

**EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES  
FACULTY OF PEDAGOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY**

**Földiné Irtl Melinda Mónika**

**Far Eastern Influences on Life Reform and Reform Pedagogical Aspects in  
the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**or**

**the Impact of Indian Culture on Life Reform and Pedagogical Reform Processes**

**Thesis for doctoral dissertation (PhD)**

**Doctoral School of Education**

*Head of the Doctoral School: Prof. Dr. Anikó Zsolnai*

*Doctoral Programme in Theoretical and Historical Pedagogy*

*Programme Director: Dr. habil. Imre Garai*

*Thesis Supervisors:*

*Prof. Dr. András Németh*

*Prof. Dr. Ágnes Birtalan*

DOI: 10.15476/ELTE.2024.174

*Budapest, 2024*

## **Presentation of the thesis and explanation of the choice of theme**

The relevance of historical research in pedagogy today is founded on the general experience that all the phenomena that disheartened individuals and society a century ago (industrialisation, pollution, war, disease, impermanence) are still present today as challenges to be solved.

Even today, many people seek refuge and salvation in Eastern philosophies or are open to cultural influences of Indian origin and the pedagogical methods associated with them. This phenomenon was also observed in the past, from the 'fin de siècle' period until the Second World War. However, the global spread of Far Eastern ideas and practices (meditation, yoga and others) has been and continues to be accompanied by a necessary process of transformation in the way they are adapted to the Western environment. As these are taken out of their original context and cultural environment, they are forced to adapt to European political, historical and economic needs. Subsequently, the philosophical and practical systems that have evolved as an integral part of Indian culture, are transformed and often eroded by their isolation from their original cultural environment.

As today, so a hundred years ago, there was a widespread interest in the systems of practices supporting physical and spiritual liberation and harmonious existence that were inspired by Far Eastern cultures, but at the same time misunderstandings, misconceptions, idealized or directly distorted teachings about them emerged, and the individual and social perspective-shaping effects of this complex phenomenon contributed to the development of individual lifestyle reform efforts or educational reform processes at both international and national level. In the research we wanted to present areas of Far Eastern influences in the life reform movements that we have not or only partially discussed before, such as the direct Far Eastern connection of well-known and less discussed international actors, or some specific areas of domestic reception (medicine, physical education). Given the large number of international and domestic actors involved, only a selection of examples has been chosen. The life reform narratives of well-known key figures and hitherto less studied actors have been supplemented with Far Eastern aspects.

Integrating Indian cultural influences, based on a harmony of theory and practice, and encouraging continuous self-improvement, altruistic education went well beyond the classroom pedagogical practice even before the Second World War. In addition to the well-known

reformist educational trends (see Waldorf, Montessori), which were mostly influenced by the theosophical movement and linked to Far Eastern ideas, the practical implementation of life reform ideas and educational reform efforts inspired by Indian culture can be detected in several individual and small community forms, beyond the framework of institutionalised education. In today's pedagogical terms, we can assert that these have enriched the practice of informal learning and Life-long Learning at the individual level.

Considering the criteria of scientific objectivity and the results of the studies described in the research background, the following initial premises have been collected:

- The universal history of education and the comparative history of education consider it necessary and timely to study distant cultures (Japan, India, China, etc.) and their interactions (Kéri, 2015).
- International and, more significantly, European processes have directly influenced the reception of the Hungarian life reform movements (Németh et al., 2005; Németh and Skiera, 2018)
- Among the concepts of life reform, one of the most essential features, the motif of seeking *self-redemption*, is typically accompanied by the practice of seeking natural *external and internal freedom* (Krabbe, 1974; Buchholz, 2018. 99.)
- The *idea of self-redemption*, which replaced the belief in external redemption, favoured the spread of new spiritual trends.
- Among the objectives of the life reform movements, some were in perfect harmony with some Far Eastern ideas or practices (Földiné and Komár, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2023)
- Because of the ideological parallels, certain Far Eastern motifs emerged in the practices of various life reform communes, social groups and individuals, which may have intensified interest in Hindu and Buddhist theosophy or the theosophy that mediates them (Földiné and Komár, 2019:17-18; Németh, 2023: 73-75)

Based on these previous assertions, the present research infers:

1. There are many indirect and direct Indian cultural influences on international and domestic life reform efforts.
2. Indian cultural influences played an indirect or direct role in international and Hungarian pedagogical reform efforts and institutionalisation processes in the first half of the 20th century.
3. Some of the actors of the life reform and pedagogical reform efforts have been observed to integrate, to a greater or lesser extent, motifs, ideas and practices related to the Indian

cultural sphere in their lifestyles, artistic and other creative activities and/or pedagogical approach.

The key research questions:

1. How do Indian cultural influences relate to life reform and reform pedagogy in the first half of the 20th century?<sup>1</sup>
2. Which core and related movements have been inspired by Indian cultural influences?<sup>2</sup>
3. What Indian cultural motifs can be observed in life reform efforts before the second World War?<sup>3</sup>

## **Research background**

Within the history of education, the need for an East-West dialogue has been expressed for several decades. Because the term 'East' is such a complex and immense cultural mix (more on this later), scholars have rightly criticised and expressed doubts about whether the enormous cultural differences allow Europe to understand and process the educational processes in the Far East (Hayhoe and Pan, 1996).

