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Bloembergen, M.

Routledge
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History and Anthropology

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ghan20

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To cite this article: Marieke Bloembergen (2023) Meditation matters: The politics and networks of yoga and spiritual reform between Indonesia, India and the West, 1900s–1970s, History and Anthropology, 34:5, 740-761, DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2023.2249474

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2023.2249474

Published online: 12 Sep 2023.

HISTORY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
2023, VOL. 34, NO. 5, 740–761
https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2023.2249474

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Meditation matters: The politics and networks of yoga and spiritual reform between Indonesia, India and the West, 1900s–1970s

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ABSTRACT

Starting from sites of yogic and Buddhist learning connecting Indonesia and India this article explores the politics, practices, transformation, dissemination and uses of knowledge on yoga and meditation in late colonial and postcolonial Indonesia, and their relation to moral geographies of Greater India. It follows, across (violent) regime changes, the trajectories of learning of a number of self-made experts and entrepreneurs in this field who were also involved in the postcolonial Buddhist reform movement in Indonesia: the Chinese Indonesians Souw Tjiang Poh (b.1929), better known, also as yoga guru, under his Buddhist name Yogamurti; and his meditation teacher, Tee Boan An (1923–2002), who, as Ashin Jinarakkhita, is more famous as motor behind the Buddhist reform movement in Indonesia from the 1950s onwards. Yogamurti's and Tee Boan An's histories of 'yogic' transformation reach back to 'alternative' spiritual reform trajectories of the Theosophical Society of late colonial times, and continue, across decolonization and the violent regime change of 1965, to those of the hippie trail of the 1970s. These spiritual and 'Indic' religious revivalist entrepreneurs provide alternative perspectives to the grand narratives of political history, yoga, 'Indian religion' or 'Greater India'. Across regime changes, their paths crossed and they exchanged knowledge, thereby changing and reshaping social hierarchies as they moved within an 'alternative present' in which spirituality seemed a way to move forward to 'alternative futures'.

KEYWORDS

theosophy; Buddhist reform; knowledge networks; moral geographies; Chinese Indonesians; hippie trail

> Swami Vivekananda! What a name! He was one of the men who gave so much inspiration to me – inspiration to be strong, inspiration to be a servant of god, inspiration to be a servant of my country, inspiration to be a servant of the poor, inspiration to be a servant of mankind. He was it, who said: we have wept long enough; no more weeping, but stand on your feet, and be men![1]

In 1963, at the occasion of the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), *Voice of Vivekananda*, a compilation of Vivekananda's writings on yoga, came out in Indonesia,

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in English and in Indonesian, with an encomiastic foreword by President Soekarno. The booklet was an initiative with global reach from the Calcutta-based Institute of Culture of the international Ramakrishna Mission (founded by Vivekananda in 1897), and published by 'the Indian Community of Indonesia'.[2] As such, it reflected the legacies and worldwide popularity of the Indian national(ist) hero and popularizer of modern yoga as a means to 'self-realisation' and 'freedom' – and as an ancient Indian good for the world. Soekarno, in his foreword, recalled how, when he was a leader of the Indonesian anti-colonial struggle, Vivekananda inspired him, emphasizing masculine strength and leadership as the main inspiration and gift of Vivekananda. Accordingly, Soekarno had read some works of Vivekananda (and of Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda's guru), when he was a political prisoner in the colonial Netherlands Indies. The Indonesian *Voice of Vivekananda* contained a facsimile page of one of those books in his possession he referred to: the Dutch translation of the biography of Vivekenanda, by the famous French author and India aficionado Romain Rolland. It shows Soekarno's enthusiastic scribbles in the margins – in Dutch – next to a passage were Rolland reflected on what drove Vivekananda in *this* world:

> A real leader of men knows what he has to do. Vivekananda knew that if he was to lead the peoples to the conquest of an ideal, it was not enough to inflame their ardour individually; he had to unite them in a spiritual militia. He who wants to form a people, has to form an elite first! The types of the new man; the leaders, who not only take the lead, but also prepare the future; for their very existence is already the realization of the order that is to be.[3]

What spoke to Soekarno (looking back in 1963) was Vivekananda's message of spiritual and physical strength as a means to self-realization, will, and action in this world, and as a device towards the development of a new type of man, who would be strong and ready to form a 'spiritual militia' in preparation for a new world order.[4] While we may infer from this how much Vivekenanda's lessons mattered to Soekarno, it is interesting to note that we find little about Vivekanda in the biographies of the nationalist Soekarno. This seems an important lacuna, or at least an underestimation of the influence of Indian nationalist ideals in Indonesia, which emphasized 'Indian spirituality'.[5]

Meaningfully for this article, the Indonesian translation of *Voice of Vivekananda* that appeared next to the English version was delivered by someone lesser known (than Soekarno) in Indonesian social political histories: the (lower educated) Chinese Indonesian Souw Tjiang Poh (b.1929), formerly a small business entrepreneur who, by absorbing knowledge on yoga and meditation in the context of Indonesian Chinese Buddhist revival networks, and through an Indian yogic missionary teacher, transformed into a yoga teacher in the 1950s. Souw Tjiang Poh would also translate some other of Vivekananda's treatises on yoga into Indonesian in 1964. By then he was quite famous on Java under the name 'Yogamurti'.[6] Emphasizing Vivekananda's importance to Indonesian nationalism, as Soekarno did retrospectively, would therefore be simplifying the matter, if we ask what might have driven Yogamurti. We need to consider, as this article does, how, by whom and why (new) notions of yoga, Indic religions, and Indian spirituality entered colonial Indonesia beginning in the late nineteenth century, and how *various* groups of people in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia responded. These included yogic entrepreneurs like the lesser known Yogamurti, who were driven by other ideals, that may be supportive of, run parallel to, or transgress anti-colonial nationalist ideals.

Elaborating on the emphasis of this special issue on unsettling encounters, knowledge exchange, and the makings of religion, as well as its site-centred approach, this article explores the politics, practices, transformation, dissemination and uses of knowledge on yoga and meditation, individually, and in networked associational settings, in late colonial and postcolonial Indonesia. It does so by centralizing Yogamurti, as a lesser known self-made expert and entrepreneur in this field. Yogamurti's history of 'yogic' transformation reaches back to 'alternative' spiritual reform trajectories of the Theosophical Society of late colonial times, and continues, across decolonization and the violent regime change of 1965, to those of the hippie trail of the 1970s. By following Yogamurti along the sites of knowledge exchange, as well as the gurus that shaped him in Indonesia and India, we encounter and follow the development of some other more or lesser known spiritual entrepreneurs, such as his meditation teacher Tee Boan An (Bogor, 1923–2002), famous as the first Indonesian citizen (born in a Chinese migrant family) ordained as a Buddhist monk in Burma (1951–1953).[7] These spiritual and 'Indic' religious revivalist entrepreneurs provide alternative perspectives to the grand narratives of political history, yoga and 'Indian religion'. Across regime changes, their paths crossed and they exchanged knowledge, thereby changing and reshaping social hierarchies as they moved within an 'alternative present' in which spirituality seemed a way to move forward to 'alternative futures'.[8] Like other religious and scholarly agents in this special issue, they shifted roles as experts and amateurs (see Bloembergen and Kloos, this special issue), and as teachers and students of yoga and meditation. In that long term history of associational spiritual knowledge production and practices, which embraced and promoted yoga, we see the remarkable growth in popularity of yoga during the first decades of the newly independent Republic of Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s, for which Yogamurti was one of the engines. Why, why then and for whom? What was local, 'Indian', or global about traveling in yogic and meditational networks in early independent Indonesia, and how did it function politically? How, moreover, and to what extent did yoga, and yogic entrepreneurship disseminate 1950s cultural diplomatic ideas of a Greater India into Indonesia?

