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Exercise and Well-Being: Myth and Practice of the »Tibetan Rites«

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Table of Content

Introduction	1
1. Books and History	4
2. Peter Kelder	8
 Method.....	 11
1. Informants.....	11
2. Participant observation, the course	16
 Ethnography of Tibetan Rites.....	 19
1. Chakras	20
2. Common Practice	23
Repetitions.....	23
Time, Place and Condition	25
Breathing.....	26
Movement and Exercises	26
Sequence.....	34
Nutrition	34
Youthful Mind	35
Origin.....	38
3. Individual routines and rituals	39
Courses, Attendees and their needs	40
Practice routines of beginners, their motivation, effects and difficulties.....	43
Practice routines of long term practitioners, their motivation and effects	46
Trainers' Education	47
Practice routines of quitters, their motivation and effects	55
Non practice of the sixth rite	59
4. Informants' explanations of effects and function of TR	61
TR and other approaches to well-being	64
Spiritual Aspects.....	70
 Conclusions	 75

Bibliography.....	93
--------------------------	-----------

Appendix	97
-----------------------	-----------

Abstract.....	97
----------------------	-----------

Kurzzusammenfassung (German abstract).....	98
---	-----------

Curriculum Vitae	99
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Introduction

My education in anthropology has always been led by my interest in theory and health. I guess my interest in theory arose from my own drive to know and being able to explain everything in a logical way through words. Following this drive led me to attend lectures which provided different theories to the questions of society and its phenomena. And also attended philosophical lectures, about how science is done at all, getting to know the importance of logic in our society and our discourse of the theory of science. The other part of my scientific education belonged to health, especially different methods of healing, how health is a part of our society and how it is constituted.

Besides my anthropological studies I was educated in Aerobics. After my exam I attended a further education in Pilates, because I realised that I was not really fond of the performance character of Aerobics. Most of the people who attended my Aerobics classes came to sweat, lose weight or trim their bodies. When you put the focus on these aspects, little space is left for concentration, proper alignment, controlled breathing and coordination. So I did a further training in Pilates. Pilates is based on concentrated and coordinated movements connected to breathing and causes a different bodily experience. I preferred this way of exercising because it provides on the one hand a formation and stretch of the muscles and in the other hand you can also break a sweat with the right exercises; these are all aspects, which are wished for in Aerobics classes. But additionally through synchronised breathing and movement, which needs a lot of attention and focus, it appeases the mind and can leave a sensation of being lighter, taller and calmer after the training. One disadvantage of Pilates is that it takes some time to learn its principles and incorporate them into the practise.

Nowadays it is common knowledge that movement provides health. The question is, how I can be healthy, or can achieve health and how I can keep up well-being for longevity. There is another discourse about exercising, where the health factor is overshadowed by the strife for beauty, for who has the firmest and fittest body. On another side we also got a boom of Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong and other, let me call them non-western ways of movement. These can also consolidate and strengthen your body but also, following their philosophy have effect on your mind and/or soul. The values of beauty and health seem to be important in our society. In this thesis the aspect of health and well-being through exercising is researched taking as one example the Tibetan Rites.

Taking a look at different ways of exercising I faced questions concerning the way of movement. Does it depend on the underlying philosophy, or the chosen focus while exercising, or the personal aim? Even more, how can a different philosophy of movement be integrated in our usual way of movement?

The **Tibetan Rites** (TR) are an example of practised non-western movement, concerning health promoting exercises. I got to know the TR through a discussion with my father, where we could not find an agreement on whether it should be five or seven chakras in Yoga philosophy. Chakras belong to a part of Yoga philosophy which will be explained later on. A month after the discussion, my father handed me a book from his library (maybe I should mention that he is also a teacher of physical education), with the title *Die Fünf »Tibeter«*. *Das alte Geheimnis aus den Hochtälern des Himalaya läßt Sie Berge versetzen*, an extended German edition of *The Eye of Revelation* (1939) by an author named Peter Kelder. After reading I started practising. I liked the idea of doing movements which not just strengthen my physical body but also had effects on my whole well-being. Plus it was a time saving routine with just five exercises. I did not mean to force myself into it; I rather wanted to experiment and experience.

When I needed a topic for my thesis it was quite obvious to get deeper into the phenomenon of the TR. On the one hand it covered all my scientific interests. It is said that the TR are health promoting exercises and that they originate in Tibet and are explained with a non-western philosophy. On the other hand I already had experiences with them, through my own practice, which only could help me in connecting to interview partners and understanding their practice. My own practice is part of participating in a phenomenon that is more than plain observation.

I started my research on the internet, as usual I started with the author. I was very surprised about the data. There was hardly any data of the author himself, no date of birth or death, actually his existence was doubted. Furthermore it is speculated if he is really the author of *The Eye of Revelation* (1939). So here the mystery began. Nevertheless or maybe because of this fact, the reception of the Tibetan Rites seems to be quite high. So the question came up, what the TR can provide that addresses so many people. And even more, how do different aspects influence the reception and practice of the TR. The aspects listed below were detected during my research on the internet:

(a) the fact that different versions of the book were published in the course of time, and (b) connected to that: the question of authenticity of the author and the content of the book. furthermore (c) the question of the history and origin of the Rites; (d) the concept of health promoting exercises based on a non-western epistemology, where the effects of the exercises are put into question, and finally (e) the mythological aspect of all these phenomena.

I approached these questions through internet and library research and by participating in a course in which the TR were taught, but mainly through interviews with practitioners, teachers and learners.

1. I was interested in the rites themselves. Is there more information about alignment especially when they are said to cause pain when not practised correctly? Do the informants have problems with proper alignment? How many repetitions do they do? When they have a long term practice, do they all do 21 repetitions, which is given as the maximum number by Kelder? Following the concept of starting with 3 repetitions and adding two every other week, someone would have to reach 21 repetitions in only 10 weeks. Also what is the secret about achieving 21 repetitions and not any other number? Can the TR be practised anywhere and anytime? On the internet you can find different suggestions about breathing, so what is the right way, is there a right way at all? Do they also practise the not so well known sixth and seventh rite?

2. I was interested in additional recommendations concerning the practice. Do the informants use affirmations while practising, what is the use of these, does something change in comparison to not using positive thoughts? What opinion do they have on the question of nutrition? How does nutrition influence the practice or the effects?

3. I was interested in the changes or effects that occur when someone practises. Does the practice really have an impact on a physiological and psychological level? Does the practice change one's mind-set and even spiritual positions?

4. I wanted to know how informants explain the effects and function of TR. Do they refer to the chakra philosophy, which is written down in the book or do they explain it in a more logical western way? Can any other way of movement achieve the same results? Concerning the informants who underwent the *Dachverband* training, why did they do so and what could

they say about their own courses? Who attended their courses and how did the trainers explain the need to provide such courses? And finally I wanted to know what my informants thought about the so called *Fountain of Youth* and the origin of the rites.

The practice of the TR can not be seen separated from the practice of other non-western movement practices especially those of Yoga. I refer to Yoga, because it is the most popular, besides QiGong or TaiChi and all the different kinds of Martial Arts. Already in 1975 a German newspaper published an article about the new “Volkssport Yoga - Heil aus dem Osten?”¹ By now there are supposed to be about 3 million Yoga practitioners in Germany², and about 300.000 practitioners in Austria³, which in both cases means an attendance of 3 to 4% of the entire population. Nearly 50 % of Austria’s population is supposed to do sports regularly, this number is from 1998 and I actually doubt it, because it has to be considered that doing sports is not the same for everyone; for one doing sports means being on e.g. skiing vacation for a week once a year, which is regular too, and another will mean an activity of three times a week.⁴ And a study of 2005 showed a decrease of all sport activities of Austrians.⁵

1. Books and History

Many editions of *The Eye of Revelation* in German and English have been published during the past 50 years. Most of the German editions are derived from the first German edition in 1989. Here a list is given of the different editions. I use my father’s 1994 edition as basis for my thesis, this has two reasons. First, none of my informants ever mentioned the original edition, secondly, all long-term practitioners got to know the TR practice between 1994 and 2001, therefore the basic information they had is probably derived from the 1994 edition. This 1994 edition is a republished version of the 1991 edition. The English reprint of 1946, which was published in 2008, is taken for comparison. Kelder’s 1946 extended edition is often claimed to be from 1947. It can not be figured why this information is given. Watt, the editor of the reprint of 2008 edition speculates that it is a simple mistake, because maybe the copyright page was missing. However I was not able to find a 1947 edition, it was not to be found in any library nor is it listed as publication. Nearly all books which refer to the TR hold

¹ http://www.yoga.de/yoga_v2/?cnr=10 (6.7.2009 14h)

² http://www.yoga.de/yoga_v2/?cnr=10 (6.7.2009 14h)

³ <http://www.kleinezeitung.at/magazin/wellness/495803/index.do> (6.7.2009 14h09)

⁴ <http://www.schmelzweb.at/forumdisplay.php?s=&f=22&page=1&pp=20&sort=lastpost&order=desc&daysprune=-1> (10.7.2009 13h)

⁵ <http://oesterreich.orf.at/stories/49249/> (6.7.2009 14h30)

the name of the original author Peter Kelder, even if he has nothing to do with additional information. Sometimes an additional author is mentioned, whom I add in front of the edition when necessary. The book has been published in 17 different languages; the list below just includes the German and English editions.⁶ I add the number of pages at the end, so extensions can easily be seen. It is interesting that for example the same publisher published *The five rites of rejuvenation* in 1978 with 42 pages and about ten years later a so-called original version with just 30 pages. By the way, in the Anglophone area, the rites are seldom called 'Tibetan rites' or the 'five Tibetan rites', which is commonly used in the German language. They rather refer to '(five) rites of rejuvenation', 'Tibetan secrets of youth and vitality' or the 'ancient secret of the fountain of youth'.

English Editions

- 1939 *The Eye of Revelation*. California: New Era Press. (31p.)
- 1946 *The Eye of Revelation*. California: The Mid-day Press. (79p.)
- 1978 *The five rites of rejuvenation*. California: Borderland Sciences Research Foundation. (42p.)
- 1985 *Ancient secret of the "Fountain of Youth"*. Washinton: Harbor Press. Rev. ed. of: *The eye of revelation*. 1939 (50p.) republished in 1986, 1989
- 1988 *Tibetan secrets of youth and vitality*. Aquarian Press. New rev. ed. (64p.)
- 1989 *The eye of revelation: the original five Tibetan rites of rejuvenation*. California: Borderland Sciences Research Foundation. (30p.)
- 1999 Kelder, Peter and Siegel, Bernie. *Ancient secret of the fountain of youth, book 2: a companion book*. Washington: Harbor Press; New York: Doubleday. (302p.)
- 2008 Kelder, Peter and J.W.Watt. *The eye of revelation: the ancient Tibetan rites of rejuvenation*. Booklocker.com Inc. (107p.) reprint of 1946.

German Editions

- 1989 *Die fünf »Tibeter«: das alte Geheimnis aus den Hochtälern des Himalaya lässt Sie Berge versetzen*. Wessobrunn: Integral. (75p.) Extended translation of the 1985 English edition.
- 1991 *Die fünf »Tibeter«: das alte Geheimnis aus den Hochtälern des Himalaya lässt Sie Berge versetzen*. Wessobrunn: Integral. 11.-12. print. New rev. ed. (91p.) Introduction

⁶ www.worldcat.org (9.9.2009 14h15)

by Chris Griscom, translated by Christopher Baker. Further contributions by Birgit Petrick-Sedlmeier et.al. republished by Volker Zahedra Karrer in 1992, 1993, 1994.

- 1992 *Die fünf »Tibeter« und Erfahrungen mit den fünf »Tibetern«: das alte Geheimnis aus den Hochtälern des Himalaya lässt Sie Berge versetzen.* Güterloh: Bertelsmann-Club. (254p.). Wolfgang and Brigitte Gillessen (ed.), republished in 1993, 1994, 1998 Bern, Wien, München: Scherz Verlag (287p.)
- 1996 the book from 1991 was published in Braille print (123p.)
- 1997 Kelder, Peter and Miethe, Manfred. *Die fünf »Tibeter«: das alte Geheimnis aus den Hochtälern des Himalaya lässt Sie Berge versetzen.* München: Integral. New extended ed. (126p.) republished in 1999, 2001 Bern. München. Wien: Scherz., 2002, 2004 Frankfurt am Main: Scherz. (no author mentioned)
- 2000 *Die Fünf »Tibeter«. Das Begleitbuch. Weiterentwicklung und gezielte Anwendung der weltberühmten Übungen.* Bern, München, Wien: Scherz (267p.) Translation of 1999 English edition.
- 2004 *Die fünf »Tibeter«: das alte Geheimnis aus den Hochtälern des Himalaya lässt Sie Berge versetzen.* Salvesen, Christian: *Der sechste »Tibeter«. Das Geheimnis erfüllter Sexualität.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer. (329p.)

The history and origin of the rites is very controversial. It is suggested that Peter Kelder was inspired by *The last horizon* by James Hilton. This novel was published in 1933. It tells a story about a hijacked plane in the Himalaya area, Tibet. The kidnapped passengers are housed by a Lama monastery where first no one talks to them about what had happened and everything is kept secret. In the preface of Hilton's book there is a reference to the monastery that it is a place where the mindful treasures of man are preserved and kept alive. It appears to be a wonderful place, where people live in peace and get older than usual. This place is called Shangri La, which became a synonym for a paradise on earth. Through the isolation of the lamasery the guests are confronted with themselves. Conway, the main character of the book, a veteran member of British diplomatic service, gets to know bodily exercises which are practiced by the lamas. These exercises are not explained any further but are also said to be part of the longevity of the Lamas. Kelder's story about the TR is very similar to Hilton's story in the way that the main character, the source of Kelder's information, also has to do with the British government and that he gets to know the TR practice in a lamasery which is very difficult to find somewhere in the Himalayan area.

The history of the book *The Eye of Revelation* starts in 1939, with the first publication. The origin of the rites, which are said to be hundreds of years old, could not be traced to a specific historical moment. Some say they are from Tibet, others say they originate in Yoga or maybe Kum Nye, also a Tibetan way of moving, or taking positions. In a German edition of 2007 you can find a small note that the TR originate from Yoga (Salvesen 2007: 109). Still its origin is doubted and maybe an invention of a smart guy.

With the first publication of *The Eye of Revelation* in German in 1989 the seed for spread was also set in Austria. From March 1992 until November 1994 the book had a fixed place on the list of bestsellers.⁷ In 1991 there was the first German extended publication with an additional introduction, additional speculation about the author, called the ‘phantom’ and further recommendations on exercising. Over time even more extended publications were published, adding more experiences of practitioners or additional non- movement exercises for well-being. And also more suggestions for nutrition and little rituals with e.g. water.

In the early nineties the German *Tibeter Dachverband* was founded and on its homepage you find an approximate number of sold books: 1, 3 million.⁸ It is interesting that there is no date of foundation of the German association but confusing information about copyrights: They hold the copyright of all writings on their homepage, which is quite usual, but also the copyright concerning the content of German books from 1987 on until 2006.⁹ Which is quite strange, because the first German edition was published in 1989, which means two years later. An email to the *Dachverband* did not get me any further. I did get a reply that my mail was forwarded to the responsible department, but have not heard anything from them until now. There is also no year when the training was installed which the *Dachverband* provides to become an authorised »Tibeter«-Trainer®. The training consists of about 50 to 60 hours of training in theory and practice, takes about a week and costs approximately 1.450.- Euros.¹⁰

Even though the first book was published in 1939, the real hype in German speaking countries came 50 years later. In English the book had already been republished in ‘46, ‘78, ‘85 and

⁷ <http://kurier.at/archiv/liste.php?suche=Peter+Kelder&suchedatum=19920101%7C20090928&offset=0&&simple=> (8.7.2009 12h20)

<http://kurier.at/archiv/liste.php?suche=Peter+Kelder&suchedatum=19920101%7C20090928&offset=20&&simple=> (8.7.2009 12h50)

<http://kurier.at/archiv/liste.php?suche=Peter+Kelder&suchedatum=19920101%7C20090928&offset=40&&simple=> (8.7.2009 13h20)

⁸ <http://www.fuenf-tibeter.org/> (6.7.2009 15h)

⁹ <http://www.fuenf-tibeter.org/50114096ee0f6c710.html> (6.7.2009 15h30)

¹⁰ http://www.carlos-liebetrueth.de/was/ausbildung/5tibeter_ausb.htm (25.09.2009 13h30)

'88. Because my research was restricted to Vienna, I did not go into greater detail with the English editions. The republication of the 1946 edition of *The Eye of Revelation* with lots of remarks of the editor revealed information about the author and a different background of how the TR function. All this information was not even mentioned in any of the books written in German. So the distribution of information and the discourse are limited by language. As I said, since I was researching the Viennese way of practising, the work deals with the German discourse of the TR. Therefore the publication of 1989 is taken as starting point, even if the history of TR is older. The upcoming of the TR in the German area, can be reconstructed by different books, discussions on the internet and the reception of other institutions. Thus the Burgenländische Gebietskrankenkasse (BGKK), a health insurance company, recommends the practice of the TR for greater well-being, under the rubric of prevention.¹¹ But this institutional pick up is very rare, the BGKK was the only one I could find. But at least, this on the one hand shows a certain appreciation of the rites, and on the other hand points at how little non-western health 'promoters' are integrated in health care institutions.

When you google "fünf Tibeter" you will get about 15.600.000 hits worldwide.¹² I surely have not read them all, but most of the pages are concerned with the movements and effects. Only some are critical about the effects. For example there is an article, which was published in a German magazine in November 1999¹³, where the author doubts an effect in general and is more concerned about different information about the author Peter Kelder and the republishing of books than anything else. She even states that there has not been a 1939 edition and that the promise of change through, the practice is a marketing gag. It took a while to research the 1939 edition, but actually found it in the public library of New York¹⁴, which proves her being simply wrong. As I said, most homepages were more warning about wrong alignment than questioning the effects in general.

2. Peter Kelder

The author of the *The Eye of Revelation* and *Die fünf »Tibeter«* must have been an interesting person. Information about him is rare and contradictory. In 1990 the publisher of the German edition, Volker Z. Karrer, speculates about him: that maybe Peter Kelder is alive and youthful or maybe the name is the pseudonym of a woman. Actually Karrer does not know anything

¹¹ http://www.bgkk.at/portal/index.html?ctrl:cmd=render&ctrl>window=bgkkportal.channel_content.cmsWindow&p_menuid=58483&p_tabid=3&p_pubid=77862 (6.7.2009 16h)

¹² http://www.google.de/search?q=f%C3%BCnf+tibeter&rlz=117SKPB_de (6.7.2009 18h)

¹³ <http://www.magnin.ch/Tibeter.htm> (6.7.2009 18h30)

¹⁴ <http://catalog.nypl.org/record=b12899078> (8.7.2009 13h20)

about him (Kelder 1994: 11). In 2000 the first German edition of the *Ancient secret of the fountain of youth, book 2: a companion book* by Kelder and Siegel was published as *Die fünf »Tibeter«. Das Begleitbuch. Weiterentwicklung und gezielte Anwendung der weltberühmten Übungen*. In the introduction the American representative of publisher Harry Lynn describes Peter Kelder as a friend. Still alive and wants to keep his privacy. Questions about him would just distract from the truth of his message to the world. Peter Kelder was adopted and raised by Dutch people. He travelled a lot working for the merchant navy. He speaks a couple of languages and loves books and poetry. Peter Kelder used to live in the Hollywood Hills, California and was working for the film studios, when he wrote the book in the 30ies. He met Colonel Bradford, his principle informant, a retired well travelled British Army Officer, when he was living in Los Angeles. Bradford is a pseudonym – that was the only information about the Colonel (Scherz 2000 : 11- 12).

In the appendix of the 2008 English edition, the editor J.W. Watt makes deductions about Kelder from the text, which are logical if one takes the text as biographical. Therefore Kelder had to be a man of means, who had time to spend time in the afternoon to chat or to stay up all night long and to live in an apartment which was probably in a hotel. Also he had to be educated well enough to engage the interest of Colonel Bradford. Kelder is also the name of the copyright holder, a pseudonym would nullify the copyright. As for Bradford, Watt assumes that he was actually the primary author but could not publish the book, because of his position. He may have been a high ranked officer and spy in the “Great Game” (British and Russians wanted to make Tibet part of their empires) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Watt found data on a Sir Wilfrid Malleeson which match Colonel Bradford’s biography, but no further information, which he describes as odd and asks if it could have been a “deliberate effort to expunge his records?” (Kelder 2008: 104). Watt also suggests that Kelder was at least 50 years old, otherwise he would not fit into the Colonel’s exercising group. Bradford, according to the text, was 72 or 73 years old in 1939. Sir Wilfrid Malleeson died in 1946, at the age of 79 years and 1946 is the same year *The Eye of Revelation* was republished by Peter Kelder, and maybe is a tribute to his friend (Kelder 2008 : 97- 107).

Christian Salvesen (2004: 84- 85) writes about Kelder that he studied economics and worked at a publishing house. One day his boss called him into his office and told him to take notes during the conversation between him and his old friend, who had interesting things to tell about his journey to the Himalaya. (Why did this publisher not publish the book himself and

allowed a temporary substitute to write it?) According to Salvesen, an American named Harry Lynn found the book in the 80ies and could register the copyright, because it was impossible for him to find the author. After the German success of the book, Lynn started his search for Kelder and found him. And according to Salvesen also the German publisher Volker Z. Karrer was able to meet Peter Kelder in 1994. In 2001 Peter or in Dutch Pieter Kelder died 88 years old. So according to this information Peter Kelder was 26 when he published *The Eye of Revelation*. Another theory came from one of my informants, Edith, she had heard that the name Peter Kelder was a pseudonym and that he was an Austrian. And that Peter Kelder wanted to publish the book at the Buddhist Octopus Verlag. The owner at that time was of the opinion that it would not work and refused to publish the book. When I asked her how she knew these things she said that it was gossip.

For my informants the myth about Peter Kelder was quite uninteresting. Most of them did not mention the author at all, or said that they did not know more than what is written in the first German edition. Also the story about the Colonel was more seen as “carrier-function” than reality. Hans, one of my informants, stated that the story is needed to lure the readers into practising, and Ludwig, another informant, completed this statement that every philosophy needs its believers and would have less sense to publish a book which will not be bought. And in Peter Kelder’s place Ludwig would not have published only one book but even more. That the need for it is given is proved by the fact that the book is still being republished over and over again.

Method

1. Informants

I found my informants mainly through the homepage of the *Fünf »Tibeter« Dachverband*, where the qualified teachers are listed from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia, Italy, Spain, Netherlands and also one trainer in Brazil. Also when I was browsing through the different editions of the German book I found different lists of trainers, which was also a lot of help. For financial reasons all interviews were held in Vienna, during a time period of approximately four months. This does not mean that I just had Viennese as interview partners; there was also one with Polish background and a Moldavian interview partner, who was on a visit.

Against my expectations my pool of interview partners was almost evenly distributed in sex; I had 5 men and 7 women as informants. So altogether I had 12 informants. The age reached from 21 to nearly 60, with an average of 44 and a gap between 25 and 40. As for their educational and occupational background nearly everyone had to do in the health sector, except for three (Klara, Anton, Gertrud), who worked for business companies, but also mentioned a main interest in health and well-being. The names are pseudonyms. Five of my interview partners were educated and authorized teachers from the *Dachverband*, which does not mean that they held courses but they were long time practitioners, except one.

Klara, female, a little bit above 40, has a practice of 15 years, was educated in TR in 2000 and has been teaching since then. She graduated from a school for tourism but is not working in this area. The interview was held in a Café and took about 35 minutes. Klara seemed to be a very happy and grounded person but was first a little sceptical about the interview and said she would not know what to talk about. I guided her through the interview with common questions about the TR practice and their aspects.

