King of Miracles by listening to Buddhist scriptures. Such progress is typical to the Chinese thought and will be examined more closely later on. However, the goldfish also had a special weapon, just like Sun Wukong, but he had not received it from a supernatural being as Sun Wukong had, but it was a lotus stalk turned into a mallet. The lotus stalk could not have transformed due to the hearing of scriptures, so the only possible explanation is a perspectivist reading. A lotus stalk was a miraculous mallet for a goldfish-turned-into-monster.

The goldfish acquired either the human perspective or that of a powerful spirit by listening to the scriptures, i.e., he had earlier considered himself a goldfish and then a human or a spirit, or, through the power of the scriptures, he had gained the power to enforce his own perspective on others, including humans. The first possibility differs from the Amazonian perspectivism, where all the beings see themselves as humans. The other one, however, would be comparable to the Amazonian notion.

2.5 Discussion

Finally I would like to discuss what perspectivism could offer to Chinese studies and, also, what Chinese sources could contribute to the theory of perspectivism. I would thus like to present some further ideas for theoretical discussions. Such a theoretical sketch may be too abstract, yet abstractions and generalisations cannot be avoided here.

A broader question that the topic poses is about the conception of the human being: who is human, what makes humans human, as well as the relations between humans and animals, spirits and gods. Amazonian perspectivism pre-

supposes a similar soul for all living beings (and perhaps also things) (Santos-Granero 2009). Thus the difference lies in the body, which is also the source of the perspective. Yet, the body is very unstable and cannot be relied upon. The perspective can be changed and the body is transformable.

Here, the use of the notion of the soul is problematic, because different cultures have different worldviews and the concept of the soul is clearly rooted in the Western thought. For example, for the Wari' people, soul is *jam*, which implies the capacity to *jamu*, transform. *Jamu* "indicates a capacity to change affection and to adopt other habits" (Vilaça 2005: 452). This idea differs clearly from the Western notion and also helps to understand the background of perspectivism.

In the Chinese thought, the difference between humans, spirits and gods is not qualitative but quantitative. Intrinsic to Chinese cosmology are smooth transitions, diffuse boundaries and a continuity of being, meaning that all things form a continuum (Tu 1987: 447). This is caused by the breath *qi*, which "animates the whole universe from stone to Heaven" and "makes it impossible to imagine a clear separation between spirit and matter and, by implication, flesh and soul. Understandably, a form of animism and its corollary, panpsychism, are taken granted by the Chinese" (Tu 1987: 448). Human souls, of which there are two, *hun* and *po*, differ from the great gods of the pantheon only in their relative strength (Schipper 1993: 36).

Also the life force *ling* can be interpreted as soul (Tu 1987: 448). Either way, firstly it means that the human soul does not differ from the souls of other beings and, secondly, that in China there is no egalitarian cosmology to be found as that in the Amazonian described by Viveiros de Castro, but one with value judgments.

If beings are set in a hierarchy, then their respective perspectives are not equal either. Thus in *Zhuangzi*, although the dependency of things on the perspective is demonstrated, there is one proper perspective, which is the heavenly view of the world (Ivanhoe 1993: 652). Yet, in Amazonia the perspectives are not always equal. For example, Londoño Sulkin writes that this applies to the Muinane people, and true perspective and morality are also linked to each other (Londoño Sulkin 2005: 16).

Value judgments form a connecting link between cosmology and religion. They connect ethics and morality with cosmology and, most importantly, cause some beings to be considered purer than others. But as according to Chinese cosmology everything is in constant change, the boundaries between the profane and transcendent can be crossed. All the matter cleanses with time, so that old things and beings such as trees or turtles are considered holy. Thus, "each person can [---] radiate energy, that is, become transcendent" (Schipper 1993: 41).

In the *Journey to the West* one can also find a turtle who had, due to his old age, developed further from being an ordinary turtle. He wanted to become human and explained his state to Triptaka as follows:

"I have been perfecting myself here for about one thousand years. This is a pretty long span, and I have already been fortunate enough to learn human

speech; but I still remain a turtle. I should indeed be very much obliged if you would ask the Buddha how long it will be before I achieve human form.” (Wu 1958 [1943]: 277)

It was mentioned before that with time beings become transcendent, yet here the turtle, who already had become a spiritual being, wished to become human. This is because in Chinese cosmology “human beings have the finest of vital forces in the cosmos” (Tu 1987: 448). Thus from all potential beings it is best to be human, which means that being human is automatically being moral.

Surprisingly – considering the egalitarian cosmology of Viveiros de Castro’s perspectivism – it is exactly here that one can find important parallels to Amazonian perspectivism. The aforementioned Muinane see perspective, bodily substances and morality as intrinsically connected, which adds a religious dimension to perspectivism. Londoño Sulkin writes that “in the narratives I heard, Real People are intrinsically moral because the substances that constitute their bodies and subjectivities are moral; they are so because they originated in the very bodies of the creator and other cool mythical beings, in those felicitous circumstances in which they succeed in creating things truly human” (Londoño Sulkin 2005: 12).

Animals constitute “failures in moral sociality” (ibid.: 13). This is dangerous for humans because animals try to destruct or sabotage the true human perspective and impose their own immoral views on them (ibid.: 15), a situation exactly as in the *Journey to the West*, in which three animals pretend to be Daoist immortals and persuade the king to oppress the Buddhists.

As Amazonian perspectivism turned out to be useful in interpreting Chinese sources, so can Chinese cosmology help to explain perspectivism.

Due to the important role of transformations in perspectivism one must ask what it is that is being transformed. Perspective alone is not enough, because, as Viveiros de Castro has said, it is not independent but comes from the body. Something must be transformed in order to transform the perspective. I believe that the possibility of transformation is linked to the fact that the body is constructed, because such a processual body indicates that the body is not a biological entity. Transformation is therefore a special case of the construction of the body or its disturbance by an external influence.

This is why I would like to propose a new notion of relations. Perspective is derived from relations or bonds between the subject and its objects. These relations and the perspective are connected because in every relationship it is important to be human and not to establish inter-human relations with non-humans. In case some of the bonds are destroyed, there is a danger of losing humanity. This can be caused by a supernatural encounter. The network of relations determines what a person is. As the relations change in time, the person’s identity also changes; for example, a son becomes a father. The dependency of personhood on relations and its instability was also mentioned by Taylor (1996), and it would fit Turner’s notion of bodies and perspectives as sequences of multiple transformations, and would thus remove the contradiction

between his and Viveiros de Castro's ideas. The body is the center of relationships, meaning that the bonds in question are relations between bodies. That may be the reason why the body is important as it is, and much attention is being given to its external signs and markings.

Humans are seen as consisting of relations also in traditional Chinese cosmology, in which a person is not an isolated individuality, but a center of relationships (Tu 1987:448). That is why it may be legitimate to add relations into the model of perspectivism, for as it was previously shown, perspectivism occurs also in the Chinese thought.

The notion of relations could also connect cosmology and society, and would explain why morality and being human are connected. Of the many classical Chinese schools of thought, relations are most prominent in Confucianism, thus I would like to examine some of its notions more closely. Because Confucianism concentrates mainly on society, one might think that it does not directly concern the current topic. This is, however, not the case because society is part of cosmos, and also because Confucius like Zhuangzi operated with terms that were part of the common cultural background.

Confucius differentiates between true humans and those who are human merely biologically, calling them gentlemen (*junzi* 君子) and commoners (lit. 'small people' – *xiaoren* 小人), respectively (Mäll 2009: 24). Perhaps the most important idea in Confucianism is the humanness (*ren* 仁). *Ren* manifests in one's relations to other people and is closely linked with ritual (*li* 禮) (Shun 2002). *Ergo*, being human means behaving in a specific way and having specific relationships. So what I have claimed about perspectivism is already formulated in Confucianism: true human (*junzi*) is constructed in a constant process, which requires that one behaves toward others as human (*ren*), acts in a specific way (*li*), and is through relations or bonds connected to other people, living and dead alike. The Confucian notion of culture (*wen* 文) may also be added to this list. For Confucius culture connected the present and the past. Because behaviour is part of the construction of a human being, it becomes comprehensible why morality is related to being human.

Returning to *Zhuangzi*, one can see that these Confucian social ideals, especially ritual behaviour, were vehemently criticised. It is possible to interpret this critique via perspectivism with relations or bonds, as for *Zhuangzi* it was not the human perspective but the heavenly one that was moral, and his goal was to abolish social bonds. If what a person is depends on relationships or the sum of perspectives, that is, how one sees others and they see him, then a person remains pluralistic. If one abolishes the bonds, also the plurality of perspectives disappears, resulting in the kind of freedom that *Zhuangzi* propagated. In such a case the first perspective can always remain the "self" or also beyond the "self", thus enabling one to appear to others as one wishes, and at the same time one would see all other things as "they really are". Abolishing the bonds would be exactly the kind of situation as described in *Zhuangzi* 7.1.

2.6 Summary

Amazonian perspectivism is a South-American indigenous cosmological notion, according to which every being, independent of its species, sees itself and its species as human. The term was introduced by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998) and has also been successfully applied to other cultural areas, such as North Asia (Pedersen 2001). In the current chapter I have argued that perspectivism also occurred in premodern East Asia. As examples I have used two influential texts from different eras in Chinese history, *Zhuangzi* (4th–3rd century BCE) and *Journey to the West* (16th century CE).

As a result, the following could be concluded:

1. Perspectivism helps to understand and interpret classical Chinese texts. The connecting link between East Asia and South America that enables to compare their cosmologies is shamanism.
2. Zhuangzi's philosophy cannot be separated from its cosmological presuppositions.
3. The Chinese concept of relations can be applied to perspectivism. Relations construct the being, and by changing the relations, the being changes as well.
4. In Chinese perspectivism, all perspectives are not equal. The right perspective and morality are intrinsically connected.

3. TRANSCENDENCE AND HUMANITY IN GE HONG'S *SHENXIAN ZHUAN*¹⁶

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the concept of human in Ge Hong's (ca 283–343) *Shenxian zhuan* (Traditions of Divine Transcendents), a collection of hagiographies of Daoist immortals or transcendents (*xian*). In this study I use the translation by Robert Campany (Campany; Ge Hong 2002). Although Ge Hong is best known as a Daoist alchemist, *Shenxian zhuan* is composed by using biographies from many different sources, both literary and vernacular, and for this reason, I believe that this collection can give an insight into not only of Ge Hong's views, but into the concept of man in early medieval Chinese thought in general.

The early medieval era¹⁷ is of great importance in Chinese cultural history, because a large part of what is known today as classical Chinese culture is a product of this time. In the middle of the first millennium BCE there was an explosion of ideas known as the Hundred Schools of Thought and in the early dynastic period a complex system of cosmological ideas was formed. As the

¹⁶ An article based on this chapter has been submitted to „The e-Journal of East and Central Asian Religions“

¹⁷ Using the term 'medieval' in non-Western context may be questionable. However, in Chinese historiography this term is in use and is clearly defined, which is also why I use it. See also K. Knapp 2007.

textual corpus grew, it was systematized and combined, and new ideas arose from this scholastic work. Buddhism, that had made its way to China during the Han dynasty, now also reached the higher classes of the society. The Early middle ages was the time, when organised religion emerged in China. Next to the arrival of Buddhism the first Daoist schools emerged – first as a result of millenarist movements, leading most notably to the establishment of the school of Celestial Masters, and then the *Shangqing* and *Lingbao* schools were founded in the fourth and fifth centuries respectively.

