

The Americanization of Ancient Science

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In recent years, the growth of Yoga has gained much notoriety. The program “YOGA ed.”, promoted by Yoga instructor and creator Tara Guber, has developed rapid popularity in public schools. By 2007, 100 schools in twenty-six states ran the program taught by more than 300 physical education (PE) instructors.¹ Yet this new PE initiative has been challenged by an unusual alliance of secular and Christian fundamentalist parents.

A group of parents at a school in Encinitas County, California sued the school district superintendent in *Sedlock vs. Timothy Baird Superintendent* over the use of YOGA ed. in their children’s school. The parents claimed that Yoga was a religious practice and thus violated separation of church and state, citing the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.² Suing on behalf of the parents in the lawsuit, The National Center for Law and Policy (NCLP) alleged “civil rights violations resulting from its... Ashtanga yoga program,” and claimed that Yoga was,

¹ “Yoga Causes Controversy in Public Schools: Some Parents Say it Violates the Separation of Church and State,” *NBC News*, January 28, 2007, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/16859368/ns/health-childrens_health/t/yoga-causes-controversy-public-schools/#.Uzw4XiiMfuc.

² Kyla Calvert, “Promoting Hinduism? Parents Demand Removal of School Yoga Class,” *NPR News*, January 09, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/2013/01/09/168613461/promoting-hinduism-parents-demand-removal-of-school-yoga-class>.

“inherently and pervasively religious, having its roots firmly planted in Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and western metaphysical religious beliefs and practices.”³

The school district defended the program as just one element of a greater initiative to help children make healthier decisions.⁴ They claimed the Yoga program was exercise, citing scientific evidence that Yoga improved attention among students, and resulted in higher test scores and reduced rates of childhood obesity. Tara Guber had earlier stated, “I stripped every piece of anything that anyone could vaguely construe as... religious out of the program.”⁵ Superintendent Timothy Baird added that their program was technically not Ashtanga Yoga, but had been extensively modified for children K-6.⁶

The NCLP argued that not only was Yoga Ed. still religious, but that it would be tricky to say when something stops being religious.⁷ Many parents are still convinced that it is impossible to separate Yoga from Eastern religions and that even “filtered” Yoga entices young people into exploring other religions and mysticism.⁸ In response to the controversy California Judge John S. Meyer stated that Yoga was religious, but having been stripped of its cultural references, it was

³ Maria Nikias, “Yoga Lawsuit: Encinitas Union School District in California Sued over Classes,” *ABC News*, February 21, 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/yoga-lawsuit-encinitas-union-school-district-california-sued/story?id=18561237>.

⁴ Calvert, “Promoting Hinduism?”

⁵ “Yoga Causes Controversy in Public Schools,”

⁶ Nikias, “Yoga Lawsuit,”

⁷ Calvert, “Promoting Hinduism?”

⁸ “Yoga Causes Controversy in Public Schools,”

not taught in a religious manner.⁹ He rejected the lawsuit, further stating that the modern practice of Yoga "is a distinctly American cultural phenomenon."¹⁰

Aside from challenging the Americanization of Yoga, the opposition to YOGA ed. raises an interesting question: does practicing Yoga lead to religious conversion? The only eastern religion that has attracted any significant number of converts in the United States (US) is Buddhism. This expands the question: does practicing Yoga lead to religious conversion to Buddhism? A strong correlation exists between the rise of Yoga and of Buddhism in the US, but this relationship is not causal. Rather, by analyzing the historical development and subsequent Americanization of both, a third factor causing their rise in popularity emerges: the incorporation of modern Western science into ancient, and once religious, Eastern practices in the pursuit of psychological and physiological health.

Both Buddhism and Yoga have been growing in the US for several decades now. Today, they are a common part of American life. Ranked third behind Christianity and Judaism, Buddhism has become one of the largest religions in the United States.¹¹ Diana L. Erk, a professor of Contemporary American Religion at Harvard University, has stated, "Buddhism is now an American religion," no longer just an immigrant practice.¹²

⁹ Krishnadev Calamur, "Calif. Judge Rules Yoga in Public Schools Not Religious," *NPR News*, July 01, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/07/01/197712791/calif-judge-rules-yoga-in-public-schools-not-religious>.

¹⁰ Marty Graham, "Yoga Not Teaching Religion in Encinitas Schools, California Judge Rules, Appeal Expected," *Huffington Post*, July 22, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/01/yoga-school-religion-_n_3530347.html.

¹¹ Jaweed Kaleem, "Buddhism in America: What is the Future?," *Huffington Post*, September 20, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/14/america-buddhism_n_876577.html.

¹² Kenneth K. Tanaka, "Dramatic Growth of American Buddhism: An Overview," *Dharma World*, September 2011, http://www.rk-world.org/dharmaworld/dw_2011julyseptdramaticgrowth.aspx.

The multi-million dollar Yoga industry is also booming in America.¹³ Big business capitalized on an estimated \$10.3 billion spent by Yoga consumers in 2012, clearly indicating an elevated level of popularity and participation.¹⁴ The American College of Sport Medicine (ACSM) even claims that Yoga is one of the fastest growing sports, aside from Yoga's gradual incorporation into PE classes.¹⁵

Evidence of this growth pervades modern mainstream culture. MasterCard recently aired a commercial featuring a meditating woman.¹⁶ Since 2009, the annual Easter Egg Roll hosts a "Yoga Garden" on the White House lawn.¹⁷ This is in conjunction with the First Ladies "Get Up and Move" imitative. Iconic American characters like Spider Man, the Easter Bunny, and the Cat in the Hat are seen in the garden practicing Yoga with children and adults.

