

The background of the slide is a photograph of the University of Vienna in Austria. The main building is a grand, light-colored stone structure with multiple levels of arched windows and classical architectural details. In the background, the two tall, ornate spires of St. Stephen's Cathedral (Stephansdom) rise against a clear blue sky. The overall scene is captured from an elevated perspective, showing the courtyard and surrounding urban environment.

Announcement

Conference on

**Yoga in Transformation:
Historical and Contemporary
Perspectives on a Global
Phenomenon**

September 19–21, 2013

University of Vienna, Austria

Yoga type practices and associated teachings emerged for the first time in South Asia around the middle of the first millennium BCE. Ever since the phenomenon yoga has shown a protean flexibility and creativity. It constantly produced new forms of practice and theories depending on the changing social, religious and philosophical contexts with different regional variations. Thus, the history of yoga is a complex and multifaceted one, and still remains far from having been exhaustively investigated.

Furthermore, yoga today has become a phenomenon of global mass culture, which influences the everyday lives of millions of people. Against this background the investigation of yoga in both the past and present is a task of high topical value that affects several academic disciplines.

The past two decades in particular have brought new insights, methodological approaches and questions concerning the history of premodern yoga traditions in South Asia, the interpretation of yoga-related literature, and the impact on other Asian cultures. Furthermore, the investigation of modern transnational yoga has established itself as a multidisciplinary field of study in its own right. The motives and experiences of contemporary practitioners and their global networks are being investigated with methods of the social sciences and cultural studies. The startling results of studies on the history of modern yoga have not only caused scholarly discussions but also public debates on the relation of traditional and modern yoga, which sometimes have been politically charged, especially in India.

The conference will explore yoga from a broad perspective: it will examine different strands of South Asian yoga in the premodern period and forms of modern yoga, the changes that occurred within the premodern yoga practices and theories, as well as more recent developments and the current transformation of transnational modern yoga.

For this purpose, outstanding specialists in South Asian studies, the study of religions, sociology, cultural studies, theology and history of religions have been invited to contribute their research papers. The conference will give them an opportunity to intensify their mutual communication. For those who are interested in yoga in general, it will provide convenient access to information on recent high-level research.

Vienna has been a fertile ground for yoga studies, as is evidenced by the seminal work of the Indologists Erich Frauwallner (1898-1974) and Gerhard Oberhammer at the University of Vienna, and by more recent initiatives such as the international conference on “Yogic Perception, Meditation and Altered States of Consciousness” which was held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2006. The organizers of the present conference are happy to continue this tradition.

Organizers

Karin C. Preisendanz

Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies
University of Vienna

Austrian Society for the Study of Religions (ÖGRW)

Karl Baier

Department of the Study of Religions
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Philipp A. Maas

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The conference will be jointly hosted by the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, the Department of the Study of Religions, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna, and the Austrian Society for the Study of Religions (ÖGWR).

Venue of the conference

Campus of the University of Vienna

Aula

Spitalgasse 2, Hof 1.11

1010 Wien

Contact

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The final program and the conference website will be available soon. They will provide more details including abstracts of the conference papers.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS AND LECTURE TITLES

- 1 **ALTER, JOSEPH S.** (University of Pittsburgh, U.S.A.)
“Indian Yoga and German Nature Cure: Parochial Philosophies, *Prāṇāyāma* and the Provincialization of Modernity”
- 2 **AMALADASS, ANAND** (Sacred Heart College, Chennai, India)
“Christian Response to Yoga”
- 3 **BAIER, KARL** (University of Vienna, Austria)
“Yoga and the Viennese Occult Revival”
- 4 **BIRCH, JASON** (Oxford University, U.K.)
“Unpublished Manuscript Evidence for the Practice of Many Āsanas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries”
- 5 **BURGER, MAYA** (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)
“Sāṃkhya Yoga in a Transnational Perspective: Śrī Anirvan and Lizelle Reymond”
- 6 **HAUSER, BEATRIX** (Alpen-Adria-University of Klagenfurt, Austria)
“Bodily Practices from Afar: Global Flows and Cultural Interferences in Postural Yoga”
- 7 **KIEHNLE, CATHARINA** (Leipzig University, Germany)
“Songs on Meditation from the Jñāndev Gāthā”
- 8 **KOCH, ANNE** (University of Munich, Germany)
“ ‘It’s Time to Give Back!’ Competitive Charity in Today’s Global Yoga”

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- 9 **MAAS, PHILIPP A.** (University of Vienna, Austria)
“On Postures in the Pātañjala Yogaśāstra”
- 10 **MALLINSON, JAMES** (Oxford University, U.K.)
“Yoga and Sex: What is the Purpose of Vajroli Mudrā?”
- 11 **NANDA, MEERA** (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Chandigarh, India)
“Pseudoscience and Resemblance Thinking in the Construction of Modern Yoga”
- 12 **NEWCOMBE, SUZANNE** (Inform, based at the London School of Economics, U.K.)
“Spaces for Yoga”
- 13 **RASTELLI, MARION** (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria)
“Yoga in the Daily Routine of the Pāñcarātrins”
- 14 **SAMUEL, GEOFFREY** (Cardiff University, U.K.)
“The Development of Guruyoga (bla ma'i rnal 'byor) in Tibet”
- 15 **SINGLETON, MARK** (St. John's College, New Mexico, U.S.A.)
“Evaluating Modern Yoga and its Relationship to the Past”
- 16 **VERDON, NOÉMIE** (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)
“Bīrūnī's Choices of Interpretation and Methods in his Kitāb Pātanjal”
- 17 **WHITE, DAVID** (University of California, Santa Barbara, U.S.A.)
“ ‘Classical Yoga’? The Fall and Rise of the Yoga Sūtras?”
- 18 **WUJASTYK, DOMINIK** (University of Vienna, Austria)
“Some Problematic Yoga Sūtras and their Buddhist Background”

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday (9/19)	Friday (9/20)	Saturday (9/21)
<p>8.30-9.15 Registration</p>		
<p>9.15-12.30 Welcome & Lectures</p>	<p>9.45-12.30 Lectures</p>	<p>9.00-12.30 Lectures</p>
<p>12.30-14.00 Lunch</p>	<p>12.30-14.00 Lunch</p>	
<p>14.00-16.00 Lectures</p>	<p>14.00-16.00 Lectures</p>	
<p>18.00-19.45 Public Evening Lecture & Discussion</p>	<p>18.00-19.45 Public Evening Lecture & Discussion</p>	