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Edited by

[Bron Taylor](#)

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ing outside the front doors, the *pahko'olam* dance around the flower patio. Simultaneously, the deer dancer is bringing his cosmic dimension, the *sea ania*, into presence. The *sea ania*, or flower world, is another realm of the Yoeme cosmos where the deer live, often conceived as under the dawn, and wherever the *huya ania* (wilderness world) opens up into the blossoms of complete being. Thus, through this ritual sacrifice the various Yoeme dimensions coexist: the pueblo, the church, the *huya ania*, the *sea ania*, and since these latter two are pre-Christian derivatives, they also signify the enchanted world of Yoeme ancestry, the *yo ania*. Here at the place where these worlds come together, the onlookers throw confetti flowers at the attacking soldiers (*Fariseos*). For what seems like hours, the community is showered by multicolored flowers drifting on the wind and upon a sea of swirling being. After the whole community defeats evil, fireworks shoot into the sky, heralding Saint Michael's return to heaven since he has collected everyone's sacrifice in the form of the flower. Everyone who has come and given of themselves during the previous season (performers, family members, observers) are considered to be sharing in this flower, this grace that originates not from God on high but through collective sacrifice.

As other contributors have noted in this volume, the word "nature" has no direct translation in Yoeme; nor can we directly translate "religion." I quickly learned in my work in Yoeme villages that to talk about religion, I would use the word "*kohtumbre*" (a Spanish loan word for "custom" but used also for "society"), which most closely approximates the idea of religion. To ethnographically unpack the concept of "nature" entails the discussion of all seven or eight *aniam*, or possible states of being, which roughly relate to geographical/cosmological spaces. Perhaps the best term to draw all this material together is *lutu'uria*, which translates as "truth" but entails a socially performative component, a sharing of ritual knowledge. Thus, references to the *aniam*, as well as experiential knowledge of cultural traditions and religious practices, are expressed in performances that socially assert and test truth claims. These dances and speeches are religious obligations and ways of representing core aspects of Yoeme identity. Thus, *lutu'uria* provides a means by which Yoeme share their sense of the "real" world, namely, "nature."

David Shorter

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- See also: Castaneda, Carlos; Radical Environmentalism (and adjacent, Rodney Coronado and the Animal Liberation Front).

Yoga and Ecology

The Yoga tradition originated several thousand years ago in India. Early evidence of Yoga practice can be found in Indus Valley seals unearthed in Mohenjodaro and other cities that date from 3500 B.C.E. Textual references to Yoga appear in the middle Upanisads and the Mahabharata, dating from about 600 B.C.E. The Buddha and the Jina (ca. 500 B.C.E.) both taught yogic styles of meditation. By around 200, Patanjali summarized Yoga practices in a classic text known as the *Yoga Sutra*. Sanskrit texts such as the *Yogavasishta* (ca. 1000) and the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (ca. 1500) describe various forms of Vedantic and esoteric Yoga. Haribhadra's *Yogadrstisamuccya* (ca. 750) and Hemaandra's *Yogasastra* (ca. 1250) discuss the adaptation of the tradition to the Jaina faith, while the later texts of Kabir and Guru Nanak allude to Yoga meditation from universalist and Sikh perspectives. Yoga continues to be practiced throughout India and has become increasingly popular worldwide.

In its various manifestations, Yoga includes practices and philosophical positions that accord with values espoused by modern ecologists. Unlike many other schools of thought in India, Yoga is thoroughly realistic. It builds upon the Samkhya school of philosophy, first espoused by a near-mythical sage named Kapila who perhaps lived in northeastern India around 900 B.C.E. Kapila's teachings were later systematized by a philosopher known as Isvarakrishna, who composed the *Samkhya Karika* in the early centuries of the Common Era. In this seminal text, the author exerts great care to articulate the existence and importance of the natural world. He posits that the world

is known to us through its effects, and the effects stem from a common cause, *prakriti*, a term that many scholars choose to translated as “nature.” Nature provides experience and liberation for her silent observer, the spiritual consciousness or *purusa*. According to the *Samkhya Karika*, all things exist for the purpose of serving and liberating this consciousness. Through understanding the nature of the creative force known as nature, one advances toward a state of freedom. To understand the structures and purposes of things one is able to cultivate a state of nonattachment that, from the perspective of this philosophy, entails a state of appreciation and respect, not disdain and abnegation for nature.