Big name celebrities like Jennifer Aniston, Russell Brand, and Katy Perry openly practice both and many more practice one or the other.¹⁸ Journals on both subjects have become common. The *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, first published in 1991, now reaches around 10,000 readers, not all of whom are formally Buddhist.¹⁹ *Yoga Journal*, encompassing everything from news

¹³ Justin Hakuta, "Has Yoga Lost Its Soul? Part 1: Selling out and Innovating," *Huffington Post*, January 9, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/justin-hakuta/yoga-sell-out_b_1157089.html.

¹⁴ "Yoga in America Study 2012," *Yoga Journal*, 2012, http://www.yogajournal.com/press/yoga_in_america. Hakuta, "Has Yoga Lost Its Soul? Part 1" : Hakuta, "Has Yoga Lost Its Soul? Part 1"

¹⁵ Mindy Caplan, "Diversify Your Clients' Workout With Yoga," *ACSM*, February 19, 2013, <http://certification.acsm.org/blog/2013/february/diversify-your-clients-workouts-with-yoga>.

¹⁶ Sarah Pulliam Bailey, "American Zenophilia," *Humanities*, April 2010, <http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2010/marchapril/feature/american-zenophilia>.

¹⁷ "Yoga at the White House," *Leah Cullis Yoga*, <http://leahcullis.com/yoga-at-the-white-house/>.

¹⁸ Famous People Who Meditate," *Transcendental Meditation*, February 5, 2014, <http://tmhome.com/experiences/famous-people-who-meditate/>. : ¹⁸ "23 Very Famous Celebrities That Do Yoga," *People Magazine*, March 26, 2014, <http://chuck-bluestein.hubpages.com/hub/23-Very-Famous-Celebrities-That-Do-Yoga>.

¹⁹ Thomas A. Tweed, "Night-Stand Buddhist and Other Creatures: Sympathizers, Adherents, and the Study of Religion," in *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, ed. Duncan R. Williams and Christopher S. Queen (Richmond, Surrey: Curzan Press, 1999), 75-76.

articles to tips on the practice of Yoga, began publishing in 1969. In 2013, over 380,000 people become members in addition to those who visited their website without subscribing.²⁰

Incorporating Yoga into training regimens is now the norm. Not only are NFL and NBA teams using the practice, but also the US national Olympic teams. Mark Grimmette, coach of the US Olympic co-ed Luge team, earlier stated, “Yoga is something we have had with the team for a few years now.”²¹ Even the United States Army has new recruits perform exercises derived from Yoga.²²

Buddhism too is now something normal. Jack Kornfield, a teacher at Rock Mediation Center, commented, “A few decades ago, people would look at me with a weird face when I said I taught people about meditation for a living. Now, at the gas station or supermarket, people say, ‘oh yeah, I could really use that.’”²³

It is very obvious that both Buddhism and Yoga have become common influences on American society. Religious or not, these practices have become Americanized. As a result, controversy over both and their relationship will not end with *Sedlock vs. Timothy Baird Superintendent*. It is imperative to understand the dynamics between the two and their gradual Americanization. To do this, I will present a brief history of each practice’s arrival in the United States. Then I will discuss how, over the course of time, each has been stripped of what is traditionally considered religious, it’s continued practice justified through science, and the

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²¹ Hakuta, “Has Yoga Lost Its Soul? Part 1” : “Is Yoga the Secret to Olympic Gold?,” *Huffington Post*, February 14, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/14/yoga-olympics_n_4777970.html.

²² James Dao, “Making Soldiers Fit to Fight, Without the Sit-ups,” *New York Times*, August 30, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/31/us/31soldier.html?pagewanted=all& r=0>.

²³ Kaleem, “Buddhism in America: What is the Future”

gradual creation of “a distinctly American cultural phenomenon.” It should be noted that few surveys or western scholarship on either existed before the 1980s.²⁴

In the strictest sense, Yoga originated as a Hindu practice, just as meditation is Buddhist. Yet despite these religious differences, their mutual development on the Indian sub-continent resulted in many shared philosophical principles. Early writings even describe Yoga as more of a mental discipline, rather than a physical one. Yoga is grounded in the Buddhist Eightfold Path and some argue they remain intertwined.²⁵ Yoga involves meditation and vice versa, they must be considered together.

Their Journeys to the United States also share many similarities, though Buddhism’s story is more complex. Some of the earliest accounts of Buddhism in America are from Chinese immigrants in the 1800s. It did not, however, spread outside of this niche community until mostly Japanese missionaries began to arrive in the 1890s.²⁶ This has created two kinds of Buddhism in America.²⁷ This phenomenon was not found in Yoga, most likely due to relatively little historical immigration of peoples from the Indian sub-continent to North America.

This divide exists between Afro-/Euro-American converts and Asian immigrants and their Asian-American decedents. Still persisting, communication and partnership between the two groups and their temples is almost nonexistent.²⁸ It is important to note this difference.

²⁴ Jan Nattier, “Who Is a Buddhist?: Charting the Landscape of Buddhist America,” in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1998), 183.

²⁵ Peter Connolly, *A Student’s Guide to the History of Philosophy of Yoga* (Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2007), 219. : Robert Love, *The Great OOM: The Improbable Birth of Yoga in America* (New York, New York: Viking Press, 2010), xi.

²⁶ Charles S. Prebish and Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Faces of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1998), 4.

²⁷ Duncan R. Williams and Christopher S. Queen, *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship* (Richmond, Surry: Curzon Press, 1999), xvi.

²⁸ Kaleem, “Buddhism in America”.

