DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
Hello, everyone. Thank you very much for joining us for this webinar. You may see that a location pull just popped up in Fernie. We would like to know where you are joining from today so we know times in all of those wonderful things.
My name is Dr Christa Kuberry and today I am joined by Anya Foxen who was going just such a pleasure. She is a historian studying yoga and spirituality. She is the author of two books, inhaling spirit, which is coming out I think now, basically connect with Oxford.
And also graffiti of a Yogi. And she is also currently finishing a book with myself, so we are finishing a book called is this yoga? The histories, concepts of contemporary practice. Look for that soon. Anya Foxen is also an associate professor at Cal poly State University.
A long-term practitioner and a quote unquote retired yoga teacher. I am so thankful to have you with us, Anya Foxen, to share your scholarship, she is also on the committee for the yoga theory practice group for the American Academy of religion. I believe the coach there as well. Such an honour. Thank you.

ANYA FOXEN:
Thanks, Krista. Hello everyone. Just a little bit about logistics first. I have got about half an hour worth of stuff here that I kind of want to say just as a set up for our discussion. But I am also very happy to hear from all of you and I am happy to field questions and thoughts that you might have at really at any point. So use the Q&A function. If I say anything you want to hear more about, or something but you wonder about, or you know, you just have a thought that you would think would be helpful, go ahead and share that at any time.
I will try and stop a couple times to make sure we hit on all of that. The other thing that I want to say to preface, is that this is the first part of a four-part series. So for each workshop, we are going to try and focus on kind of one specific topic.
But the way that I'm thinking about it is that they are also all going to sort of stuck together.

What we are dealing with here is a story. And the story is about how our yoga practice got to be the way that it is.
So one thing that I want to acknowledge right off the bat is that the story is going to look a little bit different for everybody because yoga practice is a little bit different for everybody.
And you can probably see my dog walking around behind me, so we will just let that go. (Laughs)
What I'm trying to say is depending on the kind of yoga that you are practising, different parts of what I am going to say over these four talks year might resonate with you kind of more or less. Then others.
So depending on what that ends up looking like, right, we can hopefully have a discussion together about how the variety of staff that modern yogas looks like and fits into this narrative.
So actually, what I want to focus on today's session is getting us to think about what we mean when we say this word yoga.
In other words, what is yoga? Right? You will notice the keywords in our titles our origins and authenticity.
Let me just clarify quickly that I'm not here to tell you where yogurt comes from or what it does and what it doesn't
I am a historian as Krista mentioned, so from a historical perspective, these questions don't really have hard and fast answers.

They are very complicated questions.

And they are especially complicated in our modern global context. We are talking about origins and authenticity, really what it means and how it has been heavily influenced by colonialism.

And we have to talk about issues of power dynamics and social justice.

So what I would like for us to think about as we are kind of trying to wrap our heads around the story of modern yoga, isn't just the objective historical facts of how maybe certain ideas or certain practices got to be the way that they are, but also what this really means for us as practitioners.

So what I would like for us to think about as we are kind of trying to wrap our heads around the story of modern yoga, isn't just the objective historical facts of how maybe certain ideas or certain practices got to be the way that they are, but also what this really means for us as practitioners.

So that all being said, we are going to stay a bit more conceptual, so I will talk a bit more abstractly rather than throwing like a whole bunch of historical texts and data and things at you.

And then over the next few sessions, we will try and really dig into some of that history there.

So specifically, for the first half of today's topic, I think I am going to deconstruct and pull things apart a little bit. And then in the second half, we are going to see if we can kinda put some of the stuff back together.

I am seeing the questions already pop up. We will talk about some of the stuff like in Mark Singleton's book yoga body. That book really examines how it is that postural practice came to be. The way that it is.

And that is a lot of my own work as well. So what I want to do today is sort of preface I little bit about how we fit moderate postural practice in the larger story of what yoga has been and what it is.

Let me just kind of give you an example of the kinds of conceptual things that I am talking about.

I think we often like to say that yoga isn't just about physical poses. Yoga isn't synonymous with (inaudible). But let's think about what it is that we are actually saying there.

Like of course yoga isn't just physical poses because if it were, then every time you move your body in a particular way, regardless of why you are doing it, it would be yoga. So let me actually show you what I mean by this and share my screen here.

I practices. Hang tight with me for just a second. -- Practised this

OK, so this is yoga. As we today acknowledge it.

But then, this presumably is not yoga, right?

So we all kind of intuitively know that there is more to calling something yoga than just the fact that you put your body into a particular shape. That is something that is so obvious that maybe we ignore it little bit.

And this applies even if the kind of yoga practice that we are talking about really just looks like a bunch of shapes.

So here is the tricky thing then. I will show you a couple more examples.