The earliest depictions of Yoga, found on sculptures that date from 5500 years ago, show persons imitating various aspects of the animal domain. An early statue from Mohenjadaró shows a man with his jaw wide open and his eyes bulging, approximating the roar of a lion. This pose later earns the name of *simhasana*, lion’s pose. A tableau first found in Indus Valley steatite seals and then repeated thousands of years later etched into the pillars of countless temples, shows a meditating deity, now known as Pasupati or Lord of the Animals. This imposing figure sits cross-legged and austere, surrounded by devoted and attentive animals such as goats, cattle, and what today seem to be make-believe creatures. This genre of representation exudes a sense of being in harmony and perhaps communion with the animal realm, and convey a sense of comfort in the company of nonhuman realities.

In the middle, Upanisadic period of Yoga, we find speculative discourses and dialogues about the nature and function of the human body and mind. By reflecting on the functions of the body, particularly the breath, and by seeking to still the mind, the Upanisads state that one can establish a connection with one’s inner self or Atman, often translated as soul. Passages from the early Upanisads such as the *Chandogya* and *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisads* emphasize the primacy of breath and the relationship between the microphase and the macrophase aspects of reality. By getting to know oneself through focusing on the power of the breath, one feels an intimacy with the larger aspects of the Earth and heavens, perhaps most aptly conveyed in the first section of the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad*, which first correlates the various functions and regions of the universe with the cosmic horse, and then makes a similar series of correspondences with the human body. By understanding one’s desires and impulses, as well as the structures and functions of one’s body and mind, one gains an understanding of the cosmos.

The later Upanisads and the Bhagavadgita speak directly of Yoga as the technique to be utilized in order to feel that intimate connection with the flow of life and one’s place within reality. The *Svetasvatara* and *Maitri Upanisads* state that by drawing the senses inward and controlling the breath, one can reach a state of equipoise.

The Bhagavadgita comes to describe the Yogi as one who comprehends the relationship between the “field” or nature (*prakriti*) and the “knower of the field” or spirit (*purusa*). Within the body of Krishna, the entire world, in its splendor and terror, can be seen, appreciated, and embraced. The metaphor of the human body becomes extended in the *Gita* to include all aspects of the universe.

The *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali outlines an eightfold practice to ascend toward the state of self-realization through which one realizes one’s connection with the universe. The underlying philosophy of Yoga places great value on feeling the connection between one’s self and the larger world of nature. This continuity becomes celebrated in the term *samadhi*, the goal of Yoga, which describes an experience of non-difference between oneself, one’s sensory and mental processes, and the world. As described by Patanjali, the practitioner of Yoga becomes like a clear jewel, with “unity among grasper, grasping, and grasped” (*Yoga Sutra* I: 41). This state of consciousness allows one to melt into one’s surrounding and in the process diminish and eventually reverse past tendencies (*samskara*) bringing one to a state of clarity and immediacy.

The eight practices identified by Patanjali can be seen in light of environmental ethics. The beginning stage of Yoga includes five ethical practices (*yama*), held in common with the Jain tradition. First and foremost, Patanjali discusses nonviolence (*ahimsa*), which entails not harming any living being by thought, action, or assent to harmfulness. This precept advocates the protection of all forms of life, and certainly can be applied to cultivating an attitude of respect toward individual creatures as well as ecosystems. To support this discipline, Patanjali includes four additional vows. Truthfulness (*satya*) can be used to inspire acknowledgement of wrongdoing to the living realm. Not stealing (*asteya*) can be applied to remedy the imbalance of resource consumption in modern times. Sexual restraint (*brahmacarya*) can be used as a corrective to the crass commercialization of sex as well for population control. Non-possession (*aparigraha*) allows one to minimize the greed and hoarding that has plundered the planet. These five practices entail holding back, disciplining oneself, saying no to such behaviors as violence, lying, stealing, lust, and possessiveness.