By the time Yogamurti had gained fame as a yoga guru in 1960s Indonesia, a number of other Indonesians, who were active in a variety of meditation practices in Solo, Central Java, which they had been developing in theosophical, Buddhist revivalist, and local emancipatory spiritual associations, attracted a new flock of students and followers from the West. These Western students, both academics and non-academics who partly followed in the hippie trail towards (a Greater) India, were seeking to understand 'Javanese' spirituality and its 'Indic' roots, and to get a taste of 'Javanese' meditation along the way.[9] They carried with them their insights into 'Asian spirituality' popular at home, through the works of Asian and Western spiritual seekers-cum-gurus like Alan Watts, Krishnamurti, William James, Aghananda Bharati, Edward Teryakian, or Chogam Trungpa Rinpoche, and, for some Dutch students, Han Fortmann's *Oostersche Renaissance* (Eastern Renaissance).[10] Directed by the travel guides of the hippie trail, they hoped to find what they sought, precisely at the sites of spiritual practices and knowledge exchange that went back to late colonial times, which are central to this essay.

Intriguingly, this 'convivial' exploration of meditation as a means towards self-realization *and* universal peace in 1970s Solo, between Western scholars-cum-spiritual seekers and Javanese and Chinese spiritual gurus, evolved in a country which had only recently experienced army-orchestrated, inter-civilian mass killings, following the

preempted communist coup in 1965 that brought general Soeharto and his New Order Regime to power. A new repressive regime did not recognize as religions local spiritual associations, including the *aliran kebatinan* (batin = inner; spiritual; aliran = [in this context] association) that were likewise not recognized as official religions under Soekarno. They were thus haunted by the image of communism, albeit in ambivalent ways, as Merle Ricklefs has pointed out. On the one hand, a number of *kebatinan* movements were banned after 1965, and others were forced to register within official religions. On the other hand, president Soeharto, who was rooted in Javanese *kebatinan* and a seeker of gurus and spiritual guidance himself, apparently also created a climate were other *kebatinan* organizations could grow.[11] Yet, the anxieties caused by the experience (or enactment) of massive violence may have been ground for a local search for spiritual coping. Indeed, the remarkable activity of spiritual reform movements at different periods in time – during the late colonial state, after the recolonization war and independence, and after a subsequent violent regime change – may reflect a combination of anxiety and a search for means to cope with change.[12] It is this tension between spiritual experimentation and hope on the one hand, and on the other insecurity, anxiety and (violent) change throughout time in both local and global contexts, that also provides the background of the larger query central to this article.

The protagonists in the present article were all spiritual seekers who travelled across the formal boundaries of states, and experimented across those of the grand religions, but they are traditionally excluded from national historiographies. If they are included, they are understood as unconventional, 'alternative', vague, and inward/self-centred actors who stepped off at the wrong bus stop. They are also missing from the new transnational historiography on 'subaltern internationalists' and the thriving world of transnational political reformative activism between Asia and Africa in the 1950s. By trying to grasp the 'Bandung spirit' beyond the famous intergovernmental Bandung conference of Afro-Asian countries in 1955, scholars in this new field have, importantly, transferred the attention from key political leaders to the agency of some less famous (non-state) actors, and to non-state initiated associational activities and cultural expressions that transcended local and national interests, *and* that fed into (older) international networks of anti-imperialism, trade unions, and a global world peace movement developing after WWII.[13] This new scholarly query, however, still seems to be defined by a search for clear anti-colonial motives, and thus by classic frameworks of national historiographies of empire and decolonization. The religious and the spiritual seekers who were also physically moving in this world of 'supra-local', transnational thinking, are moreover remarkably absent as a clearly identifiable group.[14] At most they are temporarily followed as far as they *were* or would become politically active in a recognisable manner. Why is that? Their activities not only transcended local and national boundaries, but also aimed for a spirit and ideals that they considered universalist, but that we may gauge to be exclusive of others, and that are as such, political in essence. Perhaps the spiritual seekers are left out because they do not fit, or are hard to fit in. Is the question then, how can we include the spiritual seekers and yogic networks in these histories? Or should we try to fit them in at all?

As I argue, the alternative transnational yogic actors which feature in this article, while at first sight seem inward-directed, are in fact as political as the 'non-aligned' activists – if only because their spiritual aspirations also served particular alternative reformist aims,

and thus they could be exclusive as well. They may have fostered a breeding ground for anti-colonial criticism too, but they also were supportive of India-centric forms of cultural imperialism, and of what I refer to as the moral geography of Greater India. As Sumit Mandal also shows in this special issue, alternative geographies that transcend the limits of nation state-dominant perceptions of 'world religion' may come with their own particular sense of moral superiority, and along with it, social and political exclusion. As part of a larger world of alternative spiritual knowledge networks, they continue to have an impact worldwide, including in academia, until today.[15] So, what can we learn about the modern histories of yoga in Indonesian contexts and their role in moral geographies of Greater India?

The politics of yoga, and moral geographies of 'Greater India'

Yoga (and related practices of meditation) matters in the lives of many people in the world today, at all levels of society; it is often considered to be an ancient good from India, unquestionably healthy and strengthening for body, spirit *and* mind. To understand how yoga works politically, it helps to consider yoga as an object of heritage formation. Yoga, like 'heritage' is nothing but becomes, in forms it is sold, valued and used by its practitioners. As a commodity, object and product of heritage formation, yoga is also always political, and part and parcel of ideas and moral geographies of a Greater India. The field of critical yoga studies, discussed below, and on which I gratefully draw, has provided sharp insights in this line of enquiry, but intriguingly, while gauging yoga as a deeply political phenomenon, it also still operates from an India-centred frame.

The central queries of this article are grounded in my larger research into the makings of what I refer to as the moral geography of Greater India, and the questions of how and why Indonesia became part of it. Both a heuristic concept and an ongoing multi-sited development of knowledge production entailing epistemic violence, the moral geography of Greater India encompasses the region now called South and Southeast Asia that is worldwide, in museums, science and popular culture, most often presented as one, *superior* civilization with spiritual, Hindu-Buddhist characteristics, and Indian origins. Followers of that idea of Greater India – from Indian nationalists to yoga aficionados around the world – pit it against an image of Western civilization as materialistic and warmongering, ignoring Islam. Interestingly, with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia is included in the moral geography of (a Hindu-Buddhist) Greater India. In museums of Asian Art, as well as in popular culture, from tourist guides to the Hollywood Blockbuster *Eat, Pray, Love* featuring Julia Roberts meditating in Bali, Indonesia is emphasized as a country with a Hindu-Buddhist spiritual culture and Islam seems absent.[16] Thus, in a double way, the case of Indonesia shows how epistemic violence works. In this article I tentatively explore the role of twentieth-century yogic knowledge networks through an Indonesian self-made guru like Yogamurti who connects to other gurus in these networks.

