

Dr Jason Birch

Jason Birch received a doctorate in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford in 2013. His area of research is the medieval yoga traditions of India, in particular, those called *Haṭha-* and *Rājayoga*. His thesis, which was supervised by Professor Alexis Sanderson, focused on the earliest extant *Rājayoga* text called the *Amanaska*. A critical edition and annotated translation of this Sanskrit text is accompanied by a monographic introduction, which examines the influence of earlier Śaiva tantric traditions on the *Amanaska* as well as the significance of the *Amanaska* in later yoga traditions.



In 2015, Jason worked on an ERC-funded project called [Ayuryog](#) at the University of Vienna, for which he wrote an article on the shared terminology, praxis and theory of āyurveda and medieval yoga traditions. In September 2015, he began work on the [Haṭhayoga project](#) at SOAS London University where his focus is to edit and research manuscripts of Sanskrit yoga texts which were written on the eve of colonialism. Many of these texts provide a window into the Brahmanization of *Haṭha-* and *Rājayoga* and the proliferation of physical yoga techniques, some of which have become prominent in modern yoga, such as the practice of numerous *āsana*.

Jason has taught courses on the history of *Rājayoga* and *Haṭhayoga* at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and the Masters of Arts in Yoga Studies at Loyola Marymount University, and currently teaches a course on the history of medieval yoga for [SOAS' Master of Arts in Traditions of Yoga and Meditation](#). He also shares the fruits of his research with practitioners of yoga by contributing modules to various yoga training courses in Europe, Asia and Australia.

Jason also contributes to <http://theluminescent.blogspot.it/>

Publications

2017 (forthcoming) – “The Proliferation of *āsana* in Late Mediaeval Yoga Traditions”, *Yoga in Transformation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on a Global Phenomenon*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Unipress.

2015 – “The *Yogataravali* and the Hidden History of Yoga”, *Namarupa Magazine*, Issue 20 (Spring 2015)

2013 – ‘The *Amanaska*: King of All Yogas: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation with a Monographic Introduction.’ DPhil Thesis, Oxford.

2013 – ‘*Rājayoga*: The Reincarnations of the King of All Yogas’, *The International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 17, 3: 401–444.

2011 – ‘The Meaning of *haṭha* in Early *Haṭhayoga*’, *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 131.4.

2011 – “Universalist and Missionary Jainism: Jain Yoga of the Terāpanthī Tradition” in *Yoga in Practice*, Ed David White, University of Chicago Press

Some of Jason’s work can be downloaded from his academia.edu webpage at: <https://ochs.academia.edu/jasonbirch>