The following study is part of the Theoretical-Historical Programme of the Doctoral School of Education of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE PPK), the research project on the history of education of the Historical, Theoretical and Comparative Pedagogical Research Group of ELTE PPK<sup>4</sup>, which has been ongoing for several decades, and the activities of the Hungarian Reform Pedagogical Association (now led by Beatrix Vincze), founded by András Németh in 1995. In the extensive materials on the history of education published earlier by the research group, the direct link between life reform efforts and reform pedagogy<sup>5</sup> has received special attention within the history of pedagogy, which has brought in new perspectives on the earlier discourses on reform pedagogy on the international and domestic arena (e.g. Németh and Skiera, 1999; Hopfner and Németh, 2008; Németh and Pirka, 2013; Németh, Pukánszky and Pirka, 2014; Vincze, 2018).

---

<sup>1</sup> The types of linkages, directions and other typological models are discussed in detail later in chapter 3.5.

<sup>2</sup> The full model is explained in chapter 3.5. This includes nutritional reform, dress reform, women's movement, arts, sexual reform, housing reform, religious/philosophical/ideological reform, reform pedagogy, medical pedagogy and others.

<sup>3</sup> This will be discussed in chapter 3.4 (Buddhism, Hinduism, karma, reincarnation, nonviolence, teacher-disciple relationship, guru, meditation, yoga, breathing and other motifs).

<sup>4</sup> OTKA T 22253 Comparative Study of Reform Pedagogical Approaches

<sup>5</sup> OTKA K 111833 Reform Pedagogy and Life Reform - Reception Trends, Institutionalisation Processes.

The approach-forming influence of the above research is reflected in the works of the members of the research community on the history of museum education, art history, dance education, music education, and therapeutic education. Beyond the social phenomena of life reform, which are manifested globally, there are multiple, contradictory ideas, ways of implementation, various nation-state aspirations with unique facets, different educational systems and political regulations (Németh, 2013b). Studies on the life reform efforts of individual countries show that the pedagogical aspect occurs only in a partial form alongside social-historical, sociological and art-historical approaches, and we, therefore, believe that a more complete picture needs to be drawn by harmonising and synthesising the European perspective. Our publications preceding this research already aimed at this endeavour (Földiné and Komár, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020b, 2023).

The historical periodization of reform pedagogy has been discussed (Hansen-Schaberg and Schonig, 2007), according to which several different era boundaries are used (1890-1910/20, 1920-1933, 1945-1960) (Vincze, 2018, 38). The era boundaries we consider ideal in the light of previous studies:

1. from the 1870s to World War I (or 1900)
2. the period between the two world wars
3. from the outbreak of the Second World War until approximately 1950

In the context of the pedagogical reforms and life reform that unfolded at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in addition to the social, economic, political and other dimensions behind individual and community reforms, the phenomenon of the physical-spiritual dimensions, the strong link to religiosity and spirituality, has already been outlined in some previous academic works (Buchholz, 2018; Baader, 2004; Németh, 2013).

Consequently, a deeper exploration of the spiritual, and religious dimensions of domestic trends and reception processes has become justified, the basic motives of which are also discussed by András Németh in his article on neo-religious movements (Németh, 2023). As part of the research project supported by the OTKA research project Reform pedagogy and life reform - reception processes trends, institutionalisation processes (K 111833), the outcomes of our research pertained to this topic have been published in Hungarian and international volumes of studies<sup>6</sup> (Németh and Pirka, 2013; Németh, Stöckl and Vincze, 2016; Németh and Vincze, 2017; Boreczky and Vincze, 2018; Németh and Skiera, 2018; Kempf, Vincze and Németh

---

<sup>6</sup> See MTMT in the list of internet resources.

2020). The all-art exhibition *Hidden Stories* held at the Kunsthalle (Múcsarnok) between September 2018 and January 2019, provided an audiovisual insight into the areas of life reform related to Indian culture (Hindu, Buddhist, Yogic and other motifs).

### **Sources used for research**

The primary literature sources of the research were books on Buddhism, Yoga, Hinduism, Life Reform, Reform Pedagogy, History of Education, written/published in Hungarian between 1880-1950. We had randomly scanned all the available sources with specific keywords listed below. Additionally, we have been reviewed the major works related to the Life Reform and Reform Pedagogy<sup>7</sup> (including Rousseau, Nietzsche, Spencer, Bergson, Tolstoy, Hesse, Rolland and others) and the critiques or journal articles regarding the subjects mentioned above, published in the same historical period. Initially, we had been examined the expressions regarding the title of our research, and then the most important terms closely related to Indian culture. We had been kept extended our list according to the findings and added other related terms during our primary source research.

Primary terms for searching: Far East, Asia, India, Tibet, Buddha, Buddhism, Siva, Hindu, Hinduism, Brahmanism, Yoga, Theosophy, Theosophist, Meditation, Pedagogy, Life Reform. Searching words added to the extended list<sup>8</sup>: Orientalism, Orientalist, Ceylon, Sri Lanka, Burma, Nepal, Brahmin, Zen, Yogi, Pali, Sanskrit, Spiritualism, Spiritualist, Occult, Occultism, tantra, psychophysical, Hypnosis, Hypnotism, Hypnotherapy, Clearvoyance, Mazdaznan, Turan, Turanism, Reform Pedagogy, anthroposophy, naturopathy, movement arts, vegetarian, Vegetarianism, Breathing exercises, Advaita Vedanta, Fakirs, Ayurveda, Vedas, karma, reincarnation.