And then there was Ge Hong who swam a bit against this current that was organized religion. He too was a collector and systemiser of texts but he inherited a tradition that stems from Han dynasty quest for immortality and Southern Chinese shamanistic tradition. Although his ideas may be considered to be somewhat anachronistic, his work sums up the development of Daoism from its beginning until the fourth century: influences from Laozi and Zhuangzi over vernacular traditions and legends, the *fangshi* and alchemy to organized schools can be found in Ge Hong's writings.

The central concept in Ge Hong's thought is *xian*, meaning an immortal or transcendent, or a sage. He wrote on the topic of how to become one, and composed the Traditions of Divine Transcendents as proof of its possibility. Being a religious goal, the *xian* signifies human perfection attainable through practice of the Way. At the same time, many practices needed for that, were learned from, or make use of spirits, and the *xian* may also have peculiar physical marks, which are things that may relate them more to the spirit realm than human world. Ge Hong, however, stressed the opinion that they were indeed humans. Such beings, who at the same time symbolized human perfection and the same had non-human attributes, are helpful in studying the concept of man. In this chapter I compare the *xian* to the ordinary humans, in order to find out, how humanity was perceived in Ge Hong's tradition of early medieval China.

3.2 Humanity and the human body in Early Medieval China

Before moving to Ge Hong's work, a brief introduction to the concept of man and the human body in early medieval China. Robert Ford Campany has used the term "biospiritual organism" (2002: 8) to describe the Chinese idea of man. These two spheres are in the classical Chinese thought not separable from each other resulting in a unique way of understanding the world. The reason behind that is *qi*. *Qi* is a word that probably doesn't need much explaining. Its direct meaning is 'breath' (or perhaps "pneuma", which is the translation Campany uses) but its range of meaning is much wider. Livia Kohn has summed it up nicely by saying that *qi* is the "fundamental energy of the universe, the basic stuff of the Dao, the life force in the human body, and the basis of all physical vitality" (Kohn 2006: 3) and "it is also the material energy of Dao, the under-

lying force that of the greater universe, the power that makes things happen in the cosmos.”

Qi is thus simultaneously the matter, that which animates the matter in the living body and also what makes the matter move and change in the world. *Qi* is itself in constant movement and transformation which results in all the phenomena in the world. This idea is mainly based on *Yijing*, The Book of Changes, which one of the oldest Chinese classics. It was originally a divinatory book but it soon became to be understood as a cosmological treatise. The transformations of *qi* result in different levels and modes. For the human body this means that health is the presence of a strong vital energy and smooth, harmonious, and active flow of *qi* (Kohn 2006: 3).

Another important idea is the analogy between the body and cosmos. This concept is also relatively old in China and can be found in texts from the second century BC such as the *Huainanzi* (Kohn 2006: 5). Both the ideas of the analogy between micro- and macro cosmos and the transformations of *qi* were developed further during the Han dynasty and combined with each other when yin and yang as the opposite modes of *qi* were divided into five phases, *wuxing*. In the human body, these five phases (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) were associated with five inner organs. Organs are in this system of thought understood differently as in modern thinking, they do not have the functions they have according to modern medicine but are focal points of channels or meridians of *qi*.

The five inner organs also hold the spiritual forces, which are the *hun* souls, the spirit *shen*, the will, the *po* souls, and the seminal fluid or essence *jing* (Robinet 1997: 95). As the body is also a microcosm the organs further correspond to heavenly bodies and sacred mountains. On the vertical axis the human body contains three cinnabar fields, one in the lower belly, one in the heart and one in the head (Robinet 1997: 94).

The human body doesn't constitute a closed system but is in constant contact with the world which means that everything one does – breathing, eating, physical contact, sexuality, emotions – results in an exchange of *qi* (Kohn 2006: 13). Because of its transformations *qi* exists in different levels. It can be pure and fine and also coarse and impure, so the aim of a Daoist practitioner is to conserve and circulate the “good” *qi* and not to lose by thoughtless actions. Humans have in general one of the finest *qi* in the universe which means that exchanging *qi* with the outer world is often not to be desired.

This understanding of the human body is the basis for Daoist practices aimed for achieving transcendence. However, all that is described is cosmology and not anthropology. All things form a continuum because *qi* “animates the whole universe from stone to Heaven” and “makes it impossible to imagine a clear separation between spirit and matter and, by implication, flesh and soul.” (Tu 1987: 448) Human souls (*hun* and *po*) differ from the great gods of the pantheon only in their relative strength (Schipper 1993: 36).

The question of the concept of man thus remains. If everything is *qi*, then what is it that makes a human being human? Humans do have their own specific *qi* but as they exchange *qi* with the world, they make it so themselves.

The first thing that sets humans apart from other beings is of course human culture. And while humans are cultural beings, it also has consequences on the body – human body is a cultural body. This is perfectly illustrated through Chinese vocabulary as there were already during the Hundred Schools of Thought the ritualised body *gong*, physical body *shen* which is both a living body and a relative body, the form *xing*, and *ti* which is the part of body that forms a part of a bigger whole (Sommer 2010). Both modern biological understanding of the body and the Cartesian dualism are alien to classical Chinese thought where the body is seen – as Campany put it – as a “biospiritual organism” that is composed of different influences.

Another thing that is intrinsic to humans in Daoism is the potential of becoming a transcendent *xian*. Simply put it also means that it is good to be human. This is in itself nothing specific to Daoism but a common characteristic to religious thinking. What it means, however, is that it connects humanity to morality. Human behaviour – that is culture – is moral behaviour.

The cosmological body, humanity, culture and morality meet in the concept of transcendence. Transcendent and profane form no dualism in Chinese cosmology as there are smooth, yet hierarchical transitions between different categories of being. The difference between a sage and an ordinary human is “in degree and not in kind” (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 176). In a way it can be said that superhuman is especially human, a crystallized humanity.

3.3 Ge Hong and transcendence

Ge Hong (ca 280–343) is one the most interesting figures in the history of Daoism. He came from a southern Chinese aristocratic family that had lost its position because of political changes but he was able to receive academic education. His father’s extensive library was destroyed by soldiers and in order to educate himself, he started copying books. He began with the Confucian classics and then turned to the various philosophical writings (Knapp: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Ge Hong’s uncle Ge Xuan (164–244) was a famous Daoist. Ge himself found a teacher when he was 14 or 15 and his teacher Zheng Yin was in turn Ge Xuan’s disciple.

Ge Hong is best known as an alchemist and by the name *Baopuzi* (Master Who Embraces Simplicity) which is also the title of his best known work. And because alchemy was associated with Daoism, he is considered to be a Daoist. His work is however much more manifold, consisting of various genres and writings on several topics. Even *Baopuzi* is not an entirely Daoist work, but consist of two parts, the so called Inner- and Outer Chapters of which the first

concentrates on techniques for achieving immortality or transcendence, that is mainly of alchemy, and the latter on various topics such as society and culture.

The other surviving work of Ge next to *Baopuzi* is the *Shenxian zhuan* (The Lives of Divine Transcendents) which consists of hagiographies of Daoist immortals. As it is usual with old texts, the *Shenxian zhuan* has also grown over time. Company has divided the hagiographies into groups according to the time of their composition and in this chapter I have concentrated on the oldest group, which means that even if a biography is not written by Ge Hong, it is relatively contemporary to him.

Ge's interests were manifold but his personal agenda was clear: His goal in life, or the main idea of Daoism according to him, was immortality. The Chinese word for it is *xian* 仙. It has been traditionally translated as 'immortal' but more recently scholars like Company or Steed prefer the word 'transcendent'. This is also the translation I prefer, because the goal of the adept is to transcend the ordinary humanity by becoming superhuman. The concept of immortality which is part of transcendence also needs to be clarified. Being immortal doesn't mean living forever but to live as long as heaven and earth. As previously explained, everything consists of *qi* that is not unchanging and so are the heaven and earth also not everlasting.

Shenxian zhuan is an extremely valuable source for studying the idea of *xian*, as it, unlike *Baopuzi* and other texts concentrating on the techniques, describes how the *xian* were understood in Early Medieval China and what their role in the society was. Although as Isabelle Robinet points out, Ge Hong is the only Daoist author to express his own personal view (Robinet 1997: 79), the *Shenxian zhuan* is perfectly suited for studying ideas in that were commonplace in 4th century China, because the different hagiographies are derived from different sources covering a wide spectrum of traditions.

The concept of *xian* had gone through a considerable evolution from the first millennium BC to Ge Hong's time. In *Zhuangzi* the *xian* were fantastical creatures used in parables for transmitting ideas of *Zhuangzi*'s philosophy and during the Han dynasty they were depicted as avian and serpentine hybrids (Wallace 2011). By the time of Ge Hong *xian* had become a concrete goal and an end effect of a transformation believed to be absolutely possible. The *xian* were, as Company points out, not only a theoretical concept, but "Traditions" shows that there were *xian* effectively present in Chinese society of the time. The hagiographies enable us to see, what place they had in the community and what was it that made them different from other members of the society.

According to Ge Hong, different practices could lead to transcendence. All of them need to be learned from a teacher. The most common Daoist practices are breathing exercises. All Daoist bodily techniques are in essence *qi* practices but breathing exercises are based on the literal meaning of *qi* as breath. Through inhaling and exhaling can the adept control and direct the circulation of breaths in the body. Such practices were *xingqi* "circulation of pneumas," *daoyin*,

“guiding and pulling,” *tu na* “expelling and absorbing,” and *taixi*, “fetal breathing.” (Campany 2002: 20)

The diet plays an important role. This comprises instructions of what to eat and what is to be avoided. The most common Daoist dietary regulation is the avoidance of grains. This can have various interpretations, it may mean grain in a narrow sense and not eating any would thus be a recommendation for a healthier diet; or it may also be that under ‘grains’ is meant food in general, suggesting that transcendents have no need for ordinary food. The list of recommendations is diverse. It contains ordinary food for a healthy diet but also mineral, magical and mythical ingredients that can be found in special places accessible only for adepts. Such a distinctive diet alone is for Ge Hong however not enough for reaching the goal but rather, as Campany wrote, “a way for preparing the adept for a higher work that alone promised transcendence (as distinct from longevity): the preparation and ingestion of an alchemical elixir.” (Campany 2002: 30)

Another set of techniques are sexual practices or ‘the arts of the bedchamber’. In their basic concept they are very similar to breathing exercises, both aim to obtaining ‘good’ *qi* and to direct the circulation of different *qi* in the body.

The most suitable way for this endeavour in Ge Hong’s opinion is alchemy. Campany defines alchemy as “carefully controlled transmutation of the pneumas in base mineral, metallic, and other ingredients into compounds of their precious essences, which in early China typically were ingested as vehicles of longevity and transcendence, always accompanied by religious rites and understood as a vehicle of biospiritual self-cultivation.” Not everyone shared Ge’s conviction about the efficiency of it and soon after Ge Hong’s life alchemy became rapidly declining in its importance for Daoists as new practices such as visualisation techniques advocated by the *Shangqing* School were introduced. Eventually it became transformed into the inner alchemy where the transmutations occurred in the body.

