

The Kundalini Research Foundations. Gopi Krishna's global network of kuṇḍalinī researchers.

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Abstract:

In 1967, the Indian Pandit Gopi Krishna (1903–1984) published his autobiographical account, *Kundalini. The Evolutionary Energy in Man*. The book revolves around a bodily experience, which he interpreted as the awakening of the Tantric energy notion of kuṇḍalinī. Research into kuṇḍalinī thenceforth developed into the major aim of his life. Along with a growing group of international collaborators, Krishna founded the Kundalini Research Foundation, aiming to shed light on kuṇḍalinī's enigmatic nature. These collaborations were increasingly embedded in a global network of practitioners, scholars, and religious protagonists. From 1970 through the mid-1980s branches opened in India, Europe, and North America—all promoting Krishna's ideas and writings.

This paper aims to investigate organization, structure, and activities of the Kundalini Research Foundation and its associated global network of kuṇḍalinī aficionados. Moreover, highlighting Krishna's role as imitator of global research endeavors sheds light on the transnational aspect of modern kuṇḍalinī discourses. For a comprehensive understanding of modern perspectives on kundalini, it is thus indispensable to analyze the activities of Krishna's Kundalini Research Foundations—a cultural phenomenon that scholars have hitherto paid little attention to.

Short bio:

Marleen Thaler is a historian of religion at the University of Vienna, with additional degrees in Social and Cultural Anthropology and Oriental Studies, all from her alma mater. Her research interests include Alternative Religious Currents, Esoteric Studies, Religious Traditionalism, Global History, Contemporary Paganism, and the history of yoga. Currently she is finalizing her doctoral dissertation on the globalization, scientification, and nationalization of kuṇḍalinī, focusing on Gopi Krishna's seminal influence on modern kuṇḍalinī discourses. Other current projects involve a co-edited volume on subtle energies and her upcoming monograph on John Michell.

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