Yoga History
The Indus Valley Civilization flourished in the Indian subcontinent (including present-day Pakistan, Northeast India, and Afghanistan) between 3300-1500 BCE. It flourished in the basin of the Indus River and the Sarasvati River (which is now dry) and has left us with the remains of numerous large settlements, i.e., an archeological record that shows skill in handicraft, metallurgy, urban planning, and water supply systems.

Archaeologists have found extensive remains of two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The Indus River Valley civilization is thought to have been highly advanced. Remains found suggest that the cities were laid out in grids, with straight streets, something that other people living at the time in different parts of the world didn't do. Houses were mostly the same in size and shape, and each one had its own well and bathroom, with pipes leading to sewers. Mohenjo-Daro had its own central bath, with several surrounding buildings.
Archaeologists have found bowls of bronze and silver and collections of writings from the civilization. The writing remains undeciphered leaving us knowing little about the religious and spiritual life at the time. The metallurgy and other artifacts such as potter and seals reveal the sophisticated society as a major trade power considering that these metals were not available nearby.

In one of the largest cities/settlements built around 2500 BCE, Mohenjo-Daro, the Paśupati Seal was found. This seal has been interpreted as a proto Śiva in his form as "Lord of the Animals". This has led to the speculative conclusion that Yoga was practiced in the Indus Valley, thus having a 5,000-year-old history in the subcontinent of India.

Around 1900 BCE the Sarasvati River, due to reasons unknown (speculations of the tectonic plate movement, drought, flood, invasion from human and alien) began to dry up and the civilization was lost.
Around 1500 BCE, a large group of nomadic cattle herders, the Āryans, migrated into the area of the Indus Valley. They migrated from their ancestral home near the Caucasus mountains, north of the Black Sea in Central Asia (near modern-day Russia). They entered the Indus Valley through the fabled Khyber Pass. The Khyber Pass cuts through the Hindu Kush Mountains in Pakistan, India's neighbor to the northwest.

In contrast to the city-dwelling Harappans, the Āryans were nomads who raised livestock, rode chariots, and loved to gamble. They lived in simple homes, grouped in clans, and herded sheep and goats. Warrior chiefs, called rajas, ruled these clans.
These people, known as the Āryans, were warriors who practiced slash and burn agriculture, cutting the trees on a plot of land to create a field, burning the vegetation in large fire rituals, fertilizing the soil for the growing season. The life of the tribal Aryans focused around the central fireplace called the Yajñā.

The Āryans being cattle herders were skilled horsemen who built chariots, and used their military skills to control the native people and spread their language and culture.
The Āryan people brought the Sanskrit language, which surpassed the local language in popularity. In Sanskrit, Āryan means "the noble ones."

The Āryans created marvelous stories, stories that continue to be told or sang today. Āryan beliefs, guidance on rituals, hymns, and philosophies are described in the four Vedas. The Vedas, composed from 1500 - 1000 BCE., written in early Sanskrit, are a collection of poems and sacred hymns, believed to have been revealed directly to seers among the Āryan priests. The Sanskrit word Veda means knowledge. The Vedas, preserved by oral tradition, are composed of the Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas.

The Aryans gradually settled in the valley and took up agriculture.
Mantra Marga (The Path of Mantras)

One of the most common tools that continues throughout yoga traditions, aside from meditation, is the use of sacred sound. The repetition of sacred sound is called mantra. Mantras are used to cultivate a relationship with Śakti. They are sacred verbal formula that is recited. It may be recited both internally and externally “vibrationally”.

The “meaning” of the mantra is not its most important aspect. In tantra mantras hold a deeper understanding of reality than the mind can hold. The mantras are not saying something, mantra “are” something.

The Deity may have a gross form as and anthropomorphic image, and as a geometric form as the yantra, or a sacred diagram of the deity. mantras are the vibrational signature of the deity.

