



**Daily Life Yoga Practice for Well-being of Yoga Masters:
An Ethnographic Study**

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Thesis Title Daily Life Yoga Practice for Well-being of Yoga Masters:
An Ethnographic Study

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ชื่อหัวข้อวิทยานิพนธ์	การศึกษาชาติพันธุ์วรรณนาการปฏิบัติโยคะในวิถีชีวิตเพื่อความ ผาสุกของครูโยคะ
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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาและอธิบายความหมายของการปฏิบัติโยคะตลอดจนการบูรณาการโยคะมาใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันในมุมมองของครูโยคะและบริบทของสังคมวัฒนธรรมไทย รวมทั้งครูโยคะมีกลวิธีในการปฏิบัติโยคะอย่างไรจนประสบความสำเร็จในวิถีโยคะและมีปัจจัยอะไรบ้างที่สนับสนุนให้วิถีโยคะได้พัฒนาเพิ่มขึ้นจนเป็นที่ยอมรับในสังคมปัจจุบัน ตลอดจนมีปัจจัยอะไรบ้างที่เป็นอุปสรรคต่อการปฏิบัติโยคะและฟันฝ่าอุปสรรคได้อย่างไร โดยใช้วิธีการศึกษาเชิงชาติพันธุ์วรรณนาของ สปราคเล่ (1979) ผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลักเป็นครูโยคะ จำนวน 12 คน และผู้ให้ข้อมูลทั่วไป 22 คน ซึ่งประกอบไปด้วยสมาชิกในครอบครัว เพื่อนบ้าน นักศึกษาที่เรียนโยคะและเพื่อนร่วมงานของครูโยคะที่ทำการศึกษา ผู้วิจัยเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากหลากหลายวิธีโดยการสัมภาษณ์และการจดบันทึกภาคสนาม การสังเกตแบบการมีส่วนร่วมอย่างต่อเนื่องและอยู่ในภาคสนามเป็นเวลานานถึงหนึ่งปี รวมทั้งนำการตรวจสอบสามเส้ามาใช้ในการตรวจสอบข้อมูล วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลตามแนวการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงชาติพันธุ์วรรณนาของสปราคเล่เพื่อให้เกิดความน่าเชื่อถือในข้อมูลที่ได้

ผลการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลพบว่าผู้ให้ข้อมูลให้ความหมายของการปฏิบัติโยคะไว้ 3 ความหมายคือ (1) เป็นเครื่องมือในการส่งเสริมสุขภาพ (2) เป็นศาสตร์และศิลปะในการดำเนินชีวิตเพื่อให้ชีวิตมีความสมบูรณ์ และ (3) เป็นปรัชญาของชีวิตเพื่อที่จะได้ชีวิตที่สงบสุขและหลุดพ้นจากความทุกข์

ทั้งปวง ครูโยคะสะท้อนถึงการเข้ามาสู่วิถีโยคะโดยมีสิ่งจูงใจดังนี้ คือเป็นวิถีที่มีความศรัทธาและสอดคล้องกับเป้าหมายในชีวิต ได้รับประสบการณ์ที่ดีจากการปฏิบัติและศรัทธาในวิถีการดำเนินชีวิตของครูโยคะ โดยที่มีกระบวนการในการพัฒนาตนเองในการปฏิบัติจนได้รับการยอมรับว่าเป็นครูโยคะดังนี้คือ มีการเตรียมตนเอง ปัจจัยที่ทำให้ประสบความสำเร็จในวิถีโยคะและวิธีการในการพัฒนาตนเองจนได้เป็นผู้ที่มีความเชี่ยวชาญ ในการบูรณาการโยคะมาใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันนั้นผู้ให้ข้อมูลกล่าวว่า เป็นการปฏิบัติเพื่อตอบสนองความต้องการการดูแลสุขภาพ การดำรงอยู่ของความเป็นมนุษย์ และการปฏิบัติให้เกิดความสมดุลในชีวิต ตลอดจนการบูรณาการโยคะและการรักษาแบบผสมผสานในการจัดการกับปัญหาสุขภาพ นอกจากนี้มีปัจจัยทางวัฒนธรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการปฏิบัติโยคะทั้งที่ส่งเสริมและเป็นอุปสรรคในการปฏิบัติโยคะ

การศึกษาครั้งนี้ทำให้ได้รูปแบบการปฏิบัติโยคะในชีวิตประจำวันที่ใช้ในการดูแลสุขภาพอย่างเป็นองค์รวม บุคลากรทางสุขภาพและบุคคลอื่นๆที่สนใจสามารถใช้ผลการศึกษานี้เพื่อช่วยให้ผู้ปฏิบัติสามารถนำโยคะมาปฏิบัติให้ยั่งยืนจนบรรลุเป้าหมายในชีวิตตามที่ได้กำหนดไว้

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ABSTRACT

This focused ethnography aimed to explore and describe the meaning of yoga practice and explore what yoga masters do, from the adoption of yoga until they achieve the yoga masters, and how they integrate yoga practice into daily life from their perspectives and that of Thai culture. Cultural beliefs and factors influencing yoga practice as well as strategies to becoming a yoga master were explored. Twelve key informants and twenty-two general informants (family members, neighbors, yoga students, and colleagues) participated in this study. The data were obtained through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic records over a year period. A variety of techniques to improve and document the credibility of the study such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation were used. Spradley's (1979) ethnographic method was used as the guideline in analyzing the data simultaneously with data collection.

The findings revealed the meaning of yoga practice as a tool to promote health, science and the art of living a perfect life, as well as a philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment. To become a yoga master, significant motivations are needed, including faith in yoga philosophy, fitting with the goal of

life, experiencing the benefits of and being impressed by the way of life of yoga gurus, and the process self-development to be a yoga expert, including self-preparation, supporting factors, and strategies to improve oneself. Yoga masters have integrated yoga into daily life as a response to healthcare needs, to maintain the existence of humanity and a life balance, and to integrate yoga and complementary therapies in the management of health problems. Two categories of cultural beliefs were highlighted as influencing yoga practice, namely: (1) facilitating yoga practice included faith in yoga philosophy, beliefs associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism, belief in sufficient economy and contented living, a high education level, health problems, experiencing positive outcomes of practice, the understanding and support of family, the support of organizations, and the support of health-promoting policies related to complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs), and (2) impeding yoga practice included lack of self-discipline and adequate available time to practice it.

The findings suggest that health professions should promote yoga practice in the daily lives of patients as beneficial to their holistic health and help practitioners succeed in achieving a sustainable yoga practice and reaching their life goals.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background and significance of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, research questions, and its conceptual framework. The definitions of the terms used in this study are also clarified.

Background and Significance of the problem

Well-being is significant to good life and the continuing goals of individuals. It is a major criterion for the evaluation of the success of governments and societies; if the people in a country enjoy overall well-being, it reflects in a good national public health (Raz, 2004). Recently, the healthcare reform in Thailand is changing the focus of care from caring for the sick to health promotion. Therefore, individuals need to be empowered to develop personal skills for a healthy living. In addition, the shift of health problems from infectious acute diseases to noninfectious chronic diseases calls for more attention on holistic healthcare and the integration of complementary therapies to care. In order to battle these noninfectious chronic diseases, the Thai government has implemented a new strategy called the Thailand Healthy Lifestyle Strategic Plan (2007-2016) (Konnark, 2011); which involves the promotion of the contented lifeway and the use of complementary therapy to promote a healthy and peaceful life. Several techniques provide health and well-being such as music listening, Tai chi, Gi gong, yoga and meditation (Biley, 2000; Chen, Hsu, Chen, Tseng, 2007; Dossey, & Guzzetta, 2005; Hodges, 2003; Sjogren, et al, 2006; Thaweepkul,

2004). Among those, yoga is quite popular because it is used extensively in both health services throughout government and private hospitals, public health services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Moreover, a survey by the Thai Bureau of Health Policy and Strategy reported that yoga was one of the most popular forms of complementary therapy that most Thais have used at some point in their lives (Terachaiskul, 2005).

Yoga, an ancient Indian practice, has been shown to have a positive contribution in the maintenance of our general well-being and happiness (Gharote, 1990). If it were practised by more people, they would learn the optimal health benefits of a physical, mental, and spiritual nature that yoga provides (Iyengar, 1997). When considering the whole process of yoga, it involves the highest level of meditation or Samadhi (Gore, 2003). In the Samadhi state, the mind becomes free from all thought and is absolutely still or super-conscious (Bhaskarananda, 2002). At this level of consciousness, spiritual well-being is derived and no other complementarities can achieve this in the same way as yoga. Yoga is a mind-body practice that helps a person seek for the perfect union of body, mind, and spirit through a system of posture, breathing control, Bandhas and Mudra, kriyas, meditation, attitude training or ethical behavior, and mitahara and yogic diet (Gharote, 1990; Sivanada, 2000). In action, yoga is a skilful science of gaining control over the mind by reducing the film of avidya or false perception to act correctly, resulting in unfluctuation of consciousness (Desikachar, 1999; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). At this level, there is direct experience of Samadhi and happiness, or freedom from suffering (Iyengar, 1997).

In the yogic perspectives, the human being exists concurrently on five sheaths; these sheaths of existence are called Panca koshas. The koshas include the physical body (*Anna-maya-kosha*), the life force or vital body (*Prana-maya-kosha*), the mind body (*Mano-maya-kosha*), the intellectual or wisdom body (*Vijnana-maya-kosha*), and the bliss body (*Ananda-maya-kosha*) (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). It is believed that imbalance in any of these sheaths results in illness (Nagarathna, Nagendra & Monro, 1995). In contrast, balance and consciousness level raising are the ultimate definition of health. There are two types of illness in Indian philosophy. The first is illnesses with strong physical content such as communicable diseases and accidental injuries. The other is mental diseases that arise through disturbance, especially in the mind sheath, and result in physical illness such as restlessness, dissatisfaction, anxiety and so on (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). These give rise to physical tensions reflected in the nerves and muscles, obstructing normal blood flow and causing a person to get exhausted easily; consequently, the nervous system cannot coordinate various functions of the body. Thus, disharmony and imbalance are produced. If they are of long-term duration in vital functions, they lead to disease (Gore, 2003). Living one's life in moderation is thought to keep all five sheaths in balance, which contributes to health and well-being (Fontaine, 2000).

Yogic practices are adopted to balance and harmonize disturbances in each of the sheaths. In the physical sheath, it refers to appropriate lifestyle and yogic diet. Asana as well as the kriyas tradition cleanses the inner organs of our body. They bring about an increased range of adaptability of the tissues forming various organs and systems and raise the threshold of their reactivity (Gharote, 1990). The purpose of kriyas is to establish psycho-physiological balance and promote deep internal

awareness. Yoga asana consists of physical movements to mobilize and activate particularly affected parts of the used body. They are physically revitalizing and promote deep relaxation and mental calm (Gharote, 1990; Nagarathna, & Nagendra, 2004). Yogic techniques then focus on the next limb called pranayama, which refers to a process of gaining control over Prana, that is, the life force in the vital body. Suitable types of pranayama help to remove random agitations in the Pranic flow in the body. At this level, physiological changes take place, which influence the mind and emotions. After sufficient practice, it lowers the metabolic rate, quietens the mind, and brings about higher levels of consciousness (Bhaskarananda, 2002; Gore, 2003; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). A yogic technique called *pratyahara*, draws the focus inside and withdraws the attention of the five senses from the stimuli of the external environment focusing inwards on breathing and sensations. At this level of pratyahara practice, controlling the senses and observing inwardly the body, breath, and sensations, results in heightened awareness and control of the fluctuations of the mind. At the mind sheath, yogic practice focuses on meditation, which progressively deepens concentration. Progressive habitual practice allows the mind to become relaxed. Relaxed concentration of the mind for longer and longer durations leads ultimately to super-consciousness (Samadhi). The fourth sheath focuses on the wisdom body, which is the power to discern and discriminate. It releases one from all miseries and obsessions by changing our attitude towards wrong habits, which are the agitations of the mind. The final sheath is the bliss body, which is the key concept in yoga practice because it reminds us that we are within the overall happiness. Finally, yoga practice including asanas, pranayama, kriya, pratyahara, meditation, attitude training, and yogic diet can balance a human being's five sheaths.

Previous research has found that the regular practice of yoga postures and pranayama produce significant physical, psychological, and spiritual health benefits. In terms of physical well-being, research shows that yoga has the beneficial effects of modifying cardiovascular risk factors (Damodaron, et al., 2002), increasing pulmonary function (Harinath, et al., 2004; Visweswrlah & Telles, 2004; Yadav & Das, 2001), reducing pain (Carson, et al., 2007; John, Sharma, Sharma & Kankane, 2007; Kakigi, et al., 2005; Sareen, Kumari, Gajebasia & Gajebasia, 2007; Williams, et al., 2005), improving muscular strength and endurance (Cowen & Adams, 2005), improving lower body flexibility and balance (Puymbroeck, et al., 2007), and increasing immune function (Kochupillai, et al, 2005). Psychological health benefits of yoga have been also reported in the area of stress reduction (McCaffery, Ruknui, Hatthakit, & Kasetsomboon, 2005; Panjwani, et al., 1995; Shapiro, Cook, Davydov, & Ottaviani, 2007; Telles, Naveen, & Dash, 2007), and the improvement of general and psychological well-being (Hadi & Hadi, 2007; Malathi, et al., 2000; Statler, Wheeler, Siegel, 2007). The benefits of yoga practice has been reported to improve the spiritual well-being of yogic practitioners (Thaweepkul, 2004), bring about self-awareness (Hodges, 2003; Valente & Marotar, 2005), and spiritual health efficiency of male drug addicts (Boonyamanee, 2006). Although there is evidence that using yoga can improve one's health status and promote well-being, most of the research has focused on symptom management (Carson, et al., 2007; John, Shama, & Kankane, 2007; McCaffery, Ruknui, Hatthakit, & Kasetsomboon, 2005; Puymbroeck, Payne & Hsieh, 2007; Sharma, Mahajan & Sharma, 2007; Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer & Eckert, 2007; Telles, Naveen & Dash, 2007).

Even though it has been evidenced that yoga benefits in many ways, most yoga practitioners use only the asanas, pranayama and relaxation techniques (Chaya, Kurpad, Nagendra, Nagarathna, 2006; Hadi & Hadi, 2007; Moadel, et al., 2007; Oken, et al., 2006; Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer, Eckert, 2007). Moreover, it has been shown theoretically that yoga is an integrated system of physiological, psychological and philosophical practices treating imbalances and maintaining overall well-being; yet, this is an etic view (outsider's viewpoint) of the benefits of yoga practice (Hollenbeck, 2007). Additionally, evidence also shows that yoga masters, who are knowledgeable in yoga and practice it regularly, are healthy and live their lives in a balanced and contented way (Desikachar, 1999; Iyengar, 1997). It is interesting to explore how yoga masters incorporate yoga into their daily life and how yoga brings them well-being. More than that, their experiences are beneficial in guiding yoga practitioners to maximize the potential benefits of its practice in their daily life. Thus, in this study, the researcher will employ ethnography to explore the daily life yoga practice of yoga masters.

Ethnography is a research process of learning about people by learning from them. It facilitates exploration of people's cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1979). By using this method, the researcher can explore the informants' understanding of their lived experiences in their own setting. Moreover, ethnography allows the researchers to go beyond what they have observed, to inquire as to the meaning of the behavioral patterns and events of the people involved, and to explore the common experience and ways of integration of yoga in daily life practice. Spradley (1980) has pointed out that the ethnographic method is one way to discover the meaning of human behavior. Furthermore, it will make it possible for the researcher to achieve the objective of

obtaining knowledge about the experience of yoga practice in daily life and to explore the ways in which yoga is integrated in daily life from the yogi masters' view (insider views of people). The symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) is an underpinning philosophy explaining this phenomenon. This theory is selected because its symbols and interpretative processes undergird interactions fundamental to understand human behavior (Patton, 2002) and it is relevant to the philosophical underpinning of ethnography. Therefore, ethnographic research is appropriate for this study to gain knowledge from the yoga masters, who have knowledge and direct experience in daily life yoga practice and disseminate such knowledge to the public using yoga to promote health and well-being.

Significance of the study

The findings of the study provide evidence based findings that can serve as a foundation to develop a cultural model to enhance well-being. In addition, more specific benefits of this study to nursing are:

1. To gain an understanding of daily life yoga practice for well-being
2. To provide baseline data for developing a model to enhance well-being for people in the context of their cultures
3. To provide guidance for integration of yoga into daily life

Purpose of the study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To describe the meaning of yoga practice for well-being from the emic point of view
2. To explore what yoga masters did to become yoga masters
3. To explore how yoga masters integrate yoga into daily life practice to promote well-being
4. To identify and explore the cultural beliefs and other factors influencing yoga practice in daily life

Research questions

Seven principal research questions were used to guide this study. In an attempt to obtain a deep understanding of the meaning of yoga and the integration of yoga in the daily life of yoga masters, the following questions were considered:

1. What is the meaning of daily life yoga practice for well-being?
2. What do yoga masters do to become yoga masters?
3. What yoga concepts do yoga masters use in their daily lives to enhance their well-being?
4. How do yoga masters integrate yoga into daily life to enhance their well-being?
5. What are the health outcomes as a result of daily life yoga practice?
6. What are the cultural beliefs influencing daily life yoga practice?
7. What are the others factors influencing daily life yoga practice?

Theoretical framework

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and the five sheaths of existence in a human being (Desikachar, 1999; Gharote, 1990; Iyengar, 1997; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001) were selected to construct the theoretical framework of this study. Patanjali states that yoga is a process of gaining control over the mind and it consists of eight interconnected limbs. These limbs lead progressively to higher stages of health, self-awareness, and calm down the mind (Fritz, 2007; Herrick, & Ainsworth, 2000; Jakubczak, 2004). The eight limbs of Yoga Sutra are a major tool in assisting an individual in learning how to live a valuable life, have inner harmony, and ultimately a union of the individual with universal existence and attain further happiness or the bliss stage (Gharote, 1990; Jakubczak, 2004; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). Other yoga techniques, namely yogic diet, mitahara, kriyas, and bandhas are also necessary to help operate on different sheaths and produce a balanced existence (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001).

In the perspective of yoga, health is related to five sheaths of human existence or *Panca Kosha*: the physical body, the life force or vital body, the mind body, the intellectual body and the bliss body (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). It is believed that imbalance in any of these sheaths results in illness, in contrast to balance and the raising of consciousness as the ultimate definition of health and well-being (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1995). Additionally, imbalance in any sheath results in the imbalance of the three gunas or qualities (sattva, raja, tama) of nature and mind in each individual's behavioral patterns (Iyengar, 1995).

Yogic practices are adopted to balance and harmonize disturbances in each of the sheaths (Gore, 2003; Nagarathna, & Nagendra, 2004). At the level of the first sheath or the physical body, our focus is on the third limb of the Yoga Sutra, kriyas, and yogic diet and mitahara. The third limb, called asana, helps to mobilize and activate particularly affected parts of the used body and prepare oneself for meditation. The benefits of asana practice consist in revitalize physiology, promoting deep relaxation, and further developing mental calmness, leading to an inner awareness (Gharote, 1990; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). Kriyas establish psycho-physiological balance and promote deep internal awareness. These techniques bring about an increased range of adaptability of the tissues and raising the threshold of their reactivity through neuromuscular reaction and established hormonal balance. Yogic diet plays an important role in human beings by providing energy to build up tissues and regulate body processes. Mitahara, a moderate diet, is followed as a body requirement. In relation to the health of the physical body, it refers to yogic diet and mitahara, kriyas, and yoga asanas. The second sheath is the vital body. Yogic techniques focus on pranayama, which refers to a process for gaining control over prana. The flow of prana through a higher level in the body stimulates charka, controlling the glands nearby to function well, resulting in good health. Suitable types of pranayama helps to remove random agitations in the pranic flow, clears pranic blockages of the vital body, and balances the nadis freely flow, leading to spiritual awakening (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). Sufficient practice lowers the metabolic rate, quietens the mind, and increases body awareness (Bhaskarananda, 2002; Oken et al., 2006). Performing the three most important bandhas that bind the current of vital energy in a particular region helps in the return of venous blood, controls certain

semi-voluntary muscles, and tones up the internal organs (Gharote, 1990). Kriyas are cleansing practices of the inner organs and purification of the nadis, which also help reach vital body and psycho-emotional balance (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). The third sheath is the mind body, which is made possible by the last four limbs. The fifth limb is called Pratyahara, bringing the focus inside and withdrawing the attention of the five senses from the stimuli. This practice heightens awareness and controls mind fluctuations. The yogic techniques, next, focus on the sixth and seventh limbs called Dharana and Dhyana. These practices seek to develop deeper consciousness as well as the highest value of concentration. The final limb of yoga Sutra is called Samadhi, leading to a state of ultimate super-consciousness. This progressive habitual practice allows the mind to become relaxed and super-conscious (Samadhi). As a result of the practice of meditation and concentration, the practitioner gains advanced mental development showing in lightness, peace, cheerfulness, and bright idea. Moreover, the first two limbs of the Yoga Sutra, called Yama and Niyama, involve attitude training through ethical commitment and self-discipline, which help one changes one's attitudes in order to have a right perception and pure mind. As a result of these, one could have less avidya and further greater freedom from suffering. These are the firm foundations of spiritual experience and training for basic mind purification, which is present in serenity, calm, kindness, goodwill, compassion, alertness, and non-violence. The fourth sheath, wisdom/intellect body, concerns the power to perceive and discriminate in a living being. It manumits all suffering and obsessions by changing the attitudes towards all wrong habits, which are the fluctuations of the mind. The final sheath (bliss body) is a key concept in yoga practice because it reminds us that we are within the overall happiness resulting from super-consciousness or Samadhi. It

reflects a great level of knowledge that brings about wisdom. The blissful state or Samadhi is experienced when we know and/or understand things that we could not before. Finally, yoga practice through asana, pranayama, meditation, kriya, yogic diet, mitahara, and attitude training helps balance the five sheaths of human existence (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). Hence, when they are balanced and one's consciousness level is raised, one achieves well-being.

Yoga masters are persons practicing yoga and teaching others with their yoga knowledge. Observing their practices and asking them for information and/or insight related to their practice, one can gain valuable knowledge. Hence, to achieve the objectives of obtaining knowledge regarding performing yoga in daily life and exploring the ways of integrating yoga in daily life from yoga masters' perspective (insider views of people). Ethnography based on the theoretical concept of social constructivism paradigm (Patton, 2002) help to understand the way of life from the native point of view selected to guide this research.

The social construction or the constructivist position assumes that realities are multiple, constructed, socially-and experientially-based, and local and specific in nature (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This inquiry aims to understand and reconstruct the meaning of social phenomena of people investigated. Therefore, it is important to explore meaningful human interpretations holistically, that is, to investigate the daily life experiences of yoga practice by yoga masters in their places. Ethnography emphasizes exploring social phenomena, making it suitable to study the everyday life of yoga masters.

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research, which refers to the work of describing a culture in order to understand another way of life from the native point of

view (Spradley, 1979). In addition, Spradley has pointed out that the essential core of ethnography is the meaning of actions and events to the people in which the ethnographer searches for understanding. These meanings can be expressed directly through language or indirectly through action and the knowledge that is gained from doing fieldwork. Hence, an ethnographer needs to have an intense desire to understand others' lives through being part of a specific cultural scene in order to present the native point of view. By doing fieldwork, the ethnographer participates in activities; for example, asking questions, learning a new language, observing play, interviewing informants and taking field notes (Spradley, 1980). Moreover, ethnographic methods allow for multiple interpretations of reality and alternative interpretations of data throughout the study. Therefore, ethnographic methodology is congruent with the study of the way of living of yoga masters from the emic perspective.

Although yoga practice helps balance the five sheaths, which is the key concept of health and well-being, some influencing factors may have a profound effect on yoga practice. In the context of yoga practice, previous studies have found that health policies, one's state of health, good education, religion, beliefs, and the social structure of one's society are associating factors with yoga practice (Armstrong, 1978; Barnes, Bloom & Nahin, 2008; Hodges, 2003; Samingwan, 2007; Srichalakom, 2004). Furthermore, in order to achieve health and well-being, the researcher, as a health care provider, believes that daily life yoga practice would be more effective if it were developed and promoted appropriately based on people's cultures and beliefs. Obviously, comprehensive knowledge regarding daily life yoga practice for well-being from the emic and etic perspectives constitutes the crucial baseline data to

develop a model to enhance well-being for people in the context of their culture. The illustration of interrelated concepts in this study is presented in Figure 1.

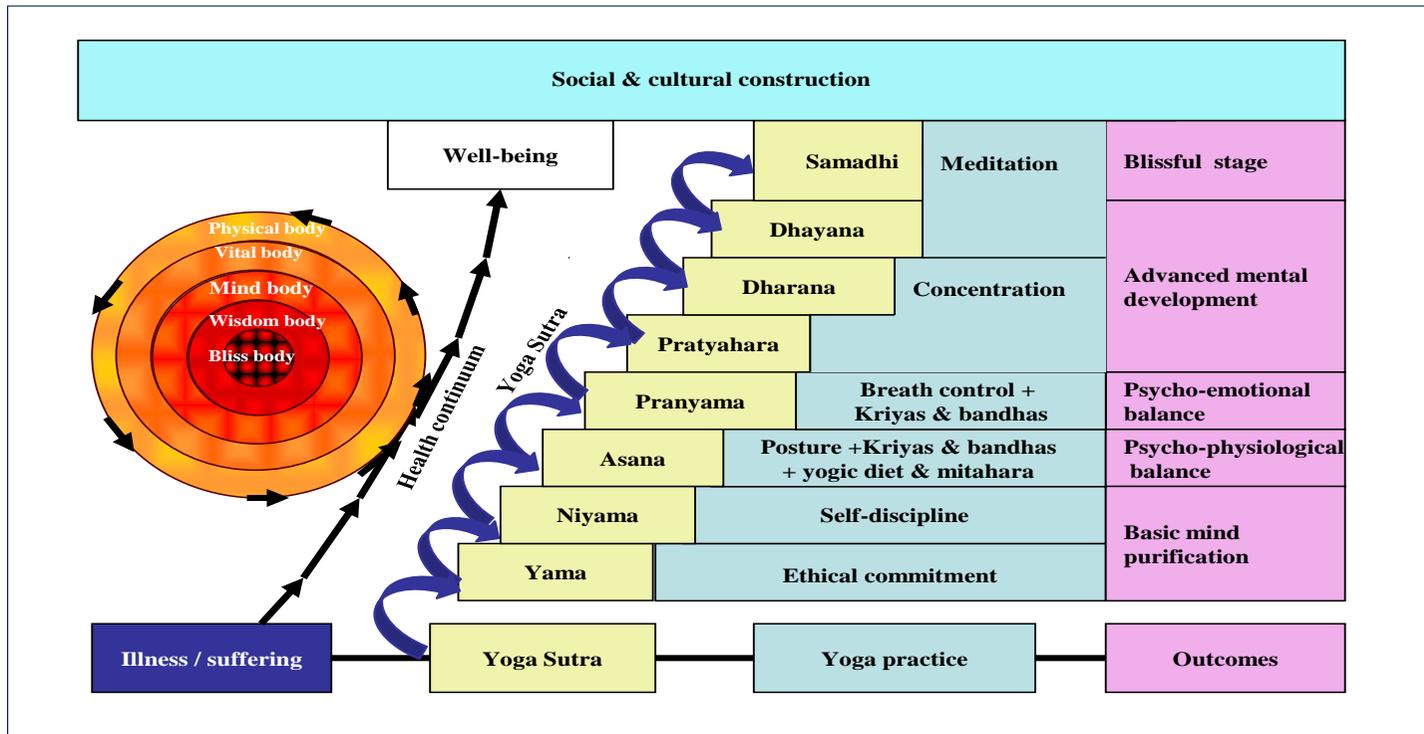


Figure1: Theoretical framework of the study

Definitions of terms

Daily life yoga practice refers to a way that a person applies yoga philosophy and its practice to his/her daily life practice in order to obtain good health and perceived well-being. The daily life practice includes an ethical commitment, self-discipline, asanas or postures, breathing control (pranayama), control over the senses (pratyahara), concentration, meditation, purification techniques (kriyas), and yogic diet.