“Ethnic Buddhism,” a term coined by James W. Coleman, has stayed close to the old ways though in a new environment. “New Buddhism,” also Coleman, will refer to Buddhism altered by western influences.²⁹

The earliest account of an American interested in Yoga was by Henry David Thoreau. This Transcendentalist of the mid-1800s occasionally expressed interest in Yoga, and at times referred to himself as a yogi.³⁰ Although, like the man himself, it was not the norm of the time, it does suggest some level of American exposure very early. In correspondence with Buddhism, Yoga did not begin to spread in earnest until the 1890s when Indian Yogis traveled to American to proselytize.

“Modern Yoga,” coined by Elizabeth DeMichelis, is another important term. It will be used to denote the difference between Yoga practiced in India and that practiced in America. A type “...that evolved mainly through the interaction of Western individuals interested in Indian religions.”³¹ Both New Buddhism and Modern Yoga are the American versions and thus will be the focus of this paper.

Although Buddhism and Yoga existed in the United States before, it was 1893 when each received widespread exposure to the American public. That year, Chicago hosted the World’s Fair, and in conjunction, the World Parliament of Religions. Leaders from the major world religions and various sects met to give speeches and lectures. It was so successful that many would conduct lecture tours of the United States later that year, further exposing Americans to these practices.

²⁹ James William Coleman, “The New Buddhism: Some empirical Findings,” in *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, ed. by Duncan R. Williams and Christopher S. Queen (Richmond, Surry: Curzon Press, 1999), 92.

³⁰ Elizabeth DeMichelis, *A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism* (New York, New York: Continuum, 2004), 2.

³¹ DeMichelis, (2004), 3.

Shaky Soen, a Japanese Buddhist Monk, attended the event and lectured in several cities afterwards. He returned to Japan the following year but sent three disciples back to America. The most famous of these, and most successful by far, was Daisetz Teiari (D.T.) Suzuki.³² His authorship and work with such people as Carl Jung and Erich Fromm became a driving force on New Buddhism.

Shuye Sonoda and Kukuryo Nishijima, also Japanese Buddhist Monks, attended. In 1898, they established the Buddhist Mission of North America, but changed the name to the North American Buddhist Church that same year.³³ Note the expedience with which the name changed, no doubt to appear less foreign with an American audience. Another example of Buddhism's attempt to blend in was Paul Carus' *Gospel of Buddha* (1894). These suggest an early inclination in Buddhism to assimilate with a new culture.

Swami Vivekananda, an Indian Yogi, also gave lectures and toured around the United States following the Parliament of Religions, until 1897 when he returned to India.^{34 35} Before leaving however, he established several Yoga ashrams in major cities; the most famous is the Vedanta Society of New York.³⁶ He is also credited with inspiring widely read works like *Karma Yoga* (1896) and *Raja Yoga* (1896). Like D.T. Suzuki, his influence on Modern Yoga is far-reaching and he is considered to be the most successful early proselytizer of Yoga in America.³⁷

Ideas and practices of established beliefs like Christianity and science are never fully replaced. Their legacies resonate in a culture. Nor do ideas like those of the Counter Culture and

³² Prebish, (1998), 4.

³³ Prebish, (1998), 5.

³⁴ Vivian Worthington, *A History of Yoga* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1982), 139.

³⁵ Connolly, (2007), 203.

³⁶ Worthington, (1982), 139.

³⁷ Connolly, (2007), 203.

the Feminist Movement develop without influencing that around them. Inevitably, the result is a hybrid between old and new. From this point on, New Buddhism and Modern Yoga will begin to develop.

American interest in Yoga and Buddhism has not always been consistent. The 1890s were a boon for Western interest in the East, however. Thomas Tweed, a history professor at the University of Notre Dame, quoted the New York Journal reporting, “it is no uncommon thing to hear a New Yorker say he is a Buddhist now adays.” Yoga shared much the same popularity. Though rapidly gained, it was a more temporary fascination for the majority of Americans. By the 1910s, enthusiasm had run out.³⁸

Interest did not begin to return until 1920, when the “Father of American Yoga” landed in Boston Harbor. Paramahansa Yogananda, a Yogi, traveled from his native land of India to take part in the International Congress of Religious Liberals. It was here he gave his most famous lecture, called *The Science of Religion*. That same year he found the Self Realization Fellowship (SRF) and began a lecture tour of America that would last the greater part of a decade.³⁹

By 1922 he was in California where his lectures were attended by “tens of thousands”.⁴⁰ In 1925 he made Los Angeles the headquarters of the SRF and in 1927 President Coolidge received him at the White House.⁴¹ Yogananda was not universally popular, however. Many

³⁸ Jan Nattier, “Buddhism Comes to Main Street,” *Urban Dharma*, <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma/mainstreet.html>.

³⁹ “Paramahansa Yogananda’s Biography,” *Self-Realization Fellowship*, <http://www.yogananda-srf.org>.

⁴⁰ Worthington, (1982), 141. : Jeanne Ricci, “Paramahansa Yogananda,” *Yoga Journal*, <http://www.yogajournal.com/wisdom/453>.

⁴¹ “Paramahansa Yogananda’s Biography,” : Ricci, “Paramahansa Yogananda,”

believed him to be a cult leader seducing young women.⁴² Thus began the American association between Yoga and sexuality.

Yogananda would continue to lecture into the 30s and even the 40s before retiring into seclusion in the 1950s, but his message remained the same.⁴³ Focusing heavily on breathing and meditation, he also encouraged chanting.⁴⁴ Quoting his Yogi master, though no historical evidence of the man exists, "... Yoga, the scientific technique of God-realization..." Yogananda later personally wrote, "...science of Meditation known for millennium to the Yogis and Sages of India, and to Jesus, any seeker of God..."⁴⁵

It does not matter if Mahavater Babaji was a Yogi, said those words, or even existed. Paramahansa Yogananda certainly wrote them and there are important notes to take away from this. The moment he gave his *The Science of Religion* lecture in 1920, he was attempting to rectify Eastern spiritual belief with Western science. Americans were for the first time introduced to the idea that religion and science might be compatible, something the Abrahamic religions continue to struggle with. Phrases like "scientific technique" and "science of meditation" became common when discussing the subjects and remain so today.

