



Mallakhamb in Germany

Yoga on Rope and Pole
for Children and Adolescents



Mallakhamb
Deutschland e.V.
YOGA AN SEIL UND PFAHL



Front page: Mallakhamb at the International Yoga Day 2018 in front of the town hall in Munich/Germany; photo: Paddy Schmitt



Greetings

On February 16th and 17th the first international Mallakhamb Games will take place in Mumbai.

Thereby, a long-held dream of Mr Deshpande will come true. He and his team have worked tirelessly, to create a forum for his vision of a worldwide Mallakhamb movement.

We, the association Mallakhamb Deutschland e.V., Yoga Forum München and Kreisjugendring München-Stadt, would like to cordially congratulate Mr Deshpande and his team and wish them much success.

Since 2004, Mr Deshpande has been coming to Munich yearly with a group of children. As part of a week-long holiday activity as well as a family seminar he has taught us the fundamentals of Mallakhamb. We are in a constant and lively exchange with him, which is characterized by mutual learning.

Based on the traditional Indian sport we have developed a concept to merge the theory of Yoga with our western background of educational sciences to teach Mallakhamb in our context.

We would like to present to you this concept to spark a lively debate, how children worldwide can practice this fascinating sport in a healthy and joyful way.

Gertrud Anzenberger
Educational scientist / Yoga trainer
President Mallakhamb Deutschland e.V.



**Mallakhamb
Deutschland e.V.**
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Sophienstraße
Spielhaus

entdecken – spielen – lernen



**YOGA
FORUM**
MÜNCHEN e.V.



Mallakhamb

*A workshop as part of the open, intercultural youth holiday project
„Komm doch mit nach Indien“*

The KJR München-Stadt is responsible for 50 municipal recreation site and eight day care centres within the whole city. This professional children and youth work is open, voluntary, gender-sensitive and geared towards the active participation of children and adolescents, as well as their individual needs. Since 2004, the KJR München-Stadt has organized the intercultural holiday project “Komm doch mit nach Indien” during summer holidays as part of this open youth work with invited guests from India to teach Mallakhamb to children in Germany.

Since then, lots of children and adolescents have discovered a passion for Mallakhamb and deepened their expertise in a class that’s occurring twice a month. As part of this extracurricular education we impart children and adolescents with knowledge and abilities that are neglected at schools. This process of learning is free from performance pressure or external marks.

The satisfaction with individual learning achievements is not a consequence of assessment by a jury and followed with an award ceremony, but is experience-oriented. Our mission is to strengthen children and adolescents, which also means being free from external marks. Being satisfied with my performance is my own decision. I decide myself, if and how much I want to learn. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction with my own performance is the drive for the motivation to learn more.

Every child comes with different physical and mental conditions. What may be a huge learning progress for one child, may be easy for another child with better starting conditions. Therefore, there cannot be one universal measure for success or ability that applies to all. Every child is welcome and equally appreciated. There is no distinction between good, better and best. This has to be viewed individually.

Imparting knowledge and ability we are guided by health and prevention, by cooperative social behavior and interest in one’s own learning. It is about personal, social, cultural and instrumental skills.

As our extracurricular learning concept follows health education, it is important to us to teach health-oriented movement sequences through Mallakhamb. With professional support from adj. Prof.Reinhard Bögle of the Yoga Forum München e.V. we, being Yoga teachers in Munich, have managed to merge insights from



Yoga and sport medicine/physical therapy with Mallakhamb, so that in addition to joy through movement, pathological weight distribution can be avoided, while simultaneously promoting health.

Mallakhamb is a highly attractive sport for children and adolescents, which offers plenty of joy and a sense of achievement, as well as significant, real appreciation from adults.

We are very grateful for the longstanding and active support by Uday Deshpande and Neeta Tatke, who dedicate time and energy every year, to impart to us their knowledge of Mallakhamb, which ultimately is the important foundation to develop Mallakhamb into a healthy movement training distinct from competitive sport.

For this we want to express our sincere gratitude.