The second stage of Patanjali’s Yoga seeks to cultivate positive behaviors that can similarly be interpreted through the prism of heightened ecological awareness. Five practices are listed. Purity (*saucha*) can be seen in terms of keeping one’s body, thoughts, and intentions clean in regard to one’s surroundings. Contentment (*santosha*) encourages a philosophy of accepting what is “enough” and not striving to gather more than one truly needs. Austerity (*tapas*) entails putting oneself in difficult situations for the purposes of purification and the building of strong character. Self-study (*svadhyaya*) generally entails reading and reflecting on philosophical texts and

in the case of environmental applications might include reading the nature poets. Devotion to god (*isvara pranidhana*) for an environmentalist might encourage regular forays into the wilderness to feel that important connection with the awe that nature inspires. Each of these serves as a touchstone for self-exploration and appreciation of one's place within the world.

The third phase of Patanjali's eightfold system, the practice of yoga postures (*asana*) receives relatively scant mention in the *Yoga Sutra*. Patanjali states that the purpose of performing the physical exercise of Yoga is to gain "steadiness and ease, resulting in relaxation of effort and endless unity" (YS II: 46–47). In later centuries, this aspect of Yoga was adumbrated and expanded by later writers, who draw extensive parallels between the practice of physical Yoga and the ability to see one's relationship with the animal realm.

In order to understand the significance of animals as it develops in later Yoga traditions, we need to discuss briefly the nature of shamanism. Mircea Eliade describes the importance of shamanic rituals that display intimacy with specific animals as follows:

Imitating the gait of an animal or putting on its skin was acquiring a superhuman mode of being . . . by becoming this mythic animal, man becomes something far greater and stronger than himself . . . He who, forgetting the limitations and false measurements of humanity, could rightly imitate the behavior of animals – their gait, breathing, cries, and so on – found a new dimension in life: spontaneity, freedom, "sympathy" with all the cosmic rhythms and hence bliss and immortality (Eliade 1963: 460).

These remarks by Eliade underscore the important relationship cultivated between humans and animals from prehistoric times. Animals were noted for their particular abilities and accomplishments. To imitate these fine qualities was considered a sign of spiritual attainment.

In the later Yoga texts, animals play an important role. Many postures (*asanas*) carry the names of animals. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, written by Svamarama in the fifteenth century, lists several poses named for animals. Some examples are the Cow Head's Pose (*Gomukhasana*) [HYP 20], the Tortoise Pose (*Kurma asana*) [HYP 24], the Rooster Pose (*Kukkuta asana*) [HYP 25], the Peacock Pose (*Mayur asana*) [HYP 32], and the Lion's Pose (*Simha asana*) [HYP 52–54].

Additionally, later Yoga manuals such as the *Gheranda Samhita* include several additional poses named for animals, including the Serpent Pose (*Naga asana*), the Rabbit Pose, the Cobra Pose (*Bhujanga asana*), the Locust Pose (*Salabha asana*), the Crow Pose (*Kakasana*), the Eagle Pose (*Gauruda asana*), the Frog

Pose (*Manduka asana*), and the Scorpion Pose (*Vrischika asana*), to name a few.

Yoga practice does have an emotional effect that goes beyond mere strength or flexibility of the body. In the performance of the Peacock pose, one feels a sense of balance, a sense of pride, an affirmation of one's ability to move competently in the world. In the Eagle pose, one feels a sense of entwinedness and focus, a honing of one's vision and purpose. In the Cobra pose, one feels both a tremendous gravity and a rising up, a sense of being weighted and glued to the Earth, yet yearning and stretching to rise above. In the Lion pose one feels positively regal, refreshed and energized. At the close of a Yoga session one feels renewed and in a sense redefined, prepared to encounter the world with greater agility and balance.

In India, animals are part of one's everyday reality, even in the cities. One encounters cows, goats, cats, dogs, and numerous other animals on a daily, sometimes continuous basis. People often feed birds before taking their own meal, birds that fly into the home at dinner time, expecting acknowledgement. Gurani Anjali, a contemporary teacher of Yoga, has urged her students to observe animals, to learn from animals. One has a sense that the attention required to move into and sustain a Yoga pose carries a connection with the ancient shamanic tradition of animal imitation.

However, it could also be argued that a danger lies in over-romanticizing the mysterious or shamanic aspects of animal mimesis. For instance, Denise Kaufman, a prominent Yoga teacher in Los Angeles, suggests that one adapt a largely empirical attitude toward doing Yoga and relating with animals. In an interview she commented:

Animals move; people can learn about movement from animals. House pets stretch all day long, creating space in their joints. Animals sit in different kinds of positions. Monkeys and apes do things with their hands. Perhaps as humans we need to reclaim our four leggedness. Getting down on all fours stimulates the pranic flow. Sitting in chairs tightens the hamstrings and the lower back. Animals don't sit on furniture; they have not built things contrary to their nature (personal communication, February 1999).

