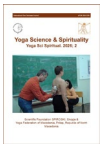
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Scientific Yoga, Historical Legacy, and the Future of Yoga Therapy in North Macedonia: Reflections from the Editorial of Yoga Science & Spirituality

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: The second issue of Yoga Science & Spirituality continues the journal's mission of promoting Scientific Yoga and Yoga Therapy through historical reflection, scholarly discussion, and contemporary perspectives.

AIM: To highlight influential personalities, institutions, publications, and contributions that have shaped the development of Scientific Yoga and Yoga Therapy.

METHODS: This issue features an editorial, an interview, scientific articles, a journal analysis, and a profile of a yoga institution, providing historical, educational, and professional perspectives on Scientific Yoga and Yoga Therapy.

RESULTS: The contributions featured in this issue reflect the continuing development of Scientific Yoga and highlight its relevance to health promotion, education, and integrative healthcare.

CONCLUSION: By reflecting on the past, recognizing those who have contributed to the field, and encouraging ongoing dialogue, this issue aims to support the ongoing advancement of Scientific Yoga and Yoga Therapy while bringing together scientific understanding and traditional yogic wisdom.

Introduction

With the release of the second issue, the magazine Yoga Science & Spirituality has now became a reality.

I would like to believe that through this publication we are contributing to the development of a culture that values Scientific Yoga, as well as other fields of integrative and complementary medicine that have long sought recognition within the broader scientific and healthcare communities [1], [2], [3], [4].

In this issue

In this issue, we begin with an exploration of the history of Scientific Yoga. I believe we are at an important moment when it is essential to document the key milestones in its development, along with the individuals whose dedication and vision helped shape this field. Special recognition should be given to those who are no longer with us. Honoring their memory and acknowledging their contributions is an important part of the yogic tradition and culture.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences on the passing of my dear friend, Dr. Vasilije Tomanoski, who left us unexpectedly in March. Among the many memories we shared, our journey to the Fifth World Congress, "Yoga and Holistic Medicine ", held in Annecy, France, in May 1994, remains unforgettable.

The Portraits section of this issue is dedicated to Dr. M. V. Bhole, one of the most distinguished figures in the history of Scientific Yoga. We were privileged to enjoy a long-standing friendship with him and also we had the opportunity to meet him at three World

Congresses, experiences that greatly enriched our understanding of yoga research and practice [5].

The interview is dedicated to a remarkable individual, Dr. Amalia Parousi, from Athens, Greece—a physician and yoga teacher since the mid-1970s. Her name is closely associated with the scientific approach to yoga in the Republic of North Macedonia, and she has played a pivotal role in its development and recognition.

Dr. Parousi has been my first assistant and long-time collaborator. Over the years, her contribution has been invaluable, particularly in the education and training of yoga instructors, the integration of medical knowledge into yoga teaching, and the unwavering moral support she has selflessly provided since 1978.

The interview was conducted by Vancho Taseski, Senior Professor at the School for Teacher Training. His professional collaboration with Dr. Parousi began in 1980 and has continued ever since.

I am particularly pleased that this issue of the journal features a highly interesting study by Dr. Mukesh Jain from India, a long-standing friend and respected colleague whom I have known for more than three decades.

Over the years, our friendship has been strengthened through numerous meetings at World Congresses on Yoga and Ayurveda, and we have also had the privilege of hosting him in Ohrid, Skopje, and Athens. One memory stands out in particular: it was Dr. Jain who invited me to participate in a yoga workshop held at the auditorium of the University of Calicut during the VI World Congress on Yoga and Ayurveda in 1996, in Kozhikode, India. The workshop brought together several distinguished experts in the field, including Dr. Bhole, Dr. Gharote from India, Prof. Micheline Flak from France, Dr. Giorgio Barabino from Italy and many other prominent participants. It remains a memorable event and an important milestone in my professional journey.

In the section dedicated to notable publications in the field of scientific yoga, Tanja Dimova Abrasheva presents an analysis of *The Yoga Science*, a book by Divyansh Sharma published in 2025.

This important work is expected to make a valuable contribution to the continued development of knowledge, education, and professional practice in the fields of scientific yoga and yoga therapy. By offering contemporary insights and a research-based perspective, the book has the potential to further strengthen the understanding and application of yoga as a scientific discipline [1], [2], [3], [4].