A telling example in the multifaceted political framework of yoga and Greater India thinking came in 2015, when Indian prime minister Modi, with United Nations' support, announced 21 June as 'International Yoga Day' in a speech echoing Vivekananda, describing yoga as a gift from India to the world. His proclamation came just three days after the start of the Islamic fasting period Ramadan, to the irritation of Muslim groups in India.[17] While yoga practitioners worldwide still celebrate International Yoga Day, the recent

critical turn in the scholarly study of yoga has started questioning the polished image of yoga as an ancient self-conscious Indian good. A number of scholars with expertise in South Asia or India, first from religious studies and later from anthropology, have provided insight into the history of the making, political use, and commodification of modern yoga in colonial India, and between colonial and postcolonial India and the West, from the late nineteenth century until today.[18]

Yoga, as it is embraced and practiced today, and as critical studies of yoga have by now convincingly shown, is a re-invented tradition or heritage, and has been used for physical, spiritual, economic and political aims since the late nineteenth century. Soekarno's hero Swami Vivekananda, a highly educated son of a privileged Bengal family in Calcutta, has played a key role in the presentation of yoga to the world, selling it not only as an ancient Indian good, but also, as critical anthropologist of yoga Sarah Strauss summarizes it, pointing out its possible worldly uses. He did so in ways that would please both Indian anti-colonial nationalists and a Western public. Vivekananda gained global fame as an Indian Hindu missionary, guru, and legitimizer of yoga, due to his performance at the world parliament of religions in Chicago in 1893. He promoted his ideas on yoga as an ancient, healthy, spiritual and physical strengthening product from India through lectures and manuals with clear practical instructions on the four different paths he had distilled from various traditions: *Raja yoga* (the path of self-control), *Bhakti yoga* (the path of love and devotion), *Jhana yoga* (the path of knowledge or intellectual learning), and *Karma yoga* (the path of work, or selfless service to others), the first of which would ultimately lay the foundation for today's Hatha yoga. This translation of yoga, from a practice grounded in ancient philosophical traditions to a practical means towards 'health and freedom', became popular because it promised to provide both physical and spiritual strength *in* the world.[19] In the West, it was sold as needful for people seeking to reconnect to a spirituality they deemed lost, while remaining active within capitalist society. His performance in the US led to the founding of the international Vedanta Society in New York in 1894, to which Vivekananda would send his own missionaries from his Ramakrishna Foundation in Calcutta – the spiritual militia, on which Soekarno would read in Romain Rolland's biography of Vivekananda.[20] And that aspect of militant action through self-realization and leadership apparently spoke to Soekarno.

Anthropologist Sarah Strauss pointed out how contemporary definitions and practices of yoga, as well as the role yoga plays 'as a metonym for spirituality' 'reflects more about modern transnational cultural flows than pristine ancient traditions'.[21] Interested in yoga's modern transnational dimensions, Strauss focuses on the *sampradaya* (ideological community) of another famous Indian yoga guru, Swami Sivananda (1887–1963) of Rishikesh, and his Divine Life Society (DLS). Sivananda popularized Vivekananda's four paths and his practical, worldly approach to yoga – summarizing these into the mantra of 'Serve, Love, Meditate and Realise'.[22] Partly through the so-called export gurus whom Sivananda trained and sent out into the world from the 1950s, he also inspired some Indonesians who contributed to the popularization of yoga in Indonesia. One of these Indonesians was Yogamurti, who as we shall see, would not only learn directly from DLS export-guru Vishnu Devananda (1927–1993), but also edited an Indonesian translation of Sivananda's *Yoga Asanas*.[23]

Remarkably, while all studies within the field of critical yoga studies address the global outreach and popularity of yoga, and some indeed explore transnational flows of forms of

yoga and their transformation between India and the West and back, there has been little attention on the circulation and exchange of ideas and practices of yoga and meditation between India and its southern neighbours, particularly Indonesia.[24] What might we learn from the entrepreneurs and sites of yogic knowledge production and exchange in Indonesia, to further understand the political dimensions of yoga? What was local, Indian and colonial about the legacies of yoga in postcolonial Indonesia, as performed and disseminated by Yogamurti and his teaching companions? With these questions in mind, below I explore the sites and politics of Indonesia-based yoga biographies, and the role of 'Greater India' therein, in colonial and postcolonial times. We therefore now turn to Yogamurti, whom we follow in fragments throughout the article, as a guide who moved within the knowledge networks of yoga, and moved these himself as well, and we begin at a site of knowledge exchange outside Indonesia, to which they all connect.

From Bodh Gaya to Bandung

It may sound ironic that I first learned about the existence and activities of the Chinese Indonesian yoga teacher Yogamurti, who lives in Bandung (West-Java), at the Buddhist pilgrimage site Bodh Gaya, in North India. But it is not, when we try to understand this encounter from Yogamurti's terms – to the extent that we can imagine that. In January 2017, I visited Bodh Gaya, in the framework of my research on Indonesia and the knowledge network of Greater India, in which I understood Bodh Gaya as one of the sites that connected pilgrims, scholars and seekers since the early nineteenth century, and that also reached out to Indonesia and its small minority of Buddhists and spiritual seekers. Bodh Gaya is one of the world's most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites, as it is where Buddha is said to have found Enlightenment under a Bodhi tree, next to which a Buddhist temple was built in the seventh century. Restored and reconstructed several times in the nineteenth century, at the successive and competing initiatives of various parties – a local Hindu group, the colonial government and Anagarika Darmapali's Buddhist revivalist Mahabodhi Society, it has been a world heritage site that caters to a global Buddhist community since 2015.[25] There, I learned from the only Indonesian language publication in the Mahabodhi Society library, a 28th anniversary publication of the Moernianda Brotherhood for yoga training, that this Indonesian citizen, Yogamurti, founded the Moernianda Brotherhood in Bandung in 1959. What fascinated me from the book, apart from the many images and lessons of Indian guru Satya Sai Baba (1926–2011), were the photographs of massive yoga classes which Yogamurti led in the 1970s, at the Gandhi Memorial Intercontinental School in Jakarta (founded in 1950).[26] Thus rewarded with several indications of Indonesian-Indian connections, I gathered that the book must have been a gift from an Indonesian pilgrim or tourist, or maybe even Yogamurti himself, and that Yogamurti might be a meaningful mediator in the spiritual knowledge networks between India and Indonesia which I tried to identify and understand.

I soon learned that Yogamurti (born in Anyer [West-Java] in 1929 under his Chinese name Souw Tjian Poh) converted to Buddhism in the early 1950s after Indonesian independence; he would gain fame in Indonesia as the guru who inspired Indonesians to do yoga from the 1960s onwards.[27] Yet, neither yoga nor Buddha would provide Souw Tjian Pohs'/Yogamurti's only guides towards spiritual salvation, as I came to understand when I visited him in Bandung for the first time in 2017. Seeking the right house and

directed by his neighbours who knew him as 'pak Yoga' (mister/father Yoga), I saw myself welcomed by a giant poster of a smiling Sai Baba in Yogamurti's doorpost. Inside the house, next to images of all sorts of other spiritual gurus – including Vivekananda, his teacher Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836–1886), and Jesus – and books on Krishnamurti (1895–1986), Sai Baba's presence was the most prominently featured, and included a life size framed photograph on the wall. Over the course of several interviews, I learned that Yogamurti's learning trajectory into yoga was pluralistic in both its aims and its origin. I realized that his religious and spiritual formation is hard to situate in clear-cut boundaries of official religions; and the Indian Divine Life Society style yoga that he had learned in 1950s Jakarta was not the only style of yoga he appropriated and taught to others. But whatever the source of inspiration, the more important question, the issue central to our purposes here, is why and how yoga mattered to him and to a larger group of local, Dutch colonial and foreign seekers moving in and out, in (loose) associations, or individually, in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia?