Edith, female, 58, has a practice of 14 years. After her graduation from high school she became massage therapist. Edith is from Poland and has been living in Austria for 20 years. She has a long Buddhist practice and was the only one of my informants who really looked young. With really young I mean that she had no wrinkles at all, was moving easily and maybe it was her charisma which impressed me. The interview took place at her working place and took only 20 minutes. Like Klara somehow I had to guide her through the interview. She was really not talkative and said that she would not know a lot more than what

is written in the book. Therefore she was of the opinion that she would not have a lot of input to give and just gave short answers most of the time. Although the interview was quite short, her presence and calmness were striking and she would say that her being that way cannot only be attributed to her TR practice.

Hans, male, 56, has a practice of about 8 years, and got his licence as »Tibeter« trainer in 1999/2000. He mentioned his graduation from high school and years later became Master of Reiki, senior shaman, shamanic life coach, reintegration- and clearing-therapist and instructor for conversation techniques and meditation. Hans did not make any comments on what he had done between high school graduation and his further educations. I met him in his place of work and he was the only one of my informants who could have talked for hours, the interview took about an hour. Hans seemed to have a very strong personality and as a consequence of his education this interview frequently dealt with energetic work.

Anton, male, 45, has a practice of about 8 years, and was educated in 2001. He has a degree in economics and works in the sales area. Again, the interview was held in a restaurant while having lunch and took almost two hours with little pauses in between. Anton liked to talk and was the informant who gave the most input on Buddhism and the TR during the interview.

Stefan, male, 43, sport science, psychological education as mental trainer and release techniques. He got to know the TR working at a hotel in Tyrol in 1996. He was educated the same year and practised the TR for four years, during his own courses at the hotel. The interview was held on the phone and took about 30 minutes. On account of his education Stefan was the one informant who had the greatest experience with other non western movements (Qi Gong). Stefan came into my work nearly by accident. He was holding a workshop on release techniques during one of my own further education courses in aerobics, I just had to ask him if he knew the TR. He agreed and mentioned that he had undergone formal education by the *Dachverband*. .

I could find only one person who had a long- term practice of the TR, who was not a teacher. **Gertrud**, female, 46, has a practise of 15 years. After high school she studied humanities. Since 2001 she is executive manager of a big mobile phone company. I met her at her headquarters and she was talking to me about 35 minutes. Gertrud made the impression of

having a lot of energy and a calm place somewhere inside her, to distance herself from her stressful job.

Three informants used to do the TR but quit out of mainly two reasons: Boredom or laziness.

Marta, female, 47, was educated as specialist in tourism and later became Yoga teacher. She got to know the TR about 20 years ago and practised for about a half year. Marta and I met in a café and talked about for 40 minutes. She gave a lot of input concerning the comparison and similarities between TR and Yoga

Franziska, female, 55, psycho therapist. She was the only one who said that she had heard about the rites about 30 years ago, that was before the first German edition was published in 1989. She practised for about 2 to 3 years. I met her in her workplace and the interview took just about 15 minutes, because Franziska was slightly sick at that time and wanted to rush through the interview as fast as possible, but she did not want to cancel our appointment. So she talked for about 15 minutes and was also able to cover my main interests of the TR.

Ludwig, male, 46, masseur. He had the shortest practice of the „quitters“, about 3 to 5 months. He was very talkative when we met at his massage parlour and talked for about 50 minutes. Ludwig gave most input to questions of health promoting character of movements.

Two beginners were found in my circle of friends. **Nina**, female 25, student of medicine and **Doris.**, female, 21, studying psycho therapist sciences at the Sigmund Freud University, both had a practice of two to three weeks, when I interviewed them. Nina's interview just took 10 minutes; she had not read any book of the TR and did not know more about the TR than the exercises themselves. But she had her own opinion about e.g. the origin or function of the TR. The interview with Doris took about half an hour, she had read a book about the TR and also had done further research on the internet to get to know more about the Tibetan rites.

And then I had another 'accidental' interview partner. Boris saw me reading about the TR in the subway and came up to me, offering his knowledge, being neither an 'authorized' teacher from the *Dachverband* nor practitioner. But he seemed to have quite an understanding of the topic. **Boris**, male, 56, does not practise the TR because he is too busy and does not have a regular working day which would allow him to practise regularly. A regular practise is needed on the one hand to reach effects and on the other hand not to irritate the body when the

practise is quit and the chakras are not stimulated any more. Boris, a Moldavian, studied Cosmoenergy in Moskau and then travelled to Korea, Tibet and India where he also got to know the TR. Boris was the only one who got to know the TR in India. The interview was held on the phone. Boris suggested to find someone who speaks Russian, so we could talk more easily because his knowledge of German was really low. I was lucky to find a translator who was willing to translate for me. The interview took about have an hour and was difficult to translate because the translator did not have a clue of the topic and therefore difficulties to express Russian in German terms. Still this interview was interesting, because Boris was the only one who had learned the rites in India. This did not make a lot of difference concerning the practice but he had different opinions on some aspects.

A lot of trainers I found on the internet did not call back or made vague comments on their willingness giving an interview. The trainers who held courses could not help me find long-term practitioners because almost everyone told me he or she did not know anyone who had a long term practice. So I got lucky finding at least one long term practitioner (Gertrud), but I suppose it was just because she is the manager of a big company and had been interviewed by a newspaper. In this short article¹⁵, she was asked what gave her strength (German: “Kraft” physical and psychological) and she answered: the TR. And I was lucky again to get an interview with her though she has a tight schedule. Finding beginners would not have been such a problem, I just would have had to visit courses, but since they are not such a good source for long term effectiveness of exercising I kept the number of beginners very low.

Concerning all the practitioners I wanted to know their acquaintance with the TR, where or how they got to know them, their motivation and aim in practising, their way of practising, the experiences they had with the TR, what the practice means/meant to them and why they chose this way of exercising. Generally I also wanted to investigate their way of explaining the effects and functions of the TR, and what kind of history and origin of the TR they received or believe in. Concerning the teachers I furthermore tried to find out the differences between various types of practitioners, such as auto-didactic or trained or educated ones. Autodidacts are those who never attended a course or got the exercises shown by an authorized teacher (Nina, Doris, Gertrud, Marta, Franziska, Ludwig). In the case of Nina she had not even read the book and just knew the exercises from a friend. As ‘trained’ I refer to those who had been at a course, but none of my informants fit into this category than myself.

¹⁵ <http://kurier.at/archiv/volltext.php> (12.7.2009 21h30)

And with ‘educated’ I mean those who attended the training to become an authorized and licensed »Tibeter«-trainer (Klara, Anton, Hans, Edith, Stefan). Before they all got their licences they had been autodidacts. Boris was the exception. He did not fit exactly in this category because officially only the *Dachverband* provides trainer’s education. Boris referred himself as a instructor, but was not trained by the *Dachverband*; he got to know the TR through his study journeys in India.

The interviews were held personally, except for two over the phone, and I always tried to use a narrative form, which leaves the interview partner a lot of space to mention things which might not have been covered or brought to speech, if I had used guided interview questions. Here the problem occurred that some people just do not like to talk out of the blue. And that these interviews were rather held in a question – answer format, after all I had to get some information out of my interview partner(s). One problem during the interviews was time. Most of my informants wanted to have it over quickly, so there was little time to ask more questions to things they said. This became obvious when I was writing the ethnography section: some statements they made were not clear, but I could not get further personal explanations from them.

A problem which occurred was how to speak of bodily experience. No one made concrete statements about their bodily experience; with concrete I mean detailed information, which offers you a greater understanding, or gives at least a hint of how this person experienced the practice. Nor did hardly any one of them make remarks on the effects to the mind or soul, even when they all were convinced that exercising had an effect on their state of well-being, where e.g. a calm mind is part of. What they did mention partly, was a change of living or life style. Through my own practice I could get a glimpse of what they meant by their vague comments on bodily experiences, but this brought up the question of method. Actually the method of understanding their practice moved from logical traceability to comparing with my own experience. I had to use my own bodily experience to make more sense of the data and to get an understanding of the practice of and through personal experience. A further problem that occurs at this point is how the researcher herself can express this experience, knowledge and understanding, by just using words. One further difficulty was the language. German is a language of nouns, and has a preference to put these nouns together and best of all in an abstract way. And therefore to write in English I had to find paraphrases, which mean more or less the same, to translate the abstract-compound nouns.

2. Participant Observation, the course

I participated in a course at the *Volkshochschule* (an institution which provides different kinds of courses at moderate prices) during which I conducted participant observation. It provided me some basic information about the Tibetan Rites. The course was built up in three sessions of one and a half hours within three weeks.

In the first session we learned the technique of the rites, positions for relaxation and some background information. In the second session we repeated the first five rites and added the sixth. In the third session we repeated everything we had learned in session one and two and ended with practising the seventh rite, singing mantras. Having a practice of nearly two years in TR and feeling well with it I wondered if I was doing them in the right way. The teacher, Iris, 31, a physiotherapist and masseur has been practising for 6 years and has been teaching for two years. Her experience with practising the TR regularly was that she felt more awake the whole day and being overweight she lost 10kg in three years without a diet with just being more aware of her feeling of hunger and the way of eating.

She introduced the rites with the saga of the Colonel who came back from a Himalaya journey rejuvenated and who brought the rites with him. She emphasized that during the practice no pain must occur. Then she went on, starting with stretching exercises before she explained the rites. Her deep breathing was very striking and rousing. The teacher explained the rites in great detail. After every explanation and try out, she explained the whole exercise again and controlled us while we repeated the exercise. She emphasized that every movement has to be done equally often and that it is important to keep the flow of the movements while following the breath. When someone had troubles with one rite she gave suggestions to make it easier or more comfortable, e.g. using a pillow under the knees, when the kneeling position felt uncomfortable. The way she corrected me at one of the rites felt quite uncomfortable and caused a pain in the back. When I told her that this way of movement did not feel good, she suggested to go back to my usual way. Iris underlined that the relaxing positions are important for the body to assimilate the movements. In the first session we practised for about an hour, and then she answered further questions, concerning time of practice and repetitions. Iris told us that the TR can be practised whenever someone likes to and she would start with three repetitions and add more repetitions when necessary, she only does 6 repetitions. Then we repeated the exercises and ended with a breathing exercise for the last ten minutes. This exercise was meant to help to learn breathing properly while practising the rites. The exercise

was to breathe with the help of the midriff, then just into the lungs and then combined using midriff and lungs.

In the second session two weeks later Iris gave us handouts and went through them. First the effects: strengthening of the immune system, stimulation of organs, strengthening and stabilisation of digestive functions, increase of detoxification, strengthening of the heart muscle, regulation of blood pressure and blood circulation, increase of flexibility of the spine and the joints, invigoration and extension of the musculature of the whole body, strengthening of the breathing organs, breathing generally becomes deeper, and one's perception of the body improves, which causes a change of appetite and eating habits.

The most important thing during exercising, she said, is to stay aware of one's activities and what happens during the action. It is necessary to stay focused and sense what happens, which is the most difficult task to fulfil. When someone just does one of the exercises, it often is carried out mechanically. The mind is far away, probably occupied with thoughts which have nothing to do with the exercises. This separates the mind from the body. The rites on the other hand are a ritual which should be executed as a very conscious action or meditation that connects one with oneself. This attentiveness and awareness together with the deep breathing causes the special effects of the TR.

Concerning the practice it is necessary to exercise regularly, it need not be every day, maybe three times in the week, but it does not make sense to practise every day for three weeks and then pause for two weeks. A fixed exercising time would be advisable. Again she repeated to start with 3 repetitions and add two more, when you feel ready. Do not do more than 21 repetitions. Iris told us about a man she met, who was doing the exercises much more often. This man always took things to the extreme wanting to do everything more than perfectly. This way of exercising caused him to be totally over the top and working whole days and nights. After a while he looked totally exhausted and years older than he was until he realised that it was too much and slowed down and also decreased the number of repetitions. Further recommendations were that the sequence of the rites from one to five should be followed; the only exception is that the first rite can be put last. To drink a glass of warm water before the practice supports the detoxification. Also do not eat a heavy meal two to three hours before the practice. Do not shower at least half an hour after the practice. This is useful to let the energy continue to have an effect. The rites should not be treated as a fitness program and no

one should force oneself into them. Do not overdo the stretches and do not bounce. Direct the focus to body and breathing, you may close your eyes. Put all different thoughts aside. When you are sick and bedridden it is possible to exercise mentally, going through the exercises in your mind and breathe. After these explanations she showed us the right breathing, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth, and the sixth rite.

In the third session she made us repeat everything we learned the two sessions before everyone of us had to say something which has to be taken care of while practising. At the end we sang different mantras which were on the handouts. Iris told us that the voice is an indicator of personality, that the way someone talks and intonates can show what kind of person he or she is. To have a calm way of talking and strong voice for example shows that this person is connected to oneself, can handle everything in a calm way, but also can establish oneself and knows what he or she wants or needs.

The number of attendees decreased from session to session. In the first session there were 15 persons (2 men, 13 women (one couple)). Second session: 11 attendees (2 men, 9 woman) and in the third session 9 attendees (one man, 8 women). I was obviously the youngest attendee. I estimate that the others were between 40 to 65 years. Only a few were doing sports regularly, these were easy to detect, for they had fewer problems with the alignment and the movements of the rites. Others had trouble with the correct alignment, because they were neither stretched enough nor they had enough strength, and also were straining themselves a lot.

To sum up, the course did not give me a lot of new information about the rites. One was that no matter how many repetitions are done, do them evenly often and best choose an uneven number, as Iris put it. This is easily achieved by starting with 3 repetitions and adding two every time when an increase is appropriate – this always gives one an uneven number of repetitions. The second information, which was quite interesting, was the teacher's statement about her education having been excessively expensive. She has the impression that the demand is not that high and she does it because it is fun for her, but financially it is really not profitable.

Ethnography of Tibetan Rites

The preface to *Die fünf »Tibeter«* (Kelder 1994: 7-10) says, to benefit from the book and the exercises an open mind is needed, otherwise reading would not be necessary at all. The open mind refers to the overcoming of traditional thinking, which offers just a certain way of seeing the world. When an open mind is given, the so called impossible things get possible. The writer of the preface especially refers to feeling and looking younger through the practice of the rites. The aim of the book is to reach as many people as possible and help them. What the writer exactly means with to help them is not mentioned, it can be derived from the rest of the text that the help refers to the achievement of health, well-being and happiness. These achievements are grounded in the concept of an universal energy, which penetrates everything. Also human beings are nurtured by this energy. This energy also has influences on the endocrine glands system, which regulates the hormones, which are essential for e.g. the process of aging. This energy can be used to harmonize the whole body. Therefore, besides the openness to overcome standardised views, the feeling of being valid, worthy and dignified is needed to achieve a changing. Barbara Simonsohn (1998: 13), who wrote about the Tibetan Rites with children, states that the book would be a success if people have learned to take responsibility for their own well-being and their lives. She describes it as “Primäre Prävention”. When energies can flow freely, diseases would stay away and because health is not just the absence of diseases well-being is going to be a condition of dynamic energies, inner balance and high vitality.

The book *Die fünf »Tibeter«* (1989) and also the further editions are written in first person and tell a story about the narrator (Peter Kelder) and Colonel Bradford, who found the so called *Fountain of Youth* (Kelder 1994: 23). Colonel Bradford had been travelling through India and Tibet to search for a certain monastery he heard of, where people become older than usually and look young and vital. After his research he finally found the mystic monastery, and lived with the lamas, who taught him about chakras, certain exercises to stay young and healthy, about nutrition and mantras. The Colonel shares his secrets with the narrator of how he regained such vitality (Kelder 1946, 1989 and all further editions.).

1. Chakras

The intention of the Tibetan rites is to activate and harmonize the chakras. Chakras can be compared with invisible organs. Chakra, in Sanskrit, means wheel or swirl, and following this concept every chakra moves at a certain speed and can also turn right or left. The use of TR is to speed up the chakras for greater energy and longevity. In *Die fünf »Tibeter«* this speeding and energetic character of chakras is pictured in the comparison of a young healthy human, who has a lot of power and nearly sparkles with energy, and an old unhealthy human, who has lost energy and also moves less energetically than children. The chakras are considered to be the engines of the body.¹⁶

The human body is pervaded by different energy channels, 'nadis' in Sanskrit. Tibetan or Indian nadis and Chinese meridians are sometimes treated as analogy for an easier or comparative understanding, but can not be taken as the same. This was pointed out by my informants Hans and Stefan. Three main nadis are important for the flow of prana, the universal energy, and at every point where the nadis cross each other a chakra 'occurs' (for detailed description see below). These channels are pictured like a stick with a double helix wrapped around. Ida and Pingala nadi are to the left and right of Shushumna nadi, which goes along the spine. Ida and Pingala are connected to the sympathetic nervous system. Shushumna, the "psychic energy", is said to control the function of organs through the chakras, which are mainly connected to the parasympathetic nervous system (Hackl 1996: 62).

Every one of the seven chakras, which is the number of chakras most frequently given, belongs to a different physical organ, having a correspondence to the vegetative nervous centre and the hormone centres. Also, every chakra is attached to certain principles, elements, sounds or words (mantra) and colours and a symbolic lotus, from four leaves, to thousands of leaves. The term thousands stands for uncountable. On the one hand the chakras are pictured as lotus, which are more or less opened, which means that they are able to permeate cosmic energy (Simonsohn 1998: 26). On the other hand the lotus is associated with divinity, fertility, fortune, knowledge, purity, beauty and enlightenment. The lotus also stands for mental and spiritual evolvment, because this flower has its roots in the mud, but grows straight towards light and it is also stain-resistant. The literature of chakras is very broad and their spelling,

¹⁶ These assumptions can be verified through "Kirlian - Photography", which can map otherwise invisible electronic fields, the so called 'Aura' (Kelder 1994: 8). Chakras are seen as energies that influence the 'Aura' from the inside.

description and interpretation differs from text to text. In *Die fünf »Tibeter«* (Kelder 1994: 27-28) seven chakras are mentioned. Other literature also mentions smaller chakras in the palms and the soles, and also minor chakras between the main chakras.

The first chakra, in Sanskrit **Muladhara** (*mula* = root, origin, source; *adhara* = stake or vitally important part), is said to be located at the end of the spine, in the area of the pelvis, above the after (Iyengar 2008: 402-403)¹⁷. It is said to regulate the production of oestrogen or testosterone (Gärtner 1996: 65)¹⁸. Furthermore it correlates with the principle of stability (*prthivi*) and the element earth, and therefore stands for universal trust and the ability to connect with the world and the sense for living. Its mantra is *Lam*, its symbol the four foliated lotus, and its colour red (Hackl 1996: 60)¹⁹.

The second chakra, in Sanskrit **Svadhishhtana** (*sva* = vital force or soul, *adhishtana* = domicile or housing), is said to be located close to the sexual organs. It is said to regulate the production of cortisone and adrenalin. It correlates with the principle of heat (*tejas*) and the element fire and is connected to topics of sexuality and creativity. Its mantra is *Vam*, its symbol the six foliated lotus, and its colour orange.

The third chakra, in Sanskrit **Manipura** (=navel), is said to be set close to the solar plexus and the liver and is said to be responsible for the production of insulin and glucagon. It correlates with the principle of flow (*ap*) and the element water and is connected to topics of personality and volition. Its mantra is *Ram*, its symbol the ten foliated lotus, and its colour is yellow.

The fourth chakra, in Sanskrit **Anahata** (= heart), is said to be located close to the heart and the chest bone, and therefore connected to the physical heart. It correlates with the principle of independent locomotion (*vayu*) and the element air and is connected to topics of love, healing, and relations. Its mantra is *Yam*, its symbol the twelve foliated lotus, and its colour green. The heart chakra is said to have a kind of special function connecting the upper and the lower chakras, which also means to connect or to transform between heaven and earth.

¹⁷ Spellings and translations are from Iyengar 2008 : 402-403.

¹⁸ For the hormones, which are said to be produced by the chakras, see Gärtner 1996 : 65 – 69.

¹⁹ For the references to body, principles, elements and sounds, Hackl 1996 : 60 – 62.

The fifth chakra, in Sanskrit **Vishuddi** (*vishudda* = pure, clear), is said to be located close to the larynx and has a lot to do with expression and communication. Singing is an additional exercise to improve this chakra. This chakra is said to regulate the thyroid. It correlates with the principle of space (*akasa*) and the element ether. Its mantra is *Ham*, its symbol the sixteen foliated lotus, and its colour is blue or light blue.

The sixth chakra, in Sanskrit **Ajna** (= dominion), is said to be set between the eyebrows or a little bit above. It correlates with the principle of mind (san.: *Manas*) and the element light and is connected to topics of intuition and perception. Its mantra is *Om* (or *Ksham*), its symbol the 96 (two times 48) foliated lotus, and its colour is deep blue, indigo or violet.

The seventh chakra, in Sanskrit **Sahasrara** (or called the lotus with thousands of leaves), is said to be located at the top of the head and some people say it is located above the head. Together with the thousandfold foliated lotus it stands for a universal consciousness and enlightenment. The colours ascribed to it are violet, golden and white, also the mantra *Om* is used for this chakra.

Chakras are connected to each other through the nadis and therefore a change in one chakra can cause a change in other chakras too. The TR are movements which have input on all chakras, and the individual exercises have input on respective chakras. Every chakra can be disturbed during upbringing, by trauma or lifestyle. However, in the 2008 reprint of *The Eye of Revelation* of 1946 the chakras are not even mentioned. There are seven psychic vortexes in the physical body which also whirl, but they share the locations of the chakras only partly (Kelder 2008: 17). These vortexes are located deep within the forehead, in the posterior part of the brain, in the throat at the base of the neck, in the right side of the body (waist line), in the reproductive organs and one in each knee. “These psychic vortexes revolve at great speed. When all are revolving at the same speed the body is in good health. When one or more of them slow down, old age, loss of power, or senility begin to set in almost immediately.” (Kelder 2008: 17). Editor Watt comments on the fact that the vortexes have been exchanged by the locations of chakras that the publisher tried to make more sense of the vortexes by the better known chakras. Even more, Watt adds in a footnote (2008: 14) that:

Right from the start, some publishers were making Kelder’s work a subset of yoga...while this may be good marketing strategy since yoga practitioners are likely to

be interested in the Five Rites, it is not faithful to Kelder's intent. Kelder never mentioned yoga, and most certainly would have had he wanted to.

None of my informants mentioned the vortexes; all of them, if they said something about whirls at all, referred to chakras. Those who made comments on chakras were convinced that the harmonizing of chakras is the reason for the effect of the Tibetan Rites.