Manual and digital filtering were mixed based on the availability of sources. The categorisation of the sources used is unusual from a research methodological point of view because primary and secondary sources were categorised according to their role. Being historical research, a simple chronological arrangement of sources, whereby publications and other source works from the time of the specific research period could have been considered as primary sources, might have been obvious, but it did not provide an appropriate methodological solution in our case. In the pre-World War II literature, which was thematically related, authors often referred

---

<sup>7</sup> Including the writings or translations of the persons concerned with the reform of life (for example Ferenc Völgyesi-Emile Coué's method, or Barna Balogh's translations of Yesudian's writing).

<sup>8</sup> The extended keyword search was applied to the results after filtering by primary words.

to each other's works; therefore, in some cases the work was used as a primary source for the author's connection to Indian culture, while in other cases the same work was considered secondary literature because of its reference, review or other content (information referred to and communicated by others) to contemporary works.

The primary source research was carried out mainly through personal library research (TKBF, OSZK, Szabó Ervin, ELTE PPK) and we made intense effort to get access of the physical copy of the rare books of the historical period of the 'fin de siècle' before the II. World War. The digital library of INTERNET ARCHIVE ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)) was one of the of greatest help to get access for the international sources, just as the search engines of international scientific databases i.e. JSTOR, ACADEMIA.EDU. Databases of archive journals and other sources like ARCANUM, HUNGARICANA and other were supporting the searching process. The keywords listed above were searched for in a non-exhaustive way, but only for specific authors in the period 1880-1950 to find prominent figure and main motives related to Far Eastern, especially Indian cultural effects on life reform and pedagogical reform.

## **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into four main chapters. The Introduction is divided into five sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter, there is space for the critical, philosophical and specific Buddhist philosophical aspects of science. The second sub-chapter provides a detailed description of the research and the research background. The third sub-chapter summarises the research questions and presuppositions. In the fourth sub-chapter, the methodological background of the research is described. The final chapter discusses the research outcomes.

The second main chapter provides a systematic review of the key concepts in the title of the research and attempts to put the definitions into a deeper context. Among these, we begin with the term Far East<sup>9</sup>, which first needs to be clarified geographically in terms of the cultural regions that are the focus of this thesis. In the second part, we will discuss life reform, and in the third, reform pedagogy in general. The discussion of the latter two concepts is supplemented by a discussion of ideological reform, in which, as this research suggests, life reform is seen as a new religious form of life in the period under study.

---

<sup>9</sup> In the dissertation, after clarifying the term, we will consistently capitalise both the members for ease of reading and to indicate the multifaceted message of the term.

The fourth chapter of the second part specifically reviews the Hungarian aspects of these two topics in general. All these chapters can be considered as background explorations, but at the same time, the ideas and examples presented in them provide a basis for new aspects of the overall social, cultural, economic, political, and pedagogical context of the life reform movements, and thus can be of ‘self-value’.

The subsections of the third main chapter discuss the international and domestic phenomenon of persons associated with life reform turning to the Far East and provide a systematic overview of Far Eastern motifs in life reform and pedagogical reform efforts. In the concluding part of the third main chapter, the typologies of Far Eastern influences that have been compiled based on the above insights are presented.

The fourth and final chapter is divided into three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter contains a summary of the research findings. The second subsection reflects on the perpetuation of Indian cultural influences in the processes of life reform and pedagogical reform. The Concluding Reflections add personal experiences and commentary to the paper.

Another peculiarity of the structure of the thesis is that, in addition to the traditional Buddhist opening and closing formulas, the Preface and the chapter entitled ‘Introduction’ and the Concluding Reflections in the ‘Summary’ are both experimental in their attempt to link theory and practice, as the academic treatise seeks to follow the structure of Buddhist rituals symbolically.<sup>10</sup> This justifies that the outward framework of the thesis departs from the usual academic publication style, but only to the extent so that its final structure may reflect elements of Buddhist philosophy and practice. The first scene-setter is that the arousal of the right intention<sup>11</sup>, familiar from the Noble Eightfold Path<sup>12</sup>, is what initiates the Introduction. In keeping with the structural foundations of the scientific work, and by analogy with traditional Buddhist rituals, the writing adopts the following order:

1. Invocation, greeting, arousing the right intentions (Foreword, Introduction)
2. Method, practice, meditation (Negotiation, Expression)
3. Offering merit<sup>13</sup> (Summary, Concluding thoughts)

---

<sup>10</sup> The tribute in Pali on the front cover and the final dedication of merit reinforce this framework.

<sup>11</sup> Skt. Samyang sankalpa (second member of the Buddhist noble eightfold path).

