

## YOGA IN INDIA VS. YOGA IN AMERICA



A year and a half ago, I moved halfway around the world to the Pacific Northwest from my hometown in South India. I left home with bittersweet feelings — I was excited for the new possibilities, but at the same time, sad to leave everything familiar and dear back home. It was a big, tumultuous move and the one thing that remained constant for me was yoga. It was my friend when I had none, it gave me a sense of purpose when I woke up each morning. For several months, I struggled with the challenges of settling in a new country — I did not know how to drive, had to get used to a winter unlike any I had experienced, find a house, furnish the house, find a job and get my life in order. It was not easy and I was often very lonely and bitter about having left so much behind. But being someone who has always been driven, I woke up and pursued yoga every day. I'd go to yoga classes nearby, and try to make friends with students. I read up about the local yoga events and community. Yoga became my best friend all over again and kept me sane and happy. It made me feel like I was home.

Initially, I had no idea what the yoga scene would be like in Seattle and in the U.S. Every day I learned something new. There is so much yoga around here, that it was and continues to be exciting for a yoga geek like me. America is a nation that seems to have an excess of everything, and yoga is no exception. I couldn't help but be fascinated by the differences between yoga in the U.S. and in India and these are a few of my observations.

### **Observation #1: yoga in America is more popular among the masses than yoga in India**

Yoga is a craze here. Almost everyone seems to do it. Yoga is practiced back home, but it is available far more easily and commercially available here. The west has successfully commercialized yoga and there's an amazing range and variety. Back home, people practice yoga as a way for spiritual growth and pursue other practices like going to the gym or aerobics for health reasons. When I looked at class schedules here, I was often surprised and shocked at the variety that was offered. I knew of different styles and lineages, but the idea of chocolate yoga, yoga to live music, rock-and-roll yoga, naked yoga, love yoga, etc. would shock the daylights out of me. Coming from a traditional yoga background, I often found myself annoyed and upset, but soon

learned to ignore the eccentric ideas that have borrowed the name of yoga.

### **Observation #2: the yoga teacher-student dynamic in India is drastically different than in the US**

I have met some great teachers here. But I must say that the teaching styles vary dramatically. In India, the ancient concept of Guru-shishya parampara (teacher-disciple traditions) is a strong part of the culture, both in and outside of yoga. The teacher is revered and respected and his or her word is absolute. A teacher draws you from ignorance to light. A student doesn't behave casually or talk back in the presence of the teacher. A student serves the teacher out of respect and gratitude. There is a certain way to sit, talk and interact with someone respected or elder to us. In classes I attended here, I've seen a far more casual dynamic. Students interact informally with the teacher, some never acknowledge the teacher, some do their own sequence in a group class and some even talk back to the teacher. It's taken me some time to get used to!

### **Observation #3: the teaching styles vary greatly between India and America**

In India we believe that teaching is the noblest profession. When someone passes their knowledge to you, it is an honor. I have been privileged enough to study under some great masters. Even though the language of instruction is English in both places, there is a big difference in how yoga teachers instruct a class here and back home. Most Indian teachers' instructions are limited to the alignment, breathing patterns, focus of the mind, and other guidelines around the asana and its benefits. The language used is plain and simple. Here, I've noticed how the yoga language is different for many teachers. Some spoke about healing, relationships, heart opening, pain, sorrow, joy, trauma etc. in class. This was alien to me. It would be considered an unnecessary distraction back home. I do appreciate though that different things work for different people. Like the Bhagavad Gita says, "there are as many yogas as there are people".

### **Observation #4: the combination of yoga & fashion in the US is not present in India**

I did not know of special yoga clothing until I moved here. For me dressing for class meant a comfortable track pant and a breathable t-shirt. While I have been excited to have access to the variety offered here, it is astonishing that there are multi-million dollar businesses using yoga as a vehicle to sell products to people. In India, people show up in very casual comfortable everyday clothes for a class. They do not spend a lot of money accessorizing themselves to look good in class. After all, yoga is about detaching from the body and senses. You will often spot women doing yoga in their traditional outfits like sarees and lifting themselves up in a graceful headstand. Yoga is a part of everyday life for those who practice it.