This is yoga.

This is light on yoga.

But then, is this yoga?

They are kind of the same pose, right? And I can even tell you that the pose on the right, so the one that looks more like a sketch is supposed to be performed in tandem with breathing exercises and breath work.
But the thing is, I can also tell you with reasonable certainty that Mary Bissell, the author of this book on women’s fitness from 1891, had probably never heard of yoga. At least not of the kind that he is performing on the left there.

Even if she had, it is not what she would’ve said her book was about. Technically, the thing on the right is not a (inaudible). It does not come from India. And historically, it really has little or if anything to do with the stuff that was called yoga.

I mean that historically. And that is an important distinction. So what I am saying is that the practice that Mary Bissell was advocating for in 1841, evolved more or less independently than any kind of preceding Indian yoga traditions.

Now we know this because tax are sort of nice that way.

They use words to represent concepts. We can mostly kind of figure out what the words mean. And we can trace them back and the concepts that they represent to other texts. Sometimes the author might even tell us where they are getting a particular concept from.

So that is why we can say that Mary Bissell is not talking about yoga and the concepts and practices that she is talking about don’t come from yoga sources. They come from somewhere else.

This is actually the history that we will kind of look at in future sessions, where is this other stuff coming from? How does it kind of come to bear on our modern postural practice? What is the kind of entangled history there.

For now, I just want to point out that it is very interesting that one of these poses is called yoga and the other one technically is not.

So this is kind of a modern example. Let's go in the opposite direction for a second. This is yoga.

This is (inaudible) sitting what he describes as a meditative (inaudible).

But then, what about this?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
It didn’t change for me at least.

ANYA FOXEN:
I wonder why. Let me-share my screen real quick here. I might've just froze or something.

The pictures are helpful, obviously. OK, let's see. Share screen.

How's that? Cool, perfect. On the left now, you see this man which is the first mentioned that I mentioned. And then on the right you see the famous what is sometimes called the (inaudible). This is from the site of the (inaudible) civilization. So some of you might be familiar with this image already. But for those of you who are not, it is often used to trace yoga practice in South Asia all the way back to the (inaudible) civilization. We are talking around 2500 BCE before the common Era.

So when you hear people say that yoga is 5000 years old, this is usually what they are referring to. But the tricky thing about the (inaudible) civilization is that this was a very long time ago. Which is sort of obvious, again.

But think about what that really means in terms of how little we actually understand what things would've been like in this culture. So for one, we cannot even read the language that is inscribed in some of these seals.

So really what we have, is these material artifacts like architecture and pottery and seals like this one.

You see an aqueduct and you can set of -- sort of assume that this is something is for air negation and plumbing and I kinda think stop but you don’t need to read a text about it to know what it means.

But what about these really cultural loaded images that we are dealing with, where there is all sorts of symbolic and maybe even religious meaning that is involved?

What we see in this image on the right is a kind of roughly rendered human figure sitting with her legs crossed. That
Can we honestly say that they must be meditating?

Do we really even know why this person is seated that way?

Did we know what this pose means? And specifically, here is a really tricky thing, because we can kind of project back, but do we know what it would have meant almost 5000 years ago?

In the specific time and the specific place.

There are all sorts of reasons why somebody might sit with her legs crossed. Including the fact that this is just you wouldn't do when you don't have a chair.

Is this a proto-yogi kind of image? I mean maybe. That is possible. But the thing is, we do not really know.

And so the larger point I am trying to make here is that just looking at a kind of surface level physical thing that a body is doing doesn't actually tell us all that much.

It doesn't mean that the physical thing, the pose in this case is meaningless.

Actually, it is really just the opposite. The pose can be really meaningful. But it can be meaningful in a lot of different ways depending on the context.

And so what we need to do is kind of really think about that context to figure out what the meaning is.

I will stop sharing at this point

Are there any pressing questions that we need to address? I think we are good, right?

OK, perfect.

Let me kind of build on that a little bit then. When we say that yoga isn't just about the poses then, what are we really mean by that?

Usually we point to maybe the philosophy behind it. And we say that yoga is a holistic practice. And a lifestyle.

And that is obviously all very, very important. But I also kinda want to refrain this question for us a little bit. Because I think often, we are kind of dismissive of yoga as a physical practice.

Because we have this kind of reflexive assumption that if something is happening in the body, it somehow less profound or less important or less complicated then something like meditation, which by the way, you don't really ever meditate without being in your body. Right, meditation is a thing that happens in the body.

Or if you wanted to go more abstract, Navy ethics or philosophy or something like that. -- Maybe

None of this is really actually true, is it? Bodily practices are also really meaningful and complicated. Otherwise we would not have all these ambiguities like constant figuring out what these images that I just showed you are actually depicted.