Well-being refers to the individual's perception of his/her existence, which he/she assesses based on his/her own values and experiences to be healthy and happy.

Yoga master refers to a person who practises yoga regularly in his/her daily life by following the Yoga Sutra as a guideline of his/her practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature related to the study of daily life yoga practice for well-being by yoga masters was reviewed and is presented in relation to the following topics: well-being, yoga for well-being, ethnographic methodology, and trustworthiness.

1. Well-being

The term “well-being” is commonly used in philosophy to describe how good health is ultimately perceived (Crisp, 2005). According to geographical perspective, other terms are used such as standard of living (socio-economic), quality of air and water (environment), quality of life (social welfare), and holism (health care) (Fleuret & Atkinson, 2007). In addition, Swanson (1993) has pointed out that well-being is an important phenomenon of concern in the nursing discipline.

Literature review reveals that well-being has been mentioned in a variety of terms equated with life satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, absence of anxiety and depression, good health, and quality of life (Anderson, 2007; Cummins, 2005; Kanh & Juster, 2002; Pichler, 2006; Raz, 2004; Rice & Steele, 2004; Stubbe, de Moor, Boomsma, de Geus, 2007; Vella-Brodrick & Norrish, 2008). Mostly, quality of life is a personal sense of well-being that consists of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions (Ferrell, 1996; Wettergren, Bjorkholm, Axdorph, Bowling, & Langius-Eklof, 2003). In addition, quality of life also is viewed as well-being and life satisfaction (Cummins, 2005). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the quality of life should be understood

from an individual's evaluation of his/her life; commonly referred to as a subjective quality of life or subjective well-being (Efklids, Kalaitzidou, & Chankin, 2003; Pichler, 2006).

Well-being is recognized as an individual's perception of his/her existence, as assessed by the individual based on his/her values and experiences, which are both objective and subjective. Well-being has been derived from two general perspectives, hedonistic perspective and eudaimonic perspective.

The hedonistic view, which focuses on happiness, is generally defined as the presence of positive effects and the absence of negative effects (Deci & Ryan, 2008). That is most often interpreted to mean experiencing a high level of positive effect, a low level of negative effect, and a high degree of satisfaction with one's life. The concept of well-being in this way has been used interchangeably with happiness. Of course, maximizing individual's well-being has been viewed as maximizing one's feelings of happiness. In addition, this perspective is considered as subjective well-being that people evaluate for themselves. With regard to the hedonistic perspective, well-being focuses on happiness that is equated with the experience of positive emotions. Studies dealing with concepts of subjective well-being and life satisfaction may be included under this umbrella. A number of psychometric instruments have been developed to measure the various aspects of well-being, including: the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Index of Well-Being (IWB), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), and positive affect scale of the short-form, Mood and Anxiety Symptom Questionnaire (MASQ). Although tools are available to evaluate the components of feeling happiness or satisfaction in life as a part of human experience, it appears that the assessment of

subjective well-being (SWB) has been the most studied component (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Desjardins, Zelenski, Robert, & Coplan, 2008; Diener & Tov, 2007).

The eudaimonic view, which focuses on the meaning and self-realization, defines well-being as living well or being fully functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This construction was developed from the humanistic psychology concept that has six characteristics of psychological well-being: (1) self-acceptance – a central feature of mental health and a characteristic of self-actualization, which consists of possessing our own actions, motivations, feelings and acceptance of one's past life, and all of one's personal experience; (2) personal growth – explicitly concerned with self-realization of the individual that relates to openness to new experiences; (3) positive relationships with others – considered the ability to love, having strong feelings of empathy, and having the capacity for great, deep friendships; (4) autonomy – emphasized in independence, self-determination, and the regulation of behavior from within; (5) environmental mastery – the ability to create environments suitable to one's psychic conditions; and (6) purpose in life – meaning that a person has goals and a sense of directedness and objectives for living (Ryff, 1989, Ryff & Singer, 2008). Instruments to measure well-being regarding the eudaimonic perspective such as Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB) have been developed. It has been used in various studies involving the field of treatment with the measurement of the outcome. The SPWB has provided evidence that psychological well-being (PWB) and quality of life (QL) are seen as indicators of the outcomes of treatment intervention (Abdraziakova, Bulygina, & Enikolopov, 2007; Carmody & Baer, 2008). Several studies have been tested for well-being.

Uppal (2006) studied Canadians with disabilities and found that the level of happiness was associated with the severity of the disability and unemployment, but was independent of the type of physical disability. Studies on elderly people have shown that income, level of education, social support, and health have significant effects in predicting subjective well-being (Zhang, Huang, Ye & Zeng, 2008). Some studies have measured well-being by examining distress and psychological well-being, which consist of anxiety, depression, positive well-being (Ryff, et al., 2006), cognitive and emotional components comprising satisfaction, illness, knowledge, and activity (Rask, Astedt-Kurkiand, Paavilainen, & Laippala, 2003), and by measuring depression and happiness (Joseph, Linley, Harwood, Lewis & McCollam, 2004). Satisfaction with life is a cognitive appraisal component of happiness, which is also measured (Cohen & Shmotkin, 2007; McAuley, Blissmer, Marquez, Jerome, & Kramer, 2000). Furthermore, in the study of people with cancer, the quality of life has been used to determine well-being (Cohen, Mount, Tomas, & Mount, 1996).

It is recognized that differences exist between hedonia and eudaimonia. In the hedonic perspective, well-being is considered subjective correlating with people's experience of a sense of wellness. It is interpreted to mean experiencing a high positive level, low negative level, and a high degree of life satisfaction. It is also believed that a person moves away from problems, and that one's feelings of happiness are maximized (Deci & Ryan, 2008), whereas the eudaimonic perspective is concerned with living well, which refers to being fully functioning (Ryff & Singer, 2008). In addition, this view also focuses on psychological well-being, which is construed as growth and human fulfillment influenced by the surrounding contexts of people's lives. Although well-being has been investigated from different

perspectives, evidence from previous studies has indicated that the self-assessment of well-being is considered to be an appropriate outcome measure that indicates the way in which an individual perceives and reacts to his/her health. However, this study may fit in with the hedonic perspective because hedonia is concerned with the experiences one has and often how pleasurable these experiences are (Bloodworth & McNamee, 2007), and it correlates with subjective well-being of the informants' experiences.

Several studies have shown the promotion of well-being. For example, the study of Kim and colleagues (2008), using a quasi experimental design to examine the relation of meditation to power and well-being among 31 Korean adults, found that practicing Chakra meditation for 4 weeks significantly increased well-being scores in the meditation group, but there were no significant changes in well-being scores if they did not do meditation. Morone and colleagues (2008) studied 27 older adults with chronic low back pain in a clinical trial of an 8-week mindfulness meditation program and used content analysis. They found that the participants described achieving well-being during and after the meditation session. A study of 84 college students, who regularly practiced yoga for 10 weeks, revealed that concentration improved overall and anxiety decreased over the 8 weeks of assessment (Statler, Wheeler, & Siegel, 2007). Furthermore, other techniques have been used to promote well-being such as Yang-style, Tai Chi (Chen, Hsu, Chen, & Tseng, 2007), gi gong exercise (Johansson, Hassmen, & Jouper, 2008), prayer (Maier-Lorents, 2004), meditation (Kim, Park & Kim, 2008; Morone, et al., 2008; Sagula & Rice, 2004), physical exercise (Sjogren, et al., 2006), listening to music (Biley, 2000), and yoga (Hadi & Hadi, 2007; Srichalakom, 2004; Statler, Wheeler, & Siegel, 2007; West, Otte, Geher, Johnson, & Mohr, 2004). All of them have been shown to improve both physical and psychological well-being.

Evidence from yoga practice has been shown to help reduce psychological and physical symptoms such as menopausal symptoms, depression, stress and anxiety, etc., in various populations (Booth-LaForce, Thurston, & Taylor, 2007; Kirkwood, Rampes, Richardson & Pikington, 2005; Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer & Eckert, 2007; Williams, et al., 2005) as well as promote well-being in healthy adults (Hadi & Hadi, 2007; Thaweepkul, 2004; Srichalakom, 2004; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). In addition, to gain the most benefit from yoga, daily practice is promoted for sustainability.

2. Yoga for well-being

Yoga is one of the six fundamental systems of Indian thought collectively known as *darsana*, which means sight or point of view (Desikachar, 1999). Yoga has its origins in the Vedas more than 6,000 years ago, the oldest record of Indian culture. It is derived from the Sanskrit word “yuj” and has been translated as “to yoke or to join the individual self with the universal self” (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004), ‘to come together’, “to unite” (Desikachar, 1999), “yoke”, “unity”, “discipline”, or effort” (Payne & Usatine, 2002:5). The most common understanding of the word “yoga” is “union” (Raub, 2002). In the spiritual sense, it is the union of the mind with the divine intelligence of the universe. It aims, through its practice, to release a human being from the conflicts of body and mind, which exist in every living thing and from the influence of the qualities of universal energy, that are present in every physical thing (Raub, 2002:797). Yoga was systematized as a special *darsana* by the great Indian sage Patanjali in the Yoga Sutra, which stated, “*Yoga is the ability to direct the*

mind without distraction or interruption” (Desikachar, 1999:9). Yoga has been practised for thousands of years in India, where it is a way of life including ethical models for behavior, and mental and physical practice aimed at spiritual enlightenment. Moreover, Gore (2003) mentioned that individuals practising yoga daily as ritual would experience a great deal of peace and joy of mind and further their health and happiness.

2.1 Philosophy of yoga

Patanjali is mentioned in the *Light on the Yoga Sutra* (Iyengar, 1997) as being the restraint of citta, which has been translated as consciousness. Sometimes, we use the term mind interchangeably with citta, so focusing on the mind it is similar to focusing on the citta. Citta is the individual counterpart of the universal consciousness. In addition, Yoga Sutra focuses on the mind and its qualities and how we can influence it. Our mind has its own five activities. These activities are correct perception, incorrect understanding, imagination, dreamless sleep, and memory; these activities work together except for dreamless sleep. A result of these activities of the mind within, alone or in combination with various activities is *dhuka* or suffering (a feeling of being restricted), the level of which depends on its effects. Moreover, human beings have three qualities of mind – *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva* – known as *guna*. Both *tamas* and *rajas* lead to *dhuka*, but *sattva* is positive in the sense of leading to a reduction of *duhkha* or suffering (Desikachar, 1999).

According to Yoga Sutra, *avidya* or incorrect comprehension is used to describe a false perception. *Avidya* is expressed in four different ways. The first is *ego* that invades our thoughts with opinion such as “I am the most important” or “I believe that I am right.” The second is *raga*, which expresses itself in making

demands; for example, if we do not have enough of something and we want more of it. The third form is the manifestation of refusing things and having feelings of dislike. The last is fear, which is mainly feeling uncertain, negative and upset. As long as we have avidya, we are at risk of making mistakes resulting in suffering. Avidya rises through the result of our many unconscious actions, so the mind becomes more and more dependent on habits until we accept the actions as the norm. This habitual action is called *samskara* (subliminal impression) that covers the mind resulting in the obscuring of the clarity of consciousness. Samskara also creates excitement and emotional impressions. If they are favorable, they create a good impression; if unfavorable, they cause aversion, resulting in the fluctuation and modification of consciousness and further creating sorrow and unhappiness. Therefore, the goal of yoga is to reduce the film of avidya or samskara in order to act correctly resulting in the unfluctuation of consciousness (Desikachar, 1999). Furthermore, the recognition and conquest of avidya and its effects is the only ladder by which one can climb upward until one gets to the highest rung on the ladder. The goal we want to meet is Samadhi, that is, free from avidya. By practicing yoga, we can climb up this ladder.

Yoga consists of eight interconnected limbs: Yama (ethical commitment), Niyama (self-discipline), Asana (posture), Pranyama (breath control), Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (self-realization or enlightenment). These limbs lead progressively to discipline, which purifies the body and mind, ultimately leading the yogi to enlightenment or Samadhi (Fritz, 2007; Jakubczak, 2004; Krishnananda, 1992). Furthermore, there are three things recommended to help practitioners climb upward (Desikachar, 1999). The first is *tapas*, described as the practice of asanas, pranayama, and strict diet helping

get rid of blocks and impurities in our system as well as giving as other benefits. The second is *svadhyaya*, which we can learn ourselves by reading and studying certain texts, and is then followed by a reflection of our mind. The last is *isvarapranidhana* that means the quality of practicing asanas and pranyama. These three methods should be practiced as much as possible.

Health based on yogic perspectives is related to five sheaths of existence of a human being or *Panca Kosha*. These are: the physical body (*Anna-maya-kosha*), the life force or vital body (*Prana-maya -kosha*), the mind body (*Mano-maya-kosha*), the intellectual or wisdom body (*Vijnana- maya- kosha*), and the bliss body (*Ananda-maya-kosha*) (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). It is believed that imbalance in any of these sheaths results in illness (Nagarathna, Nagendra & Monro, 1995), in contrast to balance and the raising of consciousness, which are the ultimate definition of health and well-being.

Yogic practices are adopted to balance and harmonize disturbances in each of the sheaths (Nagarathna, & Nagendra, 2004). At the level of the physical body, the focus is on the third of the eight limbs of Yoga Sutra, kriyas, yogic diet and mitahara. The third limb is called Asana, referring to the physical practice as well as kriyas, the traditional cleansing of the inner organs of the body. Kriya is a special yogic technique to purify the human physical system, which consists of six processes. These processes are: stomach wash (Dhauti), colon flushing (Basti), nasal douche and cleansing (Neti), steady gazing (Trataka), manipulation of abdominal muscles (Nauti), and forceful rapid breathing (Kapalabhati). These techniques bring about an increased range of adaptability of the tissues forming various organs and systems, as well as raising the threshold of their reactivity. The purpose of kriya is to establish psycho-

physiological balance and promote deep internal awareness. Asana means suitable postures in which a person can sit comfortably for a long time (Bhaskarananda, 2001; Gharote, 1990). The physical movement of asana involves the mobilization and activation of particularly affected parts of the used body. In addition, practicing asanas can lead a master towards disciplined freedom. The purpose of practicing asanas is to prepare oneself for meditation as well as to revitalize one's physiology and promote deep relaxation and mental calmness and an inner awareness (Gharote, 1990; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). During the practice of asana the concentration focuses on unifying the body, the breath and the senses including the mind. Hence, the breath can link between the inner and outer body, which is important to achieving stillness of the body and concentration of the mind. This is also a preparation for higher yoga practice such as pranayama and meditation. This method is the reconditioning of psycho-physiological mechanisms of the body to establish physiological balance among various systems for their harmonious function. Six processes of kriyas establish psycho-physiological balance and promote deep internal awareness. These processes bring about an increased range of adaptability of the tissues as well as raise the threshold of their reactivity through neuromuscular reaction as well as established hormonal balance.

Food is important in energy storage to preserve health in human beings. Yoga classifies food for human beings into three categories: Tamasic, Rajasic, and Sattvic food (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). *Tamasic food* is stale, tasteless, smelly, cooked overnight, or impure. This kind of food produces sleep, tandra, attachment, fear, dizziness, poverty and misperception. *Rajasic food* is bitter, sour, saline, steaming hot, and spiced. This kind of food produces instability, anxiety and a tendency to get

involved in worldly affairs, which generate sorrow. *Sattvic food* increases vitality, purity, strength, stamina, health, happiness, cheerfulness and good appetite. These foods are fresh, wholesome, natural and of good quality. They add vitality to the total system by bringing perfect, harmonious balance of energy states, as in the food itself (Sivananda, 2000).

Mitahara, the quantitative aspect of the diet, means that food should never exceed nor be less than body requirements. Large quantities of food distend the stomach, reducing its muscle tone and hampering the digestive process and causing constipation as well (Gharote, 1999). Yoga prescribes that the food should be nutritious, low in protein and high in carbohydrates. Proteins undergo putrefaction in the intestines, causing gas and interfering with the eliminative function of organs. Carbohydrates, on the other hand, do not putrefy in the intestine. However, when starch or sugar ferments in the intestine, acids are formed, preventing putrefaction by interfering with the normal bacterial flora of the intestines. Moreover, yoga beliefs maintain that protein decomposes rapidly and produces toxins or poisonous substances that are bad for the human body. All kinds of fruits and vegetables, natural forms of diet, contain little protein. They are also anti-toxic and have been used by humans in cleaning processes for centuries. The quantities of food suggested in mitahara are: a half-stomachful of sattvic food, one quarter-stomachful of plain water, and the remaining quarter should be reserved for the expansion of gas. Mitahara is ideal for all wanting to preserve health as it is quite hygienic and in harmony with the environment (Sivananda, 2000). Hence, the yogic diet appropriate for the yogin (yoga practitioner) is made up of sattvic food and mitahara. In relation to health of the physical body, yoga refers to yogic diet, kriyas, and yoga asanas.

Yogic techniques focus on the fourth limb, called Pranayama, which refers to a process for gaining control over prana, i.e., the life force in the vital body or the vital sheath. In fact, the flow of prana through a higher level in the body stimulates the point of power called Chakra, which controls the glands nearby to have good function, resulting in good health. Suitable types of Pranayama help to remove the random agitations in pranic flows, clears pranic blockages of the vital body, and balances Ida and Pingala nadis, causing Shusumna nadi to flow, which leads to spiritual awakening (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). At this level, physiological changes take place, which influence the mind and emotions. Sufficient practice increases vitality, lowers metabolic rate, quietens the mind, and takes one to higher levels of consciousness (Bhaskarananda, 2001; Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004; Oken et al., 2006). By quieting the mind, different emotions are also controlled atomically. Additionally, yogic techniques focus on Mudras, a skillful technique to establish equilibrium and dormant vital force. The essential practice of Mudras during asana and pranayama is called Bandha, that is, to precisely lock certain areas in order to bind the current of vital energy. The three most important bandhas are: Jalandhara bandhas, which involves the neck and upper spine; Uddiyana bandhas, which focuses on the area between the diaphragm and pelvis; and Mula bandhas, focusing on the area between the navel and pelvic floor. The yogic techniques draw from all areas utilized to this point. With the balance of the mind and emotions, a person shows a stable emotional personality that we can be observed from his/her actions such as existential guilt, sympathy, moral outrage, anger, fear, etc.

The level of Manomaya kosha or mind body is made possible by the last four limbs of the yogic techniques. The fifth limb is called Pratyahara; it brings the focus

inside and withdraws the attention of the five senses from stimuli. The main practice is called “Yoga Nidra” and involves withdrawing our attention from the external environment and focusing it inwards on breathing and sensations. At this level of pratyahara practice, we want to control our senses and inwardly observe the body, breath, and sensations, resulting in a heightened awareness and control of the fluctuations of the mind. The yogic techniques focus next on the sixth limb called Dharana. It refers to all the ways we seek to develop deeper consciousness as well as the highest value of concentration. After that, the yogic practice focuses on meditation, which the yoga tradition classifies as the seventh limb called Dhyana; it is the progressive deepening of one’s concentration. The final limb of Yoga Sutra is called Samadhi, leading to the state of ultimate of super-consciousness as well as infinite bliss. Its progressive habitual practice allows the mind to become relaxed. The relaxed condition of the mind for longer and longer durations leads to ultimate super-consciousness (Samadhi) or a state of inner freedom. External forces have no power over a person in this state because of his/her correct understanding of the external world (Desikachar, 1999). As a result of these practices, the practitioner achieves advanced mental development that is evidenced in a lightness, peace, cheerfulness, and clear thinking that we can observe from one’s feelings, behaviors and speech. Additionally, basic mind purification is important before moving on further advanced mental development. The first two limbs of the Yoga Sutra, called Yama and Niyama, involve attitude training through ethical commitment to self and self-discipline. The Yama practices are: do not think of harming any life form; speak truthfully; do not steal; control sexual appetites, which disturb the mind; and deny greed. All are actions and attitudes that one ought to avoid. Niyama is the cultivation

of the following good habits to improve the quality of the mind and make it stronger. These are: purity of behavior (Sauca); contentment (Santosa); satisfaction with the minimum of necessities for healthy living and diligent practice of asana and pranayama (Tapas); disciplined study of such literature that helps one in meditation (Swadhyaya); and surrender of oneself to God, which is the highest respected of each person based on his/her belief, and the quality of asana and pranayama practice (Ishvara Pranidhana). Practicing yoga throughout yama and niyama can also help one change one's attitude in order to make it possible for one to have right perception, so that one can have less avidya and further one's greater freedom from suffering. Yama and niyama are ethical disciplines, which are the keys to open the spiritual gate and direct the method of mind purification (Iyengar, 1999). Furthermore, there are three qualities of the mind in the human nature: tamas, rajas, and sattva, known as the guna. Each guna has its own characteristic properties, which can be known indirectly by noticing their properties manifested through their evolved products. The tamas presents in heaviness, inertia, and obstructs knowledge by ignorance. Sattva presents in joy, lightness of heart, cheerfulness, bright spirit, etc. that cause our mind to be alert, aware, peaceful, compassionate, and capable of knowing the unknown. Rajas presents in movement, activity, and stimulation that cause the mind to experience restlessness, pain, suffering, and enthusiasm. Although the three gunas differ in their properties, they share two common characteristics. They are always playfully wrestling with one another in order to make themselves predominant by subduing the other two. The other is their perpetual struggle to cooperate with and help one another because a guna cannot exist independently of the other two (Bhaskarananda, 2002). To practice Yama is to suppress the tama-guna that is the root of impure patterns of

thinking, feeling, speaking, and behaving, which create mind fluctuations, whereas the practice of Niyama is to counter the raja-guna (Chidanada, 1999). Hence, sattva-guna is dominant in human nature and is present in serenity, calm, kindness, goodwill, compassion, alertness, and non-violence. Therefore, these characteristics of sattva-guna are empirical indicators of basic mind purification in these two limbs of yoga practice. These indicators are found through the patterns of thinking, feeling, speaking, and behaving.

The fourth sheath focuses on Vijnanamaya kosha or the intellectual body, which is the power to perceive and discriminate. It manumits all suffering and obsessions by changing our attitude towards all wrong habits, which are the fluctuations of the mind. These problems can be removed by knowledge, which emerges substratum from the vital body and the mind. It helps one change one's attitude. The aim of this level is to encourage the development of self-realization. Moreover, the practice of yama and niyama help operate the kosha as well.

The final sheath is Anandamaya kosha or the bliss body. This is the most subtle aspect of our existence, which is characterized by a lack of any form of emotion. By practising meditation, the experience of bliss or happiness is developed and stabilized over time, leading to Samadhi or moksha. It is a key concept in yoga practice because it reminds us that we are within the overall happiness resulting from super-consciousness or Samadhi that has been developed and stabilized over time. Patanjali said that, through Samadhi and tapa, the sadhaka or practitioner develops a stable growth of mature intelligence. At this state, yogi differentiates between the wavering of thought processes and understanding of the self being changeless. His/her mind reflects its own form, clear mind, like a crystal. All speculation and deliberation

come to an end and liberation is experienced without the emotions of desire, anger, greed, pride, and malice. Later on, a great state of knowledge and wisdom is gained and the blissful state or Samadhi is experienced, i.e., we can see and understand things that we could not see or understand before. Additionally, Nagarathna and Nagendra (2004) have pointed out that the practice of asana, pranayama, kriyas, and meditation helps balance all levels the physical body into the bliss body. Finally, yoga practice through asana, pranayama, meditation, purification techniques, yogic diet, mitahara, and attitude training are adopted to help balance all of the five sheaths of human existence. In this study, the word Samadhi, moksha, or kaivalya are used interchangeably with happiness or well-being.

Based on Indian philosophy, it is believed that disease happens through an imbalance in the lower three sheaths of existence, which are the physical, vital, and mind sheaths, that can be easily disturbed. The fourth and fifth sheaths permeate the universe and cannot be perturbed (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1995). There are two types of illness. First are the illnesses with strong physical content such as communicable diseases and accidental injuries. Second are mental illnesses that arise through disturbances in the mind sheath and result in physical illness such as feeling restless, dissatisfied and anxious. Living one's life in moderation is thought to keep all five sheaths in balance, and adopting yoga contributes to health and well-being (Fontaine, 2000). Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years in India to maintain health and aims to achieve the goal of self-realization or consciousness. However, there are different schools of yoga, which will be briefly described.

2.2 The Branches of Yoga

There are several branches of yoga traditionally cited as valid approaches to the goal of self-realization. Yoga is meant to help individuals into a state of revelation or enlightenment where they can realize their true spiritual identities. Prakash (2007) has described the seven traditional branches of yoga as follows:

2.2.1 Hatha Yoga: physical yoga is a branch of yoga which comes out of a deep respect and interest in the well-being of the body, which is considered a sacred vehicle for the soul. Hatha Yoga uses postures and breathing techniques to help bring the body into a state of peace and health. It attempts to purify the nervous system and strengthen the body to a state of freedom. Accomplished Hatha yogis can remain without food or water for periods of time unreachable by the untrained human being.

2.2.2 Jnana Yoga: yoga of knowledge or wisdom is the yoga of the mind of wisdom to the path of the sage. This path requires development of the intellect through the study of the scriptures and texts of the yogic tradition. The Jnana yoga approach is considered the most difficult and at the same time the most direct. It involves serious study and appeals to those who are more intellectually inclined.

2.2.3 Karma Yoga: yoga of action is the path of self-transcending action. It works as spiritual service. One practices karma yoga whenever one performs one's work and lives one's life in selfless action and as a way to serve others. Habitation for humanity, the service of the NGO habitat for humanity, is a prime example of selfless service associated with the karma yoga path.