The last method for achieving immortality was, as Campany translated it, by “Means of a Simulated Corpse”. This can basically be describes as cheating. In order to explain what it means, first a peculiar Chinese idea needs to be introduced: the heavenly bureaucracy. In Chinese thought there exists in the heavens a bureaucratic system resembling the Chinese imperial one. All deeds of every people are recorded in files and accordingly decided upon one’s lifespan which in turn becomes written down. Anyone wanting immortality needs therefore to erase or change his or her date of death from the files. As this is by any means easy, one could also hope to bypass it. When escaping by the Means of a Simulated Corpse, one tricks both the heavenly bureaucracy and the human society. The adept leaves everybody believing that he or she is dead but leaves a substitute for his or her own dead body and leaves incognito into mountains or a faraway country. This practice was deemed to be lowly by Ge Hong, however, according to his official biography it was how he himself departed from this world (Campany 2002: 17).

3.4 Ethics in Ge Hong and Material Virtue

These are the practices that Ge writes about and that Company has listed as “some salient aspects of the thought and practice reflected in and presupposed by *Traditions* and *Inner Chapters*.” (Company 2002: 18) It leaves open the question of the role of ethics in the (Daoist) pursuit for transcendence and immortality in Early Medieval China. On one hand were ethics in Ge Hong’s thought definitely important (Knapp: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy), on the other however, was transcendence in his opinion to be achieved by the means of an alchemical elixir, which would probably mean that saw ethics as prerequisite for the quest (or as being important in other contexts) and not as a way to transcendence.

I would like to argue that ethics is in *Traditions* one of the main factors that lead to transcendence. First one cannot ignore the ethical dimension in the early Daoism of *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*. Ge personally held the concepts of non-action *wuwei*, and naturalness *ziran* not in particularly high esteem, because his philosophy advocated goal-oriented action, however the influence of these texts on all of Daoism including alchemy is enormous as they constitute the basis for Daoist practices

Secondly the cosmological background of Heavenly Bureaucracy makes ethics an imperative presupposition for every pursuit and practice. When the aim of a practitioner is to live long or even forever while one’s lifespan is decided upon in the Heavens according to one’s deeds, then being ethical in one’s actions is mandatory. Another reason, why the transcendentals, their behaviour and the Heavenly Bureaucracy are connected, is that the officials are the very same transcendentals. Aiming to become one means thus aiming to become a position in the bureaucratic system (Although not everyone wished that and that’s why some transcendentals preferred to remain earthbound). This is the exact same thing aspired by literati and aristocracy in the earthly Early Medieval China.

The third reason is ‘material virtue’ which is a concept that fits in with both of the previous items. Material virtue is a term coined by Mike Csikszentmihalyi to describe the physical effect of action and ritual on the human body (Csikszentmihalyi 2004). This notion is very helpful for me to explain, why I have come to the conclusion that the actions of a human were believed to form the body.

The main idea is that the virtues manifest themselves through physiological changes in the body (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 6) making thus the virtue itself a material or a bodily category. The virtue doesn’t exist independently in a vacuum but is linked to behaviour or to the acts one does. The causal chain is thus as follows: Correct behaviour is virtuous and produces human virtues, these bring about physiological changes in the body. The conclusion is thus that behaviour shapes and constructs the body.

In Csikszentmihalyi’s book it mostly applies to ritual behaviour and the virtues in question are the Confucian virtues. He points out that this shows also

the bodily, transformative and ethical dimension of the ritual, while in religious studies most attention is still given to its social dimensions (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 251). This I believe is a very important point in dealing with most religious practices, as any practice can be described as a ritual. Also one should take into consideration that the everyday life in premodern times was much more ritualized than today's. I personally find Gavin Flood's definition of ritual as any formalized, repetitive action (Flood 1993: 233) most useful. When material virtue thus applies to ritual behaviour, it doesn't mean that special occasions are meant but rather the other way around. Because behaviour and actions have concrete consequences, most of the behaviour is being ritualized. Confucian ritual behaviour encompasses most of the everyday life from clothing to conversing with other people.

However ethics is a social category. That means that the social dimension of the ritual cannot be separated from the ethical and bodily ones. Virtues only possess meaning in relation to other humans. So it is not the actions but also the human society that physically shape the human body. This leads to the conclusion that behaviour and sociality are part of the concept of the body in early medieval Chinese thought.

The concept of material virtue Csikszentmihalyi writes about it stems from a specific context – namely it originated as an early *ru* or Confucian answer to the – mainly Daoist – critique on ritual behaviour. Where is then the link to Ge Hong, who is mostly described as a Daoist? First it needs to be said that the terms Daoist and Confucian are anachronistic, or more precisely – the idea that one has to be either one or the other is an anachronism. It is an idea derived from the Western exclusivist notion of religious affiliation. A Daoist in medieval China was someone who practiced the arts of Dao, but there was nothing exclusive to it. And as already mentioned, Ge Hong's personal views were multifaceted and he composed texts on both Daoist and Confucian topics. He even expressed his goal as starting a new lineage of teaching (Puett 2007) as opposed to being a follower of one tradition or teaching. And secondly Csikszentmihalyi also mentions that the notion of material virtue can afterwards be found in Chinese culture throughout the history (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 253).

There are also hints that may show how Ge Hong was directly influenced by this way of thinking. The concept of material virtue stems especially from the works of Mengzi and Zisi, and particularly from Zisi's work *Wuxing* 五行. *Wuxing* are the Five Phases as explained at the beginning of the paper – a part of Chinese cosmology that is the basis for alchemy and other Daoist bodily practices. It also needs to be mentioned that another text called *Wuxing*, namely *Mozi wuxing ji* (Master Mo's Treatise on the Five Phases) was one of the texts Ge inherited directly from his teacher (Campany 2002: 14). Its exact content and connection to Zisi are, however, unknown.

3.5 Examples

Most of the earliest hagiographies have in some way or another ethical topics in them. Of these I chose the following two as examples.

a) Chen Anshi¹⁸

The story begins by describing his ethical conduct:

“Chen Anshi was a native of Jingzhao. He was a hired servant in the household of Guan Shuben. By nature he was compassionate and kind. Whenever he was out walking and saw a bird or beast, he would get off the road so as not to startle it. He did not step on live insects and had never killed any creature.”

His master Guan Shuben loved the way and meditated on spirits. One time as Chen Anshi was a teenager, two transcendents came to see Guan. Guan, however had become lazy and his wife told him that these were probably just some students begging for food, so he didn't meet them. So instead they turned their attention to Chen Anshi who passed their tests and started teaching him. They gave him two pellets of a drug and admonished him as follows: “When you return, do not eat or drink anymore, and live in separate quarters.” Guan Shuben grew suspicious that Chen Anshi was no ordinary person, and he knew that he had proved unworthy, so he sighed and said to himself:

““The way is venerable, and its Power is honourable, but these have nothing to do with seniority. My father and mother gave me life, but I can be caused to attain long life only by a teacher. And one who has already heard of the Way is qualified to be my teacher.” And so he adopted the ceremonial behaviour of a disciple, and did obeisance to and served [Chen] both night and day, sweeping and cleaning for him. When Chen Anshi had completed his Way, he ascended into the heavens in broad daylight; but on the verge of his departure he transmitted his essential arts of the Way to Guan Shuben. Guan, too, later departed as a transcendent.”

In this story all the arguments can be found to demonstrate how human behaviour (moral-, social- and ritual) constructs both humanity and transcendence in a person. First Chen was undeniably ethical in his behaviour and this doesn't just include one good deed but it is explicitly pointed out that he acted like this all the time. This conduct ultimately led him to transcendence, while he didn't start to pursue the goal himself. The second interesting part is when the transcendents instructed him to not eat or drink anymore (and to eat the pellets they gave him instead) and to live in separate quarters. This both changes the everyday behaviour and drastically alters his social relations. It effectively demonstrates that he was no more an ordinary human and it is the very same thing that made him superhuman in the first place. It shows that being human

¹⁸ A2 In. Campany p. 141.

means doing human things and not doing those leads to another way of existence. The conduct of Guan is also interesting. The correct conduct was in medieval China as usual with ritualized behaviour dependent on the social role. Guan too changed his usual behaviour in order to become a transcendent but in his case it was specifically linked to social relations.

b) Jian Keng¹⁹

The second hagiography I chose, is the one of Jian Keng. This is a longer story, so I will briefly explain the background. Jian Keng “loved tranquillity and stillness and did not feel compelled to serve the world. He did not seek fame or promotion, nor did he make a show of elaborate carriages or clothing: he occupied himself solely with nourishing his life and regulating his body.” He was supposedly 767 years old and thus quite famous. The king wanted to know his secret and sent a concubine (who also was 270 years old and looked like 17) to inquire Jian Keng about his Way. Jian told her that he may be old but he doesn’t believe he will ever become a transcendent because he has had too many ups and downs in his life that destroy the harmony of the *qi*. The he talks about some transcents:

“Some eat primal pneumas, other roots, mushrooms, and herbs; some come and go among humans, unrecognized [as transcents] by them, others conceal themselves and are seen by no one. In their faces grow unusual bone structures, and on their bodies there is strange hair. Most of them prefer deep seclusion, having no intercourse with ordinary people. But although these sorts have deathless longevity, they absent themselves from human feelings and distance themselves from honor and pleasure. There is that in them which resembles a sparrow or a pheasant transmuting into a mollusk: they have lost their own true identity, exchanging it for alien pneuma. With my stupid heart I cannot bring myself to desire this. Those who have entered the Way should be able to eat tasty food, wear decent clothes, have sex, and hold office. Their bones and sinews firm, their complexions smooth, they grow old but do not physically age.”

Campany comments this hagiography as follows: “One reason Ge Hong rejects extreme ascetism, aside from the fact that it entails abandoning longevity-enhancing (if, for him, only supplemental) practices, is captured in the sentence, “There is that in them [self-secluding renouncers of intercourse with ordinary people] which resembles a sparrow or a pheasant transmuting into a mollusc: they have lost their own true identity, exchanging it for an alien pneuma.” Ascetic styles of practice threaten to deny the practitioner’s humanity rather than complete it; Under their aegis, successful practitioners might even become a different species of being, no longer mating with humankind.” (Campany 2002: 185)

¹⁹ A 14, In: Campany p. 172.

Jian Keng then also talks about practitioners who fail to obtain the Way or become a transcendent and again emphasizes the importance of humanity and behaviour:

“Such persons contravene any human intentions. If they knew only the [arts of] the bedchamber, shutting off their breath, giving measure to their thoughts and reflections, and eating and drinking as appropriate, then they would obtain the Way.” (Campany 2002: 179)

The biography of Chen Anshi showed that in order to become transcendent one needs to transcend ordinary humanity by adopting another way of life and rejecting ordinary behaviour that constructs the ordinary human being. The story of Jian Keng shows the dangers and the limits of such conduct. This affirms the claim that humanity including is constructed by human behaviour. It also shows that this does not only apply to cultural definition of humanity but it includes the human body also. The loss of humanity of these *xian* who have rejected human ways, manifests itself through changes of the body – the transcentents have “unusual bone structures, and on their bodies there is strange hair”. By going too far they have become unhuman when they aspired to become superhuman. Both correct human behaviour and inhuman behaviour have physiological consequences on the body.

