

## Effect of Yoga on Development of Culture

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**Abstract:** *This paper explores whether practicing yoga may become a method for conscious shaping of life, ie. means of self-cultivation and development of culture in their surroundings. The goals of yoga and culture have the same direction, which is above individual design, development, evolution of consciousness. The existence of schools for the training of yoga instructors and increased interest of individuals to actively create well-being in their life through yoga practice affect the development of culture. Culture is focused on the transformation of personality and all-round development of man's essential powers. Yoga culture derives from the assumptions, values and behaviors that promote the jama and nijama. The practice of yoga provides an opportunity for personal development through which an individual finds meaning through expressing their full potential, to more substantial and comprehensive life .*

**Keywords:** *yoga, culture, development, self-cultivation*

### Culture as a concept

Culture as a concept is very complex and different theories starting from the economic and social, through technological and psychosociological to anthropological philosophical attempted to provide an answer. Etymologically the term "culture" is derived from the Latin word "*cultus*" and "*colere*". The word "*colere*" means "nurture", "harbor", "process".

There are two basic meanings of the word "culture", the first practical - material that culture understands as a process of nurturing their own offspring, ie. children and youth, but also the cultivation of soil, plants and animals; material culture.

The second primary meaning of the word "culture" is the process of nurturing the soul and spirit, and the development of man's psychic and spiritual abilities. In this sense Cicero understood philosophy as "the culture of the soul" (*Cultura animi philosophia est*): spiritual culture, and culture in the narrow sense, which are science, art and philosophy.

In relation to the social and philosophical and methodological basis there is a difference between the naturalistic understanding of culture, idealistic – understanding of the value, technological positivist and dialectical understanding of the culture. The basis of naturalistic concept of culture is that nurturing and improving the natural environment is considered culture. Nature is neither cultural nor uncultured, or anti-cultural.

Idealistic-value understandings of culture contrary to a naturalistic conceive that base and the content of culture are the human spirit, in other words consciousness not only independent of nature but also of social reality.

Leslie White who is the representative of the technological positivist understanding of culture believes that culture is a form of energy, technology purposefully designed. According to him the energy has to be restrained, directed and controlled to be significant in the cultural systems.

The historical materialist conception defines culture as "the totality of the material and spiritual values that mankind has created during its social and historical practices" (Šešić, 1989).

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In everyday life and activities of people the concept of culture is related to etiquette, or for faster integration into the new fashion trends up to (not) cultural belonging to the variety of informal groups. Manners and courtesy in relationships are often identified with a term "cultured individual" and are linked to the city (urban) lifestyle, and uncultured to the village (rural) lifestyle (Bozovic, 1989).

In relation to the forms of existence and activity there is a culture of basic forms of existence, including the culture of nutrition, the culture of sex, work culture; then culture of human relationships and human behavior. Previously talked about the culture of the spirit and nowadays more and more about the culture of the body, the gym, the culture of nutrition, the culture of clothing and housing, the work culture, the culture of leisure.

Culture as a phenomenon is associated with values, with something that has some value and importance in human life, human activities and behavior.

### **Culture - the pursuit of development and constant improvement**

In contemporary philosophy of values and sense culture is a process of value and meaningful process of shaping the human condition and human reality. The individual is meaningful and active being (Šešić, 1989).

Cultural activities and work must be not only meaningful but true human values, ie. I can not have some inhumane functional sense. Any human activity that would be considered to be cultural must meet two criteria: cultural activity serves the development of the individual and the benefit of the wider community, otherwise it would not be a cultural activity. That is why the culture can be considered a true positive human activity that is at once the cultivation of human life, behaviors and actions, and the design of everyday reality, overcoming nonsense.

The theory of sense that includes the grounds could be applied to the culture, a sense of expediency and sense of functionality. Many economic organizations have a sense of the merits and has no sense of organization, or suitability, functionality or value sense. So under the culture can be considered a true positive human activity that is at once the cultivation of human life, human behavior and human actions, the creation of human life and reality, overcoming the meaninglessness of human life. Conversely, any decrease or negation of the value or the meaning of human reality represents decline and the denial of culture. There is only a development or decline.