2.2.4 Raja Yoga: yoga of physical and mental control. Raja means "royal," and meditation is the focal point of this branch of yoga. This approach involves strict adherence to the eight limbs of Yoga Sutra. These limbs, or stages,

follow this order: ethical standards (yama); self-discipline (niyama); posture (asana); breathing control (pranayama); sensory withdrawal (pratyahara); concentration (dharana); meditation (dhyana); and ecstasy (samadhi). Raja yoga attracts individuals who are introspective and drawn to meditation. However, this path suggests a monastic or contemplative lifestyle; yet, entering a monastery is not a prerequisite to practising raja yoga.

2.2.5 Bhakti Yoga: yoga of devotion is the path of love and devotion. Traditionally, this has involved the use of external props and external relationships. Rites, rituals and ceremonies comprised the props, and adoration of gurus and an external Supreme Being were the focus of the relationships. The beauty of Bhakti yoga is that it is easily accessible to anyone, regardless of spiritual development, because the aspirant is free to establish a relationship with God in any form that he/she finds attractive. In addition, it satisfies the primal craving inherent in the soul of all beings. Bhakti yoga satisfies this urge within a spiritual context, permitting love and devotion to be cultivated and directed in a healthy manner.

2.2.6 Mantra Yoga: the path of Potent Sound, aiming at liberation through the recitation (aloud or mental) of empowered sounds such as om, hum, ram, and hare Krishna.

2.2.7 Tantra Yoga: yoga to awaken the body's energies, aiming at liberation through ritual, visualization, subtle energy work, and the perception of the continuity of the ordinary world and the transcendental reality. It teaches that there is no gap between the Divine and the world; the Divine can be found in ordinary existence.

Although there are various techniques of yoga practice as mentioned above, the goal is to attain a state of pure bliss and oneness with the universe via blending physical, mental, and spiritual practices (Fontaine, 2000).

2.3 Yoga practice and its impacts

Yoga practice or insight yoga refers to any form of practice that aims at achieving the state of Samadhi, Moksha or kaivalya – the state of absolute freedom from conditional existence or avidya (the root cause of suffering) (Feuerstein, 1999). According to its origin in light of the yoga sutras of Patanjali, when people practise any method of yoga, the mind diffuses throughout the body like the wind moves and spreads in space. Afterwards they are prudently, precisely and religiously practiced, passions or avidyas are controlled and single mindedness develops. The practitioner becomes highly flawless and transparent as crystal. This clarity brings about harmony and a new light of wisdom dawns (Iyengar, 1997). From this state, the master or practitioner increases his practice to gain bliss and balance, and achieve Samadhi and happiness as well.

The most well-known benefit of yoga in the literature is its clinical use as a therapeutic intervention and for health promotion for disorders such as depression (Janakiramaiah, et al., 2000), stress and anxiety (Smith et al., 2007; Sharma, Mahajan, & Sharma, 2007; Malathi & Damodaran, 1999), chronic insomnia (Khasa, 2004), hypertension (McCaffery et al., 2005; Murugesan, Govindarajulu & Bera, 2000), respiratory problems (Manocha, et al., 2002; Visweswarlah & Telles, 2004), as well as promotion of well-being (Hadi & Hadi, 2007; Harinath, et al., 2004; Malathi & Damodaran, 1999; Thaweepkul, 2004).

2.3.1 Yoga as therapeutic intervention

Evidence suggests that yoga plays a vital role in not only preventing diseases, but also as a therapeutic intervention (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). For example, yoga techniques including meditation, a variety of breathing techniques and physical postures, focusing on isometrics and stretching are capable of inducing a coordinated psycho-physiological response, which is the opposite of the stress response. This response can be observed in the modified activity of the hypothalamic pituitary and the autonomic nervous system associated with the reduction of basal cortisol and catecholamine secretion (Khalsa, 2004). Moreover, yoga has been used with therapeutic benefits in a number of disorders. For example, it can be used to reduce blood pressure in essential hypertension (Aivazyan, 1990, McCaffery, Ruknui, Hatthakit & Kasetsoomboon, 2005), and as alternative treatment (Nagendra, 1996) for bronchial asthma (Manocha, Marks, Kenchington, Peters, Salome, 2002; Sabina, et al., 2005; Vendantran, et al., 1998), diabetes mellitus (Thotham, 2007), cardiovascular disease (Jayasinghe, 2004; Manchanda, et al., 2000; Schmidt et al., 1998) anxiety and depression (Pikington, Kirkwood, Rampes, Richardson, 2005), and carpal tunnel syndrome (Garfinkel, et al., 1998).

Most people living with bronchial asthma suffer from physical and emotional problems that demand various self care strategies for their management. Manocha and colleagues (2002) reported that, in their study of adult patients with asthma that was poorly controlled by inhaled steroids, twenty-one subjects in the yoga intervention group, attending a 2-hour meditation session based on yogic principle once a week for four months, could improve their level of airway hyper-responsiveness to methacholine (AHR) compared to twenty-six subjects in the control

group. Significant improvements in the Profile of Mood States related to depression, anger, vigour, fatigue, and confusion were also found in the yoga group. A small RCT of university students with asthma divided 17 subjects to yoga and control groups. The yoga group engaged in relaxation pranayama techniques, yoga postures, and meditation three times per week for 16 weeks and showed significantly improved exercise tolerance, reported relaxation, more positive attitudes as well as less use of short-acting bronchodilator medication (Vendantran, Kesavalu, Murthy, et al., 1998).

Yoga has been found to have beneficial effects in diabetes patients, too. For example, Malhotra and colleagues (2002) found that twenty-four NIDDM patients practicing yoga asana with thirteen postures, 30-40 min/day for 40 days under guidance, had a significant decrease in fasting blood glucose levels and glycosylated hemoglobin; however, the FEV, FVC, PEF, MVV significantly increased after the 40 days of yoga asanas regimen. Moreover, a systemic review found that the practice of yoga for eight days to 12 months, incorporating yoga asanas, could reduce fasting and post-pandial glucose levels in glycated hemoglobin fasting (Innes & Vincent, 2007). Likewise, Thotham (2007) conducted a yoga camp using asanas, pranayama, meditation, health education for five days and, later on, yoga practice at least three times a week for six weeks and reported significantly decreased fasting blood glucose and HbA_{1c} levels in NIDDM patients. Furthermore, the study of Agrawal and colleagues (2003) indicated that 82 diabetes patients, joining a yogic life style intervention including asana, pranayama, meditation and strict diabetic diet at least five days a week for a continuous period of 3 months, improved their glycemic control, lipid profile and blood pressure.

Several research findings have documented the usefulness of yoga in the treatment of various risk factors of cardiovascular diseases. For example, Schmidt et al. (1998) reported a significant improvement in the levels of blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, and body mass index after a 3-month residential training program consisting of a vegetarian diet and yoga. Moreover, Manchanda, et al. (2000) found that, in a randomized controlled study, patients with angiographically proven coronary disease and practicing yoga for one year showed a decrease in the number of angina episodes per week, improved exercise capacity and a decrease in body weight, and a greater reduction of cholesterol levels as compared with the control group.

Depression is a kind of mental health problem with far-reaching effects. However, most individuals having this problem seek complementary therapies to relieve their symptoms. A number of studies have been conducted in this area. Vedamurthachar and colleagues (2006) reported the results of a randomized controlled study employing Sudarshana Kriya yoga in alcohol-dependent individuals admitted in the De-addiction Center of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences. The control group underwent the standard detoxification program similar to the intervention group, but without yoga. The Sudarshana Kriya yoga (SKY) is specific to breathing; Ujjayi, Bhastrika and Cyclical breathing sessions were held for 1 hour in the mornings of alternate days. These procedures were done in a sitting posture with eyes closed and followed by yoga Nidra for 20 minutes. The interventions were given for a period of over 2 consecutive weeks. Positive results were obtained from both groups. Depression inventory scores significantly dropped at post-assessment; however, the drop was more in the SKY group (intervention). A drop was also observed in plasma cortisol as well as ACTH (depression hormone

indicator) levels differently; being greater in the SKY group. However, the benefits of SKY as an antidepressant treatment should be tested for longer periods of time in selected patients continuing to manifest clinical depression. Besides, a 4-week study randomly assigned 45 persons with severe melancholic depression to three treatment groups: bilateral electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) 3 times per week; imipramine (IMN) 150 mg at night; or Sudarshana Kriya yoga (SKY). The SKY group was instructed to practice once a day for 30 minutes followed by 15 minutes of relaxation 6 days a week. The mean Hamilton Rating Scales for Depression (HRSD) scores dropped significantly in the three groups by the end of 4 weeks. The difference between the SKY and ECT groups was statistically significant, but, between the SKY and IMN, it was not. Although SKY was less powerful than ECT, it appeared to be an effective alternative to ECT or medication even in severe depression (Janakiramaiah, et al., 2000). Recently, Woolery et al. (2004) tested a short-term course of Iyengar yoga in patients with mild depression as measured using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), but without psychiatric diagnosis. Iyengar yoga is based on B.K.S. Iyengar considers specific asana and sequences of asanas to be effective in alleviating depression. Twenty-eight adult volunteers were randomly assigned to two groups; an hour of yoga classes each week for five weeks or the control group. A significant reduction in BDI and State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) was observed in the yoga group, but not in the control group. From the findings of these studies, it appears that yoga-based interventions may have potentially beneficial effects on depressive disorders. Moreover, yoga can serve as an add-on treatment in schizophrenia patients. Duraiswamy and colleagues (2007) carried out yoga asanas, pranayama, and relaxation sessions 1 hour a day for fifteen days compared to physical therapy on

forty-one patients with schizophrenia; the patients continued practicing yoga for the next three months. They found that subjects practicing yoga significantly improved their quality of life scores compared to subjects receiving physical therapy, and they were no serious adverse events such as delirium, suicidality or any serious physical complications in either group during the four-month period.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common problem in the workplace and has a negative financial impact regarding medical expenditure. Usually, it is treated with anti-inflammatory agents, wrist splints, avoidance of one's occupational duties and surgery to reduce numbness, tingling pain and weakness in the thumb of the affected hand. Yoga has also been used to improve grip strength and pain reduction. Garfinkel and colleagues (1998) reported the results of a randomized trial of hatha yoga practice for 90 minutes twice weekly for eight weeks on patients with carpal tunnel syndrome; a significant improvement in grip strength and pain reduction was observed. Furthermore, yoga has been documented to be used in the treatment of various other diseases; it is currently used to manage symptoms such as stress, anxiety, and pain.

Stress is experienced in response to a range of physical, psychosocial, and emotional stimuli. If these stimuli go beyond normal limits, they lead to physical and mental symptoms such as stress, anxiety and depression. Yoga is used to manage a range of health complaints as well as maintain wellness. A randomized controlled trial consisting of three groups, the hatha yoga and relaxation techniques based on Jacobson's progressive relaxation technique were compared against the control intervention for periods over 10 and 16 consecutive weeks to reduce stress and anxiety. Positive results were obtained for both treatment groups (yoga and relaxation

technique). However, the yoga group reported more flexibility and lifestyle changes compared to the relaxation or control groups (Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer & Eckert, 2007). Additionally, a systemic review of research evidence for yoga in the treatment of anxiety comprised eight studies, in which participants were suffering from anxiety disorders. All of them registered positive results in favor of yoga (Kirkwood, Rampes, Tuffrey, Richardson & Pilkington, 2005).

Evidence related to yoga practice suggests that it is also effective in pain control in patients with headache (John et al., 2007), labor pain (Chuntharapat, Petpichetchian & Hatthakit, 2008), cancer pain (Carson et al., 2007; DiStasio, 2008), and pancreatitis patients (Sareen, Kumari, Gajebasia, & Gajebasia, 2007). John and colleagues (2007) studied the effectiveness of the holistic approach of yoga therapy for migraine management. Thirty-six migraine sufferers participated in yoga therapy including yoga postures, breathing control, relaxation practices, and meditation five days a week for 60 minutes. Kriya or the leaning process was practiced once a week with deep relaxation. The results of this randomized controlled trial were reported as a comparison with the self-care group (control). After three months of intervention, they reported a reduction in the frequency, intensity, and duration of pain attacks.

Yoga has also been used in pregnant women. A study of pregnant women practicing yoga enrolled 37 primigravida pregnant at 26-28 weeks of gestation in the intervention group. They followed a yoga program including a series of six 60-minute sessions at the 26th, 28th, 30th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, and 37th weeks of gestation and also practiced at home for 30 minutes at least 3 times a week for 10 weeks. The 37 primigravida pregnant women in the control group did not practice yoga. The results revealed that those in the yoga group had significantly less labor pain than those in the

control group. It indicated that yoga practice for 30 minutes, at least 3 times a week for ten weeks can relieve pain during labor (Chuntharapat, Petpichetchian & Hatthakit, 2008).

Carson and colleagues (2007) conducted yoga for awareness therapeutic program on metastatic breast cancer (MBC) constituting a serious life threat for involved women. Twenty-one adult women with MBC participated in the eight-week protocol including gentle yoga postures, breathing control, meditation, didactic presentations, and group interchange. Each session lasted 120 minutes. Participants were encouraged to spend at least 10 minutes a day practicing yoga strategies on their own, and applications of yoga to daily living were assigned each week. The outcome was assessed using daily measurements of pain, fatigue, distress, invigoration, acceptance, and relaxation during two pre-intervention weeks and in the final two weeks of the intervention. The results demonstrated significant improvements in daily invigoration and acceptance, along with trends for improvement in pain and relaxation. Moreover, patients who practiced longer on a given day were also much more likely to experience less pain and fatigue and greater invigoration, acceptance, and relaxation the following day. Additionally, the effects of yoga on pain have been tested in the general population. Kakigi and colleagues (2005) recorded magnetoencephalography (MEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) findings following noxious laser stimulation on a yoga master who claimed not to feel pain when meditating. The participant, a 65-year-old male, had been practicing yoga for 38 years. The results demonstrated that, during non-meditation, the subject felt a painful pin-prick sensation; a score of 8 on a scale of 0-10. During meditation, the subject claimed to feel no pain, reporting a score of zero,

or a light touch-like feeling. According to the finding of this study, it appears that extensive training in the technique of yoga meditation may really reduce pain.

2.3.2 Yoga for health promotion

Yoga appears to provide non-medical symptom relief, and improves physical health as well as psychological well-being (Statler, Wheeler, Siegel, 2007).

Improvement of physical health: Yoga can promote positive physical changes such as enhancing muscular strength and body flexibility, and promoting respiratory and cardiovascular function. Puymbroeck, Payne, and Hsieh (2007) studied the effects of yoga on the physical fitness of eight informal caregivers. The yoga sessions lasted 2.5 hours per week for 8 weeks, consisted of asanas and pranayama activities, and were led by a certified yoga instructor. The participants were also encouraged to practice yoga at home. After completing 8 weeks of practice, the results showed improved lower- and upper-body strength, and lower-body flexibility, balance and agility. Caregivers in the yoga group showed trends toward improvement, while caregivers in the control group showed trends toward decreased ability on the same parameters during the 8-week period.

Cowen and Adams (2005) conducted a study on twenty-six healthy adults aged 20–58, who participated in 75-minute sessions twice weekly for six weeks of either astanga yoga or hatha yoga classes. Significant improvements at follow-up were noted for all participants in diastolic blood pressure, upper-body and trunk dynamic muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, perceived stress, and health perception.

Chaya, et al., (2006) conducted a study on the effect of long-term combined yoga practice on the basal metabolic rate of healthy adults. The yoga group practiced a mixed set of yoga techniques daily in the form of asana, deep relaxation

techniques, pranayama, and meditation daily over a period of six months, whereas the control group did not practice yoga. The results revealed a significant decrease in the basal metabolic rate of the yoga group. There was also a significant decrease in other respiratory parameters such as oxygen consumption, carbon dioxide production, respiratory minute ventilation volume, and breath flow rate. Moreover, Yoga asanas, pranayama, meditation and kriyas significantly improved pulmonary function including the forced vital capacity (FVC) and the forced expiratory volume in the 1st second (FEV1) in 60 healthy young women, 17 to 28 years of age, who practiced one hour daily for twelve weeks (Yadav & Das, 2001). Additionally, both aqua yoga and land-based yoga practice three times a week for eight consecutive weeks could reduce the percentage of body fat and improve cardiorespiratory endurance among 22 women aged 50-59 (Samingwan, 2007).

Improvement of psychological well-being: The practice of yoga asana, pranayama and relaxation 60 minutes daily for seven days has been shown to decrease the time taken to fall asleep, improve sleep efficiency, and significantly decrease symptoms of distress in 47 tsunami survivors (Telles, Naveen & Dash, 2007).

Harinath, et al., (2004) conducted Hatha yoga and Omkar meditation to observe their effect on psychological profile, and melatonin secretion. Thirty healthy men volunteered and were randomly divided into two groups. The yoga group practiced selected yogic asanas and pranayama in the morning for 1 hour and in the evening asanas, pranayama, and meditation for 1 hour daily for 3 months. The control group performed routine army physical training 1 hour in the morning and 1 hour in the evening daily for 3 months. During meditation, subjects were asked to concentrate

on the Ajina charka located near the prefrontal area and then on the Sahasrar charka located in the pineal gland for each breath expired, while they chanted Om in a soft voice. The results indicated that the well-being inventory score increased significantly in the yoga group compared to the control group. Moreover, the mean melatonin levels at 2-4 am after yoga and meditation were significantly higher than before administration of yoga meditation. These observations suggest that regular practice of Hatha yoga and Omkar meditation could significantly improve well-being among the healthy men volunteers. Similarly, regular practice of Hatha yoga for three months improved overall concentration and attention, decreased trait anxiety, and improved motivation for success among 84 college students (Statler, Wheeler & Siegel, 2007).

Michalsena, et al., (2008) tested the effects of a 3-month Iyengar-yoga training on emotional and physical well-being in women with mental distress. The results revealed that subjects practicing both intense-level yoga and moderate-level yoga showed significant improvements in the quality of life, stress, anxiety, depression, anger and pain-related symptoms compared to the control group. Moreover, research on forty-two yogis practicing yoga in their daily life for more than a year was able to improve their well-being (Thaweepkul, 2004).

Improvement of spiritual well-being: Studies have shown that yoga practice can improve spiritual health efficiency of male drug addicts (Boonyamanee, 2006). The study of Malathi, et al., (2000) on forty-eight healthy staff members of the medical colleges and general hospitals of Mumbai found that, after regularly practicing yoga for four months, they had an increase in feelings of success and satisfaction about their achievement in life. Moreover, 42 yogis practicing yoga in their daily life for more than a year reported a very good level of spiritual health

(Thaweeekul, 2004). The popularity of alternative health care and the promising health benefits of yoga practice in both medical symptom relief and well-being in various populations have led to its sustenance and integration in daily practice. Additionally, yoga has often been used in combination with other therapies to promote health. For example, hatha yoga and meditation combined with music have been reported to promote well-being among coronary artery disease patients (Sharma, Gupta & Bijlani, 2008).

2.4 Daily life yoga practice for well-being

Yoga is a disciplined practice, which develops the human personality by affecting all aspects of one's existence and provides one with complete health, prosperity, happiness and peace. Daily life yoga practice for health or well-being can be practised in both normal and deviation health.

2.4.1 Normal health

A person adopting yoga in his/her life needs to change his/her undisciplined life into a disciplined lifestyle. First of all, he/she needs to set times for sleeping and getting up, working and resting, walking and eating, etc. All can be done through yoga practice (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999).

2.4.1.1 Sleeping and rest: a person should go to bed early at night and wake up early, before sun rises. Sivananda (2000) pointed out in the course of sadhana (yoga practice) that one should get up at 4 am and go to bed not later than 10 pm; it is not necessary to rest more than six hours. However, in a study of yoga practitioners' lifestyle, it was reported that they slept an average of 8.3 hours a day for health (Thaweeekul, 2004).

2.4.1.2 Eating: yoga classifies food into three categories for human beings, predominantly tamasic, rajasic, and sattvic food as mentioned earlier. The yogic way recommends sattvic food, which increases vitality, purity, strength stamina, health, happiness, cheerfulness and good appetite. Such kinds of food are fresh, wholesome, natural and good quality, e.g., season fruits and fresh vegetables. They add vitality to the total system by bringing a perfect, harmonious balance of energy states that is present in the food itself. Yogic practitioners take light, simple food and have a balanced diet, consisting of especially fruits in season, and do not consume more food than needed to satisfy the appetite (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999). In addition, yogis are prescribed diets for harmony, consisting of taking half a stomachful of sattvic food, a quarter stomachful of plain water and the remaining quarter is reserved for the expansion of gas. This technique is called mitahara (Sivananda, 2000). Moreover, yoga prescribes diets low in protein and high in carbohydrate because protein causes gas and interferes in the eliminative organ functioning (Gharote, 1990). Thaweepkul (2004) studied the yoga practitioners' lifestyles and reported that their good health was due to consuming fresh, seasonal, and natural food. However, they avoid saline, steaming hot, spiced, and stimulating food such as coffee, tea and alcohol. Although food plays an important role in maintaining life, some additional techniques are prescribed for healthy living.

1) Balanced eating: in this technique, the food must be taken in natural or the maximum possible natural form only. Fresh seasonal fruits and fresh, green, leafy vegetables and sprouts are excellent for a sattvic diet. These diets are classified as juices, fruits, raw-food, boiled vegetables and soup diets. Being alkaline, these diets help in improving health, cleansing the body and rendering it

immune to disease. A balanced diet is more than fifty percent of what an individual seeking good health needs. In terms of quantity of food, the yoga approach to eating properly is to fill half of one's stomach with food, one quarter with water, and one quarter with air. This ensures one will leave the table satisfied but not full. Avoiding eating when feeling upset, anxious, or rushed is also an important point. Furthermore, eating slowly and chewing well are recommended because efficient digestion is crucial to overall good health, and the digestive process starts in the mouth. In addition, eating regularly and not skipping meals is important (Payne & Usatine, 2002).

2) Fasting: is an important natural technique for health preservation. Fasting is the process of giving a rest to the digestive system. During this process, the vital energy, which digests the food, is wholly engaged in the elimination of diseases from the body. Short fasting with a fruit or liquid diet should be done whenever required. A fruit diet with only one type of fruit should be observed 3 to 4 times a day and the total amount of fruit intake should be less than one kilogram (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999). In addition, people practicing yoga for more than three years consume more fruit and vegetables compared to both those who have practiced yoga less than a year and those not practising yoga (Kristal, Littman, Benitez & White, 2005).

2.4.1.3 Exercise: yoga prescribes the practice of asanas to help balance the physical body, promote endurance and stamina, enhance flexibility, and develop inner awareness (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). Anandamitra (2000) pointed out that one should always massage after asanas in order to stimulate the glands to secrete natural oils, which protect the skin, stimulate all the nerve endings at the surface of the body, and harmonize the aura of pranic energy, which surrounds the body.

1) Asanas: Desikachar (1999) mentioned in the Heart of Yoga that asanas' aims are sthira, sukha and preparing the body for meditation as well. Additionally, the most beneficial practice of asanas is the physical aspect. Several researches have shown the effects of hatha yoga practice on health-related physical aspects, including muscle strength and endurance, and flexibility (Hodges, 2003; Somsap, Kasetsomboon, Krischareon & Polain, 2005; Tran, Holly, Lashbrook & Amsterdam, 2001), as well as psychological aspects. West and colleagues (2004) studied eighteen healthy undergraduate students who participated in hatha yoga practice 2 hours every afternoon for a semester. The results revealed that hatha yoga decreased perceived stress, negativity and cortisone levels that correlate with stress reduction. Furthermore, Srichalakom (2004) found in her study that yogic practitioners participating in hatha yoga felt calm, had breath control and concentration, were free from frustration, had will, perseverance, and positive feelings towards their surroundings, and realized that hatha yoga was part of their life. Similarly, Hodges (2003) found that the investigated women's experiences of the minimum five years of hatha yoga practice indicated increased flexibility and strength, improved levels of physical awareness, helped to clear their minds and enabled them to overcome stressful lifestyles. Additionally, they reported feeling peaceful, calm, centered, and at one with the world, and perceived improving their well-being and quality of life.

2) Massage: aims to improve the blood circulation and also strengthen bodily organs. Massage also relaxes the muscles. One qualitative research of nine anxiety patients receiving light massage found that they described the experiences during massage as being relaxed in both body and mind, and after

massage experiencing a decrease in anxiety and an increase in self-confidence (Billhult & Maatta, 2009). Moreover, sunbathing the whole body after massage is prescribed as a means of preserving health and strength (Anandamitra, 2000).

2.4.1.4 Breathing or respiration: air is essential for all the living.

There are three factors that affect breathing: physiological, emotion, and free will. Physiological changes can be adjusted by one automatically to demand. Emotional factors alter the respiration process; for example, when we laugh, our breathing is deeper, and when we are depressed, the pattern is shallow. Although changes in breathing pattern exist, we can control them at will. The control of breathing that yoga prescribes for being healthy is called pranayama.

1) Pranayama: the breathing exercise of yoga. It improves the functioning of respiration, which promotes circulation and nutrition to vital organs. When these function well, there is a harmonious state in the person as a whole. Moreover, it also aims to keep an alert mind and our attention on breathing as well as to promote deep relaxation, and to eliminate impurities and reduce avidya. In order to purify the mind, it is recommended to practice it as much as possible with a breath ratio of inhalation: retention: exhalation: stoppage of 4: 12: 8: 8. The time taken for retention and stoppage is increased gradually (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). Beside, gaining control over the respiration taking place leads to states of consciousness and physiological functioning such as vital capacity, oxygen supply and so on (Gharote, 1990). Even though we can control our breathing by practicing pranayama to balance the vital sheath, we need fresh air to increase prana, which is necessary for human beings.

2) Air bath: fresh air is most essential for good health, so individuals should live in a clean place or in the presence of fresh air. In addition, one research studied 42 yoga practitioners reporting that their health was at a very good level. The results showed that their home and work place environment were well ventilated (Thaweepkul, 2004).

Evidences of yoga practice for promoting well-being have been published regarding normal health as mentioned above; however, during health deviation yoga is promoted as well.

2.4.2 Deviation health

According to Indian philosophy, yoga finds its principle in the Vedas (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999). It arose with ayurveda thousands of years ago (Monro, 1997). According to the yogic view, imbalances at any sheath of the existent human being results in illness (Nagarathna, & Nagendra, 2001). However, the effectiveness of yoga depends on frequent and regular practice. Though yoga is a science of practice aimed at achieving health and well-being, practising yoga during deviation health needs to be clarified. Several symptoms and ailments are common in human beings such as problems of the digestive system, respiratory system, circulation system, endocrine system, and nervous system.

2.4.2.1 Deviation in the digestive system

1) Constipation: the causes of constipation are mostly lack of physical work, increased mental stress, hurry in one's lifestyle, use of tea and other intoxicants, etc. (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999). Moreover, from the yogic perspective, it is believed that constipation is due to a lack of Apana (downward flow of life energy; upward flow is prana), and the disturbance

in the flow of prana causes bowel disorders (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990). Additionally, balancing energy around the navel (Samana) refers to normal digestive mobility that is maintained by standing asana, deep relaxation in pranayama, and yogic diet. Furthermore, in yogic and nature cures, it is suggested that Surya Namaskara is more useful for constipation and one should drink fresh water before going to the toilet (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999).