2. Common Practice

The TR are said to be a simple, easy and time saving practice. They are supposed to be simple and learned easily. This is just partly true. Being a sporty person you will not have problems with exercising, but if you had not done any sports for a while, maybe for tens of years, these exercises will take time to be exercised properly:

...für die heutige Zeit eine ganz ideale Folge, weil es dauert nicht lang auch wenn ich's bedacht mache. Und ich kann sagen wenn du's beherrscht, kannst du's am morgen machen bevor man in die Arbeit geht. (Marta)

The usual practice which is recommended by most of the German editions (Kelder 1994: 34-42) and on the internet²⁰ is as follows: Do the five basic exercises every day, starting with three repetitions, and add two more repetitions every new week, or when you feel ready, until you achieve 21 repetitions. Do not eat approximately two hours before; this is a recommendation which is given to all Yoga practice and most sports activities. Practise in the morning or in the evening, whenever you feel comfortable. Breathe in when you start the exercise and exhale when you come back to the starting position

Repetitions

None of my informants had a daily practice of 21 repetitions. Some of them decided to do the exercises unequally often, thus varying the usual recommendations. All of them let their body decide how many repetitions they do or do even fewer. Edith gave an example of what happened when she did all 21 repetitions:

²⁰ e.g.: <http://www.lifeevents.org/5-tibetans-energy-rejuvenation-exercises.htm> (8.6.2009 11h20)
<http://www.fivetibetans.com> (8.6.2009 11h40)
<http://www.t5t.com> (8.6.2009 12h20)

... heißt ich hab einmal probiert 21 zu machen ich hab gedacht innerhalb von einer Woche ich werde sterben. Das war fürchterlich und wenn [für] jemand eben die größere Anzahl von Wiederholung nicht gut ist, so was probiert, dann kriegt er alle Zustände. Also überall dort wo ich Schwachstellen im Körper habe oder hatte damals, hat sich so ausgewirkt. Wirklich ich war am Ende. Also das würde ich abraten... Körperlich und geistig ich hab mich so schlecht gefühlt, das war wie ein Gefühl wirklich, eigentlich eigne ich mich fürs Spital. So hat mir alles weh getan und habe ich mich wirklich fürchterlich gefühlt. Also man sollte sich immer, so wie [bei] jeder Sache nach [dem] eigenen Gefühl richten.

Simonsohn (1998: 35) writes that more repetitions than 21 would not have an additional effect. Marta believes that '21' is a holy number, but could not argue her statement. I can only speculate about the purpose of 21 repetitions. Numbers have been given various connotations throughout time, history and beliefs. In a biblical sense one stands for god and two for Christies dualistic nature of god and human, and three for trinity, the synthesis which overcomes duality. I also mention the number three because three times seven equals 21, this is just a simple primary school calculation. And there are seven chakras or seven days of creation.²¹ In the numerology after Reichenstein one stands for will, two for knowledge, three for alliance, seven for victory and 21 for success.²² In the Mayan sense one stands for unity two for duality three for action and seven for reflection.²³ The recommendation of 21 repetitions could be therefore given in a combination of three and seven, also the sum of numbers of 21 is three, that for example every chakra is activated or accounted for three times. The theory I like best is that two, the individual and cosmic soul become one. This parallels the yogic sense; in a numerological sense it could be stated as success. Anton remarked:

Es geht ums, nicht dem anderen entsprechen sonder sich selber entsprechen Zeit für sich nehmen fürs eigenen Atmen fürs eigenes Bewusstsein und damit äh muss ich nicht irgendwem entsprechen, der schreibt 21 oder 23 oder 27 ist ganz furchtbar. Sondern was mir gut tut und mir entspricht. Also das wirklich dem persönlichen individuellen Gefühl anpassen und das kann an manchen Tagen kann man ja auch sagen, ok heut möchte ich, heut bin müde, aber heut möchte ich mich stärker aktivieren, ich mach

²¹ <http://www.rodurago.net/index.php?site=details&link=1> (14.10.2009 11h)

²² <http://schicksal-in-zahlen.de/literatur.html> (14.10.2009 11h30)

²³ <http://www.mayanmajix.com/TZOLKIN/> (14.10.2009 12h)

mehr von den Übungen und an machen Tagen sagt er, ich mach es nur mental oder ich mach fünf von jeder und damit ist das völlig genug.

Time, Place and Condition

There was no discussion about when the practice should take place. There was agreement either the morning or the evening, some of my informants referred to sunrise and sunset. Boris, the Moldavian informant, was the only one who described morning as until 11a.m but he did not comment on evening time. He continued that when you do not feel strong enough to do all 21 repetitions they can be split in two, practising one part in the morning and the other in the evening. Boris argued that this would be the best way to practise because there are different flows of energy in the morning (solar energy through Pingala nadi) and in the evening (lunar energy through Ida nadi). Another internet source suggests to break down the 21 repetitions into three sets of seven.²⁴ Also having achieved all 21 repetitions (in the morning) a second practice can be started in the evening again starting with three repetitions (Kelder 1994: 43-44).

The question of the place of the practice was hardly discussed. The German as well the original editions suggest to use a rug beneath the body, especially for rite two to five (Kelder 1994: 34, Kelder 2008: 21). Simonsohn (1998: 37) is of the opinion that it would be best to practise at the same place every time and also reserve the place only for the TR. She also adds that it should be practised by an open window to provide a lot of oxygen during exercising. Marta was the only informant who commented on the place that she thinks it helps to practise at the same place every time.

Concerning one's condition, opinions varied, from 'do it every time even while being ill'(Anton) to 'do not do it while being ill' (Edith), depending on whether they were convinced the practice would do good or not. The third suggestion was to practise when feeling like it, looking for one's own needs, as Marta said. Doris told me that she tried to exercise while having a hangover, which suddenly made her feeling even worse.

²⁴ www.lifeevents.org/5-tibetan-energy-rejuvenation-exercises.htm (8.6.2009 11h20)

Breathing

Most of the German editions and internet sources²⁵ suggest breathing in at the start of the movement and breathing out when coming back to the starting position. Some refer to breathing in through the nose and breathing out through the mouth, which was also the recommended breathing technique in the course I attended. The German version always emphasizes deep and rhythmic breathing during every exercise (Kelder 1994: 34-35). The best way would be to use the full capacity of breathing, supporting the lungs by means of the midriff. The first rite, spinning, has no breathing recommendations at all. Furthermore it is recommended to imagine that all tensions are flowing out of the body when breathing out. While breathing in, imagine to fill oneself with a feeling of fulfilment and comfortable feeling (Kelder 1994: 46). In the reprint edition of 1946 no breathing recommendations are given at all, breath control is no topic. According to the editor of the 2008 edition, breathing is important to the rites, but that the author Peter Kelder knew “you will automatically breath [sic] deeply (and correctly) when you perform the Rites properly” (Kelder 2008: 23).²⁶ The informants did not comment on breathing patterns at all. In general they were of the opinion that it is necessary to breathe deeply and fluently in order to achieve effects.

Movement and Exercises

All exercises should be done with a focus on breathing or bodily sensations, not in a rush and not with a focus on achievement or benefit. The philosophy behind is more a ‘let-it-be-and-do’ than forced and goal-oriented. The rites are meant to have an effect on body, mind and soul. Concerning the body the practice of TR is said to decrease the phases of rest, meaning that you would need less sleep (Simonsohn 1998: 53) Furthermore the skin is meant to be more elastic and smoother, appetite should change and therefore can help to control one’s weight. These effects are grounded in the assumption that the TR have an effect on the thyroid gland, which balances the metabolism and activates digestion. The body position is also meant to change towards being more upright. This should also affect one’s attitude in the same way, the outer position would have impact on the inner attitude and they can reflect each other. On an emotional level the TR are said to solve swings of mood and lead to more

²⁵ e.g.: <http://www.fuenf-tibeter.org> (6.7.2009 11h20)
<http://www.fivetibetans.com> (8.6.2009 11h40)
<http://www.t5t.com> (8.6.2009 12h20)

²⁶ I took breathing to an experiment and tried to forget the usual breathing and follow the “natural” way. So I breathed in at the starting position, breathing out while moving, in again in the end position and out again returning to the starting position. This way of breathing made me slightly dizzy but felt more intense. Trying to breathe out while starting the movement and in when coming back to the starting position felt quite awkward and uncomfortable. I have always been breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth, having the impression of deeper breathing compared to just using the nose to breathe in and out.

vitality, joy of life and enthusiasm, without being dependent on outer things. As for the intellect the TR are supposed to increase the ability of concentration and also to change one's thinking. Especially concerning the ways of thinking, which should move from the dualistic 'either/or' to the holistic 'as well as', which should lead to an integration of all sides of life or personality. (Simonsohn 1998: 56) Some informants favour a certain rite; this can depend on time and mood. At least two of my interview partners, Doris and Anton, were in favour of the first rite. In general the informants did not comment on each single rite. Marta always compared them to Yoga exercises and Doris and Ludwig made some comments about the difficulty of proper alignment. Especially Ludwig criticized the presentation of the exercises. He has the experience that people, who have little knowledge about anatomy, have difficulties with alignment and movement:

An sich sind die Übungen für den gesunden Organismus sicher absolut problemlos immer unter Voraussetzung, dass sie perfekt ausgeführt werden. ...aber es steht wirklich zu wenig beschrieben drinnen. Für den Laien war mir das Buch zu wenig, und ich hab hauptsächlich wenn Leute mir was vorgezeigt haben korrigiert und gesagt worauf's wirklich ankommt ...Das Wichtige eigentlich an einer Übung, meine ich, wenn man sie weitergibt ist: eh, einmal eine perfekte Anleitung, mit vielen Bilder von wegen Übungsabschnitten, und genau da stehen durchaus Sachen drinnen von wegen mit Zehen aufstellen und achten was zuerst kommt und wie das fließen soll, aber man liest es ja nicht.

The **first rite** is to spin clockwise; in later German editions, like in those by Arnold Lanz *Fitness und Entspannung mit den Fünf »Tibetern«*®, the rite is called "Kreisel" (2005: 30). Stand tall, with your arms straightened out parallel to the floor, palms down, and then start to turn. The German editions do not give any breathing recommendation, but they suggest in the appendix to fold one's palms in eye height and look at the thumbs to regain one's balance more easily (Kelder 1994: 77). Iris, the teacher of the course I participated in, recommended to start with the palms at eye height, to breathe in when stretching the arms and to breathe out when you start turning.

There are two different ways to spin. The first way is to turn around your axis, meaning being aware of one's centre. The other way is to keep spotting with your eyes and then turn, meaning to fix a point with your eyes and not to let it go, therefore the head has to be turned

at first and a little bit faster than the rest of the body. The problem in spinning is not to get dizzy or sick. This leads to a further problem in the recommendations, which are contradictory as to when to stop: either before or after you get dizzy or sick. The middle way would be to continue spinning until you get slightly dizzy but are still away from getting sick. Concerning the ways of spinning, with and without spotting, the focus is just different. With spotting the focus lies on the spot. This could cause some pain in the neck when it is already sore and is turned in a harsh and fast way. Without spotting, the focus lies more on the centre and the middle axis right through the whole body. The attention on the centre can also be added when spotting itself is embodied.²⁷ Whatever you choose, it always has to be clockwise. Why should one turn clockwise? The reason of spinning is to activate all energies which are in the body and which are to be centred to be ready for the other exercises. To spin to the right means to connect to the ground and oneself. Marta explained that through the turning all energies are centred and that turning to the left would disperse energy. This rite has influence on all chakras because of its movement. The first rite is said to provide stability and self consciousness (Lanz 2005: 110). The rite is meant to give drive and impetus for the whole day. Furthermore the rite is supposed to solve problems with circulation, to clear the thought and to assist happiness, luck, facileness, and release from worries. In common the rite should prepare for a positive attitude towards life.

The **second rite** is sometimes called “Kerze” (Lanz 2006: 35), Marta refers to it as a variation of a Yoga exercise called *Padasana*.²⁸ The rite has input especially to the abdomen chakras. The rite starts with lying on the floor on your back and lifting the head and legs at the same time, the arms lie close along the body and stay there during exercising. The palms face the mat and fingers are closed. The most important thing during this exercise is to bring the whole back to the floor before the lifting starts. This will prevent a pain in the back, which is probably untrained. While lifting the head to the chin and the straight legs to an upright position, the shoulders should stay on the floor during the whole exercise, which has to be taken care of especially when the practice is new. The back has to stay on the floor also while coming back to the starting position; it is very common that the lower back will arch off the floor because of a lack of strength in the abdomen. This problem can be solved with bending the knees before lifting. That will automatically tip the pelvis slightly and will bring the whole spine to the floor. While lowering the legs the abdomen will need less strength to keep the

²⁷ After experimenting I actually prefer the second one. Simply because turning the body as a whole and keeping attention on the centre, the middle axis makes spinning more authentic than keeping the eyes on one spot.

²⁸ The Yoga variations of the rites are explained in chapter of comparative movements and actions.

spine on the floor when knees are bent too. Usually while lying on the floor with the spine in its natural position, there will be a little space between the mat and the lower back. To improve this position and get the whole spine to the floor, pull the legs led by the heels out of the hips, as if you went around something which is between your torso and your legs. Especially beginners' legs do not have to be straightened; most of these persons have got shortened hamstrings, which will make it impossible for them to stretch their legs fully in an upright position. But after a few months of practising, this soreness in the back of the legs will be gone. This will enable the gymnast to extend the legs even further. The second rite is said to strengthen the muscles of the abdomen and the back and therefore is meant to cure back pain (Lanz 2005: 116). Furthermore the rite should support digestion, and therefore is said to have a cleaning function of body and mind. This should help to overcome old attitudes and mind sets.

The starting position of the **third rite** is to kneel on the floor with toes mounted and a straight torso. This rite is also called “Halbmond” (Lanz 2006: 43), or also “Camel”²⁹, which is again derived from a Yoga exercise. After taking the starting position put your chin towards the chest bone at the beginning and then bend the upper body backwards led by the chest bone. While breathing out come back to starting position and let the chin rest on the chest. Other instructions suggested to limit the back tilt of the head by placing a hand on the neck. Then bend the spine backwards, as long as the legs can hold the same position as in the starting position and as long as lifting up again (to the starting position) happens without straining. This can be achieved by letting the chest bone lead the movement. To avoid pressure in the throat area leave your mouth slightly open while moving backwards. Another part of alignment is concerned with the position of the hands. The usual one is to place them on the side but a little bit shifted backwards, so the hands do not lie exactly on the back of the hamstrings nor on the sides of the thighs (Kelder 1994: 35). Bending back and not to strain oneself or hurt one's back is the most complicated thing during this exercise. This problem of aligning was especially mentioned by beginner Doris, who helped herself a little with YouTube videos and found her way to practise rite number three.

Why let the chest bone lead? This exercise has effects on the heart chakra, which is said to be located somewhere behind the chest bone. The focus on the leading chest bone prevents the lower spine from sacking. This is the most common mistake during this exercise and causes

²⁹ www.lifeevents.org

most of the pain in the lower back. The third rite stretches the upper body, especially chest, shoulders and neck (Lanz 2005: 121). The rite trains the muscles around the ankle. Also rite number three is said to give the renal an extra portion of oxygen. Furthermore the rite is meant to prevent heart attacks and should help heart, lungs and stomach to work optimally. Concerning the mind this rite is supposed to make space for new positive thinking and general openness. It should give ground to love, strength, enthusiasm and daringness.

The **fourth rite**, sometimes called “Brücke” (Lanz 2006: 50), starts in a sitting position with a straight back and stretched legs in hip distance from one another, hands beside the bottom, and goes on with moving the pelvis upward and bending the knees until a table top position is reached. Again the chin should touch the chest at the beginning and ending of movement. The fourth rite is especially difficult for those who have not done a lot of sports in the past years. It takes a lot of effort to lift the bottom off the ground and bring it to a parallel position to the floor. Also the neck has to be taken care of, so that it is not ‘pushed’ into the shoulders, which Ludwig underlined. In addition to that you find at least two recommendations where to place the hands before starting the movement. One is exactly beside the bottom, straight under the shoulders and another is to put hands slightly more forward. Rolling the shoulders downwards before starting the movement can help proper alignment and makes a great difference to the neck; it can hang freely without being ‘stopped’ by the shoulders. The fourth rite strengthens the back and wrists and stretches the upper body (Lanz 2005: 127). The movement should activate the digestive organs. Again this rite is said to correct and overcome thinking of prejudice, intolerance, impatience and bias, and should replace them for regularity, clear self-assessment, strength and love.

The **fifth rite** starts in a push-up position, hands and legs at the same distance of about 60cm apart from each other. In German terminology the exercise is called “Berg” (Lanz 2006: 57) and sometimes this rite is named after the Yoga exercises and moves from the “cobra” to the “downward dog”.³⁰ When you have reached the starting position let the pelvis sack towards the floor and look up, but do not let the head sack into the shoulders. Therefore push the shoulder blades downwards. And then while breathing in lift the bottom as high as possible, shift the weight backwards towards your feet, thus reshaping your body to represent the letter A. Breathe out while you return to the starting position. Also the fifth rite tends to cause pain in the lower back when not practised correctly. During the starting position pain can be

³⁰ www.lifeevents.org (8.6.2009 11h20)

avoided by activating the gluteus; and during the upwards-movement through an activation of the lower abdomen.

Doris for example talked about a pain while moving into the A position and suggested that she was not doing it right. What is also difficult is to check the right position of an upside down 'V' without seeing oneself in a mirror. During this exercise the first chakra, which connects one to the ground, is lifted towards heaven and in this way activated, as stated by Marta. The fifth rite moves and stretches the whole musculature, trains the wrists and ankles, and is said to activate circulation (Lanz 2005: 131). The rite is supposed to connect mind and heart, and to cast out negatives. The rite is also meant to help against abstractedness and restraints.

The **sixth rite** is highly disputed. This rite should be added when one already has experience with the other five, because it is said to be an exercise for advanced practitioners. In *Die fünf »Tibeter«* Colonel Bradford tells his audience (they had been installing an exercising group) that the sixth rite raises energy of regeneration, not only mentally but also physically (Kelder 1994: 52). Usually, human vitality, which nurtures all chakras, is given away through the sexual energy in the first chakra. To become a "superman" or "superwoman" it is necessary to let this energy flow through the whole body and every chakra (Kelder 1994: 52; 2008: 47). To lead this energy to higher levels celibacy is needed (Kelder 1994:52, 2008:46). The publisher of the German edition comments on this issue, namely that it seems to be impossible to let sexual energy flow upwards when using this energy for practised sexuality (Kelder 1994: 56). With this statement the Colonel underlines the incompatibility of sexual lust and 'true' spirituality. The publisher does not agree to this statement. He links this conviction to the 1930s, when this was a common concept. Still editions warn about risks, which may be legitimate or not. It could be stated that practising the sixth rite does not harm provided one has no sex. Another group of practitioners (pupils of Chris Griscom, who wrote the introduction to the German edition in 1991) includes the sixth rite into their practice but makes sure not to have sex a few hours before or after the rite (Kelder 1994: 56).

With the sixth rite only 3 to 5 repetitions are recommended, and breathing is totally different. And it just should be practised when one has an overspill of sexual energy. The 1946 reprint edition calls it the "excess of procreative energy" (Kelder 2008: 47). Stand tall, breathe out while bending forward, press all the air out of the lungs and come back to upright position

with empty lungs. Put your hands on the hips and straighten your elbows; in this way the shoulders are shifted up. Tuck in the abdomen and out the chest and hold the position until you feel the need to breathe in again. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. While breathing out release your arms. Breathe a couple of times before you repeat the exercise (Kelder 1994: 53). This rite is said to provide an extra load of energy when needed and is meant to provide a clear mind and an active intellect (Lanz 2005: 135). The reprint of 1946 says about the advanced exercise and celibacy:

If you really want to look and be young in every respect there is a Sixth Rite that you must practice. I have said nothing about it until now because it would have been useless to you without first having obtained good results from the other five ... it would be necessary for them [the practitioners] to lead a more or less continent life.”
(Kelder 2008: 45-46).

In the text a footnote explains the word ‘continent’ as ‘celibate’. The editor J.W. Watt comments on what “more or less continent” may mean (Kelder 2008: 89). First, nothing is said about complete celibacy. Second, the editor speculates that the phrase “more or less”, could be taken as 75% celibacy. Watt argues (2008: 89) that 75% of times people do not engage in sex when they have the urge to, because at that time it is inappropriate and therefore they resist their urge. “So if you were to practice the rite number six only when it was inappropriate to engage in sex you may very well be living up to the “more or less continent” standard”.

Christian Salvesen wrote a whole book about the sixth rite and its practice, with further information on chakras, the sexual energy called Kundalini, tantra, yoga, love and sexuality, named *Der sechste »Tibeter«*®(2007). In short, the Kundalini is thought to be the divine cosmic energy in the body. It is symbolized by a snake, rolled together at the end of the spine. This sleeping energy has to be awakened and drawn upwards through Sushumna-nadi and the chakras (Iyengar 2008: 117). The rise of Kundalini is one way or instrument to achieve the ‘greater’ but not a necessity. The sixth rite is just one way to awake and raise Kundalini. In the course I attended, the sixth rite was just said to be a breathing exercise for the raise of sexual energy and this exercise is the real fountain of youth. Salvesen (2007: 139-142) emphasizes that we apply our sexual energy in various ways to achieve different things. Originally the biological function is to reproduce life, but this energy has impact on all areas

of our life. This sexual energy can be expressed in very different ways and sexuality is just one of them, others are for example the drive for life, love but also the energy of power, war and destruction.

In short this sexual energy is everything, it is the thing that keeps us alive and influences our whole actions. Therefore it can not be said that sexual energy, the serpent power is good or bad; it is not only one. Salvesen maintains that actually the sixth rite should be the most important one, but restrictions have been made, which prevent people to exercise this rite. So it does not come as a surprise that none of my informants was practising the sixth rite, some were trying to, but none of them included it into their daily practice. Salvesen practised the sixth rite and experienced intense sensations and concluded that the key to transmutation lies in the immediate sensing and perceiving of this energy. It is not about doing something with it; rather experience it very consciously, everything else will happen by itself. The effects will vary from person to person, but life will get more fulfilled, intense, mystic and timeless. In the end Salvesen agrees with Watt that the sixth rite does not harm sex life, but rather improves it (2007:184). Salvesen also adds another practice recommendation, namely to keep your tongue on the palatal and when coming up again, to contract your PC-muscle. The easy recommendation is to tuck the abdomen in. Salvesen explains that the pubococcygeus (PC-muscle) has its origin at the pubis and inserts at the sacrum; this muscle is mainly used to back off from urinating. So called improvements of this muscle can help against incontinence, problems with the prostate or impotence, and after delivery. Furthermore a controlled PC muscle can hold back ejaculation and can lead to multiple orgasms (Salvesen 2007: 170, 296).

The **seventh rite** is no physical exercise; it refers to the singing of OM or other mantras. In the usual *Die fünf »Tibeter«* editions, this information about the voice is not even mentioned as seventh rite. Again Christian Salvesen gave it a greater importance and called it the seventh rite in his publication of *Der Siebte »Tibeter«®. Die eigene Stimme entwickeln und erfolgreich einsetzen* (2004). In *Die fünf »Tibeter«* you can find a short chapter about the energy of voice. First the Colonel addresses men and their voice and pitch. The higher the pitch of a male's voice, the lower his sexual vitality and vice versa. (The first and the fifth chakras are linked and dependent on each other.) The high pitch is a sign of degeneration and can be prevented by training the voice to speak in a deeper pitch. This again will influence the energy of the first chakra and the body will regain vitality. Women on the other hand should not try to get their voice as deep as men; actually if a woman has quite a deep voice she

should try to raise it. Then the Colonel goes on with the singing, which Lamas do not do because of the singing or the meaning of the words itself, but because of the effect on the chakras the vibrations of singing provide.

The rite is described in the following way: Fill your lungs and while breathing out try to reproduce the sound of 'OM'. Split your breath into half for "O" and half for "M". Try to feel "Oooo" in the chest area and "Mmm" in the area of the nose (Kelder 1994: 66). The reprint edition of 1946 presents more methods to lower the voice, but does not maintain to sing OM (Kelder 2008: 61). With an exception of Edith no one mentioned the seventh rite, nor was anyone practising it.

Sequence

Usually the rites are practised in the sequence listed above, but adjustments can be done. A common change is to put the first rite last, after the other four, as Anton does it, except when the sixth rite is practised too, after the sixth rite (Kelder 1992: 118). If one has troubles with one rite it can be skipped and added after a longer practice of the others. The movements are so powerful that just practising the first rite can do a lot. The sequence can also be integrated in a regular workout (Kelder 1994: 45). After a rite is done you may rest for a while breathing deeply. On the last pages of *Die fünf »Tibeter«* you find relaxing positions for rites two to five. The 1946 reprint requests a pause between every repetition of the rite. Both versions suggest to stand erect between the rites and breathe in and out deeply a few times. They also suggest not to take a cold shower after the exercising, it would harm the flow of energy (1994: 46, 2008: 40). And Iris was of the opinion that it would best not to shower at all directly after the practice of the rites.