### **Observation #5: the popularity of hot yoga in the US contrasts with its rarity in India**

Hot yoga is almost unheard of in India: Yes, it's true! While hot yoga is very popular here, it is not well known in India. In fact, most yoga practitioners have no idea who Bikram is or what hot yoga is! I heard of hot yoga much later in my teacher training when someone mentioned heating up the room. There are probably a couple of studios now that offer hot yoga back home, although we don't need it with our hot climate. Traditional Indian teachers do not recognize this as a form of yoga and caution that this is not how yoga was meant to be practiced.

Even though there are differences, yoga unites people all over the world. We may be different on the surface but we all seek the same goals of good health and liberation. The paths we take towards yoga are many, but in the end they all unite. No path is higher or inferior than another. What I have learned from moving across the globe is that yoga is universal and I've been inspired to see how people around the world have

embraced yoga and evolved with it. It is a key to freedom that belongs to all humanity.

[Photo by [Amanda & Manuel Cristaldi](#) - CC BY]

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#### About the author



### Arundhati Baitmangalkar

Arundhati fondly known as "Aru" has been teaching yoga for over 8 years now. She is an experienced yoga teacher as well as a Bollywood performer and instructor. She has studied classical hatha, vinyasa lyengar and power yoga in India and she strives to make her culture and tradition available to everyone. She runs her own yoga studio, [Aham Yoga](#), in Redmond.

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This article was published by [Arundhati Baitmangalkar](#) on Saturday, August 2nd, 2014

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**Naren K. Schreiner** · [Follow](#) · Director at Sangita Yoga - The Yoga of Music

Thank you for sharing your important observations. The non-judgmental tone will be very appealing to Americans who are sensitive to criticism, especially within the circles of yoga and spirituality wherein love and non-judgment are preached (often to avoid any responsibility to discipline and authority). My only regret is that your article will not affect the change that I believe is desperately needed within the modern yoga world. I don't recall the Gita declaring "there are as many yogas as there are people" -- rather, I see that yoga is clearly spelled out in the Gita and other yogic scriptures. America's so-called yoga teachers are in dire need to actually study and follow these. I believe your most important observation was hinted in part 4 "after all, yoga is about detaching from the body and senses".

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**Ana Franklin** · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · Managing Director at Yoga Connection At Heart Space Yoga

Thank you for these observations. Yoga is being "interpreted" by Americans, like so many other foreign disciplines and traditions, to fit their own ability to understand it. Unfortunately, Americans, and some other westerners have very little understanding of deep, abiding cultural paradigms since we are a very young, perhaps arrogant country - rather like a 'teenager' who thinks she knows more than her grandmother. It is refreshing for me, after forty years of practicing and studying the ancient vedic traditions, to see that someone is bringing up this mis-interpretation of yoga. It may only reach the consciousness of a few, but perhaps over time those who find healing and peace of mind from yoga, will delve deeper into the true teachings.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 43 · August 4 at 8:29am



**Aham Yoga**  
Hi Naren & Ana,

Thank you for your comments. Yes judgments get us nowhere. When we strip away everything we are all the same aspiring towards the same goals of peace and liberation. As

I always say , Yoga happens on the inside...not outside.

Reply · Like · 37 · August 5 at 5:52pm



**Jeremy Martin** · English Teacher at Tainan elementary schools

Naren, that's funny - I was thinking about how my Gita starts with 'There are as many paths to God as there are people', and how they're the same sentence. I think I found that in the Intro.

And thanks, Aru, for the non-judgment. Wouldn't want to come off like this:  
<http://xkcd.com/1314/>

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**The Yoga Way - Heather**

These are great! I'd add: Observation #6 Drop-in Classes are virtually unheard of in India

I remember the first time I mentioned it casually to my teacher in Mysore. He looked at me with such surprise and asked, "What is a drop-in class?". I felt rather foolish trying to explain to him that people come and go to a class and may not return as per their liking. My teacher's face grew even more confused after I explained this. And he asked me, "They don't attend classes everyday?" When I replied, "no" it seemed as if it might be really hard to take us seriously with this approach.

In India (although this might be changing somewhat) there is a level of commitment required for at least one month of practice. Classes are taken 5-6 times per week. It is so important to immerse oneself into the practice by not allowing our usual resistances, fears and excuses to stand in the way. It may seem scary or even like a long time to stay for a month, but when one considers that Yoga is a lifetime's practice one month is just far too short!