2) Diarrhea: is caused by an excessive release of Apana and disturbance in Samana. Practising inverted postures at least 30 minutes a day as well as pranayama, meditation and deep relaxation helps to harmonize the energy flow and to reduce anxiety associated with diarrhea (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990).

3) Hemorrhoids: yoga can help prevent hemorrhoids by promoting local circulation to the anus and reducing constipation, by practicing the half shoulder stand three times a day for ten minutes each time and doing abdominal locks (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990).

2.4.2.2 Deviation in respiratory system: natural breathing brings health, happiness, and renewal as well. It clears the mind and calms the emotions, whereas irregular breathing causes mood and further respiratory problems (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990).

1) Common cold: it can be caused by allergic reactions, emotional stress, and sometime viral infections. Yoga techniques help to reduce the frequency and intensity of this condition. These techniques comprise rapid abdominal breathing, alternate-nostril breathing, and surya namaskar practiced daily in the morning (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999).

2) Nasal allergy: it is the body's reaction to foreign irritant substances that enter as one inhales and send a violent blast of air through the nose followed by a swelling of the nasal lining and a continuously runny nose. Yogic techniques help the practitioner increase the nasal lining's tolerance to these agents through abdominal breathing, asana, and nasal wash (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990). Moreover, previous research has found that yoga postures and breathing control reduce morning symptoms and improve the quality of life in adults with respiratory allergy (Sabina Williams, Wall, Bansal, Chupp & Katz, 2005). Additionally, research evidence has shown that yoga programs, including postures, breathing techniques and relaxation, significantly improve pulmonary function (Birkel & Edgren, 2000; Mandamohan, Jatiya, Udupa & Bhavanani, 2003).

2.4.2.3 Deviation in the circulation system: high blood pressure happens in the circulation system and is believed to be a disease of the modern life style and it appears as a symptom of other diseases. The basic causes of high blood pressure are excessive mental work and tense daily routine, wrong eating and living habits. Previous research has shown that a yoga program involving asanas, pranayama, and relaxation significantly reduces blood pressure (McCaffery, Raknui, Hatthakit, & Kasetsoomboon, 2005; Raju, Prasad, Venkata, Murthy & Reddy, 1997). Similarly, Nagarathna and colleagues (1990) mentioned in their study of yoga as treatment for common ailments that pranayama, relaxation techniques, and meditation were recommended to practice in both high blood pressure and heart disease patients. Moreover, deep breathing without retention and relaxation techniques should be practised and the practice of inhalation and exhalation via the left nostril also decreases blood pressure (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999).

2.4.2.4 Deviation in the endocrine system: menstruation shows maturity of the female sex organ. However, menstrual disorders are suffered from most ladies with several symptoms such as increased or decreased quantity of blood; menstrual period not at the proper time; backache during the days of menstrual period; and pain and heaviness in the head (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999). Regarding the yogic practice of asanas, especially the butterfly posture, the hand-to-feet pose, the triangle, moon, and forward stretches improve circulation to the pelvic region and send a message to the brain to restart the menstrual cycle. Pranayama and deep relaxation give a sense of well-being as well as remove barriers to restoring the natural menstrual cycle (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990: 80). Besides, a women suffering from these symptoms should consume sattvic food only and change her attitude, i.e., have good thoughts by reading good books (Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, 1999).

2.4.2.5 Deviation in the nervous system: the nervous system controls the functions of different organs to maintain homeostasis. Any change in the functions of one organ leads to changes in the function of other organs (Gore, 2003). Several symptoms happen throughout this system.

1) Insomnia: sleep is essential to mind and body as a chance to rest. Yogic techniques help to calm anxiety and slow down the mind. Before going to bed, one should do arm-stretch breathing and hand-stretch breathing for 6 to 10 times, and then practice slow abdomen breathing and deep relaxation until falling asleep naturally (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990). Recent research has shown that an eight-week period of regular 1-hour daily yoga practice with slow

abdominal breathing and meditation in a seated pose significantly reduced the total wake time and improved the sleep quality of 40 chronic insomnia participants (Khalsa, 2004).

2) Low back pain: the shape of our spine allows us to balance straight and strong back muscles. Several main causes of pain are major damage, injury, spasm, and stress (Nagarathna, Nagendra, & Monro, 1990). Yogic techniques including doing asana with forward bends, backward bends, twists, alternate-nostril breathing, and meditation help to reduce back pain (Sherman, Cherkin, Erro, Miglioretti & Deyo, 2005; Sorosky, Stilp & Akuthota, 2008).

Though yoga is popular in society at present, the use of yoga practice in one's daily life is limited. A broader review of both Western and Thai literature was undertaken to identify factors that may influence the practice of yoga.

2.5 Factors that influence the practice of yoga

It has been demonstrated that yogic practice competence is influenced by an individual's characteristics and capabilities, and cultural and social structure. The individual's characteristics and capabilities include age, gender, education, health state, beliefs as well as experiences. The cultural and social structure refers to all the external factors surrounding the individual, which can affect the person's yoga practice. These include social, religious, guru yoga, health policy, economic, cultural values, and language factors.

2.5.1 Individual's characteristics and capabilities

Some of the individual's characteristics affecting yoga practice which have been reviewed are age, education, health state, and experiences (Dasikachar, 1999; Kladpet, 2007; Samingwan, 2007; Thaweeekul, 2004).

2.5.1.1 Age: studies on age as a factor influencing yoga practice have shown conflicting results. National Health Statistics report that yoga is one of the six kinds of complementary and alternative medicine that U. S. adults commonly used and experienced a marked increase from 2002 to 2007. However, the users were more adult women, aged 30–69, with a college education (Barnes, Bloom & Nahin, 2008; Birdee, et al., 2008). In Thailand, there are limited studies on yoga related to age. One study of 42 adults practising yoga at the Yoga Center of Lumpang Province during February 2004 reported that the participants were mostly (73%) adults, aged 41-64, and only a small number (2%) were aged less than 30 years; most of them (62%) were well-educated (Thaweepkul, 2004). Additionally, yoga has been used for therapeutic benefits in all age groups such as children (Galantino, Galbavy & Quinn, 2008), adults, and older adults (Chen, Tseng, Ting, Huang, 2007).

2.5.1.2 Education: although studies on education level influencing yoga practice have not been reported, most research studies have been done in universities. Therefore, most yogic participants have been well-educated (Samingwan, 2007; Thaweepkul, 2004). Additionally, a national survey of U.S. adults using complementary and alternative medicine reported that yoga was one of the six kinds of such forms of treatment commonly used among the well-educated (Barnes, Bloom & Nahin, 2008). Birdee and colleagues' (2008) cross-sectional survey in 2002 among 31,044 yoga users showed that they were predominately young Caucasian, college-educated, adult females.

2.5.1.3 Health state: Hoyez (2007) pointed out that health is the primary reason for adopting yoga practice. In a 2002 cross-sectional survey in the U.S., it was found that many people practice yoga to maintain health, particularly to treat

musculoskeletal or mental health (Birdee, et al., 2008). Moreover, Kladpet (2007) proposed that, based on her experience, yoga practice enhanced health status. However, illness is described in Patanjali Yoga Sutra as interfering to the yogic way (Desikachar, 1999). Additionally, in principle, yoga can be practiced in any state of health for both therapeutic treatment and health promotion. For example, Sharma, Gupta, and Bijlani (2008) tested the effect of yoga as a lifestyle intervention for subjective well-being among healthy subjects and various illness subjects. The results of the study showed significant improvement in the subjective well-being scores of the 77 subjects within a period of 10 days as compared to controls.

2.5.1.4 Experiences: most human beings are constantly engaged in an endless struggle of preventing painful experiences and trying to get rid of suffering and pain. Human activities try to overcome or eliminate them and ultimately find the way to achieve a state of perfect bliss, freedom and joy. Yoga practice is effective in achieving these states (Chidananda, 1999). Hence, the elimination of painful experiences is the main motivation of yoga practice by persons.

There are three things in Patanjali Yoga Sutra that are recommended to help the capabilities of yoga practice: *Tapa* refers to a process of inner cleansing in order to keep physically and mentally healthy by practising asana and pranayama as much as possible, which then can help remove blocks and tensions both physical and mental; *Svadyaya* refers to looking into ourselves and the study of spiritual sacred texts to comprehend one's own self; and *Isvarapranidhana* refers to the quality of action and the purification of the mind by love and surrender to God or anything that is the highest respect of person. When these three things are linked

together, yoga practice can help one achieve progress toward the arrival to the point one aims.

2.5.2 The cultural and social structure

2.5.2.1 Faith in yoga philosophy

Faith is something a person experiences. Faith in the yoga philosophy means there is strong belief and experience in the outcomes of yoga. Yoga has several meanings in accordance with a person's approach and development in practice. Some people may understand yoga as a mode of exercise for physical health because they practice only yoga asanas; other persons may understand yoga as a way to help them achieve a certain poise of equanimity and a way to take care of all one's aspects of life. Moreover, Patanjali defines yoga as a discipline to restrain mind fluctuations and modifications aiming at spiritual enlightening in order to eradicate sorrow (Iyengar, 2008). Since the purpose of yoga practice is spiritual enlightenment, it concurs with the fundamental human goal of meeting one's needs. Because of this reason and the fact that humans want to be better than they are, they must find out the way to reach the culmination of their needs. Therefore, faith in yoga philosophy is a motivation to study and practice yoga seriously and further develops the progression towards optimizing one's goals.

2.5.2.2 Beliefs and values: beliefs change according to the evolution and development of a society. The beliefs are worthy things to people because they can help responding to an unknowable thing, which is the cause of expressing human behavior. Values influence the decisions and behavior of persons. Therefore, beliefs and values influence human behavior. For example, there are many kinds of yoga practice promotion based on the beliefs in its good outcomes of

practice. For example, yogic practitioners practise yoga not only for physical and psychological health benefits, but also because they believe in the good outcome of the yoga way; consequently, they are willing to regularly practice yoga (Srichalakom, 2004). Based on the yoga philosophy beliefs, illness is caused by an imbalance in any of the five sheaths of a human being (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2001). Hence, yogic practitioners practise yoga as much as possible to balance these five sheaths in order to maintain healthy living. The knowledge regarding Thai beliefs on health and illness will help everyone become interested in yoga practice to understand how yoga masters practice yoga for health resulting from their beliefs.

Moreover, based on the achievement of yoga practice, reaching the highest state of clarity and detachment are concerns of yoga practitioners (Desikachar, 1999: Sutra 4.7). Natural living and a simple way of life are example kinds of detachment beyond motivation of yoga practice in order to balance one's way of living. This is congruent with the King of Thailand's philosophy of sufficiency economy, which highlights a balanced way of living employing the principles of moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity, aiming at improving the existence of a human being (Mongsawad, 2010). This philosophy has been applied to all levels of the society to guide people toward living in a middle path. Therefore, faith the philosophy of sufficiency economy may strongly influence the subscription of people in our country to the yoga way of life.

2.5.2.3 Religion: differences of religious philosophy will cause practitioner to have different formats or concepts of practice. Thais, including yogi masters, are predominantly Buddhist (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division, 2007). Although Buddhism originated in old Brahmin theistic beliefs,

Buddhist teachings are different. Buddhism focuses on moral and intellectual vitality. It approaches the human with laws of nature that a person has the potential for self-perfection through a life of freedom, that is, enlightenment. Yoga originated in India as did Buddhism to find the way to relieve suffering. Hence, religion strongly influences the yoga way. Similarly, Krishnamacharya, a yogi scholar, pointed out in the Heart of Yoga that, because of his interest in religion, he became a yoga master (Desikachar, 1999). Moreover, Thai Buddhists have been dominated by the creed of Kam Kao (kamma), the belief that one's present sufferings or well-being are the result of deeds done in one's past lives. The belief of the law of kamma involves the influence of past action relating to present human behaviors; good deeds bring out good results and bad deeds bring bad results. Hence, the law of kamma governs the workings of intentional human thought and action. This belief has a strong influence on human responsibility in both the personal and social levels (Chanchamnong, 2003). Yoga practice relates to yama and niyama, which are the foundation of yoga practice and similar to the ethics of a religion. Moreover, most Buddhists commonly practice meditation responding to the spiritual need for higher happiness, which is the same as yoga practice that aims, through meditation, to bring about Samadhi or the blissful state. Whenever, people practice meditation as part of a religion, it is similar to practicing yoga.

2.5.2.4 Health policy: health policy is usually adjusted according to the economic, social, political, technological, and health problem conditions of people in the country (Ministry of Public Health Thailand, 2008). It has an important role in influencing the habits of one's way of life. The Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plans (Thailand Health Profile 2007-2011) have been promoted

in the country using complementary therapy for well-being (Ministry of Public Health, 2008). Therefore, many people in the country seek techniques that are appropriate to them for self-care practice to maintain their health. Yoga is one of the popular forms of alternative medicine that most Thais use (Terachaiskul, 2005). However, there is a limitation related to evidence of yoga users in Thailand; in other countries it has been found that the majority of yoga users identified the use of yoga practice for health maintenance (Birdee, et al., 2008). The health policy in the country promotes yoga in many ways such as via the mass media, health professionals, the beautiful body appearance of its presenters, and the provision of funds to support the networking of yoga practice groups. As a result, yoga has become popular in the country.

2.5.2.5 Guru yoga or yoga teacher: the yoga guru serves as a role model of yoga practices because they have good outcomes from its practice. Some people like to practice yoga because they want to get the same outcomes as the gurus. However, Valea (1999) pointed out that, before awakening the Samadhi of yogic practitioners, there are many potential dangers facing the one who practices without the supervision of a yoga guru. Thus, the help of a teacher in assisting the practitioner is absolutely necessary. Moreover, Desikachar (1999) pointed out that a guru helps a student find his or her own way in yoga practice, and then he or she can enjoy a quality practice and further its optimal benefits. Furthermore, a guru represents a god, which is something abstract, intangible, and remote; we have no direct dealing with him. Therefore, we can see the guru as the representative of god, i.e., god manifests himself in the guru and one believes that his will comes to us through the will of the guru (Chidananda, 1999).

3. *Ethnographic methodology*

In this study, the philosophical underpinning of ethnography is based on the theoretical concept of the social constructivism paradigm (Patton, 2002).

Guba and Lincoln (1990) described that constructivism begins with the premise that the human world is different from the natural, physical world and, therefore, must be studied differently. Human beings have evolved the capacity to interpret and construct a reality. Human perception is not something real in an absolute sense, but made up and shaped by cultural and linguistic construct (Patton, 2002). Constructivists study the multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions with others. Hence, the idea of truth becomes a matter of consensus among the informed and sophisticated constructions, diverging from an objective reality (Schwandt, 1994). Moreover, the constructivist position assumes the relativist worldview. Its *ontological* assumptions are that realities are multiple, constructed, socially and experientially based, and local and specific in nature. It means that all tenable statements about existence depend on a worldview and no worldview is uniquely determined by empirical or sense data about the world (Patton, 2002: 96-98). Its *epistemological* assumptions are “transactional and subjectivist.” The relationships between a researcher and the objects of research are linked interactively. In this view, findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, the *methodology* is “dialectical and hermeneutical” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 11). The constructed realities of the people investigated can be elicited and refined through the interaction between an investigator and responds, compares and contrasts through a dialectical interchange (Guba & Lincoln,

1994). These meanings are specific to time and place, and the inquiry will be open to new interpretation as new information is gathered. However, it is possible to aim for a consensus of constructions that is reasonably informed and sophisticated. As a constructivist inquiry is value-bound by the value of both the respondents and the investigator, these values must be explicit so that the readers understand how the bias of the investigator may have influenced the outcome. Therefore, to understand how people make sense of the situation they have constructed, the ethnographic methodology is selected in this study.

Ethnography is the primary method of anthropology and the earliest distinct tradition of qualitative inquiry. The word “ethnography” is originally from the Greek word *Ethnos*, meaning a people or cultural group (Patton, 2002). The study of ethnos or ethnography is the work of describing a culture (Spradley, 1979). Additionally, Spradley (1979) mentioned that the essential core of ethnography is concerned with the meaning of actions and events for the people in which the ethnographer searches for understanding. These meanings can be expressed directly through language or indirectly through actions. To describe the cultural scene of a particular group of people, the researcher needs to have an intense desire to understand others’ lives through being part of a specific cultural scene in order to be able to present the native point of view. Ethnographic inquiry is established based on the assumption that any group of people interacting together for a period of time will evolve a culture, and that knowledge of all cultures is valuable (Spradley, 1979). Furthermore, culture can be viewed as the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experiences, especially a way of life, and to generate social behavior (Fetterman, 1998). It is not just a cognitive map that tells people what to do in given situations; it is a guide for acting,

knowing what is appropriate, i.e., the principles for interpreting and responding within a given society (Spradley, 1979: 4-5). The primary method of ethnographers is participant observation which means intensive fieldwork in which the researcher is immersed. The ethnographer must also know how to describe a culture or subculture sufficiently. He/She must also describe a culture or a social group as much as possible including the group's history, religion, politics, economy, and environment (Fetterman, 1998).

The purpose of ethnography is to gain an understanding of the meanings a culture group attaches to symbols in organizing and interpreting their life experiences (Parse, 2001). Furthermore, this methodology allows for multiple interpretations of reality and alternative interpretations of the study data. The ethnographer describes a social and cultural scene from the emic or insider's perspective (Fetterman, 1998). Ethnography also offers the researcher with a variety of different techniques for data collection; for example, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, and participant observation.

The major reason for selecting Spradley's ethnography (1979) in this study is the appropriateness of the methodology with the purpose of the study that is to identify and describe cultural beliefs and experiences of yoga practice of yogi masters. By employing the ethnographic method, the researcher intends to grasp the whole of the yogic lifestyle, beliefs, and cultures influencing the integration of yoga in daily-life practice for well-being from informants' viewpoints and knowledge. Ethnography allows researchers to go beyond what they have observed and inquire about the meaning of behavioral patterns and events from the people involved. Moreover, as Spradley (1979) pointed out, ethnography seeks to build a systematic

understanding of all human cultures from the perspective of those who have learned them. Additionally, Spradley's method uses semantic relationships to contain a vast number of folk terms used to refer to things and actions that people experience and we can use such folk terms to convey meaning to others. Furthermore, semantic relationships provide the ethnographer with one of the best clues to the structure of meaning in another culture and lead directly to the larger categories showing the organization of cultural knowledge learned by informants (Spradley, 1979). Ethnographic research based on Spradley's process consists of twelve major steps organized in a sequential mandate as follows:

Step one: locating an informant

The great challenge in doing ethnography is to initiate, develop, and maintain a productive informant relationship. An ethnographer-informant relationship is involved to identify the characteristics of a good informant. Spradley (1979) has identified five minimal requirements for selecting a good informant: 1) thorough enculturation, 2) current involvement, 3) an unfamiliar cultural scene, 4) adequate time, and 5) nonanalytic means. Enculturation is the natural process of learning a particular culture. Informants are almost always thoroughly enculturated in traditional societies or a culture scene. In doing ethnography, good informants are selected and they must know the actual culture well enough to act as informants. An informant should have at least a year of full-time involvement in a culture scene. The more thoroughly enculturated an informant, the better it is. In terms of current involvement, when people are currently involved in a culture scene, they use their knowledge to guide their actions. The ethnographer must look closely at the kind of current involvement a potential informant has. Individuals living and working in close

proximity often believe they share the same way of looking at the world. When researching familiar cultural scenes, the language differences seem to be slight and are easily overlooked; consequently, the analysis of field data becomes more difficult. Finally, interviewing within a familiar cultural scene creates problems. If informants believe the ethnographer's background makes him/her familiar with the cultural scene, they trust her. However, if they feel that she does not know anything about them, they will withhold information. Before starting the interview with an informant the researcher must be sure that they have adequate time to participate. Because the informant is an expert witness, high priority should be given to a person who has adequate time for research. The ethnographer wants to discover patterns of meaning in what an informant says. Constant analysis of utterance is required, taking words apart to find their tacit relationships and patterns. Some mistakes will occur in analytic insights; the interviewer must take special precautions for using frequent native language questions.

Step two: interviewing an informant

The ethnographic interview uses speech as means for research. Most data are gathered through participant observation and a great deal of casual, friendly conversation. There are three important ethnographic elements for getting rapport with informants. *Explicit purpose* entails that the ethnographer must make his/her purpose clear. *Ethnographic explanation* connotes that the ethnographer must repeatedly offer explanations to the informant from the first encounter until the last interview. The ethnographer must translate the goal of doing ethnography and eliciting an informant's cultural knowledge into terms the informant will understand. *Ethnographic questions* used in an ethnographic interview are of three main types: descriptive questions, structural

questions, and contrast questions. It requires practice for a novice ethnographer to acquire the necessary skills.

Step three: making an ethnographic record

In this step, a record of research is begun. It consists of field notes, tape recordings, pictures, artifacts, and anything else which document the cultural scene under study. The goal of having an ethnographic record is for it to reflect the same differences in language usage as the actual field situation. In addition to identifying the various language usages in the field situation, the ethnographer must make a verbatim record of what people say. Both native terms and observer terms will find their way into the field notes. The best way to make a verbatim record during interviews is to use a tape recorder.

Step four: asking descriptive questions

Getting trust develops in the free flow of information, resulting from both the ethnographer and the informant having positive feelings about the interview. The ethnographer must pay attention to building friendly relationships in each cultural scene to learn local, culture-bound features that build rapport. This rapport encourages informants to talk about their culture. Three principles facilitate the rapport building process: making repeated explanations, restating what informants say, and do not ask for meaning but ask for use. Descriptive question elicit a large sample of utterances in the informants' native language. They are intended to encourage an informant to talk about a particular cultural scene.

Step five: analyzing the ethnographic interview

Before continuing to the next interview it becomes necessary to analyze the data collection. This analysis will enable the ethnographer to discover questions to

ask in future interviews. Ethnographic analysis is the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole.

Step six: making a domain analysis

In this step, domain analysis leads to finding other kinds of domains. Every culture has a huge number of cover terms and included terms (folk terms). These two components are linked by means of a semantic relationship. The ethnographer should tentatively identify domains in a culture. By using a semantic relationship, the ethnographer can discover most of the culture's principles for organizing symbols into domains.

Step seven: asking structural questions

Using structural questions helps to confirm and add more included terms to complete the domain. Structural questions need to be adapted to each individual informant and meshed with other kinds of questions.

Step eight: making a taxonomic analysis

There are many different domains or folk terms in the culture scene being studied. These folk terms are organized into subsets through their semantic relationships to cover terms. As a result, subsets of folk terms and the way these subsets relate to the domain are identified and the internal structure of the domain is revealed. This process is called taxonomic analysis.

Step nine: asking contrast questions

The meaning of a symbol can be discovered by finding out how it is different from other symbols. These differences help understand the attributes of folk terms in a domain. There are two major ways to search for differences among folk

terms in the cultural scene; review all field notes looking for informants' statements, and ask contrast questions. Contrast questions are powerful tools for discovering many tacit relationships among the folk terms that have been collected from informants.

Step ten: making a componential analysis

The componential analysis is the systematic search for the attributes associated with cultural symbols. It leads to specific ways to represent all this extra information. In this step, components of meaning (attributes) associated with cultural symbols or folk terms will be examined by searching for contrast, sorting them out, and grouping some together as dimensions of contrast.

Step eleven: discovering cultural themes

Spradley (1979: 186) pointed out that the cultural theme is a cognitive principle, tacit or explicit, recurrent in a number of domains and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning. The search for themes is a means for discovering the relationships among domains and the relationships of all the various parts to the whole cultural scene.

Step twelve: writing ethnography

In the process of writing research one discovers a hidden store of knowledge gained during the research process through the translation process. That includes the entire process of discovering the meaning of a culture and communicating its meanings to people in another culture. Looking, for example, at what has been written is the best way to write the report. Ethnographers may choose to report natural history organized chronologically or organize information based on significant themes.

4. *Establishing trustworthiness*

It is important to recognize weaknesses of the study design, and not to ignore them as being of minor importance. In qualitative research, rigor is demonstrated through researchers' attention to and confirmation of information discovery. The goal of rigor in qualitative research is to accurately represent a study of participants' experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have identified the following terms that describe techniques supporting rigor of the work: credibility (internal validity), dependability (reliability), confirmability (objectivity), and transferability (external validity).

Credibility, accords to the notion of internal validity; thus, refers to the truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It means that the findings of the study are accurate and believable. Credibility is achieved when a researcher's descriptions are recognized as valid by those who had that experience. Five techniques are used to ensure the credibility of the findings: persistent observation, prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and participants' check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the researcher will spend enough time, at least one year in the field, in order to get close to the informants and gain their trust. Therefore, they will be willing to share their lives. The researcher persists in observation; this technique helps the researcher get accurate information and can identify the factors influencing yoga practice in the daily life of yogi masters that are not stated by the participants. Triangulation involves the use of multiple sources and various techniques in data collection such as interviewing, participant observation, group discussion, and taking photographs in order to confirm the accuracy of the information. Member checking involves

presenting findings, interpretations and conclusions to representatives of the informants where the data is collected and gathering feedback regarding the validity of the data and researcher's inferences. In this study, the finding and interpretations will be confirmed with some informants to take account of the findings of the study.

Dependability: it is a criteria met once researchers have demonstrated the credibility of the findings. Because of the primary role of the researcher as an instrument and the inductive nature of qualitative research, the audit trail is critical to reflect a detailed account of all methodological decisions and rationale for decision making. The audit trail provides a mechanism for tracking the research process, determining methodological consistency, and developing the thick description (Hollway & Wheeler, 2002). The audit trail also includes the researchers' reflexive journals, with ongoing documentation of the researchers' role, reactions and influence on data collection and analysis.

Transferability: it is described as being external validity. It is established by creating thick descriptions. The researcher should be responsible to describe information as fully as possible in order to apply it in other contexts (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). The findings of this study will be reported in a rich literary style. The report will include quotations, commentaries, and stories, which add to the richness of the report and help to understand the context of experience in which it occurred (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability: it refers to the direct and documented evidence repeatedly arising from informants' source data, and explanations by the informant being repeated about certain phenomena. In order to prevent personal bias, a reflexive journal, peer review, consultation with expert researchers, and confirmation from

informants will be used. In addition, raw data will be systematically recorded and noted to provide a clear account of the methodology taken over the course of the project. Field notes will be recorded on a regular basis in which reflection and photography can provide the means for capturing situations of action. The recorded materials could be tested for adequacy when data are analyzed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used for this study. It presents the research design and methods which are organized into the following sections: research design, setting and context, informants, recruiting procedures, research tools, process of data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

Research Design

The qualitative ethnographic method was employed to answer the research questions and to meet the purpose of this study on yoga practice for the well-being of yoga masters. This method promoted the exploration of people's cultural knowledge and understanding of their way of lives from the insider's point of view (Spradley, 1979). It was also used to explore, analyze, and explain the yoga masters' viewpoints, cultural beliefs, social behavior, practice and recognizing the significance health complexity according to yoga practice. By using this method the researcher was able to reveal the emic or insider's viewpoints of yoga practice and to separate them from the etic viewpoints of theoretical yoga practice. Moreover, by using the qualitative approach the data collected was quite significant; these processes can now put the pieces together and offer a complete picture of phenomena (Burns & Grove, 2005). By using the ethnographic method, the researcher was able to gain insight into the yoga masters' culture, lifestyle, philosophy and their day to day experiences from the yoga masters' perspective. An intrinsic part of this process involved getting close to,

and participating in a wide cross-section of their everyday activities over the period of one year. Hence, the researcher was able to identify factors influencing these perspectives through using collected data to produce themes that represent the life of the informants. They were asked the following research questions: What is the importance of daily life yoga practice for well-being? How do yoga masters integrate yoga in to their daily life to promote their health or well-being? What outcomes do yoga masters perceive from their daily yoga practice? What are the cultural beliefs and other factors influencing the practice of yoga?

