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Body and Ki in Gicheon : practices of self-cultivation in contemporary Korea

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Cover Page



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Stellingen

Behorende bij het proefschrift
*Body and ki in Gicheon:
Practices of self-cultivation in contemporary Korea*
door Yeonhwa Jeon

1. The concept of technologies of the self developed by Michel Foucault can be fruitfully utilized for studying such phenomena as *ki suryŏn* in Korea, *yangsheng* in China and ascetic practices in Japan as methods for cultivating personal subjectivity. This will help placing these practices within a context of academic research and support the attempt of Russian sinologist Abayev to establish the psycho-physical culture of East Asia as a research subject of its own.
2. Pain, produced in GiCheon through the very particular experience of *naegasinjang*, is utilized as a technique for self-transformation. In GiCheon, pain is formulated as enlivening and opening *ki* channels, thus molding the body toward perfection.
3. *Ki suryŏn* in general and GiCheon can be viewed as a part of *sŏndo* culture, the culture, either re-invented or reformulated, of mountain-dwelling practitioners striving for immortality.
4. Mountains are spaces for performing *naegasinjang* and other GiCheon positions, and also a background against which an ideal GiCheon body created by *naegasinjang*, an immortal body, is imagined and articulated. This way mountains are re-invented and re-formulated in GiCheon.
5. The interviews with Chinese *yangsheng* practitioners and Korean *ki suryŏn* practitioners, show that an East Asian perception of the universe as living and sentient is shared by contemporary people.
6. The study of pain in Korean and Japanese practices can contribute to a better understanding of asceticism around the world and of pain as human experience in general.
7. Experiential modalities as similar processes occurring on the different levels of the self (intentional→emotional→cognitive→physical→familial→social→universal) provide a useful concept in the analysis of the lived-body, studied in a variety of academic disciplines.
8. The scheme of two vectors unfolding as
intentional→emotional→cognitive→physical→familial→social→universal
and
universal → social → familial →physical→ cognitive → emotional → intentional
selves does not only contribute to our understanding of the processes of self-construction and self-development in GiCheon but also in other practices of self-cultivation.
9. In contemporary South Korea the middle class trend toward “better” living connects with the pursuit of “nature”, invented and constructed to counterpoise pollution and urbanization. The cultural perception of mountains as the dwelling place of mountain immortals adds depth to this middleclass trend and is utilized by *ki suryŏn* groups for marketing their retreats in mountain centers.
10. The study of the social phenomenon of *ki suryŏn*, of which GiCheon is but one example, is useful for understanding contemporary Korean society, as *ki suryŏn* offers techniques for dealing with the pressures of modernity.
11. South Korean schoolchildren often live in a world almost totally isolated from the world of adults.