3.6 Social relations as part of the human body

The body and behaviour, i.e. morality, are thus connected to each other because ritual behaviour partakes in construction of the human body. The underlying idea for it is the Chinese concept of material virtue as formulated by Mike Csikszentmihalyi.

Based on the hagiographies in *Shenxian zhuan*, I would add relations or social bonds as an extra feature for the model of material virtue. It would help to explain and understand the medieval Chinese concept of man as well as religious practices connected to it.

It is evident that relations are very important in Chinese culture until today as they are one of the core topics of Confucian teaching and both Campany and Csikszentmihalyi mention it. I would argue that it relations are also part of material virtue and the concept of human body because relations are part of the behaviour that produces the virtue. Relations are something that effectively form the body, and correct conduct (and therefore virtue) depends directly from on the social bonds (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 4).

The aspirants of transcendence try to alter their relations through both behaviour and practices similarly to what Bourdieu explained about class habitus:

“It is their present and past positions in the social structure that biological individuals carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of *social position* and hence of the social

distance between objective positions, that is, between social persons conjuncturally brought together (in physical space, which is not the same thing as social place) and correlatively, so many reminders of this distance and of conduct required in order to “keep one’s distance” or to manipulate it strategically, whether symbolically or actually, to reduce it, increase it or simply maintain it.” (Bourdieu 2008)

By living in the mountains as opposed to the village and having a different diet they break bonds with the human society. While doing this, they need to be careful not to lose their own humanity as explained in the hagiography of Jian Keng. Also, in order to remain in control of the transformation, they need to construct new relations. A closer look at how the transcendents were depicted, discloses that many of the practices and attributes serve to construct relations with the spirit world, or, as is mostly the case, fake them.

For example, one of the most important and also popular techniques of Daoist adepts is the use talismans, *fu*. These can have various uses like warding off evil, healing or instant traveling. Talismans work by commanding spirits. They are in form of a text, a message of command that can be read by spirits (Campany 2002: 61) and work by being a contract. Campany explains: “Here, as in so many other instances, the idiom was administrative; the model, a combination of Zhou-era feudal procedures and early imperial practices. A contractual document between the ruler and a civil or military official charged with a task was written on bamboo, silk, or bronze. It was then split in half so as to leave a jagged edge. Each half constituted a credential (信). [...] Han weft texts extended this model by positing talisman-sealed agreements between the “rulers” on high – the spirits of the heavens and the earth – and their “officials” in the human realm. Just as the king or emperor of humanity “joined talismans” with heaven, so might the adept.” (Campany2002: 63–64) The talismans are thus a way of establishing contractual relations to the spirit world.

They are said to have been passed down from ancient rulers which makes the adepts their spiritual successors (Robinet 1997: 21). A social dimension of possessing talismans can be seen here, as the adepts demonstrate their relations to the spirits and ancient sage-rulers, but such an outside-perspective doesn’t show the whole picture. It is not only humans to whom are the adept’s relations demonstrated but also the spirits, as it becomes clear from Ge Hong’s writings that “talismans worked by commanding relatively low-ranking spirits in the name of higher deities.” (Campany 2002: 64)

The attributes of the transcendents, such as a staff or a sword, constitute another way to create (or demonstrate) relations to the spirit world. Campany states that the bamboo staves of the transcendents were “clearly a sign of their divine commission as the staves are mentioned in connection with tablets of command inscribed with jade characters.” (Campany 2002: 69) The swords have a similar function. I will again cite Campany: “Adepts wore ritually empowered swords as apotropaic devices and s insignia of divine authority. In this

the emulated the higher beings²⁰ they hoped to join.” (Campany 2002: 70) The second sentence is especially interesting. The sword acts here as any visual sign that symbolises belonging to a specific group, for example as in today’s subcultures. By having a sword, the adept demonstrates to the human society that he belongs to the transcendentals and attempts to create social bonds to the world of heavenly beings.

The role of interpersonal relations in forming the body through behaviour becomes evident especially in hagiography of Chen Anshi. As Chen’s past master became his disciple, he took himself a new role which meant another ceremonial behaviour: “And so he adopted the ceremonial behaviour of a disciple, and did obeisance to and served [Chen] both night and day, sweeping and cleaning for him.” Chen became a master because Guan became his disciple which didn’t just mean learning from Chen but also the respective ritual behaviour.

3.7 Humanity as a bodily and as an ethical concept

It is time to return to the main topic of the chapter – the question, what was the concept of man in Early Medieval China? Humans are part of the universe that was seen as a continuum, where everything, both categories of beings and individual objects (and subjects), are connected. This doesn’t mean that everything is the same, whether in vernacular tradition nor in Ge Hong’s thought. Although *qi* is the basic stuff of what everything is made of, it comes in different modes which results in different phenomena in the world. The idea of the continuum means instead that everything can change into something else. These transformations are not chaotic but follow natural laws of *qi*’s transmutations according to the interactions of its aspects yin and yang, and the laws of generating and restraining between the five phases. As human body was seen as a microcosm, this is not only how humans interact with the universe but also how the body functions.

This is however only the physical part of the concept of man, but being human comprises more than that. Especially culture and behaviour are important in completing a person. Csikszentmihalyi introduces material virtue through a passage from Mengzi (Mengzi 4A17) where the question is raised, what is the correct behaviour in case of contradictory obligations: “When a sophist tries to trap Mengzi in a conundrum, the reply is that the correct course of action is so clear that one who does not follow it is not of the human race but actually a member of the *chailang*, literally “jackals and wolves“, signifying a complete lack of moral impulses (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 6).²¹ This shows that ‘human’ is, among other things, a moral category. Even if “jackals and wolves” is here a

²⁰ Ge Hong describes Laozi (p. 206) or Lord Wang (p. 261) as having a sword

²¹ The citation is taken from: Mengzi 4A17, Mengzi zhengyi 15.520-2 (sf. Lau 1970, 124-5)

metaphor, the idea is clear – one who does not share humanity’s moral norms, is not a human.

The physiological concept of man based on cosmology and the cultural one based on behaviour are not two different things. The human body consists of both of these aspects, as the behaviour has not only a social effect, but a physical one as well. And as the human body is constructed both cosmologically and culturally, so is also that of the superhuman and by both of these it is possible to become *xian*. Alchemy is the physiological/cosmological way of manipulating the body and ethics, virtue and morality the behavioural way. And although Ge Hong seeks transcendence through alchemy, it is impossible to achieve it this way without moral behaviour, whereas through right conduct it is possible to become *xian* without alchemy.

A part of this behaviour that constructs the body are social bonds. By manipulating these, i.e. by cutting some bonds and creating new ones, the body can be transformed. Cutting and creating relations is however a balancing act, because the goal is not to become a spirit. Although spirits possess some powers, the adepts wish to gain for themselves, the spirits are a different category of beings that do not possess culture or morality as humans do. Moreover, most spirits are dangerous to humans and the ability of protecting humans from malevolent spirits is one of the abilities of the transcendentals. Because of the dangers of dealing with spirits, Ge Hong explicitly warns people to engage in longevity techniques without proper guidance and preparation (Campany 2002: 24). I have interpreted (Lind 2014) the danger of losing humanity in classical Chinese culture through perspectivism, a notion of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (Viveiros de Castro 1998) originally describing the ontology of indigenous cultures from the Amazon region. According to this view, ‘human’ is the first person perspective, so that animals and spirits also see themselves as humans, and other species or categories in a relation to that central point. Accepting the perspective of another species is accepting its humanity at the cost of one self’s.

Ge Hong is an extremely humanist thinker with his whole philosophy centred on the possibilities human knowledge and human techniques have. Puett writes that it is a “distinctly human aspect of knowledge” to “develop knowledge and technical arts to organize human society, control the spirit world, and transform themselves to become spirits. The non-human spirits do not seem to help humans in this process. And for understandable reasons: the techniques in question allow humans, among other things, to deceive and control the spirit world. And who knows what future techniques, if the progressive accumulation continues, will allow humans to do.”

This special role of humans brings us back from social relations to cosmology. Yin and yang, whose constant alternation is the source of all phenomena in the world, is represented in the world by Heaven and Earth. The place of man in the universe is precisely between these two and such a central position gives humans the potential to take an active role and control the transformations intrinsic to Chinese cosmology. The philosophy and ethics of *Daodejing* and

Zhuangzi requires that a person should fit himself into the natural process by non-action *wuwei*. Ge Hong however didn't think much of this philosophy (Puett 2007) and argued that taking an active role in becoming transcendent is not allowed but obligatory for someone with respective supposition. The already emphasised humanism of Ge Hong is perhaps most evident in the biography of Laozi in the *Shenxian zhuan*, where he extra commentates that Laozi was a human:

“My own view is that, if Laozi were indeed a celestial essence or deity, then there would have been no era in which he did not appear. [...]How could there ever have been a period when practitioners of arts of Dao were lacking? Therefore it is hardly surprising that, in every era from Fu Xi down to the three ancient dynasties, various persons have become noted for their arts of the Dao. But why must we regard them as the same, single person, Laozi? These sorts of speculations are the product of recent generations of practitioners, lovers of what is marvellous and strange, who have created them out of a desire to glorify and venerate Laozi. To discuss it from a basis in fact, I would say that Laozi was someone who was indeed particularly advanced in his attainment of the Dao but that he was not of another kind of being than we. (Campany 2002: 196)

[...] From this it can be seen that the view that Laozi was originally a deity or numen must stem from practitioners of the Dao of shallow views who wished to make Laozi into a divine being of a kind different from us, so as to cause students in later generations to follow him; what they failed to realize was that this could cause people to disbelieve that long life is something attainable by practice. Why is this? If you maintain that Laozi was someone who attained the Dao, then people will exert themselves to imitate him. If you maintain that he was a deity or numen, of a kind different from us, then his example is not one that can be emulated by practice.” (Campany 2002: 197)

3.8 Conclusions

The transcendents or immortals in the Traditions of Divine Transcendents were humans who had achieved immortality by practicing the various arts of the Dao. The concept of *xian* has varied throughout history but in Ge Hong's thought, *xian* were clearly human, and becoming one was a specifically human property. As long life is in Daoism both the religious goal and a natural human attribute, achieving immortality would mean excelling in humanity. At the same time, the *xian* were also different from ordinary humans, having also a different body. This manifests itself for example in that it didn't age as the body of ordinary humans does. The changes in the body had to be kept under control, in order to not to lose humanity altogether.

The ways or practices of transcending ordinary humanity, and the details that connected or differentiated *xian* from others, sheds light on the concept of man in early medieval China. The transcendents were no fantastic beings as, for example, in *Zhuangzi*, but they did act and live (special diet and dwellings) differently, and had different relations than ordinary members of their society. If

the divergence became too big, they faced the danger of transforming into something other than intended.

The *xian* thus differed from other people in both body and behaviour, conduct and relations. 'Human' was hence understood as both a bodily and a moral category. Separating these two is also somewhat artificial, as morality and physicality were connected and influenced each other mutually. Csikszentmihalyi named this effect 'material virtue'.

In short: human is who behaves as one.

CONCLUSIONS

The subject of this thesis was the concept of the body in South and East Asian bodily religious practices. There is a set of self-cultivating techniques that use the body in ritual religious practice, and have also bodily religious goals. Such practices are most prevalent in Taoist meditation and alchemical traditions, in Yoga, and in Tantric traditions. The practices developed in the Middle Ages.