Still his teachings remained steadfast religious. Foremost was his emphasis on chanting, which did not last, as Modern Yoga and New Buddhism have cut out such aspects of the practice.⁴⁶ Furthermore, there is an obvious intention to appeal to a Christian audience. Arguably, the Hindu God Brahman could be equivocated to the Abrahamic God, which no doubt was his

⁴² "Swami's Lectures to Women Face Ban As Miami Official Foresees Violence," *New York Times*, February 04, 1928, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F20A12F73B59127A93C6A91789D85F4C8285F9>.

⁴³ "Paramahansa Yogananda's Biography,"

⁴⁴ Ricci, "Paramahansa Yogananda,"

⁴⁵ "Paramahansa Yogananda's Biography,"

⁴⁶ Coleman, (1999), 92.

intention. His reference of Jesus as a meditating Yogi makes clear, however, he had no intention of separating these practices from what is traditionally considered religious in America.

Paramahansa Yogananda increased attention on Yoga and Meditation and brought about many changes. He started the long association of Yoga and sex. Though he was not the first to attempt, he was the first to expose Americans to the idea of rectifying religion and science. Both are major parts of Modern Yoga and New Buddhism. Still, he remained a promoter of Yoga as a religious practice.

One other prominent figure of the 1920s was Shri Yogendas. A Yogi and scientist, he established The Yoga Institute of Mumbai in 1918, a research organization devoted to the scientific study of Yoga as therapy. He first came to America in 1921 and remained in residence until 1924 when he returned to India. Founding The Yoga Institute of Harriman, NY, he promoted research in America on the physiological and psychological effects of yoga.⁴⁷ This is also a huge aspect of Modern Yoga and New Buddhism, but did not become prominent until later.

Despite hostility from some Americans, Yogananda's efforts were not in vain. By the 1930s there was an increase in popularity for Yogis and Buddhism.⁴⁸ Pierre Arnold Bernard, known as "OOM the Omnipotent" drew particularly high levels of media attention in the early 30s.⁴⁹ Founder of the popularly known "Clarkstown Country Club" (CCC) in South Nyack, NY,

⁴⁷ "About Us," *The Yoga Institute*, <http://theyogainstitute.org/about-us/>.

⁴⁸ Worthington, (1982), 141.

⁴⁹ "OOM' NAMED BANK HEAD.; P.A. Bernard, Once the 'Omnipotent,' Rules Pearl River Institution," *New York Times*, November 15, 1931, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA071EF93B5413718DDDAC0994D9415B818FF1D3>.

he was something of an occultist leader. This Iowa-born American drew considerable numbers of prominent members of American society to his Yoga sanctuary.⁵⁰

From college presidents to medical doctors and famed authors to future composers, many of these people came to him with serious issues. Depression, additions of one sort or another, and post-traumatic stress are among the most often recorded. Bernard promoted Yoga as a philosophical system, like that practiced in India, but also as a therapeutic method of dealing with these problems. By focusing on physical postures, breathing, and meditation, many of his practitioners claimed peace of mind.⁵¹

The CCC reached its zenith in 1931, when membership ranked over 400 social and educational elites.⁵² Many of his students would go on to be prominent in Modern Yoga and New Buddhism in later decades.⁵³ Although participation in such a group was still on the fringe of society, seen as hyper-sexual and pervasive, three trends are important to note.⁵⁴

First, all of these members came to Bernard for therapeutic assistance. Regardless of whether he successfully provided this, though most claimed yes, their intentions are most telling. Yoga had become linked with therapy, reflecting the work of Shri Yogendas' Yoga Institute. However, Bernard did not preach to the masses as Yogananda had, but focused on a select group. This group tended to be wealthy and well-educated. A more subtle difference was their approach to the religious aspect. Bernard presented yoga as a philosophical system, not a religious practice, and focused more on the physical.

⁵⁰ Robert Love, *The Great OOM: The Improbable Birth of Yoga in America* (New York, New York: Viking Penguin, 2010), 1-2.

⁵¹ Love, (2010), xi.

⁵² Love, (2010), 1.

⁵³ Love, (2010), 340.

⁵⁴ Love, (2010), 5.

Pierre Arnold Bernard was not the only active Yogi and Buddhist in the 1930s. Dwight Goddard, another American, converted to Buddhism on a Baptist missionary trip to China.⁵⁵ In 1932, he published the first English translated anthology of Buddhist teachings in what he titled *A Buddhist Bible*. This was later expanded and republished in 1938.⁵⁶ Widely read among converts, it became critical in spreading Buddhism in America. *A Buddhist Bible* gave the public access to a wider range, and more direct, literature. Christian influence on New Buddhism is also reviled by this work, like Paul Carus' *Gospel of Buddha* and Paramahansa Yogananda Christian rhetoric.

Nephew of Pierre Arnold Bernard, Theos Casimir Bernard, also brought national attention to Buddhism and Yoga in the late 30s. Earning a BA in law and an MA in philosophy, he later become a professor and leading expert on Tibetan Buddhism.⁵⁷ His 1937 travels and adventures to Asia, chronicled in *Penthouse of The Gods*, projected him, Buddhism, and Yoga into national spotlight.⁵⁸ In 1939, he went on tour promoting his book and lecturing about his experiences.