<sup>12</sup> Skt. Ariya Astangika-marga (right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right remembrance, right contemplation)

<sup>13</sup> In a Buddhist ritual, this is the invocation, greeting and taking refuge in the Buddha (teacher), the Dharma (teaching), and the Sangha (community) within oneself. The method, the practice itself is meditation. It is the offering of merit, and the sealing of our intention; for whatever knowledge and insight we gain, that we offer for the happiness of all beings.



The unconventional Preface and Introduction can be seen as a kind of ritual gateway, i.e. a stage for greeting and setting a spiritual purpose.<sup>14</sup> Here we wanted to present the principles that define the personal narrative and accompany the research throughout.

At this point, still hovering in a kind of transitional state - in the moment before the initiation - the author and the reader have the opportunity to decide whether they are participating as professionals doing academic work or as simple readers. They can reflect on the ethical and spiritual guidelines they wish to follow, and on how they wish to use the facts discovered and the knowledge gained in the future. In this way, we can directly relate to a kind of life reform approach and the Far Eastern impulses. The author's individual, world-view framing should not be seen as a binding direction for the reader, and the information in the preface and introduction can be ignored, though it may also be possible to read these lines to awaken an altruistic attitude or the desire to eliminate the suffering of all sentient beings.<sup>15</sup>

Of the three steps of the ritual form described above, the second, i.e. the practice, can be linked to the research, the writing or reading, processing, and internalisation of the trial part. This means that, if one can integrate everyday activity into the framework of spiritual practice and consistently keeps the given ethical principles in mind, then researching, writing and/or merely reading it attentively can become a kind of active, dynamic meditative practice or contemplative exercise.<sup>16</sup>

In this context, it is also worth noting that in the Eastern tradition, meditation itself is known to be the most precise and subtle research that can bring one closest to understanding oneself and any phenomenon in the experiential world. In the initial stages of meditation practice, it is common to encounter distraction, and consequently determination to return to the originally designated primary object of meditation. A parallel to this is how minor (although necessary) digressions or distractions<sup>17</sup> appear in the present dissertation, meanwhile the thread returns to the gist again and again. The so-called conscious diversions are most often represented in the footnotes symbolically. Therefore, their incidence are relatively high).

Finally, the third step in the specific structure is the Summary. Regarding the practical aspects of this chapter, from a secular point of view, the publication of the results and conclusions can

---

<sup>14</sup> See Turner (2002) on rituals.

<sup>15</sup> This attitude, well known in the East, is of course taken for granted in many Christian or other religious pedagogical writings, but in the field of secularised university education, and perhaps at the social level, it can be said to be less emphasised today.

<sup>16</sup> The term method in the traditional ritual process does not only refer to formal, sitting meditation. In the case of a thesis, not solely material that is written in a strange trance state, in a so-called visionary mode (suggestion), may indicate that a work was produced within the framework of a meditation practice.

<sup>17</sup> In everyday terms, this refers to the phenomenon of a wandering of consciousness.

enrich the knowledge of academics and those interested in the subject from a secular point of view. Moreover, it can provide an opportunity to outline further research directions, and possible fields of application, and to share ideas to stimulate future research. It can serve as an intellectual guide for all. By analogy with the closing rites of Buddhist rituals, the Summary can be seen as a gesture of *merit offering*<sup>18</sup>, outlining the hidden wish: *“I wish that the knowledge gained through research could serve the happiness and well-being of all beings.”*<sup>19</sup>

### **The research methodology**

The subject of our doctoral thesis belongs to the field of educational science. History of pedagogy is, in essence, primarily historical research, and as such can rely mainly on written historical sources, individual biographies, monographs, i.e. sources preserved by others, rather than empirical facts (Kéri, 2001).

The complementary nature of the qualitative and quantitative approaches creates a kind of necessity for cooperation, as they are complementary to each other. Their different orientations mean that they are not suited to fully exploring all subfields independently. Only by complementing each other can the different perspectives thoroughly investigate the processes of education, training, education and culture within the so-called social reality (Németh, 2015). However, we did not choose the application the mixed version of the two different type of research methodology. By its nature, this basic research induced the conduct of a qualitative approach. (Szabolcs, 2001; Mason, 2005; Dennis et al., 2013; Babbie, 2020).

A thesis with a kind of Diltheyian approach is a descriptive, deductive, theoretical work. It focuses on source research, document and content analysis.<sup>20</sup> Qualitative content analysis of primary and secondary source literature is descriptive in nature. Document and text analysis, employs a hermeneutic (understanding) approach. This analytical-interpretive content analysis, by considering the complex historical social phenomena of a given period, provides an opportunity to uncover hidden connections and deeper contexts (Szabolcs, 2001; Falus, 2000; Csíkos, 2020). Based on the data collected during content analysis, it is possible to formulate novel, valid yet replicable conclusions (Krippendorff, 1995) and to create categories and

---

<sup>18</sup> This is an indispensable part of the ceremonial practice in all Buddhist schools, because it serves, among other things, to cultivate (develop, strengthen) the positive mental tendencies of *skt. dana* (giving), *metta* (love), *karuna* (compassion), and as an antidote to pride, jealousy, envy and other negative mental tendencies

<sup>19</sup> Commonly used with formulas. ‘May all beings be happy’, etc.