That would be really straightforward because a pose would translate to something. Here is maybe kind of a way to think about it. Maybe the idea of moving the body is not at itself very interesting. We do this all of the time. Like, I can just fling my arm out and so what.

But it is also kind of rare that we move our bodies for no reason whatsoever.

So we could say that actually what is really interesting is why we move the body in specific ways.

What is putting the body in one pose or another are moving it this way or that way supposed to be doing? And why?

For what?
What do you think is going on inside your body when you do this particular thing?

What are you trying to accomplish? What is the goal of the practice in other words?

So I think and I'm kind of seeing this pop up in the questions, this is where things get really interesting again, especially if we are talking about kind of the idea about Orgins and authenticity.

I am seeing some of the things about modern yoga as may be a diluted version of the original yoga.

Or kind of pointing to this idea that (inaudible) is one of the eight (inaudible) that potentially describes in the yoga sutras.

And so this is actually where we are going so bear with me for a second. Because I think there is some really interesting ways in which we can kind of act, admit both of those things that being true.

Also not is one of the eight limbs. Yet modern yoga is not the same as (inaudible) yoga. And it is really interesting to grapple with. Like, OK, what is it that that means?

So if we, I am a historian. I will repeat that. I think that really, really reflects my perspective here in a way that again, it is we are not thinking about this from a strictly historical lens. This story might look different for you.

But if we are really interested in historical origins, then really also what we have to kind of grapple with is the fact that understandings not of just big picture spiritual goals, so what is it that the yoga sutras brings in that we are advocating for in the grand scheme of things? Not that kind of stuff. That is different from one culture to another.

But also, the more kind of nuts and bolts understandings of how bodies work. How they are different from one culture to another. This is especially true if we are talking across time.

It is really important that we don't have a kind of flat picture of the past. And this is also very true when it comes to something like yoga. So on the one hand, we can say people are people. Meaning regardless of time of plays, human society is just really complicated.

There is diversity and this is this agreement and there's social and political and economic interests.

There's those tricky differences between like a, the ideals that we aspire to. And our lives realities.

And so all of this is kind of universally an aspect of human civilization. From this perspective, to imagine that there was like, this time in the golden past when everybody sat down and kind of perfect isolation from you know, the complications of daily life and they read one single text. Let's say the yogas sutures. And they understood it perfectly.

In all the exact same way and they practice it to the letter. And date mutually all of them agreed to call this yoga. I mean, that is not really realistic, is it?

Because think about all of the disagreements that we have about yoga now. It would not have been any more realistic back then that it is now. Because the complexity of human civilization hasn't really changed all that fundamentally.

So part of what we have to sort of talk about here is that historically speaking, the word yoga has never really meant one universal thing.

There has always been this kind of diversity of traditions and there's always been these disagreements about what and what doesn't count.

So that is part of what makes the story of yoga very complicated but it is also part of the stuff that make it very interesting.

So we are sitting here asking like, what is yoga? And Army really practising it? People in Southeast Asia would've been asking themselves this exact same thing 2000 years ago. That really hasn't changed very much.

So what is interesting is to kaizen look at that diversity and really sort of see well OK, what is going on here versus what is going on there. And what are the differences and where are they coming from. Maybe even more importantly.

That is one thing.
Here is kind of the other important thing to remember.

People are people, but cultural differences. Again, especially across time are also very, very real.

So think about this. A few hundred years ago, you would've lived your entire life thinking that the sun revolved around the earth. Yeah?

This would've been perfect rational for you to think. So as an educated person, this would've been your picture of the world. And this is a picture that would've been supported by that day's most advanced science.

So from this perspective, projecting like sort of our modern understanding of bodies of minds, of really anything in between on to premodern yogurt text, that is not really realistic either.

If we are going to understand yoga practices, whether they are bodily practices, whether they are meditative practices, whether it is philosophy, so like, why is it practice the way that it is.

Why are they putting the body in this pose? Why are they breathing this way? We really have to think about those practices in the context of their culture and their time.

Which means that we have to think not really just about spirituality and philosophy, but we have to think about psychology and we have to think about biology.

And we have to think about medicine. And not the way that we know those things to be. Our biology. Our psychology. Our medicine. But we have to think about what those things would have looked like for those people in that culture at that time.

For instance then, it is not always necessarily very helpful to impose our modern understandings of light, and anatomy onto premodern ideas of the (inaudible) body. We can look for connections.

But is also important to understand that we are really not talking about the same thing. People a few hundred years ago thought about their bodies and how they work differently. Then the way that we think about our bodies today.

So we talk about enzymes and hormones and neurotransmitters. But modern people wouldn't talked about the stuff. They would've talked about spirits and they would've talked about humors and wins and vital energies.