The 1930s were a time of increased attention on Buddhism and Yoga. The New York Times even ran an article on the growing number of American converts to Buddhism. Its apparently science-friendly philosophy was also noted.⁵⁹ Americanization was underway,

⁵⁵ "YANKEE BUDDHIST LEAVES FOR TIBET," *New York Times*, September 24, 1933, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F10A1FFC395A10718EDDAD0A94D1405B838FF1D3>.

⁵⁶ Robert Aitken, "Still Speaking," *Tricycle*, June 12, 2013, <http://www.tricycle.com/ancestors/still-speaking>.

⁵⁷ "Penthouse of the Gods," *Harmony Publishing*, <http://www.harmonypublishing.co.uk/new-releases/penthouse-of-the-gods.html>.

⁵⁸ Stefanie Syman, *The Subtle Body: The Story of Yoga in America* (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010), 123.

⁵⁹ Henry James Forman, "A Bible Which Contains the Essence of Buddhism," *New York Times*, September 11, 1938,

however slowly. Shifting from a religious practice to a philosophical system, however subtle, had large ramifications. It opens the door to strip, alter, and add to the practice. Buddhism and Yoga's continued efforts to justify itself with science and a growing association with therapy became prominent. American sexualizing of the practice also continued.

During World War II, there was a general aversion to Eastern practices. Neither Buddhism nor Yoga disseminated greatly into American culture in the early 1940s. This is not to say Theos Casimer Bernard was stagnate, however. In 1942, he earned his PhD from Columbia University and published his dissertation *Hatha Yoga: The Report of a Personal Experience*,⁶⁰ using his personal fame to further expose Americans to the practice.

In fact, following the end of the war in 1945, there was yet another boom of interest, resulting in even more publications. Middle-class housewives, veterans, and young new starlets were all fascinated.⁶¹ Paramahansa Yogananda published again in 1946. *Autobiography of a Yogi* remains his most famous work and has been translated into 34 different languages.⁶² In 1999, Harper Collins included his work in the "100 Best Spiritual Books of the Century."⁶³ It has certainly been widely read and continued to promote a friendly relationship between Eastern Religious thought and science.

With the advent of technology came new outlets for Yoga and Buddhism. Not only were photos more widely available, so were motion pictures. The first to take advantage of this was

<http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F5071FFE3B581A7A93C3A81782D85F4C8385F9>.

⁶⁰ "Penthouse of the Gods," *Harmony Publishing*

⁶¹ Syman, (2010), 177.

⁶² "Paramahansa Yogananda's Biography,"

⁶³ "Book awards: HarperCollins 100 Best Spiritual Books of the Century," Library Thing, <https://www.librarything.com/bookaward/HarperCollins+100+Best+Spiritual+Books+of+the+Century>.

ever pioneering Theos Casimer Bernard, who published the first illustrated book of Yoga.⁶⁴ He posed in various yoga stances almost completely naked.⁶⁵ Such bravado was not socially acceptable, but still inspired a great number of other works.

Like the 1930s, Buddhism and Yoga continued to be most popular among the social and educated elite. Indra Davi, known as the “First Lady of Yoga,” was born in the Russian Empire before emigrating to India, and then the United States. In 1947, she opened her famous studio in Hollywood which hosted stars like Gloria Swanson, Jennifer Jones, and Robert Ryan.⁶⁶

In that same year Loomis Dean took a photo op of Marilyn Monroe performing several yoga poses.⁶⁷ True to the sex symbol she was to become, she wore little clothing while making suggestive looks.⁶⁸ Then in 1949 Sir Paul Dukes demonstrated Yoga on live TV in Britain.⁶⁹ This would later be published for an American audience in the April addition of LIFE magazine. All of the photos show Sir Dukes with two young women scantily clothed, performing various Yoga poses together.⁷⁰

Little proselytizing occurred of the 1940s for either Buddhism or Yoga, but some very important Americanization trends occurred. Through the published works of Paramahansa

⁶⁴ Worthington, (1982), 141.

⁶⁵ “Der Himmel liegt in uns,” *Yoga Journal*, http://www.yoga-journal.ch/der_himmel_liegt_in_uns.htm.

⁶⁶ George Feuerstein, “A Short History of Yoga,” Abhyasa Ashram, <http://www.swamij.com/history-yoga.htm>.

⁶⁷ “Unpublished: Portraits of Marilyn as a Young Actress, 1948,” *LIFE*, <http://life.time.com/culture/marilyn-monroe-unpublished-photos-of-an-aspiring-young-actress-1948/#1>.

⁶⁸ Yoga Carrot Cake & Cashmere, “Marilyn Monroe Posing For the Cover of LIFE Magazine 1948,” *Facebook*, April 2, 2012, https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.349836995062876.76915.315543478492228&type=1&comment_id=4112498&offset=0&total_comments=6.

⁶⁹ Worthington, (1982), 141.

⁷⁰ *Cultural Institute*, <http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/browse/Sir%20Paul%20Dukes?hl=en>.

Yogananda and Theos Casimer Bernard, Yoga and Meditation continued to be associated with science and focused on the physical, not the ritual. So much that a blatant attempt was made by Marilyn Monroe, and possibly even Sir Paul Dukes and Theos Casimer Bernard, to capitalize on the growing sexual perception of the practices. Further, conversion and participation stayed primarily among the elite, as Indra Davi's studio attests.