Nutrition

Colonel Bradford also gives advice about nutrition (Kelder 1994: 57-61, 2008: 51-57). He explains the way Lamas nurture themselves and eat. First the meal just consists of one sort of food, so the digestion is easier than when mixing different kinds of food, especially when protein and carbonates are mixed. This should be respected in any way. The Colonel was mainly impressed by the Lamas eating a row egg yolk in the morning. Unless they were doing hard physical work, they always just ate the egg yolk. An egg yolk is supposed to provide every nutrition that is needed by the brain, nerves and organs. One should eat very slowly and chew the food properly. Digestion starts in the mouth with chewing and insalivating the food,

which was also underlined by Anton. The better food is digested already in the mouth, the easier it is for the body to get the best out of it. Through this process the food is more nurturing and through that the amount of food can be decreased. “The right food , the combination of foods, the right amount of food, and the right method of eating food combines to do great things for one“ (Kelder 2008: 56). A lot of informants were convinced that nutrition is important because of its impact on the whole body. They nurtured themselves in different ways as it can be read in the section about *Individual routines and rituals*. But actually nobody upheld that the TR could only have effects when someone eats healthfully or as suggested. However, most of them underlined that healthy nutrition and eating habits would influence one’s well-being and lifestyle. Furthermore, as the TR are said to be exercises of energy-increase, as well as nutrition can increase one’s energy, proper foods and ways of eating support the function of TR. None of the informants said that low quality foods and eating habits decreased the effect of the TR, but their statements somehow indicated that.

Youthful Mind

The last input Colonel Bradford gives is about mentality. It is part of mentality that people get old; in order to stay young it is necessary to think, act and behave like a young human. Walk tall and with dignity, believe that impossible things are possible (Kelder 1994: 67-68). The reprint of 1946 differs in its chapter design from German editions. In the English edition one chapter (Long-Lived Lamas) is about nutrition; another chapter called *Voices, Vortexes, and Vitality* deals with different methods of lowering the voice, there is also a chapter called *Mantram–Mind Magic* which is about conscious thinking and the singing of *Aum*, which requires certain diet recommendations (Kelder 2008: 67):

A Mantram is a ‘vocalized instrument of thought’. There is a slight difference between Mantram and Mantra. Usually, Mantram means vocalized thought, while Mantra is an inaudible thought.

In general people have words or sentences which run through the mind, this subconscious activity should be taken advantage of in different ways. One is to attach a further sentence to a certain thought, for example when the sentence is “Peace in our mind”, extend it with “Peace in our mind means peace, power and plenty for me right now” (Kelder 2008: 68). As pointed out by Kelder (2008: 68-72):

... attach it to something of meaning and consequence, and after a while when the subconscious ceases to project its activity into your conscious mind, although it will continue to repeat the thought within itself (this has been proven through the use of hypnotism) ... the sub-conscious mind will begin to put the thought into practice in your conscious life ... the idea is to send just as powerful a suggestion into the sub-conscious realm of mind as possible ... your thought that will do miracles in your subconscious world for you ... a little later on in your CONSCIOUS or OUTER WORLD

This attachment is also called *affirmation* which originates in Latin *affirmare* and means to affirm, confirm, install, assure, declare, assert or to claim. The chapter of *Mantram-Mind Magic* was added in to the 1946 edition (extension of the 1939 original edition). Salvesen (2004: 83), author of the book about the sixth and seventh rites, claims that this chapter was added in 1947. As I mentioned in the introduction, a 1947 edition could not be found, and it is probably a mistake of dating the book. Furthermore Salvesen states that this additional chapter was added to the German editions in 1996, called *Das verlorene Kapitel*.

Das verlorene Kapitel is about the use of Mantrams but was changed compared to the original of 1946. In the German version it is not suggested to extend one's thoughts but rather to say out one's wishes loud. These should be expressed in words of emotional terms or the feeling you will achieve when you have reached your aim. This means that wishes e.g. for a new car or clothes can be summed up with the wish for plenty and wealth. Add the word *now* to it; this should tell the beyond-consciousness (in the 1946 edition it is the sub-consciousness) to start with fulfilment right now. Focus on the final result and do not tell your sub- or beyond-consciousness how things should be done, it will do them by itself in a very subtle way (Salvesen 2007: 70). The second part in this chapter is about the seventh rite, the singing of *OM*. This word or rather sound is thought to have a magical effect on the beyond-consciousness, no matter what your mother tongue may be (Salvesen 2007: 73). The worth of this word lies in its sound and the vibration, not in its meaning. But only these persons can profit from the rite who are ready to receive such a powerful vibration. Therefore first the practice of the rites is needed, also recommendations about nutrition should be followed and one must not drink alcohol or smoke. Also one should drink a lot of water to clear one's body to be able to receive such vibrations at all. The singing of *OM* is said to be for elderly people, who have reached an age, in which the wisdom of life deepens naturally. This is argued that

elder people already have realised to see behind one's illusions and distraction of the material world, and they know that the earnings of life lie inside of oneself. The singing of *OM* and one's mantram can be combined, keeping one's mind quiet during the singing of 'O' and repeating one's affirmation during the sounding of 'M'. The 1946 edition speaks of the singing of *AUM* instead of *OM*. Concerning one's preparation and execution they recommend the same things, such as that the seventh should not be practised before being 21 years old, "it is intended for mature men and women" (Kelder 2008: 78).

There is an appendix about affirmations already in a German 1994 version written by the publisher and one of the teachers of the *Dachverband*. They state that thinking determines life, matter follows mind. Thoughts are another kind of energy which can be channelled through conscious affirmations. These have positive, inspiring and releasing effects and can steer life. Examples of affirmations while practising the rites are added. Maruschi A. Magyarosy, who is a trainer for *fünf »Tibeter«* education, gives the same affirmation she uses at her work and these are also available on cassettes³¹. Magyarosy suggests (Kelder 1994: 82) to choose and use these affirmations, which especially match one's own situation and need. When creating one's own affirmation it has to be taken care that no negations are used, an affirmation should always be formulated as positive statement as if it were reality. (Use either future or present tense.) There are 18 affirmations, with six differing from rite to rite and the others staying the same. To use all 18 affirmations you have to be either quick at learning and remembering or just record them on tape and replay them while practising.

At least Anton, Gertrud, Klara and Marta, who make up a third of my informants, used affirmations. Marta was the only one who gave me a list of what she thought were the most important affirmations for the rites and partly explained connections to the chakras. For example she connected the fifth rite to the affirmation of „*Ich konzentriere mich jetzt auf das Wesentliche im Leben.*“. Practising this rite it has to be taken care that the head and the shoulder can release and relax, and the softer this part of the body gets, the easier it is to focus on the important things in life. She argued that having the brain "on air" makes it impossible to concentrate on other things, therefore this affirmation is used. Besides the affirmation for the sixth rite all the others were taken from Magyarosy's recommendations. For the sixth rite Marta created „*Ich hole mir Kraft aus der Stille.*“ in analogy to the void of breath ("Atemleere") during the exercise. The other informants who used affirmations did not give

³¹ Cassette –Seite 3, Die fünf »Tibeter« – Audio-Set bzw. Medien-Set, überarbeitete Fassung, Wessobrunn 1991, Integral Verlag, ISBN 3-89304-405-1.

any examples, they all stated that they used their own affirmations as long as they needed to and were convinced it would support one's well-being.

Origin

The controversial question of the origin of the rites was not really reflected by my informants. Nina and Doris suggested the origin of the rites in Tibet or Indian Yoga. Klara saw the origin in Yoga too, whereas the TR are dynamic exercises instead of fixed positions as usual in Yoga. She suggested that these exercises were passed on by monks, but she was not really sure about it. But she was convinced that the exercises have their origin somewhere in the East and probably in Tibetan monasteries. She did not conduct further research concerning the rites' origin and mentioned that she just can repeat what is said in the books. Furthermore she saw no connection to India, other than that they were coming from somewhere around there. Having no further knowledge, she was of the opinion that a knowledge of origin would not be necessary for the practice.

Edith said she would not know anything more than what is written in the book, and Hans said, he could only repeat what he had learned. Probably the rites have their origin in India. In the 8th century a migratory movement originating in the regions of Mongolia, India, China, Japan to Tibet occurred, and with it the knowledge was passed on. At this time a Lama or sovereign collected the knowledge of this area. Hans suggested that the knowledge of TR and the exercises were handed down from India or somewhere around there. At this time this knowledge set was distributed and developed the form that is presented nowadays. Anton stated that the rites came from the Himalaya area but it can not be said that the rites come from Tibet itself. But he was convinced about the area, because there breathing exercises, conscious perception, awareness and attentiveness are very common ways of exercising and living. He mentioned that there is a ritual in Tibetan Buddhism which consists of prostrating in front of a Buddha statue or an altar. This ritual is not like the TR but has elements of it. This act of prostration is a sign of adoration of the enlightened ones who function as teachers. This act connects the agent to the enlightened ones.

Gertrud could not really remember what was said in the book about the origin of the TR but speculated that they come from some ancient civilisation. It would be nice to know more about their background and origin, but actually it does not make a difference. She pragmatically takes out of it what she likes. Gertrud suggested that the TR are originated

somewhere in the Indian/Tibetan area. The sequence of the TR is special but a lot of these movements are very similar to Yoga exercises. Gertrud assumed that the problem of tracking the origin lies in the tradition of oral transmission. Nowadays it is easy to transport information, you just have to upload a video to YouTube and it can be watched all over the world.

Marta was the only one who was really sure about the origin of TR in Tibetan monasteries. She argued that in the Himalaya area, because of its geographical height and closeness to the universe, there exists a higher energy level. Marta imagined that exercising at such a place makes it easier to achieve 21 repetitions. Furthermore she emphasized that Tibetans had always been engaged in the work with energies. And this is the reason why it seems to be a holy centre for Europeans and they are attracted by it. Franziska thought she had heard that no one knows the TR in Tibet, but was still sure about their origin being in Tibet. She was of the opinion that when something has been associated to something for such a long time, this connection will stay. But in the end it would not make a difference where they come from. Ludwig never concerned himself with the question of origin. For him this seems to be the secret of the book. He doubts that the TR are originated in Tibet. But even if, it would not matter that much. Ludwig thinks that the TR were invented by an intelligent man, whoever that was. And that the name 'Tibeter' is much easier to sell than the 5 Scandinavians or South Africans. Using the term 'Tibeter' refers to a flair of integration of body, mind and soul, a meditative character and so on. These associations can be used much better than others and therefore have been chosen on purpose. But in the end he would not be surprised if the TR were really originated in Tibet. He doubts, however, that that can be reconstructed, except by finding Peter Kelder and asking him. My informants were mainly interested in doing the rites, less so in thinking about TR's history or origin, which had no influence on their practice. The only exception was Franziska, whose enthusiasm decreased when the Tibetan origin of the rites was doubted. Even if they were not sure about TR's origin in Tibet they liked to refer to it and were fond of its mystical flair.

3. Individual routines and rituals

None of my informants followed exactly the recommendations discussed in the previous chapters. The first part of the following section deals with the participants of the courses that my trainer informants were giving. These responded to the question of who was attending the course and why. Concerning the practice itself the question came up of what is needed to keep practising, to avoid the temptation of quitting. Then the focus will shift to the individual

practice of my informants, their motivation and effects, and also difficulties, from beginners, long-term practitioners to quitters. Most of the informants remarked that the TR are quite a time saving routine. And Doris, Anton and Ludwig underlined their easy pick up as a daily routine because the TR just consist of five exercises.

Courses, Attendees and their needs

Only three trainers made comments on their courses and what kind of people attended them. Klara gives regular courses at the *Volkshochschule* (VHS), an institution, which provides all kinds of courses at moderate prices. These courses are attended by 80 % women and 20% men. Klara experienced that women come to find their selves, to relax and to find peace, whereas men tend to come to move and exercise. Klara has different generations in her courses from 30 to 60, and sometimes up to 75.

Hans saw the reason for exercising in experiencing things which are different from daily life. There is a desire for something and people try to get into ‘it’ because they long for it or they heard about it and are just curious. Religions have lost their positions but still there is a drive to look and search for transcendent experiences. And the TR, being different from Yoga, has helped those interests to evolve. He mentioned that in earlier days, when Yoga came up, it had to do with peoples’ interest in Eastern philosophy, Buddhism and to experience oneself. Hans described the reasons for the practice:

Also die Grundsehnsucht ist es nach irgendetwas etwas transzendenten, nach der eigenen Transzendenz und dem was hinter mir steht um dann doch wieder zu mir zu kommen. So würde ich mir das erklären.

Anton said that in his courses there was a tendency of more female attendees. He assumed that women are more open minded. His pupils were from 25 up to “elder”. These elder people were also very open and sometimes already had experience with TR and wanted to learn more about it. Men, who attended his courses, were also open, but he described them as being the opposite of tough and strong, or ones who conquer the world. Or, he suggested, they may have been that way and then something must have happened which made them more aware of themselves and attentive to one’s actions and thinking. Anton saw the reason for a lower male attendance in our socio-cultural background. He got the impression that the Tibetans he met during his meditation practice followed a much more playful and easy going approach than

our culture. Practising shall be fun, be under the motto of “relax and take it easy”. In the West we tend to be very strict and exact. And nearly inflexible, taking the recommendations very seriously and as fixed. But Anton has the impression that this attitude starts to loosen up through media. On the one hand through the acceptance and possibility of attending Yoga or Qi Gong classes or meditation groups, and on the other hand through the acceptance that something like that is needed:

Merke schon es ändert sich ... früher war's glaub ich gar nicht so en vogue oder möglich, dass man so sagt ich geh in einen Meditationskurs oder 5T Kurs, da hat man g'sagt, oder die Männer gesagt wieso? Aber heutzutage ist es glaub ich schon sehr sehr, es kommt in Mode, weil es ist ein Ausgleich ist, zu dem allem was wir alle, auch die Frauen erleben, aber die haben schon viel früher gespürt, es tut mir gut wenn ich was anderes mach, durch diesen ganzen Hektik Trubel dieses ganze Stressthema das um uns herum herrscht. ...das merken Männer auch immer stärker das geht halt nicht auf Dauer und da muss, wo ist der Ausgleich dazu? ... Deshalb ort ich auch mehr Männer, also schon das Interesse der Männer wird größer und auch die Öffnung derer die selber auch verspüren es geht mich nicht so gut, und ich möchte einfach was für mich machen. Und daher auch mehr die Tendenz, dass jetzt mehr Männer kommen.

He thinks that women were first to realise that a balance to the stressful daily routine is needed. This daily routine is filled with requirements of being better and faster. These requirements can not be fulfilled all the time and are exhausting over a period of time, therefore a practice is needed which balances, in order not to get lost in complying with requirements. Anton has the impression that more men start to realise the need for relaxation and equilibrium. So men's interest grows and they start to open up when they have sensed their own need to do something for themselves. Through this process more men start to attend courses to learn such methods. But men prefer individual lessons, where they have a safe place to open up and get into it. A further reason why men start to attend courses is the change of the world view. The task of being better and faster all the time is impossible to achieve, and the quest can not be continued forever. This realisation triggers the search for alternative models. This search can lead to Eastern philosophies, which provide other aspects and norms than performance namely compassion, love and wisdom. A job related success will nullify itself when the person itself is not in harmony with him or herself. Any success should be accepted with gratitude, knowing that accomplishments are achieved through teamwork.

Anton compared this teamwork with the building of a house, which shows that when people work together well, a beautiful thing can develop in a short time.

It was a surprise to hear that Stefan's courses were evenly attended by men and women, most of the time couples came to learn the TR. Stefan could make exact statements about their age: 45 and up. Only Klara has been holding courses regularly, three to four times a year for already ten years. She has had the experience that the biggest problem to stay in practice was in consequence and too high expectations. On the one hand it is the book that promises wonderful things after a short practice. People would start the practice and after two weeks they have some pain or soreness because they are not used to exercising and then they quit:

Das größte Problem was die Leute dabei haben ist die Inkonzsequenz. Dass das eben so wie in den Büchern auch angepriesen wird als Wundermittel. Dann mach ich's zwei Wochen, dann tut einiges weh, weil man eben Bewegung nicht gewohnt ist, das ist ganz logisch und ja wo ist jetzt das Wundermittel? Das hilft nicht, dass sich manche vielleicht zuviel erwarten: Ich glaub' alles wird anders, ich schau jünger aus und spring herum wie ein junges Mädli, net.

On the other hand she has the impression that people expect way too much from the practice, they think everything will change and they will look younger and will feel like youngsters. People would have to realise that the body reacts and is strained in the beginning when someone has not done any sports in the last years. The body has to adjust to the movement which simply takes time. Another factor of staying in practice is one's weaker self, she referred to it as "der innere Schweinehund", because the practice needs time which has to be taken. And the last thing she mentioned was that a lot of people wait until something decisive happens, to realise that someone needs time for him or herself.

Edith mentioned about her effort to teach that there had not been any interest in learning the TR. But maybe courses at the VHS would be attended (the place Klara has been teaching.) Trying to teach it to friends too, Edith had the experience that none of them was consequent enough to practise. Furthermore she was of the opinion that the practice of the TR does not suit everybody. Everybody is going their own way and nobody should be forced into anything. Edith was of the opinion that people over 60 are mostly not willing to do such a straining practice. And furthermore that a lot of people do not feel the need to exercise at all,

no matter if they are young or old. So the main reason for her that people do not stay in practice was that they were not interested in moving and exercising. Edith would have also agreed with Hans, who said that it depends on one's effort and will to stay in practice. He, like most of the others, did not know anyone who practised the TR regularly. But he again underlined that when someone really wants to practice, he or she will do it, it is a question of priority.

Practice routines of beginners, their motivation, effects and difficulties

The two beginners (Nina, Doris) had totally different rituals. The things they had in common were that they both practised in the morning, and they had a practice experience for about a month, at the time I was doing the interview. Both were autodidacts meaning that they had learned the rites either from a written source or a friend. They had never attended a course nor had they been instructed by a qualified teacher individually. Nina was the only practitioner who had not read the book or other literature about the TR. She just knew and learned the rites from a friend. And she did not make any effort to research the topic. She assumed the origin of the rites in Tibet as a holistic method to harmonise the body, person, and environment. Nina described her reasons to start the practice as:

Weil naja also ich erhoffe mir ein bisschen, dass es irgendwie irgendso Ausgleich und Ruhe bringt, und irgendwie so Nervositäten ausgleicht und Stress ausgleicht und auch psychische Ruhe bringt und dass es vielleicht auch psychosomatische Beschwerden ein bisschen ausgleicht so Magendarmbeschwerden und eventuell Zyklus-unregelmäßigkeiten verbessert.

This motivation is quite explicit, which was rare during the interviews. Many of my informants said that they started with the TR out of curiosity, having no explicit aim, or they wanted to do something good for themselves. Concerning Nina's practice and the effects which showed up, she could be at least satisfied with the factor of inner calmness, stress release and more energy:

Und ja, sie sind angenehm irgendwie so oder als Ausgleich oder um in der Früh ein bisschen in Schwung zu kommen auch den Tag nicht so gestresst zu starten irgendwie sondern halt irgendwie ein bisschen entspannter und ruhiger. Ja ja ...ich fühl mich schon irgendwie immer nachher ja halt ausgeglichener und mehr bei mir oder so.

Nina practises in the morning, soon after awakening, and doing only three repetitions, and has not increased her repetitions during practice, even when she feels the need to repeat the exercises more often; she keeps at 3 repetitions mainly for reasons of time management. Although she was doing only three repetitions, she already benefitted after practising for two weeks. What she mentioned about the practice was that she really had to concentrate on proper movement, and that when she did not put all her attention to the moving and was distracted by something else, she had fewer of the effects mentioned above. This was her only difficulty, not to get distracted during exercising.

Doris on the other hand had difficulties with the proper alignment, having a pain in the back while practising the 5th rite. This seems to be comparable to other sources as one of the main difficulties for practitioners: a weak back, which causes pain while moving. She got to know the TR, finding the book on a shelf at her working place, a rehabilitation and resocialisation centre. She found the book really dubious, especially the story of the man who looked tenths of years younger after practising than before. For her this story was plain fiction, but the exercises were described very well. She liked the fact that they are just five exercises. Doris used to exercise in the morning two years ago, but quit because it was too much for her doing up to 20 exercises in the morning. And she started the TR because she thinks:

...ich glaub es ist einfach gut wenn man in der Früh grade zum Aufstehen jeden Tag irgendwelche Übungen macht, weißt ... dass man immer seinen fixen Termin hat oder fixe Zeit wo man immer was macht.

Her routine differed in various ways from Nina's. First Doris had to have some coffee before starting exercising. According to others this is not the best thing to do, because coffee is thought to decrease the effect of the TR. She said she would need it to get energy to do the exercises. Then while her breakfast is cooking she does the first three exercises, then stirs her cooking and moves on doing the 4th and 5th rite, with some music in the background. Doris practises nearly daily like Nina, but does not start with three repetitions but rather repeats each exercise as long as she wants or has power to do it, but with a maximum of 21. She does not even count her repetitions but she guesses that she does not do more than 21. So her repetitions vary from exercise to exercise and depend on her daily constitution, according to how she feels or rather her body tells her to do. Though this routine differs a lot from Nina's,

she nearly speaks of the same effects, like the impression of having more energy and feeling more awake:

Eher eben wacher. Genau, mir kommt auch vor, dass das Gleichgewicht besser, also prinzipiell ist dadurch dass ich so groß bin ist das manchmal g'schissen mit Gleichgewicht und da muss man echt aufpassen. Und äh ja ich glaub das liegt an meiner Lieblingsübung die Drehübung das dürfte schon was mit deinem Kleingehirn machen, damit'st ein gutes Gleichgewichtsgefühl hast. Und ansonsten sicher energetischer, eben vitaler und ich hab das Gefühl, dass ich meinen Körper viel bewusster wahrnehme.

Moreover Doris likes the feeling of strained muscles, which had been disregarded until picking up the practice of the TR. For her that especially refers to the back part of the shoulders, which straightens your upper body. This awareness of certain parts of her body which have been trained in the morning, accompanies her throughout the day. Doris belongs to the part of practitioners who does not expect a lot of the practice, and just tries out and believes “that it is good”:

Aber direkt erhoffen tu ich mir jetzt gar nix davon, also ich glaub einfach, dass es gut ist und ich vertrau dem, dass das gut ist. Die werden schon wissen, was für Übungen sie zusammengestellt haben und ja ich mach das stupid runter einfach nur einmal schaun.

What she also remarks is, that compared to the time when she started the practice, she has the impression the movements are much easier to exercise the longer she practises. Doris is also surprised by the effect of doing just five exercises because compared to the time when she did not do any kind of exercising in the morning, it really makes a difference to her. Although she has read the book and has done some research on the internet, she just limits her practice to the exercising and does not care about suggestions about nutrition or using affirmations. Nor does she understand the way of explaining the effects through the chakra epistemology; she finds it more confusing and does not really care about it.

Even though these two have different ways of practice, they both benefit. Not in the exact same way besides the stimulation of circulation. Nina seems to have or refers more to the

psychological effect, feeling more relaxed and centred. Doris on the other hand accents more her bodily sensations. While Nina is doing her practice in a very focused and concentrated way, Doris just ‘does it’: *“Und ich weiß nicht ich mach die dann einfach so runter und bin dann fertig”*. But Doris has also problems with pain during the movement, which might be caused by her way of just doing it instead of staying focused. Doris mentioned that she had looked up the exercises on YouTube, which was not much of a help for her, because everybody was doing them in a different way.