Setting and Context

Thailand is divided into four regions, namely the north, northeast, central, and south. Each region differs climatically, culturally, and also linguistically. It has a population of 65.74 million, dominated by the Thai race (National Statistic, 2008). Around 80 percent of the population is ethnic Thai. The remainder is comprised of the following significant groups: Chinese (14 percent), Malays (about 4 percent), then Laotians, Mons, Khmers, Indians, and Burmese (The Directorate of Joint Civil Affairs, 2002). Nearly 94 percent of people speak Thai or Thai dialect. The predominant religion of the population above the age of 13 is Theravada Buddhism (93.6 percent), Muslim (5.4 percent), Christian (0.9 percent), and others (0.1 percent) (National Statistic, 2008).

In terms of geography, Thailand has had easy contact with other countries in Southeast Asia for a long time. Since the second century A.D. central Thailand has had close commercial contact with India and was a base for Hindu merchants. The

southern Isthmus of Kra was used for trade between India and Indochina in goods such as gems, glassware, pearls, etc. In the ninth century A.D. South Asian people travelled and spread religious, social, political, and cultural ideas that influenced the development of Thailand's culture and national identity (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division, 2007). All of these gave Thailand a rich cultural diversity also incorporating Indian culture.

To date, Thai policy (Thailand Health Profile 2006-2011) has been promoted to people in the country using complementary therapies for their health (Ministry of Public Health, 2008). According to a survey by the Bureau of Health Policy and Strategy it was found that yoga is the popular form of alternative medicine that most Thais have used (Terachaikul, 2005). About 12% of the Thai population uses complementary and alternative medicine through health services, general hospitals, community hospitals, public health centers and private hospitals (Division of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2005). Additionally, the practice of yoga has been popular since a famous yoga master named Chod Hatsabumrer studied yoga in India in 1937 and taught yoga to others (Thai Yoga Institute, 2004). Although it has been taught in multiple styles, depending on the objective of the users, its root is from Patanjali's Yoga Sutra that emphasizes the mind-body practice such as Hatha yoga, Hot yoga, Yoga harmony, etc. Recently, several government and non-government organizations such as the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, the Division of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, the Thai Yoga Institute and the Doctor Villager Foundation and the Faculty of Nursing at Prince of Songkla University have been contributing to promote the use of yoga as an alternative way for general health improvement and well-being. The Thai Yoga Institute has created

a country-wide network through consistently offering yoga training courses and periodic newsletters updating the yoga movement and the knowledge of yoga to its members around Thailand of which most yoga masters are a member. As a result, they have networked simultaneously. This institute received some funds to support its activities from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation that derives 2 percent of its revenue from taxes on alcohol and tobacco (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2001; Thai Yoga Institute, 2004). Yoga lessons and various yoga training courses are easily accessible in Thailand. There are yoga teacher courses offered by the Thai Yoga Institute and some universities such as the Prince of Songkla University. Yoga is used extensively for promoting health and beautifying the body. For example, movie stars are used as presenters, advertising the practice of yoga through television and other media. But since its use has gained popularity, there is still no evidence of yoga integrated into daily life and that concept needs to be explored.

Due to the fact that there are only a few yoga masters in the same area, this fieldwork was conducted in two different regions: the south, where the researcher was residing and central Thailand which is the center of the country's yoga network. There was good cooperation between yoga masters in both regions, namely in the areas of education, training, and the sharing of information and expertise. The informants in central Thailand were obtained from the yoga network.

Moreover, the typical yoga masters in this study were living in a nuclear family in urban areas where commerce and education were centered. Although the informants were living in an urban area, their residences had natural flow and were well ventilated. They planted small trees and several kinds of herbs used for healing themselves when they had physical imbalance. Regarding the yoga practice of the

informants, they not only practiced by themselves at home but they also created a group to share and teach yoga regularly. They voluntarily taught yoga and shared life experience, training facilities and equipment (such as yoga mats) with the group. Some informants, who base their beliefs on making merit by helping the community, voluntarily taught yoga to a Buddhist group at a meditation center situated far away from where they reside. Some informants who did not have regular work received remuneration, however not for the gains of profit but for living expenses.

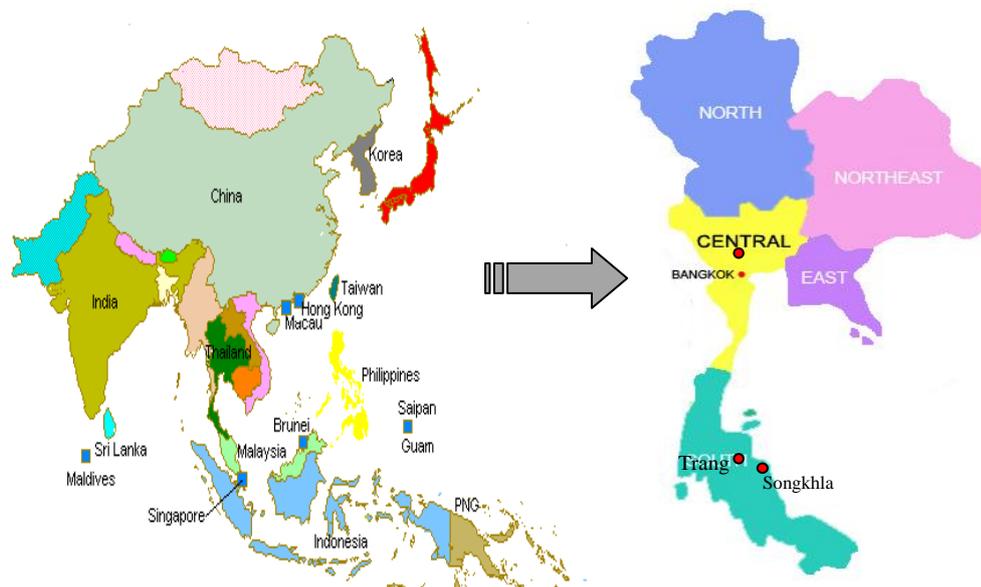


Figure 2: Asian and Thailand Maps (<http://www.forensic.cc/images/south-east-asia-map.gif>)

Informants

Informants in this study consisted of two groups: key informants and general informants who were the main sources for the researcher in learning about yoga practice for well-being. The key informants were initially selected in Songkhla province, Southern Thailand where the researcher is residing. They were selected carefully by choosing who was the most knowledgeable and skillful in yoga practice. The general informants were family members, friends, neighbors, and yoga students who knew about the yoga masters' way of life or were close to the key informants.

The key informants were selected on the basis of several criteria that fitted with the study aims, namely; yoga masters with the following criteria: (1) have received a formal yoga training course for at least one week, (2) engaged in intensive and ongoing regular yoga practice at least once a week, (3) have been using yoga in daily life for at least five years, (4) live in places that are safe and easily accessible. General informants consisted of family members who were living in the same house with key informants; friends who had close contact with the key informants or lived in the same village; or yoga students who had studied yoga with the key informants.

The number of key and general informants in this study was determined by informational considerations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The information was considered as saturated when no more new information was forthcoming. However, literature suggests that an ethnographic approach commonly requires 30-50 informants including key and general informants along with other multiple data sources such as documents; records; photography; social network diagrams (Morse, 1994). In total, there were 34 informants recruited in this study.

Recruiting Procedures

After receiving approval from the research committee and Institutional Review Board of the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University, the researcher gained entry to a particular subculture of yogic populations. The names of potential informants, which were small in number because of the limited presence of yoga masters, were purposively identified through the researcher's yoga teacher and via the snowball technique. A total of fifteen participants were directly approached by the researcher. However, only twelve consented to take part in the study. Three potential participants chose not to take part in the study because they had limited available time and were limited in their use of yoga. It has already been mentioned that the first contact key informant was the researcher's yoga teacher who was an invaluable source of information regarding the theory and daily practice of yoga in since 1997. The purpose and benefits of the study were explained and she participated willingly. Afterwards, the researcher and the informant made an appointment to conduct interviews. However, to make sure that the decision to participate in this study was freely made, the researcher asked permission from the informant to be involved in their daily activities including visits at home and yoga class. When this was allowed, interviews were then conducted and observation techniques were used to collect data. Written or oral consent was given. The next key informant was introduced by the previous yoga master. Furthermore, the yoga masters who were expert and knowledgeable in this region were limited. Other informants were assessed through the yoga network group they had regular interaction with and who were expert and skillful in yoga. Consequently, four key informants were chosen in Bangkok, Central Thailand.

Research Tools

This study used several instruments including the researcher, demographic information form, interview guide, observation guide, field-note taking form, camera, and audiotape recorder.

1. The researcher

The most important research tool of ethnography is the researcher. Self-awareness of the researcher's role becomes essential. The researcher realizes what her role should be. She took her role as participating in the culture, observing the participants, documenting observations, collecting artifacts, interviewing members of the culture group, analyzing, and reporting the findings. The step-by-step method of collecting, analyzing, and presenting ethnographic research is presented to educate the readers (Spezial & Carpenter, 2003:164). In doing so, a high level of intellectual discipline is required. Therefore, documentation of the researcher's credentials is valuable in judging the worth of the study (Burn, 1988).

In this study, the researcher is a Thai who was born and grew up in Thai culture. She has studied yoga since she has been studying her Master's degree in nursing. Also, since the researcher is a yoga master herself, she had the advantage of doing ethnography in her own culture. Familiarity with the local culture and language of the informants helped the researcher to understand the whole meaning and context of certain phenomenon. Moreover, the researcher has very good relationships with most of yoga masters since she has been working with them in a yoga network, thus, it did not take much time to build relationships and gain trust from them. However, some informants who did not participate in the yoga network were also easily

accessible and trusting. They were usually willing to share feelings, experiences and knowledge with one coming from the same background. In contrast, there were some disadvantages; the researcher was familiar with cultural scene therefore the possibility of missing relevant information could occur due to a decreased sensitivity toward nuances (Roper & Shapira, 2000) and the danger of going native. Going native refers to the phenomenon whereby the researcher becomes just like the group of people that he or she studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To overcome this issue, the researcher always needs to realize the role as ethnographer to learn from experts (yoga masters) how yoga is practiced in daily life for an extended period of time and to learn their culture throughout the whole period of the study. As a rule, when observing, the researcher always asks yoga masters what they mean in relation to their practices or actions before concluding the interpretation. Another problem is personal bias arising from the familiarity with the local culture and language of informants. The researcher always needs to realize his or her role as a researcher and not act as an informant, reflecting on prior assumptions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher observed and studied informants in their natural environment, clarifying and analyzing the observation and interview data, and checking information which was unclear in interpretation. Moreover, the researcher developed trust with the informants in order to obtain accurate, meaningful, and credible data. Additionally, reflections were also conducted with a peer colleague, qualified in ethnography research, to verify the findings. Finally, the researcher has been able to present the findings as thorough and trustworthy.

2. Demographic Information Form

The demographic information form was used for gathering primary

personal information of the key and general informants regarding gender, age, marital status, number of persons in the family, level of education, occupation, religious preference, health problems, perceived current health status, course of yoga training, course of yoga teaching, experience of yoga practice in daily life, and kinds of yoga practice in daily life (Appendix A & B). This information was useful to provide contextual background of informants that linked to their experiences and/or expression of yoga practice.

3. Interview Guide

An interview guide was developed based on relevant literatures regarding yoga practice. The researcher used a guideline by Spradley (1979) for conducting the ethnographic interviews. The interview guide was prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each person interviewed. All interview questions were suggested and guided by three experts. Each expert was well-rounded in the areas of the ethnographic method and cultural diversity and cultural care. The interview guide was used throughout the fieldwork after establishing trust and friendly relationships with the informants. The principles of interview were asking open-ended questions, using understandable and appropriate language and clear questions. The first question in the interview guide started with a broad descriptive question such as “What do you do in your daily life?” The structure and contrast questions were used to explore more deeply the specific culture of yoga practice. Then the ethnographer could learn from the informants what they thought about their world from their point of view. These questions are found in appendix C.

4. Observation Guide

An observation guide was prepared to help the researcher to document ‘what is going on in the setting of the study?’ It included physical aspects and environment, activities, objects, feelings or behaviors that appear in the study setting (Appendix F). In this study, the researcher carried out three types of observation: descriptive observation, focused observation, and selective observation (Spradley, 1980). Descriptive observation was used to get information about general and social situations especially at the initial process of study. Focused observations was conducted to gain information about particular issues that come up from data analyzed, for example, how the informants integrate yoga during their work or their eating. Selective observation was added after data analysis and repeated observation to gain more data related particular situations or issues that important to deeply understand the phenomena understudy.

5. Field Notes Taking Form

A field notes taking form was used to note action and communication, nonverbal behavior, and physical layout of an area observed in the field that increased understanding about the informants’ activities. The researcher wrote down information that was observed and heard to capture major points of data from interviews and daily observation. Field-notes-taking was also a good way to keep track of what was happening in the field. It was written in the field or immediately in as much detail as possible after leaving the site.

6. Audiotape recorder

The interview process was audio-taped in order to prevent missing some important information during the interview, upon permission of informants.

Audiotape recorders effectively capture long verbatim quotations while the ethnographer maintains a natural conversational flow. It could be used to improve the accuracy of data collection due to the fact it can be analyzed over and over again.

7. Camera

A camera was used for taking photographs of specific events or objects which provided meaningful data to be analyzed during field observations. The camera was used in the fieldwork; especially for taking informants' pictures, which would be taken after verbal permission or written permission from the informants.

Research process

The research process in this study consisted of two phases; preparation phase and data collection, data analysis and writing ethnography phase.

Phase 1: preparation

This preparation phase included the preparation of the research proposal, gaining access to potential participants, recruiting participants, building a relationship and trust between the researcher and participants, assessing the study context. The researcher also underwent preparation, before entering into fieldwork, in areas such as data collection techniques, particularly interviewing, observing, and taking field notes.

Phase2: data collection, data analysis and writing ethnography

This section illustrated an overview of how data were collected and analyzed and highlighted particular issues encountered during the process of data collection. Data were gathered over a period of fieldwork by using Spradley's method

(1979) as a guide to understand the meaning within the language of study. The Developmental Research Sequence (Spradley, 1979) consists of twelve major steps organized in a sequential mandate to guide the researcher from initiation of fieldwork to data analysis and writing the ethnography. These steps of Developmental Research Sequence (D.R.S.) are as follows.

- Locating an informant

The important sources in this study were from the informants. Although all people can become an informant, not everyone is a good informant. Informants were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the phenomenon studied. The researcher is a yoga practitioner and has very good relationships with most yoga masters since she has been working with them in a yoga network (mentioned previously). Access to informants and gaining trust from them seemed to be much easier. The first contact informant was the researcher's yoga teacher (previously mentioned). Then the next key informant was introduced by the previous yoga master. Moreover, all key informants were in the yoga network; therefore, it seemed easier to gain their trust.

- Interviewing an informant

Although data were gathered through participant observations, interviews also were the important source of data collection. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with an interview guide focusing on yoga practice in daily life. Moreover, to gain rapport and make the interview flow continuously, friendly conversations were used with every key informant. Additionally, the informants were experts in providing the researcher with cultural information and clear purpose. The goal of research was explained to each informant before starting an interview. All interviews were recorded.

- Making an ethnographic record

Field notes, tape recordings, and pictures were mainly used to make an ethnographic record from interviews and observations from the cultural scene under study. All records were written in the language the informants used and had some quotation marks. In addition, the native terms were recorded verbatim. The condensed account and expanded account field notes were used both in interviewing and observation. The researcher recorded the condensed accounts of matters that related to the meanings of yoga and yoga practice during or after interviews and observations. Then, within 24 hours of interview or observation, the researcher wrote up an expanded account of the condensed account. She also recorded the experiences, ideas, and problems that arose during fieldwork.

- Asking description questions

The interview guide was used to maintain the conversations were in the on the track of the research inquiry. Moreover, the initial question was stated with broad descriptive question. For example, “What happens in your daily life?” “Could you describe to me your routine activities since you got up in the morning until you go to bed?”

- Analyzing ethnographic interview

After interviewing the informants, all collected data were analyzed on a daily basis before proceeding to the next interview. The analysis began with reviewing field notes to search for cultural symbols and to search for relationships among those folk terms (cultural symbols). This analysis enabled the researcher to discover questions to ask in following interviews and to find out what things are significant to the informants. Four kinds of ethnographic analysis were used.

- Making a domain analysis

Domain analysis begins by using semantic relationships, in this step the researcher (namely myself) looked closely at each kind of semantic relationship before applying it. Firstly, I applied a single semantic relationship, and underlined folk terms (included terms) in field notes. Then I used a domain analysis worksheet to assist analysis. For example, using X is a kind of Y to highlight semantic relationships that link between included terms and cover terms in the cultural domain. For example, several included terms (asana practice, breath control, concentration practice and deep relaxation) is a kind of promotion of health (cover term).

- Asking structural questions

Structural questions were used to confirm and add more included terms to complete the domain. For example, “You mentioned that there are several practices for promoting health, what are those?” (Structural question)(Appendix H-1).

- Making a taxonomic analysis

In this step, the included terms were organized into subsets through their semantic relationships to a cover term; new relationships among folk terms within each domain were identified. The internal structure of the domain was revealed (Appendix: H-2).

- Asking contrast questions

The meaning of a symbol may be similar to others symbols, contrasting questions were asked to elicit differences among folk terms.

- Making a componential analysis

In this step, I searched for different attributes associated with cultural symbols to examine the components of meanings (attributes) correctly associated with

cover terms or not. For example, in order to understand more about the informants' perceptions of asanas practice and physical exercise which were listed under the same domain of 'Ways to promote physical health' (Appendix H-3)

- Discovering cultural themes

In discovering cultural themes, I put every taxonomy and the relationships of all parts and some cover terms without taxonomy together, then I made sketch maps to all information under study. The cultural themes were revealed.

- Writing an ethnography

This writing contains many cultural themes to present to the readers. The themes illustrate the meanings of yoga practice, becoming a yoga master, integration of yoga practice in daily life, and cultural beliefs influencing yoga practice.

Data Collection Method

The principal methods of data collection used in this study involved (1) participant observations, (2) semi-structured interviews with key informants and general informants, and (3) record keeping with field note, photographs and other documents. These techniques were able to provide a rich source of data by which a vivid description of the phenomenon of yoga practice and the integration of yoga for well-being in the cultural context of the yoga masters' community.

1. Participant observation

Participant observation has been used in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and culture for qualitative research. It

characterizes most ethnographic research and is crucial for effective fieldwork (Fetterman, 1998). Participant observation allowed the researcher to check definitions of terms that participants used in interviews and to observe events those informants were unable to share when doing something impolite or sensitive (Kawulich, 2005). It also gave the researcher a better understanding of what was happening in the culture and lent credence to one's interpretations of the observation.

Spradley's (1980) guidelines were used for observation and three types of observation: descriptive observation, focused observation, and selective observation were main methods in this study. These guidelines were 1) the location where the events occurred, 2) the identity of the actors or participants in the setting, 3) the behavior and action of the people, 4) the things that are located in the setting, 5) single action of people, 6) what is happening, 7) the time frame and sequencing of activities, 8) what people are aiming to do, and 9) what are the feelings of people who participated in the events. The observation guide was made for focused and selective observation to anticipate important data missing. Field notes were generated for all types of observation and completed immediately on the day after the researcher left the setting. By participant observation in the yoga masters' homes, I gathered a clear picture of the integration of yoga practice in daily life, in particular, their yoga practice since waking up in the morning until going to sleep at night as well as other normal human functions such as consuming food, their sleeping pattern taking part in society.

I was aware of the importance of building trust and establishing rapport before entry into the setting under study. Several strategies in establishing trust were applied: be unobtrusive, become familiar with the setting before beginning to collect

data, keep the observations short at first to keep from becoming overwhelmed, be honest in explaining to participants what was being done (Kawulich, 2005). The key informants were willing to deeply express their feeling and share their experiences related to yoga practice. Along the course of field work study for a period of twelve months (September, 2009 to September, 2010) I conducted 36 visits to the homews and work places of the twelve key informants. Each informant was visited at least two times at home or at the work place; the length of each visit was about two to five hours. It was no problem for me to ask to stay overnight with a selected yogi's family in order to observe and understand the whole life picture of the yoga master within the natural context.

Staying overnight in those yoga master's families provided me with significant information regarding to yoga masters' lifestyle, pattern of yoga practice, and their social interaction with the family members.

2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured and informal open ended interviews were used throughout the period of fieldwork. Interviews were conducted with both key informants and general informants. An initial interview guide was developed from a literature search to cover issues to be explored for each group of informants. The appropriateness of the content, length, and setting for an interview was tested with a pilot case before initiating data gathering in the field. The semi-structured and audio0-taped interviews were conducted informally at locations that were convenient to the participants both inside and outside at the participants' home or work place. Follow up communication by phone was made for additional interviews or meetings. An interview guide was used to maintain the conversations on the tract of the research inquiry. I also stayed in

the field and visited the home of each informant at least twice. The interviews were conducted in the informant's local dialect when appropriate. Although the same written language is used across Thailand and the Central Thai language is the official language for every part of the country, a number of dialects were used in different parts of the country for every day purpose. In Southern Thailand, people use both the Central and Southern Thai language for daily communication. Most of the people in urban areas use Central Thai whereas those who live in rural areas normally use the local dialect. Moreover, two informants come from Bangkok, the Central region; they were the foundation of the yoga network with the yoga masters in the south and they were involved in teaching yoga held by yoga masters in the south. However, two informants were Japanese, who have stayed in Thailand for over twenty years and are familiar with Thai culture but use English to communicate. The researcher used Central Thai, the local dialect, and English, depending on which language was used by the informant.

For general informants, the researcher started the initial interviews in the same way as for the key informants in order to validate information from the key informants and to keep the meaning in context. The length of interviews depended on the availability of the informants. Place and time for the discussion of personal issues was arranged around the informants' availability. Some additional information was communicated by phone. Moreover, there were some strategies that were used to improve the quality of interview. These strategies were active listening, patience, flexibility, and audio recording (Guion, 2006). Audio recordings were made with the permission of the participants.

3. Data recordings

The record collected consisted of field notes, photography and audiotape recording.

3.1 Field notes taking form

The field notes taking form used in this study were condensed accounts, expanded accounts, fieldwork journals (Spradley, 1980), and a home visit form which was prepared for general information.

The field notes taking form was used during the periods of observation in the individual's environment to note communication and actions, nonverbal behavior, interactions between yoga masters and their surrounding peoples, and aspects of physical setting that increased understanding of the activities of interest. Moreover, a condensed account was recorded on key ideas and specific words and an expanded account was used to expand physical of the condensed accounts (Spradley, 1980).

After interviews and observations, the researcher recorded a condensed account of matters such as words or behavior that related to the meaning and activity of yoga practice. Then, within a day of interview or observation, I wrote up the expanded account of the condensed account. Expanded accounts and field note records were recorded by using thick description in order to make explicit the detail of the situation being studied.

All general information about time and duration of each visit, place and events at the time of visit, together with a description of any changes in the environment were routinely recorded on a home visit form for each informant. The home visit form was very useful as a point of reference for relevant interview

transcripts.

3.2 Camera

I also took photographs in order to recall accurately particular events or objects such as daily life, equipment, and religious ceremonies which provided meaningful data for analysis.

3.3 Audiotape recording

The researcher used tape recording to prevent the missing of some important information during the interview.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data in ethnographic study is lengthy, complex and time consuming which challenges a novice researcher. All data collection and analysis was done on a daily basis. The analytic process involved a description of the situation under study, then lead to explanations of relationships to develop a model of daily yoga practice (in the Thai cultural context). Data analysis was conducted manually in the Thai language which used by informants and easily revealed more meaning in-context. Four components of ethnographic analysis as described by Spradley (1979) were used for data analysis: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and theme analysis.

Firstly, *Domain analysis* which involves a systematic search for large components of cultural knowledge and provides an overview of the cultural scene studied. There were a large number of folk terms (included terms) that were difficult to tell from the way informants talked, therefore, semantic relationships and structural

questions were used to identify, verify, and categorize those folk terms into domains which were universal. I explored all the interview transcripts and field notes for included terms which shared similar meanings in relation to cover terms. By using structural questions I confirmed and added more included terms to complete the domain. Two components, included terms and cover terms, were linked by strict inclusion of a semantic of relationship(Appendix: H). This analysis involved systematic comparison of information across all observations and interviews within case in order to determine whether or not they fitted with the existing domains.

The initial analysis of data was undertaken simultaneously with data collection. This simultaneous approach helped me in identifying additional questions to ask and to guide the data collection. Data analysis was contextually based and was done within case and it was as complete as possible for each case. Using structural questions (as mentioned earlier) helped to confirm and add more included terms and domains which were combined and reviewed within the first three cases. New included terms and domains from the remaining nine cases were added to the initial analysis; the final complete analysis was gradually built up from the initial three cases.

Secondly, *Taxonomic analyses*, in this process the folk terms were organized into subsets through their semantic relationships to the cover term. As a result new relations among folk terms within each domain were identified and the internal structure of the domain was revealed (see Appendix: H-2).

Thirdly, *Componential analysis*, this step focused on the different among folk terms in a domain which were organized systematically. I searched for different attributes and then grouped them together. The purpose of this step was to examine the components of meanings (attributes) correctly associated with cover terms or not.

For example, in order to understand more about the informants' perceptions of asana practice and exercise practice which were listed under the same domain 'Ways to promote physical health', I searched for differences to these terms (asanas and exercise practice) and I found that the informants perceived that the practice of asanas helps to harmonize endocrinal secretion, balancing emotions and give a positive attitude to life. On the other hand, performing exercise overworks the joints engenders rheumatism and stiffness (see Appendix: H-3).

Fourthly, *Theme analysis*, this step was used to search for relationships among domains and how they were linked to a culture as a whole. At this stage, all domain that were considered importance from the informants' point of view were integrated together to describe the total phenomenon being studied.