The characteristics include creating a sacred area, analogising the body with cosmos, descent of god(s) into the body and/or ascent to the higher spheres; additionally also using the “energies” or “breaths” of the body (*prāna*, *qī*) and attributing religious significance to internal organs. It assumes a concept of body that is closely related to cosmology so that the body could be manipulated by applying cosmic principles.

There are several theoretical notions that I believe help understand how the body is perceived in these practices, how it functions, and how can it play the role in them that it's playing. First and foremost the body acts – and is understood – as *habitus*. This means that the body is culturally constructed, which in turn leads to next theoretical notions – *perspectivism* by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and *material virtue* by Mark Csikszentmihalyi. The first deals with the instability of the body and the second with the effect of (ritual and moral) behaviour on the physical body. Another presupposition applies to the historical background of the development of the practices in question and states that commentary traditions or the accumulation of textual corpus leads to correlative thinking, including the development of correlative cosmologies that build the basis for the bodily self-transformation practices.

Having these theoretical presuppositions as the point of departure, the thesis was divided into two main parts. The introductory part set the theoretical framework for the three case studies.

In this dissertation, by studying the aforementioned practices, and considering both the theoretical and historical work done by other researchers in this field, I have reached the following conclusions.

1) Transformation of the body can be a religious goal. The described practices are a form of ritual. Ritual, as demonstrated by Roy Rappaport, has a transformative character and it acts as a switch that changes its object from one state from another. Good body-related examples are the rites of passage, as described by Arnold van Gennep, and charismatic healing, studied by Thomas Csordas. If the ritual thus concentrates on the body, as in the bodily practices studied here, the aim and the result of it is a transformation of the body.

The transformation of the body is a religious goal. It can be connected to other religious aims, or it can be an independent goal in itself. I would like to stress the bodily transformation as an independent religious goal, because in the religious studies it has too often been overlooked as physical changes in the body have mostly been interpreted as a by-product of practices that aim for

spiritual transformation. The only exception in this perception seems to be Daoism, where body-related goals have been traditionally accepted in the academic discourse as an intrinsic part of Daoist religiosity, although Daoism doesn't differ essentially from other religious traditions.

The interpretation of the goal of a religious practice depends on the perspective. If one is to assume beforehand that religion deals with the 'spiritual', then the interpretation according to which the bodily transformation is merely a side effect of a 'spiritual' quest is evident. If one however is to omit this presupposition, a whole new picture appears.

2) The techniques that aim for bodily transformation, use correlative thinking in the structure of the practice. Correlative thinking is a product of commentary traditions and combination of notions. It leads to both correlative cosmologies and complex concepts of the human body, where manipulating one part of what is pictured as a coherent system, brings forth changes in other parts.

3) The body is perceived as being unstable and changeable. It is constructed and the construction is a continuous process. What was an acute danger in Amazonian perspectivism, becomes here a basis for ritual self-construction. As in Amazonian perspectivism the self and the body are dependent on social relations. Hence the next conclusion.

4) The construction of the body has next to the ritual also social and ethical dimensions. While the body is deliberately constructed in the ritual by the subject, the ritual itself depends on social relations. The best example here is Confucian thought, which combines ritual behaviour and social relations in a coherent system. The social dimension of the body is itself well-known and demonstrated by sociologists, but in this work I show that it is also present in *individual* bodily practices.

Ethics and morale can in this context be described as bodily categories. In China a concept developed, where ritual and ethical behaviour have physical effects on the body. This concept is described with a modern term as 'material virtue'. Essentially the categories 'bodily' or 'physical', or 'material' are not separate from other dimensions of religious thinking. For example, ritual purity, one of the central concerns in bodily transformation practices, deals both with material substances and thoughts. This brings us back to the first conclusion about the transformation of the body, and to the question, whether it is an independent religious goal or not.

Of these four, the first two conclusions regarding the transformation of the body, are discussed in the theoretical introduction and in the article/ chapter "Bodily religious goals in Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā", which is the case study that supplements the theoretical framework. The other two conclusions, that is the changeability of the body and its dependency on society and moral, are

discussed in the latter two chapters: “Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*”.

As these two chapters deal with Chinese traditions, it needs to be said that the conclusions are based on Chinese culture and thus applies predominantly on Chinese concept of the body. Chinese sources, especially Ge Hong’s “Traditions of Divine Transcendents” offer an excellent insight into the relation of the adepts to society by adding the society’s perspective to transformation practices. David White has studied Indian vernacular narratives about yogis in his book “Sinister Yogis” and also come to the conclusion that it gives a broader view on Yoga than what can be attained from only looking at Yoga manuals.

These four conclusions are not separate, but they all concern one concept of the body. They are different aspects that together build a coherent understanding of the body that can be found in the traditions with bodily practices. This understanding of the body provides notions of the role of body and person in society and in cosmos, motivation of changing the body, and at the same time a set of ideas how to change it. It demonstrates that the basis for bodily religious practices is not only the specific alchemical or cosmological understanding of the body, but a broader social concept of the body, where the body is unstable and dependent on the environment and community. I hope that these conclusions, especially what concerns the role of the body in achieving religious goals and the social dimension of the body in individual practices, help to broaden the scope of religious studies also by other traditions and that they can be used as starting points for future case studies.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Kehakontseptsioon Hiina ja India kehalistes religioonipraktikates: transformatsioon, perspektiiv ja eetika

Sissejuhatus

Käesolev töö uurib kehakontseptsioone Ida- ja Lõuna-Aasia kehalistes religiooni-praktikates ning selle kaudu ka inimkeha rolli religioonis. Suuremas osas religioonitraditsioonidest esineb mingil kujul kehalisi enesetransformatsiooni praktikaid. „Kehalise” all pean ma silmas seda, et a) praktikas, nt rituaalis või meditatsioonis kasutatakse keha – näiteks mõjutatakse kosmoloogiliste energiatega või jõudude nagu Hiina *qi* ja India *prāna* liikumist kehas; ning b) praktika eesmärk on seotud kehaga. Sellisele laiemale definitsioonile vastavaid praktikaid võib leida erinevates traditsioonides, aga Indias ja Hiinas on välja kujunenud grupp praktikaid, mille juures keha roll on eriti suur ja mis sarnanevad oma ülesehituselt üksteisega: need on tantristlikud rituaalid ja jooga Indias ning taoistlik meditatsioon ja alkeemia Hiinas.

Need praktikad sisaldavad reeglina püha ala loomist, keha analogiseerimist kosmosega, jumala/te laskumist kehasse ning praktiseerija tõusu kõrgematesse sfääridesse kosmoses ja/või kosmosega analogiseeritud kehas. Lisaks veel ka kosmoloogiliste ja keha-energiatega või hinguse kasutamist (eelkõige suunamist ja transformeerimist) kehas ning jumalate või jumaliku jõudude asumist kehas või siseorganite jumalikustamist. See tähendab, et need praktikad eeldavad kehakontseptsiooni, mis oleks lähedalt seotud kosmoloogiaga, et keha oleks võimalik mõjutada kasutades kosmoloogilisi printsiipe.

Töö eesmärk on seega uurida India ja Hiina traditsioonide kehalisi praktikaid, et leida, millised kehakontseptsioonid on neile aluseks ja milline on nende praktikate sisemine loogika, st kuidas keha nähakse ja millised on praktiseerija eesmärgid seoses kehaga. Selleks lähenen ma teemale praktiseerija enda perspektiivist – so see, mida väljendatakse kõnealuste traditsioonide tekstides nagu näiteks meditatsioonimanuaalid. Ma proovin leida neid tegureid, mille tõttu on kujunenud erinevates traditsioonides välja sarnased praktikad ning luua teoreetilise raamistiku, mis võimaldaks selliseid kehalisi praktikaid uurida.

Praktiseerija isiklikule motivatsioonile keskendumine ei tähenda, et sotsiaalne mõõde analüüsist välja jäetakse. Töö käigus selgus, et individuaalsete praktikate kehakontseptsioon pole sotsiaalsest lahutatav ning ei ole võimalik individuaalseid praktikaid vaadelda isolatsioonis. Kehakontseptsioonid on seotud ka eetika ja sotsiaalse käitumisega ning kuigi kõnealused praktikad on enamasti väga individualistlikud, on nende eeldused, sh keha kontseptsioonid, sõltuvad sotsiaalsetest mõjudest.

Töö koosneb kahest osast. Teoreetilises osas käsitlen ma religiooni ja keha suhet ning see koosneb omakorda kahest osast. Sissejuhatuses tutvustan kõigepealt töö aluseks olevaid traditsioone rõhuga hindu tantral, joogal ja taoistlikul meditatsioonil, ning seejärel teema senist uuritust ja antud uurimuse teoreetilisi

aluseid. Nendeks on Pierre Bourdieu „habitus“, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro „perspektivism“ ja Mark Csikszentmihalyi „materiaalne voorus“ (material virtue) selle kohta, kuidas inimkeha premodernsetes kultuurides mõistetakse; ning praktika kohta Steve Farmeri mudel korrelatiivsete kosmoloogiate arengust. Esimese osa teises pooles käsitletakse keha transformatsiooni rituaalis iseseisva religioosse eesmärgina, mis on kehaliste religioonipraktikate aluseks. Töö teine osa koosneb kolmest individuaalsest ajaloolisest *case study*-st India ja Hiina traditsioonide kohta, mis on ilmunud omaette artiklitena. Need on teoreetilise osa aluseks ning samas lisavad käsitletavale kehakontseptsioonile uusi dimensioone, nii et töö kaks osa koos moodustavad terviku ja järeldused põhinevad mõlemal osal.

Ajalooline taust

Käesoleva töö aluseks on kehalised praktikad India ja Hiina traditsioonides fookusega hatha joogal, hindu tantral ja taoistlikel meditatsioonitehnikatel, eriti *Shangqingi* koolil ja Ge Hongi töö. Analoogseid kehalisi praktikaid leidub ka mujal, näiteks Tiibetis, Jaapanis, Koreas või Kagu-Aasias, mis on kultuuriliselt India või Hiinaga lähedalt seotud, aga sarnasusi esineb ka Euroopas ja Lääs-Idas; ning traditsioonidest eriti Vajrayāna budismis, aga kõiki pole ühe töö raames praktiline käsitleda.

Klassikalise Hiina kultuuri kehakontseptsioon ei ole piiratud ühe religiooni-traditsiooniga ent kehalised transformatsioonipraktikad on iseloomulikud taoismile, mistõttu antud töö keskendub taoismile. Olulisel määral on arvesse võetud ka rahvalikke traditsioone, mis on taoismiga ajalooliselt tihedalt seotud. Ge Hong (u 280–343) oli eelkõige taoismiga seostatav literaat, filosoof ja alkeemik, kes on tuntud *Baopuzi* ja *Shenxian zhuang*-i autorina. Tema filosoofia keskendus surematuse otsinguile ning tema töö võtab kokku varakeskajaks väljakujunenud Hiina kehakontseptsiooni. Varsti peale tema eluaega tekkinud *Shangqing*-i kool oli esimene monistlik taoismi koolkond ja selles kujunes välja taoistliku meditatsiooni põhijooned. *Shangqingi* meditatsioon keskendub visuaaliseerimistehnikatele.