Tibet's subjugation by the Peoples Republic of China in 1950 resulted in large numbers of refugees. This was most felt in the United States by the immigration of Tibetan Buddhist Monks. Since that time, Tibetan Buddhism has played a prominent roll in shaping New Buddhism in America. Suffice to say that, starting in the early 50s, an increased number of Buddhist teachers arrived in the US.⁷¹

They were not the only ones who shaped these practices however. *Look Younger, Live Longer* by Gaylord Hauser, published in 1950, was an extremely important work. In the wake of an increasing American fascination with diet and health, Gaylord Hauser was the first to publicly link Yoga with the health movement. It was also a New York Times bestseller that year, widely consumed by the American public.⁷² Selvarajan Yesudian later released *Yoga and Health* in 1953, further linking the two.⁷³

D.T. Suzuki came to the continental United States from Japan in 1951. Settling in New York, he began teaching a series of seminars on Zen Buddhism at Columbia University. Concerned most with connecting Zen and psychoanalysis, his students included psychoanalysts Karen Horney and Erich Fromm.⁷⁴ His influence was far-reaching in the academic world and

⁷¹ Prebish, (1998), 4-7.

⁷² Syman, (2010), 188.

⁷³ Feuerstein, "A Short History of Yoga,"

⁷⁴ Dawn Lawson, "Susuki, D.T.," American National Biography Online, January 2001, <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01898.html>.

helped popularize and permanently link Meditation and Psychology. Shri Yogendra also returned for a brief time in the early 1950s, continuing to promote American research into the benefits of Yoga as therapy.⁷⁵

By the late 1950s, it was clear Buddhism was on the rise and going mainstream.⁷⁶ Jack Kerouac, a prominent writer of the “Beat” generation, even wrote about his encounters with Buddhism in *The Dharma Bums*. But it was the connection between Yoga to physical healthy and Meditation to mental healthy that really characterized the 1950s, creating legacies in New Buddhism and Modern Yoga that grew stronger with time. Moreover, without this connection, it is unlikely that either practice would have survived the conscious efforts of the 1960s and thereafter to remove all things religious. At this time in American history, New Buddhism and Modern Yoga begin to take clearer shape.

When PBS recently asked why they joining Buddhism, practitioners said they had high anxiety in their lives and jobs. Taking only what parts they wished, each found that Buddhism gave them peace of mind and helped cope with the difficulties of life. Speaking on meditation as it is practiced today, Robert Thurman, a professor of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, stated, “We have a phenomenon of millions of people who use mindfulness to improve their health, but it might have nothing to do with Buddhism.”⁷⁷ David Brazier, author of *The New Buddhism* (2002) and other works on Buddhism and psychotherapy, commented on it at the recent Maha Council gathering in New York City, “...there was little if any consideration in the formal session of the teaching of Buddhism...”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Feuerstein, “A Short History of Yoga,”

⁷⁶ “Religion: Zen: Beat & Square,” Time Magazine, July 21, 1958, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,868663,00.html>.

⁷⁷ Bailey, “American Zenophilia,”

⁷⁸ Kaleem, “Buddhism in America: What is the Future”

Jillian Michaels' *Yoga Meltdown* and Barbara Benagh's *Yoga for Beginners* can be found on DVD at almost any retailer.⁷⁹ Just one of many companies capitalizing on the growing American interest, Victoria Secrets now offers a collection of yoga wear.⁸⁰ A recent survey published by the North American Studio Alliance found that 85% of traditional fitness centers now offer Yoga classes.⁸¹ Another survey in 2012 conducted by Sports Marketing Surveys USA on behalf of Yoga Journal found that 59.6% of those who practice Yoga do so for stress relief, 58.5% for improved overall health.⁸²

Starting in the 1960s, as Buddhism and Yoga continued to be secularized, each gradually became accepted by the scientific community to be psychologically and physiologically healthy. As a result, corporate business capitalized on the second and third health boom in the 1980s and 2000s to further commercialize the practices. It is over this time period that Modern Yoga and New Buddhism as we know them today developed in earnest.

Sam Harris, a renowned neuroscientist and outspoken atheist, after a weeklong meditation retreat at the Insight Meditation Society, mused that "if meditation ever becomes widely adopted as a tool of science, it will be quickly stripped of its Buddhist roots."⁸³ He would go on to say that "if shorn of its religious encumbrances, it could be one of our greatest resources

⁷⁹ "Jillian Michaels: Yoga Meltdown," Barnes & Noble, http://www.barnesandnoble.com/listing/2691600344366?r=1&cm_mmc=GooglePLA-_-DVD-_-Q000000633-_-2691600344366. "Yoga for Beginners," Barnes & Noble, http://www.barnesandnoble.com/listing/2690198656622?r=1&cm_mmc=GooglePLA-_-DVD-_-Q000000633-_-2690198656622.

⁸⁰ "118 Matches for Yoga," *Victoria's Secret*, <http://search2.victoriasecret.com/?q=Yoga&theme=vs>.

⁸¹ "Press, Statistics, Resources and Links," NAMASTA, <http://www.namasta.com/pressresources.php>.

⁸² "Yoga in American Study 2012," *Yoga Journal*, http://www.yogajournal.com/press/yoga_in_america.

⁸³ Sam Harris, "A Contemplative Science," Huffington Post, February 2, 2006, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sam-harris/a-contemplative-science_b_15024.html.

as we struggle to develop our scientific understanding of human subjectivity.”⁸⁴ This is exactly what Buddhism and Yoga have done in America.

The Counter Culture movement of the last 60s saw a wave of practitioners of Buddhism and Yoga.⁸⁵ Drugs were a large part of the hippy culture, and one of the largest proponents of their use was Timothy Leary. A Psychologist at Harvard University, he focused considerable time and energy studying the connection between yoga, meditation, and LSD. Aside from large amount of publicity, his work never had much of an effect on the practices.