<sup>20</sup> At the initial stage of the research, we wanted to complement this with an empirical method, as there were several semi-structured interviews with people born between 1930 and 1945, but because of the Institutional Research Ethics Code and the fact that many of the interviewees had died in the meantime, these early audio-format, partially structured in-depth interviews were not used.

typological models concerning pedagogical effects. The research work has several objectives: exploration, interpretation, systematisation and inference.

Unusually, we have used historiographical elements not only to present the background to the research but also in all the sub-chapters, as many themes and persons have been highlighted.

In the stylistic presentation of the essay, a novel approach has been adopted. The titles were not intended to be objective but artistic, thus fulfilling several roles at once. In the titles of the second chapter, poetic images such as *bouquet*, *spice*, over and above the so-called speaking titles such as *Oriental Magic*, and *Far and Near and all*, were intended to represent. On the one hand, the freedom of writing symbolizes the creative art, on the other hand, the aesthetics, and finally, it is indicating a hermeneutic approach to deeper contexts.

### **Limitations of the research (Epistemological and methodological)**

All research on the history of education has its limitations, as not all known scientific research methods can be applied simultaneously (Szabolcs and Golnhofer, 2015), so we have chosen the more obvious qualitative focus and neglected the use of quantitative, empirical methods. A combination of qualitative-quantitative methods could be used to verify the extent of individuals' actual religious and ideological commitment, but we have not been able to extend the focus of our research in this direction at present because there is still a paucity of biographical data, biographical documentation to be mapped (especially when examining the life trajectories of individuals); as a result, we did not wish to make any definitive statements about the sympathies of the protagonists of life reform with the Indian cultural influences and ideals we have hypothesised, and the deeper spiritual implications beyond that.

The scope of this dissertation means that only a fraction of the information gathered so far has been presented in this thesis, hence there may be occasional references in the work to information that the author is yet to disclose, but space limitations have not allowed for more extensive and precise source citations. Concerning the limits of the present research, we should also mention the personal commitment of the researcher to the topic (see preface, final chapter). These sections are not written as contrived explanations, but out of respect for Buddhist tradition and scientific paradigm, and because, in my opinion, the presence of religious, theological, and philosophical commitment may pose a challenge in terms of reconciling the differences between interpretive paradigms (see: traditional religious - religious scientific - scientific).

It is not characterised by a goal-oriented but a value-oriented interpretive paradigm (Weber, 1919; Dilthey, 2004), in which the researcher and the object of the research interact; their relationship is characterised by interrelated processes. This interaction does not allow for value-free communication.

### **Main findings of the research**

During the so-called 'fin, de siècle' period, global, and with greater impact, European processes (political, economic, educational) directly influenced the reception of the Hungarian life reform movements. The diffusion of ideas related to Far Eastern and Indian cultures may have been facilitated at both international and domestic levels by the collateral benefits of colonisation: improved travel conditions, relative development of infrastructure in the colonial territories, the start of inter-religious dialogue, and direct experience of traditional educational models. There have been destructive effects along the direct relations, such as the deliberate weakening of traditional values in the colonial territories, and possible social and religious tensions as a result of missionary activities. International political events, both in the East and the West, played an indirect role in the unfolding of life reform and reformist pedagogical efforts.

The new human ideal of returning to nature and naturalness, and the close connection between the philosophical, religious and quasi-religious influences behind the movements that opened up in its wake, together with the reformist pedagogical efforts, was an undeniable phenomenon at the turn of the century (Németh, 2023). Within this, impulses related to Far Eastern spirituality appeared.

Instead of the old intellectualistic-verbalistic education, metaphysical regions, deeper religiousness and national consciousness were given space in pedagogy (Domonkos, 1934: 338). The emergence of such opinions at the social level is also interesting for us because they indirectly contributed to the spread of Far Eastern and Indian cultural influences in the field of pedagogy and child education. Indirectly, the dissemination of ideas mainly took place through the practices of analytical psychology and the above-mentioned hypnosis, hypnotherapy, suggestion, autosuggestion.

The motif of seeking self-redemption, which played a central role in the concepts of life reform, was typically accompanied by the practice of seeking natural external and internal freedom. The idea of self-redemption, which replaced a belief in external redemption, was in perfect harmony with the principles and practice of Eastern philosophies, including Buddhism and yoga. The numerous models of interconnectedness have manifested themselves directly and

indirectly in international and domestic processes (through life reform communes, organisations, other social groupings and individuals).

The rich repository of Indian, Tibetan, Sinhalese, but more broadly Japanese and Chinese spiritual inspirations appeared more prominently in Hungary from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly due to the interest in cultural roots.