Souw Tjiang Poh (Yogamurti) was born in a first generation Hokkien Chinese migrant family, from Southern Fujian China, that settled in Anyer (West Java), in the first decades of the twentieth century. The family ran a small batik shop. To some extent Souw Tjiang Poh's formation reflects the predicament of the Chinese Indonesians in Indonesia, whether of long term or recent migrant descendant, as continuously being perceived and treated – politically and in society – as a homogeneous 'foreign minority' or as 'citizens of foreign descent'.[28] As Yogamurti recalled, living in Java as Chinese migrants had not been easy, neither during the Japanese occupation when the shop got raided, nor in the years of the war of independence and the early years of the Indonesian Republic, when they were considered 'Asian' but not Indonesian citizens. In 1947 the family moved to Jakarta, where they again started a small Chinese Batik shop, and where, in 1952 Souw Tjiang Poh began his own job, and apparently also began his spiritual, Buddhist, and yogic experimentation.[29]

While Yogamurti started experimenting with yoga in 1950s Jakarta, studying with various teachers, in that same period we see a remarkable, more general interest in the promises of yoga as featured in local, and still appearing Dutch language newspapers. They provide insight into the multiple contexts in which we can also understand Yogamurti's queries, and the trajectories that made him find special appeal in yoga and meditation. Before further exploring his spiritual development, it is helpful to understand something about the theosophical yoga that indirectly also shaped him.

Theosophical yoga: great expectations in this world

In November 1954, the Semarang-based *Dyana* (Heaven, Paradise), the stencilled official journal of the Perhimpunan Pemuda Theosofi Indonesia (the Association of Young Theosophists in Indonesia, founded in 1951) published a brief news item with the intriguing title 'Only yoga is capable of resisting radioactive radiation'. The anonymous author reported how a certain Sankar Deo, in India's capital New Delhi, had argued that, in the event of a nuclear war, those people who practiced 'ilmu yoga' (the science or knowledge of yoga) would be saved from destruction. He then raised the pedagogical question 'Apakah yoga itu'? (What is this thing called yoga?), followed by a lesson, presented as fact:

> Yoga is the oldest form of gymnastics known to mankind. Almost everyone who practices yoga is extremely healthy and it is said that yoga can lengthen your life by 150 years.

To prove his point, he added that 'the prime minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, practices yoga everyday by standing on his head during a couple of minutes and he has never been ill in 40 years'.[30] The brief news item revealing huge healing expectations from yoga, reflected a wider spread and longer standing existence of interests in yoga as 'ancient Indian' in colonial Indonesia, amongst a number of Dutch, European, and local elites and educated middle class groups. These interests in new spiritual matters like Indian yoga went back to gatherings of the international Theosophical Society's earliest lodges in the Netherlands Indies, founded first by Europeans in the early 1900s, but soon involving Javanese and Chinese members and leaders.

The Theosophical Society is a modern, international spiritual movement, which plays an important explanatory role for understanding the nature and reach of Greater India thinking, and for the introduction of spiritual goods, sold as ancient Indian, into Indonesia.[31] It was founded in 1875 in New York by the Ukrainian-born Russian German Helena Blavatsky and the American Henry Olcott, and soon (1883) had its headquarters in Adyar, India. Aiming towards the highest spiritual wisdom through the study of all religions, and of ancient, preferably Indian, texts, it connected spiritual seekers, scholars, teachers, artists, and 'Asian Art' collectors. It had branches and local lodges worldwide. In the Netherlands Indies, after a 'false' start in the early 1880s, the number of lodges (and centres) grew steadily, most on Java, after the first one opened in Semarang (1901). The Theosophical Society also began a centre in Sumatra in 1916 and a lodge in Bali in 1937. The Netherlands Indies Theosophical Society was recognized as a section of the TS in its own right (thus separate from the Netherlands) in 1912.

Perceived as an ancient source of Asian wisdom, a spiritual means towards the empowering of the self, and the improvement of the world, yoga became a core-interest of the Theosophical Society's foremen and forewomen. At the 32th anniversary of the Theosophical Society in Benares in 1907, the new president, Annie Besant, helped by her Indian friend and 'collaborator', Bhagavan Das, delivered four lectures on the nature of yoga, its philosophical traditions, yoga as a (psychological) science, and the promises of yoga in practice – that is as a means towards achieving unity with the spirit through the expansion, and mastery, of a spiritual self.[32] The lectures were based on a mixture of Indian philosophical traditions – including the yoga sustras of Patanjali, and a popular interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita as a message of worldly action through control of the spiritual self.[33] This 'theosophical' yoga, promoted as an empowering good leading to a spiritual unity, demanding a strong will and focus, and contributing to a universal brotherhood, also entered the journals, separate publications and lodges of the Theosophical Society in the Netherlands Indies. The first two issues of the first theosophical journal (in Dutch), published there from 1901–1902 onwards, featured an article series on Swami Vivekananda's *Karma Yoga* (the path of work, or selfless service to others).[34] And, for the embodied experience, the members of the lodge in Surabaya, which had been recently founded in 1902, could hear a talk on 'yoga and mysticism' on 2 May 1906, presented as:

> [the] concentration of all human energy on one aim: the unfolding of the divine spirit […] concentration is the main condition of yoga, in the same way concentration is the main condition for humanity to improve the world.[35]

The interest in India, yoga, and Indian gurus can, moreover, be found in a range of related local journals appearing in the 1920s and 1930s reflecting a multivocal spiritual reform movement, connecting in different languages, that fed into, and partly overlapped in membership with, the Theosophical Society. A foreign initiative, the Theosophical Society became 'localized' not only through its growing local membership, but also by playing a role in all sorts of associational reformative initiatives that identified with a *pergerakan kebatinan* (spiritual reform movement), schools, and journals that appeared in the 1920s and 1930s.[36]

Thus, by the 1930s, 'yoga' – as an 'Indian' thing – was no longer as 'foreign' as it had seemed, but was also very much being localized. It was mostly oriented toward cultivating spiritual and physical control to serve moral reform in this world. After the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945) and the period of the Independence War and Indonesian Revolution (1945–1950), in the early independent Indonesia of the 1950s, yoga became advertised more widely, as a new (but old) asset, and a healing, empowering tool for modern urban Indonesians and a slowly decreasing number of Dutch. Meanwhile, informal and formal Indian cultural diplomacy entered the scene as well, in the form of Indian export gurus and a yogic diplomat.

Healing yoga and Indian diplomacy, on postcolonial Indonesian grounds

The brief news item in *Dyana* above regarding yoga's alleged power against nuclear fallout and on Nehru's daily yogic exercises show the depth of healing expectations from yoga as an ancient Indian good. This was not surprising in a theosophical magazine, but its appearance in the 1950s was far from unique. A quick glance through the – now digitized – Dutch newspapers that still appeared in independent Indonesia in the 1950s, demonstrates the popular interest and trust in the *healing* possibilities of a more inward-directed yoga addressed to a Dutch and Indonesian speaking public. We see scattered advertisements: for lessons in, and books on yoga, amongst others by Paul Brunton, 'Only a few copies left!'; from the 'School of Silence' in Yogyakarta and the 'Asia-Institute' in Bandung, in which the sellers propagate yoga as the means to 'evade all hindrances of life and find success', promise 'success in business', the possibility to heal 'nervous and other kind of disturbances of the mind', and offer 'self-defense'.[37] Against the background of these miracle-cure ads on yoga, we can begin to appreciate how readers might have responded. One such individual was the son of theosophists, a Java-born Dutchman named Rama Polderman (Magelang, 1924–1988) who had been imprisoned in a Japanese internment camp. Polderman embarked on a spiritual quest that led him first to study with a guru in Sri Lanka, and eventually to introduce Hatha yoga – which developed out of Vivekananda's *Raja yoga* (the path of self-control) – to the Netherlands in the 1950s.[38] So why did this apparently larger interest develop in 'yoga itu' in Indonesia of the 1950s?

