



RUPRECHT-KARLS-UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG

INSTITUT FÜR RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT
ZENTRUM FÜR EUROPÄISCHE GESCHICHTS- UND KULTURWISSENSCHAFTEN (ZEGK)

Institut für Religionswissenschaft · Akademiestraße 4-8 · D-69117 Heidelberg

Inken Prohl

Medializations of Asian Religions: Reentering the Body in Yoga, Ayurveda, Mindfulness, and Other Practices

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Abstract

Transculturally transformed ideas and practices associated with Asian religions and spirituality such as Yoga, Ayurveda, Mindfulness or the Martial Arts gained tremendous popularity in highly industrialized societies during the past decades. They can be understood as transcultural confluences in which allegedly Asian notions of conditioning mind and body and allegedly Western trends as the ‘therapeutic culture’ come together. The concepts and benefits of these practices are disseminated and advertised primarily through print media, TV, and the Internet. The summer school will focus on this ‘medialization’ as it has decisively influenced form, content, and circulation of these practices.

What is more, the conceptions and exercises in question revolve around body postures, movements and physiological devices as means to influence, transform, heal or optimize body and mind likewise. The lectures and workshops of our summer school will discuss the means of ‘reentering’ the body as well as reintroduce theories of embodiment and experience. Above all it aims at affording an opportunity for the critical appraisal of these highly successful practices between pastimes, therapies and religious aspiration.