In the early phase, the strengthening of national consciousness during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the scientific endeavours of research into origins and the individual and collective traumas of the First and Second World Wars probably played a decisive role. In addition, the widespread dissemination of theosophical teachings, interspersed with Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, had a significant influence and played a primary mediating role in the practical elements. The popularity of the Society's public lectures, international publications, translations of original and commentary texts and journal communications (or even strong opposition to them) have all contributed to some people turning their attention to genuine traditional sources or travelling to India. In terms of scholarly interest, the East-West dialogue has been strengthened mainly through Orientalism (Sanskrit, translations of Pali texts and other professional publications and translations).<sup>21</sup>

As well as philology, archaeology and geography, also medical, physiological and naturopathic aspects aroused interest in the Far East. In parallel with the rise of occultism in the West, this openness was first manifested in groups of people with special abilities (spiritualists, mediums, thirst busters, clairvoyants, necromancers). This was accompanied by scientific interest on the part of Western psychologists, doctors and others involved in hypnosis, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis. Through teachers visiting the West, it was possible to connect directly with the source. Stronger impulses were gained through personal encounters with masters (Umrao Sher-Gil, Lama Anagarika Govinda, Selvarajan Yesudian, Rabindranath Tagore, Abdu'l-Bahá, Jivandi Jamshedji Modi) or with dedicated Western disciples (i.e. Annie Besant, Paul Brunton). The reception of the 'Lebensreform' and its reform pedagogy was influenced by Far Eastern influences, Hungarian travel experiences,<sup>22</sup> popular personal accounts, travel diaries,<sup>23</sup> the activities of art collectors, art-craft dealers<sup>24</sup>, and art (especially literature, visual arts, movement arts) and pedagogical interactions (Kelényi, 1998; 2020; Tésits, 2022).

---

<sup>21</sup> The works of Max Müller, Giuseppe Tucci, Paul Carus, René Guénon, Mircea Eliade, Paul Deussen and other Indologists and Orientalists, either through translations (József Kaczvinszky, Béla Hamvas) or direct sources (József Schmidt, Eugen Neumann, Jenő Lénárd).

<sup>22</sup> Stein, A., Baktay, E., Balázs, F., Ráthonyi, Á., Sass-Brunner, E. and others.

<sup>23</sup> For example Rózsa Hajnóczy, Bélán Mocsári, Mária Fáy, Zsigmond Justh and others.

<sup>24</sup> Ferenc Hopp, and Imre Schwaiger are the most famous.

In order to support the scientific investigation of complex interfaces, several experimental typology designs were presented in our study, mainly to draw attention to the multifaceted aspects of the classification possibilities.

In conclusion, life reform and educational reform efforts have taken external and internal practices from the rich treasure trove of Far Eastern ideology, primarily related to Hindu, Buddhist and yogic teachings, all of which aim for the harmonious development of the individual and society. In particular, yoga has become popular for its special postures, breathing exercises and practices that promote concentration and control of the mind. Among the previously mentioned external and internal practices imported to the West, elements visible and less visible to the physical eye respectively, i.e. the ideas and practices of action (lifestyle, nutrition, clothing, exercise, breathing exercises) and thought (philosophy, worldview), or in other words, the ideas and practices for the health of the body and mind/spirit, we can observe a frequent repetition of some of the most important motifs. These include, for instance, the *śīla*, *ahimsa* (respect for life, non-harm, intention of harmlessness), the *śīla* karma (cause-and-effect or action-and-consequence force) (Ghéczy-Hugyecz, 1935; Baktay, 1943; Völgyesi, 1943; Yesudian, 1943) and reincarnation (rebirth); each constituting the basis of both Hindu and Buddhist views. The idea of non-violence, applicable to oneself, to others and to the environment, encouraged individuals and small communities to take their own responsibility and to exercise moral duties, based on an understanding of cause-and-effect. After the Second World War, all these ideas and practices were neglected due to the political rules and regulations, and mostly became prohibited; however, upon the fall of the Iron Curtain, their popularity and free application, even in the field of institutionalised education, revived on a societal scale.

## **Bibliográfia**

Ablonczy, B. (2016). *Keletre, magyar! A magyar turanizmus története*. Budapest: Jaffa.

Agarwal, C. V. (2001). *The Buddhist and Theosophical Movements 1873-2001*. Varanasi: Maha Bodhi Society of India.

Antolik, A. (szerk.) *Életreform Magazin 1932-1938 számai*.

Baader, Meike S. (2004). *Erziehung als Erlösung: Transformation des Religiösen in der Reformpädagogik. Beiträge zur pädagogischen Grundlagenforschung*. Weinheim; München: Juventa.

Babbie, E. (2020). *A társadalomtudományi kutatás gyakorlata*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.