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**Jessica Powell**

In mysore it's rare to non-existent but in other parts of India drop in classes are common. That being said, the serious student is almost always doing an intensive or commits to a month to many months with their teachers but those teachers also offer drop ins... the committed students get priority though :)

Reply · Like · 3 · August 4 at 9:01am



**Zuzana Háková** · Follow · Gymnázium Zikmunda Wintra Rakovník

:)

Reply · Like · 1 · August 4 at 9:58am



**Aham Yoga**

Heather,

Mysore is one of my most favorite places on this planet, life is simple there. I love going back there for yoga. My Guru is from Mysore. Yes, the concept of trying out a yoga class in traditional serious yoga schools is rare. We do not try out a teacher in the East as we do in the West. You will find it more in studios in larger cities in India.

Reply · Like · 2 · August 5 at 5:55pm



**Mas Vidal** · Founder and Director at DANCING SHIVA YOGA AND AYURVEDA

Its a good thing we are beginning to see articles such as these. Congratulations! I have been teaching classical forms of **DANCING SHIVA YOGA AND AYURVEDA** for years such as Raja, Bhakti, Hatha, Jnana and Karma etc....and Ayurveda and people kept saying "what?" They ask Is this like flow, hot....what brand or style do you teach? My message to many has been that "style" based teachings that are not linked to a lineage or sampradaya will eventually dissolve as the shakti (energy) that is usually transferred through from the Guru-teacher to student does not exist in "Americana" Yoga. What we have in America is fitness yoga. To clarify the Gita enumerates the four main paths I mention above. These 4 -paths constitute an integral approach to yoga that cannot and should not be reinvented as we have done in America. It can be adapted or customized as per the student but should not become a mish-mosh of whatever the teacher is feeling that day. May we all support to preserve these great traditions that are Divine Mothers and Lor Shiva's gifts to humanity to raise us out of the dark spell of maya we have been in for millennia. Aum Namah Shivaya! Jai Maha Bharata!

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**Paulo Tramuja** · Tradutor-Intérprete at Tradutor e Intérprete

Great text. People also look at me strangely when I say to them yoga is religion before anything else. As you well know, the sacred most Hindu text, the Bhagavad Gita, is a treatise on yoga. I doubt 1% of the people practicing so called "hot or power yoga" ever ran or want to run their eyes through a single line of this book. Truth, it said, can be quite inconvenient!! :D

Reply · Like · 10 · August 5 at 1:56am



**Alicia Mätzener**

Yes, please!!!

Reply · Like · 1 · August 5 at 5:24am



**Ana Franklin** · Follow · Top Commenter · Managing Director at Yoga Connection At Heart Space Yoga

Paulo Tramuja this is so true, yet in the west the word religion is not really understood and tends to confuse people. Dogma is not religion, and Yoga is not a dogma. When dogma is mistaken for true religion, things get confused and contentious, so many people run the other way. Yoga is very personal, as is religion. Religiousness is not seen as a force that stands apart from dogma by most Americans. Thanks for bringing this up - it is important, but unfortunately, most people don't get it.

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**John Feist**



Thank you for your insights. You have confirmed many things that I suspected to be true. I especially appreciate your comments about "hot yoga".

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**Ajitsingh Giridharisingh Tapasvi** · Follow · Managing Director at The YOGA House -A Destination for the Health Conscious

Hey Arundhati good notes. Keep the traditional practice going especially the guru Shishya parampara

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**Ramanjit Garewal** · Yoga Institute Santacruz.

:-) :-)

Reply · Like · August 4 at 11:55pm



**Aham Yoga**

Thank you Ajit! good to hear from you after so long. Hope all is well at Yoga House. I honestly believe the best learning happens under the Guru shishya parampara.

Reply · Like · 2 · August 5 at 5:49pm



**Ajitsingh Giridharisingh Tapasvi** · Follow · Managing Director at The YOGA House -A Destination for the Health Conscious

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Reply · Like · August 5 at 11:15pm



**Meredith Marie Jackson** · Yoga Instructor at PrAna

I love how this is written so humbly and gracefully. You observe without judgement. I am from the US but have studied yoga in India also. I have frustrations with the attitudes of yoga in America, but it is what it is, and Yoga will always be there to remind me to get over it. Thank you!

Reply · Like · 11 · Follow Post · August 3 at 7:59pm



**Aham Yoga**

Happy to hear that you have been lucky enough to experience yoga in both worlds. That is great experience. Good Luck..

