

## Serpent Power 2.0: Kuṇḍalinī Activations in Contemporary Germany

Already early yoga pioneers like Sri T. Krishnamacharya and Yogananda but also Western psychologists like C.G. Jung and popular authors like John Woodroffe were interested in Kuṇḍalinī practices in the early 20th century. Kuṇḍalinī, a secret »serpent power«, as Woodroffe famously called it, is said to sit coiled at the bottom of the spine and, according to Tantra and Haṭhayoga, must be stimulated by various and difficult practices to move up into the skull to lead to an enlightening experience.

As many practices in contemporary yoga, what was once considered esoteric and very advanced, today gets broken down, democratized, and embodied. The »Kundalini Activation Process« (KAP) taught by Venant Wong promises exactly this on the homepage: »(…) a blend of raw Kundalini & deep consciousness that is overwhelmingly incarnated into the physical body.« The website promises that with continued exposure a »profound rewiring of the brain structure and central nervous system happens« and a facilitator even told me that she has to teach them because she got »addicted« to these experiences. In this talk, I will present preliminary ethnographic, historical, and body research on contemporary Kuṇḍalinī practices and discourses, already popularized by Osho and Yogi Bhaḥan: What precisely is the nature of today's Kuṇḍalinī practices and in what setting are they performed? How do people describe their experiences and how can their effects be understood from an embodiment point of view? And how do these practices and discourses resonate with a contemporary European middle class amidst their busy, urban, digitalized (family) lives?

Dr. Laura von Ostrowski's book to her PhD-thesis was published Open Access under the title *A Text in Motion* in 2022. As a religious scholar, indologist and ethnographer her areas of research include modern and contemporary yoga, the reception history of the *Yogasūtra*, aesthetics and embodiment. She teaches about the history of modern yoga at the online education portal [www.yogastudien.de](http://www.yogastudien.de) and is associated with the University of Hamburg, Germany.

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