Although we can not actively take part in the championship based on our own background, we are looking forward to the possibility to present our work with Mallakhamb as part of this event and wish our partners a successful event. We hope to have many more years of fruitful cooperation.

Jutta Schneider

Social pedagogue, experience pedagogue, Yoga trainer

Director „Komm doch mit nach Indien“

Kreisjugendring München-Stadt





Mallakhamb – Yoga on the Rope and Pole – and the Marmas as a Means of Quality Control

Yoga on the rope and pole has a long tradition. The history of it still needs to be researched further, but as Uday Deshpande discovered, Mallakhamb has traditionally been called “Yoga on the rope and pole” in India. (He told me about it in a joint workshop in the fall of 2018.)

The “marmas” (special points in the body) have been known in Indian medicine and in Yoga for over 2,000 years. But for a long time, they have been considered “secret knowledge”. Only selected and experienced teachers passed the knowledge on to their students and swore them to secrecy. This is why today, many people don’t know about marmas and their significance.

Marmas are vital points in living beings, which are sensitive to pain, and which play an important role in Yoga and Ayurveda as well as many other fields. They are also important in Indian dance and in the Indian martial art Kalarippayat – fittingly the word marma literally translates to “death points”.

In 1980, I was travelling India to learn more about marmas. That is when I met an old keeper of a temple elephant.

The keeper told me, how both he and the elephant knew about marmas. “When I was a young men, I could not have kept up with the strength of an elephant, but now that I am old and know more, I can”, he told me. All he had to do was to take a stone and aim at the direction of one of the elephant’s marmas – and the elephant immediately calmed down.

As I said, the knowledge of marmas has long been kept a secret, but over the last decades more and more information has come to light.

About ten years after I first looked into marmas, I went to India to look for a form of Yoga for children and teenagers. I wanted the youngsters to be able to learn about their body and their mind in a more child appropriate





way than having them exercise the “grown-up” version of Yoga, with lots of meditation and sitting still.

Vd. B. P. Nanal, who was tasked with insuring the quality of Yoga institutions in all of India and who is also a well-respected ayurvedic teacher of marmas, suggested to me that I visit the Maharashtra Mandir and observe some Mallakhamb lessons. This is when I first saw the exercises on the rope and the pole, and I soon realized that this was a good training for the marmas.

As a university-trained educationalist, I have been involved in teaching “Yoga and Marmas” at the Munich sport university for over a decade. I was specifically interested in evaluating the criteria of movements in regard of the marmas. During my first times watching Mallakhamb, I could observe how the trainers – without verbalizing it – integrated the teachings of marmas in their movement work with children.

When I returned to Germany, I met with Jutta Schneider, who worked for a municipal youth-organization. She was interested in bringing Mallakhamb into her work with German children and teenagers. It was Jutta Schneider who first met Uday Deshpande, and she invited him to Munich to teach a Mallakhamb workshop.

Dr. Georg Lechner, who was the director of several Goethe-Institutes in Asia, was the one who then suggested calling Mallakhamb “Yoga on the Rope, Yoga on the Pole” in German.

So much about my background and my first experiences with Mallakhamb, let’s now take a closer look at the marmas in combination with Mallakhamb.

Marmas are points of quality control for yogic and athletic movements and postures. These observation points can help us to ensure quality in movements and postures. By observing them, we can determine if a movement is “good” (healthy) or if adjustments are needed.





In western sport medicine, we have about 20 of such body-points (mostly the different joints, etc.) which we use to scientifically analyse movements. But there are 107 marmas, of which about 50 can be used as observation points for quality control – this means with the marmas there are three times as many quality control points as in western medicine. Of the 60, ten marmas are the ones most vital to look at for practical purposes (feet, hands, center for legs and arm stretching, side trunk).



Other important examples are the hip-joint-marma (*kukundara-marma*), the knee-joint-marma (*jānu-marma*) and the mentioned the side trunk-marma (*kakṣadhara-marma*), the arm-strength-marma (*āni-marma*) and the marma between the big toe and the second toe (*kṣipra-marma*). The last one is essential for holding the rope in Mallakhamb.