Mantras are powerful tools for achieving yoga.
GĀYATRĪ MANTRA

The Gāyatrī mantra is used to invoke inner illumination and expands our awareness into at all levels of our being and connects us with all realms of consciousness in the Universe. Goddess Gayatri, mother of the Vedas, is the manifesting śakti of this powerful and famous mantra with its specific meter, number of syllables and intonation in the oral recitation.

Origin, History and Use: As part of the Rig Veda in the ancient Vedic civilization, the Gāyatrī mantra has been widely used in India in the unbroken and vibrant Hindu religious tradition. In sacred thread ceremonies for boys, the Gayatri is transmitted from father to son during a fire ritual (yajna). Major Hindu rituals and personal practices include chanting the Gayatri mantra.
“We meditate on the three realms (lokas) of manifesting consciousness in the Universe: physical (manifested), intermediate (becoming) and celestial (causal). We contemplate on that adorable Divine effulgence which radiates through the Sun. May That Divine Light illumine our minds (intuitions).”
Word by word Translation of Gāyatrī mantra:

Oṁ - Ultimate Reality, Supreme Consciousness

Bhūr - Earthly plane/Material Visible World

Bhuvaḥ - The World of Becoming/Astral plane

Svaḥ - The Subtle/Heavenly Plane/Mental World

Tat - That

Savitur - the Sun’s Manifesting/Activating/Stimulating Power

Vareṇyam - the greatest of all

Bhargo - destroyer of all faults

Devasya - divine virtues

Dhīmahi - we meditate

Dhiyoḥ - (that) power of perception/intuitive mind

Yoḥ - who

Naḥ - ours

Pracodayāt - propel our intellect
Saṇkhya cosmology is a dualistic philosophy that emerged from Vedic speculation of creation. It is essential because its metaphysics are pervasive in Indian philosophy, and yoga philosophy especially is closely related to Sāṇkhya. It is one of the oldest and most influential of the six Indian darśanas, and it's authorship is traditionally credited to Kapila.
Sāṇkhya gives a systematic account of the evolution of the universe and illustrates the 25 principles Prakṛti, Puruṣa, and its evolutes.

Sāṇkhya development

1. Proto - Sāṇkhya 15th - 6th century BCE (Vedas and Upaniṣads)
2. Pre- Classical 4th century BCE - 1st century AD (Epics)
3. Classical 1st - 11th century AD (Sāṇkhya-kārikā)
4. Renaissance 15th - 17th century AD (Saṁkhyaśūtras)

Samkhya Philosophy translates as “Theory of Numbers or Enumeration.” It is the subtle principles of energies that govern the Universe and all the living entities. The founder of Samkhya Philosophy is Sage Kapila. According to sage Kapila, the desire to create and procreate is an instinct within every one of us, and the reason behind is the Universe itself. The Universe created us and, being part of the Universe – we have the same desire to create. Just like in the Dao symbol, we have the yin and yang – male and female part – two sides of a same coin.

Similarly, the energy of the Universe also has two sides. There are Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The Male Divine or Puruṣa has a desire to witness himself through the creative potential of his counterpart, the Divine Feminine, Prakṛti. The ‘Divine’ breathed OṂ and thus the duality of the ego {being male and female} into life.

Creation of the Universe ultimately originates within the divine love between Puruṣa and Prakṛti and their desire to manifest that love. Samkhya Philosophy is the theory of the creation of the Universe through the tattvas, the 24 subtle elements.
**Sāṅkhya**

**purusa**
- pure awareness
- witness
- masculine principle
- unmanifest
- no attributes

3 guṇas/attributes
- sattva- potential, inactive energy, essence
- rajas- active, kinetic, movement
- tamas- inactive, heavy, potential energy

**prakṛti**
- divine will
- manifesting power
- feminine principle
- manifestation of all attributes

Mental faculties
- mahat - cosmic intelligence
- buddhi - individual intelligence
- ahaṅkāra - self identity
- manas - sensory mind

**ahaṅkāra manas**

**sattva**
- ears
- skin
- eyes
- tongue
- nose

**rajas**
- tongue (speech)
- hands (grasping)
- feet (locomotion)
- reproductive organs
- excretory organs

**tamas**
- sound as such
- touch as such
- sight as such
- taste as such
- smell as such

**pañca-jñānendriya**
- pañca-karmendriya
- pañca-tan-mātra
- pañca-mahā-bhūta

More subtle  More gross

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Around 500 BCE, new groups of renunciant ascetics arise independently of the Brahmanical Vedic traditions. These groups include Buddhists, Jains, Yogis, Ājivakas. They were all interested in finding ways to end karma driven suffering and ending the cycle of saṁsāra developing various techniques such as meditation and tapas to end this cycle.