Practice routines of long term practitioners, their motivation and effects

I had 5 long term practitioners as informants and four of them were educated trainers. The trainers did not mention physical difficulties during the practice. But they were all convinced that proper alignment is necessary to prevent pain. Otherwise suffering or pain will occur. Therefore it is important to learn the movements correctly and best of all during a course held by an authorized teacher. One of my interview partners mentioned that it makes a big difference whether a teacher is authorized or not. Stefan even told me about a lawyer who is just occupied with this topic, that courses must be held by authorized and licensed trainers only. My last informant, who was teaching the rites in a hotel for four years in Tyrol, was confronted with this lawyer, who threatened to take legal steps unless the licence for further courses was bought. My informant was surprised that it was even possible to get rights for the use of the name of the *fünf »Tibeter«*. Furthermore he said that this lawyer went from hotel to hotel to admonish all, who were teaching without a licence. So some of those licence-less trainers helped themselves by just changing the name of their course from *fünf Tibeter* to for example *“tibetische Morgengymnastik”*. What was also a common statement was that learning from a book almost has to lead to mistakes, like Hans and Klara explained:

Das Buch schafft Grundkenntnisse ... wenn es um die korrekte Anwendung geht, wie bei vielen anderen Dingen auch, sehr nützlich jemanden zu haben, der einen korrigiert. Die 5T sind einfache Riten. Aber man kann verdammt viel verkehrt machen, wenn man selbst das aus dem Buch lernt. ...Hab Fünf Übungsabende angeboten,... beim dritten haben Sie alle noch Probleme, zuerst denkt man kann's, dann kommt das Unklare, dann kommen die Fehler rein, dann wird man verunsichert und dann wieder Sicherheitsphase. 3 Abende ist Minimum. (Hans)

Naja es ist egal, was man sich selber aneignet oder vielleicht auch was man lange macht, dass man dann irgendwo seinen eigenen Stil hineinbringt und durch diese Ausbildung dann, bin ich dann wieder dorthin geführt worden (lacht) ja dorthin geführt wies wirklich gehört. (Klara)

And they told me about how surprising it was during their trainers' education to see everybody doing the TR in their own way, slightly different from one another:

Bei der Ausbildung am Anfang haben die Lehrtrainer gemeint zeigt uns mal wie ihr die Übungen gemacht und jeder hat's anders gemacht und das war faszinierend. Jeder hat das Buch gelesen jeder macht's trotzdem ein bisschen anders find ich schon sehr spannend. (Anton)

This experience can be repeated when one looks up the TR on YouTube: almost everybody is exercising in a different way.

Trainers' Education

As reasons for their education most of the trainers gave interest and a fateful occasion that came up. Anton saw a note about the trainer education at the back of the book and informed himself about it and thereupon attended the course to do the training. Edith started the education because she was very fond of the rites and being a massage therapist she thought it would match her profession and she would like to pass it on to others. Klara and Hans said about their fateful occasion to absolve the TR training

...Äh Eigentlich hat sich's irgendwie ergeben (lacht) war glaub ich gar kein großer Auslöser... ich hab mir damals ein Buch von Arnold Lanz gekauft, der auch diese Ausbildung gemacht hat ... wie gesagt ich weiß es nicht mehr genau hab dann mit ihm telefoniert das war dann eine hopdrop Aktion. Wo er gesagt hat: „Na wenn sie Lust haben kommen sie dann und dann, da gibt's an Kurs“ da hab ich grad Urlaub gehabt zufällig, und hab mich zum gepackt und bin hingefahren. (Klara)

War ich auf der Sinnsuche ... die Gelegenheit hat sich angeboten eine Ausbildung zu machen. (Hans)

Stefan was the only one who decided to undergo the education after he was confronted with the already mentioned lawyer who threatened to take legal steps, when further courses with the name *die fünf »Tibeter«* were given without a licence. I was not told a lot about the education. There had been two different training course, one in Germany, provided by the *»Tibeter« Dachverband*, and the other one in Switzerland, which does not exist any more, but was also connected to the *Dachverband*. The education in Germany was held by Maruschi Magyarosy and Carlos Liebetruh, who are seen as veterans or gurus of TR. Hans said about the education:

... lauter exotische Leute da, Essen ayurvedisch, ganz ein schöner Einstieg und auch sehr sehr stolz etwas gemacht zu haben und sehr gut gefallen hab festgestellt, dass viele Fehler sich eingeschlichen hatten.

and therefore expressed reservation for self studies of the TR, like all trainers. Hans was educated in 1999/2000, approximately at the same time when Klara got her license. Klara, like others, justified her education with her interest in doing it right, getting more information about proper alignment and movement. In addition to that to learn more about the background and what kind of assistance can help during practising.

The women had a practice of about 14 years (Klara, Edith) and the men of about 8 years (Hans, Anton). Every one of them had read the book and was self-studied before the trainer education. All trainers practised every day in the morning except when they are sick. I start with Klara, who has the longest practice of 15 years. She explains her motivation to start the TR with the boom of wellness at that time, when she tried to find her own little wellness and herself. After some other try outs like autogenic training, the fact that the TR do not require a lot of knowledge and time it seemed perfect for her, needing silence and movement to relax. She had difficulties to remember her starting and why she kept doing it, besides liking it. Klara remembered that she had always been stiff in the neck and had always had a pain in the back, which never occurred again, after years of practice. What she appreciates is her flexibility and her daily time just for herself and to back out. She lengthens this time following her own demand, having a “quasi Fixum”, but sometimes:

... fühlt man sich einfach irgendwie so, dass man vielleicht auch mehr Zeit hat oder ich mir mehr Zeit nehme oder mehr Zeit brauche, weil ich eben angespannt bin oder

aufgedreht oder irgendwas brauch damit. Und manchmal gar wenn man eben gar keine Zeit hat dann mach ich wenigstens jede Übung 3-mal, dass ich sie auch wirklich gemacht habe.

Klara adds affirmations to her exercising and adapts them to what she needs. Therefore she also uses the exercises to calm down, to gain energy or just to feel well whenever she feels she needs it. At the end of the interview she suggested a reason for her early exercising:

Vielleicht war am Anfang ok das kann ich schon sagen, das für mich Abgrenzen eben von den Alltagsproblemen, war vielleicht schon, wenn man Familie hat und kleine Kinder und Schulkinder und pipapo für mich irgendwo ein Schritt war wirklich was für mich zu tun, so mal quasi egoistisch zu sein und sich selber etwas Gutes tun.

Edith's motivation to start the practice was not mentioned at all; she referred to being Buddhist, she got to know the TR through a conversation with a publisher while working on a translation of a Buddhist book. She read Peter Kelder's book and started exercising. Edith has done them every day, over a period of 14 years. She was of the opinion that the experiences with the TR are not something to tell. It appears to me that she on the one hand referred to bodily experiences, which are difficult to put in words and on the other hand to the effects or changes in her lifestyle, which again is a process where changes happen in silent over time. Meaning that this process is a mainly unconscious change which can only be measured by its effect of for example loss of weight:

...also hat sich alles grundsätzlich geändert. Schwer zu sagen ob ich das den Tibetern verdanke oder meinem Karma (lacht). Aber mit Sicherheit ich kann sagen ganz ernst aufgrund von längerer Ausübung dieser Übungsserie hmm ändert sich sehr viel. Also in der inneren Einstellung des Menschen und dadurch natürlich ändert er sein Leben. Das ist mir absolut sicher.

For Edith it was important to mention that the changes in person and lifestyle can not be exclusively derived from the practice of the TR, something that also Klara mentioned. Edith's examples of changing her life was that she quit smoking, not from one day to the other, but over time, after a heavy smoker career of 32 years. Also she lost her overweight of 10kg. Edith repeats the exercises 9 times and would not do any more, after experimenting doing all

21, which made her feel awfully sick. She said that the practice of the TR belongs to her psychological and physical hygiene.

Hans started his practice out of curiosity and because the TR consisted of just 5 exercises. The exercises had great impact on his muscles especially with respect to flexibility, which made him feel different. Hans had to quit his practice because of an injury and after taking up the practice again realised the difference:

Ja es ist doch ein Gefühl der Durchflutung in der Früh, man merkt doch es passiert was, es ist ein energetisches Tun, ich mach schon viel Energiearbeit aber das ist was anderes. Das ist ein Spüren des Körpers es ist allein durch die Dehnung, durch die Atmung und durch die Rhythmen, dieses Ein und Aus, dieses Yin Yang, Anspannung Entspannung dadurch kommt (stottert) ... es ist ein großes Phänomen, einerseits eine Belebung andererseits eine Beruhigung, beides zur gleichen Zeit das ist ziemlich interessant.

During the time of practice the ways of practising changed depending on his phases in life, from a calm meditative way to sporty achievement. And with the different focus, the effects were different. Then he realised that moving with little attention „*da hab ich gemerkt dass der Sinn nicht ganz erfüllt wird.*“. So he went back to practise slowly, being aware of his body, not only of tensions but especially of his sensations, „*sondern indem ich mich spüre*“ (Hans). He did not tell me how many repetitions he does, but he does not get up to 21. He was the first one who sometimes mixed his practice with the salutation to the sun, a Yoga sequence. Like the others he liked to refer to the phrase „*tut mir gut*“.

Hans had some more explanations what the TR can lead to after a consequent practice: they lead to the essence of being, where you stop thinking and just are, where you remove from „*was tut man*“ (what ought to be done) to your own needs, and thus let you sense your own needs. This is initiated by getting more aware of your sensations and then may lead to the next step of living them. It is a way to experience oneself. He is of the opinion that you can only experience yourself by means of and through the body and this is the precondition of happiness, to embrace one's sensations and respect them:

Ich komme zur Essenz meines Seins, Chakren sind wichtig dabei, ist eine Motor Funktion, aber es geht noch wesentlich tiefer. Dass ich aufhöre nachzudenken wer ich bin und einfach bin. Das ist dann auch die hohe Schule, muss nicht immer sofort passieren, sind kleine Erleuchtungssituationen. 5T als „Erleuchtungs-Maschinerie“.
(lacht laut)

My other male interview partner Anton on the other hand was of the opinion that the TR do not lead to enlightenment because the way to it is a different one. For Anton enlightenment is a spiritual action, which has to be consciously worked on, it has to be one's decision to follow a spiritual path. The TR on the other hand can only be a stepping stone toward finding oneself, which gives ground for spirituality if one likes to. But the TR alone cannot lead to enlightenment, therefore additional activities are needed.

Anton has a practice routine of 8 years and does them in the morning, except when he skips them in the morning, and is bothered by his conscience; then he catches up in the evening. He repeats the first rite fast and much more often than the others and sings himself a happy birthday to it, which altogether activates him. The other exercises, which are more exhausting, are repeated slowly about 5 to 7 times without counting. Anton is the only one who practises together with his wife. But they do it in different ways; he is practising more slowly and she does it more quickly to activate herself and to wake up more easily. Also he adds some exercises from Shiatsu afterwards to stretch. Anton emphasizes slow and attentive exercising, but actually everybody should practise in his own way; this means taking time for one's breathing and consciousness and listening to the body. He had always been a sportive person and on account of his occupation he had less time available. So he was looking for something which did not require a lot of time and was easy to integrate in his daily routine, therefore the TR were optimal:

Ich hab früher sehr viel Sport betrieben, Leistungssport, und bin dann mit dem Einstieg ins Berufsleben aufs Problem gestoßen der Zeitknappheit. Und Zeit ist ja für viele oder für fast die meisten Menschen ein knappes Gut. Und da hab ich sie [TR] entdeckt, als sehr gute sozusagen Ergänzung meines Repertoires.

The rites had not only effect on his physical condition but had also impact on a mental level. Putting the focus of exercising on conscious breathing and being mindful earned him an

extension of his condition. This consciousness goes far beyond the simple practice of the TR and has effect on his whole lifestyle, and on being more aware of one's actions, like eating, thinking and breathing throughout the day. This can only evolve when the precondition is set to open up for all the things that may come. To sum up this way of living leads to an avoidance of things which do not encourage health and well being and directs the focus on things which do promote health and well being. Even more, the exercises should not only be practised in a mindful way but also with gratitude and humility. The practice of the TR changed Anton's way of seeing things and made him much more aware of himself, which also influences his work life, as he handles things with much more care and awareness:

Oder ich schau ... Warum reagier ich manchmal ablehnend oder wütend oder ängstlich oder sorgenvoll bei bestimmten Themen, klar wo hat man nicht vorgesehen oder nicht geplant und dann taucht es plötzlich auf. Das ist ein spannender Prozess mit dem achtsamen Umgehen mit dem Thema, mit dem sich, dort hinzuschauen was macht es mit mir, warum ist das bei mir so und so warum spür ich da plötzlich Wut auftauchen. Ich lös es nicht immer optimal das sicher nicht, aber dass ich's zumindest wahrnehme aha da ist was.

Anton and Hans were the only ones who made more comments about nutrition. Both stated that nutrition is important because like the TR it provides the body with energies. When one eats food of bad quality or in a fast way with less chewing and just swallowing the food down, this would not do any good. Conscious eating is necessary because the better you chew and sense your food, the better you can also digest other things, like one's feelings, sensations, words of others and so on. Anton gave the example that in German you use the term “*etwas liegt mir im Magen*” or “*ist schwierig zu verdauen*”, which refers to feelings or sensations. Therefore when you chew properly, things get easier to digest and handle, and eating becomes another form of handling one's problems in last consequence. The right nutrition can support the effects of TR and lead to even more well-being.

Hans was of the opinion that nutrition is very important for a healthy being. Nutrition provides resources and without them no changing or healing can be achieved. He would never just eat one sort of food, because it would lower his pleasure of eating. Pleasure or enjoyment during eating and all other things you do for living should be the major aspect. Concerning nutrition he mentioned the Pareto norm 80:20. This should be the proportion of healthy food

to junk food, which again should be done with pleasure. Also he mentions the importance of the ability of the body to absorb food, healthy food is useless when the body is not able to absorb it. Hans pledges for biological food, which excludes foods which were treated to keep well e.g. sorts of milk; he is against the use of microwaves and also underlines the environment, which nurtures the body e.g. places where you eat or sleep.

Anton laid the focus on attentiveness during eating, who cooked the meal, what does it look like, how does it smell and taste. He describes eating not as getting nurtured but as a means of living. The German term “*Lebensmittel*” is taken apart and conversed “*ein Mittel zum Leben*”. Anton claims that eating has bonding qualities, especially in a community that meets for certain occasions and sits down to eat. Therefore energy is not only gained by the meal itself but also the environment and the community.

None of my informants ate like recommended in the book (Kelder 1994: 57-61). Doris eats Traditional-Chinese-Medicine-5-elements porridge in the morning, „*was jetzt nicht so tibetisch ist aber, eigentlich gar nicht, aber es verträgt sich trotzdem recht gut.*“ In traditional Chinese medicine five elements exist, which are said to make up the universe and all beings. Every person has a different constitution, consisting of different proportions of elements. Depending on one's constitution different nutrition is needed, which consists of a certain proportion of the elements, which a food is related to. Doris approved of separating protein and carbohydrate meals and would try to do so, which was not always possible with her working routine. Edith for example, having overweight for years, experimented a lot with nutrition and as she underlines, has found her personal way: a mixture between 5 elements, food combining and blood type. Klara has never dealt with nutrition at all. It has not been a topic in her courses either. Her view was that everything that is beyond bodily exercise depends on how someone develops or extends the practice of rites. Franziska, one of those who quit her practice, did not connect nutrition to the TR but was of the opinion that nutrition is very important to well being.

The only long term practitioner Gertrud who was no trainer but had a practice of 15 years, was a manager of a big company and made similar comments on the impact of TR on her work life like Anton. The practice helps her to cope with stress and helped her through hard times of her working life, to establish herself, but not in an aggressive way, rather in a way that matches her own personality:

Ja vielleicht könnte man auch sagen dass mir die 5T und meine Einstellung zur Ernährung und auch Yoga mich sicherlich dabei geholfen hat die Stürme des Berufslebens zu bezwingen und derer gibt es viele. Sich durchzusetzen aber nicht so aggressiver Weise sondern so wie es mir als Persönlichkeit gerecht wird oder entspricht.

She is much more aware of her body and her breathing, and this makes it easier for herself to keep outer things at a distance. In German the term “*sich abgrenzen*” is used; this means that someone is aware of his/her feelings and sensations, his/her body, needs and their borders. Through this limiting one knows better what one wants, needs, what does good or bad and furthermore can set limits to their environment and other people more easily. This border is not rigid, it results from being more oneself, this self-reception stands in the centre of every psychological treatment. Gertrud describes it with having an inner calmness and an outer serenity. She got to know the TR browsing through a bookshop, which is what she loves to do, and her attention was caught by the book: „*Oft ist es ja so, dass man auf gewisse Bücher stößt wenn die Zeit reif ist.*“ Contrary to Klara, who got to know the TR at about the same time, Gertrud refers to a time, where Yoga and the TR had not been as en vogue as nowadays. The reason to start the practice was derived from her desire for some time for herself, where she could regain her strength, with little effort:

Eigentlich ganz klein [anfangen], man versucht immer grad wenn man viel Stress hat oder ein hohes Arbeitspensum zu erledigen hat doch Zeitinseln für sich selbst zu schaffen in denen man wieder Kraft schöpft und die fünf Tibeter sind so was für mich. Und es ist insofern toll als dass es jetzt nicht so ein großer Zeitaufwand ist, ich brauch keine, ich muss nicht in ein Fitnessstudio deswegen gehen, ich brauch keine besondere Ausrüstung, ich muss keinen Termin ausmachen wie wenn man das machen muss wenn man Golf oder Tennis spielen geht.

Generally it was her interest to stay healthy in an alternative way and through her own capability of self-healing, as opposed to conservative treatment. Gertrud mentioned that she has always been fascinated by eastern approaches to health, which according to her try to go to the root of the problem and try to act preventively. In contrast, the western medicine just treats symptoms, which for her is also connected to the pharmaceutical lobby, which has no interest in having healthy patients, otherwise they could not make so much money. Gertrud is

very fond of the approach of preventive providing of health and sees the practice of TR as one of these methods. She was surprised by the great impact that the knowledge of TR caused, namely an increase of her physical and mental well-being. Gertrud is the only one who does not practise every day but about 3 times a week and does about 9 to 12 repetitions, except the first rite with more repetitions, and all exercises in a conscious, mindful way. Also she is the only one who changes between morning and evening practice but actually prefers practising in the evening. And most of the time she adds a short meditation or visualisation. She also uses affirmations but not during the practice. Gertrud stated that:

Was man schon merkt ist wenn man in einer großen Stressphase ist und dann nicht macht, dann spürt man natürlich wenn man bisschen ausgesetzt hat dass man wieder von vorne beginnen muss. Aber andererseits wieder recht schnell reinkommt, das ist das schöne. Es ist einfach eine Frage der Disziplin weil es tut einem sehr sehr gut, wenn man es tut.

She experienced when she and her colleagues had a long flight and she was practising the TR afterwards, she was the only one who did not moan about back pains or fatigue. Gertrud was of the opinion that nutrition is very important for one's well-being and can assist the impact of TR practice. She tries to subsist herself consciously, which for her starts with words like sustainability. This means that she makes sure to buy food that is produced in her close environment, and not delivered from far away like China. Gertrud tries to eat vegetarian and avoids meat and fish as far as she can. Instead she prefers vegetables and fruits which are “*frisch und lebendig*”. As for food preparation, she does not use microwaves because she thinks it is not natural and healthy to heat up food in such a short time.

Practice routines of quitters, their motivation and effects

All of those who quit had different reasons and they told me little about the practice they had, when they practised about 15 to 20 years ago. Concerning that time all of them were of the opinion that the TR were not really popular, where on the other hand trainers, who most of them got to know the TR at least five years later, refer to a time of growing popularity through marketing.

Franziska's motivation to start the practice was to be fitter, and she really felt better during the time of practice of about 2 to 3 years with interruptions. With “better” she refers to

feelings of being more lively and being more complete. Again she used her practice to distance herself from others. The clarity that she felt intensified while she was increasing the number of repetitions to 21 and this made ground for meditation. Franziska confessed that she quit because she was lazy, or simply forgot to practise after another start of practice:

Also vor kurzem hab ich wieder einen Versuch gestartet, aber ich vergesse es dann. (lacht) Ja ich vergesse dann. (lacht) Und dann wieder, Mensch ich wollt ja wieder anfangen die Tibeter zu machen.

And then her enthusiasm was decreased by somebody saying that the TR are not originated in Tibet and are probably an invention of the west. She moved on practising and still believes the rites are from Tibet, but this information took something away from her enthusiasm, „*hat dem so bissl was genommen*”.

Marta started like Klara to cope with her daily routines, especially those concerning parenthood:

Ich hab das eigentlich erfahren von einer Freundin, dass sie auch übt und hab ein ganz altes Buch [1989] zu den Tibetern in die Hände bekommen, von meinen Eltern, gefunden in irgendeinem Regal. Und hab dann begonnen zu üben, in dieser Zeit war ich ganz junge Mutter und hatte viele Probleme mit meiner Tochter und hab einfach jeden Tag die Tibeter geübt, so bin hingekommen...die 5t haben mir Selbstvertrauen wieder geschenkt, dass ich mit meinem Körper Bewegungen ausführe, dass ich mich wohler fühl, aber nicht nur im Körper also es geht sehr stark in Seele Geist diese Haltungen

Marta had a practice of about half a year and also felt better and more vital. Even more she regained self-confidence. Marta started with 3 repetitions and really slowly built up. She used to use affirmations for every single exercise a certain one which she also handed over to me (examples see page 37). She was sure that practising on the same spot every time also assists the practice. The stimulatory TR routine brought her to Yoga where she found a greater diversity of exercises and stuck to it and quit the practice of TR, she even was trained as Yoga teacher. Marta was of the opinion that nutrition inevitably belongs to all kinds of works

connected to a change of energy, because also nutrition provides certain energies that either improve or worsen one's condition:

Der Zusammenhang von Energiearbeit und Ernährung ist ganz wichtig, gehört unweigerlich dazu. Aber ich möchte kein striktes Verbot von irgendwelchen Dingen da aufführen ... ich find man sollt immer eine gesunde Balance finden zu dem was gesunde Ernährung heißt. Aber ich find man sollte nichts machen, was so strikt ist. Ich hab so die Einstellung, dass man sollt einfach immer wieder Freude und Lust empfinden bei allem was man macht.

For her it was important not to have strict commandments or restrictions. She referred to people who enjoy eating, certain kind of food for example chips or chocolate, although these are not really nutritious because they consist of either fat or sugar. It is not about what is said to be healthy, which also changes from time to time depending on the latest research, it is about the right balance between so called junk food and food which provides necessary nutrients. She does not think of living vegetarian as it is suggested by Kelder (1994: 58). Finding one's balance does not depend on what is eaten; she claims that the important aspect is that you eat with enjoyment and pleasure. Marta stated that she thinks everything which is ingested in moderation is healthy; this also includes alcohol. Marta, who used to smoke, quit smoking after further practice of breathing exercises. She thinks that the TR, practised regularly, will lead to more conscious breathing. And when someone has realised what breathing really means one has to quit smoking inevitably. She explained that she sees breathing as the source for living, and that smoking would impede proper breathing and the flow of life. Marta said that she thinks that no work with energies is compatible with smoking because it will always decrease one's energy. But she would never force anyone to quit smoking, she just thinks it is one of the unhealthiest things you can do to your body. Ludwig, being very active in sports, started the practice out of curiosity:

Ja und das war so eine Phase wo ich wieder was anfangen wollt, es war Winter, und dann ist mir das [Buch über die TR] wieder eingefallen, und hab mir gedacht: ah interessant, das probier ich aus, und hab diese Übungen gemacht. Und bin dann relativ bald auf 21 [Wiederholungen] gekommen.