Data analysis was conducted by hand in Thai. Then the researcher translated into English, however, the process of translation was very hard and time consuming due to the language barrier and cultural differences. To verify the accuracy and context of certain terms or phases, the researcher asked the yoga teacher who was well known to translate many English Yogic texts to Thai Yogic texts and to check and give suggestions.

Ethical considerations

Permission for the involvement of participants was obtained from the Institutional Review Board, Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University. A complete explanation and written description about the purpose of the study, the research method, anticipated benefits and risks such as infringement of privacy were

given to all participants. They were allowed to ask questions and to decline or accept participation in this study or withdraw from the study at any time they wished. Either verbal or written consent was offered to each informant before beginning with the interviews. Two strategies were employed to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The anonymity of informants was ensured by using code for all data sources. The results of this study were presented in group form and no information makes it possible for individuals to be identified. The informants' photographs were presented in groups and faces were covered. The informants' confidentiality was protected, during and after the research was completed. All the personal identifiable information gathered in this study, including audio-tapes and transcriptions, field notes, and computer files were kept confidential and stored in a secure place by me, (the researcher), for a period of five years following the study. After completion of the study, audio-taped interviews were erased. Informants were informed that only this researcher and her advisors could access the remaining written data.

Although my visits inevitably disturbed the privacy of the participants and their families, I attempted to minimize the effect by regularly asking the participants to let me know whenever they felt uncomfortable to my presence or answering my questions, I would ensure that they felt free to stop the tape recording any times they wanted. I also ensured them that I was not judging them on their ideas or thoughts but I respected and was really interested in whatever was meaningful to them. I also clearly stated to them that, it was right not to discuss or answer any given issue if they found it too uncomfortable to do. Then some informants signed the consent documents and some informants consented orally.

Establishing trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the reliability and validity of a study finding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings were evaluated by several procedures for increasing trustworthiness. These procedures were as follows:

First, *credibility*, it refers to the accuracy or believability of findings that have been mutually established between the researcher and the informants. The activities that increased credibility included prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking, recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I spent a year with the people being studied as a participant observer on a regular basis. I participated in the daily life of informants to share knowledge and information in order to build relationship and establish trust. Therefore, they were willing to share their lives with me as they really were. This also provided opportunities for me to check if there were biases in my interpretation or perception of information or activities. I also used continuous observation and spot observation to gather the data in the fieldwork. These techniques helped the researcher to get accurate information. These could identify the factors influencing yoga practice in the daily life of the yoga masters that were not stated by the participants. Although prolonged engagement was needed to build trust, the possibility was that I might consider myself as a member of the culture being studied (therefore going native) and that would cause bias. Therefore, to prevent the phenomenon of 'going native', I needed to realize my role as a researcher and reflect on any prior assumptions. I was aware of the situation and delayed my own conclusions as to what was seen and did not make assumptions. Thus, I delayed the interpretation by making a hypothesis that

was not the conclusion. I needed to make sure that this was the meaning of the informants and not my own interpretation. Data were collected by using multiple methods, including interviewing, participant observations and reflection, and taking photographs to confirm the accuracy of information. Also, I undertook multiple interviews with the informants on the same topic, and repeated observations of the same daily life practices in the natural context. Member checking has been assured by presenting findings, interpretations and conclusions to the informants from which the data were collected and gathering feedback regarding the authenticity of the data and researcher's understanding and interpretation. This technique also helped me to grasp the diversity and common linkages of the phenomena. The findings and interpretations were verified with all key informants to take account of findings of the study.

The second, *confirmation*, I provided a trail of evidence for the other researchers to follow and checked whether they would arrive at similar conclusions. In order to prevent personal bias, a reflexive journal, peer review, consultation with expert researchers, and confirmation from informants were used. Moreover, I restated the ideas or findings that I experienced with all key informants. This was done when a particular issue was unclear. In addition, raw data were systematically recorded and noted to provide a clear account of the methodology taken over the course of the project. Field notes were recorded on a regular basis in which reflection and photography could provide the means for capturing a situation in action. The recorded materials were tested for adequacy when data were analyzed and interpreted. The data collection and data analysis were done under the supervision of the research advisors. They performed audits to confirm that the raw data and each step taken in

data collection and data analysis were suitably approached and that interpretations were made appropriately.

The third, *dependability*, to achieve dependability, because of the primary role of the researcher (myself) as an instrument and the inductive nature of qualitative research, I (the researcher) was conscious of constructing meanings throughout the research process, and acknowledge the role of data collection, data analysis, and knowledge synthesis. I also exercised self-awareness and self-reflection on biases and predispositions that might affect the research process and conclusions. The audit trail provides a mechanism for tracking the research process, determining methodological consistency (Hollway & Wheeler, 2002). This was conducted by tracking raw data including audio-tape recordings, data reduction and analysis products, and process notes.

The fourth, *transferability*, refers to whether the findings from a complete study have similar meaning when transferred to another similar situation, context, or culture or in the same context at some other time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to meet this criterion, the findings of the study were reported in a rich literary style including quotations, commentaries, and stories which add to the richness of the report and to the comprehension of in what circumstances the experience occurred. In order to facilitate transferability, I provided detailed documentation in all phases of the study process. Rich description was used to make the detailed pattern of cultural and social relationships contextually explicit. It put time, place and events together based on the significance that actions and events had for the member of a culture within the cultural context and the researcher's conceptual development (Hollaway & Wheeler, 2002). So, broad description presented a basis for the readers' evaluation of

quality and therefore, they could apply the findings to their own area.

Lastly, *saturation* refers to the stage reached when no new data is forthcoming from the informants in the observed situations or interviews. This criterion was met when the collected data revealed redundancies or duplication of content with regard to similar ideas, meanings, experiences, descriptions, and other expressions from informants or repeated observations emerged. In this case it is considered that the data has reached the point of saturation.

Summary

The ethnographic method was used to carry out this study in Thai culture. The data were collected from twelve yoga masters and twenty two general informants including family members, friends, and yoga students. Close contact with the key informants was made by using instruments including the researcher, a demographic data form, an interview guide, observation guide, field-notes-taking form, a camera, and an audiotape recorder. Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously over the fieldwork period by using Spradley's twelve steps Sequence of Developmental Research. The data participation observation were recorded in field notes taking forms, data from interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Four components of ethnographic analysis as described by Spradley (1979) were used for data analysis: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and theme analysis. Permission for the involvement of doing research was obtained by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkhla University. Ethical considerations included informed consent, the right to withdraw,

respecting of autonomy and confidentiality and they were assured. The findings of this study were evaluated for establishing trustworthiness by the process of credibility, confirmation, dependability, transferability and saturation.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the research findings and discussions related to the daily yoga practice of yoga masters in the Thai cultural context for well-being. The findings were collected from emic perspectives or an insider's experiences of yoga practice in Thailand, based on interviews with individuals who are experienced in practicing yoga and on observations of the researcher. The questions throughout the interview were open-ended and accompanied by clarification; therefore, the meaning of subjects' experience could be understood more fully. This chapter starts by describing the characteristics of twelve yoga masters, followed by depictions of the descriptions and patterns related to the meaning of yoga, and how yoga masters incorporated yoga into their daily living. Moreover, cultural beliefs and factors associated with yoga practice are presented. A discussion on research findings can be found at the end of this chapter.

Description of Informants

Characteristics of key informants

The characteristics of the twelve key informants who are yoga are described briefly masters using their pseudonyms K1 to K12.

K1

Yoga master number 1 was a 51-year-old female Buddhist, who completed a bachelor degree in nursing. She has been a yoga master since 2006. Her husband was

a government employee working not far from her workplace. She has two daughters; the first daughter was a dental student and the second daughter was a medical student. All of her family members were living together and her family had enough income to live a good life. She began practicing yoga eight years ago and she took a training course on being a yoga teacher at the Thai Yoga Institute in 2004. She has adopted yoga in her daily life since then, and, currently, she practices yoga asanas and pranayama very day in the morning or otherwise in the afternoon, when leading the yoga practice for the group at her workplace. Other components of the Yoga Sutra were also included in her daily living. Her daily-life yoga practice consisted of ethical commitment, positive thinking, breathing control, asana or postures, meditation, purification techniques, and yogic diet. She considered yoga to be a life science. Moreover, she devoted two days a week to voluntarily teaching yoga to interested people at her workplace.

Before K1 entered the practice of yoga, she had suffered from allergies for a long time and she had taken medicine to relive her allergic symptoms such as urticaria and rhinitis. She was sometimes admitted to hospital due to her allergic symptoms. Her allergies gradually improved after regularly practicing yoga. A year after her yoga practice, she still needed modern medicine to relieve her allergic problems sometimes. Currently, her regular yoga practice has alleviated her allergic symptoms and does not need modern medicines any more. Furthermore, she also expressed that, when she did not perform yoga asanas, she felt malaise or muscular fatigue.

K1 appeared slim and healthy at the time she was interviewed for this study. She expressed that her health status was very good as a result of yoga practice and her yogic way of living, which involved mindfulness of diet, positive thinking when

sudden, unplanned events happen, etc. She was also happy to share her knowledge about yoga with others. Therefore, she was very friendly and enthusiastically answered the questions during the interview session, and she was very happy when I stayed overnight with her family.

K2

Yoga master number 2 was a 60-year-old female Buddhist, who had completed a master degree in nursing and had retired from her regular work as an educator. She has been a yoga master since 1997 as she was working for a nursing school. She has completed two yoga training courses in India. The first one was from Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, Lonavla, while the second one was from the Yoga Institute, Santacruz on yoga therapy. She has been offering yoga classes, formally, through a university and, informally, to the public for twelve years. Likewise, she has become very well-known as an expert in yoga and has been invited to be a speaker and consultant for both government and non-government organizations. In addition, she was very enthusiastic and interested in learning various complementary therapies including Thai traditional medicine. She is a religious person, who has participated in advanced Buddhist retreat courses regularly and has combined her yoga practice with her religious practice. Her husband has also retired from government employment and joined her journey of religious and yoga practice. He accompanies her when she teaches yoga and serves as her teaching assistant in her yoga class. She had two daughters and a son; all of them were bachelor-degree graduates. Her eldest daughter also practiced yoga and she sometimes helped her mother with the yoga class. After

her retirement, she decided to move to a village in order to live in a natural environment. She claimed that yoga had changed her and her family's life totally.

The only health problem of K2 before her yoga practice was allergies; however, they did not stop her from working. She stated that she has used every component of yoga by following the Yoga Sutra. She highlighted that her first two components of the Yoga Sutra – Yama and Niyama – were significantly developed to an advanced yoga practice. She was so kind to accommodate me because she was always busy with helping people in a Buddhist retreat and complementing naturopathy with yoga in many places, where she was invited as an expert consultant. Even so, she let me interview her five times, three to five hours each time, and she allowed me to attend her teaching as often as I could. Importantly, she has acknowledged her role as a yoga guru by helping yoga novices succeed in their yoga journey from generation to generation. Her experience was invaluable and she is one of the best models of a yoga guru, who applies yoga to every facet of her life.

Moreover, she integrated yoga and Buddhism nicely in her daily life practice. She held to the five precepts of Buddhism and tried to have vegetarian food most of the time. She also expressed that her goal was to reach enlightenment in this life if possible. To that end, she meditates, prays and practices yoga every day. Currently, she perceives her health to be very good and is passing through her menopausal period without suffering any menopausal symptoms. She has not used any modern medicine for a long time since she started practicing yoga. However, when she gets some health problems, she uses some Thai herbs to relieve her symptoms.

At the time of my data collection for this study, she looked healthy, slim, energetic and calm. She was very friendly and enthusiastically answered my questions during the interview sessions.

K3

Yoga master number 3 was a 55-year-old female Buddhist, who had completed a master degree. She was an educator in a nursing school and an administrator in her organization. She has been a yoga master since 2004. She obtained training on yoga for health for a week at the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University; it was a joint training course between the Thai Yoga Institute and the Faculty of Nursing. She had neither health problems nor menopausal symptoms during her menopausal period. She had a daughter and two sons; all of them were teenagers – the two sons were studying in university. Her husband was a modern physician, who was not interested in yoga, but he always gave her good support for her practice. At the initial stage, she did not practice yoga regularly until she engaged in yoga teaching. She has voluntarily taught yoga to the public once a week for seven years. She was appreciative of her husband and children, who understood her interest and always supported her to do volunteer yoga teaching. She has been using yoga in daily life for five years by following the Yoga Sutra. She admitted that her progress in yoga came from her asanas practice. She regularly practiced asanas and pranayama in the morning and before bed time, and she kept a Yoga mat ready in her bedroom to practice at any time. Other components of the Yoga Sutra were performed in her daily living. Moreover, she admitted that yoga had gradually changed her to conform to the yogic way; however, she did not use kriya yogic techniques like other yoga masters did.

Furthermore, yoga helped her family with healthy eating. She perceived her health to be very good and was happy to share her knowledge about yoga with others. She, too, was very friendly and enthusiastically answered the questions during the interview session, and was very happy when I stayed overnight with her.

K4

Yoga master number 4 was a 47-year-old female Buddhist, who looked slim and healthy. She was a nurse working in a primary care center in downtown Trang. She had completed a master degree in administration science and has been a yoga master since 2005. She studied yoga from her trusted yoga guru individually for four years, and completed a course on being a yoga teacher for a week from Trang Hospital; a joint training course between the Thai Yoga Institute and Trang Hospital. She had a son and a daughter, who were studying in high school. Her husband was a teacher at a governmental high school in the same town. All of her family members were living together, and her family had enough income to make a good decent in a small house surrounded by many planted Thai herbs. She has tried to practice yoga following the Yoga Sutra as well as integrating other yogic techniques such as kriya and yogic diet in her daily life. She has regularly detoxified to achieve physical balance by using plain water or her urine. Additionally, she was a Buddhist and practiced religious activities regularly, for example, praying at a temple, helping community members organize the *ceremony of towel phapa* (a merit-making Buddhist ceremony) to the royal temple, etc. Moreover, she had strong faith in Buddhism and yoga, as she maintained that both philosophies can be complementarily used to guide her practice toward reaching her ultimate goal in life. She aimed to free herself from the cycle of *Samsara* (the process by

which karma causes rebirth) based on the Buddhist belief. She has been holding to the five Buddhist precepts for many years and was much disciplined in her daily life.

Furthermore, she had initiated and established a yoga health promotion project among the health personnel and others in the community as a part of her job duty. She had five years of experience in teaching yoga. She has been anemic since she gave birth to her daughter; however, she was in health. She adopted a simple way of life and used herbs and natural therapy rather than modern medicine for her health problems. She has stopped using modern medicine for about 10 years. She practices asanas and meditation an hour in the morning as well as meditation an hour before sleeping. Moreover, she regularly practiced asanas and pranayama five evenings a week during her yoga teaching for the community.

At the time of my data collection, she looked cheerful as well as calm, and she was friendly and enthusiastic answering the questions during the interview session.

K5

Yoga master number 5 was a 48-year-old Buddhist man, who had completed a master degree in journalism in the United State of America. He has been married for sixteen years, but he has no children; there were only two persons in his family. He is the director of Thai Yoga Institute, Bangkok. He took a six week yoga course from Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, India, and he has done regular self-study by reading many yogic texts sent to him by his guru from India. His personal yoga practice was performed every morning. He has been teaching yoga for about 10 years; he has been involved in teaching several courses offered through the Thai Yoga Institute, namely,

Yoga Foundation, Pranayama, and Yoga for Trainers. He expressed that he used the Yoga Sutra as a guide to his practice, especially asana, pranayama and meditation.

Moreover, he was very knowledgeable in Buddhism. He was disciplined and lived a contented way of life, and integrated Buddhist concepts into his yogic practice. He admitted that the Buddhist way, Buddhist culture, and a Buddhist environment helped facilitate achievement in yoga practice as well as promote mind development. His wife owned an insurance business that brought enough income to live a good life and to ensure a secured future.

K5 retired from his regular work in 1997. After retirement, he devoted his time and energy to promote yoga in Thailand. He regularly writes yoga articles on various health magazines and yoga journals. Furthermore, he has translated many well-known yoga text books into Thai, which have been used in many yoga courses in Thai universities. He was also actively involved in teaching yoga at courses held by the Thai Yoga Institute and universities. However, his work could not bring regular income, but it was enough to make a living in a yogic way. Importantly, he was happy that he could maintain his meaningful way of life. He has gained very good support from his wife, even though she did not practice yoga. They gave respect to each other and went along with their family life very well. Thus, his involvement in yoga was for his spirituality rather than earning an income for the family. He was very kind and generous; he was happy to teach and share his knowledge and expertise to others without expectation for a return.

During my data collection, he looked very thin; however, he was healthy. He admitted that he had some physical health problems such as aphthous ulcers and constipation. Nevertheless, these problems could be solved by naturopathy. Finally,

he was friendly, cheerful, nicely-dressed and full of enthusiasm to share his experiences of yoga practice.

K6

Yoga master number 6 was a 48-year-old Buddhist woman, who has taught yoga for five years. She is married, but has no children. She lived in Bangkok and had a yoga network with yoga masters in Southern Thailand. She retired as financial and banking officer to take care of her father, who was diagnosed with cancer. Since then, her father has died and she now has more time available to do things meaningful to her life. Her expenditure comes from her savings. Her husband is in the army and is not interested in yoga, but he always understood and gave her good support for her practice. Although she was living with her husband in a large condominium where was widespread in central Bangkok, it had a sunny lawn and garden where she could experience the energy of nature. She usually lived together with only her husband; however, her mother sometimes came to visit and stayed with her.

She received her first yoga training course from the Thai Yoga Institute in 2003 and, later, another training course from Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, India for eight months. Moreover, she has gained additional yoga knowledge through reading yogic text books. She has been involved in teaching Yoga Foundation, Yoga for Trainers, and other selective yoga course at Prasanmit University, Thailand.

Initially, K6 wanted to practice yoga to strengthen her physical health because, as she did not have a child, she wanted to be healthy and independent in order to not burden others in the future. She mentioned that she did not have any health problems that needed yoga to alleviate, but she would like to care for her physical self. Her

initial yoga study involved a yoga guru and was related to the promotion of mind development; therefore, her yoga practice was irregular. After she retiring and attending the yoga training course from the Thai Yoga Institute, her practice became regular. She expressed that she followed the Yoga Sutra as a guidance of her practice, especially *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, meditation and yogic purification. However, the techniques of purification and kriya yoga would be done only when indicated by the physical, e.g., when getting rhinitis or an upset stomach. At the time I interviewed her for this study; she did yoga regularly, but kept it at a minimal level to maintain a balance of both the body and mind. Furthermore, she usually took good care of her health; she did lots of exercise and tried to consume natural food.

At the time of my data collection, she concentrated more on mindfulness meditation to calm her mind. Her belief was the mind needed to be calm before death in order for it to enter a good realm (Propphume) or heaven. Without regularly practicing mindfulness meditation, it was difficult to have a peace of mind before entering the stage of unconsciousness. Therefore, she devoted her time to practicing mindfulness meditation along with teaching yoga asanas to those who practiced Buddhism regularly. She discovered that yoga meditation could facilitate mindfulness cultivation and lead to further in-depth concentration. She looked peaceful, refreshed, friendly, and enthusiastic to share her experiences of yoga practice.

K7

Yoga master number 7 was a 59-year-old Buddhist single female, who had completed a master degree in health sciences. She lived with her elder sister, who had retired as a university educator to a garden house surrounded by trees and Thai herbs.

Her parents had passed away long time ago; while growing up, she was taken care of by her elder sister. Additionally, she admitted that her desire to help others was influenced by her elder sister, who was very kind and compassionate. For example, her sister helped K7 to purchase a new car in order to assist the elderly who could not walk to practice meditation at the temple and provided fuel for that car regularly.

K7 had worked as an audiologist in a university hospital. Even though she had a good job with a high salary, she decided to resign from her job two years ago in order to seek a peaceful mind and nirvana. She had enough income from her retirement savings and lived a self-sufficient way of life.

Initially, she suffered from allergic symptoms that disturbed her daily work. She found that her health problems could not be completely cured by modern medicine. She began to practice yoga as an alternative and complementary therapy to solve her health problems 14 years ago by participating in a yoga class at the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University, and further taking a yoga training course from Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, India. Her allergic symptoms disappeared without using any modern medicines since she started practicing yoga and changed to a vegetarian diet. She has been teaching yoga to her colleagues for five years. Recently, she taught yoga to the elderly practicing meditation at a temple. She has been using yoga in her daily life since 1996, following the principles of yama and niyama, asanas, pranayama, meditation, relaxation, kriya, and consuming vegetarian food. Her yama and niyama practice served as a discipline in accordance with the principles of dharma of life. She practiced asanas, pranayama and kriya, especially nasal cleaning, every morning. She was disciplined and lived in a contented way of life; for example, she modified her old garage into a bedroom by using a mosquito net

tent. Moreover, she believes that the magnetic field is a very important source of energy for living – a life force. Therefore, when it was time to sleep, she turned her head toward the north during waning moon and toward the south during full moon in order for the earth's magnetic forces to enhance her energy power.

During my data collection, K7 looked calm, wore a casual dress and no cosmetics. She enthusiastically narrated her experiences on how she achieved happiness in her life by living in a contented and balanced way with the natural environment. Animals and trees could be found in her residential area; many kinds of vegetables and plants grown for consumption and for offering to Buddhist monks.

K8

Yoga master number 8 was a 45-year-old Buddhist female, who had completed a master degree in nursing. She worked as a nurse educator in a university. She has been a yoga master for 9 years. She completed two yoga training courses: the Yoga Teacher course from the Thai Yoga Institute in Bangkok, and Yoga for Pregnancy and Postpartum for a month in Mysore, India. She has gained more yoga knowledge through reading yogic text books and discussing with her yoga guru. She has tried to practice yoga following the Yoga Sutra as well as integrating other yogic techniques such as kriya and yogic diet in her daily living. Moreover, she was also practiced *dharana* and *dhayana* for her advanced mental development. Additionally, she emphasized an awakening of consciousness with the present moment and unconditional acceptance. She has been offering yoga training courses: Yoga for Teenaged Women's Health, Yoga for Pregnant and Postpartum Women's Health, and Yoga Therapy for Pain Alleviation. She has two sons and a daughter and her husband worked as an educator in the same university.

She lived with her husband, her mother, and her children. She was very busy with her work and her family duties and she always used yoga to teach her children.

Her initial intention of practicing yoga was to promote her health as well as to help others. She mentioned that she did not have any health problems, but she wanted to maintain her physical and mental health. Furthermore, she was interested in doing research on yoga and women's health and on yoga and the health of pregnant women. During my data collection, she looked peaceful and refreshed, friendly, and enthusiastic to share her experiences of yoga practice.

K9

Yoga master number 9 was a 52-year-old Buddhist man who had completed a bachelor degree in marketing in Japan. Later he obtained a diploma in yoga education from Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, and master degree in Indian Philosophy from the University of Pune, India. Additionally, he took a training course in yoga therapy at Swami Vivekanand Yoga Anusandhan Samsthan, Bangalore, India in 1994. He has been married since 1986; however, he has no children. Therefore, he has been living with only his wife who has joined him in his yoga journey and has served as a teaching assistant for his yoga classes. He regularly resides in Thailand for six months and India for another six months every year. He has done regular self-study on yoga by reading many yogic texts and learning from his trusted yoga gurus in many places in India. He has been involved in teaching yoga for seventeen years in mainly India and Thailand. The courses he has taught were Instructor of Yoga Therapy and Yoga for Teacher Training. He expressed that his regular yoga practice followed the Yoga Sutra as a guidance; however, at the time I interviewed him for this study, his asana

practice was decreased to the level of balance for both physical and mental health. He heightened his focus on practicing both meditation and *pranayama* (breathing control) regularly, both in the morning and before bed time. He was very knowledgeable in Buddhism, very disciplined and lived a contented way of life. He has also integrated Buddhist concepts into his yoga practice. He admitted that the Buddhist way, Buddhist culture, and a Buddhist environment helped facilitate his achievement in yoga practice to succeed in mind development. Additionally, he regularly joins a *vipassana* (Buddhist meditation) course to improve his meditation skill in Nepal.

K9 admitted that his turning point that led him to the study of yoga was his grandfather, who suffered from a stroke until the end of his life and when Japan experienced an economic boom in the 1990s. “Almost all people worked hard, without enough sleep,” he said. He had a lot of chances to make himself rich, but he could not manage well enough with the mainstream society, which was not very kind (*metta*). He decided to find happiness and calm in his life instead by working in marketing research. Meeting a yoga teacher brought him happiness in his life; all human beings need to live a happy, healthy and peaceful life without conflicts. He chose to study yoga at Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, India because they offered courses in academic yoga, in other words, knowledge-based yoga. He regularly travels to India and Nepal to study yoga and other Indian philosophies every year. Furthermore, he devotes his time and energy to teaching yoga in several universities such as Mahidol University, Prasarnmit University, etc. However, his work does not bring him a regular income, but it was enough to make a living in a yogic way. He has been provided with accommodation by his good Thai friends since 1997.

During my data collection, he looked very thin; however, he was healthy. He adopted a simple way of life and used herbs and naturopathy rather than modern medicine when he got health problems. He was friendly, cheerful, nicely-dressed and full of enthusiasm to share his experiences of yoga practice. Importantly, K9 has been very highly *metta* (kind behavior) with his yoga students and has helped them as much as he could. He has served as a model of yoga guru for his yoga students.

K10

Yoga master number 10 was a 61-year-old Buddhist woman. She had completed a college degree and married K9 twenty-four years ago, but she has never had children naturally. She had become interested in yoga before she got married. Moreover, her grandmother, who was interested in mental development and ordained as a Buddhist nun in her final stages of life, had a lot of influence on K10 and led her toward adopting a simple life. She took a yoga training course from Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, India along with her husband. Later, she became a teaching assistant to the Yoga Therapy course at Vivekananda Kendra Yoga Research Foundation in Bangalore, India. K10 had a very important experience that changed her perspective and attitude about studying yoga while there. She was treated and respected as other yoga gurus, even though she was younger than the other students. The senior students showed respect to their teachers by falling prostrate at their teacher's feet, which meant they were not only showing respect for the teacher, but also to previous generations of teachers.

K10 was interested in yoga because she was very stiff and that made her very anxious. Yoga was suggested to her by her close friend as suitable for her condition. Then

she learned how to practice yoga from a Norwegian yoga teacher. His style of teaching was the same as that of the traditional yoga teaching she had received in India. There, she met K9, who was attending the yoga class as well. With a similar lifestyle as well as goals of life, they decided to be spouses and have lived together ever since. K10 stated she did not have health problems except her physical stiffness; therefore, her yoga practice was for the purpose of maintaining a good health.