Mallakhamb is important for the health of children and youths, and knowing about marmas can help to ensure that the training of Mallakhamb is good for the person.

The teaching activities of the German association “Mallakhamb Deutschland e.V.”, we see Mallakhamb as a health promotion activity for children and teenagers (using both the old Indian concept of health, as well as the modern WHO-term).

If trained wrongly, the children can get typical Mallakhamb-hollow backs and knee problems, but integrating the knowledge of marmas in the training can prevent such back and knee problems.

It's obvious how marmas play a crucial role in Mallakhamb and why the health-orientation of Mallakhamb is very important.

Bringing the knowledge and awareness about marmas out into the open, would bring the old tradition of Mallakhamb into an enlightened 21st century, and give the students the tools to self-correct.

By Reinhard Bögle, Adj. Prof. Center for Behavioural Medicine Pune, Board Member of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine, Chief Trainer of Yoga Forum Munich e.V.



Mallakhamb Trainer Education in Munich

When we founded the Mallakhamb association Germany we wanted to achieve two main goals:

We want to make Yoga accessible to children and that they should enjoy the Mallakhamb training.

We are convinced that the Mallakhamb tradition supports our idea, and that's why we would like to spread Mallakhamb as sport and entrance for Yoga across Germany. Our starting point is Munich. Experienced Yoga teachers have offered Mallakhamb trainings here for several years now. In order to boost the popularity of Mallakhamb we have educated young trainers ourselves. Doing that we bear the hope that this wonderful sport will be spread – across generations and across regions.

In terms of content, our main focus in training trainers is to make young people aware of the relations between Mallakhamb positions and Yoga asanas. They should learn a practical and theoretical basis for a health-oriented movement training.

Developing our training concept, we focused on the Mallakhamb positions on rope and pole. We always try to focus on similarities to the Yoga positions. In addition, we teach the basics of marma knowledge: The future trainers should in particular get an understanding of the marmas, which are particularly important in Mallakhamb. These marmas are located on the feet and hands, in the sides of the body, and they are the places for extending legs and arms as well as the hip joints.

First, students get to know these body points in Yoga asanas on the ground. Then they also practice them in the exercises on the rope and on the pole. On the one hand, the action in the marmas is helpful in executing Mallakhamb positions. On the other hand, they gain the understanding that the rope is used in support of the marmas. In addition, a trainer's assistance at those marmas is very effective and makes a more health-oriented movement possible.

The new trainers practice themselves and teach other children under instruction and supervision. They learn to provide manual assistance as well as clear verbal instructions.

The planning and reflection of the training is based on the fact that the children can learn new movement skills with joy. The subsequent conversation about the learned practices sharpens the observation of the trainees and their mediation skills.



In our trainings one major focus is on avoiding any injury. All children should get an awareness of their body. Everybody – both the young people in their trainer education and the participating children – should ask themselves again and again: How much strength do I have, what can I endure and how do I deal with fear and pain?

Fear and pain are important feelings that need to be taken seriously and for which there needs to be a suitable approach. This consideration is not self-evident in our western world.

However, the theoretical basis for this can already be found in the Yoga Sutras, the most important Yoga text. There the ethical basic idea for practicing Yoga is described: ahimsa. This

means being not hostile, doing nothing that hurts or harms yourself and others. Overall, the trainer education extends over a full year (9 individual days and two weekly seminars with a total of 144 teaching units). This format offers plenty of room for one`s own experience.

In order to get a Mallakhamb trainer certificate after completing the educational year, the trainees have to plan and carry out a Mallakhamb workshop for a total



of three hours. In addition, they submit a written plan and reflection and are supported by a supervision.

We are very happy with the first successful training group with 12 participants in 2017/ 2018. All have received a trainer certificate.