- Baktay, E. (1931). India: India múltja és jelene, vallásai, népelete, városai, tájai és műalkotásai. Budapest: Singer és Wfolfner Irodalmi Intézet Rt.
- Baktay, E. (1943). India bölcsessége. Budapest: Pantheon.
- Balázs, F. (1975). Bejárom a kerek világot (1923-1928). Bukarest: Kriterion Könyvkiadó.
- Balogh, B. (1943). India hipnózisa – Kelet „szuggesztíós jógája” a gyakorlatban. Budapest: Viktória Könyvkiadó.
- Boreczky, Á., & Vincze, B. (Szerk.). (2018). Reformpedagógia és életreform – recepciók tendenciák, intézményesülési folyamatok. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Buchholz, K. (2018). Az életreform vezérmotívumai. In A. Németh & E. Skiera (Szerk.), *Rejtett Történetek: Az életreform-mozgalmak és a művészetek* (o. 99–105). Budapest: Műcsarnok.
- Choné, A. (2009). Rudolf Steiner, Carl Gustav Jung, Hermann Hesse: Passeurs entre Orient et Occident: Three Mediators between East and West. Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg.
- Csíkós, C. (2020). A neveléstudomány kutatómódszertanának alapjai. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó.
- Dennis, B., Carspecken, L., & Carspecken, P. (2013). Qualitative Research. New York: Lang.
- Dilthey, W. (2004). A történelmi világ felépítése a szellemtudományokban. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Fajcsák, G., & Kelényi, B. (Szerk.). (2017). Sanghay Shanghai: Párhuzamos eltérések Kelet és Nyugat között. Budapest: Hungart.
- Falus, I. (2000). Bevezetés a pedagógiai kutatás módszereibe. Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó.
- Ghéczy-Hugyecz, E. (1935). Az élet rejtélye. Budapest: A szerző kiadása.
- Golnhofer, E., & Szabolcs, É. (2005). *Gyermekek: Nézőpontok, narratívák*. Budapest: Eötvös József Könyv Kiadó Bt.
- Hartmann, W. C. (1925). Who is who in the Occult, Psychic and Spiritual realms in the United States and Foreign countries. Jamaica: The Occult Press.
- Hayhoe, R., & Pan, J. (1996). East-West Dialogue in Knowledge and Higher Education. New York: Routledge.
- Hesse, H. (1923). Sziddhárta: Hindu rege. Budapest: Génius.
- Holmes, E. (1911). What Is and What Might Be. London: Constable and Co.
- Hopfner, J., & Németh, A. (Szerk.). (2008). Pädagogische und kulturelle Strömungen in der k. U. K. Monarchie, Lebensreform, Herbartianismus und reformpädagogische Bewegungen. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH.
- Kelényi, B. (1998). Schwaiger Imre a Connaissance: Egy családregény fejezete a Hopp Ferenc Kelet-Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum történetéből. *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 47(1–2), p53–63.
- Kelényi, B. (2020). Egy magyar nábob Indiában, avagy a hagyományos indiai kézműipar újjáélesztése. *Keletkutatás*, p85–104.

- Kéri, K. (2001). Bevezetés a neveléstörténeti kutatás módszertanába. Budapest: Műszaki Tankönyvkiadó.
- Kéri, K. (2015). Adatok és művek a nem nyugati kultúrák neveléstörténetének kutatásáról. Pécs: PTE BTK Neveléstudományi Intézet.
- Király, D. (1942). Az iskolai és a levente-testnevelés kézikönyve: Rendgyakorlatok, menetnóták, szabadgyakorlatok, ősi hindu jóga gyakorlatok, szertorna, haditorna és játék: 700 gyakorlat, 100 játék, 100 óraterv, 1800 ábra. Szeged: Szeged Városi Nyomda és Könyvkiadó Rt.
- Krabbe, W. (1974). Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform: Strukturmerkmale einer sozialreformerischen Bewegung im Deutschland der Industrialisierungsperiode. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Krippendorff, K. (1995). A tartalomelemzés módszertanának alapjai. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.
- Mayring, P. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: Theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution. Philipp Mayring. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssao-395173>.
- Németh, A. (2013b). A neveléstudomány főbb fejlődésmodelljei és tudományos irányzatai. Neveléstudomány, (1), p18–63.
- Németh, A. (2023). Új Ember, Új Társadalom, Új nevelés—A reformpedagógia és az újjavallásos mozgalmak kapcsolata. In Béla Pukánszky & P. Sárkány (Szerk.), Pedagógia és kereszténység: Teológiai, neveléstörténeti és nevelésfilozófiai metszetek (o. 65–81). Budapest: Szent István Társulat.
- Németh, A., & Pirka, V. (Szerk.). (2013). Az életreform és reformpedagógia – recepció és intézményesülési folyamatok a 20. Század első felében. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Németh, A., & Skiera, E. (1999). Reformpedagógia és az iskola reformja. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.
- Németh, A., & Skiera, E. (2018). Rejtett történetek: Az életreform mozgalmak és a művészetek. Budapest: Műcsarnok.
- Németh, A., & Vincze, B. (Szerk.). (2017). Továbbélő utópiák – magyar életreform törekvések a nemzetközi recepció hatásai. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Németh, A., Biro, Z. H., & Garai, I. (2015). Neveléstudomány és tudományos elit a 20. Század második felében. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Németh, A., Pukánszky, B., & Pirka, V. (2014). Továbbélő utópiák – reformpedagógia és életreform a 20. Század első felében. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Németh, A., Stökl, C., & Vincze, B. (Szerk.). (2016). Survival of Utopias: Life Reform and Progressive Education in Austria and Hungary – Weiterlebenende Utopien: Lebensreform und Reformpädagogik in Österreich und Ungarn. Wien: Peter Lang.
- Puskás, I. (1991). India bibliográfia. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Szabolcs, É. (2001). Kvalitatív kutatási metodológia a pedagógiában. Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó.
- Szatmári, B. (2022). A buddhizmus magyarországi elterjedésének korai szakasza. Budapest: A Tan Kapuja.



Tésits, R. (Szerk.). (2022). Magyarok Dél-Ázsiában [tematikus szám]. *Modern Geográfia*, 17(2).

Torgyán, A. (2022). Az emberiség fátklyavivői: Szentek, tanítók mesterek lexikonja (Köt. 1-3). Gyoma: Etalon kiadó.