Anthropologist Sarah Strauss, who studied the transnational appeal of yoga with a special focus on Swami Sivananda's Divine Life Society, has pointed out how 'events surrounding World War II, particularly the development of nuclear weapons technology, provided a rationale for many people, in India and elsewhere, to take up the practice of yoga'.[39] Apparently, Sivananda, at that time one of the more famous yoga gurus, effectively played into these global fears of a nuclear threat unbounded by national

borders, with his message of universal unity and brotherhood, through spiritual regeneration, to be achieved by his summarizing of the four paths of yoga as 'Serve, Love, Meditate, and Realise'. He became a prophesier in the eyes of wannabe disciples in search of peace and security.[40] On the way, and partly though his export-gurus, he inspired many other individuals, who similarly shaped yoga for their own ends. Amongst them, in Indonesia, were the unknown Yogamurti, and a much better-known Indonesian policeman, whose lives only very temporarily crossed through one of Sivananda's export gurus. Both focused on a search for empowerment and spirituality. Yogamurti's trajectory may exemplify how, at grassroots level, yogic queries in Indonesia connected to Indian cultural diplomacy, and to inter-Asian knowledge exchange, but also to very particular socio-political developments, including those concerning the position of Chinese, that were important for the popularization of yoga in 1950s–1960s Indonesia.

In 1957, partly in the context of the visible, transnational, and global attention toward yoga as a means of healing, self-control, and peace, Yogamurti, then working as an import-export manager for a firm in Jakarta, had his first encounter with what was sold as Indian yoga.[41] In that year, he got the chance to follow an intensive 9-day course by Indian yoga guru Vishnu Devananda (1927–1993).[42] Devananda was one of the first 'export-gurus' from the Divine Life Society mentioned above, founded by Sivananda Saraswati in Rishikesh, the Hindu pilgrimage town at the crossroads of the holy Ganges and sacred mountains in Northern India. As the field of critical yoga studies has made abundantly clear, long before the Beatles popularized India and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi with his 'Transcedental meditation Science' (TMS) after their visit to Rishikesh in 1968, Rishikesh produced its own yoga missionaries, following the trend set by Vivekananda and others.[43] Moreover, it drew seekers and pilgrims from Indonesia, pursuing parallel paths which preceded and were independent of the *hippie trail*.[44] One such figure was the former colonial police officer Soekanto Tjokrodiatmodjo (1908–1993), who in 1945 became the first head of the Indonesian National Police Forces. This policeman also happened to be following a lifelong spiritual path. In the context of a diplomatic mission, during his sojourn as military attaché in New Delhi (1951–1952), Soekanto, wishing to find out more about yoga, travelled to the DLS in Rishikesh in search of a yoga teacher for the Indonesian police force. Soekanto facilitated Devananda's public workshop in Jakarta that Souw Tjiang Poh attended.[45]

During Devananda's yoga lessons, Souw Tjiang Poh, who was already familiar with meditation techniques involving the control of breath and bodily postures, proved agile and talented. Looking back at the age of 89, he explained to me how and why, while at that time 'in gloomy moods', this form of yoga (again, sold as 'Serve, Love, Meditate, and Realise') made him feel re-empowered.[46] To him it seemed to be more the practice than the message that got him. In any case, he got hooked, and began to passionately spread the knowledge about its techniques. In these early years of learning the DLS *asanas* (postures), Yogamurti and a certain Kwee Liong Tian, a Chinese-Indonesian business man based in Surabaya who had learned the DLS technique too, inspired each other. As Yogamurti would also eventually do, in 1958 Kwee Liong Tian began to write and publish about yoga, translating Sivananda's yoga guides into Indonesian, which featured illustrations of the *asanas*.[47]

Yogamurti would further exercise Devananda's yoga fanatically, and became a propagator and guru of yoga. In 1958 he left his job in Jakarta, and moved to Bandung (West-

Java). 1958 was also the year when the Indonesian government implemented a treaty that forced Chinese Indonesians to actively, explicitly choose Indonesian citizenship. Moreover, one year later Soekarno's 'Guided Democracy' began a politics of alienation, restricting 'alien residence and trade', which targeted Chinese Indonesians. These dramatic interventions causing further insecurities for being a Chinese in Indonesia, may have been the background of Yogamurti's move to Bandung. While he never made an explicit connection to this in our conversations, he did refer in general to the predicament of Chinese in Indonesia being perceived as 'Asian foreigners'.[48] In Bandung, Yogamurti stirred the interest in yoga amongst a growing number of peers eager to learn, beginning with a group of eight Chinese-Indonesian dentists. One year later this led to his founding the Murnianda brotherhood, an association that combined a training in spiritual and physical formation. It started out branding as a school for yoga, and would become rather popular in the late 1960s. Accordingly, the number of schools would grow from one in Bandung, to 82 Murnianda schools all over Indonesia.[49] Also, as I figured out in Bodh Gaya, Yogamurti would give massive yoga classes at the Gandhi Memorial International School in Jakarta in the 1970s.[50] In that venture he was supported by the Indian ambassador in Jakarta Appa Pant (on post, 1961–1964). Sharing a joy for yoga, Pant became a personal friend, Yogamurti told me, and as his private photograph-albums implied, featuring the ambassador in challenging yoga postures.[51]

As these examples show, Indian-Indonesian cultural diplomacy of the 1950s, in the form of diplomatic networks, export gurus, and Indian representatives in Jakarta played a significant role in spreading and popularizing yoga as healthy, ancient tradition flowing from India into Indonesia. Yet, importantly the popularization of yoga also advanced on a grassroots level, developing local terms. Indeed, Chinese Indonesians' Buddhist reformative networks would play a role in the popularization of new, foreign forms of yoga and meditation in the 1950s. However, these forms were not necessarily entirely Indian in origin, nor were they cherished as such. It is precisely in this world where the lives of Yogamurti and Tee Boan An/Ashin Jinarakkhita crossed.

The mediative meditations of Tee Boan An/Ashin Jinarakkhita

Many of the long term and networked histories of yoga and meditation can be illuminated through the learning process of the Chinese Indonesian Tee Boan An. As the first Indonesian citizen who became ordinated as a Buddhist monk in Burma, and who played a key role in the organized Buddhist revival in postcolonial Indonesia, his life has been discussed extensively both in Buddhist associational biographies, by historians, and most recently by religious historian Chia in his study of twentieth century Chinese Buddhist missionaries in Southeast Asian islands.[52] For the sake of brevity I therefore summarize how Tee Boan' An's life reveals how foreign techniques of meditation and yoga entered Indonesia in local, theosophical, and Burmese guises.