Reply · Like · 1 · August 5 at 6:01pm



**Zachary Haag**

I'm formerly from Seattle, but found yoga in Miami. Let the asanas teach the body, then the body can teach the mind. Namaste. ♥

Reply · Like · 8 · Follow Post · August 5 at 5:58am



**Aham Yoga**

Well said.

Reply · Like · 1 · August 5 at 6:03pm



**Yoga Shobha** · Follow · Program Director at Amrita Yoga · 116 followers

Thanks for sharing this. Its amazing to understand and see the huge difference. I agree to the differences that exist but also see that people sincerely are striving to reach the TRUTH, the REAL.

I am an Indian born in a family of a Yogi and practicing from early childhood. I teach International audience at Amritapuri, Amma's ashram Amrita Yoga since 2004 - [amritayoga.com](http://amritayoga.com)

I find the pure vibrations of selflessness and unconditional love imbued within our yoga practice here at Amritapuri.

Yoga is a journey and I see that people start at somepoint but reach for sure either NOW or later to that TRUTH. In my practice of Amrita Yoga, my experience of this journey is very natural and spontaneous journey within. It is my experience that people east, west, south or north are all thriving hard to MERGE with the TRUTH.

Amrita Yoga is a devotional practice and blends the ancient principles of Yoga aiming to cater to the immediate contemporary needs. [amritayoga.com](http://amritayoga.com)

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**Judith Jbooty Booth** · Owner at BN02s

Yoga started in Africa and was taken with Africans who migrated to what we now know as India. I am sure today in India variations of the original are practiced. Not making judgment offering some very important information and a glimpse of how culture spreads.

Reply · Like · 6 · Follow Post · August 4 at 5:09am



**Chrispy Bhagat Singh** · Follow · Top Commenter · Sir Reality at Petrastella

Interesting postulation - do you mind citing a source or credible article that discusses this idea?

Reply · Like · 22 · August 4 at 6:07am



**Aham Yoga**

Yes would be interesting to read something more about this . Thank you.

Reply · Like · 1 · August 5 at 6:02pm



**Tamika Caston-Miller** · Houston, Texas

Chrispy Bhagat Singh <http://www.amazon.com/civilization-religion-mystical-spirituality-philosophy/dp/188456450X> I have not read this book, but it should provide some framework.

Reply · Like · 1 · August 6 at 10:24pm



**Tamika Caston-Miller** · Houston, Texas

I am a practitioner of Western Yoga, I've never visited, much less practiced in, India and am not interested in practicing it as religion. I believe that the fundamental reason yoga presents itself differently in the US is because many American yogis are not practicing it as religion. As such, there would be obvious differences. I see no issue with this (and don't know that you are arguing that this is an issue), but I do agree that anyone reaching into the world of yoga is attempting to become a part of something bigger than him/herself--this is much better than the alternative.

Reply · Like · 5 · Follow Post · Edited · August 6 at 10:28pm



**Ana Franklin** · Follow · Top Commenter · Managing Director at Yoga Connection At Heart Space Yoga

Not sure who you are answering in this comment, but yoga is not a religion in and of itself, and one cannot practice yoga "as a religion". However, it is a practice which requires a certain devotion and commitment if one is to ever know what yoga is. Religiousness, and yoga requires it, is simply dedication, commitment to staying with the practice and not dabbling or doing something one week and off the next week. Therefore, yoga can be called a science of religiousness - or a science of faithful commitment. Transformation does not happen without this kind of dedication. And any attempt by a human being to quiet the mind, is an attempt at transformation. But nowhere in the yoga tradition are we asked to believe anything - and dogma is the basis for religions as we know them today.

Reply · Like · Yesterday at 8:20am



**Tamika Caston-Miller** · Houston, Texas

Ana Franklin As I'm sure you are aware of the origins of yoga and yogic practice within Buddhist & Hindu tradition, I won't address that--I mean that it is a part of religious practice. In this article, the author specifically addresses the "Guru-shishya parampara (teacher-disciple traditions)" as a "strong part of the culture, both in and outside of yoga." Also, other commentators (ie. Naren) are speaking about their practice and understanding of yoga in spiritual terms. I am not saying that yoga is a religion, but rather a product of it and expression of it, just as prayer isn't a religion, but rather a product of it and a method of religious expression. Perhaps the problem is that I used "religion" instead of "religiously" or "as a religious expression." I thought that would be assumed. My point is that the author points out the differences between Western and traditional yogic practices, and I'm simply positing a possible explanation of said differences. When people adopt a practice that has been used as religious expression into a secular context, its practice will look and feel different. It will also be a source of discomfort or humor for those who practice it as a part of religious expression. That said, I do not believe that it takes away from the beauty of the practice.