And so there might be really interesting and meaningful parallels between all of these things, but they are really sort of not the same.

So I really big important thing to kind of internalized is that we should not decide premodern or otherwise culturally different ways of talking about the body or talking about the practice. This means not treating them as less rational than our own.

These are things that I rational, that are coherent another sort of authoritative in their own context.

But it's also kind of means understanding that they are not somehow necessarily more authentic or something like that. They are just embedded in this different worldview.

So authenticity is a little bit relative I guess is what I'm trying to say.

Here's where we can kind of start with this question of what is yoga? Hopefully this can speak to some of the stuff that I see popping up in the Q&A as well.

Part of flight but be helpful here is to kind of not get too hung up on the word itself. Let me explain why. Because of course to many of us, yoga is this really meaningful word.

But the interesting thing about yoga which is... I mean, it has a history. It is a word in (inaudible) that has a particular etymology, it is a super basic and super generic word.

And as a word in Sanskrit that has a particular etymology, it is a super basic and super generic word.

And the interesting thing about the super generic words that I can mean a lot of different things depending on the
I am going to share my screen again here just to give you an example of what I mean. This is the thing that I have been working on in terms of well, how do we define yoga?

Which by the way, spoiler alert, you might have caught onto the fact that I am not necessarily advocating for defining it in any one way.

So this is kind of the standard since cryptic English dictionary entry for yoga. And I didn't even give y'all the whole thing. This is like the first half of it. Maybe the first 40% or so.

And this is important to understanding what is going on here. The way that the dictionary works is that it starts with the most common ways that a word is used. So that is what you see at the top.

And then it gets sort of increasingly more obscure and more specific.

So then we start getting into specific contexts. So notice what the most common usage of yoga is. Notice of those, ways of yoga is used is to refer to it as sort of literal yoking of horses. Some of you might already have a sense of this, given how often we say that yoga comes from the verbal of (inaudible) which basically means something like two yoke.

In fact, our English word yoke is a true cognitive of sun script words that are derived from (inaudible). Means a consummate, language to group. There's a common ancestor there.

And notice that it is not really (inaudible). It is not until we get all the way to the bottom of the list here that we get to the idea of yoga as something like meditation.

Again, I am only giving you about half of the full entry here. So as you do continue to go down the list, you do get a few more of these more specific kind of spiritual or philosophical definitions of yoga. So it will talk about yoga is the (inaudible). Yoga is this for like that (inaudible). Or something like that.

But what we should take away from this dictionary entry, is that actually when you see the word yoga and in ancient Sanskrit text, the chances are we are talking about a team of horses or a chariot or something. Just statistically speaking because these are the more common uses of that word. OK, fine.

Not every occurrence of the word yoga refers to the kind of yoga. That we care about in this conversation. That doesn't mean that yoga is not a real thing somehow.

So what does yoga mean when we do use it to refer to this sort of spiritual practice?

If there is all of the stuff about yoking in chariots, why is that stuff that we particularly care about at this moment, why is it also called yoga?

The easiest way to explain this I think is to kinda think about how often we use common technology as a metaphor.

So think for example of how we sometimes talk about the brain like is a computer. It is a really popular analogy and sort of our modern society. Or you can think about how during the scientific revolution, philosophers in Europe started talking about the universe as is kind of finely tuned clock mechanism.

Well, if it is 500 BCE, one of the most complex technologies you have is actually a chariot. It is why chariots are such a popular metaphor in ancient philosophical text. Especially if your trying to describe complex systems like a human cell. -- Self

The Buddhist use it. Plato uses it. It is like this really common... It is like a mean. -- Meme

Why are recalling the spiritual practice by the same word that means chariot? Well again, it is kind of a metaphor. It is not a literal use of the word. And so we can kind of think about our ancient -- anguish word yoke as a parent help -- as a parallel maybe. -- English word

So actually, there is another kind of similar word for if you really wanted to try and translate yoga to get a sense of OK, how is this being used and how does it mean in their original historical context where pops up?
The word that I really like to use is actually this word rig. Rig is a bit more of a nautical thing. It is actually how we refer to this complex like system of ropes and chains and pulleys and cords and stuff that we used to mount the masts and sails into a ship. So it is not a chariot but it is a little vehicle of some sort.

And so we can also use rig use sort of refer to any sort of multi (inaudible) structure like an oil rig or a camera rig.

You can use it as a verb to sort of refer to putting something together in general. Like when you wake up.

The thing that I really like about rig is that it also sort of speaks to this meaning of yoga that isn't a very common in the way we use today, but it pops up in the ancient text. And then I get really confused. We are sometimes told that yoga can sometimes even mean something like trick or fraud or something like that.

In any sort of wonder how that can be because yoga is his whole something.