Born in Buitenzorg/Bogor in 1923, Tee Boan An gained fame in Java through his so-called Dharma-tours supported by his theosophical connections he had developed in Solo, through which he inspired Chinese and Javanese Indonesians to convert to Buddhism. Between 1951 and 1953 he travelled and lectured across Java, first as vice-chair of the Perhimpunan Pemuda Theosofi Indonesia, and then, after his return from Burma (where he stayed from 1953 to 1954) in 1954, as an ordained Buddhist monk (in Theravada

style) under the name of Ashin Jinarakkhita. As one of many means of spiritual exploration, yoga was present in Ashin's early life, connecting colonial, Islamic, and *kebatinan* individuals who were important to his formation. Although his lifelong queries may have likewise been informed by the predicament of Chinese subjects in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia, Tee Boan An grew up in much more privileged surroundings than Yogamurti. He was born into a well-situated family of second generation Chinese migrants. He attended the exclusive colonial Hollandsch-Chinese School (Dutch Chinese School) and the Hogere Burgerschool (Higher Civic School, qualifying for access to academic study) in Batavia, brightly preparing for an academic education. In his youth in Bogor, Tee Boan An got interested in occult and spiritual matters in a variety of contexts: through an unnamed 'haji' living behind his family house, who was an expert in magic matters; through his visits to a nearby Chinese temple, which at that time would combine elements of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and where Chinese priests would conduct funeral rites;[53] and through his walks to Gunung Gde, the big mountain overlooking Bogor, together with another specialist in occultism, a Dutch theosophist whom he called 'Reigh'. Reigh taught him about 'magnetism', and inspired him to read the bibles of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled: Secrets of the Ancient Wisdom Tradition* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). In addition, according to a Buddhist biographical compilation on Ashin Jinarakkhita, Tee Boan An's grandfather, Tee Teng Hui, familiarized him with Javanese *kebatinan* traditions. That is, in this case as the scarce information implies: grandfather Tee Teng Hui engaged with the sacredness of landscape (also via mountain walks) and served Tee Boan An only vegetable dishes, influencing him to stop eating meat.[54] This information illustrates the various local interpretations of what *kebatinan* actually implied to different people.

Tee Boan An's multi-sited query into spiritualism in those early years in Bogor must have provided the contexts and teachers through whom he began experimenting with meditation and yoga, and talking about yoga as a spiritually empowering and healing activity. In the commemorative, slightly hagiographic compilation of biographical writings, he is said to have told his friends there:

> When you are stressed […] yoga. Yoga cares for your spirit, you won't be bothered by worries. When you are again bothered by many worries, empty your mind again, when it is empty you can think again.[55]

Theosophy provided a subsequent, additional context for Tee Boan An's spiritual formation, first in Java: during the chaotic period that followed after the Japanese surrender and the declaration of Indonesian Independence by Soekarno and Hatta on 17 August 1945, he often visited nearby Solo and Yogyakarta and befriended members of the reviving Theosophical lodges there.[56] And then in the Netherlands where he begun a study in chemistry at the University in Groningen (in the northern Netherlands) in 1946. There, he became a member of the local theosophical lodge, attending lectures as well as lecturing there himself. During travels in Europe, he also connected to theosophists. In Paris he met and was impressed by Krishnamurti, who happened to be speaking there. Importantly, at the University in Groningen, Tee Boan An also studied with Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950), the famous theologist and professor of comparative religion. Van der Leeuw fed his interest in, and choice to devote himself to the study of Buddhism, to leave chemistry, and to return to Indonesia in 1951, where he would play a key role in

the development of a 'suitable' Buddhism for Indonesia, and for Chinese Indonesians, across the violent regime change of 1965.[57]

Meaningfully, while in Burma in 1951 (to become ordinated as monk), Ashin also learned a technique of yoga that became popular in the West in the 1960s and 1970s as well: Vipassana, better known as 'insight meditation'. Ashin's teacher was, in fact, the famous Burmese monk Mahashi Sayadaw (1904–1982), who, through his Asian and Western students, helped to popularize Vipassana worldwide.[58]

In a recent academic study of the history of Vipassana, the practice is described as 'using corporeal experience as the means to gain insight into a universal truth: reality's impermanent, unsatisfactory, and unconditioned nature'.[59] Back in the 1960s, when Vipassana became popular among practitioners worldwide, an American student of Vipassana, experienced it as 'watching inward', i.e. watching your mind, breath, feelings, pain, pleasure, hope, bliss, hunger and 'whatever it was that rose in the field of consciousness'.[60] Two other American students of meditation, in this case in Java, experimented with Vipassana in a Chinese Buddhist temple in Semarang in 1975. They described it to their Chinese-Indonesian meditation teacher Sudarno Ong in Solo as 'the capacity to concentrate', and 'to discipline "the observer", to focus concentration in the head'.[61] As we shall see, Ashin may have facilitated the Indonesian reception of this form of mindful, inwardly directed meditational yoga through Vipassana meditation training at Buddhist temples – significantly, however, this occurred *also* via more broad exposure from these two American students as well as Yogamurti, for that matter.

I realized only later that in the context of Chinese Buddhist associational life of the 1950s, Ashin, besides DLS guru Devananda, also played a crucial role in Yogamurti's formation, leading him to the path of Buddhism and to absorbing 'insight meditation'.

Encounters of a pluriform kind: Yogamurti, Ashin Jinarakkhita, and Western students

When I first visited Yogamurti, I was initially intrigued by his story about his Indian guru Devananda, and the connection with police officer Soekanto. Later, when Yogamurti showed me his private photo-albums, I recognized Ashin Jinarakkhita sitting in meditation posture in one of the photos. Inquiring about what he was doing in this album, Yogamurti explained to me that, actually it was not Devananda but Ashin Jinarakkhita, whom he knew through the Chinese-Buddhist reformative networks, who first taught him the principles of yoga and meditation and made him feel their healing value.[62]

Souw Tjiong Poh (before he became Yogamurti) met Ashin Jinarakkhita attending one of his lectures, when he was based in Jakarta around 1953. He converted to Buddhism in 1954, took on the name of Yogamurti – given to him by Ashin – and would, in those early years, become head (ketua) of the Buddha Gaya temple in Watu Gong (Semarang, known as the Watugong temple) which Ashin Jinarakkhita founded in 1955, the first new Buddhist temple catering to the reviving self-organizing, new Buddhist community in Indonesia.[63] Yogamurti himself co-founded the Bogor section of the Chinese Buddhist organization Persatuan Pemuda Pemudi Sam Kauw Indonesia (P3SKI) in 1954, now the Pemuda Tridharma Indonesia.[64] Meanwhile Ashin, recognizing Yogamurti's talents, stimulated him to develop his meditation techniques further at the Watugong temple.

Preoccupied with the Indian connections and not yet familiar with the critical study of yoga and meditation histories, it was only later that I realized that the techniques Yogamurti learned from Ashin Jinarakkhita were based on Vipassana.[65] Not accidentally, it was also this form of meditation (amongst others), by then quite famous in the West, which the foreign students in Solo of the mid 1970s discussed with their meditation teacher, the Chinese Indonesian Sudarno Ong.[66] Some of them told Sudarno Ong how they had practiced Vipassana in the Buddhist temple 'Tanah Putih' (White Land) in Semarang (founded in January 1965; Watugong – where Yogamurti practiced in the 1950s – had to close in 1964).[67] Intriguingly, both these foreign students and Yogamurti found their way to meditation, corporal experience, and control, precisely in the context of theosophical-cum–Chinese-Buddhist emancipatory networks that dated back to colonial times. But Sudarno Ong's amateurish, accidental experts were the Western students. Or, as one of his American students – historian of the Sumarah movement Paul Stange – quoted him in his diary: 'Sudarno says he feels he's been learning a lot through all of our discussions because it has been giving him indirect exposure to gurus and techniques from all over the world'.[68] That same kind of insightful exposure to various gurus and techniques towards spiritual control and self-realization – and the sense of connecting spiritually and 'meeting in a spark' – must have been what enlightened Yogamurti in the double sense of the word.