Gabi Kreusch
Yoga trainer



Above left to right: Gabi Kreusch (trainer); Reinhard Bögle (Yoga Forum München; head of education); Uday Desphande (SSVM, head of education); Jutta Schneider (social pedagogue, KJR München Stadt); Neeta Tatke (SSVM); Ruth Anzenberger (trainer); Gertrud Anzenberger (trainer);

Mid: Jana Jolliffe; Niamh Laube; Isabelle Kreusch; Hannah Friedrich; Amelie Dietenmeier; Rosalie Franzl; Sophia Spitzl;

In front: Nora Samhouri; Sebastian Krimmer; Michael Wegner; Niklas Moore; Selina Holzapfel



The History of Mallakhamb in Germany

Idea: Yoga for children – Solution: Mallakhamb

Reinhard Bögle, president of the Yoga Forum München e.V., is curious: How can you teach Yoga to children? In India he finds Mallakhamb, Yoga on rope and pole.

Initiative: How exactly?

2002: Jutta Schneider, social pedagogue and Yoga teacher trained by the Yoga Forum München e.V., travels to India. She wants to learn more about Mallakhamb and meets Uday Deshpande, a well-known Mallakhamb trainer. He teaches her Mallakhamb and she invites him to Munich.

Response: That's how!

Since 2004: Uday Deshpande has been coming to Munich regularly with young Mallakhamb trainers and students. The Kreisjugendring has provided a setting with the intercultural vacation activity "Komm doch mit nach Indien" ("Come with us to India"). Munich Adult Education Institution (MVHS) has organized the family seminar "Yoga and Mallakhamb" in house Buchenried at lake Starnberg

Resonance: Let's do that, too

Since 2010: There have been regular Mallakhamb classes in Munich. We practice the movement sequences on the ground with a Yoga teacher, to then execute them safely and without fear on the rope and pole. Since 2012, Ruth Anzenberger has been the first official Mallakhamb trainer in Germany, certified by a Mallakhamb trainer course of the University of Mumbai and the Indian Mallakhamb Association.

Return visits: Gather experiences

In December of 2009, 2011 and 2015: A German Mallakhamb team went to Mumbai to further their knowledge of the sport. In a 10-day camp the children get to try the hanging pole, bottle Mallakhamb as well as Nirandhar Mallakhamb. So that's how Indian kids practice Mallakhamb!

Founding: Let's make it official

On September 10th, 2015, the association "Mallakhamb Deutschland e.V." was founded. On June 6th 2016, it was officially entered into the association register.

Reap the benefits: Practicing is fun

Since 2016: Workshops in Nürnberg, Rosenheim, Bregenz and Feldkirch (Austria). Classes in Regensburg and Munich. More and more kids learn Mallakhamb.



International Mallakhamb Day: Just try it

2017: The first international celebration of “Mallakhamb Day” Germany takes part as well! Big and small climb up the rope.

Well-founded knowledge: Educating Mallakhamb trainers

2017: We started educating the first Mallakhamb trainers outside of India. Over the course of a year, twelve young Mallakhamb students from the age of 13 to 23 learn more about Yoga and Mallakhamb, exercises and assisting students. In September 2018, we awarded the certificates.

Worldwide Competition: We are there!

2019: The first worldwide Mallakhamb championship takes place in Mumbai. We are there to present how Mallakhamb has developed in Germany.





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Yoga on the rope and Yoga on the pole is beginning to be rediscovered and developed as a biological, psychological, philosophical and neuroscientifically founded mind-body health promotion procedure in its own right. In this brochure on the occasion of the first International event in Mumbai 2019, the people of Mallakhamb Germany e.V. show how children and youngsters can benefit practicing Yoga on the rope and Yoga on the pole for their own development as an integral part of lifelong Yoga learning.

The intentions /objectives of learning Yoga result through knowledge of the treasury of yogic knowledge, from which the issues and goals recognized as being of personal significance can be deduced. Of key importance is the transition in stages from unknowingness and imbalance towards developing and stabilizing of bodily, psychic and social processes. Self-awareness and self-confidence, playfulness and joy of life combined with relevant know-how of mind, body, social behavior and the vital spots (Marmas) can be achieved.



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