The issue concludes with two insightful contributions by Anastasia A. Dojchinovska and Dr. Elena Petrushevska. Their articles highlight a distinguished journal and a renowned yoga center that have made a significant impact on the development of yoga in recent decades.

The first focuses on the *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, a respected publication that has played an important role in advancing research and professional practice in the field [6], [7]. The second presents *Vivekananda Yoga Kendra* in Bangalore, an institution that has earned recognition for its longstanding contribution to yoga education, research, and community outreach [2], [3], [4]..

I would also like to mention that in December 1995 we had the opportunity to participate in the International Yoga Congress in Bangalore. Together with Dr. Blagoja Gjorgieski and Vancho Taseski, we visited the center and met our hosts: Dr. Nagendra, Dr. Nagaratna, and Prof. N. V. Raghuram.

During our stay, we had the opportunity to exchange views on the development of yoga in India as well as in the West. I especially remember the meeting and conversations with the spiritual guide of the center at that time, Prof. Shri Shastri, a man who deeply appreciated efforts to develop traditional yoga and to connect science with yoga in the Western context. As a representative of ancient Indian wisdom, he embodied a rare continuity between tradition and modern understanding.

It was precisely these meetings and conversations with Prof. Shri Shastri that inspired me to write *The History of Scientific Yoga*.

Perspective and development of yoga in North Macedonia

In the following discussion, I would like to present my perspective on certain developments that have had an impact on the field of yoga. One recent initiative is especially noteworthy.

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of North Macedonia is in the process of drafting amendments to the Law on Alternative Medicine. The proposed amendments seek to broaden the scope of recognized alternative practices by adding Reiki, Bach Flower Remedies, and Crystal Therapy to the areas already covered by the legislation.

Promoting yoga therapy

As strange as it may sound, yoga, which, although included in the old law, never found its rightful place both within alternative medicine and within the framework of official, classical medicine [1], [1], [2], [3], [4], [8]. Here, I am especially thinking of yoga therapy, although the level of scientific yoga and yoga therapy in North Macedonia has been present for 55 years. Top world-class scientists who have personal experience in yoga, who have participated in a series of research in state medical institutions in cooperation with a small number of yoga therapists, have come to significant results presented both at world medical congresses and at scientific yoga conferences. Among those

doctors who have distinguished themselves by promoting yoga, the following stand out: Dr. Josif Naumovski - cardiologist, Dr. Ilija Prangoski - cardiologist, Dr. Pavica Bogdanov – internist-phthysiologist, Prof. Dr. Zdravko Trojachanec – sports medicine, Prof. Dr. Mirko Spiroski - imunology, Dr. Vasilije Tomanoski- internist-nephrologist, Dr. Marjan Kotlar – cardiologist, Dr. Milena Ilieva Arsova – gastroenterologist, Dr. Stojan Kovaceski– nephrologist, Dr. Tode Klisheski – cardiologist, Slavica Ristanoska – psychologist, Dr.Ana Derebanova – internist-nephrologist, Julka Zdravkova - psychologist.

The list of individuals who have contributed to the development of yoga is extensive, and it is important to acknowledge them, at least from a historical perspective. As time passes, there is a risk that credit may be given to people who have made little or no positive contribution to the advancement of scientific yoga—or, in some cases, whose influence may even have been counterproductive.

I sincerely welcome the proposed expansion of the list of recognized alternative practices and hope that the time will soon come when scientific yoga and yoga therapy are also included. Such recognition would enable us to contribute not only to the wider application of yoga therapy but also to the development of qualified and competent professionals with appropriate education and training in scientific yoga [1], [2], [3], [4], [8].

This is particularly important when it comes to the formation of future regulatory bodies and expert committees. It is essential that key decisions regarding yoga and yoga therapy are made by individuals with relevant knowledge, expertise, and professional experience. Too often, influential positions are assigned to people who have limited understanding of yoga and even less familiarity with yoga therapy yet feel entitled to make decisions on matters of great significance.

Conclusion

Finally, I would like to emphasize that, as part of our editorial policy, we have adopted the principle that scientific papers and articles should be submitted directly to the Editorial Board by the authors themselves, provided that the work has not been previously published in another journal.

In closing, I wish you all a peaceful and pleasant summer.

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