Hiina kultuurile omane kehakontseptsioon kujunes välja hiljemalt varakeskajaks erinevate suundade koosmõjul nagu Hani ajastu kosmoloogia, konfutsianistlik eetika ja Lõuna-Hiina šamanistlikud traditsioonid, mis mõjutasid nii taoistlikku filosoofiat kui rahvausundit. See kontseptsioon tugineb eelkõige kosmoloogilisele ideele, mille järgi kõik koosneb hingusest *qi*, mis jaguneb omakorda vastandlikeks poolusteks *yin* ja *yang* ning viieks faasiks *wuxing*. *Qi* on pidevas liikumises, nii et *yin* ja *yang* ning faasid mõjutavad üksteist vastastikku ja muutuvad üksteiseks. Teine oluline idee on kosmoloogilised ja antropoloogilised analoogiad – keha on analoogne riigile või kosmosele ning viis faasi vastavad siseorganitele, maailma osadele aegadele, värvidele jpm.

India religioosne maastik ja ajalugu on väga kirjud ning ühest kindlast keha-kontseptsioonist selle juures rääkida ei saa. Ka jooga ega tantra ei moodusta kumbki koherentset traditsiooni ega õpetusliini, vaid on üldmõistet praktikate perekondade või -tüüpide kohta. Ajaloos on mõlemast kasvanud välja erinevaid harusid, mis omakorda ka üksteisega ühinenud on. Jooga ja tantra on ajaloo jooksul ka üksteist pidevalt mõjutanud ning on seotud ka teiste India religioosete vooludega, eelkõige Śaivismiga. Jooga ja tantra juures ongi oluliseks jooneks, et nad ei ole religioonitraditsiooni- vaid praktikapõhised. Lisaks erinevatele hindu vooludele, esinevad jooga ja tantra ka džainismis ja budismis. Tänapäevaks on mõlemad, aga eriti jooga, saanud ülemaailmselt väga populaarseks, olles samas läbinud märgatava transformatsiooni nii et populaarne moodne jooga ja keskaegsed praktikad erinevad üksteisest märgatavalt. See näitab veelkord jooga ja tantra paindlikkust ja kohanemisvõimet.

Jooga ajaloo algus pole täpselt teada. Sõna „jooga” esineb juba Veedades, ent iseseisva kehalise praktikana tekkis ta tõenäoliselt umbes samal ajal kui budism ja džainism. Hatha jooga on omakorda palju hilisem nähtus, pärinedes keskajast. Varase hatha jooga, mis on seotud Nāth joogidega, põhiideeks oli, et vabanemine on saavutatav hingamise kontrollimise kaudu. Selle baasil kujunes 14.–15. sajandil välja klassikaline hatha jooga, mille tuntuim tekst on Svātmārāmale omistav *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*. Tantra tekstid ja praktikad tekkisid esimese aastatuhande keskel erinevate mõjude segunemise tulemusel. Tantra oli algusest peale väga heterogeenne traditsioon, koosnedes erinevatest iseseisvatest praktikatest ja alamtraditsioonides, mis jagavad hulka ühiseid ideid ja mõisteid. Käesolevas töös on kõige rohkem tuginetud Kašmīri šaivismile.

Ühtset keha-kontseptsiooni erinevatel jooga ja tantra traditsioonidel ei ole, aga baasideed, mida jagatakse, sarnanevad väga tugevalt taoistlikule keha-kontseptsioonile. Keha ja kosmost nähakse mõlemaid kihilistena, kehas on kanalite süsteem, mida mööda liiguvad „tuuled” ja vedelikud. Kanalite kokku-puutepunkte tähistavad *cakrad*. moodustav Nagu Hiinas *qi*, on ka hatha joogas hingus *prāna* ka kosmoloogiline kontsept, aga mitte kõige aluseks. Kehal on kosmoloogilised korrelatsioonid, nii et kehalised praktikad võivad omada tagajärgi ka kosmilisel skaalal. Tantra traditsioonides saavad keha ja kosmos kokku *mandala* kujul.

Teoreetiline taust

Inimkeha on liikunud eriti just viimasel ajal religiooniuringutes ja kultuuri- ja ühiskonna uurimises laiemalt tähelepanu keskpunkti. Käesolev töö kasutab nii kitsamalt religiooni vallas tehtud uurimusi kui üldisemaid teoreetilisi käsitlusi sotsioloogia ja filosoofia vallas. Lühidalt võib selle, mis tulemustele on keha ja religiooni suhete kohta jõutud, kokku võtta järgmiselt: 1) Keha on religioonis oluline faktor, kuna keha kaudu tajutakse ümbritsevat, keha kaudu osaletakse religioonipraktikates, ta on kommunikatsioonivahend ja kannab ning väljendab informatsiooni, ning ta kehabab sotsiaalseid norme. 2) Keha mõistetakse

kultuuri vahendusel ja ta on kultuuriline konstruktsioon. 3) Premodernsetes ühiskondades eksisteerivad mitmed kehakontseptsioonid üheaegselt.

Kõige olulisem teoreetiline alus antud töö jaoks on Prantsuse sotsioloogi Pierre Bourdieu teooria “habituse” kohta. Bourdieu kasutab mõistet habitus tähenduses struktureeriv struktuur, mis organiseerib praktikaid ja seda, kuidas praktikaid nähakse, samuti kui hoiakute (*disposition*) süsteem. Habitus võimaldab omastada kollektiivseid hoiakuid ja loob isiku käitumisstrateegiaid, olles kokkuvõtteks kõik, mis kedagi ühiskonnaga suhtes iseloomustab – riided, käitumine, sõnavara, maitse-eelistused jne. Kui võtta keha habitusena, võimaldab see hõlmata kultuuriliselt konstrueeritud keha erinevaid aspekte, kuna see seletab, kuidas erinevad kehale omistatud omadused tekivad ja kuidas neid edasi kantakse. Habitus seob üksikisikut ja ühiskonda, minevikku ja olevikku ning – mis on ka oluline – on kontsept, mis käib eelkõige kultuuripraktika kohta.

Järgmine teoreetiline alus, mida käesolevas töös kasutatud on, on perspektivism, mis pärineb Eduardo Viveiros de Castrolt. Perspektivismi näol on tegu Amazonase piirkonna indiaanlaste kosmoloogilise ja ontoloogilise idee kirjeldusega. Selle idee järgi on „inimene” samastatud esimese isiku perspektiiviga, nii et kõik olendid, nii loomad kui vaimud, näevad endid inimestena, oma ümbritsevat maailma inimeste maailmana ja teise liike vastavalt nende suhetele esimese perspektiivi liikidega. Kuigi perspektivismi mõistet kasutati algselt ühe kindla kultuuripiirkonna juures, on tegu teoreetilise raamiga, mis võib osutada oluliseks inimkeha ning inimeste, loomade ja vaimude omavaheliste suhete mõistmisel ka teiste kultuuride juures. Tegu on ühe viisiga mõista inimese ja kosmose suhet. Indiviidi, liigi või kategooria identiteet kosmoloogilisel skaalal on kehakontseptsiooni baasiks ja see teeb perspektivismi oluliseks iga uuringu jaoks, mis tegeleb keha rolliga religioonis. Seega kasutan ma perspektivismi teooriat antud töös taustana, mis võimaldab näidata erinevaid potentsiaalseid võimalusi inimkeha mõistmiseks. See aitab näidata, et inimkeha on kultuurilistes protsessides ebastabiilne, avatud ja muutlik, mitte konkreetne, sest ta ei ole iseseisev, vaid sõltub välistest teguritest.

Otseselt antud töös käsitletava kultuuri kehakontseptsiooniga on seotud Mark Csikszentmihalyi mõiste „materiaalne voorus” (*material virtue*), millega ta tähistab klassikalises Hiinas tekkinud ideed, et rituaalne käitumine mõjutab otseselt füüsilist keha. Ma jõudsin järeldusele, et moraalsus võib olla otseselt kehaga seotud, kõigepealt uurides perspektivismi avaldusi Hiina mõtlemises. Need kolm ideed, mis on võetud teoreetilisteks alusteks, habitus, perspektivism ja materiaalne voorus, ei ole eraldiseisvad, vaid kui neid kõrvutada, on näha, et nad moodustavad tervikliku võimaluse vaadelda inimkeha osalemist inimkultuuris. Bourdieu habitus on sealjuures aluseks, millele teised kaks toetuvad ning kolmekesi koos oli neile võimalik rajada teooria keha transformatsiooni kohta seoses kehaliste religioonipraktikatega.

Enne seda aga veel ühest teoreetilisest eeldusest. Erinevalt eelmistest ei käi see mitte kehakontseptsiooni, vaid teatud tüüpi praktikate ideede väljakujunemise kohta. Nagu eelnevalt näidatud, on kõnealuste kehaliste religiooni- praktikate juures sarnased kehakontseptsioonid, mis on seotud kosmoloogiaga

ja kus keha ja tema erinevaid osi seostatakse analoogidega makrokosmilisel tasandil. Sellist korrelatiivset kosmoloogiat ja korrelatiivset mõtlemist laiemalt on kirjeldatud eelkõige Hiina juures, aga see esineb kõigis kirjakultuurides. Steve Farmer kaastöös erinevate valdkondade teadlastega väidab, et korrelatiivsed süsteemid tekivad kommenteerivate traditsioonide tulemusel, kui teksti-korpuse suurenedes hakatakse olemasolevaid vanemaid tekste tõlgendama ja, mis peamine, üritatakse neid omavahel ühtlustada. Jooga, tantra ja taoistlike meditatsiooni- ja surematuse tehnikate puhul ongi ühiseks jooneks, et need traditsioonid ei ole arenenud lineaarselt ühest algpunktist, vaid on tekkinud erinevate ideede kombineerimisel ja kirjalike ja rahvalike traditsioonide liitmisel. Kommenteerivad- ja eksegeetilised traditsioonid ei seleta mitte ainult korrelatiivsete süsteemide teket, vaid ka selle aega ja kulgu. See aitab panna kehaliste religioonipraktikate arengu konkreetse ajaloosisesse raamistikku. Käesolevas töös uuritavad praktikad toetuvad kosmoloogilistele ja antropoloogilistele ideedele, mis tekkisid Indias ja Hiinas esimese eelkristliku aastatuhande teisel poolel peale seda, kui filosoofia oli tekkinud ja samal ajal, kui tekkisid uut tüüpi imperiaalsed riiklikud struktuurid. Need kehalised praktikad ise arenesid välja varakeskajaks ja saavutasid oma keerukuse kõrgkeskajal.

Keha transformatsioon rituaalis

Kui vaadata keha ja religiooni suhet kehalistes praktikates, on küsimusteks, mille alusel seda teha saab, mis on praktikate eesmärk ja mis toimub nende raames keha. Käesoleva töö raames jõudsin järeldusele, et neid erinevaid kehaliste praktikate traditsioone seob see, et religioosne eesmärk on seotud keha. Ma nimetan seda religioosset eesmärki keha transformatsiooniks. See eesmärk võib olla iseseisev kui ka seotud teistega.