Goal: Nirvāṇa (extinguishing) or mokṣa (liberation) = complete eradication of karmic traces, including the cessation of the personal identity.

These ideas make their first appearance among the Śramaṇa traditions. (They did not refer their practice as Yoga.)
Ascetic Renunciates

Both the Vedic and Śramaṇa traditions had spiritual seekers practicing both tapas (austerities) and dhyānayoga (meditation). Tapas (literally meaning heat) refers to difficult practices done to gain special consideration or special gifts. For Vedic ascetics, these gifts were usually special powers or favorable conditions. Śramaṇa ascetics practices to still the mind or for the destruction of past karma.
The **Upanisads** are Sanskrit spiritual texts devoted to the teaching of ascetic renunciates. Combining knowledge from the Vedas, Sāṇkhya, and the Śramaṇa traditions the Upaniṣads describe and "updated" vision of reality. The earliest definition of yoga comes in the Upaniṣads in the 3rd century BCE.

“Yoga as firm restraint of the senses.”
Kaṭha Upaniṣad 6.10 - 11
The **Katha Upanisad** is the conversation between a young boy and the god of Death. Here the analogy of the *chariot* is taught.

Read the story of Nachiketas and Yama (the Lord of Death)

The Upaniṣads are commonly referred to as Vedanta "the end of the Vedas." There are over 200 Upaniṣads with the earliest being principle.

Concepts in the Vedas focus on the Brahman (ultimate reality) and Ātman (individual soul) and learning to discern the two. Sāṅkhya metaphysics form the foundational understanding. The confusion between reality and self is the human condition and results in suffering and rebirth.
Around 1000 BCE, the Aryans started to create two marvelous epics. We know about daily life during this period from these famous epics, the Rāmāyana and the Mahābārata. These epics are stories about Aryan life, wars, and accomplishments.

Sāṅkhya and yoga are common in both epics.
Rāmāyana

The epic, traditionally credited to Maharishi Valmiki, describes a story in which the (good) Aryan king Rāma, destroys the (evil) pre-Aryan king Rāvana.

The Ramayana is one of the largest ancient epics in world literature. It consists of nearly 24,000 verses.
Mahābhārata

The Mahābhārata is another great Sanskrit epic describing the Aryan wars where two clans battle it out, and one emerges victorious. The battles waged in the Epics symbolize the victory of good over evil and, like myths, taught the Aryans about such things as honor, courage, and proper behavior.

Again yoga and Sāṇkhya are both common in the Mahābhārata; especially in the long section at the end of the 12th book, the Mokṣadharma. The Mokṣadharma contains the oldest systemization of yoga.

Another part of the Mahābhārata that contains teaching on yoga is the Bhagavadgītā. The Bhagavadgītā appropriated yoga from the ascetics traditions and sought to establish yoga within the Brahmanical religion, suggesting that yoga could be done in daily life (within one's caste established in earlier Vedic period).

"No Power Equal to Yoga"
- Mahābhārata 12.304.2ab
The Bhagavadgītā (200 B.C. to 500 C.E. approx), part of the Mahābhārata, is often considered one of the most influential text in yoga. The Gita teaches a way of life-based on faith and devotion. It is a 700-verse Sanskrit scripture that is part of the Mahābhārata.