She regularly resides with her husband in Thailand for six months and India for the other six months every year. Her regular yoga practice follows the Yoga Sutra and other yogic purifications as guidance. Moreover, she performs yogic techniques complemented with naturopathy regularly such as doing hip baths, using herbs and Ayurveda medicines, and so on. At the time I interviewed her for this study, her yoga practice was decreased to the level of maintaining a balance of both the body and mind. Importantly, she concentrates on meditation as well as pranayama for advanced mental development. Furthermore, her initial intention was not to be a yoga teacher, but a teaching assistant to her husband. The situation changed because she requires an income to survive. She has since become a yoga instructor, but her teaching is not done purely in terms of doing business. Her work did not bring her a regular income, but it was enough to make a living in the yogic way. Besides, she has integrated Buddhist concepts into her yoga practice. K10 admitted that the Buddhist way, Buddhist culture, and Buddhist environment helped facilitate the achievement of yoga practice to promote mind development. Even so, she followed her husband every year in attending the *vipassana* course to improve her meditation skill.

At the time I interviewed her for this study, she looked very slim but healthy. She was calm, cheerful, friendly and enthusiastic to answer my questions during the interview session.

K11

Yoga master number 11 was a 66-year-old Buddhist single woman. She had completed a bachelor degree and she has been a Yoga master since 1993. She had had an allergic rhinitis, which disturbed her daily work. Her allergy problem gradually improved and eventually disappeared after the first year of her regular yoga practice. She lived with her younger sister and mother in a small garden house surrounded by Thai herbs and several kinds of trees. She complemented yoga and healthy food with caring for her father, who was disabled due to a car accident; her father passed away fifteen years ago. She was a religious person and integrated her yoga practice with her religious one. She has been committed to being a nun and living in a temple. Therefore, she donated all her belongings and property; she sold her own business in order to be out of debt and have mental independence. She entered the meditation practice in order to find true inner peace. However, her mother developed dementia and needed a care taker. She has been taking care of her mother with dementia full time, unlike her other siblings who have regular full-time work. She regularly practices being a Buddhist nun, the same as a priest at the temple, but living at home.

She completed the Yoga Teacher course organized by the Sarnsagarun Foundation and a further Yoga Teacher Training course at the Yoga Institute, Rishikesh, India. She has done regular self-study on yoga by reading many yogic texts and discussions with her yoga gurus. She has incorporated yoga into her daily living for

seventeen years. Her experience of teaching yoga for health encompassed nine years. She expressed that she followed the Yoga Sutra as a guide to her yoga practice, especially by performing asanas and meditation every morning. She was disciplined and lived a contented way of life. She donated her time to teaching yoga and acted as demonstrator when her colleague taught yoga in several places such as Ramkumheng University and the University of Technology in Bangkok. Moreover, during my data collection, her asanas practice was decreased to the level of balance for both body and mind. Recently, she concentrated on mindfulness meditation to calm the mind and reinforce the soul. She perceived her health to be in a very good condition and she went through her menopausal period without suffering any menopausal symptoms. She has not used modern medicine for a long time since she started practicing yoga. She also expressed her goal to be enlightenment in this life if possible. However, her progress has been slow due to being busy caring for her mother at her younger sister's home.

At the time I interviewed her for this study, she was peaceful and refreshed, friendly, and enthusiastic to share her experiences of yoga practice. She welcomed me to share in her yoga and religious practice as much as I wanted and she was very happy and kind to me when I visited her.

K12

Yoga master number 12 was a 49-year-old married Buddhist woman. She had completed a doctoral degree in nursing and works as a nursing educator in a university. Her experience of teaching yoga was 7 years. She attended her first yoga training course, Yoga for Health, for a week at the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla

University. It was a joint training course between the Thai Yoga Institute and the Faculty of Nursing. She later completed another training course from the Thai Yoga Institute, Bangkok in 2005. Moreover, she has gained more yoga knowledge through reading yogic text books, and been involved in teaching Yoga Foundation and Yoga for Trainers. She has adopted yoga into her daily life for seven years by following the Yoga Sutra. However, she admitted that she did not use some components of the Yoga Sutra such as control of the senses or *pratyahara* and other kriya of yogic techniques. She had neither health nor menopausal symptoms. She has two sons, who are studying in university; the first son is a second-year economics student living in a dormitory near his university, while the second son is a first-year dental student living together with the family. Her husband is a prosecutor who was not interested in yoga but has always given her good support for her practice. Her family has enough income to lead a normal life. She has voluntarily taught yoga to the public twice a week for seven years at her workplace.

K12 first engaged in yoga as an exercise until she took a training course from the Thai Yoga Institute, and then yoga practice was adopted into her daily life. She mentioned she did not have any health problems and she would like to maintain her physical and mental health through the practice of yoga. Furthermore, she was interested in doing research on yoga and allergies. At the time I interviewed her for this study, she looked peaceful and refreshed, friendly, and enthusiastic to share her experiences of yoga practice.

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants (n = 12)*

Variables	Number
Sex	
Male	2
Female	10
Marital status	
Married	10
Single	2
Age (years)	
40-50	5
51-60	5
> 60	2
Religion	
Buddhist	12
Educational level	
Community College	1
Bachelor Degree	2
Master Degree	8
Doctoral Degree	1
Diet	
Vegetarian	1
Non-vegetarian	11

Table 1 *Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants (cont')*

Variables	Number
Children	
Yes	7
No	5
Income	
Sufficient	12
History of health problems	
Yes	4
No	8
Duration of yoga in daily life (years)	
5-7	5
8-10	2
> 10	5

In summary, the key informants consisted of ten female and two male yoga masters, who had an experience in yoga practice for more than five years. All of them were Buddhist, and their ages were 40 to 66 years, with a mean age of 53.83 years (SD \pm 6.69). Most of them were married and lived with their spouse. Seven yoga masters had children and all of their family members were living together. Most of them held college up to doctoral degrees and were health professionals. All of them had enough income to make a good living. Prior to yoga practice, four of them had suffered from severe allergies. However, at the time of interviewing for this study, they were healthy and looked calm. Moreover, none of them had used modern medicines to relieve their allergic problems since adopting yoga in their daily living.

Characteristics of general informants

The general informants consisted of seventeen females and five males. Their marital status was: fifteen married, six single and one widowed. Their ages ranged from 22 to 67 years old, with a median age of 49 years and a mean age of 47.13 years (SD \pm 10.90). Most of them were bachelor degree graduates (n = 19) and employed (n=17). The relationships between the key informants were: five spouses, two daughters, one neighbor, six colleagues, and eight yoga students. In this study, the general informants were referred to by a pseudonym from G1 to G22 and the characteristics of the general informants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 *Characteristics of General Informants (N= 22)*

Variables	Number
Sex	
Male	5
Female	17
Marital status	
Married	15
Widowed	1
Single	6
Age (years)	
< 30	2
31- 40	3
41-50	12
51-60	4
> 60	1
Educational level	
Community College	1
Bachelor Degree	19
Master Degree	2

Table 2 *Characteristics of General Informants (cont')*

Variables	Number
Occupation	
Student	2
Self-employed	1
Private sector employee	2
Government sector employee	9
Nurse	5
Retired	2
Housewife	1
Relationship with key informants	
Spouse	5
Daughter	2
Neighbor	1
Colleague	6
Yoga student	8

Daily Life Yoga Practice for Well-being

Daily life yoga practice for well-being was described by the yoga masters, who regularly practiced yoga. The findings were sorted into topics using the following categories: the meanings of yoga; becoming a yoga master; the integration of yoga into daily life; perceived outcomes of yoga practice; and cultural beliefs and factors associated with the practice of yoga.

1. Meanings of Yoga Practice

Yoga practice in the context of regular daily practice has been illustrated by the key informants, who confessed that it was meaningful to them and a reality that had to be accepted. The yoga masters gave a wide range of meaning to yoga practice in daily life. Three themes reflecting the meanings of yoga practice from an emic point of view emerged. These were: (1) a tool to promote health, (2) science and art of living a perfect life, and (3) philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment. They were described as follows:

1.1 Yoga practice as a tool to promote health.

This means yoga practice was a tool to promote overall health, which originates in all of the aspects of holistic health. The nature of yoga practice focused on the potential of an individual's capacity as a key to maintain the balance of life. All yoga masters definitely agreed that healthy life and happiness come from yoga practice. The study of yoga would let them know the cause of their illness, including how to live in good health. In addition, every activity of yoga served the purpose of

bringing about a balanced and happy life through self-exploration, mindfulness cultivation, change of attitude toward life, and moral development. These assisted them to promote holistic healthcare. These ideas have been supported as quoted below:

Yoga is a tool of health promotion. It emphasizes the exploration of self. Even though we do not learn about illnesses in yoga, we definitely understand illnesses and their causes, and realize how to be healthy. Every activity of yoga is for health. Yoga is an important tool leading to health and self-care... I know the answers to, how much to learn, how much to practice, and finally how much I understand myself... (K2)

Another informant expressed that yoga was a tool leading to health, both physically and mentally. The practice of yoga helps cultivate concentration and assists Buddhist meditation, which is mental training aimed to alleviate suffering by stopping the rise of all desires in an individual and, thus, leading to happiness. These practices resulted in a holistic health; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health as well as having good ethical behaviors. These are the principle foundations of ultimate happiness. As one key informant said in the following statement:

My yoga practice has changed my attitude to use yoga as a tool to promote my health, both physically and mentally. Yoga assists the practice of Buddhist meditation and Dhamma, which result in a holistic health. It consists of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Ethical behaviors, which are the principle foundations of ultimate happiness, are also considered. (K5)

Asanas, pranyama and meditation were used to maintain good health and mindfulness cultivation, leading to good physical, mental, and social health. A yoga master said:

Nowadays, yoga is part of my daily life; it is used to maintain good health, balance of mind, and have good relationships with

friends. When I want inner peace, I continuously practice it; then I feel an intense inner dynamism. (K10)

Mindfulness helps prevent the mind from becoming unfocused; it forbids daydreaming and aimlessly drifting along with the flow of mind objects. Practicing mindfulness helps to gain a deeper understanding of reality and, thus, provide more inner freedom. Moreover, it prevents humans from indulging in foolish pleasures and prevents evil from sneaking into the mind. Mindfulness leads to clear comprehension and understanding of things as they are. Therefore, the mind becomes unburdened and relaxed, and exists in accordance with its true nature (Payutto, 1995). Moreover, all of the yoga masters agreed that yoga was used to help promote balance in life. Yoga asanas and pranayama (breath control) were found to effectively unite their body and mind. After its practice, they felt flexible, comfortable, with an airy body and the mind was cheerful and calm. It was used to control anger as well. Most yoga masters stated that the more they practiced yoga, the more benefits they gained from it. This is supported by their statements:

Nowadays, we use yoga to balance both body and mind. Asanas solve uncomfortable feeling. Even after an hour of practice, I feel airy and comfortable in my body, and the mind quickly becomes aware, cheerful, and calm. Practicing yoga, we can balance the body and the mind. (K4)

Yoga practice has been proven to remove tensions and is an effective technique for restoring emotional stability. All yoga practices have the effect of controlling the autonomic nervous system, which governs emotional life (Gharote, 1990). However, if a person cannot control it, it hurts him. For instance, when one gets angry, one does more damage to oneself than to the person one is angry with. Negative emotions

not only destroy, but also use up valuable energy. Therefore, a positive attitude toward life is very important to maintain one's mental health.

Moreover, life involves holistic health; every human wants the worldly enjoyments and his/her mind gravitates towards the pleasures of worldly experience. It easily tends towards violence and untruthfulness, which will destroy his harmonious life. Moral development through the practice of yoga, e.g., *Yama* and *Niyama*, pillars of righteousness, helps one to conquer negative attitudes influenced by the external world. Also, by following moral discipline, one's behavior and positive attitude will pass to others surrounding him. Nature becomes one's friend and this quiets the mind. The following statements support this idea.

I firstly engaged in yoga by practicing asanas and eating healthy foods. After a while, I moved toward working more on mental and spiritual health. I emphasize the cultivation of positive attitude toward life by being generous and kind to myself and others.... (K7)

One key informant expressed:

When we do not hurt both ourselves and others, we have a better health and a perfect life. We need to learn how the mind functions through our thoughts and actions. Although it is difficult to control our mind to have good thoughts and, consequently, good deeds, we should be morally disciplined. Initially, if we use our senses of perception or the idea to justify ourselves to the surrounding people, then our behavior approaching them changes to unfriendly action, which disturbs our mind and emotions. When we follow righteousness, our mind is gradually purified. Then our behaviour towards others is good and this furthers good mental health....(K2)

All yoga student informants agreed that yoga is a way to promote both physical and mental health. They believed that it was most useful to become aware of one's mind. Whenever they practiced asanas, their minds would gradually quieten and their bodies became strong and flexible. One student said:

Yoga helps promote a quiet mind and a flexible body. I, therefore, can meditate longer than before. (G19, yoga student of K4)

1.2 Yoga is the science and art of living a perfect life.

This theme could be explained in terms of science and art. Yoga is a science because it has been set in its way as a practical, methodical, and systematic discipline that has the lofty goal of helping human beings to become aware of their deepest nature by using the experiment of self-study. The Yoga Sutra, which consists of eight limbs or components, has been set up as a mind map to reach the ultimate goal. However, in practice, the participants have freedom to choose its limbs and adapt them to suit themselves regardless of their starting point or every limb of the Yoga Sutra could be followed at the same time. The practices and benefits derived are prescribed; hence, this could be scientifically verified by anyone. Every participant has different results depending on how much realization and self-awareness she/he has in the level of performance in order to reach the highest goal as planned. The following statements support this theme.

Yoga is everything. Without yoga, I seem to be empty. It was a good opportunity for me to know the yoga masters who introduced yoga to me. I use it primarily to teach my kids to be good such as being charitable, flexible, and disciplined in life. Yoga helps cultivate positive attitudes as well as good thought, deeds, and only good words. I would like to tell the world that yoga is a philosophy to guide one's living, not just to be taught in a classroom and left to the past like Dhamma. The best way to learn and understand yoga is to practice it... (K1)

To me, yoga is an intellectual science. It makes me understand myself and uplifts my mind and spirit. I also believe that yoga is a science. Desirable outcomes can be expected as a consequence of its practice. Apparently, the results of yoga practice are being more disciplined in life, having more patience, and a better quality of mind. (K5)

Yoga is also viewed as an art. It is an art that employs gentle body movements, breathing techniques, concentration, meditation and ethical behavior disciplines to achieve an individual's goal in life in different ways of practice. In other words, yoga is an art in action, which produces an intense inner dynamism in human beings. Humans are naturally caught up in the web of lust, anger, greed, passion, pride and jealousy. The foundations of the yogic way, which are friendliness, compassion and joy, and happiness and virtue, are conducive to mental peace. Yoga practitioners can experience the beauty of its practice and consequences, which grow in all aspects of their life, as expressed by the following statements:

Because of yoga, I can control my feelings when facing disagreeable situations. For example, previously, if a colleague used sarcastic words, I would get angry and immediately argue; however, following the yogic way has made me less sensitive to these kinds of words and, sometimes, I do not even recognize them. If the situations are really serious and I cannot cope with it, I will control my breath in order to calm my mind. (K1)

Yoga is both a science and an art of living. It teaches us how to live happily in a logical way, how to value ourselves, and do things that are right. (K2)

Two family members (daughters) supported this idea. They noticed that their mothers had taught them how to be happy in society; do no harm to others, both in their presence and in their absence; offer generous hospitality to others who have suffered or who are less fortunate than you. Additionally, they had taught them to be grateful to their parents. One family member said:

My mother (K1) has taught me to provide hospitality to friends and those with more seniority, to love others and be flexible in life. Additionally, she has taught me how to relax when I feel stressed out. These have removed suffering from my life..... (G1 daughter of K1)

1.3 Yoga is a philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment.

This refers to a whole set of beliefs and knowledge about life, life goals, and how to lead one's life in order to achieve one's life goal. Yoga guides a person to understand him/herself and realize his/her life goal. It helps ring about a brighter and clearer mind or intelligence. The intelligent way helps understanding one's life, and then one will know how to live and how to reach the desired goal. The desired goals sought by individuals are divided into levels of health/well-being and enlightenment. A union of both the physical and the mental is one of the mechanisms that promotes a peaceful mind and furthers enlightenment, which, from the yogic/Buddhist point of view, is the goal everyone needs to seek after in their life. These ideas are supported by the following statements.

Yoga is a philosophy of life leading us toward our life goal, which is simply a happy life without suffering and stress. The ultimate goal is a pretty good and majestic thing, purity. As a result of purity one is led to intellectual ascent, which, in turn, promotes mercy that is the highest quality of a human being. Mercy helps reduce conflicts, both in ourselves and our surroundings, so we are friendly, have goodwill toward everyone, and reach simply conventional happiness. (K2)

Moreover, two yoga masters admitted that yoga is a way that leads them to the life goal of enlightenment and further liberation. That is, free from prejudice, excessive attachment, ignorance and pride. These ideas are supported by the following statements:

Yoga is my whole life. The goal of yoga is the same as my goal in life, that is, liberation or nirvana. I want it here in this life, but, how far I will be able to go in achieving it, I am not certain. All I want is real freedom in life and detachment; I do not want to cling to anything. Now, I can stay anywhere, with anyone, and am still happy all the time. I wish I could stay balanced all the time and not be violated by any disruption... (K4)

Yoga is a philosophy of life. It provides principles to guide the life of a human from birth until death in order to help them achieve their goal of life, freedom or liberation. (K5)

The meaning of yoga had three main themes: a tool to promote health, a science and an art of living a perfect life, and a philosophy of life leading to peaceful life and enlightenment. However, yoga masters recognized its meaning could be significantly different depending on an individual's capacities and the level of their development. Some yoga masters focused on the obvious health promotion, but others focused on its aspect as a science and an art of living, whether or not its philosophy of life lead to a peaceful life and enlightenment. The key informants focusing on yoga's health promotion capabilities, referred to all health aspects in a holistic approach; nevertheless, at the outset of their yoga journey, physical health was their main interest. Later, their practices deepened, aiming to improve mental and spiritual health. Good mental health gives results in other health aspects. Examples in the informants' words were:

I firstly engaged in yoga by practicing asana and eating healthy foods. After a while, I was started working more on my spiritual health. (K6)

Yoga is a way of life; I use it to teach my kids to behave well at work and in society. Without yoga, I seem to have nothing as a guidance for living. Yoga is the core guidance I follow. (K1)

Yoga helps both the body and the mind be balanced, which helps eliminate both undesirable physical health problems and having an anxious mind, and assists in attaining a foundation that calms the mind through meditation. (K5)

In summary, the meaning of yoga practice from the yoga masters' views was addressed. There were three main meanings: they perceived yoga practice as a tool to promote health, a science and an art of living a perfect life, and a philosophy of life

leading to peaceful life and enlightenment. Yoga practice on a regular basis is crucial to achieving one's life goal. However, the meaning of yoga is diverse and depends on each person's experiences of the yoga practice. The meanings of yoga practice previously mentioned are a reality that needs to be accepted because they come from yoga masters' direct experiences of yoga practice. Furthermore, there are significant motivations and self-development processes to becoming a yoga master, i.e., an expert in yoga science. These are discussed further.

2. Becoming a yoga master

Yoga master refers to a person who teaches and practices yoga regularly. The most common reason for engaging in yoga on a more regular basis was related to health. However, a few yoga masters had initially started yoga when they wanted to utilize yoga knowledge to earn an income. At the initial stage of yoga way, all yoga masters agreed that they did not have the intent purpose to be a yoga master, but that along the way of their yoga practice they cultivated the idea of being a yoga master in their mind. Additionally, their regular yoga practice made them naturally inclined to assume the role of a yoga master, who are characterized by having a good health, loving kindness and mercy, assisting and supporting others, and living in a contented way or simple way; for example, eating, living, and dressing modestly and being at peace. They were enthused to share their life experiences with their students. Furthermore, all of them had different reasons for becoming a yoga master; for example, to search for the true happy life, to care for their physical and mental health, to search for a desired goal in life, to balance their health and achieve their highest

desired goal of life. In addition, the yogic way assists one in achieving one's goal as planned. Importantly, becoming a yoga master or yoga teacher is more difficult than becoming another kind of teacher because yoga masters have to be their own critics and correct their own practice, and are stimulated by different motivations. These motivations are presented as follows:

2.1 Motivation to be a yoga master

The primary motivations identified by the informants to practice yoga on a more regular basis were linked to health and well-being. Most of them believed that yoga could bring the expected results. There were several motivations that made them continuously practice yoga and to be a yoga master. The motivations are described as the following:

2.1.1 Faith in yoga philosophy

All yoga masters agreed that faith in yoga philosophy was their motivation to study and practice yoga seriously and furthered their progress toward reaching their goal. The following statements support this idea.

Morality, observance or physical and mental practice is my philosophy and goal of living. I strongly believe that living within this way (yoga) would eliminate suffering from my life. I conceive that morality is a necessity for living and it creates human values, which one needs. I continuously maintain upright morality in my life and perceive that yoga really makes humans gain a high value and perfection. This valuable and essential science makes those practicing it free from the deep sea of suffering. (K2)

I strongly believe that this thing (yoga) makes my life better in every aspect such as health, happy living in this world, and living among colleagues with love and care. (K3)

Regarding faith in yoga philosophy, there was a strong belief in the outcomes of yoga. Yoga has varied meanings in accordance with a person's

approach and development in its practice. Some people may understand yoga as a mode of exercise for physical health and others may understand yoga as a way to help one achieve a certain poise of equanimity and a way to take care of all one's aspects of life. Moreover, Patanjali defines yoga as a discipline to restrain mind fluctuations and modifications aiming at spiritual enlightenment in order to eradicate sorrow (Iyengar, 2008). Since the purpose of yoga practice is spiritual enlightenment, it is the same as human goal. Because of this reason and the fact that humans want to be better than they are, they could find out the way to reach their ultimate goal.

2.1.2 Fitting with the goal of life

The yoga way is congruent with the life goal, that is, a peaceful life, a life without pressure, and a life without agitation. Yoga teaches mankind about living; how to live a valuable and happy life. The following statements support this idea.

My life goal is congruent with the goal of yoga practice. I am confident that I my goal of life has become manifest to me. I have found that it is a virtuous, valuable, and happy life. It is happiness and delight. I practice yoga and I get the results I am looking for; therefore, I keep practicing it. Because I have not yet reached my ultimate goal, I will continually practice it in order to free myself from all suffering. (K2)

My goal of life is to have a happy, healthy, and peaceful life, which is free from conflict within myself and with others; I have encountered these results through yoga practice. (K9)

2.1.3 Experiencing the benefits of yoga practice

All yoga masters identified positive experiences from their yoga practice. Improvements in physical and mental health were attributed directly to their practice. This fact was significant when understanding their sustained efforts to maintain an ongoing regular practice. Moreover, three yoga masters admitted that

yoga assisted them to manage undesirable symptoms such as rhinitis, urticaria and constipation. Other benefits of yoga discovered by the practitioners were a peaceful mind and a healthy body and mind. These experiences motivated them toward yoga practice with the aim of reaching their optimal goal. The following statements support this idea.

There are many reasons why I practice yoga, and one important reason among those is that I want to alleviate my allergic symptoms. When my allergic symptoms occurred, I had red rash, swollen eyes, difficulty breathing, nausea and vomiting. Sometimes, I had to take intravenous supplements; otherwise, I would not be able to work. Presently, those symptoms are gone and I do not need to take any medicines anymore. Additionally, yoga practice made my body fresh and light. It provides me with a physical and mental comfort. I feel relaxed while practicing yoga and my mind is settled. After asanas practice, I have more energy; I am not tired and I can work more. (K1)

When I have physical discomfort, I use asanas and I can see a positive result. Even when I am sick, an hour of asanas practice makes a difference. I feel comfortable, relieved, peaceful and fresh. I experience an obvious change that makes me keep practicing it. (K4)

The initial reason for my yoga practice was to fulfill my work commitment. However, the more I studied yoga, the more positive outcomes as a result of its practice I experienced. The primary health outcomes observed were physical health and later emotional stability. My mental health is better; disputes with close friends are reduced, my volatility has decreased and my driving behavior has become better. (K5)

Interviews with their spouse and other family members confirmed that the reason for continuing yoga practice related to the benefits gained from it such as successful health problem management and improvement of physical health, as one of them said:

I notice my mother continuing yoga practice because she successfully controls her allergic symptoms and she has never complained.... (G1 daughter of K1)

2.1.4 Impressed by the way of life of a respected yoga master

Most key informants (n=7) agreed that they did not have much knowledge of yoga at the beginning. Once they met yoga masters, who were calm; lived a contented and subscribed to a simple lifeway; did not talk much; talked only about useful things; had great loving kindness; and were caring and not selfishness. These are all good virtues that should characterize mankind. Furthermore, these life ways motivate the study as well as the practice of yoga in order to be happy and peaceful like the yoga masters. The following statements support this idea.

I used to do aerobic exercise. I decided to change my form of exercise to yoga because I wanted to be as cool and calm as my respected Yoga masters, Kru Kawee and Archan Payao (yoga teachers). (K1)

At first, I did not know what yoga was. When Kru Hiroshi came to the Faculty of Nursing, I was impressed by his personal characteristics, e.g., his way of living, eating and dressing was very simple. He did not talk much. He had great loving kindness and mercy in helping others by both advising and caring for the – I experienced it firsthand and was told about it by Porn (his good friend). I wished I could improve myself like he had. (K2)

Besides having faith in yoga science, I also had faith in my yoga master who was a man of loving kindness and mercy. He lived harmoniously with himself and others. This was what I was aiming to achieve. I, therefore, decided to practice yoga with him. (K5)

Though there are motivation factors for yoga practice such as faith in yoga philosophy, fitting with one's goal of life, direct experience of the results from its practice, and faith in the way of life of the yoga master, other factors, which are part of this process, would make those practicing yoga able to develop themselves to practice yoga sustainably, and improve their knowledge and their abilities in teaching yoga to those interested in yoga science.

2.2 The process of becoming a yoga master

The following deals with the process of self-development in order to have a true progress and deep understanding of yoga practice. The developmental processes from having little understanding about yoga as a novice until becoming an expert, who is able to practice sustainably and able to disseminate yoga to others, are described. In this regard, the key informants were asked the following questions: how do you prepare yourself and your yoga practice in order to achieve the set goal?; what have you found along your journey of yoga practice?; what techniques do you use to have successful achievement?; and, what are the required factors in order to achieve the goal?

2.2.1 Self-preparation

There are many people interested in yoga; some are successful in their practice but some are not. Others start practicing and quitted; they were probably not able to improve their yoga practice, which might happen from many reasons. For example, physical and mental unpreparedness, not understanding the yoga philosophy, not having patience in practice or expecting quick results from the practice, and so on. In this study, yoga masters who have been successful in their yoga practice and have continuously improved their practice, explained the different ways of self-preparation for success in yoga practice. Each person began differently, but prepared himself/herself in the following aspects.

2.2.1.1 Self-commitment to really strive and persist in yoga practice

All yoga masters agreed that successful and progressive yoga practice was achieved by continued self-discipline in practice with enthusiasm.

Importantly, one should have self-commitment to study yoga and perseverance in yoga practice. The following statements support this idea.