Völgyesi, F. (1932). Üzenet az ideges embereknek! Budapest: Bibliotéka.

Völgyesi, F. (1943). Férfi lélek, női lélek. Budapest: Vörösváry Kiadó Vállalat.

Vincze, B. (2018). Új kutatási irányok a 20. századi reformpedagógiai mozgalom helyéről és szerepéről a német nyelvű szakirodalom tükrében. In A. Fehérvári (Szerk.), A Borsszem Jankótól Bolognáig: Neveléstudományi tanulmányok. Budapest: L' Harmattan. p33-34.

Webb, J. (1974). *The Occult Underground*. La Salle: Open Court Publishing.

Weber, M. (1919). *Wissenschaft als Beruf*. München et al.: Duncker & Humblot.

Weninger, A. (1942). Az egészség testi és lelki forrásai. Budapest: Országos Közművelődési Szövetség.

Wilhelm, Z. (2022). A magyar utazók által közvetített India-kép máig élő hatásai. *Modern Geográfia*, 17(2), 25–43. <https://doi.org/10.15170/MG.2022.17.02.03>.

Yesudian, S., & Balogh, B. (1943). Sport és jóga: Ósi hindu testgyakorlatok és lélekzesszabályozás európaiak számára. Budapest: Stádium.

#### **Témában megjelent publikációk:**

Földiné Irtl, M., & Komár, L. (2016). Indo-Tibetan influences and Life Reform in Hungary in the Interwar Period. In A. Németh, C. Stökl, & B. Vincze (Szerk.), *Survival of Utopias: Life Reform and Progressive Education in Austria and Hungary – Weiterlebenende Utopien: Lebensreform und Reformpädagogik in Österreich und Ungarn*. Wien: PeterLang, p115-132

Földiné Irtl, M., Komár, L. (2017). Az indo-tibeti hatások és a két világháború közötti magyar életreform. In: Németh, András; Vincze, Beatrix (szerk.) *Továbbélő utópiák – magyar életreform-törekvések és nemzetközi recepciók hatásai*. Budapest, Magyarország: Gondolat Kiadó, p190-208.

Földiné Irtl M., Komár, L. (2017). Az indo-buddhista hatások a magyar irodalmiközéletben a 20. század első felében. In: Kempf, Katalin; Vincze, Beatrix; Németh, András (szerk.) *Reformpedagógia és Életreform – Elméleti Megközelítések, Új Kutatási Eredmények*. Budapest, Magyarország: Gondolat Kiadó, p13-14.

Földiné, I. M., & Komár, L. (2018). A jóga magyarországi története a második világháborúig. In Á. Boreczky & B. Vincze (Szerk.), *Reformpedagógia és életreform – recepciók tendenciák, intézményesülési folyamatok*. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó. p158–173.

Földiné Irtl, M., Komár, L. (2020). Oriental influences in the Endeavour of Hungarian Life Reform: Hindu, Buddhist, and Theosophical Aspects. in Vincze, B., Kempf, K., Németh, A. (szerk) *Hidden Stories – the Life Reform Movements and Art*. Berlin, Németország: Peter Lang p232-252.

Földiné Irtl, M. (2021). Active Karuna., In: *Buddhism: Integrating with Modern Sciences to Mental and Social Development*. Thailand: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University p1-9.

Földiné Irtl, M., & Molnár, A. G. (2021). Gondolatok a jóga és a kereszténység kapcsolatáról a hagyomány és a tudomány útvesztőjében. *Egyházforum*, 36(2), 24–38.

Földiné Irtl, M., Komár, L. (2022). Játékosításra törekvés a buddhista szemléletű köz és felsőoktatásban: Egy innovatív buddhista szemléletű társasjáték életreform és reformpedagógiai vonatkozásainak bemutatása In: Polyák, Zs.; Kempf, K.; Albrecht, Zs.; Csipke, Á.; Dallos, M.; Gyombolai, B.; Mester-Csiki, F.; Pálkuti, A.; Szabó, K. (szerk.) *A művészetpedagógia múltja és jelene -reformpedagógia, életreform, gyermekkultúra*.

Absztraktkötet Budapest, Budapest: Magyarországi Reformpedagógiai Egyesület, p72-72.

Földiné Irtl, M., & Komár, L. (2022). Protestáns hittérítők nyomdokain Indiában: Hermann Hesse Távol-keleti utazása. In A. Daru, B. Vincze, & A. Németh (Szerk.), *Életreform és a művészetek—Kapcsolati hálók, nemzetközi recepciók hatások, misztikus újvallásos és okkultirányzatok hatása a 20. Század első felében*. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem. p.21

Földiné Irtl, M., Komár, L. (2023). Yogic Breathing Techniques as Supplementary Methods in the Area of Physical and Spiritual Education in the Hungarian life reform movements, In: Garai, Imre; Vincze, Beatrix; Polyák, Zsuzsanna (szerk.) *Histories of Education and Reform: Traditions, Tensions and Transition*. Abstracts Budapest, Hungary: Magyarországi Reformpedagógiai Egyesület (2023) p284-285.

Földiné Irtl, M., & Komár, L. (2024). *Protestáns hittérítők nyomdokain Indiában: Hermann Hesse Távol-keleti utazása*. Megjelenés alatt.