But again, it is is really generic word. So think about the idea of like rigging a gain or rigging an election or something like that. -- Game. That is a gift from one meeting to another. It requires a sort of complex configuration of things.

So follow me a little bit further here for a second. Imagine that a few linea ago, somewhere in the world, there emerged this spiritual practice called rigging based on this metaphor of rigging up a sailing vessel, so the kind of complex at this traumatic self-discipline that you need to achieve this kind of particular spiritual state.

Fast-forward you know, 2 1/2 millennia or so and on the other side of the world, now we have people heading into fitness studios to get themselves kind of rigged up.

This is basically the story of yoga kind of in a nutshell.

Now, what is important to start up a intention to hear, if we are thinking about well, our ancient systems are more valid than modern systems, but more complex and modern systems, sometimes that might be true.

Because of course our sample size is also very specific. When we look at ancient yoga, we are reading these philosophical texts. Whereas modern yoga is a lived reality. It is very much this kind of popular thing.

But also what is important to sort of remember is that we are kind of talking about very different things potentially.

Because we are operating very different cultures. I will on share my screen here again.

However doing? Is this a good place to stop and chat elaborate?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
I think... You can continue to keep going. There is a lot of discussion in the chat, so thinking everybody for engaging with this. And maybe we will just ask a couple questions here that goes. And get back into your presentation.

But Kim is asking, how would you respond to the statement that we see yoga as we are.

ANYA FOXEN:
I mean, to some extent, that applies to like, anything, right? One of my big things... This is something that I really try to get my undergrads to wrap their heads around, I'm a college teacher in my day job.

Is that perspective really, really matters.

And that is not necessarily a bad thing. So, my students often like to talk about well, this source is bias. Or this perspective is slanted or something like that.

And the thing is, like, that's just sort of like, the human condition, right?

We see the world from our particular little situated place.

And I think that really applies even to the bigger kind of more profound things a yoga.

And that doesn't mean that everything is sort of relative, think we can come together and form common perspectives. And we can agree to some extent-like, what words mean.
But on the other hand, yeah. I think you some extent, practices aren't just these free-floating things out there on their own. Practices really don't exist apart from people.

Yoga does not exist apart from the people who practice that yoga.

It seems to us that it takes this that way in the past may be because we are not those people.

And we can look back and we can find a text and we can find this perfectly encapsulated philosophy and we can point to it and say well, there is yoga.

But somebody practice that. That thing lives. Because somebody embodied it and gave it life. Somebody did that at some point. If that kinda makes sense.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
It makes sense in from a yoga perspective as well, when you think of something like the (inaudible) and that being such a big part of the practice itself and it is, yes, you need to be aware of what you are aware of and why and how and what plays into how you gain your perspective.

And then from the historical sense of what we are doing with these talks in these lectures, it is really this idea that we need to understand our context.

One of my very favourite historians JC Smith always says that the purpose is to complicate rather than clarify. That is because there are all of these wonderful different ways of human beings looking at the world. And engaging with the world.

And Edwin Brian, who I know Anya Foxen Ashley how to translate his yoga sutras, he has one of my favourites. Which is not that contains an inexhaustible for creativity. So if there is an exhaustible potential within that, there is also to different perspectives and so I think yeah.

We have to think about that and not separate the lived experience of human beings in this perspectives as well.

And also catch that with the fact that Anya Foxen but it before, that those laypeople are living in historical times in different societies with different worldviews both culturally and philosophically, etc.

I don't know if you want to add to that Anya Foxen, or if you'd like me to aunt -- Austin is question or view that you continue talking.

ANYA FOXEN:
Yeah. I think that is an important aspect of what I am getting at. Is that there is this sort of inexhaustible diversity of what human practice might look like. Let's see... Krista, you probably have a better sense of this. Is there pressing questions that we should address now before going on? I do have a little bit more stuff that I can talk about, but I must happy to sort of address what folks are already thinking.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
I think we aren't good. The only other question I saw that might, I know I see Kathleen's and we will address it after this next one. But this might fit into before we get into, a couple people are asking about traditional text and check like the (inaudible). And if that has anything to do with his understanding of your explanation of what is yoga and if yoga is even part of the (inaudible).

ANYA FOXEN:
Yeah. Actually, how I saw another one just pop up a party feel that yoga being defined as discipline? I really like that, actually. Although, I think that's kind of part not all of what we might be talking about here.

Maybe let me go on for another little while longer and then so I can kind of give us like a couple more conceptual things.

And then disorder preface where I would like us to go from here. I know we have three more of these things, right? Is to kind of talk about if we are talking about yoga as a kind of physical practice, which again, I think those of us who are practising modern yoga, maybe if that isn't even the part that we prioritize, it is a part that we kind of want to explain.