Culture homogenizes human aspirations, needs, goals but also carries possibilities in itself to realize human unity as the universe based on the harmonization of autonomous consciousness. Culture carries the aspiration towards a more human individual (Životić, 1982).

Culture is a consciousness about the constant evolution that an individual gets about himself/herself and the world in which they live (Sartre, 1979).

Culture is a "good" to be achieved by way of living that society has established. He gives the role to humanize the life as a way to improve the existing (Marcuse, 1977). Culture is a creative activity, ie. enrichment of human life and expanding the borders of humanity (Petrović, 1978). It is a great importance of the human realizations and actions with an aim to bringing the culture to make sense, and the basis is value orientation. Values-norms are different from the value projections, because the first ones maintain the existing social structure in which a man is left with no self-awareness of their capabilities, while value-projections create man as an autonomous and self-conscious being who always wants something new, and who wants the self-realization in a totality of manifestation (Kuvačić, 1970).

Man creates and makes his living using the culture, meet their egzistential needs and develop a richer system of motivation striving to fuller personality (Golubovic, 1973).

Culture makes all things material and spiritual which individuals and groups throughout its history created by giving them value in order to design human existence and always new satisfaction of genuine human needs (Bozovic, 1989).

## The meaning of life

The question of supreme meaning of human life has long been present in the philosophy of values, and contemporary theories of values and meaning. Depending on the axiological-philosophical point of view it is considered that the ultimate meaning of life consists in satisfying physical-sensory needs, or the acquisition of material wealth, social power and prestige, and contrary to that the creation of cultural goods, and all-round development of human society and of a person itself as a personality. Some philosophers have searched for the meaning of human life in something that transcends transience, in something transcendent.

According to Karl Jaspers, the philosopher of existence, the ultimate meaning of life lies on the other side of this life. M. Heidegger's based some phenomenological ontology and existential philosophy of sense of human existence considering that it was "return to the being", "waiting for the coming of beings", "waiting for the coming of sense," "relaxation about the things" and "openness to the mystery."

In contrast to theologians, axiological idealists and existentialists, F.J. Rintelen was looking for the supreme purpose of life in the very human reality, in most human activities, especially the spiritual and cultural, in "exercising not completely certain time values", which is linked to transcendence of meaning of individual's life (Šešić, 1977).

Culture is the way to self-realization of spirit and general human movement based on sense or search for it.

Yoga as a discipline, some two thousand years sees the journey to sense in practice, which includes direct coverage of reality (continuous perception and understanding), versus analytical that implies fragmentary understanding. Yogi does not match the parts to a whole. Yogi understands the reality as it is from the whole.

## Yoga and culture

In the last five decades, there are more and more scientific studies of the effects of practice. Studies suggest that there is a potential that can be used to reduce anxiety, stress, depression. Studies emphasize the preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative effects. Yoga is a way to "inside", and gives us the opportunity to expand the scope of our mental potentials and consciousness (Salagame, 2010).

Yoga influences the development of culture by returning the meaning and purpose in life of an individual. Any life activity become painted by a higher purpose and meaning.

By becoming aware of their abilities, emotions, thoughts' processes and their own capabilities and limitation, yoga practitioner acquires the necessary conditions to manage the same by becoming more active.

To a passive observer of life who feels anxiety, fear, envy and jealousy, Yoga offers the opportunity for active participation. Yoga techniques have encouraged the development of culture because culture is every overcoming of meaninglessness of human life, human actions, activities and behaviors (Šešić, 1977).

The man of today finds meaning in the "killing time" watching television, following the fashion trends in major shopping malls, doing everything by default that most people do being trapped by matrix of desires, achievements. Yoga techniques offer a way of making meaning through the expression of one's full potential, to more substantial living. Yama and niyama yoga as part of the concept allows the process of cultivation, by adoption of human values.

Yoga practitioners live proposed values, performing the process of self-cultivation. Learning experience for the value - in the Indian spiritual tradition of the establishment of *bhavana* (from the root *bhu* - which is related to our "being"). Being in the virtues the undesirable signs could be avoided, restoration of pain, suffering and ignorance (Patanjali, 1977).