He skipped the first rite because he had the impression it had no impact on his fitness. Ludwig practised for a few months, not daily but regularly and was quite fast in increasing up to 21 repetitions. He liked the symmetry of the movements and the close connection of breathing. Also he was fond of the dynamics, which he missed in the 3rd rite. But still he had good experience, gaining energy and harmonizing him. He quit his practice because of two reasons: first, it was too little for him to do just these rites and so he started another sport practice; and second he was already doing so much sport and movement that he was of the opinion that he did not need the TR in the morning on the top of that. His view was that every movement provides input to body and mind. Furthermore Ludwig remarked that getting to know the TR with their conformity and symmetry of movement and breathing you can gain a lot for other exercises. He said that he had good experiences with the rites but others:

Von Laien her muss ich sagen, wären die Erfahrungen nicht so gut gewesen. Also Leute die zu mir in die Praxis kamen und das auch praktiziert haben, aber nicht von mir gesagt bekamen. Sondern aus dem Buch oder nicht aus dem Buch meist war's von der Freundin, und die sagt mach das und dann zeigt sie es weiter und da sind schon mal Fehler drinnen und dann werden noch andere Fehler dazu gemacht. Also das hat sich, wie soll ich sagen, nebulos entwickelt für manche.

He also gave input to the aspect of nutrition. Concerning the Colonel's suggestion to eat an raw egg yolk in the morning (Kelder 1994: 59) Ludwig explained that he thinks that the idea behind this recommendation is that the not denatured proteins have a different effect than when the egg is cooked and therefore he has no reasons, except of the danger of salmonellas to eat an raw egg yolk in the morning. Generally nutrition should be regulated individually, meaning that every person needs different foods or prefers different kinds of food. Even when a certain kind of food is said to be unhealthy it will not harm when this food is eaten consciously and with pleasure. He underlined that nutrition has always been connected to the proportion of movement too. This means that a balance has to be held between energy usage and food intake. Ludwig in the end prefers they way in which children eat, which to him is very natural. He gave the example that children, when they are not forced to eat certain things, will naturally eat just one sort of food for a meal or even for days.

Non practice of the sixth rite

None of my informants was practising the 6th rite. Most of them tried it, but did not take it into their daily practise. Nina, one of my beginners, did not mention it at all. Doris did not practise it, because she was of the opinion the rite should only be practised if one lived celibately. Klara said about her try out: „irgendwie woar des für mich net was, was förderlich, weiß net hat mich nicht angesprochen, jetzt einfach von der Übung her, hat mir das irgendwie nicht, in meinen Ablauf hineingepasst” Edith commented she would not need it. Hans practised the sixth rite for a while, which energised him, but did not keep it in his daily routine, maybe he is going to pick it up again. Hans refers to the book *Der sechste »Tibeter«*® (2007) by Christian Salvesen, where the author quotes entries from Carlos Liebetruh’s diary that he wrote while practising the sixth rite. The reference to the diary is very short and shows a man who loves and feels himself very well and makes the impression of a happy, caring man with a sex life full of love (Salvesen 2007: 171-172). Hans considers Carlos Liebetruh as really young, but Hans does not know if this fact can be attributed to the practice of the sixth rite. Hans sees the reason of the dispute in the problem of excluding sexuality, which derives especially from clerical thinking. He is of the opinion that for hundreds of years sexuality was despised, restricted to reproduction or taken as just a simple biological drive. And he added that other conceptions, like those of Tantra, include sex as a holy action. This aspect, according to Hans, becomes obvious when one takes into consideration the ancient term of the sacral bone, ‘os sacrum’. So Hans figures that the exclusion of sexuality is connected to the influence of the Church.

Salvesen (2007: 185) is the first one who writes about the practice of the sixth rite that there is no risk at all in making love after or before the practice. None of my informants was serious about what could happen while having sex, Hans joked about circular hair loss and Franziska joked about having intensive sex, which is forbidden. Anton had very little input to the sixth rite, he never was really interested in the subject:

Ich denke es ist auch eine bewusste Entscheidung ob man den sechsten Tibeter eben auch nutzt. Ich seh’s auch wieder als Achtsamkeitsübung und sozusagen welche Zielsetzung ich damit verfolgen will, aber ja.

Gertrud, like Edith was doing the five rites, and had no opinion on that topic, she referred to Salvesen’s book and argued her non practice that it never came to happen: „Nein, es hat sich

nicht ergeben.” One of the quitters, Franziska, tried it for a while and when I asked her if it was any different from doing only five rites she said:

Also wirklich viel hab ich nicht gemerkt ehrlich gesagt. Also, dass ich jetzt die Erleuchtung und die Kundalini-Erfahrung gemacht hätte, war nicht der Fall.

My Moldavian informant Boris, who was the only one who also got to know the rites in Tibet, was of the opinion that the sixth rite has the greatest effect while living celibately. The sixth rite is needed to transmute the energies from the lower chakras to the higher chakras and therefore has the strongest effect on rejuvenation. Having sex and practising the sixth rite does not harm but it lowers the effect, because the energy gets wasted during the act. But living celibately can lead to a really high age, and Boris claims that Salvesen only has adjusted the sixth rite to western living. Marta, who sometimes practised the sixth rite, was of the opinion:

Ich würde sagen, den sechsten Teil würd' ich nur machen wenn ich überschüssige sexuelle Energie hab. Die ist geheim da geht's um die Atemlehre. Gibt's auch alles im Yoga... geht ganz stark auf die sexuelle Energie. Im Endeffekt glaub ich einfach, dass der sechste Tibeter, den darf man erst dann machen wenn man weiß, wenn man seinen Körper kennt und sich schon lange Zeit mit Energiearbeit beschäftigt, wobei es egal ist Qi Gong oder Reiki, es ist alles gleich oder alles Energiearbeit auch Yoga und ich find die Sechste geheime sollte man erst machen wenn ich weiß wie ich atme, wenn ich weiß was Atem heißt.

To explain the importance of prana and breathing someone has to know that the life of a Yogi is counted in breaths. Because the breath is lengthened through breathing exercises, (pranayama) this can lead to a longer life. Also, a practice of pranayama can change one's mindset and can decrease one's craving after e.g. smoking, which happened in Marta's case. Stefan tried the sixth rite also in order to look for additional effects, which did not occur. He did not present it during his courses because he doubted that it made much sense to teach this exercise when the learners are already engaged with the learning of the five rites. Also most of the people, who attended his courses, did not know about a sixth rite or asked for it. Stefan suggested that to get to know the real effects of the sixth rite someone would have to investigate its practice. He mentioned that the sixth rite is still something mystical and secret

and that talking about it was often kind of weird. Through his interest in Qi Gong his curiosity about the Tibetan rites including the sixth one was reduced and he did not go any deeper into the matter.

4. Informants' explanations of effects and function of TR

The informants had different opinion on different aspects such as how the TR function to have an effect. Or the question is it possible to achieve the same 'results' with other exercises when the factors of holistic moving, connections of breathing and movement and the attentiveness are given? What is different from other ways of movements? Also the question came up whether the TR have an impact on spiritual engagement or not, to which the statements of the informants varied from 'certainly not' (Klara, Franziska) to 'they can lead to enlightenment' (Hans). Another further aspect was that of the question of what is meant by the *Fountain of Youth*, which is said to be the greatest achievement of the TR practice.

For some trainers it was important to mention that the TR can have effects, but do not have to. And the effects are different for everyone depending on one's constitution. For example it can not be said that the TR are good against pain in the backs, because without having any there is no need for a practice which cures back pain. Klara emphasized about effects:

Die Wirkung. Also ich (zögert/stottert) sag gleich einmal die Wirkung ist bei jedem anders. Jeder Mensch geht von einer and'ren Basis aus, jeder braucht etwas anderes, jeder sucht etwas anderes. Und da find ich, da sind die Tibeter, wie soll ich sagen, für mich war wichtig oder gut für meinen Schulterbereich. Ein anderer hat irgendein anderes Problem, ein anderer sagt er braucht's um runterzukommen, um sich zu entspannen, und der Dritte sagt er braucht's um zu Kraft zu kommen, zu Energie zu kommen.

Nina, having no knowledge of chakras, ascribed the effect of TR to a combination of taking time for oneself, the calm rhythmic breathing and the choice of these movements. Doris, having read the book, gave as explanation the chakras and energy but said that she would not really know what was happening. Klara explained the effects on the one hand with the harmonizing of chakras and when everything runs smoothly, the body functions well ("läuft auch der Körper") or you feel better. Their effect is holistic and therefore can provide different things for different needs. These effects are also influenced by one's expectations

concerning oneself, the effects or improvements which shall occur. Edith did not believe that the TR can be explained scientifically and she would not have any further explanation than the chakras which are explained in books. Furthermore she thought that not everything has to be known or can be understood with the mind. The most important thing is whether the practice does good or not.

Hans emphasized that the slowness and conscious practising is necessary to have an effect, and that there is a big difference between straining and sensing. Hans embedded the practice in the universal principle of Yin and Yang, which is part of all living, and for him the simplest way to explain the world. For example breathing connects the inner and outer world and thus harmonizes and connects everything with each other. Hans compared the concept of chakras with a six or seven cylinder car, which does not run right when one of the cylinders is not functioning properly. Also the analogy of the glands seems logical and it is known that it works but how exactly he could not say. But he thinks that would not be everything because chakras are also connected to energetic flows. Hans gave one example: When the third chakra, which belongs to functions of "T" and organically to digestion, is not working correctly, the person will have problems to limit oneself and sense his or her own needs. This can be changed through the exercises, no matter how the mechanism works exactly, but it will lead to more well-being.

Furthermore the rites lead to bodily sensations, which can lead to one's self. This choice of allowing sensations to occur narrows one to nature and to oneself. To achieve this, one has to overcome the clerical thinking of neglecting the body. Hans' argument was that neglecting the body would be like accusing creativity of having made a mistake, which is overbearing:

...sind die Tibeter eine zusätzliche Möglichkeit zu dem zu kommen wozu wir eigentlich runtergekommen sind. ... Eine Funktion der Tibeter ist die Ich-bin Funktion, dass ich mich spüre, das also Sein ohne das reflektieren zu müssen ... in einer Sache drinnen sein, das ICH BIN.

Anton, like Klara, mentioned that there is no guarantee for effects. What the practice does to someone has to be found out by the participants themselves:

Meine Botschaft an die TeilnehmerInnen [von den eigenen Kursen] ist Üben und ausprobieren und spüren ob es gut tut und in welchen Bereichen es gut tut. Was ich nicht sagen möchte, dass es ein Allheilmittel ist, also quasi mach die fünf Tibeter und du wirst heilig oder du wirst erleuchtet werden, das glaub ich gar nicht.

The practice is just one brick to oneself, which begins with taking time for oneself and breathing. And when one has learned to be attentive and careful things may change. Stefan assumed that the effect has to do with the movements but also breathing. When I asked him if the effect depends on the focus, on the synchronicity of movement and breathing, he on the one hand agreed, on the other hand he mentioned that when breathing is incorporated after a while the consciousness moves away from the focus of breathing and exercising is brought to a different level of perception.

Gertrud explained her well-being with the movements and breathing. That these exercises are movements which are not practised during any other action, e.g. while sitting in front of a desk. The exercises activate muscles and parts of the body which are not strained during a regular work day. Franziska in turn, explained it in the following way: it is the synchronisation of breathing and movement which causes well-being. For her the reason for effectiveness also lies in the certain movements and their combination. And maybe the clearness she experienced can give ground to meditation.

Marta's explanation was based on the idea of chakras and that these exercises are an extract of the main Yoga positions. Being a Yoga teacher she somehow has to be persuaded by its philosophy and movements. She mentioned that the exercising of TR has to be done in an attentive suppliant way with surrender to the movements. The more a body gets attention and is loved the slower it ages. She thinks that the TR affect the charisma, they have an effect from inside. Through the practice prana is activated. Prana is seen as the universal energy which pervades everything, this Sankrit term is also translated as breath, breathing, life, vitality, wind, energy or power. It also means soul in contrast to body. Prana is needed in order to keep the body alive one can not live without breathing at all:

...das heißt du hebst einerseits die Chakren zum Himmel, Universum, wo unendlich viel universelle Kraft vorhanden ist und du schenkst deinem Körper Liebe ... durch das Einatmen baust du es [Prana] auf und verteilst es mit dem Ausatmen im Körper ...

Und wenn du deine Spannkraft des Körpers erhöhst, durch die Haltungen und noch dazu Prana kann es nur verjüngend wirken. Das sieht man nämlich nicht bei den Sportlern, denn Sportler zehren sich aus, weil oft Sportler zu wenig Yoga machen, sag ich. Weil ein Sportler, gerade ein Sportler sollte ganz viel Yoga machen weil er sich sehr auszerzt im Endeffekt.

According to Ludwig movement in general causes a better feeling and especially when it is linked to rhythmic breathing. He also described the Tibetan rites with the adjective 'meditative', and these facts together can lead to a physical and psychological 'cleanup'. But it is not about the certain movement, but rather a balanced way of moving. Meaning that on the one hand to find a middle way of resting and moving, and on the other hand find a way of movements which affects the whole body.

To sum up: According to my informants the TR do not have to have an effect, and it can not be said that the TR provide certain remedies for specific problems. The effect of the practice shows itself in different and sometimes subtle ways. In general it can be stated that the TR have an effect on the body as a whole because of synchronic movement and breathing, which harmonizes the chakras. The general effect is an increase of energy, which again can manifest itself differently depending on the individual. One's aim or wishes can also have an effect on where or how the regained energy is channelled. Apart from a physical improvement TR practice influences the mental area in a way that one becomes more aware of one's actions. The more attentively and slowly the rites are exercised the more probable it is to achieve effects.

Tibetan Rites and other approaches to well-being

Another question of my research was if similar effects can be achieved by other movements or approaches to well-being. Both beginners (Nina, Doris) suggested that Yoga could have the same impact as the practice of the TR although Nina had hardly ever practised Yoga, but Doris had some experience. She had had a Yoga practice for about a year, but quit because of personal reasons. Nina also said that maybe Pilates could do the same, because breath and movement are linked and the focus on the body is very high. She even more compared the TR to medical treatments:

Ja wie sehr man mit alternativen Therapien vergleichen kann ich weiß nicht vielleicht könnt' man's auch mit Akupunktur vergleichen oder Homöopathie keine Ahnung ist alles irgendwie so mit Wirkung auf den ganzen Körper halt.

Some of the trainers made the point that nothing is exactly the same like the TR. But most of them suggested the sun salutation as being most similar (Edith, Hans). On the one hand because of its fluent sequence (consisting of 12 different positions) and on the other hand because of partly similar movements, which work through the whole body and therefore are said to have a similar effect. Sun salutation is also a time saving routine which is easily learned and exercised, it stretches and strengthens all muscles of the body. Klara said that for her there is nothing that can give her the same feelings like the TR. She was convinced that there are things and movements that cause similar effects but for her the TR were just perfect, and everybody has to find what one likes. Klara said about herself that she was a person who needs quiescence and movement to relax, Yoga would be too slow and autogenic training lacked dynamics.

Anton compared the effect of TR with the sun salutation because these twelve positions also work through the whole body, are connected to conscious breathing and devotion. He was of the opinion that all movements which are not focused on performance have a similar effect, for example the eight figures of Qi Gong, which come from another geographical area but have the same aspects of activating, stretching and breathing. Qi Gong is originated in traditional Chinese medicine. In this medicine the conception of 'Qi' is almost the same as prana. Qi is said to be the vital energy of life, like prana it is invisible and flows through so called meridians which permeate the whole body, like the nadis. (Scherz 2000: 54). A person who has a lot of Qi is full of energy and strength, a person who is ill has a lack of Qi. To be in good health it is essential to have an undisturbed flow of Qi and also a balanced distribution of Qi in the body. Qi circulates through the meridians which are also set in connection to certain organs and physiological systems (Scherz 2000: 55). The flow of Qi can also be regulated by physical exercises called Qi Gong, which means work with energy. Qi Gong consists of different movements and exercises which are also connected to intense breathing and conscious performance. The practice of Qi Gong is said to lead to more well-being and health, a clear mind, spiritual insight and longevity (Scherz 2000: 60 -61).

Anton also emphasized that everyone has his or her different way to achieve well-being. For example some people like to go for a walk for 15 minutes in the park and if it is carried out in

a conscious way, being aware of one's step and being in the moment, is can be spoken of meditation too. It is about one's mind-set, because when you are unbalanced the most beautiful nature will have no impact on your well-being. But when someone walks consciously and attentively around one's block of houses, the person will get more out of it than the unbalanced one surrounded by extraordinary nature:

Aber ich sag zu den TeilnehmerInnen probieren geht über studieren, es geht ums eigene Wohlbefinden und bei jeden, das ist ähnlich wie Ernährung man kann Richtlinien geben, aber jeder Mensch ist unterschiedlich, andere Geschmäcker, die TeilnehmerInnen sollen ausprobieren was ihnen gut tut.

He added that all exercises which are carried out very strictly and dogmatically with thoughts aiming of well-being, it will not do much good. Exercising for well-being in his eyes is about awareness, attentiveness, gratitude and pleasure in all actions, from eating and walking to hugging and playing with one's children or going out with the loved ones.

Stefan, who had also experiences with Qi Gong, said that there are the "acht Figuren des Alltags" (eight figures of daily routine), which when practised regularly have the same effects. The explanation therefore was that during these exercises and the TR the system of meridians is worked on, which has also similarities to the chakras and therefore can achieve the same result. When the figures are learned they take the same time as the TR with 21 repetitions, approximately half an hour.

Gertrud, who goes to Yoga class once a week, compared her practice of TR with the Yoga lesson. There different positions were exercised and complemented by meditation and breathing exercises. "... das hat auch eine tolle Wirkung, dass man ein bisschen runter kommt." After her practice of TR or the Yoga class she always has a smile on her face. She realised the difference when she takes a look at persons who come out of an aerobics lesson; these do not have the peaceful smile that the people who attend the Yoga class have. Franziska for example quit her practice doing Sufi Dhikrs instead, which according to her can not be compared to the TR. First they are 'stronger' and second breath and sounds are used to get 'higher'. The exercise of Dhikr is a Muslim devotional act where you keep repeating the names of God. She would rather compare the TR with Yoga.

Marta claimed that there are a lot of Yoga positions which have a similar effect. Because these positions are also connected to the chakras, which are to be harmonized and rejuvenate as a consequence. She was of the opinion that when someone does any kind of “*Energiearbeit*” it will rejuvenate, because you get engaged with your body and the love to your body. She argued that the less attention a body gets the faster it will grow old, because it is not loved enough. Marta also thinks that someone will start to work with energies when a positive attitude about one’s body is given. You have to love your body and yourself in order to keep it healthy and in a good condition. The Yoga exercises which are most similar to the TR exercises are for the second rite the position of *Urdhva-Prasarita-Padasana*, (san. *urdhva* = straight, up, high; san. *prasarita* = straightend or stretched, san. *pada* = foot (Iyengar 2008: 218)) an exercise with lifting and lowering the straight legs, this exercise is said to have impact on the digestive function and the muscles of the abdomen. For the third rite the *Ushtrasana* (=camel), which is the exact same position like the end position of the third rite, kneeling and bending the upper body backwards. And for the fifth rite the upward facing dog (*Urdhva-Mukha-Shvanasana*, san. *urdhva-mukha* = face looking up, san. *shvana* = dog) and the downward facing dog (*Adho-Mukha-Shvanasana*; san. *adho-mukha* = face looking down). A lot of times the upward facing dog is mixed up with the position of cobra. The difference between those positions is that with the cobra position the lower body stays on the floor, with the upward facing dog the whole body is off the floor. This position is said to be good for the back muscles. Marta said that the downward facing dog is said to regain one’s energies, to soften the shoulders and the legs. In Yoga philosophy the eight steps of Yoga, in Sanskrit *Ashtanga*, not only lead to health but in the very end to enlightenment or a living with the ‘greater’. These steps are *Yama*, common ethic laws, *Niyama*, self-cleaning through discipline, *Asana*, fixed positions, *Pranayama*, rhythmic breathing-control, *Pratyahara*, to withdraw the senses from outer things, or to release thinking out of the dominion of senses, *Dharana*, concentration, *Dhyana*, meditation, and *Samadhi*, a state of consciousness where the Yogi becomes one with the universal mind (Iyengar 2008: 15 - 16).

As I mentioned Salvesen (2007: 176) gave some further recommendation to the sixth rite. He underlined that the contraction of the PC-muscle, which is important for the practice of the sixth rite, belongs partly to the practice of Mula bandha, which again is a yogic practice. *Bandha* means bond, connect, bind or hold. These are positions in which certain organs or parts of the body are contracted and controlled. Iyengar (2007: 390) describes the use of bandhas as follows: When electricity is produced, transformers, conductors, switches and

isolated wires are needed to get the power to its destination. When a Yogi practises pranayama, breathing exercises like the sixth rite, and intends prana to flow, it is necessary to use bandhas so that prana is not wasted and can reach its destination. Three bhandas are important for the practice of movements and breathing exercises. During Jalandhara – bandha, *jala* means net, wave or loop, the neck and the throat are concentrated and the chin is laid on the chest between the top of the chest bone, between the clavicles. This bandha is used in every rite except the first one. This bandha is said to regulate and control the blood flow and the flow of prana to the heart, the throat glands, head and brain. During Uddiyana – bandha, *uddiyana* means soar, the midriff is pulled towards the chest and the organs of the abdomen are pulled towards the back and the spine. Through this bandha prana is said to be forced to soar through Sushumna – nadi, which is the main channel of nerve energy. Iyengar (2007: 401) writes in his book *Light on Yoga* that this bandha rejuvenates when practised frequently. This bandha should only be practised after breathing out and between breathing in again like in the sixth rite. As I already described in a previous section, *Movement and Exercises*, the abdomen has to be tucked in during the sixth rite and this unconsciously causes an activation of the bhandas. During the Yoga exercises these bhandas are wished for the greater flow of energy. Mula – bandha, *mula* means root, origin, source or reason, basis or fundament, is the area between after and pubis, which includes the PC–muscle. This bandha can be practiced through the contraction of the after ring muscle. At the Viennese institute for applied bio-cybernetic and feedback research Gerhard H. Eggetsberger tested the impact of the PC–muscle on the body (Salvesen 2007: 235-237). Eggetsberger's result was that the PC–muscle is the only muscle which pumps measurable electric energy through the spinal cord to the brain and stimulates areas there which are not used or activated. His test group achieved a better physical and psychological condition, especially concerning concentration and learning, better sleep and fewer depressions and sexual dysfunctions. Salvesen suggests the activation of the PC–muscle during every exercise, because of its effect.

Ludwig compared the practice of TR to a balanced training with synchronous breathing. This training has to strain all different parts of the body and has to be done in an intensity that suits the practitioner. If the training is too hard it could cause pain, if too soft, no improvements will take place:

Wenn wir den Bewegungsapparat nicht als Bewegungsapparat verwenden verkümmert er und wenn wir ihn überbelasten wird er nicht glücklich sein, ein Mittelding von

Überlastung und Nix tuan. Das gilt für alles ... Ich muss es individuell abstimmen. Wichtig ist eine ä größere Bandbreite von Sportarten und auch Übungen ... Bewegung einfließend in die Atmung ist immer auch eine psychisch und seelische ä Säuberung, wenn man so will. Wenn sie jemanden fragen der regelmäßig laufen geht dann wird der das gleichermaßen bestätigen. Das sind nicht nur Endorphine, die ihn dann so glücklich machen, sondern es ist auch, natürlich auch diese ä allein die Überwindung des Schweinehundes nachträglich ist schon ein Glücksgefühl und macht psychisch sauberer.