Like where does that come from? So I can kind of point to some of the historical traditions that we might want to be
I guess part of just sort of keep going a little bit further with that point of like, yoga as rigging or yoking. This idea, the words basic meaning even if we are talking about a spiritual practice rather than like chariots or something. It is still this idea of connecting something, joining something, maybe arranging something in a particular way. That can still mean almost anything. And so I think the question sorta becomes, OK, so what are you reading or yoking? What are you yoga in?

And this is what a keep talking about the historical complexity. This is usually receive a lot of variability where comes to premodern Indian text. Depending on their general philosophy and their worldview. And so I don't kinda want to get too far into the specific philosophies right this second because well, that is more time that we have. We sort of had spent more aspect multiple hours talking about philosophy here. But just to give you an example to kinda think about something that folks might be familiar with. Let's say we are talking but a text like the yoga sutras. Yoga there is really about this idea of kind of fine-tuning the mechanisms of the mind. So if you wanted to keep going with our translation or our metaphor, it is sort of the idea of like getting your own internal rigging into good order.

And specifically into the kind of order that is conducive to liberating your ultimate self.

Which in this case, is not your body. And it is not your mind.

That is kind of an important aspect as to what the yoga sutras as a text is doing.

So you can kinda think about yoga as properly rigging or properly yoking the mind and the senses and the intellect so that's basically, you sort of untangle that mess that there normally would be in.

Or the (inaudible) to keep turning and turning around.

Typically, your mental rigging is sort of all tangled up and out of whack. And that actually traps your true self in all of this stuff that isn't it and that isn't the self. And that doesn't belong to it.

So yoga then, according to potentially, I am a pit elaborating here, but I think this works.

Yoga is untangling that stuff, putting it into the kind of set up that is going to allow the mind to serve as a tool or as a proper vehicle for the self liberation. But in that system, interestingly, the idea is to actually sort of isolate the human self.

The yoga sutras and the philosophy kinda goes hand-in-hand with, they call this (inaudible).

That is the ultimate stage. That is yoga. Yoga sort of as a goal rather than a method.

Further south, the true self stands and isolation. It is totally alone in its nature as pure consciousness.

So this idea of yoga as union unlikely -- like wheat like to talk about sometimes, it really doesn't work there.

At least not the way that we sometimes like to talk about it in other contacts.

In a not context, yoga is not union. At least not in terms of the ultimate goal.

It is similar in (inaudible) actually, where again, you want to separate the self from the self that is keeping entrapped which is matter.

Yoga is this separation, this isolation of the self of the mind and the body that is identifies with. In ancient (inaudible) philosophy, the kind of pure internally consciousness of yourself is actually your highest reality.

It is not like there's another larger thing that it ignites with.

So that's one. Then on the other hand, this is where it's kind of helpful to notice that potentially is not the only person who wrote about yoga and the ancient world.

On the other hand, we can think about may be (inaudible). Like the kind of thing that (inaudible) talks about in the book of (inaudible). Because that book also has a lot of (inaudible) in it but uses it a little bit differently. Because then it is (inaudible). It is devotion to Krishna.
Or better yet, maybe later (inaudible) traditions where in both of those contacts, we maybe get to this idea of yoga really as union. Union of the self with God or union between the individual self and a cosmic self or something like that.

Are really just with the cosmos. The union of everything.

There are some techs that describe yoga as kind of collapsing all dualities.

So in those cases, it is not just a kind of internal rigging that you have to sort of put in orders that the self can go somewhere else. It really is this idea of kind of hitching yourself up to something else. Igniting was something else. -- Uniting. Some higher power or greater reality.

These meetings coexist. These are both kind of philosophical textually premodern ancient even, meetings of yoga.

So to kind of get back to this point, that we really have to sort of look at and think about context, I think it is really helpful to sort of not exotic size the past. Are not mythologized the past. There is truth I think in the past. And there is truth in these texts that we read. There is a lot of wisdom there. But there are also kind of their philosophies. They are meant to be considered alongside one another. And in the case of yoga, they are yet -- meant to be sort of experience. And experience as we know really tends to look different from person to person.

So let's see...

How are we doing with questions?

Krista, Army good?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
We have just one that is quite to the top.

I think the idea, Kathleen is asking what your thoughts are on the hyper attachment of teachers to gurus and lineage in terms of (inaudible)?

ANYA FOXEN:
I think that is such an interesting and important question to bring into this context because now that we just talked about all of these different traditions in all of these different sort of ancient wisdom of the texts, of course, if you think historically, the other really important thing to remember is that we talk about texts. We talk about the yoga sutras as is thing that we can sort of order off of Amazon and just read on your own in your room.

But that is not historically how things have worked. Especially not in South Asian civilization at large, but in the context of yoga.