The culture of yoga in itself includes yoga intelligence that makes sense of awareness of energy, physical, intellectual, communication and motivational potentials, and precise evaluation of the same abilities of their management. Te culture of Yoga is derived from consideration of yoga as a philosophy of living that is a

lifestyle. Yoga culture includes the culture of the body (awakening of the natural energy movements and physiological processes), culture of eating, culture of sexuality, culture of business expression, the culture of sentiment life, culture of communication, creative expression along with the conscious development of self-reliance.

"Today, we recognize two approaches to Yoga: Yoga as a system, ie. Discipline of self-improvement, lifestyle that results from the yoga philosophy of life and yoga as an effective technique. "

Yoga allows for awakening of the real nature of man, self-awareness. Self-awareness allows yoga practioners to recognize their own beliefs, values and awareness of their deepest life goals. Regardless of the impact of media, cultural pressure, or any other interference yogi is able to maintain its opinion sticking to the human values aiming to color any activity with the meaning; in each occurrence he/she tries to trace the essence. Practicing yoga we touch on our deepest meanings, values, purpose and motives; it is increased awareness of internal resources as well as commitment to higher interests. The aim of yogi is to achieve the state of unity - samadhi.

Individuals who practice yoga change their life philosophy by adopting a new life values, they change their behavior, attitudes, aiming for humanity and higher goals in their lives. By adopting the principles of yamas and niyamas (rules of conduct and compliance methods), yogi develops awareness, leading to a culture of high yoga intelligence (Nikić, 2010).

What distinguishes the true yoga practioner from the one who is not the true yoga practioner is the depth in the approach. The depth is characterized by the purpose painted awareness during his/her lifetime as much as during performing the techniques of yoga.

Today's mass culture perceives the culture of yoga only as a body culture whose center is the physical appearance and attractiveness, disregarding the philosophy of life that offers yoga which arises from the need for self-actualization.

In America, some forms of yoga (oriented towards the cultivation of the body), became part of modern consumerate culture. Individuals consume it like any other item of modern times, such as using mobile phones, internet ... Hypnotized by the ideology of consumerism that corporations successfully sell, they see only what is directly in front, but even then they only see through the lenses distorted by their own ego. Can we have so simplistic understanding of Yoga? Yoga asanas are only part of the yoga system. Yoga should be available to any individual who wishes to reach the fullness of his/her life.

The man of today with the help of modern technology has become an observer of his and others' lives, and yoga practice is a way for an individual to resist the global consumerate philosophy. Yoga is focused on internal growth, which is not linear. Many people come to yoga class from a desire to shape their body and reduce muscle tension caused by improper lifestyle; too much sitting, nervousness, negative thoughts about themselves and others not wanting to deeply perceive themselves, their potentials, but after a while they realize that yoga offers a new cultural form that eliminates the causes of imbalance.

Yoga culture are not only asanas, they prepare the body, balance energy flows, and make problems better visible, ie. challenges that ones overcomed by an individual make him/her more human and aware human being. Yoga culture requires from the individual greater awareness and real change not only of the matrix.

The individual does not repeat the patterns of behavior but by awakening them makes an impact on the change by accepting all his/her thoughts and feelings, realizing that both the sorrow, and anger are acceptable but less desirable. If dear people die, we will not be happy, sadness is natural, but we will not stay long in it, but strive to be active in life.

Today the Ministries of certain states finance the introduction of yoga in schools through the institutes and universities. The schools are obliged to introduce yoga class in the schedule, teachers get trained to give yoga classes. Educational institutions train yoga therapist to work in health facilities and train yoga instructors to work in institutes and schools.

## Conclusion

Yoga culture demands from the individual the replacement of passive consumerist philosophy. Practicing yoga enables the achievement of a higher level of awareness and the need to be an active participant in life.

Yoga gives a suggestion of an active life. Yoga proposes activism! It is not a modern consumerist culture. Yoga offers a completely new life style, taking life in their hands.

Applying the methods of yoga (jama and nijama), in everyday life, an individual knowingly enters into the process of self-cultivation and makes conscious effort to overcome the undesirable states of mind.

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Received: July 18, 2011  
Accepted: August 10, 2011