

SOAS and British Wheel of Yoga Summit Explores Yoga's 'Energy Body' for Mental Wellbeing

Monday 21 September, 2026

SOAS Centre of Yoga Studies and the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) are co-hosting a one-day summit on 31 October: *The Energy Body: Yoga between Evidence and Experience*. The event explores how yoga's centuries-old energetic frameworks can deepen lived experience, and where they align with, or challenge, modern medical knowledge.

Held at SOAS University of London and streamed online, the summit brings together internationally renowned yoga scholars, historians and practitioners to examine the subtle body system described across yoga traditions: chakras (energy centres along the spine), *prana* (life force) and *ku?alin?* (dormant spiritual energy). While modern practice remains centred on physical postures, the event asks how engaging with these subtler dimensions can transform the way yoga is experienced today.

Professor Shaman Hatley of Boston University will deliver the keynote on the chakra system, tracing its historical origins and examining the tension between medical understanding, visionary practice and embodied experience.

A panel with Dr Ruth Westoby and Dr Marleen Thaler will explore what happens when dormant energy in the body – *ku?alin?*

– begins to move, and its roots in traditions of the feminine divine. A second panel, with Dr Magdalena Kraler and Dr Marissa Clarke, will look at how breath cultivation practices can open states of bliss, and how breath, sound and movement are being reimagined through philosophy and deep listening practices.

Attendees can also experience these ideas directly through a chakra meditation to open the day and an immersive energy healing practice to close, both led by Swami Saradananda, plus Tsa Lung, a vital energy practice drawn from the Buddhist tradition, led by BWY Tutor, Sarah O'Connor.

Professor Ulrich Pagel, SOAS University of London comments: "We're delighted to be collaborating with the British Wheel of Yoga again. This summit creates a rare space for scholarship and lived yoga practice to come into meaningful dialogue. By bringing together historians, researchers, and experienced yoga teachers, we can explore complex and sometimes difficult questions about yoga and the subtle body, while remaining attentive to the ways these traditions continue to shape and transform people's lives."

Diana O'Reilly, BWY Chair comments: "This event is a wonderful opportunity to support yoga teachers and students in exploring the deeper dimensions of yoga in a safe, informed and inclusive way. It reflects our commitment to keeping yoga's rich heritage alive while making it accessible and meaningful for today's practitioners."

Tickets are priced at £75 (in-person) and £45 (online).

For details and to secure your spot, please visit our website [here](#).

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