The Gita is a dialogue between Arjuna and his guide and charioteer Krishna. Arjuna is filled with a moral dilemma and despair about the violence and death the war will cause in the battle against his kin. Krishna counsels Arjuna to "fulfill his duty to uphold the Dharma" through "selfless action." The Krishna–Arjuna dialogue covers a broad range of spiritual topics, touching upon ethical dilemmas and philosophical issues that go far beyond the war Arjuna faces.
The *Gita* presents a synthesis of ideas about dharma, bhakti, yoga, and moksa and incorporates ideas from the Sāṅkhya philosophy. The text lays out the 4 Paths to Yoga: jñāna, bhakti, karma, and raja yoga (spoken of in the 6th chapter).

### 4 Paths to Yoga

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Yoga of Knowledge</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jñana  | Yoga of Knowledge | ● Theistic system of contemplation  
● Emphasis on Self-Knowledge  
● Uses the Method of Self Inquiry  
● Direct path of awareness  
● Nondual Advaita Vedanta |
| Bhakti | Yoga of Devotion  | ● Path of Devotion  
● Emphasis on the Deity  
● Uses the Method of Ritual/Worship |
| Karma  | Yoga of Action    | ● Path of Self Awareness  
● Devotion of Action to God  
● Uses the Method of Love/Gratitude  
● Spiritual Activism |
| Raja   | Yoga of Meditation| ● Path to Samadhi/Equanimity  
● Emphasis sense/mind control  
● Uses the Method of Meditation  
● Aṣṭaṅga Yoga (Classical) |

The *Gita* teaches to live life full of intention and energy toward connecting yourself to the Divine.
CLASSICAL YOGA

Classical yoga or Raja (royal) is the yoga of meditation, marked by *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (100 BCE - 500 CE), the best known yoga text. The Yoga Sutras systemize the path of meditation into 8 "supports" that are practical means for ending the cycle of suffering.

The Sutras are heavily influenced by Sāṇkhya and Buddhism and is another appropriation by the Brahmanical religion from the Śramaṇa traditions.

The eight limb path of yoga taught by Pātañjali is often referred to as aṣṭaṅga yoga (8-limb); this is different from the aṣṭaṅga yoga sequence of postures later developed.

It is important to note that Patañjali's yoga sutra is not the only system of "yoga supports," nor is it the single system or first system to introduce the moral and ethical guidelines (yama & niyama). It is evident that these ideas were being practiced for centuries prior to the organization and documentation of the Yoga Sutras.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit Work</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yamas</td>
<td>Restraints</td>
<td>Guidance for relating outside of Self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niyama</td>
<td>Observances</td>
<td>Guidance for relating inward of Self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āsana</td>
<td>Posture</td>
<td>Guidance for relating to the physical body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prāṇayāma</td>
<td>Breath Release</td>
<td>Guidance for working with the breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pratyāhāra</td>
<td>Sense Withdrawal</td>
<td>Guidance for working with the senses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhāraṇā</td>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>Guidance for working with the mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhyāna</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>Guidance for uniting with another object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samādhi</td>
<td>Absorption</td>
<td>Guidance for uniting with your true nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Guidelines for relating to the world outside of Self.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ahimsā</td>
<td>non-violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satya</td>
<td>truthfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asteya</td>
<td>non-stealing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brahmacaryā</td>
<td>celibacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aparigrahā</td>
<td>non-possessiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niyama</td>
<td>Guidelines for relating to the world inside of Self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sauca</td>
<td>purity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saṇtoṣa</td>
<td>contentment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tapas</td>
<td>austerity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svādhyāy</td>
<td>self-study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>īśvara-pranidhāna</td>
<td>devotion to Divine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Patañjali’s Mind Training

Patañjali teaching offers a specific prescription for stilling the mind, developing focus, and ultimately meditative absorption.