In fact, according to Charles Prebish, professor of Religious Studies at Utah State University, “Hippies began to realize that perhaps Buddhism was safer than drugs.”⁸⁶ This is best exemplified by the Beatles involvement with Rajneesh Maharishi. In 1968, the group went on a retreat to Wales with Rajneesh Maharishi for a meditation seminar. Afterwards, Paul was quoted as saying, “We don’t need (drugs) anymore. We think we’re finding other ways of getting there...” After a trip to his Ashram in India ended with controversy and scandal, the Beatles went their own way.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Rajneesh Maharishi had hit the stage with his new “Transcendental Meditation” (TM).⁸⁸

Publishing *The Science of Being and Art of Living* in 1966, Rajneesh Maharishi first outlined TM. Without a doubt a contributing reason for the Beatles’ interest, he claimed it had “no color, no filigree, no story, no symbol, nor much ritual of any sort.” Moreover, he called the

⁸⁴ Sam Harris, “Killing the Buddha,” Sam Harris, http://www.samharris.org/site/full_text/killing-the-buddha/#sthash.LwTaXFDd.dpuf.

⁸⁵ Rick Fields, “Divided Dharma: White Buddhist, Ethnic Buddhist, and Racism,” in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1998), 200. : Love, (2010), 343.

⁸⁶ Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “American Zenophilia,” *Humanities*, April 2010, <http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2010/marchapril/feature/american-zenophilia>.

⁸⁷ Syman, (2010), 200-201.

⁸⁸ Worthington, (1982), 144.

practice “psycho-physiological” and used metaphysics to support his claim.⁸⁹ Both claims are indicative of his time. Not only did he strip anything that could be construed as religious, he then justifies its continued practice through science. To make this yogic meditative practice that much more Americanized, Rajneesh Maharishi introduced TM, and thus meditation and Yoga, to corporate big business.⁹⁰

Chogyam Trungpa, a native Tibetan, believed that to spread the Dharma in the west, it would have to be stripped of its Eastern culture. In 1970, he relinquished his vows and robes and immigrated to the United States. A year later he began teaching at the University of Colorado and founded the Rocky Mountain Dharma Center (Shamabhala Mountain Center).⁹¹ This started the Shamabhala Meditation Movement, one of the first movements to truly promote a secular form of Buddhism.

The Shamabhala claimed that meditation was “ancient wisdom” that predated religious practice, and therefore was not inherently religious. Instead of utilizing myths and rituals, he presented the Buddha as “a historical EXAMPLE” who attained a unique level in peace of mind experiencing the moment. He would even go as far as to say that many people falsely credit “a moment of being in tune with our mind” as spirituality. Today they have more than 170 charters worldwide and participation is completely free.⁹² Treating the Buddha as a historic figure rather than a religious one was an important shift, but more important was Shamabhala’s address of spirituality. Spirituality had no place in their practice, thus further separating Buddhism from what is traditionally considered religious.

⁸⁹ Syman, (2010), 201.

⁹⁰ Feuerstein, “A Short History of Yoga,”

⁹¹ Chronicles of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, <http://www.chronicleproject.com/chronology.html>.

⁹² Shamabhala, <http://www.shambhala.org/>.

Insight Meditation Society (IMS), the same place visited by Sam Harris, of Barre, Massachusetts is another example of secular Buddhism. Resembling the Shamambhala movement in many ways, they argue that Buddhist meditation is not religious, and encourage membership of all different faiths.⁹³ However, they diverge in two major respects.

The First is that IMS is an American founded and run organization, relying wholly on American convert practitioners and teachers. Second is the IMS reliance on psychology. Jack Kornfield, who has a PhD in clinical psychology and is co-founder of IMS, stated in *A Path with Heart*, “Of the Western ‘inner practices’ the one that is having the most significant impact on Buddhism is the understanding and practice of Western Psychology.”⁹⁴ He is also the founder the IMS sister organization in Sprit Rock Meditation Center. Here, they describe their methods as adhering to the “ethics and traditions of Buddhist psychology.”⁹⁵ Among many writings on the psychology of Buddhism, Jack Kornfield offers classes on the subject, continuing to promote that meditation is psychologically based.⁹⁶

Shamabhal went far in describing the Buddha as a historical figure and criticizing spirituality as misplaced. It was also innovative to recognize that culture must be removed if Buddhism was to spread in the west. It was the IMS that really achieved this however, by fully relying on western converts as practitioners and teachers. Jack Kornfield contributed a great deal in promoting Buddhism as not religious, but psychology and therapy. This continued association with science was not the sole work of Kornfield, as this has also been a modern trend of Modern Yoga and New Buddhism.

⁹³ Insight Meditation Society, <http://www.dharma.org/>.

⁹⁴ Jack Kornfield, *A Path with Heart* (New York: Bantum Books, 1993), pp. 244-245.

⁹⁵ Spirit Rock, <http://www.spiritrock.org/>.

⁹⁶ Jack Kornfield, <http://www.jackkornfield.com/>.

Since the 1970s, American began to accept psychology as something useful, even necessary.⁹⁷ On returning from a trip to India in the 1970s for his doctorate in psychology at the University of Harvard, Daniel Goleman commented, “I was surprised to find a fully articulated system of psychology... at the heart at these religions.”⁹⁸ Yoga and Buddhism’s association with psychology led to the development of transpersonal psychology, the first psychology sub-discipline to take spirituality seriously.

“Yoga has achieved much greater acceptance within American medicine as well as in the general population,” stated Dean Ornish, a physician and clinical professor of medicine at the University of California. In 1977, Dean Ornish published a study linking yoga with increased heart health. He has spent the remainder of his career continuing to do research.⁹⁹ Many others in the medical field have continued to do research since that time. 350 published scientific studies on meditation have now found results ranging from lower blood pressure, reduced heart failure, less anxiety and insomnia, and improved intelligence, creativity, and higher brain functioning.¹⁰⁰

American scientists are not the only ones embracing New Buddhism’s emphasis on scientific backing. Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, who has had considerable amounts of influence on American Buddhism since the 1950s, first visited the United States in 1979.¹⁰¹ He has argued for many years now that Buddhism and science have “significant commonality, especially in their basic philosophical outlook and methodology.” Further, he has repeatedly

⁹⁷ Fields, (1998), 202.