Ludwig's opinion is close to Hobert's, who describes in his book *Gesundheit selbst gestalten: Wege der Selbstheilung und die Fünf »Tibeter«* (1997) how the practice of TR can help to achieve health and what is necessary to improve one's well-being. Hobert (1997: 104-129) especially refers to the Hippocratic principles of regularity, which have great impact on health and well-being. Apart from a moderate handling of feelings, drinking and eating, sleeping and being awake, also a balanced proportion of moving and resting is necessary to achieve health. This is reflected by Ludwig's statement that the body needs certain movements, which do not overstrain or under-challenge the body. I suppose that these statements show that in earlier history a system was developed which in its holistic approach can be compared to so-called eastern approaches to well-being. But obviously these approaches have lost their attraction through secularity and the upcoming of science and especially the development of biomedicine; the separation of not only the mind and the body, but also of the self and the environment.

The systems of exercising and breathing differ from each other in the way of how they are carried out. Stefan was the only one who speculated on why people like to choose a non-western form of exercising. He explained that there was a Celtic tradition of movements which has been lost over the centuries. With the Industrial Revolution at the latest the focus was turned on different things and therefore such a tradition as the Celtic practice was disregarded. Also Stefan thinks it is the flair of 'over there' and it is the practice tradition of Yoga and Qi Gong for over hundreds of years which makes people think that there has to be something to it. These reasons lead to the preference of eastern approaches concerning well-being. Stefan admits that it could be possible to achieve similar effects with e.g. aerobics if it is carried out consciously, if one is aware of one's body and breathing, if one makes sure that the exercising affects the whole body and is not carried out with the aim of performance in

mind, but rather with an openness to the things that may occur. A practice of Yoga or Qi Gong with a focus on a need, which someone thinks has to be satisfied, will in the same way not support the practice. So what is really necessary for greater well-being and effects, besides a holistic way of exercising the body, is to be aware of one's actions and to be open enough in order to receive fulfilment.

Spiritual Aspects

The practice of TR is not just a physical exercise; already in the introduction to the German edition of *Die fünf »Tibeter«* it can be read that we, the human race, have lost contact to nature and therefore missed its path (Kelder 1994: 13). Furthermore Chris Griscom, who wrote this introduction, says we have lost our place in the world, which calls for the clear recognition of the true self, which opens knowledge to things which lie beyond our understanding for now (1994: 13). That is to say that we have to learn to understand, otherwise our foolishness will lead to a precipice. It appears that Griscom pledges for a realisation of man's ability to understand higher (divine) laws of life and death. People all over the world have looked out for these secrets and started with the discovery of oneself and their physical and ethereal body. Griscom says (1994: 14-16) that the human body is the best way to experience, because everything that happens in one's body mirrors the world. The relationship between form and formless, two divine conditions of being, influences the preservation of life. Invisible energies of life are origin and design of everything. These energies and their laws can be experienced and learned and influenced. Besides the physical practice of TR which influences the different energy systems (chakras), rhythmic breathing is important to absorb prana, which is the highest property of life, because it is said to be the substance which keeps everyone alive. When prana is translated as breath it seems quite obvious why it is important to absorb prana: without breathing and the inhaling of oxygen, this is like the west puts it, nothing can survive. Doris believes that the TR have a connection to spiritual action, but keeps distance to it. She says she knows too little about it and right now she is not interested in it:

...wenn sie einen haben und wenn da irgendwas nebenbei noch läuft dann wunderbar, aber ich muss nicht wissen was da abgeht g'rade, es soll passieren wenn's passiert und gut so.

For Klara the TR have nothing to do with religious or spiritual aspects. She sees the practice as being engaged with oneself and separate from religion. Klara, a Roman Catholic, stated that she had no interest in Eastern religion and therefore saw no connection between her practice and spirituality. Hans stated that being Catholic and doing Yoga would not really match. Yoga and the TR are about experiencing oneself through the body, which is denied in the church on the one hand and on the other it forbids to have spiritual experiences, because they are connected to the devil. So the practice must rather be connected to Buddhism, and this is a point where someone has to be flexible. Anton emphasized that when an open mind and position are given the practice goes beyond bodily exercising but this does not have to be so, it is also alright to just practise for staying fit. Anton told me that he was raised Roman Catholic, but during the last years was leaning towards Tibetan Buddhism attending a meditation group once a week. For three years he has attended the group and has the impression it is a really good complement to his Tibetan rites practice. Anton appreciates the Dalai Lama as spiritual teacher, who has a lot to pass on. Also Buddhism is the only religion which allows other beliefs as addition. He used the word “Buddh-Christ” to describe himself, still partly appreciating his Christian raising. The TR can be a possible step to an extension of consciousness through meditation, breathing or other exercising. Anton underlined the importance of gratitude several times:

Und am Tag dankbar zu sagen, ich bin glücklich und dankbar dass ich noch da bin ... dankbar sein, dass ich die Möglichkeit habe diese Übungen zu machen, andere liegen im Krankenhaus. ... und ich hab eigentlich jeden Tag die Möglichkeit mein Leben zu gestalten. Nur merkt man's nicht klar, wenn man irgendein Problem hat, dann sieht man's natürlich nicht ... auch dankbar sein für andere. Im Buddhismus heißt es, ohne die Dinge der anderen würde man nicht auf der Welt sein und man ist allein nicht lebensfähig ... Bsp. wenn ich in der Straßenbahn fahre, da gibt es einen Fahrer, welche die, die Schienen verlegt haben etc. etc.

Stefan told me that he met long term practitioners who experienced deep and altered states of consciousness. These experiences are comprehensible, because when someone intensively works the whole systems of chakras or meridians, the ability of perception will change, and also someone's approach to oneself. He thinks that this different perception makes sense, because for example some people start some kind of practice out of a deep desire for

something. And when during this practice psychological and unconscious aspects come up or are healed, nothing is left to be wished for.

Gertrud was the first and only one who was absolutely sure about spiritual input when this topic came up. She argued that when someone tries not to think or just concentrate on breathing, this alone is a big challenge. Mastering it leads to well-being and a calm mind. Her Yoga teacher from the course she is attending once a week also gives little bits of wisdom and philosophy which are inspiring, and in her eyes all this together is very spiritual and also very healing.

Ludwig's opinion on a spiritual effect of TR was divided. On the one hand he said that something spiritual can be drawn out of everything, especially out of rituals and usage. And that the belief in rejuvenation alone is a high spiritual statement. On the other hand there is a philosophy behind the rites, which to him does not really connect to ideas of belief or certain spirituality. This small background is also hidden by the secret of rejuvenation. Ludwig thinks that everything that is done can be done as spiritual action, because body, mind and soul can not be separated during an action and therefore act as a whole. To experience an exercise as comfortable the mind is also needed to recognise this condition. Ludwig described spirituality as one's approach to living which includes to do certain things or to avoid certain actions. And especially rituals help to implement and remind oneself of a certain action and condition:

Man kann aus allem eh irgendwo etwas Spirituelles rausholen, ja ich kann aus auch jedem, insbesondere aus Ritualen aus Gewohnheiten, eh für mich natürlich einen eine Glaubensgrundlage machen. ... Prinzipiell glaub ich, dass, dass alles was wir tun auch unter dem Aspekt des spirituellen machen, weil wir als ganzer Mensch handeln. Essen ist was sehr spirituelles, wenn man so will die Zufuhr von Energie, dieses Schmecken dieses Wohlempfinden, und es gibt natürlich auch Leut', die nur eine schlingen, aber eh wenn man sie einmal genauer interviewt, dann werden sie auch zugeben, dass das für sie ein Glaubenssatz ist.

During the interview with Nina, spirituality was not mentioned at all like in Boris's and Edith's, who mentioned that a long practice has input on the inner attitude. During the interview with Marta spiritual aspects were not mentioned. But since she is a Yoga teacher, we may conclude that she reasons that the practice can change spiritual positions. Franziska

had the impression that the practice did not have any effect on spiritual development or change. But maybe the clearness she felt is a good basis for meditation. Marta in contrast to Franziska was of the opinion that a meditation can not be added immediately after the practice of TR, she did not clarify her point. But she completed that one could sit and go into one's 'nothing', meaning to follow one's breath and to let all thoughts pass by. This is an exercise which can only be done by a few at the first time, and that this exercise alone, keeping one's mind silent is meditation for us westerners. (Marta)

Conclusions

The final question to be answered concerns the fundamental meaning of the Tibetan rites, namely their rejuvenating character. It is said that through the harmonizing and acceleration of chakras the body is rejuvenated. As I already said at the beginning of the ethnography section, the mind has to support this rejuvenation (see page 35). This should be done in a way that the person who practises also thinks positive and young, which means that one should be open minded to new things and should not, for example, worry about one's age because this would support aging. My informants held different viewpoints on this topic and the meaning of the *Fountain of Youth*.

Klara questioned what youth really means. She thinks that keeping the body in motion influences one's posture, not only physically but also mentally. For her this flexibility is part of the fountain of youth, which has to be worked on. It does not help to read the book, try the exercises for a few times and then quit. Someone has to stay in practice to stay fit and flexible, and has to reflect about oneself in order to stay young. When the exercises become one's second nature someone starts to think about oneself. Through this process also the mind gets flexible and does not hold on to an old mind-set. And maybe one starts to use affirmations to extinguish negative thoughts, which are quite usual. Klara thinks that we are raised to overemphasize the negative and that we have to put much energy in positive thinking, like making a gift to ourselves.

Anton said that the fountain of youth is a beautiful metaphor, because it is a beautiful picture to stay young forever. When someone increases one's well-being, which is possible through the practice of the rites, someone will be younger. He had the experience that old people who feel well appear young too. Like Klara he asked what fountain of youth means. For example the Dalai Lama appears really young, funny, playful and open like a child or a student who wants to get to know everything. Through his great interest in everything, he still learns and stays young. For Anton youth is a metaphor for openness for new things. The pure practice of TR can only be a piece of youth, but together with e.g. nutrition or other movements it can help to stay really youthful.

Gertrud just hopes that the TR will provide youth. But for Ludwig the expression *Fountain of Youth* is a legitimate allegory, especially when a look is taken at Shaolin monks. They are a

very good example of what still can be done and achieved with good condition at a high age. Ludwig was sure that when a regular workout is given, someone will stay younger and stay fit longer. This statement is true, but it was put in an exaggerated fairy tale, with a 70 year old man who is like a man in his forties. None of my informants was convinced that the practice of TR alone will provide youth, but in connection with a flexible mind and healthy nutrition they were all sure that exercising can support one's wish to stay young. No one believed that it can be possible to look tens of years younger as the Colonel did in the legend. For most of the informants the *Fountain of Youth* is a metaphor, not for physical youth but for feeling young and agile.

But the question is what does the practice of TR reveal about the informants and about society in general? First one has the impression that the practitioners all look out for greater well-being. This means that they have had to suffer from some kind of lack in their state of being. Not in such a dramatic way that they would have called it suffering, but rather to improve their well-being. This improvement did not only concern their physical health but rather lay on a psychological level, to cope with daily routines and the environment. So the need of the practice can be basically derived from a reduced ability to cope with life in general. This does not mean that the informants would have needed psychological treatment but they all called the way of living into question. Especially they questioned societal norms of 'mores' as embodied in the Olympic principle of *citius, altius, fortius* (faster, higher, stronger), which are also reflected in everyday sports and the way of how exercising is exploited. Instead of pure resistance to the requirements they found a way to stay centred in order not to get lost in fulfilling norms. The only 'more' which is needed is well-being. The way of coping with stress was found in a different cultural system, namely the mystified east. Although globalisation has diminished cultural differences and the isolation of geographical areas; it lets systems converge and makes them accessible for everyone, the 'otherness' of the generalized east has still a place in mind-sets. In the context of the practice of TR people ascribe to this foreign otherness notions such as tradition and a holistic worldview with its preventive medicine system. The character of wholeness seems to attract practitioners who were partly disappointed by western medicine. On the one hand because it treats body as a machine like a car, and on the other hand it just intervenes when someone already has symptoms of disease.

The TR are not precisely Yoga, but are considered to be a kind of Yoga to make more sense of it, because there is an abundance of literature on Yoga which is not the case with the TR. The TR, which share a suspicious lot with Yoga, and Yoga both provide a system which includes all aspects of life and therefore seem more appropriate to approach human well-being. Yoga means a combination, link or union of the individual and the cosmic self, and as such strives for the transcendence of all things and therefore leads to the recognition of truth. Recognition in this context is not the best word because it assumes that there is someone who experiences something, but actually this subject-object relationship is part of what ought to be transcended. The premise of Yoga is that everything which can be experienced is an illusion, caused by and based on ignorance. As lined out by Alter in *Yoga in Modern India. The Body between Science and Philosophy* (2004: 4):

The practice of Yoga is designed to transform illusion into reality by transcending ignorance and training the embodied mind to experience Truth. The experience of Truth is samadhi, which can be translated as a transcendent condition of ecstatic union of subject and object. Significantly samadhi is both technique for realizing this condition and the condition itself. The transcendental Self is samadhi as a condition of Ultimate Truth that is beyond time and space. In this regard Yoga can be understood as so profound to make standard categories of thought such as religion, spirituality, metaphysics, and science – to name but the most standard – singularly imprecise and dubiously qualified to articulate Truth.

It is interesting that at the same time the practitioners also showed a lack of interest in scientific explanations of the effect of the TR, which already is part of a yogic sense. For outsiders their practice can be explained by the quest for health, but why exactly they stick to their practice does not seem comprehensible in a logical way. The logic of that something is done to feel better is comprehensible but not its specific output. Therefore the practice itself is needed, it has to be experienced and sensed in order to be understood. As also Alter puts it (2004: 10), Yoga is nothing that can be understood but only experienced as such, which is a tautology contrary to the logic of knowledge.

According to Alter modern Yoga is not that much just-eastern as it is seen by the informants or others who hold the view of plain eastern tradition. Yoga, which has never been a fixed philosophy, has been transformed from philosophy to physical education and public health

throughout history (Alter 2004: 4). This transformation, even if it has taken place in India, has been influenced by “transnational ideas about health, strength and physical fitness all over the world in the mid- to late nineteenth century and early twentieth” (Alter 2004: 28). Even more. Alter thinks that the father of body building, Eugene Sandow, has had greater influence on the form and practice of modern Yoga, especially the focus on the body, than Indian self-called Yogis.

Another advantage of a Yoga practice or TR seemed to be the inclusion of spirituality. While some of the informants did not engage in spiritual things or were of the opinion the TR do not lead to spiritual engagement, others did not want to exclude the possibility. If one speaks about holistic approaches, it seems logical that spirituality inevitably has to be a part of it. Just this possibility shows that there is a certain interest in the topic, probably on account of a loss of the position of religion or spirituality in western contexts. On the one hand the spiritual character of Yoga is approved by Alter and on the other hand it is demystified (2004: 13):

Although the past century has witnessed a dramatic “secularization” of Yoga on the one hand and its articulation as a kind of universalistic, nonsectarian “spirituality” on the other, in many ways Yoga has become the functional equivalent of a distinct religion. ... Yoga has become something you believe in. But, unlike religion, the Truth of Yoga is thought to be transcendent and beyond belief.

And on page 28 he adds:

...the history of Yoga slips past spirituality and intellectual philosophy. It is unambiguously linked to rules that apply on body and nature.

This shows how powerful an imagination of a foreign system can be. How easy it is to ascribe things even if they are not there, but are so desperately wished for. Even more it seems that the look at the distant others and their arrangements of life are easier to be included than a look at one's own cultural possibilities. The easy access through internet and other media provides a great possibility for those who look for other things than the ones given in the local area. But besides this fact a lot of times it is overlooked that the world was already globalised before the upcoming of the World Wide Web; and that people were exchanging ideas for hundreds of years or were influenced, or even suppressed by others. This influence or

suppression was mostly exerted by us westerners, especially in the 19th century, the heyday of colonisation. Therefore it is no surprise that Alter (2004: 26) writes:

... a critical analysis of Yoga's history will show that it is a product of the colonial era, a product of a particular concern with health and morality, and a product of science and scientific practice.

Alter's statements counteract the enthusiasm for Yoga as a completely foreign and self-installed practice of foreigners. Even more this look at Yoga shows the connection and interdependent relationship between east and west, which makes a delimited development of an independent practice impossible. Furthermore it appears that there is a need to make geographically distant other more foreign, to distinguish them from ourselves in order to revert to something different. These dualistic categories of us and others are upheld for the purpose of projecting into the other whatever one's society may lack. Therefore it appears to fulfil the function of liberating someone from a system that is rooted in the local environment. Speaking of liberation, in Yoga philosophy life is seen as constant suffering, which has to be overcome by the transcended being in the state of *samadhi*. This condition of *samadhi* also erases the concept of a dualistic view. *Samadhi* is also described as a situation in which the mind finds a place in the silence of its inner self and is released from all pain of terrestrial existence. The self is now compared with a flame, which does not flicker any more, because it is in a lee place (Hackl 1996: 46). Finally the condition of *samadhi* means ultimate security.

It appears that the west has lost its ability to give its people the feeling of security. This can be derived by its bondage to science, which in Alter's words "is probably one of the most powerful hegemonic forces" (2004:29). But science itself is very unstable, insecure, constantly under construction. Depending on time and context, different approaches have been developed to arrive at a deeper understanding of the world. In the course of time these approaches have been put into question, even falsified and no discipline could escape this development, neither physics nor the humanities. Anthropology for example has moved from an almost hard science, in the early beginnings, to a system of explanations where everything is just a subjective construction. Alter describes science, in a sociological sense, as the religion of modernity. But especially during the last twenty years science has been confronted with questions of its legitimacy and limits. What is more, the west tends to be materialistic, but as recent events drastically show, the stock market is anything else but a secure basis.

So the body, as material, has been subordinated to the mind, which can be assigned to Descartes' work on creating these two different and unequal substances. Fields, who wrote about *Religious Therapeutics. Body and Health in Yoga, Ayurveda and Tantra*, comments on Descartes' dualism (2001: 14):

...the mind is valorized and the body considered a material object, analyzable in terms of mechanistic science. The Cartesian legacy, in words of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone [1992: 2], "has been not only to divide the fundamental integrity of creaturely life, but to depreciate the role of living body in knowing and making sense of the world" ... the redress of philosophical and functional implications of Descartes' casting of the 'mind-body problem' incorporates phenomenological and non-Western approaches to our understanding of person and body.

The body in Descartes' understanding was the seen one, not the felt body. Merleau-Ponty (1962) contributed to this point that we must distinguish between the subjectively experienced and the objective, visible body. This phenomenological approach is also reflected by the participants of TR, they have moved from a physical way of exercising to sensing their exercising. And this aspect is not restricted to the practice itself but is extended to bodily awareness throughout the day. The choice of body as health-promoting tool reflects both the integration of the body and the rejection of intellectual hegemony.

Another approach to the gain in security in connection with health was provided by Robert Crawford at the beginning of the 1980ies in his *A Cultural Account of Health*. According to him the concept of health in a society also refers to its basic assumptions and functioning. Crawford detects two main meanings of health: health as (self)-control and health as release. The meaning of health as control refers to self discipline and will power; it assumes the capability of oneself to gain health, which constantly has to be worked on. In this case the body is an object again, which can be modelled after one's wishes. Therefore health has to be incorporated as an important value in life. This again leads to a moral evaluation of health, and turns into something that *should* be done, health becomes an imperative. Striving for health in this sense has become an action of one's responsibility for oneself. This do-it-yourself-project is said to have replaced the religious doctrine of salvation; health has become a reference to morality. But also a norm, which is indefinable because there is no objective

norm of health, and therefore all the more hotly disputed for. The other meaning of health as release stands in contradiction to health as control. As release health is seen as doing oneself something good, to avoid stress, to relax, to satisfy one's needs and wishes. Health is achieved by transforming daily stress into relaxation. The logic behind is that health is dependent on psychological capacities to cope with stress.

The stressful time we live in has been outlined by the informants several times. Also that there is no need for scientific explanation of the function of TR. Yoga can replace the belief in true knowledge, which is so intensely wished for, in a way that (Alter 2004: 18):

It is based on direct experience rather than on revelation or the interpretation of inspired teaching. It is also primarily epistemological rather than ontological, in the sense that Yoga is defined by procedural methods for realizing Truth that can otherwise only be inferred.

I assume that our overly intellectual way to explain the world and to make sense of it, as well as to find ways to cope with social life and environment, also restricts possibilities. On the one hand because of certain logical lines that have to be followed and on the other hand because of its excluding character of other epistemological tools like the body. So we have limited our minds to what can be seen, logically explained and verified and also to the things which can be spoken of. The practice of TR appears to be an action which also suffers from the difficulty of expressing its experience. The informants just used general phrases as 'I feel well', 'they do good', 'they upgrade my day', 'the practice helps me to cope with daily routines' or 'I'm more myself'.

During the last century studies have been carried out on the techniques of Yoga "to test its truth value and discover how and why it works" (Alter 2004: 34). Yoga's advantage is that it is a technique that lies beyond culture. There are not only studies of the effect of Yoga on humans, also rats were tested. The animals were put in glass tubes with the head up side down, comparable to the head stand posture. And like humans rats profited from the 'exercise': they turned out to be more capable of resisting and coping with stressful situations. Alter comments on this experiment that it calls into question our concept of culture (2004: 68):

The radical nature of the experiment is in its logical, philosophical conclusion – that on yogic terms humans and rats are fundamentally, rather than analogically, the same. ... many Yoga postures are named after animals ... the animal basis of Yoga postures has been regarded as metaphorical and based on mythology. And yet, in many ways, Yoga sadhana³² is the embodied performance of our “animal nature,” at least insofar as culture – including our cultural perception of nature – is a misperception or reality. ... although the practice of Yoga is a construction of culture, the construction of culture is not a necessary condition for the experience of Yoga.

These experiments blur both the imagined incompatibility of cultural creations and the line between humans and animals. The intellect, which is said to distinguish humans from animals, has especially in the west laid down as criterion for humans to be ‘Gods’ greatest creation’. No wonder that together with a rejection of the body the intellect has become one of the greatest values, the tool in which everything can be explained.

The problem of the intellectual explanations in our terms lies in the duality of either / or. So we always must decide between two possibilities, where only one statement is valid. The possibility that two statements are true at the same time is incompatible with western logic. This general logic causes a have-to-be separation of things. In this duality also a holistic view has its opposition. In the case of the ‘whole’ it would be ‘nothing.’ So consider that ‘nothing’ is a valid category on the one hand it is an unsatisfying category for a science that wishes to explain everything. On the other hand the researchers’ questions are swept away because ‘nothing’ can not explain things in the usual logic. It could be put as illogical and therefore can rescue the researcher in his/her desire of the explicable and can say, see it is like this. On the other hand when the category of ‘nothing’ is taken as valid, one finds end in researching as nothing is the final answer and one must smile about one’s insatiable thirst for explanations. Because still it can be said, see it is like this! This short play with categories shows that no matter how hard we try to adjust our minds to make sense of the things it will lead to confusion, because traditional ideas can not be upheld. As Alter (2004: 211-213) puts it, Yoga, as a cultural system, “does not present a threat to the integrity of any other cultural system”. He is of the opinion that Yoga provides a logic for a “profound and encompassing critique of culture and society”, therefore (2004: 236) as a consequence Yoga questions ideals independent of culture. Alter puts the concept of culture into question and also the

³² = practice or procedure; the means by which self-realization is achieved (Alter 2004: 279)

anthropological discipline. He criticizes that although this discipline should deal with the human in humans, it is just concerned with distinct aspects of humans, the things that can be seen and observed rather than with the possibly invisible human in humans. And he lines out that (2004: 221):

... as an analytical abstraction the concept of culture defines a level of human experience that is epiphenomenal rather than phenomenological, and the meaningful words people create are, in fact, not webs of meaning, but as Yoga suggests, the ensnaring web of maya³³. Culture can be made to make sense, either from the inside looking at itself or from outside looking in. But in making sense is there not another more true-to-the-world reality that is obscured? Think of it this way: the development of language promotes human communication, but the history of language does not. Perhaps, therefore, the development of language is not what makes us human but that prevents us from seeing ourselves – and recognizing the importance of so seeing ourselves – as a species of animal, as beings animated by anima.