Selle eelduseks on see, et keha on kultuuriliselt konstrueeritud, nagu on seletatud teoreetiliste aluste juures. Inimest eristab teistest olenditest, et nende kehad on konstrueeritud rituaalis, see lisab kehale ja inimlikkusele eetilise ja sotsiaalse dimensiooni. Erinevaid dimensioone või kehakonstruktsioone (rituaalne, sotsiaalne, eetiline, kosmoloogiline jne) korrastab religioon kui sümbolite süsteem nagu Clifford Geertz seda defineeris. See, et keha on kultuuriliselt konstrueeritud, tähendab, et kehale omistatakse kultuuriliselt erinevaid omadusi. Kuna need omadused eksisteerivad selles multidimensionaalses sümbolite süsteemis, omistatakse neile religioosset väärtushinnanguid. Selliseid religioosset tähenduslikke kehaomadusi nimetan ma pluss- ja miinusomadusteks vastavalt neile antud hinnangutele ja vastavate omadustega kehi pluss- ja miinuskehadeks. Keha transformatsioon tegeleb miinuskeha muutmise plusskehaks nende omaduste muutmise kaudu rituaalis.

Sellist keha transformatsiooni ideed kohtab kõigis suuremates religiooni-traditsioonides. Eriti selgelt on see välja kujunenud aga mainitud Ida- ja Lõuna Aasia religioonides, kus tantra, jooga ja taoistliku meditatsiooni ja alkeemia näol on välja kujunenud konkreetset sellele keskenduvad tehnikad koos vasta-

vate kehakontseptsioonidega, mis pakuvad konkreetseid mehhanisme keha ja kehaomaduste muutmiseks. Neid tehnikaid nimetan ma antud töös keha transformatsiooniks kitsamas ja üldist ideed kehaomaduste füüsilisest muutmisest transformatsiooniks laiemas tähenduses.

Kehaomadused, mida muuta tahetakse, võib taandada neljaks põhiliseks kategooriaks: a) keha surelikkus (sh tervis), b) keha, täpsemini kehaosade ja – funktsioonide rüvedus, c) keha füüsiline piiratus, mis fikseerib keha ajas ja ruumis, d) keha lahutatus teistest kehadest (ühiskond ja selle liikmed, jumal(ad), kosmos). Need punktid võivad olla omavahel seotud ja nende muutmine võib käia koos üldise religiooneesmärgiga, nagu näiteks jumalaga ühinemine või transtendentse sfääriga kontakti saavutamine. Selleks, kuidas nendele teemadele läheneda, on aga lugematul arvul võimalusi sõltuvalt kultuurilisest taustast. Neid traditsioone, kus on keha transformatsioon kitsamas tähenduses, eristab teistest see, et transformatsioon on omaette iseseisvaks eesmärgiks.

Kuna kehaomadused on omistatud kultuuriliselt ja seega seotud ühiskonna hoiakutega, omab keha transformatsioon ka sotsiaalset tähendust. Täpsemalt on sellel kaks sotsiaalset tagajärge. Esiteks võib plusskeha olla sotsiaalseks kapitaliks. Teiseks, juhul kui plusskeha on vajalik püha sfääriga või jumala(te)ga kontakti saamiseks, aga selle saavutamine nõuab pikaajast treeningut ja esoteerilisi teadmisi, pole see kõigile võimalik. Sellisel juhul saab religioosne professionaal, näiteks taoistlik preester, esindada kogukonda ja täita oma rolli vahendajana. Korrelatiivses mõtlemises on individuaalne, sotsiaalne ja kosmiline keha analoogsed ning omavahel seotud (näiteks mandala kaudu tantras). See võimaldab praktiseerijal/adeptil/preestril ühendada sotsiaalse ja kosmilise keha nii kogukondlikus rituaalis kui individuaalses praktikas.

Juhtumiuuringud

Kehalised religioossed eesmärgid Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikās²²

Esimene *case study*-st peatükk tegeleb keha transformatsiooniga konkreetse juhtumi, hatha jooga juures klassikalise hatha jooga teksti *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* põhjal. Hatha jooga on tuntumaid kehalisi religioonipraktikaid, olles samas religiooniteadustes vähe uuritud, mistõttu valisin just selle traditsiooni lähemaks vaatluseks. *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* on kõige tuntumaid klassikalise hatha jooga tekste. Tegu on 15. sajandi keskpaigast pärit kogumikuga, millesse on teksti autor Svātmārāma kogunud kokku joogapraktikate kirjeldused erinevatest varasematest tekstidest ja loonud nende põhjal uue tervikliku süsteemi, mida nimetab hatha joogaks.

Artikli eesmärgiks oli koguda ja süstematiseerida kehalised religioossed eesmärgid HYP-s ning vaadata, milline on inimkeha roll hatha joogas. Seal on

²² See peatükk on ilmunud artiklina „Kehalised religioossed eesmärgid Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikās” ajakirjas *Idakiri*, 2014

kirjeldatud järgmisi kehalisi eesmärke: tervis või haigustest vabanemine, meeldivad füüsilised tunnused, noorus, rituaalne puhtus, imevõimed, surma ületamine ning jumalaks või jumalikuks saamine, ekstaas ja nauding, ning eraldi religioosse eesmärgina vabanemine. Selles nimekirjas toodud punktid ei ole üksteisest lahutatud, vaid moodustavad ühe kehalise eesmärgi, milleks on üliinimlik keha. Seda võib nimetada keha transformatsiooniks, millest koos teiste näidete ja keha ning rituaali analüüsiga kirjutan lähemalt töö teoreetilises osas.

Samuti ei moodusta eraldi religiooneesmärke „ülikeha” ja vabanemine, mukti, vaid need on üksteisest lahutamatud. Keha transformatsioon on vabanemise eelduseks ning vabanemine ja absoluudiga ühinemine annavad jooga praktiseerijale jumalikud kehalised atribuudid ning võimaldab ületada surma.

Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi and Journey to the West*²³

Hiina perspektivism: Perspektivistlikud kosmoloogiad *Zhuangzis ja Teekonnas Läände*

Teises juhtumiuuringus võtsin ma vaatluse alla Hiina ja liikusin kehakontseptsiooni teoreetilisema ja üldisema osa juurde. Töö teoreetiliste aluste juures ma tutvustasin perspektivismi ja potentsiaali kehakontseptsioonide kirjeldamisel ka teiste kultuuripiirkondade juures kui Amazonase regioon. See eeldab aga, et kirjeldatavates kultuurides eksisteerib mingil moel perspektivistlikku mõtlemist. Seega oli artikli esmane ülesanne tuvastada perspektivismi ilminguid Hiina kultuuris, milleks ma valisin välja kaks erinevat teksti erinevatest ajastutest, *Zhuangzi* ja *Teekond Läände*, et katta võimalikult lai spekter Hiina kultuurist, püsides samal ajal rahvalike- ja organiseeritud traditsioonide kokkupuutekohal, nagu see on ka kehaliste praktikate juures. Perspektivismi on uuritud traditsiooniliste ühiskondade juures ka mujal kui Lõuna-Ameerikas, näiteks Põhja-Aasias, aga ma soovisin näidata, et see nähtus ei pruugi piirduda ainult küttidekorilaste kultuuridega.

Hüpotees leidis kinnitust ja perspektivistlikku mõtlemist – loomulikult mitte täpselt samal kujul kui Lõuna-Ameerikas – leidub ka klassikalises Hiina kultuuris. Sellest edasi jõudsin järgmistele tulemustele: a) Perspektivism aitab mõista ja tõlgendada klassikalisi Hiina tekste, pakkudes uurijale lisavaatenurka. b) *Zhuangzi* filosoofiat pole võimalik vaadelda lahus esimese eelkristliku aastatuhande kosmoloogilistest eeldustest. c) Hiina kultuuris, eelkõige konfutsainismis, oluline idee sidemetest on seotud Hiina perspektivismiga. Sidemed konstrueerivad indiviidi, nii et sidemete muutmine toob kaasa ka indiviidi muutumise. d) Hiina perspektivismis ei ole kõik perspektiivid võrdsed. Õige perspektiiv on seotud moraaliga.

²³ See peatükk on ilmunud artiklina „Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi and Journey to the West*” ajakirjas *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 59, 2014.

Transcendence and humanity in Ge Hong's *Shenxian Zhuan*²⁴ Transtsendentsus ja inimlikkus Ge Hongi *Shenxian Zhuanis*

Kolmas juhtum näitab, kuidas transformatsioonitehnikad ja laiem moraali ja sotsiaalsusega seotud kehakontseptsioon omavahel seotud on, sidudes kokku käesoleva töö erinevad osad. See uurib seda, milline oli inimesekontseptsioon varakeskaegses (Jin dünastia aegses) Hiinas Ge Hongi „Taevalike surematute elulugude” (*Shenxian zhuan*) järgi. Ge Hong (u 283–343) on tuntud eelkõige *Baopuzi* Sisemiste Peatükkide järgi, milles käsitletakse põhiliselt taoistlikke tehnikaid surematuse saavutamiseks, aga tema kogutöö oli palju mitmekülgsem, hõlmates erinevaid teemasid, sealhulgas ka konfutsianistlikku eetikat.

Ge Hongi filosoofia keskendus surematuse või transtsendentsuse (*xian*) saavutamisele, mis teeb ta antud teema jaoks väga huvitavaks. Kuigi ta on tuntud eelkõige alkeemikuna, võib *Shenxian zhuanist* leida, et eetika, käitumine ja sotsiaalsed sidemed olid transtsendentsuse/surematuse saavutamisel sama olulised kui alkeemia ja muud tehnikad. Võrreldes inimeste ja transtsendentide (üliinimeste) omadusi nende elulugude kirjeldustes, on võimalik leida, kuidas mõisteti inimeseks olemist. Inimesekontseptsioon on eelmodernses mõtlemises seotud eelkõige kahe asjaga – kehaga ja moraaliga. Selles artiklis ma näitan, et need kaks asja on omavahel seotud, sest lisaks sellele, et inimkeha on bioloogiline, on ta ka kultuuriliselt konstrueeritud. M. Csikszentmihalyi mõiste “materiaalne voores” (material virtue), mida tutvustasin töö teoreetilises osas, aitab mõista, kuidas käitumine keha füüsiliselt mõjutab.

Shenxian zhuanist võib järeldada, et inimeseks olemist mõisteti varakeskaegses Hiinas inimliku käitumise ja inimlike sidemete kaudu. Korrektset käitumist vastavalt neile sidemetele loeti eetiliseks käitumiseks. Eetika oli kehaline kategooria, mis avaldus materiaalselt inimkehas. Seega käitumine ja sidemed ei konstrueeri mitte ainult inimese identiteeti, vaid ka keha.

Tulemused

Käesolev töös uurisin, kuidas mõistetakse inimkeha Ida- ja Lõuna-Aasia kehalistes religioonipraktikates fookusega joogal, tantral ja taoistlikul meditatsioonil. Töö käigus jõudsin järgmistele järeldustele:

- 1) Keha transformatsioon võib olla religioosne eesmärk. See võib olla seotud teiste eesmärkidega või olla iseseisev. Iseseisva religioosse eesmärgina on kehalist transformatsiooni religiooniuuringutes siiaamaani enamasti eiratud ja füüsilisi muutusi keha juures tõlgendatud vaimset transformatsiooni sihtivate praktikate kõrvalnähtusena. Erandiks paistab olevat taoism, mille puhul on akadeemilises diskursuses algusest peale läbi löönud nägemus, mille järgi kehalisi eesmärke tunnistatakse taoistliku religioossuse olulise osana, kuigi taoism ei erine oma loogikalt teistest religioonitraditsioonidest.