Reply · Like · 1 · Yesterday at 1:22pm



**Mindi Bee** · Top Commenter

Great article.

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**Dolly Lai**

Very well said!!! I am often asked what kind of yoga I teach, and when I first moved here 20 years ago, I didn't quite understand what that meant....So instead I always say, that growing up in India, we never "went" to a yoga class.... it was a way of life because its really not about what you do on the mat, but what you do for the rest of the day/week!!

I like what you said about the guru-shishya relationship because we typically only teach with the blessings and permission of our teacher. When the entire parampara stands behind you, you become a facade and the teachings flow through you..you don't own them...so there is no ego or brand building!!

I am still a bit uncomfortable with the business model of yoga in the West. Spending \$\$\$ over a comparatively short period of time to "train" to be a yoga teacher, and then being able to unilaterally decide to upgrade your certification is still very alien to me....

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**Melissa Gattin** · Follow · Top Commenter

I understand well .. I was first introduced to yoga in 1960 by a Canadian living in Panama that had lived in India for 20 years where she started into the practice .. the yoga mat had not even been developed .. LOL! I had been practicing 22 years before the "yoga mat" came out. What ever we were wearing that day, as long as it was loose enough to move in, was our "yoga clothes". Now I will have people and students tell me they couldn't practice yoga because they didn't have a mat or the right clothes and I have to explain that those are not necessary.

I still don't buy yoga pants, admit I did buy some for a couple years, but I find my LL Bean perfect fit pants work quite well and with pockets to boot .. can easily go from class to shopping or a restaurant and no one would even know I had took/taught a class.

I do like... See More

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**Aham Yoga**

Wow you have been practicing for a very long time. Always inspiring to hear people's yoga stories. Good luck.

Reply · Like · 3 · August 5 at 6:04pm



**Melissa Gattin** · Follow · Top Commenter

Aham Yoga one of the recently retired yoga teachers in Houston was 81 when she retired from teaching 6-10 classes a week .. she still practices yoga but decided she didn't want to be tied down to teaching daily. I didn't go for my teachers certification until I was in my 50's after I had to retire from Project Management ... lol! .. never to late to start yoga or to start teachers training .. luckily even when I get more "wheelchair" bound I will still be able to teach chair classes. Though Iyengar is no spring chicken himself! Does your mom also practice yoga?

Reply · Like · 1 · August 5 at 7:06pm



**Judith Jbooty Booth** · Owner at BN02s



I gave you the title and author of a book written by an author who gives historical facts. The author is a historian. Its quite comical and highly doubtful that Indians traveled to Africa and passed on yoga. One predated the other. The Dravidians history who are so badly treated in India today will validate this. India today has hundreds of ancient painting depicting the original inhabitants of India. They definitely are African. Some people will find it very hard to fathom or acknowledge the fact of how yoga became based solely on racist attitudes.

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**Arundhati Sundar** · Singapore

A big difference is the expectation of the students. When I learned in India, the teaching was always one-on-one even if there were many people in class, always individualized, quiet, inward with no "goals" to achieve. Progress was always a surprise much like one's height increase as a teenager- it happened without striving sweating bullying ones mind by the teacher or the student. Totally naturally, effortless ease, one continuous experience of peacefulness amidst 25-30 others practicing, coming going each according to their own timetables. This was Kaivalyadham in Mumbai in the early to mid 70s.

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**Bhakti Devi**

The contrast is so telling :)

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**Ana Franklin** · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · Managing Director at Yoga Connection At Heart Space Yoga

This is the true yoga.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · Yesterday at 8:00am



**Lance Desker** · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · Saint Patrick's School, Singapore

There is a related but very different form of discipline to yoga, and it's classical Indian dance. My opinion is that classical Indian dance is yoga in movement. Both embody spirituality, getting to know your body, disciplining it, and putting it through hard practice. As there are many forms of yoga, there are also an astonishing variety of dance forms, and an infinite variety within the different dances, be they Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi etc. Whereas yoga stills the body's emotions, dance highlights them in many ways, but in a graceful, subtle manner. Sringara bhakti, or the intense emotional state towards the deity that can only be understood in terms of the lover and the beloved is the prime vehicle of presentation in classical Indian dance, something that would never happen in yoga.