1. Take a seat that is comfortable and steady.
2. This is done by equally letting go of effort and expanding one's sense of self into the infinite.
3. Focus your attention on your breath, noticing the spaces where the breath is still.
4. Let your mind still with the breath.
5. Allow your sense of awareness to separate from outer objects. You are drawing the senses inside.
6. Concentrate your mind in one place.
   a. navel cakra
   b. heart lotus
   c. radiance in the head
   d. tip of the nose
   e. tip of the tongue
   f. external object
7. Allow your mind to soften while continuously focusing on the place of concentration until your stream of focus becomes one stream of awareness.
8. Staying fixed in this steady stream of awareness with your object of meditation leads to an immersion into the essence of the place of meditation.
I bow to the lotus feet of the Supreme Guru which awaken insight into the happiness of pure Being, which are the refuge, the jungle physician, which eliminate the delusion caused by the poisonous herb of Samsara (conditioned existence). I prostrate before the sage Patanjali who has thousands of radiant, white heads (as the divine serpent, Ananta) and who has, as far as his arms, assumed the form of a man holding a conch shell (divine sound), a wheel (discus of light or infinite time) and a sword (discrimination).
May the rulers of the earth keep to the path of virtue
    For protecting the welfare of all generations.
May the religious, and all peoples be forever blessed,
    May all beings everywhere be happy and free
  oṃ
peace, peace, peace
Tantra is the teachings emanating from Śiva (the Supreme Self) and Śakti (the Supreme Power). The Sanskrit word tantra means web, thread, or cord and refers to the teachings of how, through creation, man can return to the source of creation.

Traditionally tantra is thought to be underling all religions from the time of Paśupati in the Indus Valley. At this period, however, tantra became the dominant religion and included Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Buddhist traditions.

Earlier yogic teaching focused on the mind and dismissed the physical body. Tantra marks a change in perspective, where everything is a path to the divine, even the body.
The Sanskrit word tantra can also refer to a text "essential knowledge." The knowledge taught in tantra is considered more powerful than any other, even the Vedas. Tantric texts describe rituals and practices, usually associated to a deity or deities, including the use of mantras (repetition of sacred words), yantra (sacred geometry), and yoga for the attainment of special powers, or to ascend through the stages of consciousness (an expanded view of Sāṇkhya cosmology) to unite with the deity.

### 3 Tantric Paths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path of the Goddess</th>
<th>Direct Inquiry</th>
<th>Surrender to the Goddess/personal relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left Handed Path</td>
<td>Indirect Inquiry</td>
<td>Unorthodox practices with forbidden elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Handed Path</td>
<td>Indirect Inquiry</td>
<td>Orthodox practices including symbolic worship, puja, ritual, meditation, and initiation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Popular ideas in modern yoga find their roots in tantra, such as union, the yogic body, body practices, kuṇḍalinī, and visualization.
Chakra Bija Mantras

Third Eye Chakra (Ajna Chakra):
- hani
- oni
- kṣani

Manipura Chakra (Solar Plexus Chakra):
- mani
- pani
- nani
- dami
- dhani
- thani

Svadhisthana Chakra (Sacral Chakra):
- vani
- bani

Anahata Chakra (Heart Chakra):
- yani

Muladhara Chakra (Root Chakra):
- la
- la

*Start reciting clockwise from here.
By the end of the first millennium, CE haṭhayoga begins to appear in texts. At first, not calling itself haṭha but laying out a systemized approach that is later called haṭhayoga. This period is divided into two eras, early haṭhayoga, and classical haṭhayoga (marked by the Haṭhapradīpikā).

Originally classical yoga and haṭha yoga were taught alongside each other, eventually being taught as the same. Haṭhayoga was accepted into orthodoxy after the compilation of the Yoga Upaniṣads, consisting mostly of borrowed teaching from haṭhayoga corpus.
Hatha yoga combines classical yoga, tantric yoga, and ancient ascetic practices, including cleansing techniques, body postures, sophisticated breath control, energetic locks, complex visualizations, and meditations.
Before the 20th-century, yoga did not consist of the athletic practices that we find today. Postures usually meant “seated meditation postures” until haṭhayoga, and even then, they were just a select few.

