



Asien-Orient-Institut | Abteilung für Indologie

Piotr Balcerowicz, University of Warsaw

The Cosmic Man (*loka puruṣa*) as the Body of Human and the Body of the Cosmos in Jainism

Monday, December 1, 2025 | 6:00-7:30pm CET

The so-called Cosmic Man (*loka-puruṣa*) became an iconic image in the art of mediaeval India, in particular in the Jaina art. This talk discusses the concept of the human-shaped Cosmos in Jainism and the symbolic equivalence between the human body and the cosmic structure, which also carries ethical and salvific implications. In addition, the talk traces back the historical origins of the idea and examines why an image of the human body was projected onto the image of the Cosmos, or *vice versa*, why the Cosmos was visualised in the form the human body in Jainism.



Piotr Balcerowicz, Professor of Indian philosophy, specialises in history, religions and philosophical traditions of South Asia, including Jainism. Currently a professor at the University of Warsaw; former professor at the University of Munich (LMU) and Ashoka University (India); visiting professor at the University of Hamburg, the University of the Punjab (Pakistan), a junior researcher of Banaras Hindu University (India). He publishes extensively on Indian philosophy, South Asian religions and history, and his main monographs on the subject include: *Jaina Epistemology In Historical And Comparative Perspective* (2001), *Jainism and the Definition of Religion* (2009), *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vols. 14 & 17 (2013 & 2014); *Early Asceticism in India. Ajivikism and Jainism* (2016), *History of Classical Indian Philosophy. Part Three: Non-Brahmanical Schools – Ajivikism and Jainism* (2016).

This talk is part of the lecture series **Embodiments of Truths: The Body and Ascetic Practices in Ancient Indian Traditions**, jointly conducted by the Department of Indology at the University of Tübingen, the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires, and the Centro de Estudios de Asia y África at El Colegio de México.

Gefördert im Rahmen der Exzellenzstrategie von Bund und Ländern

REGISTER ON ZOOM



With funding from the:



Federal Ministry
of Research, Techn
and Space



Baden-Württemberg
Ministry of Science,
Research and the Arts