From her perspective, Yoga involves recapturing our animal physicality, reconditioning the body to establish itself within a non-technologically enhanced environment.

The relationship between sacred power and the human cannot be divorced from the harnessing of the deep images evoked by intimacy with the animal world. Early peoples of India revered animals. They depicted animals in tableaux of adornment. They surrounded their early sacred meditating Yogi with animals. Animals find prominence

in classical literature. The later medieval Yoga texts explicitly prescribe animal poses as integral to mystical attainment.

We learn to be empathetic and connected from our experience of and relationship with animals. As Thomas Berry has noted, our consciousness as humans, our development and affectivity, radically depend upon our openness and sensitivity to the natural order. To the extent that Yoga heightens our senses and brings us into visceral relationship with the nonhuman realm, our own sense of worth, well-being and connectedness becomes enhanced.

Following the mastery of the physical realm through Yoga postures, one reaches the capacity to effectively control the breath (*pranayama*), the fourth phase of Yoga. As noted earlier, the breath plays an important role in the philosophy of the Upanisads, and in the *Yoga Sutra* the mastery of the inbreath and outbreath leads to “dissolving the covering of light” (YS II: 52). The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and the *Gheranda Samhita* describe intricate techniques for manipulating the breath. Through this process, one reaches into the core of one’s life-force, sees the relationship between breathing and thinking, and cultivates an inwardness and stability, leading to Patanjali’s fifth phase, the command of the senses (*pratyahara*). This ability to draw one’s energy into oneself opens one to the higher “inner” practices of Yoga: concentration, meditation, and *Samadhi*, collectively known as *samyama*. Construed through an ecological prism, the inner work from the controlling the breath to *Samadhi* can be seen as enhancing one’s sensitivity to nature, an increase in empathy, and a willingness to stand to protect the beauty of the Earth. In a sense, the culmination of Yoga leads one to the very beginning point of nonviolence, a sense that no harm must be allowed.

The beginning of this inner threefold process requires sustained exercises of concentration (*dharana*). A standard concentration practice entails attention given first to the great elements (*mahabhutas*), then to the sensory operations (*tanmatras*), the sense and action organs (*budhindriyas* and *karmendriyas*) and finally to the threefold operation of the mind (*manas*, *ahamkara*, *buddhi*). By concentrating on the Earth (*prthivi*) one gains a sense of groundedness and a heightened sense of fragrance. By reflecting on water (*jal*), one develops familiarity with fluidity and sensitivity to the vehicle of taste. Through attention to light and heat (*tejas*, *agni*), one arrives at a deep appreciation for the ability to see. Awareness of the breath and wind (*prana*, *vayu*) brings a sense of quiet and tactile receptivity. All these specific manifestations occur within the context of space (*akasha*), the womb or container of all that can be perceived or heard.

Intimacy with the sensory process allows one to maintain focus on the operations of the mind. Thoughts (*cittavrtti*) generated in the mind lead one to question and investigate the source of one’s identity and ego (*aham-*

kara). Probing more deeply into the constituent parts of one’s personality, one begins to uncover the maze and mire of karmic accretions housed in the deep memory structures (*buddhi*), lightened and released gently through reflective and meditative processes. However, in order for any of these purifications to arise, an intimate familiarity with the body and collection of habits must occur, an intimacy that takes place through an understanding of time and place. Yoga enables a person to embrace and understand the close connection between the body and the world. By understanding each, one attains a state of clarity.

From an ecological perspective, the practice of Yoga can prove beneficial. Through Yoga one can begin to see the importance of the food we eat in constructing our bodies. One can find a calmness of mind through which to appreciate the stunning beauty of landscape and sunset and sunrise. Through Yoga, one can understand that all things within the universe rely on the creative expression of the five great elements and that we gain access to all experience and all knowledge through our own sensuality and intuition. The practice of Yoga provides rich resources for persons to reconnect with the body and with the world. Through the insights and applications of Yoga, one can begin to live with the sensitivity, sensibility, and frugality required to uphold the dignity of life, stemming from a vision of the interconnectedness of all things.