When I started my research on the internet I thought that the TR were a practice which were brought to life by a well-travelled man. I was really surprised by the fact that it was not possible to find concrete biographical data about the author and I thought that this fact would ruin my whole intention to write about the TR. How could I write about something whose origin is doubtful and the author is a mystery? I had the impression that these facts robbed me of the basis of my work. But after discussions with my supervisor it was clear that this was just another part of the phenomenon of the TR. And in the end it revealed to be a factor which is totally unimportant to the practitioners. They held either different opinions about Peter Kelder or they were not interested in the author at all, it did not influence the practice.

I guess I also had the assumption that my informants, especially the long term practitioners would be very spiritual, wise, calm and helpful. This illusion got its first cracks when I tried to find informants. Some trainers I called were almost rude and very sceptical about giving an interview, which did not match my picture at all. Also I assumed the long term practitioners would have a very special charisma, to be youthful and very vital. This picture was only given by Edith, who really impressed me. After Edith, Anton was the closest to have some kind of

³³ = the web of illusion (Alter 2004: 277)

Yogi attitude which I attributed to them. Both, Edith and Anton had an additional Buddhist practice which came closest to my assumption. But as Edith said:

... natürlich, man kann sich den ganzen Tag mit sicher selber beschäftigen, ja damit [es] einem gut geht, aber (lacht) irgendjemand muss arbeiten und alles andere machen.

My other assumption was that I thought if they did not practise because of altruistic reasons they would have a pragmatic approach; that they used the practice to achieve certain things. And again I was wrong, not as much as at the first assumption, but still wrong. With the exception of Nina, a beginner, none of my informants started the practice to achieve certain things. Most of them started out of curiosity and to experiment what would happen when they were practising the rites.

Another assumption was that the long term practitioners would do 21 repetitions and maybe had a second practice in the evening, when they were already practising 21 repetitions in the morning. I was disappointed. None of the long term practitioners was doing 21 repetitions. They all had a practice of 9 or more, but fewer than 21. Hans said about his repetitions that he does fewer than 21, but he would not tell me the number of repetitions because everybody has to find out by themselves how many repetitions are appropriate. Edith gave a very good example which happened to her when she did 21 repetitions. (see page 24). And Marta added that it can take years to achieve 21 repetitions. She reasoned that the body needs a lot of time to adjust to the movements and the impact they have on the chakras. And that the acceleration of chakras, which should be achieved through the practice, has to be carried out slowly otherwise the body will be totally overstrained and will react in various ways to cope with the self inflicted stress. This can be expressed in physical or mental suffering like in Edith's case.

It was interesting to see that my informants held also different opinions whether the rites should be practised evenly often or not. Some were of the opinion to practise every rite equally often as recommended by Kelder (Hans, Edith). Others were of the opinion that each rite should be practised as often as it is needed (Anton). Stefan, who was actually of the opinion to practise every rite equally often, mentioned that a different number of repetitions could be useful to erase weak spots faster. Anton mentioned that he likes to spin more often than he repeats the other exercises. Doris was the only one who really did every rite unequally

often. Nina was the only one who did not increase the number of repetitions after a few weeks although she had the impression she could manage it. The main reason to do so was that the time she spent in the morning with practising suited her perfectly. The question of why Kelder recommends the number of 21 repetitions could not be answered. Marta commented on this issue that she thinks 21 is a holy number, like 7, and 3 times 7 equals up in 21, which is not a very scientific explanation.

The research on the internet showed a lot of discussions about proper alignment and effects. Concerning the alignment it was said, that the exercises cause pain. My informants verified this statement considering that if someone had not done any movement for a long time, it would affect the body. These effects can also be uncomfortable like strained or overstretched muscles. Few people who start the practice have a sense for their body and therefore easily hurt themselves when they do not take care. Therefore a course or at least someone who is knowledgeable in the correct use of the body is preferable to observe one's practising especially in the beginning. The TR are said to teach body awareness and therefore proper alignment and correct movement should get easier during the time of practice. Ludwig for example criticised that the rites are not very well described in the classical *Die fünf »Tibeter«* book. He would prefer more pictures to present the whole cycle of every rite on the one hand and on the other hand he would like to have more written explanations, like which muscles have to be activated and also more detailed breathing instructions. Ludwig did not know Arnold Lanz' book in which more explanations to the proper alignment are given. Nor did he know the companion book which was published in German in 2000. This so called companion book not only offers more explanations on how to practise the five rites but also exercises which are easier to exercise and can substitute the rites in the beginning.

With the exception of Doris, a beginner, none of my informants had problems with the correct alignment and back pains which occurred at Doris' practice. Nina, who had never read a book about the TR, had either a good demonstration and explanation of the rites, or a good body awareness, which prevented her from straining or pain. Also Gertrud, who just read the book but never attended a course did not mention any difficulties with the rites. Almost every trainer told me about the trainers' education that they were surprised that everyone was doing the rites in a different way when they were first practising all together. But none of the trainers made more comments about what was the difference between the alignments and the carrying out of the rites.

Most of my informants were practising in the morning. Only Gertrud preferred to practise in the evening. All licensed trainers agreed that the time of practising is adjustable to one needs, only Boris was in favour of practising in the morning or in the evening. The trainers recommended to practise at a time that matches the personal needs, and this can be in the afternoon, too. Marta was of the opinion that the practice should always be carried out at the same time and in the same place; this would support the effect of the rites as ritual.

The question of breathing was not really brought up by my informants. On the internet you can find different recommendations, about just using the nose to breathe and others to use the nose to breathe in and the mouth to breathe out. Kelder underlines to breathe deeply and intensely, to breathe in while starting the movement and to breathe out while coming back to the starting position. In the early German editions no breathing is recommended for the first five rites, what is suggested, however, is to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth during the sixth rite. I guess this is the reason why further breathing recommendations on the internet or in Lanz' book assign this way of breathing also to the other rites. In the course I attended the trainer also recommended to use nose and mouth for breathing. It is interesting that in the reprint of 1946 no breathing recommendations are given at all. The editor Watt (2008: 23) comments on this issue that he thinks that one breathes naturally anyway while practising the rites and therefore no recommendations are needed. Boris was the only one who specified breathing. He said that the movement takes longer than the breath; this means that there are pauses between breathing in and out and in again. To sum up in general the recommendation is given to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. But actually this recommendation need not be followed in a strict way.

None of my informants practised the sixth rite. They also had less knowledge about the rite and the question of celibacy connected to this rite. Stefan was the only one who told me that he had done the sixth rite as an experiment but did not feel any additional effects on the one hand and on the other hand he was of the opinion that he had practised it for too short a time to really make statements about its use. Boris was the only one who was of the opinion that the sixth rite is not really appropriate for westerners because of the required celibacy. But at the same time he recommended Salvesen's book about the rite for westerners. Also none of my informants practised the seventh rite; it was not mentioned at all, except by Edith, who pointed out its existence when the topic of the sixth rite was brought up. The seventh rite was

only topic in the course, where the teacher Iris told us that it is not necessary to sing mantras. She, for example, rather prefers to sing folk songs in order to train her voice.

Gertrud, Klara and Anton were the ones who regularly use affirmations to support their practice. The use of affirmations is to intensify one's practice on the one hand and on the other hand affirmations are used to manipulate one's mind. This means that the use of affirmations helps to break up old thinking and patterns. Affirmations are very individual and follow one's wishes. When someone for example is very anxious an affirmation which tells someone to be calm and peaceful can help to erase the feeling of disquiet. The use of affirmations seems to be a manipulating action towards oneself, but in a conscious and positive way. Therefore the wrong thinking and the thinking of negative has to be realised first. After becoming aware of one's non-productive thinking for well-being one can start to work on the issue and to tell oneself what he or she wishes. As Kelder mentions in the 1946 edition, hypnosis works with the rearranging of thinking and clusters (Kelder 2008: 68). Franz Pissinger (2005: 13), a Viennese hypnotist, writes about his work, that the most important thing is to learn how to think outside the box, to achieve changes. John Grinder and Richard Bandler (2007: 9-10), who were pupils of Milton Erickson, the so called father of modern hypnosis, question if hypnosis exists at all. On the one hand they are of the opinion that every conscious communication is hypnosis and on the other hand they contradict themselves stating that there is nothing like hypnosis. If you assume that hypnosis is an act of changing or influencing one's state of consciousness initiating a kind of trance, every successful communication is hypnosis, for example a speech of a politician or of a car seller. Affirmations should always be formulated in a positive way. It is assumed that the unconscious does not understand the word *not*. When you for example tell someone, not to think of blue, he or she will immediately think of blue, and then will cross it out. So when you use affirmation you can change your state of consciousness for a greater well-being or to cope with different aspects of life. Affirmations can help to fulfil one's wishes (Salvesen 2007: 72). To use affirmations while one is practising has another advantage. The rites themselves as ritual already take you away from your usual activities, which means that they alter one's state of consciousness and therefore give a good ground for the effectiveness of affirmations.

The question of the supporting character of nutrition is difficult to answer. On the one hand it seems obvious that a healthy nutrition can support detoxification or one's energies. On the other hand the opinions of what is healthy change from decade to decade. All of the

informants were sure that nutrition has a supportive effect on the practice. Coffee for example is said to increase the energy, which was collected through the rites. The informants held different opinions on what is healthy and nutritious and what is not, every one of them nurtured themselves differently. The only thing they had in common and agreed on was the way of eating. They recommended to eat consciously, to see how the food looks, how it smells, what its consistence is and so on. Furthermore they said that it is necessary to chew properly, and underlined to eat slowly and with pleasure. Also one should look out for what kinds of food assists well-being and are reconcilable.

I was somehow disappointed about the statements the informants made about the changes and effect their practice had brought about. Some informants mentioned that their lifestyle changed, like Edith who lost a lot of weight without diet and quit smoking. In general they said about the practice that it energizes and appeases at the same time, and that it has impact on strengthening and stretching the muscles. Most of the time they referred to the phrase “*tut mir gut*”. And I wondered what does it make so difficult to express one’s constitution in more than three words? Can it be expressed in words at all? How do you express bodily sensations and feelings? I also wondered if it is the German language, which limits statements about the state of being.

The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu stated once (Weiß 1999: 84) that the more someone is engaged with one’s body, interested in and pays attention to one’s body, the easier it is for this person to express their bodily sensations. These persons are more able to interpret and also to identify their sensations, and therefore can express them more easily. And Alter (2004: 224), who also tries to make sense of the spoken words also references to Wilhelm von Humboldt (1988: 48) who put it that way:

Nobody means by a word precisely and exactly what his neighbour does, and the difference, be it ever so small, vibrates, like a ripple in water, throughout the entire language. Thus all understanding is always at the same time a not-understanding.

The TR are said to lead to a better awareness of the body and also one’s emotions, feelings and sensations, and help not to push back one’s emotions, feelings or sensations, which are needed to perceive one’s limits and needs. But the practice either did not help the informants to express them or if it did they did not tell me. A problem for the linguistic expression of

emotions is the difference between the bodily sensation of emotion and the verbal expression (Kühn 2002: 110). Furthermore the interpretation of emotions of another person is filtered twice. First a culturally bound and learned mechanism of suppressing emotions causes the data to be filtered. This mechanism has to be calculated in, even if it is carried out individually, depending on one's personality, and the situational condition. The second filter is produced by the attempt to transmit the emotion, feeling or sensation into another media, namely language. These theories do not justify the informants' reluctance to talk about their state of being, and what the practice feels like on the whole. Besides, they may not have trusted me or were sceptical about my work. Edith was of the opinion that it can not be spoken of experiences with the TR and Klara argued her inability to speak about experiences as:

außer dem Körperlichen was ich am Anfang schon gesagt hab eigentlich nichts. Aber ich hab, es hat auch keinen Einstieg gegeben, dass, dass ich's wegen irgendetwas Großartiges gemacht hätte. Wissen Sie, wie ich mein, ich kann ja nicht sagen wie mein Weg gewesen wäre wenn ich es nicht gemacht hätte. Also ich hab die Tibeter nicht gemacht, weil ich oder begonnen, weil ich keinen Ausweg mehr gewusst hab, oder weil, ich weiß nicht, oder irgendwas Grobes hätte reparieren hab müssen. Sondern es war ein beginn einer neuen Wellnesswelle wo ich mir einfach gedacht hab, oke probier's ich halt auch, drum hab ich da auch keinen, kann ich nix großartiges berichten.

The informants had different views concerning the issue of spirituality, whether the spiritual positions change or not. They were split between the opinion that the TR do not have any impact on spiritual positions (e.g. Klara, Franziska) and the opinion that the TR can also lead to enlightenment in the very end (e.g. Hans). I suppose that these opinions depended on the whether someone was open enough to see this possibility of TR practice and wanted to achieve it. Anton gave the example that he met people who used the TR to stay fit, which was their only desire. The informants made the impression that they all had different approaches to spirituality, except Edith and Anton, who were both engaged in Buddhism. Fransizka for example was fond of Sufism and Klara underlined to be Roman-Catholic.

Most of the long term practitioners agreed that the practice of TR triggers a process which leads to more awareness toward one's state of being and needs. Therefore the practice has to

be done in a conscious way. If this state of awareness is carried throughout the day, one starts to get more and more aware of oneself and one's actions. This can change the attitude and behaviour. And also, when needed, one's spiritual position. If one is confronted with oneself he or she will also be confronted with the outer world and the question of what is beyond it. Still there are the questions of why should someone change at all? Is there a need to change, are these persons not satisfied with themselves? I had the impression that many who started the practice did not start because they were suffering, but wanted to improve their well-being. They (Nina, Doris, Klara) wanted to be more centred and energised. Others like Anton and Ludwig started out of curiosity. And Hans for example gave as reason for the practice that it is the search for transcendent things. But still what is the need for feeling better? Anton and Gertrud underlined that we live in a very stressful time and this can gnaw on the person's state of being. Therefore the TR provide time for oneself, to come back to one's centre, which appeases mind and body and gives strength. Edith called it an act of hygiene, and together with other statements of the informants, this can be read as wiping off the outer stressful things and difficulties.

About half of the informants traced the effects back to the harmonizing of chakras, which increases one's energies. The other half was convinced that it has to do with the combination of rhythmic breathing and the movements. Also a lot of them were sure that it is the particular choice of the movements, which work the whole body. And the last factor was to take time for oneself. The question whether the same effects could be achieved with different movements was answered differently. Some were of the opinion that nothing could be exactly the same as the TR. However they did not exclude the possibility that different movements or exercises could affect body and person in a similar way. With the exception of Stefan all of the informants were convinced that it required slow and attentive exercising, synchronic breathing and movements which train the whole body. Stefan was the only one who commented that there also exist exercises where breathing becomes secondary. Furthermore that there are also exercises where endurance is asked for, which at the same time have a meditative character and affect the body as a whole. All were convinced that to look out for performance as achievement would not lead to the effects, which are ascribed to the TR.

The trainers underwent the training to become licensed and authorised trainers by the *Dachverband* because of interest (Edith, Anton, Hans), a faithful occasion (Klara), or a need to legalize his teaching practice (Stefan). Only Klara was giving regular courses. Stefan

taught for four years in Tyrol. Edith and Hans could not install a practising group, because of a low interest, and Anton, who had been giving courses, was busy because he had just become father. The ones who gave courses had different experiences. They had pupils between 25 up to 75 but with an average of pupils in the age of 40 to 45. With exception of Stefan, whose courses were mainly attended by couples, the others said that they always had more women than men in their courses. They explained this fact on the one hand with women's greater interest in health and on the other hand that women are more open minded towards alternative movements. The informants gave different reasons why people attend a course like the TR, besides the search for greater well-being and fitness. On the one hand there was the argument for the search for the transcendent in order to fill up the lost position of religion (Hans). On the other hand it is the possibility to spend some time with oneself to cope with the daily routines, which most of the time are very stressful.

The TR are said to be the *Fountain of Youth*, but none of the informants really believed in it. But they were of the opinion that movement can help to stay fit longer and also has an impact on the mind, in the way that in analogy to the body, it stays more flexible. This flexibility in body and mind can give ground to staying youthful, because age is a question of attitude.

It was interesting to see that although the informants knew about the controversy about the author and the origin of the rites, it did not have a lot of impact on their practice. On the one hand most of my informants were sure that the rites have their origin in the Himalayan region and on the other hand they were convinced that this aspect has no influence on the movements or the practice itself. Only Fransiska mentioned that the information that the TR may not come from Tibet decreased her enthusiasm but at the same time she kept the connection of TR and Tibet.

When I go back to the questions which I was facing at the beginning of the work, concerning the way of movement and how a different philosophy of movement can be integrated in our western standards of movement, the answer has to be that it is an individual choice. First none of the informants mentioned that he or she had the impression the movement would not suit their attitude or culture. Second the practice of TR can be adjusted in various ways, from meditative to accelerated. As long as the focus stays on one's action and is not carried away by different thoughts or achievements the practice will lead to greater and more holistic well-being.

The TR in a time of stress and insecurity provide compact knowledge to cope with daily routines. Unlike Yoga the only philosophical background is about the chakras and the aim of rejuvenation. The practice of TR suits time and society. On the one hand it offers a possibility to stay fit and healthy, which is wished for and counts as worthwhile. It also has some kind of mystical foreign flair, although it is not that foreign and plain Tibetan or Indian culture as imagined. This was explained in the previous chapter. Still this issue seems to be a help for practitioners in a way that when they do not understand its functioning, because it is not logical in our sense, they can talk themselves out of it saying that the TR originate in a different, foreign culture. On the other hand the practice of TR is simple and easily learned, and with the knowledge of original 30 pages one can earn an improvement of well-being for years, as long as the person keeps practising. And as a consequence the TR provide a tool kit to cope with social life and the environment and therefore can bring about a sense of security.

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Appendix

Abstract

We live in a time when every one has to face the constant growth of requirements which have to be fulfilled. To cope with this stress and prevent us from sickness, methods are needed, which balance ourselves. A lot of times people choose a non-western medical system, because these are said to function preventively, contrary to our medical system, which mainly treats symptoms. The so-called 'Tibetan rites', an exercising routine, are a method to keep and regain equilibrium. The practitioners of these rites are convinced of its effects such as gaining or regaining energy, inner calmness, more awareness of the body and sometimes the feeling of hunger changes. The history of the rites is very young. In 1939 the first version *The Eye of Revelation* by Peter Kelder was published. Years later, in 1989, the book was extended and translated into German. Kelder writes that the rites originate in Tibet, but actually they are said to be unknown in Tibet. The exercises have a lot in common with Yoga exercises and therefore are referred to as a kind of Yoga, although this has not been proved or can be verified. Also, reliable information about the author Peter Kelder is hard to obtain and difficult to verify. There exist a few data about him, which are to some extent mystical, so his real identity can not be revealed. Nonetheless the exercises find favour with a considerable number of people, especially in the German area. It seems that for the practitioners the doubted origin is nothing to debate about; neither is the so called *Fountain of Youth* that the rites are said to provide. The practitioners held different opinions on that point, as they differed in their adoption of the rites. This shows that the given system of the Tibetan Rites is very flexible and also that not everything has to be explainable in a scientific way. This work deals with practitioners' ways to approach and exercise the rites, not in an instructional way but rather concerning for example their time or amount of practicing; if they also practise the additional 6th and 7th rites, or if they add affirmations while they are exercising, or if they have even changed their way of how they nurture themselves, which is said to support the practice. Furthermore this thesis tried to capture their experiences, how the practice affected their well-being. The results were not always satisfying or convincing; for many informants articulating their sensations proved to be an unsurmountable obstacle. Yoga is said that it can not be understood in a logical way, the only way to understand is to experience the practice.

Kurzzusammenfassung

In einer Zeit der wachsenden Anforderungen an jeden einzelnen von uns entsteht das Bedürfnis nach Ausgleich. Ein Ausgleich, der uns einerseits hilft mit dem Stress des alltäglichen Lebens umzugehen und andererseits uns davor bewahrt zu erkranken. Stress ist in der heutigen Zeit einer der tragenden Auslöser für Krankheit und körperlichen Verfall. Um diesem entgegen zu wirken werden verschiedenste Methoden angewandt, die oft außerhalb des westlichen Medizinsystems liegen, da dieses sich mehr mit der Behandlung von Symptomen beschäftigt als der Prävention von Krankheit. Die so genannten ‘fünf Tibeter’ sind eine Form des Ausgleichs. Eine Übungsabfolge, die einmal richtig erlernt die Praktizierenden zu ihrer Mitte bringt, wodurch sie gefestigt und resistenter gegen Stress werden. Zusätzlich beschreiben die Ausübenden die Effekte der Übungen als Energie bringend, beruhigend und das Körperempfinden stärkend. Die Geschichte der ‘fünf Tibeter’ ist sehr jung. Im Jahr 1939 kam Peter Kelders erste Version *The Eye of Revelation* heraus, die jedoch erst Jahre später (1989) zum ersten Mal ins deutsche übersetzt und erweitert wurde. Laut Buch stammen die Übungen aus Tibet, die Recherche ergab allerdings, dass diese Übungen in Tibet unbekannt sind. So werden die Übungen aufgrund ihrer verblüffenden Ähnlichkeit mit Yoga-Übungen gleichgesetzt. Ein weiteres Mysterium bildet der Autor selbst, dessen wahre Identität nicht eruierbar ist. Nichtsdestoweniger finden die Übungen großen Anklang und die Frage nach dem Ursprung scheint irrelevant für die Praktizierenden. Genauso wie der Anspruch der ‘Tibeter’, verjüngend zu wirken, zu dem die Praktizierenden verschiedene Ansichten hatten. Deren pragmatische Aneignung zeigt einerseits die Flexibilität des Systems und andererseits die Unbedeutsamkeit von gesichertem Wissen. Diese Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Art und Weise wie die Praktizierenden sich die Übungen zu eigen machen und unterschiedlich ausführen. Nicht von der körperlichen Ausführung her, sondern in Bezug auf zum Beispiel Zeitpunkt und Anzahl der Wiederholungen; ob auch die zwei weiteren Übungen (sechster und siebter ‘Tibeter’) praktiziert werden, oder ob sie auch zusätzliche Praktiken, wie die Verwendung von Affirmationen während des Übens, oder die Ausweitung auf eine bestimmte Ernährung, zur Unterstützung der Praxis angewandt werden. Des Weiteren wurde auch versucht die Erfahrungen der Praktizierenden einzufangen, welche Auswirkungen im Einzelnen die Praxis auf jeden hat. Hier zeigte sich wie schwierig es ist körperliches Empfinden zu artikulieren und etwas zu beschreiben das nahezu nicht zu beschreiben ist. Wie es oft auch im Yoga heißt, scheint es, dass gewisse Dinge nicht verstanden werden können, noch konkret ausdrückbar sind, allerdings in der Praxis erfahrbar gemacht werden können.

Curriculum Vitae

Personal Information

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Education

2003/ 09 – 2009/11	Social- and Culturalanthropology at University of Vienna Masterthesis: Exercise and Well–Being: Myth and Practice of the »Tibetan Rites«
2002/ 09 – 2003/ 06	Graduation from Bundesrealgymnasium, 1140 Wien
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Projects

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