Where you learned from a guru. You have a lineage. That is how this stuff is transmitted.

That is not necessarily a uniquely South Asian thing, you see that in other contexts too.

But I think it really sort of... The attachment that we still have two gurus into lineages and to teachers of all sorts, and we can sort of add texts I think into this basket, right? Because we don't have a human teacher, the text is your teacher.

It makes sense in terms of how the tradition develops. It makes sense in terms of how human beings sort of learned complex concepts in general.

And so I mean, I think that you know, I don't want to comment one way or the other on whether this is a good thing or a bad thing, I don't think it is either in any sort of automatic forever true way.

But I think to some extent, history helps they are. To recognize how the historical concept of the role of the guru and the role of the lineage, what that would've looked like. That kind of sort of social maybe even safeguards if we are talking about all the things that are coming up now in terms of abuse and things like that.
What would've been in place historically. And how we are adopting those same systems to our modern context. Where are power structures.

All sorts of other social stuff looks very different.

So I guess the short answer is like, I get why it is there. And I think there are good reasons why it is there. I think there is a lot of value in those traditions and those lineages. In those texts. But things are meant to be sort of questioned and contextualized and reinterpreted.

And part of that happens on the level of the individual. And part of that also happens on the level of society. Of groups like this, where we all get together and we sort of figure out and we talk about well, so what we actually want this to look like?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
Thank you. I think that is really helpful. And when we are speaking about gurus and lineages and history, it is especially important that context piece of understanding you know, when these techs are when these traditions, what was happening, things that were taught early, you know, the yoga sutures themselves are the very small things that we are supposed to be unpacked between the teacher and the student.

And for the particular purposes of what was needed on that students path, and what was the particular teaching, of what the teacher was sharing.

And everything about certain traditions like (inaudible) for instance, the Guru is paramount. In other traditions, anything about you know, more Western post-lineage yoga practices, you don't see the same attachment in the ways that we have seen previously.

And we see in some places like Shanker and in the (inaudible) tradition, where there is even more that guru or understanding of the teacher being the one person disseminating the truth about -- out that lineage versus what we see today. I think again, and I'm sure Anya Foxen will talk about it as well, it is something that we have to continue to hold intention and to look out into question.

Which is also part of any sort of philosophical or spiritual practices this whole idea that we question and that we are self reflective and we figure out what the traditions mean for us in our moments with the knowledge that we have now.

So yeah, thank you for asking that. And thank you for your answer, Anya Foxen.

We have another... It is a comment in a question and I recognize we only have about 10 minutes, so maybe one or two more questions if you have anything else to add, please feel free.

Fly maggots saying that you love -- she love that you said that authenticity is relative. I sometimes feel pressure to pull back my passion on yoga. (inaudible).

Can you please speak to finding and presenting an authentically across disciplines as a yoga teacher? Or Avenue -- or as yoga -- or of yoga as a teacher.

ANYA FOXEN:
That is such an interesting question. And so part of, I think maybe what I will do to wrap up today, so we can maybe just leave a minute or two at the end there, Krista. His two again, sort of historically position the way to set us up for next time. This idea of yoga as a physical practice.

I think to some extent, I ate big proponent of pagan, like historical social context. And so Meg, you mentioned the sort of not just the physical side of the practice, but also the business side of yoga. And that is obviously something, that is capitalism. We all struggle with what it means to exist kind of authentically. In that particular sort of system. And I think for we have some these ideals that we often have, those can especially come into conflict for us.

But on the other hand, I guess maybe what I want to push back against a little bit or at least again to refrain, is this idea of like, OK, so in this context, we really only care about the physical side of yoga. We'll do care about the
In this kind of brings us back to the sort of stuff that I was talking about in the beginning. I don't think that physical yoga is ever just physical yoga.

I think that even if all we are doing is moving our body, I think we are always doing that in some sort of larger framework. We are always doing that for a reason. Otherwise, I mean, what would that even look like? We never do anything without some sort of larger intention.

And I think just sort of saying that OK, this is about (inaudible) and this is physical. And so, it is maybe, again, it is somehow more shallow or something like that than this other stuff. I mean, maybe. But that is not really sort of enough I think. I think we need to think it about it little bit deeper. And I think we need to sort of really with ourselves as well, just like when we engage in our practices, we need to figure out OK, so why am I doing this thing?

Even if it is is really basic physical thing that I'm doing.

What is going on in my body?

How does this relate to the way that I conceptualize my body in relation to my mind and in relation to the world around me? Why am I doing this practice?