Christopher Key Chapple

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See also: Ahimsa; Art of Living Foundation; Breathwork; Hinduism; Jainism; Martial Arts; Prakriti; Re-Earthing.

Yolngu Ceremonial Architecture (Australia)

The religious beliefs and practices of the Yolngu people of northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia are manifest in, and expressed through, their ceremonial or religious architecture.

As for other Aboriginal Australians, the world of the Yolngu was created by the travels of their ancient Ancestors imbuing sacred powers within the landscapes, flora, fauna, and people that they created. Through their activities the Ancestors marked the landscape: with their digging sticks they created waterholes and springs; where they swam they created rivers; when they rested they left permanent marks and tracks on the ground; and when they left objects behind on their journey such things were transformed into natural landscape features. As the Ancestors travelled, they also passed on knowledge and law to the Yolngu people, encompassing all aspects of their social and physical environments. This knowledge, and the actions and power of the Ancestors, are maintained and continuously reinforced through the process of ceremony. Yolngu ceremonies not only reenact ancestral events at places, but they create a temporal and spatial reference in which the people, places and actions “become” those of the Ancestors. Hence, Yolngu Ancestors are not considered part of the past, they are “ever present” in the places, things, people and marks they made in the landscape. The social identity of Yolngu people is partly constructed through their connection to particular Ancestors and places.

Yolngu ceremony grounds are places of worship that allow Yolngu to connect with their Ancestors, and although they are “unroofed,” the combination of place, structures and symbols constitute an indigenous ceremonial architecture. Structures that can be called “ceremonial architecture” are not shelters or dwellings *per se*, but are important religious symbols and spatial/architectural tools that are employed during ceremony. Although a number of these structures may be similar to those employed in everyday domiciliary life, their meanings change and are enhanced when used in ceremonial contexts. For example, in certain Yolngu sacred histories, flaming dwellings act as “vehicle for change” in which

Ancestral Beings are burnt and metamorphosed into another state following the breaking of a moral code, and then continue their respective journeys.

During the process of Yolngu mortuary ceremonies the deceased’s soul is transported back to their ancestral homeland through the invocations of song and actions of dance, incorporating sacred objects, structures and sculpted landforms. The sculpted landforms can be either representations of Ancestors themselves, the remnant marks of ancestral actions left on the landscape, or maps of the places they created. The sculpted landforms, which are low Earth ridges creating a diagram when viewed from above, are particular to the deceased’s social identity. They are also a metaphor for the ancestral homeland to which the soul of the deceased will be transported through the process of the ceremony. Around and within the sculpted land forms, the Yolngu “dance” the actions characteristic of the Ancestors and undertake purification rituals in circular pits or wells by washing and cleansing themselves, as well as burning items that have had direct contact with the deceased’s body.

Accompanying the sculpted landforms may be specially constructed shelters to hold the body of the deceased until the burial stage of the ceremony. Each shelter is specific to each mortuary ceremony and is given the name of the ancestral resting place that it symbolizes. The shelters are often decorated with feathers, shells, string and applied patterns, every detail of which relates to the social identity of different kin who are aiding the deceased on their journey. Mortuary shelters can be laden with symbolism and religious knowledge about the deceased that can only be interpreted by initiated members of the group. The form of the shelter may represent both the Ancestor, a geographical place that was the resting place of the Ancestor, and other physical manifestations of the ancestor.

Other objects representing particular characteristics of the Ancestor or ancestral homeland may also be incorporated into mortuary ceremonies. Externally, these objects may be present as upright forked posts and a ridge-pole (sometimes symbolic of a dwelling of the Ancestor), a rock, a dead tree trunk positioned vertically in the ground with suspended paperbark parcels of bones, or a line of decorated string (symbolic of all the Yolngu groups associated with the Ancestor and linked through country and ceremony). Such objects act as spatial and semiotic markers for the ceremonial participants.

Hollow logs and mortuary flags are other elements of Yolngu mortuary ceremonies. Hollow log coffins were traditionally used to store the deceased’s clean and crushed bone remains and were placed in a vertical position on the ground. Such log coffins are highly decorated with Yolngu symbols and have been transformed into a contemporary art form. Mortuary flag poles are used to denote or bring news of death, and were erected in the ground near a customary camp, or outside houses in