After haṭhayoga became and accepted aspect of the culture in India, many yoga gurus (teachers) began to spread their teachings. These teaching mostly consisted of haṭhayoga, raja yoga, and neo Vedanta idea and techniques.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the first Indian teachers to arrive in the West in 1893. Vivekananda rejected haṭha yoga and postural practice in general, preferring to teach pranayama, meditation, and mental discipline. Other Indian teachers shared Vivekananda’s opinion of āsana until 1920 when a cleaned-up version of postural yoga is introduced.
In the ’20s, a Scandinavian/danish system of gymnastics (called primitive gymnastics) made their way to India, influencing the people's interest (in health and fitness), their exercise techniques, and yoga.

Teachers like Swami Kuvalayananda (1883 - 1966) and Sri Yogendra (1897 - 1989) blended āsana and Indian physical culture with European techniques. Their reformation, with the help of the Indian government, largely shaped modern yoga.
Important PreModern/Modern Teachers

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836 - 1886)
Swami Vivekananda (1863 - 1902)
Sri Aurobindo (1872 - 1950)
Ramana Maharshi (1879 - 1950)
Swami Kuvalayananda (1883 - 1966)
Sri Yogendra (1897 - 1989)
Swami Muktananda (1908 - 1982)
Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952)
Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (1925 - 1985)
Indra Devi (1899 - 2002)
B.K.S. Iyengar (1918 - 2014)
K. Pattabhi Jois (1915 - 2009)
T.K.V Desikachar (1938 -2016)
Ammachi (1953 - )
Gurumayi (1955 - )

In 1920, Paramahansa Yogananda, addressed a conference of religious liberals in Boston, to spread the message of yoga to the West and later went on to write, Autobiography of a Yogi, still a popular teaching for modern yoga students.

By the end of the 19th century, a yoga (mixing Indian philosophy, European gymnastics, and western spiritual and religious ideas took root in America.

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T. Krishnamacharya (1888 - 1989) also strongly influence modern yoga. He studied at Kuvalayananda’s Institute, after which he taught the next wave of influential teachers. His students include Indra Devi, B.K.S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi Jois, and T.K.V. Desikachar.

Krishnamacharya was a scholar, well educated in all six schools of Hinduism philosophy, and steeped in yogic teachings. He innovated a new system of yoga that joined popular interest in the physical body, with haṭhayoga. His teachings, most notably, aṣṭaṅga vinyasa, has evolved into the modern postural styles of yoga that we practice today.
Indra Devi was the first Western student of Sri Krishnamacharya and brought his lineage west opening a studio in Hollywood.

Richard Hittleman, a student of Ramana Maharshi, returned from India in 1950 and sold millions of copies of his books and pioneered yoga on television in 1961.

In the '50s, the Baptiste family (Walt and Magana) opened their San Francisco studio. Vivekananda influenced Walt's father, and Walt and Magana were students of Yogananda. Their family dynasty continues with their children Barren and Sherri.

Swami Vishnudevananda, a student of Swami Sivananda Saraswati, wrote, "The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga." which became an essential guide and opened the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers, one of the largest networks of yoga schools in the world.
Maharishi Mahesh introduced transcendental meditation in the early '60s and now has millions of practitioners.

B.K.S Iyengar's Light on Yoga was published in 1966, influencing emphasis on anatomical precision.

Kripalu is opened in 1966 by Amrit Desai.

In 1966 Swami Satchidananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda came to New York. He opened the Woodstock Festival in 1969 and stayed opening his Integral Yoga Institute, which now has 40 branches worldwide.
In 1970 Swami Rama amazed researchers at the Menninger Foundation when tests show he can control his autonomic nervous system functions like heartbeat, pulse, and skin temperature.

Ram Dass, a Harvard professor, left on a pilgrimage to India in the late '60s returning with a guru and new identity. In the '70s, Ram Dass inspired a new generation of seekers with his book, "Be Here Now."
In 1975 Pattabhi Jois made his first visit to the U.S. and started a craze for aṣṭaṅga vinyasa yoga. And his son, T.K.V. Desikachar, later brings viniyoga to the west.