In the early 1970s, Yogamurti travelled to India with his closest friend since the 1950s, Ong Tjong Hian. This was their first visit.[69] Ong Tjong Hian was a son of Ong Soe An (1885, Solo), who in colonial times had been chairman of the Theosophical lodge in Bandung and had, in Java, in 1929, initiated the (first) Vesak celebration at the eighth-century Buddhist shrine-cum-heritage site Borobudur. The two friends followed the trail along the great Indian spiritual pilgrimage sites: from the house of Mother Teresa, and the mansion of the Rama Krishna Mission, to the grave of Indian yoga guru Sri Aurobindo, all in Calcutta, to the temple of Bodh Gaya in Bihar. There, in the library of the Mahabodhi temple, they may have left the copy of the commemoration-compilation of the journal of the Murnianda Brotherhood that I found about 45 years later. Telling, it was neither yoga nor Sai Baba but Buddha who provided the link that led me to Yogamurti. But Yogamurti made his own sense of all of these ways to enlightenment, feeling inspired and empowered along the way. And, while Sai Baba would draw him to India 'at least 62 times' (his own words), his journey of spiritual awakening had little to do with a Greater India.[70]

Concluding remarks

By following Yogamurti, beginning and ending at Bodh Gaya, this article has discussed biographies and trajectories of yoga developing across decolonization at various sites of 'alternative' and religious (Buddhist) knowledge exchange and pilgrimage, in and outside Indonesia, where yoga was embraced by various individuals of various social positions, both insiders and outsiders (or considered as such). What they initially shared, and may explain their 'connecting' and exchanges was, at first sight, having a 'quantitative' minority position in colonial Indonesia: white Dutch colonial 'ethical' elites, Javanese with Western educations, and Chinese seeking emancipation. After decolonization, the Chinese Indonesians remained within that position, and continued to play a mediating role in alternative religious and spiritual reform suitable in Indonesia.

The individuals in this essay charmed by yoga and meditation techniques were primarily seekers of spiritual knowledge and methods to get there, whether for a specifically religious (Buddhist) purpose or not. Moreover, Yogamurti and Tee Boan An, the Western students and Sudarno Ong, all had shifting roles as students and teachers, as amateurs and self-made experts. Yet, as we engage with the issues central to the introduction of this special issue, it remains a question whether or not we should deem any of these roles as 'strategic'. What seems to matter most is the recognition that knowing how to master yoga is empowering in itself; equally valuable is their position of 'floating' in between clear-cut social and religious categories and harboring an open-ended 'searching', experimental attitude. The interest in yoga emerged from contexts of tumult and possibility caused by a combination of grand expectations (of modern colonial times, of independence, of new 'nation-building or of 'Asia' in the 1970s); and of uncertainty and upheaval in socio-cultural decolonization processes, violent regime changes, and racist, socio-economic mechanisms of exclusion towards Indonesian Chinese.

The spiritual knowledge networks in which individuals like Yogamurti and Tee Boan An participated expose histories that remain beyond the scope of current national-political historiography. Their biographies reflect colonial experiences, experiences of decolonization, and reform ideals that transcend borders of 'the nation state' and those of the 'grand religions'. From the outside, their queries may seem purely spiritual, but they are also politically charged. These figures and their trajectories provide 'alternative' perspectives that may help historians to rethink how we should study and understand 'cultural' decolonization beyond the frameworks of colonial state-centred historiography, and to recognize the emancipatory political role of (ideas about) 'Indic' religions manifested in the ideas and practices of yoga.

The message of yoga as a gift from Vivekananda – or India – to the world, was (and is) a clear expression of 'Greater India' thinking, which reflects forms of Orientalism, India-centred cultural imperialism, and Asianism, and has its own discrete mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.[71] It remains very much a question, however, whether the Indonesian actors in this essay embraced that kind of thinking when they embraced yoga. Nevertheless, by doing so they may have facilitated the spread of ideas of a Greater India in Indonesia, similar to elsewhere in the world through forms of embodied knowledge sold as ancient, in the way *Dyana* and the theosophical journals did. Be that as it may, it is clear that they embraced yoga, and experimented in meditation, on their own terms.

The narratives of learning and practicing yoga in this article – including my own understanding of them – show shifts in the role of accidental experts, self-made teachers, and students, that reflect changing hierarchies of knowledge and social positioning over time, and that complicate the question, not only as to 'what is Indian?', but also as to what is colonial, and what is local about the query, and shaping, of spiritual and religious knowledge in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia. Moreover, the narratives make clear that to study them mainly in the framework of Indonesia-based new, transnational Buddhist history would also present a partial and incomplete perspective on their histories.[72] What we see when we zoom in on local narratives is an ongoing, volatile, and interactive process of learning, practicing, and teaching yoga and meditation, of appropriating specific techniques, and of developing new forms, across yoga's theosophical, Buddhist, or generalist 'Indian' framings. Teachers and students like Tee Boan An and Yogamurti

appropriated various techniques, and developed their own new forms of yoga, and visions, that at times may have suited a need for healing or revelation. But their yogic trajectories also reflected a search for control and emancipation in times of decolonization and war, and subsequent (violent) socio-political changes and insecurities, aiming for better, alternative futures in postcolonial Indonesia, that included Chinese Indonesians.

Notes

1. Soekarno, 4 October 1963; in Vivekananda 1963a: title page. Also quoted in the Indonesian translation of Vivekananda's 'Karma Yoga', see: Vivekananda 2010 [Translated by Yogamurti, first print 1963]: iii.
2. Vivekananda 1963a.
3. Romain Rolland on Vivekananda's founding of the Rama Krishna Mission, from the Dutch translation of Titia Jelgersma: Rolland 1933, 89. Translation from the Dutch into English by the author.
4. Mentioned in Vivekananda 1963a, 10–11.
5. See, however, Adams (1965, 41), quoting Soekarno on what he sees as Vivekananda's most important lesson: 'Don't make your head a library. Put your knowledge into action''.
6. Vivekananda 1963b; Vivekananda 1964.
7. Chia 2020; Juangari 2016.
8. Compare Turner, Cox, and Bocking 2020, 23; Bloembergen and Raben 2009; Bloembergen 2021.
9. Bloembergen 2018; Stange 1980.
10. Stange 1980. For Fortmann: de Jong 1973; 4. Fortmann 1970. On the hippie trail, Liechty 2017.
11. Ricklefs 2012, 118–124; 132–133; 136–137; de Jong 1973, 11–12; Quinn 2009.
12. Compare, for the 1960–1970s: de Jong 1973, 12–13; Mulder 1978: vii, 10–12.
13. Leow 2019, 30. See, also for the relevant literature Lewis and Stolte 2019; Stolte 2019; For Indonesia-centred critical studies: Lewis 2019; McGregor 2013; McGregor and Hearman 2017; Wildan Sena Utama 2017
14. See, however, Danielson 2017 and the special Issue on Religion and Peace studies, of *Peace & Change* in which this article appears. With thanks to Carolien Stolte for pointing me to this line of research.
15. Compare Bloembergen 2021.
16. See Bloembergen 2017; 2018; 2021. On the problematic position of Indonesian Islam in Museums in the Netherlands, compare Shatanawi 2014; 2022. See also Formichi 2016.
17. Compare Aalten 2015; Boom 2015.
18. For this critical trend: Newcombe, Suzanne and Karen O'Brien-Kop 2020; Michelis 2004; Alter 2004; Strauss 2005; 2007; Singleton and Byrne 2008; Singleton 2010; Hauser 2013; Pasture and Hofman 2013. For an investigation of Southeast Asian traditions of yoga based on philological study, see Acri 2020.
19. Strauss 2005; Michelis 2004.
20. Strauss 2005, 8–9; Rolland 1930, 89.
21. Strauss 2005, 8
22. Strauss 2005, 10
23. See Sivananda 1970.
24. See however, on the history and philology of Yoga traditions in Southeast Asia: Acri 2020.
25. Geary 2014; 2017, 45–48; Trevithick 2006.
26. *LLM* 1987, 63.
27. See: https://www.liputan6.com/health/read/2220837/dua-guru-yoga-raih-lifetime-achievment-award, consulted lastly 6-6-2019. I also thank Taufiq Hanafi for leading me to Yogamurti's whereabouts in Bandung, and for sharing with me the local, Bandung-based image and fame of Yogamurti.

