

# “It’s time to give back!”

## Competitive charity in today’s global yoga

### Anne Koch (University of Munich)

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Recent developments in global yoga show a tendency towards social activism in the charity market. In this context the talk will examine the Yoga Aid World Challenge 2012 (founded in 2007 by the Sydney-based couple Eriko Kinoshita and Clive Mayhew). During this 24-h-event yoga is practiced across 25 countries worldwide following the course of the sun. Japan was the third strongest country in rising donations. The underlying event-narrative “to give back” indicates the motivation for partaking in the event and sets the framework of the action as an

intercultural obligation. Corresponding social networks and digital media strongly promote the joy of practicing and equate the meaning of life with giving. Competition stands out as an unusual strategy in the predominantly gentle type of modern postural yoga. The talk will analyze the communication and interaction of this event and align the politics of affect of competition, gratitude and a sense of obligation with contemporary spirituality.



Anne Koch is Adjunct Assistant Professor in Cultural Study of Religion at Munich University, Germany. Her main areas of research are contemporary

spirituality, alternative healing and economics of religion. Since 2012 she conducts fieldwork on cosmopolitan spirituality at Anglophone yoga institutions in Tokyo. Her books deal with an epistemology of the foreign, body knowledge and the economics of religion. Anne Koch has published numerous articles and is book review editor of the *Journal of Religion in Europe* and a member of the program group “Religion in Europe” in the American Academy of Religion.

Lecture in English / No registration required