Having studied dance from traditional dance gurus from India, teachers from the West who try and inculcate the guru-shishya parampara, and non-traditional, younger Indian gurus, there tends to be a lot of trying out a teacher and then changing teachers to suit one's needs or feelings here. In India that would give you a very bad rep. as a student or dancer who can't be very dedicated. There is also a tendency to learn two or three styles, like tap, salsa and Odissi, for example, as one more style, rather than making classical Indian dance your soul and life. Lots of students also compare baladi with Odissi or Kuchipudi, and then wonder why they aren't the same!

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**Claudia Harris**

It seems to me that everyone in India is doing yoga with Baba Ram Dev (at least North India where I stay). It's not talked about as healing the emotions, but a highly effective way to heal from chronic conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure.

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**Aham Yoga**

Claudia, Yes Baba Ram Dev is popular in the north among certain circles but not well known in the south. His yoga is one of the types available in the country along with other traditional lineages.

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**Nalini Padania**

Aham Yoga I have reached your post, after reading many above, and this one I have to reply to. Maybe you live in a bubble, but the other lineages you mentioned were catering only to a few select. What about the masses - and their health at low cost or no cost, but just their own efforts. Baba has taken yoga to every province of India and to every village in every province. He is the one who has finally given Yoga its rightful place in India and made it accessible to all - young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick. Nishulk (free) classes are done by teachers trained by him. south India has lost out as people there probably do not speak Hindi, the language Swamiji speaks in. I know that he has done huge popular workshops also in south India. His Ashram has taken the trouble to actually translate his books into every... [See More](#)

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**Sebas Merino**

A teacher of mine explained that traditionally, one fundamental requisite for a yogi to accept a student was that of being vegetarian.... whereas nowadays, it is a lucrative vocation to be a yoga instructor, hence there are no requisites, in the west... though all things considered; I was not fully vegetarian when I began the practice about half mi lifetime ago... and it was the inspiration and example of the instructors which sowed a seed for mi reformation into a vegetarian.

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**Dennis De Rechter** · UA Antwerpen

Every conviction is a restriction

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 2 · August 7 at 6:59pm



**Sebas Merino**

Dennis De Rechter No.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · August 10 at 9:31am



**Sebas Merino**



Though abstinences in themselves are of no inherent value... the point remains that traditionally, one could only enter guru-student relationship if the student agreed to certain abstinences, such as not eating meat. With time, what was once perceived as an abstinence or an austerity is simply enjoyed as the good life.

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**Spanishwith Teresa** · University of Toronto

Thanks Arundhati. I relate so much to your experience. When I came to Seattle, I brought with me the yoga teachings I had learned several years ago when I lived in an asram. It was like being with an old friend in a new city. Also, It is easy to see what you mean about the contrast between the spirituality and the commercial aspect of yoga that is so strong here in the U.S. as well as the concept of the guru, the "fashion" and hot yoga. I have some Indian students here in Seattle and they tell me the same about hot yoga. It seems very different from what they have seen back home. As you say, we learn to be more tolerant towards other types of mentality and learn to live together in peace! I would love to go to your studio in Redmond.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 2 · [Follow Post](#) · August 6 at 8:49am



**Aham Yoga**

Hi Teresa, You are most welcome at our studio anytime. Please do come by to visit sometime.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 2 · August 8 at 10:46pm



**Jackie Banguera** · Yoga Teacher at YOGA

I have noticed all that you mentioned in this article about yoga in America and I noticed this big differences when I traveled to Bali to take my teacher training most people there weren't into lululemon outfits or none of that and meditation was a very sacred ritual but like you say if yoga brings you to your senses why not practice it the way it has been taught to you regardless of all the different cultures in the world...

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**Michael Melillo** · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · East Haven High School

Paying for yoga sometimes means feeding the teachers cat for a couple of days. When visiting Dubai i pleasantly found a before work outdoor class on ricebags. On the River under the lights about 5 am. I have never seen a more diversified group. Respect was prevalent to teacher -student and between students. Money was not accepted (as an American I felt compelled to offer) The yogis said an offering of catfood for the next mornings class would be more than enough. All this in a Country that cost my wife and I \$70\$ for breakfast one day.

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