Yoga journal published the first issue in 1975.
Postural yoga, after its rise in the 1900s, becomes a global phenomenon. This is a success for Pre-modern teachers who described yoga as universal. Western interest in New Age Spirituality and individualism, along with a preoccupation with appearance, has made westerners and people around the globe transfixed by yoga. There are countless teachers, styles, and schools of yoga that have popped up all over the world.

No doubt, this is wonderful. The mystical power of yoga is spreading its knowledge into spaces all around the world.

This popularity has also brought some things to consider.

1. The dilution of yoga/Indian culture by the more dominant culture. (Colonization of yoga)
2. The selling of yoga (Commercialization of yoga)
YOGA SCHOLARSHIP

From the 1900s on, western scholars have developed an interest in India's textual corpus. This is awesome. It gives us a broader account of yoga and the other contributions from Indian sources. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that most yogic textual contributions are from men in the Brahmanical class. The accounts of women and other casts of people were not documented in the same way. That gives us only a partial view of the cultural practices and home practices of the time. We can, in some ways, compensate for this lack of information by looking at the oral teachings continued today. It is also important to remember that much of the yoga scholarship that is done today is by white men in the academic setting. This scholarship is done through their lens of understanding and does not always have the breadth of scope to give a complete picture of yoga.

Yoga Scholars to Watch

- Alexis Sanderson
- James Mallinson
- Christopher Wallis
- Mark Singleton
Birth of Hanuman

Once Śiva and Parvatī, ever the adventurous lovers, decided to transform themselves into monkeys and indulge in erotic games in the dense Himalayan forests. During a climactic moment, the seed of Śiva found its mark and impregnated Parvati. Śiva directed the wind god, Vayu, to carry his seed from Parvati's womb and deposit it into the ear of Anjana. Anjana, who had previously been cursed and turned into a monkey, had furiously prayed for 12 years, asking Lord Śiva for a son. She was so dedicated in her meditation that she did not even take food or water.

The resulting bundle of joy was none other than Hanuman, one of the most celebrated and worshipped figures in Indian thought and yogic mythology. Hanumans birth signifies, among other things, the tradition of passing oral teaching (from ear to ear - karnat karnam).
At the time of Hanuman's birth, the undisputed leader of the monkey-world, Vali, a mighty and robust ape, came to know that Anjana was pregnant with a child who was bound to develop into a powerful yogi and rival. He decided to end matters in Anjana's womb itself by creating a missile using five metals: gold, silver, copper, iron, and tin. When the unsuspecting mother was asleep, he directed the weapon into Anjana's womb. Hanuman was no ordinary child. However, he was born of the seed of Śiva. The missile, as soon as it touched Hanuman's body, melted and transformed into a pair of earrings. Thus wearing the trophies of his first battle, fought while still in his mother's womb, Hanuman gloriously entered this world. Hanuman's earring symbolize the jewel of the luminous teachings of yoga, that are passed from ear to ear, their resilience to destruction, and their power to transform.
Scholar/Practitioner

A new yoga practitioner is emerging. Contemporary yogins remind us of past practitioners who were both scholars (of philosophy and the science of yoga) and technicians (of yogic technologies).

As western students, this is the path to yoga, that is relevant and respectful. The scholarship is the surrender (in something greater than our individual self), an investment into the lineage of yoga. By learning about yoga, without coloring it with our preference, we further the understanding of yoga and help to recognize India's culture and contributions, therefore putting others' needs in front of our own aims.

There are three types of men in the world. One type learns from books. One type learns from observations. And one type just has to urinate on the electric fence himself.
- Mark Twain

Nothing can replace experience because somethings in yoga can not be taught and are only learned through the relationship developed in practice. Many aspects of yoga can seem far fetched to modern western practitioners. We are skeptics and often need to see the proof before even taken something on.

Yoga is often called science in India. It is a practical and systematic study of the cosmology of human existence through observation and experience. You have to practice yoga to experience yoga, which gives you the faith to continue to practice, which reveals "Yoga."