28. Suryadinata 2008, 1–2; Chandra 2012; for a recent overview of Chinese migration history to insular Southeast Asia: Chia 2020, 12–45.
29. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung, 18 November 2019.
30. *Hanya joga* 1954.
31. The next three paragraphs elaborate on Bloembergen 2018, 62–64. See for a history of the Theosophical Society in the Netherlands-Indies, Tollenaere 1996; Nugraha 2011.
32. Besant 1913. See also http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4278/pg4278.html (consulted 9-2-2020).
33. Davis 2015, 19.
34. *Karma yoga* (1901-1902); *Karma yoga* (1903-1904).
35. The talk was reported on by *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, 2-5-1906. See *Theosofische Vereeniging* 1906. The theosophical lodge of Soerabaya was founded in 1902.
36. Bloembergen 2018. See for example *Over yoga* 1937; *Over yoga* 1940.
37. 'Yoga Brahma-Vidya' (for 'the seriously interested', including lessons on 'Tibetan Mysticism' and 'Hindu Yoga'), *Javabode*, 24 April 1953; 'Karma Yoga', *Javabode*, 16 May 1953 (in Indonesian); 9 July 1956 (in Dutch). These three ads, as well as one for the 'School of Silence', were all posted by 'Dorjee'. This is a Tibetan given name, in this case probably also the author of the similarly relevant book *Grensgebieden van de Geest* (Batavia: Kolff & Co: 1941) (Book review in *Indische Courant*, 15 July 1941). Other examples: 'Lessons in Asiatic bodily culture and Yoga' from the 'ASIA Institute' in Bandung, *Preangerbode*, 18-5-1955. 'Handlijnkundige adviezen' (ad for hand-reading and the therapeutic value of yoga for nervous disorders), *Nieuwsgier*, 12 March 1954; Yoga 'for success in business', *De Nieuwsgier*, 12 March 1954; Ads for books by Paul Brunton, by Bookshop Cosmos in Bandung, *Preangerbode*, 1-11-1955; 5-1-1957; by Bookshop TEMPO in Bandung, *De Preangerbode* 5 January 1957.
38. Polderman 1958; https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rama_Polderman. His legacy is still alive in Dutch Hatha Yoga schools, for example Bodhi Yoga in Rotterdam, as this author experienced in 2019.
39. Strauss 2007, 53.
40. Strauss 2007, 53.
41. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung, 6 March 2017.
42. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung, 6 March 2017. See however https://www.liputan6.com/health/read/2220837/dua-guru-yoga-raih-lifetime-achievment-award, consulted 22-5-2020, where it seems that Devananda actually visited Indonesia a year earlier.
43. See on the transnational missionary activities of the DLS in Rishikesh, in particular Strauss 2007; 2008
44. For example, on the Javanese theosophist and Buddhist convert, Ananda Suyono, who traveled to India in 1958, Bloembergen 2018.
45. Hadiman S.D; Soebadio 1974. Interview with Soekanto's stepson, Pak Soepardi, Jakarta, December 2019.
46. Interviews with Yogamurti, Bandung, 6 March 2017; Bandung, 5 June 2018.
47. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung, 6 March 2017. Kwee Liong Tian was politically active in late colonial times, as foreman of the Surabaya section of the emancipatory Association of Young Chinese, Hsing Chung Hui, and chair of the Chinese section of the Netherlands-Indies Red Cross in Surabaya. Information on Kwee Liong Tian, in late colonial times: *Soerabajasch handelsblad*, 8 May 1940; *Indische courant*, 23 January 1926 (news on his engagement with Han Swan Lioe, *Indische Courant*, 10 February 1937. For his books on yoga: Kwee Liong Tian 1957; 1958 [reprint 2012].
48. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung, 5 June 2018; 18 November 2019.
49. http://health.liputan6.com/read/2220837/dua-guru-yoga-raih-lifetime-achievment-award., last consulted 22-5-2020.
50. *LLM* 1987, 63.
51. Photoalbum Yogamurti, shown to me on 7 March 2017. On the school, see: http://health.liputan6.com/read/2220837/dua-guru-yoga-raih-lifetime-achievment-award, last consulted, 22-5-2020.

52. Juangjari 2016; Chia 2018; 2020; For historical studies especially Yulianti 2020; See also Brown 2004; Ramstedt 2004; 2011; Boembergen 2018.
53. Chia 2018, 30–31; Juangari 2016, 31–35.
54. Juangari 2016, 31–35; According to Chia 2018, 30, Tee Boan An became a vegetarian through his exposure to Buddhist practices in Chinese temples. Whichever road took him there, my point here is that it is precisely an openness to all sorts of spiritual and occult queries, not directed by strict vocational missions that somewhat typified both theosophical and what is referred to as *kebatinan* traditions, both of which thrived in these times, and that formed Tee Boan An.
55. Juangari 2016, 32–33. English translation MB.
56. Chia 2018, 32; On the history of the theosophical lodge in Solo across the Japanese occupation, Bloembergen 2018.
57. Chia 2018, 32; Juangari 2016; Yulianti 2020.
58. Chia 2018, 37–38. Braun 2013.
59. Braun 2013, preface.
60. Fields 1992, 318, paraphrasing Joseph Goldstein who studied Vipassana at Bodh Gaya, with one of Mahshi Sayadaw's students, Bengalese meditation teacher Munindra-Ji.
61. Stange 1975, 27–28.
62. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung 6 March 2017.
63. Interview with Yogamurti, Bandung, 18 November 2019. http://buddhazine.com/hut-vihara-tanah-putih-adalah-hari-lahir-buddhis-indonesia/ last consulted, 5-5-2020.
64. http://pti-db.blogspot.sg/2009/01/sejarah-tridharma.html, last consulted 5-5-2020.
65. Interviews with Yogamurti, Bandung 6 March 2017; 8 November 2019. Yogamurti was not explicit about the kind of meditation he learned from Ashin Jinarakkhita. Chia 2018, 37–38, on the connection between Ashin Jinarakkhita and Mahashi Sayadaw, made me realize what these might be.
66. Stange, 1975, 26.
67. https://buddhazine.com/hut-vihara-tanah-putih-adalah-hari-lahir-buddhis-indonesia/, last consulted on 20-5-2020.
68. Sumarah meditation guru, Sudarno Ong, in Solo, probably in 1975, quoted in Stange 1975, 27–28. For more extensive information on this encounter, see Bloembergen 2018.
69. Interview with Yogamurti, with support of his son, Yogadibiyai, Bandung, 5 June 2018; On Ong Soe An: Ramstedt 2004; https://darman-ong-family.blogspot.com/2010/ consulted 2-5-2019. See there, in particular also the portrait of Ong in 1958, with portraits of leaders of the TS on the wall: Mme Blavatsky and Olcott. According to this blog, Ong Soe An himself travelled several times to India, and once took along his grandchildren.
70. Interviews with Yogamurti, Bandung, 6 March 2017 (Yogamurti, emphasized to me that the visit to Bodh Gaya was merely touristic, whereas (the site of) Sai Baba was now all that mattered to him); 18 November 2019. 'Editorial' 1979, 5.
71. Compare Bloembergen 2018.
72. Compare Chia 2020; Yulianti 2020.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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