⁹⁸ Michael Szpir, “An Interview with Daniel Goleman,” American Scientist, <http://www.americanscientist.org/bookshelf/pub/daniel-goleman>.

⁹⁹ Sharon Palmer, “Fighting Heart Disease, The Dean Ornish Way,” Today’s Dietician, February 2009, http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/td_020909p48.shtml.

¹⁰⁰ “Research at a Glance,” Transcendental Meditation, <https://www.tm.org/research-on-meditation>.

¹⁰¹ “Travels by His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, <http://www.dalailama.com/biography/travels>.

attended the “Mind and Life” conference since 1987, which seeks to unite western science and Buddhism to discover new pathways to mental health through neurobiology of emotions.¹⁰²

From many scientific disciplines, not only psychology, has Buddhism and Yoga been studied, researched, supported, and approved by western scientists, American practitioners, and international Buddhists. While this has become an international trend effecting Buddhism, it has without a doubt become a corner stone of New Buddhism and Modern Yoga. They have been consciously stripped of their religious content and their continued practice is justified by mountains of research. Yet no practice is truly Americanize if it hasn’t been commercialize, which most certainly has taken place.

Yoga was first aired on the American TV program “Yoga and Health” in 1961, hosted by Richard Hittleman. He would later publish his *Twenty-Eight-Day Yoga Plan* in 1963.¹⁰³ The first all comprehensive step-by-step Yoga guide, giving instructions and illustrations, it went on to sell millions.¹⁰⁴ However, it was Liliias Folan’s 1972 PBS show “Liliias’ Yoga and You” that became a television success. Continuing to air until 1999, she said in an interview, “...Yoga is practiced in Buddhist and Christian monasteries and convents around the world. It is also a vital part of stress management programs...”¹⁰⁵ She has profited greatly off the secularization and scientific support yoga and Buddhism have received. Since the 1990s, there have been multiple for profit films about Buddhism.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Tensin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, “Science at the Crossroads,” His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, <http://www.dalailama.com/biography/travels>.

¹⁰³ Feuerstein, “A Short History of Yoga,”

¹⁰⁴ Maria, “Richard Hittleman’s Yoga 28 Day Exercise Plan,” *Hatha Yoga*, December 1, 2013, <http://hathayoga.com/richard-hittlemans-yoga-28-day-exercise-plan/>.

¹⁰⁵ Tracey Kelly, “Interview with Yoga Expert Liliias Folan,” Love To Know Yoga, http://yoga.lovetoknow.com/Liliias_Folan_Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Danny Fisher, Five Great Films About Buddhism,” *Elephant Journal*, March 2, 2009, <http://www.elephantjournal.com/2009/03/five-great-films-about-buddhism/>. : Kingofcastss, “Top

Harbhajan Singh Puri (Yogi Bajan) established “Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization” (3HO) in 1968. Much like the organizations mentioned earlier, 3HO promotes a secular form of Yoga with scientific support.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the others, however, it was created for profit. In 1977, Time magazine ran an article outing Yogi Bajan’s high income, earning an estimated \$100,000 a year from lectures alone.¹⁰⁸

Even more intriguing is Bikram Choudhury’s “Bikram Yoga” program. First promoted after establishing the Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills (1974), he apparently invited 26 unique yogic poses.¹⁰⁹ Since that time he has become very rich, living in a mansion with multiple Rolls Royces, associating with the rich and glamorous of Hollywood.¹¹⁰ In 2011, he sued Evolution Yoga, LLC for copyright infringement, claiming those poses were his intellectual property.¹¹¹ The case did not go his way, but his is a perfect example of what Yoga has become, a multi-million dollar business.

Over the past century, Yoga and Buddhism have made great strides in parasitizing themselves in the United States. But they have by no means remained the same. Starting in the 1960s, and even many events preceding this decade, three major trends occurred in the American practice of both. An effort by practitioners and teachers alike, seeking a “transcendent moment” to strip Yoga and Buddhism of their religious and cultural roots. Further, as western interest continued to grow, so has their association with scientific principles and theory. Soon, serious

Buddhist Movies (Fiction),” Now Where Was I?, January 6, 2013,

<http://www.nowherewasi.com/?p=308>.

¹⁰⁷ “3HO Lifestyle,” Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization, <http://www.3ho.org/3ho-lifestyle>.

¹⁰⁸ “Religion: Yogi Bajan’s Synthetic Sikhism,” Time Magazine, September, 5, 1977,

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,915413,00.html>.

¹⁰⁹ “Hot Yoga,” ABC-of-Yoga.com, <http://www.abc-of-yoga.com/styles-of-yoga/hot-yoga.asp>.

¹¹⁰ Loraine Despres, “Yoga’s Bad Body: Bikram Choudhury,” Yoga Journal,

<http://www.yogajournal.com/lifestyle/328>.

¹¹¹ “BIKRAM’S YOGA COLLEGE OF INDIA, L.P. v. EVOLUTION YOGA, LLC,” Leagle, December 14, 2012, <http://www.leagle.com/decision/In%20FDCO%2020121217480>.

research was devoted to the subject and has continued to be a major topic of the medical field, supporting the health benefits of both. As a result of the secular and scientific practice of both, corporate big business capitalized on the blossoming industry to complete the Americanization and development of both into Modern Yoga and New Buddhism.

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