Inside, mechanically, what do I think is happening? But also in that sort of larger sense. –

We talked about yoga fine-tuning versus yoga as union, which of the two senses if we kind of want to Semper Fi down to two senses is operating for me? Is it one, is it the other, is it both? And I think that works both the physical practice as well. Because again, I think there's always is larger picture if that makes sense.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
That makes total sense and I think in terms of thinking about even authenticity in that moment, and the reflection on the fact that there are all of these various (inaudible) wonderful different ways that you can practice yoga, understand yoga.

So I think part of the practice for ourselves of students of this path or practice or this philosophy or whatever word you want to put on it, is that we figure out what that means to us and then how we share that from our space.

So for some of us, that mind mean physical (inaudible) might mean more of a meditative practice. For some is, might be service. For some of us, it might be devotion. If you go back to the (inaudible), that is what (inaudible) is essentially saying. That is that there is all these different paths. Find the one that works for you and commit to it.

In general, commit multiple

SPEAKER:

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
I think it is important what you find in trying to fit trends or go against some sort of idea or really black-and-white ideas of right and wrong practice. Or purpose. So yeah, we have five minutes left and we have lots of questions. Do you want one more? Or do you want to end with what you had to share?

ANYA FOXEN:
Oh, gosh. You know what, let me end with what I have to share.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
We will have much more time, so please, everyone continued to bring your questions in. We love all of the engagements. And we appreciate you.

ANYA FOXEN:
It is nice that we are doing this is a multipart series. So some these questions that I am seeing, I think like, now that
I am just going to share my screen one last time here.

And what I want to sort of frame for us again, just to maybe sort of pulled some of the things from today together and to set up some other stuff or later, is again, this idea of kind of both the variability of yoga and to speak a little bit to that idea of Origins. So where does this practice actually sort of pop up? Maybe not first, but in the at least some of the first instances that we can substantiate as shortly. -- Historically

Historically, we see the stuff pop up in response to a kind of accidental question. Existential question of cycle and birth and death and rebirth?

So that is what it looks like. The way that this cycle is. There isn't a missing there. But this is (inaudible). I think I tried to clean up the (inaudible) on VA and try to get rid of it altogether is what happened. In the way that this cycle is perpetuated is through karma. Karma in this case being the kind of action that gets reaction. And so it keeps the real turning. It keeps you in the cycle.

So the question is, how do we presumably, this is a very good thing or these people in ancient times concluded that this was not a very good thing. The question then becomes what do we do about it? And so we get this idea that at some point, you can achieve, you can break the cycle and you can achieve liberation. You can achieve their fauna or whatever word you want to use for it. -- Nirvana

Here's where I want to leave us. If action is the problem, what do we do about it? What are our options? And you can sort of redo tax like (inaudible) and he read to the yoga sutras and you read through some Jane and some Buddha's text around this time, there is basically three options that pop up.

If action is the problem, the most straightforward one is you stop acting.

Like if doing stuff keeps you trapped in the cycle, stop doing stuff. And then boom, you are good. So, that is option number one. A course that is very difficult right, because like breathing is acting in the motions of the mind are acting.

The other thing that you can do and this is a little bit more if philosophical, is that you can recognize that your true self, your actual real S self is beyond the stuff that ask. It is beyond your body and it is beyond your mind. Answer really right, it is that sort of realization of that you are never really trapped. And if you have the knowledge, then you are free.

And then there's this third option, a sort of tries to bridge the other two. You can go on acting in the world, but with this kind of shift in your mental disposition, so this is a lot of what is going on. Look at the (inaudible) for instance, where they talk about don't renounce. Don't stop acting.

Renounce the fruits of your action. And then you are free.

And so if we want to talk about kind of what -- where does yoga fit in? Then stop acting action, that tends to be yoga as well be called (inaudible). Tapas transiting to a lot of things like heat. But also something like it senses him. This is the kind of yoga that you sorta very much do with your body.

This is the first emphasis that we see doing things a yoga poses. This is where pops up.

And the other thing that we have is yoga as (inaudible). Yoga is meditation.
This isn't the hardest fastest decision, distention, but it sort of clusters that change of your mental disposition. Because you are really working with the mechanisms of the mind there.

And so the interesting thing about these options is that of course, they don't have to be sort of separate options. In fact, the third thing unless there are already kind of blends the other two. And so where I wanted to go from here is to kind of thinking about what this would have looked like in 500 BCE and again, the kind of accidental problems that is addressing.

And given that and given the history that has happened since then -- what is it all mean for us today? And as I think I've handed, there is also a lot of other (inaudible) stuff in the mix.

So that is kind of where, that is our roadmap.

Stop share. Cool.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:
Thank you so much everyone for joining us. We hope to see you next week as well and thank you Anya Foxen for sharing and for exploring this aspect explaining is very complicated topic. We appreciate you all. We pretty Anya Foxen and we hope to see you soon.

ANYA FOXEN:
Thank you everyone.