

# Dr Elizabeth De Michelis

Elizabeth De Michelis has a long standing interest in religions and religious phenomena, especially those concerned with the cultivation of contemplative and meditative, non-secular lifestyles and related practices and theorizations. She is also very interested in textual studies, languages, problems of authority validation, and in the dynamics of cultural and cross-cultural transmission. Her areas of academic



expertise are the history of yoga; the intellectual history of modern yoga; modern yoga ideologies, groups and institutions; and western esotericism's appropriations of South Asian disciplines. She has carried out in-depth research in these fields and remains keenly interested in them.

After working in business during the early part of her professional life, Elizabeth retrained to work in academia after which she held positions at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge and at the Theology Faculty, University of Oxford. This included working as Director of the Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research from 2000 to 2006; see a summary of this work [here](#). Supported from the start by Suzanne Newcombe and Mark Singleton, Elizabeth was the driving force behind the creation of the Modern Yoga Research website in 2006.

Elizabeth trained as a professional translator, and also holds a BA in Modern Languages, an MA in Religious Studies from SOAS, University of London and a PhD from the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge. Her doctoral work, published under the title *A History of Modern Yoga*, was on the modernisation of Hinduism and more particularly on the

modernisation of yoga and its transmission to the West.

In line with her research interests and professional experiences in business, academic research and administration, Elizabeth continues to work in the academic field as an independent scholar. In 2016 she co-organised the conference **yoga darśana, yoga sādhana: traditions, transmissions, transformations** at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland (for information see [here](#)). In the same year she established, along with a small group of other interested individuals, the [AMRAY](#) association, aimed at promoting and supporting high quality work in the field of yoga studies. In 2018 she launched, along with four co-founders, the Open Access [Journal of Yoga Studies](#) (JoYS), and acts as its Senior Editor and Administration Manager. JoYS' inaugural article, illustrating some of the aims of the journal, can be found [here](#).

Elizabeth is a member and, given the chance, enthusiastic supporter of the [Society of Authors](#) and a long-time member of the [British Association for the Study of Religions](#). Her academia.edu page may be found [here](#).

## Publications

forthcoming 2018 – “The Modern Spirit of Yoga: Idioms and Practices”, in Flood, Gavin (Ed.), *The Oxford History of Hinduism: Religious Practice* (title TBC), Oxford University Press

2008 – “Modern Yoga: History and Forms”, in Byrne, Jean and Singleton, Mark (Eds.), *Yoga in the Modern World: Uses, Adaptations, Appropriations*, Routledge, London and New York: 17-35.

2007 – ‘A Preliminary Survey of Modern Yoga Studies’, *Asian Medicine, Tradition and Modernity*, vol. 3, no. 1: 1-19.

2005 – “Modern Yoga” in *Encyclopedia of New Religious*

*Movements*, Peter Clarke (ed.), Routledge, Oxford.

2004 – [\*A History of Modern Yoga: Patañjali and Western Esotericism\*](#), Bloomsbury, London and New York.

2000/2001 – “Report on the 2001 DHIIR workshop on the modernisation of yoga and Ayurveda”, *Cambridge Anthropology*, 22-2 :77-82 (co-authored with Françoise Barbira Freedman).

1995 – “Some comments on the contemporary practice of yoga, with particular reference to British Hatha Yoga schools”, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 10, no.3 :243-255.

1995 –“Contemporary Hatha Yoga in the UK”, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol.10, no.2 :193-5.

## **Production overseen as part of DHIIR Directorship**

The proceedings of the 2004 DHIIR Conference on *Ayurveda: Modern and Global Identities* were published in 2008 by the State University of New York Press (Dagmar Benner and Frederick Smith, eds.), under the title [\*Modern and Global Ayurveda: Pluralism and Paradigms\*](#).

The proceedings of the 2000 DHIIR Conference on *Devotion in the Indian Tradition* were published in 2005 by Orient Longman under the title *The Intimate Other* (John Brockington and Anna King eds.).

The proceedings of the 1998 DHIIR Conference on *Creating the Future* were published by Oxford University Press India in March 2004 under the title [\*Playing for Real: Hindu Role Models, Religion, and Gender\*](#) (Jacqueline Suthren Hirst and Lynn Thomas eds.).

A book partly based on the 1998 DHIIR workshop on *Yoga: The Indian Tradition* was published by Routledge Curzon in 2003 under the title [\*Yoga: The Indian Tradition\*](#) (David Carpenter

and Ian Whicher, eds.).