²⁴ Selle peatüki põhjal valminud artikkel on esitatud avaldamiseks ajakirjas „The e-Journal of East and Central Asian Religions“

- 2) Transformatsioonitehnikad kasutavad korrelatiivset mõtlemist praktikate ülesehituses. Korrelatiivne mõtlemine on kommenteerivate traditsioonide ja ideede kombineerimise tulemus. See viib nii korrelatiivsete kosmoloogiate kui komplekssete inimkeha kontseptsioonide kujunemisele, mille puhul ühe osa mõjutamine võimaldab esile kutsuda muutusi teistes.
- 3) Inimkeha mõistetakse ebastabiilse ja muutlikuna. Keha on konstrueeritud ja sealjuures on konstrueerimine pidev protsess. See konstrueerimise protsess on eelduseks rituaalsele enesetransformatsioonile. Inimese isik ja keha on sõltuvad sotsiaalsetest suhetest.
- 4) Keha ja selle konstrueerimise protsess on seotud eetikaga ja omab ka sotsiaalset mõõdet. Keha sotsiaalne mõõde on sotsioloogias iseenesest ammu demonstreeritud, aga käesolevas töös ma näitan, et see on olemas ka individuaalsetes kehalistes praktikates.

Eetikat ja moraali võib antud kontekstis kirjeldada kui kehalisi kategooriaid. Varase keisririigi aegses Hiinas kujunes välja idee, kuidas rituaalne, st ka voo-
ruslik ja moraalne käitumine mõjutab inimese füüsilist keha. Kuigi mujal pole see idee nii selgelt artikuleeritud kui Hiinas, esineb sarnast arusaama ka teistes kultuurides. Kategooriad nagu „kehaline” või „füüsiline” pole religioossetes mõtlemises tingimata üksteisest lahutatud. Näiteks rituaalne puhtus, mis on keha transformatsiooni praktikate juures keskseid küsimusi, on omadus, mis käib nii materiaalsete substantside kui ka mõtete kohta.

Nendest neljast järeldusest kaks esimest, mis puudutavad keha transformatsiooni rituaalis iseseisva religioosse eesmärgina, käsitletakse käesolevas töös eelkõige teoreetilises osas ja esimeses artiklis. Teise kahe punktiga, mis käivad keha muutlikkuse ja selle suhete kohta ühiskonna ja moraaliga, tegelevad järgmised kaks artiklit. Sealjuures pole need neli järeldust eraldiseisvad, vaid käivad kõik ühe kehakontseptsiooni kohta, olles tervikliku kehaarusaama erinevad aspektid. See kehakontseptsioon esineb nendes kõnealustes traditsioonides, milles võib leida kehalisi transformatsioonipraktikaid ja pakub arusaamu keha rolli kohta ühiskonnas ja kosmoses, pakub motivatsiooni keha muutmiseks ja samal ajal ideedekompleksi, mis seda teha võimaldavad. See näitab, et nende kehaliste praktikate eelduseks ei ole mitte ainult spetsiifiline alkeemiline või kosmoloogiline arusaam kehast, vaid laiem sotsiaalne kehakontseptsioon, mille järgi keha on ebastabiilne ja sõltuv käitumisest, kogukonnast ja keskkonnast. Ma loodan, et need tulemused, mida see töö pakkus keha rolli osas religioossete eesmärkide saavutamisel ning keha sotsiaalse dimensiooni osas individuaalsete religioonipraktikate puhul, aitavad laiendada religiooniuringute vaatevälja keha ja religiooni suhete osas, ja olla lähtepunktideks tulevaste uuringute jaoks erinevate praktikate kohta.

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(The Body in Religion: Transformation of the Human Body as a Religious Goal)

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2009–2015 University of Tartu, Estonia, doctoral candidate, religious studies
Title of the thesis: “The Concept of the Body in Chinese and Indian Bodily Practices: Transformation, Perspective, and Ethics”

2003–2009 Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany, MA history; religious studies
MA thesis: “Die Dänisch-Hallesche Mission in Tranquebar aus transkultureller Perspektive. Missionare als Kulturvermittler” (The Danish-Halle Mission in Tranquebar from the transcultural perspective: Missionaries as Mediators of Culture)

1992–2003 Kadrioru Saksa Gümnaasium (secondary school)

Employment:

2014–... NGO Wikimedia Eesti, educator

2014–... OÜ Keeletoimetus, language editor

2010–... University of Tartu, contract lecturer
Religious Studies – its history and contemporary problems
Introduction to Comparative Study of Religions
History of Religions
Chinese Religions

2014 NGO Villane Raamat, volunteer editor of the literary magazine ELLA

2013–2014 Nõmme private school, teacher (History, Social studies, German language)

2009–2010 Tõlge 24, German-Estonian translator

Academic publications

Lind, Erki. “Transcendence and humanity in Ge Hong’s Shenxian Zhuan.”
Submitted to *The e-Journal of East and Central Asian Religions*

Lind, Erki. “Kehalised religioossed eesmärgid Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikās.” *Idakiri*, 2014, pp 95–106. (Bodily Religious Goals in Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā)

Lind, Erki. “Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Journey to the West*.” *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 59, 2014, pp 145–164. doi:10.7592/FEJF2014.59.lind

Lind, Erki. “Keha religioonis: Inimkeha transformatsioon kui religioosne eesmärk.” *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri*, 2, 2013, pp 118–135. (The Body in Religion: Transformation of the Human Body as a Religious Goal)

- Lind, Erki. "Alte Gemeinschaft, Neue Religion: Religionswechsel und die Beziehung zwischen Mensch und Gesellschaft in Indien." *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 21, 2013, pp 1–9. (Old Community, New Religion: Conversion and the Relation between the Human and the Society)
- Lind, Erki. "Perspektivism Lõuna-Ameerikas ja Hiinas." *Kirik ja Teoloogia*, 57, 2013. (Perspectivism in South America and in China)
- Lind, E. "Varauusaegse misjonäri kuvand hindudest Lõuna-Indias." *Eesti Akadeemilise Orientaalseltsi aastaraamat*, 2011, pp 127 – 145. (The Image of the Hindus of an Early Modern Missionary in South India)
- Lind, Erki. "Hindu fundamentalism. Natsionalism ja religioon Indias." *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri*, 2, 2010, pp 119–132. (Hindu Fundamentalism. Nationalism and Religion in India)

Literary publications

- Short story "Nosferatu", Looming 1, 2015
- Short story "Eksisin metsa", Värsked rõhk 34, 2013
- Translation Rainer Maria Rilke "Kornet Christoph Rilke Armastus ja surm", Ninniku 13, 2013

Memberships

- 2012–... Estonian Society for the Study of Religions, member
- 2012–... International Association for the History of Religions, member
- 2012–... European Association for the Study of Religions, member
- 2010–... Estonian Oriental Society, member

Prizes

- 2014 Literary prize "Esimene samm"
- 2012 National student research competition 3. prize
- 2009 Estonian Academy of Sciences student paper competition 2. prize
- 2003–2008 DAAD scholarship holder

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Hariduskäik:

2009–2015 Tartu Ülikool, doktrantuur religiooniuuringud
Doktoritöö teema: „The Concept of the Body in Chinese and Indian Bodily Practices: Transformation, Perspective, and Ethics”
(Kehakontseptsioon Hiina ja India kehalistes religioonipraktikates: transformatsioon, perspektiiv ja eetika)
2003–2009 Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, MA ajalugu; religiooniteadus
Magistritöö teema: “Die Dänisch-Hallesche Mission in Tranquebar aus transkultureller Perspektive. Missionare als Kulturvermittler”
(Taani-Halle misjon Tranquebaris transkulturaalsest perspektiivist: misjonärid kultuurivahendajatena)
1992–2003 Kadrioru Saksa Gümnaasium

Töökogemus:

2010–... Bakalaureuse- ja magistriastme ainekursuste lugemine Tartu Ülikoolis
Religiooniuuringute ajalugu ja tänapäev
Võrdleva usundiloo sissejuhatus
Üldine usundilugu
Orientaalusundite seminar
2014–... MTÜ Wikimedia Eesti koolitaja
2014–... kaastöö OÜ Keeletoimetusele
2014 MTÜ Villane Raamat, kirjandusajakirja ELLA vabatahtlik toimetaja
2013–2014 Nõmme Erakool, ajaloo- ja ühiskonnaõpetuse õpetaja; saksa keele huviringi õpetaja
2009–2010 kaastöö tõlkebüroole Tõlge 24 saksa-eesti suunal

Akadeemilised publikatsioonid:

Lind, Erki (2015). Transcendence and humanity in Ge Hong’s Shenxian Zhuan. Esitatud ajakirjale The e-Journal of East and Central Asian Religions
Lind, Erki (2015). Kehalised religioossed eesmärgid Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikās. Idakiri, 2014
Lind, Erki (2014). Chinese Perspectivism: Perspectivist Cosmologies in Zhuangzi and Journey to the West. Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore, 59
Lind, Erki (2013). Keha religioonis: Inimkeha transformatsioon kui religioosne eesmärk. Usuteaduslik Ajakiri, 2

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- Lind, Erki (2013). Perspektivism Lõuna-Ameerikas ja Hiinas. Kirik ja Teoloogia, 57
- Lind, E. (2011). Varauusaegse misjonäri kuvand hindudest Lõuna-Indias. Eesti Akadeemilise Orientaalseltsi aastaraamat
- Lind, Erki (2010). Hindu fundamentalism. Natsionalism ja religioon Indias. Usuteaduslik Ajakiri, 2

Ilukirjanduslikud publikatsioonid

- Lühijutt „Nosferatu“, Looming 1, 2015
- Lühijutt „Eksisin metsa“, Värske rõhk 34, 2013
- Tõlge Rainer Maria Rilke „Kornet Christoph Rilke Armastus ja surm“, Ninniku 13, 2013

Organisatoorne kuuluvus

- 2012–... Eesti Akadeemilise Usundiloo selts
- 2012–... International Association for the History of Religions
- 2012–... European Association for the Study of Religions
- 2010–... Eesti Akadeemilise Orientaalseltsi

Preemiad ja tunnustused

- Kirjandusauhind „Esimene samm“ 2014
- 3. preemia, 2012. aasta Haridus- ja Teadusministeeriumi üliõpilaste teadustööde riiklik konkurss
- II auhind, 2009. aasta Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia üliõpilastööde konkurss
- 2003–2008 DAAD stipendiaat

DISSERTATIONES THEOLOGIAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

1. **Tarmo Kulmar.** Die Theologie der Kraft-, Götter- und Seelenvorstellungen der ältesten Schicht der estnischen Urreligion. Tartu, 1994, Autorreferat, 45 S.
2. **Toomas Paul.** Die Geschichte der estnischen Bibelübersetzung, I Teil (XVI–XIX Jahrhundert). Tartu, 1994, Autorreferat, 27 S.
3. **Kalle Kasemaa.** Semitistik ja poeetikat. Tartu, 1997, 131 lk.
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30. **Mart Jaanson.** Nikaia-Konstantinoopoli usutunnistuse ladinakeelse normteksti grammatiline, teoloogiline ja muusikaline liigendamine. Tartu, 2014, 371 lk.