In achieving a successful yoga practice, we should firstly have the self-commitment and intention to search what yoga is, and how to practice it. A person who has much intention to practice would be sustainable and secure. (K3)

With consistency of regular yoga practice and detachment, the intellectual clarity gradually develops and the ultimate goal of life is realized seen. The ego (asmita) gradually declines when a person continually practice it. (K5)

In maintaining yoga practice, we must have patience and perseverance in its practice. We perceive the results of practice after we persevere in it for a while, and this will ignite a further increase in performance. (K7)

People who practice yoga should have self-commitment to strive and persist in practice. What can be done in this regard is the practice of *Asana and Pranyama* meditation and *Kriya*, which are techniques used to purify both the body and the mind. Perseverance is required for the practice of asana and pranyama and to further meditation. Continued practice leads to both physical and mental changes that the practitioner is able to perceive, as said in the Yoga Sutra, *“It is only when the correct practice is followed for a long time, without interruptions and with a quality of positive attitude and eagerness that it can succeed”* (Desikachar, 1999:153). This suggestion has been embraced and proven to be true from generation to generation.

2.2.1.2 Ahamkara reduction (decrease of egoism)

In this context, a person should decrease his/her arrogance level and keep an open mind to get ready for the study of yoga. Most yoga masters (n=7) agreed that to succeed in the study and practice of yoga, a person

should open his/her mind and reduce his/her ahamkara (egoism) to make oneself gentle and get ready to study. The following statements support this idea.

In learning yoga, we must have a gentle mind, not be arrogant, must not think we know a lot, and must not think others do not know. The more we study yoga the more we discover we do not know. That is how knowledge is found. Our knowledge would be increased to the point that we would see the value of others and have more respect for them. The teachers will always be with us. (K2)

A student would not be able to learn if he/she had egoism because he/she would think he/she already knows. This is compared to a glass full of water that cannot be filled any more. Being open-minded and gentle to teachers would make them have loving kindness toward you and teach you what they know. Learning yoga involves the study of life; it helps people exchange life experiences. Practice, then, becomes a journey, proving what teachers have practiced and, then, teach what we know to those who want to learn. When they follow the teacher, they know what it is, what the results are and how to practice it further. Gentle persons would be taught how to put into their practice various techniques used in the practice of the teachers. The exchange of life experiences would always make one learn new things.

2.2.2 Strategies for self-improvement

In improving oneself to advance in the yoga way, all yoga masters were in agreement about 6 strategies of self-development, from the novice level to becoming an expert like a yoga master: searching a yoga course to study and understanding the yoga science, practicing yoga patiently and strictly, bringing the yoga practice to the point that it complements one's regular work, creating a group of

practitioners, learning and sharing knowledge and life experiences simultaneously, and motivating one's life. The details are as the following:

2.2.2.1 Searching a yoga course to study and understanding the yoga science

Studying and understanding the yoga science can be done through teachers, yoga text books, practice and learning from self-practice. All yoga masters admitted that without the yoga teachers, it was hard to understand the yoga science. However, there is a limited number of the yoga gurus; searching courses for study and reading yoga books written by them is valuable. Likewise, the disciple should have the insight to find a good yoga textbook for studying as well as practicing yoga as described in it. The yoga practitioner could share and discuss life experiences, both the positive results and the obstacles, with the yoga teachers in the yoga teaching course. These courses assisted them to learn the yoga science through true life experiences as reported by the informants.

I have made progress in my yoga practice by continually practicing it and inquiring of the yoga teacher. I have gained knowledge from what I have done; each pose generates learning. (K3)

I wanted to be an advanced yoga practitioner; firstly, I searched for a yoga teacher to study yoga seriously, but it was hard to find one. However, in the course of my yoga learning, I was able to meet yoga teachers to share and discuss about life experiences related to yoga practice, and how to overcome some limitations of my practice. (K4)

2.2.2.2 Practicing yoga patiently and strictly

Yoga is a practical science that requires discipline in regular practice. Eight advanced yoga masters gave less importance to physical practice; however, they still retained a physical balance in yoga asanas practice. They

put more emphasis on mental development, while four less advanced yoga masters focused on asanas practice. The following statements support this finding.

At present, I practice less asana, but strongly emphasize Pranyama and meditation practice, which I perform every morning and evening. I try to find time to take a meditation course to improve my skill at least once a year. Both things (yoga and Buddhist meditation) support each other. (K10)

I get up early to do asanas and exercise my shoulders, neck, ankles and all the joints. This is followed by asanas and deep relaxation practice every morning before I do other things; it makes my body flexible. Other people can see that I am firm and fit. I have practiced asanas for a long time. (K1)

I regularly practice asanas and read textbooks about how to use myself as a tool for life testing and monitoring. I always consult yoga teachers when I meet them. I practice asanas and control my breathing every morning. I try to learn every pose in order to prepare my physical body. (K11)

2.2.2.3 Making yoga practice a complement to one's regular work

Three yoga masters commented that they using their yoga practice as a complement to their regular work afforded them more chances to study yoga deeply and practice it regularly because they could practice yoga at the same time they did their usual work. Yoga masters said:

Our responsibility is to help persons with health problems to make behavioral changes that are conducive to good health. Yoga is a method one selects to promote one's health. I bring it to my work and this gives me more opportunities to practice. One also has more chance to study yoga deeply from one's yoga teacher. (K1)

Nowadays, I use yoga and natural cures as complements to my usual work; I apply it to a group of aging people and healthcare volunteers. I have had the chance to take a yoga teacher course and apply its knowledge to my work. (K4)

2.2.2.4 Creating a group of practitioners

The group of yoga practitioners helps yoga masters to learn, search for and read more in order to exchange this knowledge others. This seems to be an exercise for them to improve themselves throughout their teaching and also provide them with the discipline of practice. Having such a group forces them to practice, share and learn with the group members and shows their gratitude toward yoga by being able to disseminate what they know.

Every time I go to practice yoga with the class, I assist the teacher teaching to groups. One day, the teacher was absent, so I helped with the group asanas practice. Practicing with the group helped my practice grow fast because I have to push myself and practice more in order to share with others; additionally, the group serves like an exercise for me to investigate. (K3)

Having a group enables me to teach as well as practice consistently. (K9)

2.2.2.5 Learning and sharing knowledge and life experiences simultaneously

All yoga masters admitted that sharing is a way to sustain yoga development and comprises sharing one's life experience and knowledge. Experience exchange generates learning and adjusts one's behavior in a positive way because, what one exchanges, is something they have practiced and gotten good results from. Furthermore, sharing also assists and supports family members, patients, students, friends and those who want to study and improve their knowledge for self care and to adjust to having a positive behavior. Sharing may be a form of teaching, co-practice and co-exchange, which help one practice and improve oneself consistently. Having a group or teaching in a class would help others and

cause one's practice to progress at the same time. The following statements support this issue.

I am presently happy to help people with health problems, both physical and mental. Telling this thing (yoga) to others and sharing this experience with others is a way to fulfill my goal of life. I also gain skills from teaching, so I can force myself to practice yoga at least once a week. (K2)

I also gain while I am giving yoga lesson to others. My health, both physical and mental, also improves. My students benefit from my teaching and so do I. It is really worth the while. (K3)

2.2.2.6 Monitoring one's life

All yoga masters agreed that monitoring ones' life is accomplished through thought and action in order to brining balance to one's life. One can adjust to a positive way if one's life is not balanced. Concentration in monitoring life makes one more aware of oneself and intelligent in conducting one's life. Monitoring one's life is therefore a study and practice using oneself as an experiment. Knowing is, then, a profound understanding generated from what was found and proved. As one key informant put it:

My yoga practice is a way of monitoring and learning my own life and developing self-awareness. Because yoga deals with life, the eight parts of the Yoga Sutra enhance each level of life including body, mind and emotion, and intellect. Yoga practice helps make my life happy. (K2)

2.2.3 Successful factors

Regarding being successful in the yoga journey, all yoga masters agreed that the supporting factors that enhance a person to be a yoga master were having good friends and yoga teachers.

2.2.3.1 Good or true friends

A true friend is an important factor for successful practice. It speeds up the journey of yoga. All yoga masters highly agreed that friends, who are on the same path as you, may share or inform you about good things they have experienced and/or learned. For example, they may inform you about what they have found out in their meditation practice or share good yoga books; therefore, we can practice and exchange the knowledge we have learned. Moreover, the group members can become your true friends who help the person, who practices yoga, to improve himself/herself into being a yoga expert. Furthermore, teachers can also be good friends with whom we can share experiences as well as help and support one another. The following statements support this view.

At the present, the yoga practice of people around me is progressing fast. I feel that I must speed up to catch up with them. Friends are greatly influential. We are walking in the same direction. We always share experiences and practice Dharma together. In their company, I am always provided with what I do not have. They are willing to help when I need it. My teacher's encouragement, as that of one of my true friends, is a major contributor to me continuing yoga practice until today. (K5)

My Kru (yoga teacher) was also a good friend, who helped, taught and informed me in the beginning of my study, and he helped me study yoga in India....(K2)

Every time I practice yoga with the class, I assist the teacher in teaching the group. When the teacher is absent, I replace her. Practicing with a group made my practice progress fast because I had to push myself and practice more in order to share my knowledge with others. A group of teaching is also an exercise for me. (K3)

Having a group of yoga practitioners enables to teach as well as practice simultaneously. (K9)

This was also supported by the researcher's observation and participation in the yoga practice with a group of yoga students.

They actively shared their experience of benefits from yoga practice, new information related to yoga practice and how it improved their health. Both the group of yoga practitioners and true friends helped yoga masters to learn, search for information, and read more in order to exchange their knowledge with each other. They perceived it as an exercise to improve themselves through teaching and also helped maintain their discipline of practice. Having a group to practice made it possible for them to practice, share and learn with the group members, and shows their gratitude toward yoga by being able to transfer what they know to others.

2.2.3.2 Support from a guru or yoga teacher

All of the yoga masters agreed that yoga teachers were their models and inspiration to continue in their yoga practice. Yoga teachers not only gave good advice to their students but provided many yoga books that they needed without any expectation of repayment from the students. The following statements support this claim.

Gurus are true friends. They give us good things and advise us so that we make quick progress. They give us inspiration and a good example of practice to follow. (K2)

I have been practicing for a while, but have not gone farther than the practice of yoga asanas. I think I need to find a good guru whom I can learn from. When I have problems, I do not know who to ask for help; I do not have a guru. I would learn a lot from studying one on one with a guru. (K4)

Because the guru is a good model of loving kindness and mercy, he/she helps and supports me with everything, both yoga textbooks and suggestions. He/she provides me with what I do not have and requests no money in return. This has made me practice until today. (K5)

My yoga teacher's model of a person who has calm and loving kindness as well as happiness in his/her contented way of life

has inspired me to practice yoga and further my practice of vipassana meditation. (G16: yoga student of K5)

In learning yoga, a guru is very important because he/she is a person who informs one on correct practice. Moreover, a guru would give students advice and share experiences with them when they have problems or meet obstacles in their practice. The relationship between gurus and students involves trust. Gurus do not only give advice on practice, but search for appropriate ways for each student as well. In addition, the teaching of a guru also stimulates students to achieve and persevere because the guru would transfer his/her experiences to his/her students. Furthermore, the Hathapradipika of Svatmarama (Feuerstein, 2001) affirmed that without the grace of a true teacher, realization of the truth and the natural state was difficult to attain.

In summary, the processes of self-development to understand yoga and apply it to achieving balance in one's life and following it as a way of life involves the dissemination of knowledge to students, and requires self-development through self-preparation and the employment of success factors and strategies to help the yoga practitioner move towards being a yoga master. Two important self-preparations to succeed in the yoga way of life were self-commitment to really strive and persist in yoga practice and ahamkara reduction. The strategies involved searching for a yoga course to study and understand the yoga science, practicing yoga patiently and strictly, complementing one's regular work with one's yoga practice, creating a group of practitioners, learning and sharing knowledge and life experiences simultaneously, and motivating one's life. Moreover, two supporting factors helped them succeed in their yoga journey until they became the expert called the "Yoga master". These factors were the presence of true friends and a yoga teacher.

3. *The integration of yoga practice into daily life*

The findings highlight the integration of yoga practice in the daily life of yoga masters in 4 themes: (1) responding to healthcare needs, (2) maintaining the existence of humanity, (3) maintaining life balance, and (4) integrating yoga and complementary therapies to dealing with health problems. Six yoga masters explained that their goal of the yoga practice was having happy and healthy lives, while the others wanted to obtain intellectual development in order to reach enlightenment. The details of each theme are presented with illustrative quotes to support them.

3.1 Responding to healthcare needs

All of the informants acknowledged that the importance of the integration of yoga practice was as a response to healthcare needs. This entailed the maintenance of health and self-care activities, and the relief of Dhuka. Each topic is described as follows.

3.1.1 Maintenance of health and self-care activities

A significant motivation for yoga practice was health. All of the yoga masters agreed that their yoga practice followed the Yoga Sutra; it mostly started with asana, pranyama, and meditation. These practices improved physical health such as physical flexibility and strength. A continuous practice affected other aspects of health also such as the mind, intellect, and social skills, as expressed by the following statements:

Because of my health problem (allergy), I wanted to apply complementary therapy to alleviate my allergic rhinitis that disturbed my activities of daily living. After three months of yoga practice, all urticaria (skin rash) disappeared without the use of modern medicine. (K7)

Yoga is used to maintain a good life and I practice all aspects of the Yoga Sutra for my health. (K9)

In addition, most key informants agreed that yoga practice is not the only way used to maintain good health. Other behaviors of healthcare such as the application of natural cures, eating food with a balance of hot and cold qualities, eating healthy food as well as sufficient rest and sleep were also used. The following statements support this:

I primarily wanted to care for my physical and mental health. I try to maintain a good health because I do not want to be a burden to others. Therefore, I also use other types of health modalities that fit well with me such as adjusting to the consumption of balanced food. For example, fast food and fried food are hot foods that cause health problems, but they can be countered using cold food; asana is also used as an exercise in the course of this balance adjustment. (K6)

With my health problems, I just try to find a way to be self-reliant and yoga responds to my need. I must eat and sleep every day in order to be healthy. I go to bed early and wake up before the sun rises, consume natural foods, warm up my body and exercise my joints every morning in order to have a healthy body. (K7)

3.1.2 Relief of Dhuka

All yoga masters agreed that Dhuka, which is less or more in quantity depending on the individual, was the stimulant of the integration of yoga practice. Dhuka in one's body or mind causes one to practice yoga. The following statements support this:

Because I want to be well and happy, do not want to have Dhuka, want to have a simple life without anxiety, and have a comfortable body and clear mind, I regularly practice asana, pranyama, and ethical conduct. I have already reached this goal. I do not have Dhuka; every problem can be solved. I have the wisdom to cope with the problems I face, that is, make everything fit, live sufficiently and do not struggle in life (do not desire). (K1)

The yoga way is exactly what I need because I have got positive results from its practice. Not reaching my ultimate goal is also a motivation for me to keep on practicing in order to be free from all states of Dhuka and unfitness. (K2)

I started this (yoga) when I had tension and mental Dhuka, and also allergies and hyperthyroidism. I was very tense and wanted to be free from Dhuka, so I joined a course on Buddhist meditation practice. In that course we also practiced yoga asanas and breath control every morning. I practiced very hard (asanas) for a year. It was like being full of magic and the allergy was gone. I felt happy. (K11)

I first came to a yoga class because I was imbalanced in my mind and my friend suggested that I practice yoga. I have performed yoga asanas since then...(G22: yoga student of K4)

All human beings are born with Dhuka. Dhuka can appear in many different forms; we have never known how they happen until they happen. Then we can see Dhuka in our own thought and feeling. Yoga believes that all forms of Dhuka occur from an action of *avidya* or ignorance such as selfishness, desire, hatred, and fear (Desikachar, 1999). For example, fear of death or not having what one desires causes Dhuka. Most informants expressed that the practice of asanas, pranayama, meditation, and following ethical and moral uprightness helped them eliminate Dhuka.

3.2 Maintaining the existence of humanity

All yoga masters were concerned with eating, sleeping and living with others in the society. One's existence must be compatible with one's body, mind, intellect, and society. We must not harm others, but need to share with them, with a determination to maintain balance and be united with everything. The more we share, the more we learn from others. Therefore, the responsibility of every human exists with the consciousness of eating, sleeping, and living in the society.

3.2.1 Healthy food habits

Life would not exist without food. However, consuming too much or unhealthy food may result in bad health. Healthy food is recommended for all the living. The findings revealed that yoga masters' daily diets consisted of mainly vegetables, fruits and proteins from plants. Four yoga masters planted vegetables for their family consumption, while the remaining seven informants did not, but preferred to buy chemical-free vegetables and seasonal fruits from reliable sources. The popular protein sources from plants were beans, tofu, and mushrooms. Four yoga masters admitted that they reduced eating meat due to their self-awareness related to their humanistic values; they tried to avoid killing animals. However, seafood was preferred if there was no other choice. Moreover, four yoga masters admitted that the reduction of meat eating was due to not wanting to harm animals (according to the yoga principle of harmlessness). All of the yoga masters were also concerned with chewing food thoroughly and having food in moderation. All foods should be eaten in a calm and quiet mood and should not be taken before or immediately after yoga asana. Importantly, they used their own experiences to learn how much food should be eaten, and what kinds of food should be consumed for their health. A yoga master said:

I formerly ate quickly and a lot. However, after I studied yoga, I became concerned about chewing longer and about the fact that we should eat less and still be full. I do not force myself to eat; I just throw away the remaining portion. Eating vegetables makes my body feel light. I plant my own vegetables and buy toxin-free vegetables. I always ensure that I have five essential groups of nutrient. I eat unpolished brown rice and fish. I used to eat meat and chicken like my children, but now they are all grown up, so I have turned to eating healthy food instead. (K1)

Although I am not a vegetarian, I eat less meat so that fewer animals are killed. I notice that reducing meat but increasing vegetable consumption makes me feel physically comfortable and energetic, and my bowels work well. (K6)

I get protein from beans and tofu. It is the rainy season now, so we can harvest mushrooms from the bush, which are a good source of protein. Aging people like me need vegetables, fruit, minerals and chlorophyll; protein is less needed. I grow vegetables by myself and buy what I do not grow from a reliable seller. (K7)

3.2.2 Adequate sleep

Sleep is an unconscious state where one is not aware of their surroundings. All of the participants had adequate sleeping hours, which averaged 7-8 hours. A couple of yoga masters said:

Health requires enough sleep; I do not go to bed late at night. Usually, I go to bed between 9 and 10 pm and automatically wake up at 4 am. I sometimes wake up early than 4 am; however, I do not get up, but stay in bed. If we do not have enough sleep, our body needs more rest than usual because the chemicals related to sleep are still being produced in the body. (K2)

I go to sleep early, at 8 pm, and wake up at 4 am; I occasionally go to bed earlier, at 6 pm.... some people feel jealous of me that I can sleep so much. When I wake up, I feel energetic, and then I get up and practice meditation. (K7)

Adequate sleep is essential for the maintenance of both a healthy body and a healthy mind. Lack of sleep can impact heavily by leaving the individual feeling tired, restless, irritable, dizzy, and having blurred vision. According to the yogic way, a person should go to bed early at night and wake up early before the sun rises (Sivanada, 2000). Deep sleep also promotes the body to restore its energy supply and damaged tissues. The preferential activities of most yoga masters after getting up were asana, followed by meditation. Others did asana and pranyama.

3.2.3 Harmonious living in society

All yoga masters actively participated in social activities and devoted themselves to the welfare of the community such as voluntarily teaching yoga at their workplace to interested people or a group of meditative persons, helping community members organizing merit-making Buddhist ceremonies, and so on. They usually were friendly, paid attention to others, had loving-kindness and mercy, and accepted one's role and responsibility. Seven yoga masters highly agreed that the practice of loving-kindness, living sufficiently, and being beneficial through both words and personality to others made them live in society happily, and this included generating true friends. Some of the yoga masters said:

I apply moral principles, Yama and Niyama, in my life conduct. I live sufficiently, am happy without extravagance and without attachment. I turned down the opportunity of being the chief of my department in favor of an old colleague. This might have disappointed others and caused them suffering. I do not hurt other people's body or mind, either in front of them or behind their backs, because it is a sin. I think we do not have to win everything in our life; we may sometimes lose. Everything has a solution. (K1)

I do not take advantage of others. There is no conflict with others and myself. Having loving-kindness makes me calm and wise to understand my surrounding environment. If I do not use my ego to clash with others, I will be able to make true friends. Now, I am getting to prove what my teachers taught me and I am becoming more aware. (K2)

I get up early and extend loving-kindness to myself and other creatures in my life such as farmers, animals, and so on, as a reminder to live peacefully, not hurt others and live with love and loving-kindness. I practice giving to others. I live the principles of sufficiency economy. I ride my bicycle everywhere; however, my car is used to bring the elderly to the temple, and I pay for their medical bills. Doing things with loving-kindness can solve problems better than just doing them with responsibility. I presently extend loving-kindness and, what I receive in return, is a peaceful mind. Once my mind is calm, I would not hurt others either by word, attitude or action. (K7)

No one in this world can live by himself/herself alone. Society is, therefore, necessary. It starts from living in a family to coexisting in a larger society. Being a member of the society, each person should have his/her own responsibility and act in accordance with the rules of that society in order to live happily. Therefore, one should be friendly with self, others, and the environment in order to live harmoniously.

Moreover, most key informants (n=7) agreed that to share life experiences helped them to practice yoga and live harmoniously in the society. The following statements support this:

Right now, I feel that, every Monday and Wednesday, I have a responsibility to fulfill, and I am pleased to share my knowledge with others because, as a consequence, my health also improves..... 'Pee Tim,' who used to suffer from panic attacks, does not take any medicine now. I can see that she always has new experiences she has gained from her yoga practice that she frequently shares with us. (K1)

Life-experience sharing caused the yoga masters to practice yoga sustainably because the life-experience exchange generated learning. They occurred from self-realization and their actual practice with good results, which made them want to share these good experiences with others. By sharing or giving good things to other persons, they lived harmoniously with others. This starts from sharing with close persons in the family and then expands to others in the society such as colleagues, students, patients and people who need physical and mental healthcare. They highly agreed that they would also receive good things and learn new things by sharing good experiences with others. Furthermore, seven yoga masters agreed that yoga practice continuously creates experiences, and knowledge learning and exchange, including assistance and support for family members, students, colleagues and patients in order to

make behavioral adjustments and have wisdom to conduct their lives with balance and happiness. Walking in the yoga journey not only affects ourselves, but family members and people around us as well. The following statements support this view:

Everyone in my family practices yoga. My husband also has changed behavior to care for health. People around me are all happy. Many patients get well and students are healthy. (K2)

Bring advice frequently makes me feel that I get to link with yoga without realizing it. Teaching others makes my yoga sustainable and also makes my mind cheerful. We all win. (K6)

3.3 Maintaining a life balance and intellectual development

According to yoga philosophy, human life consists of 5 sheaths. The body as the visible and touchable sheath is the outermost sheath covering the four remaining sheaths, namely the prana, mind, wisdom/intellect, and bliss sheaths. Practically, it is for a balance and harmony among all sheaths. However, distraction in any sheath may cause Dhuka or suffering. It may not be possible to separate which action affects a certain sheath, but, rather the five sheaths of life as a whole are continuously affected, and the Yoga Sutra is a guideline to practice in order to achieve a balanced life. Moreover, other yogic techniques (kriya, bandhas and mitahara), Vipasana meditation, and naturopathic cures are used to bring one life balance and intellectual development.

3.3.1 Using the eight components of the Yoga Sutra

The Yoga Sutra was set up as a mind map to practicing yoga to achieve a balanced life and reach one's life goal. Most yoga masters admitted that it was difficult to distinguish what component should come first. They pointed out that the novice practitioner may start with any component depending on his/her teacher's

knowledgeable guidance of yoga practice. In fact, one can start with any component with the goal of unifying one's body and mind. The following statements support this:

Initially, I practiced meditation, but my mind was not strong enough, so it always swung. This is an abnormal state, which I do not need. Practicing asanas makes my mind strong. It needs frequency and discipline of practice. (K2)

I know the Yoga Sutra from my practice, which starts with asana. Each pose together with inhalation and exhalation help me learn.... (K3)

3.3.1.1 Yama and Niyama practice for basic mind purification

All yoga masters valued that yama and niyama were foundational concepts for attitudinal modification and initial mind purification. They are very important disciplines dealing with morality concerning ourselves and our surrounding environment, including one's social attitude and way of life. All of the informants expressed that they should live without harming others and being generous toward them by having loving-kindness and mercy toward themselves, others as well as the environment. Other people would be satisfied and friendly with one when one thinks more of others and does not consider oneself as the center. In addition, one lives happily when one really accomplishes what one has intended; it should be about things that are useful to others and which do not harm them. These actions should be performed with love and loving-kindness. This includes not taking advantage of others. These behaviors gradually appear in the conscious mind of yoga masters who use yoga as their way of life. Regular practice creates reliability, love and faith toward each other and powerful step toward happiness, as some yoga masters said:

Yoga teaches me to understand both self and others. It teaches me to be patient, persevere, know what is appropriate to do in order to not hurt myself, and have loving-kindness toward myself as well as others. (K1)

According to the yoga way of life, we should not harm ourselves and others. We should be disciplined and patient to practice asana and pranyama. We should give up and not cling to bad things. We should have loving-kindness. Being annoyed hurts our mental health. We should not blame others, but be harmless, honest and not deceive both ourselves and others. I strictly practice these. (K2)

I would include Yama and Niyama principles in my yoga class. If we have any pain while performing asanas, it means that we are harming ourselves. Since I entered the yoga way, my actions have been done thoughtfully, good desire and extending loving-kindness to others. People who are easily angered eventually calm down; no one can be furious for too long. We just have to be patient. Everything depends on us. (K4)

3.3.1.2 Asana practice for physical and mental balance

Asana involves the assumption of different postures linking one's breathing and movements, and its final stage of posture are sthira and sukha. All of the yoga masters maintained that asana was classified into two types: on-the-mat Asana and off-the-mat Asana. The details of their practice are explained as follows.

1). On-the-mat Asana

This is practiced with a mat; it provides physical strength and flexibility, including adjustment of one's body's balance, and a concentrated mind. All of the key informants said that they practiced on-the-mat Asana at a certain time, either in the morning or evening; morning practice was preferred the most. The reason of choosing to practice in the morning was that it provides better mental peace and emotional stability than practicing at other times. Regarding evening practice, it was usually practiced with a group or for teaching other people. There are fourteen basic poses taught by yoga master, namely Makarasana, Bhujangasana, Salabhasana, Savasana, Ardha Halasana, Sukhasana,

Shanusrisana, Pascimaanusana, Vajrasana, Yoga mudra, Vakrasana, Virksasana, Chakrasana and Sarvangasana. All of the fourteen poses of asana are frequently practiced. Other poses of asana practice would be sometimes included when teaching other people. Each asana practice provides new knowledge obtained from one's progress of practice. The body and mind combination is required in practicing asanas. It would be just posing and not doing asana whenever the body and mind are not combined. Once the body is combined with the mind, each asana practice generates mind concentration. The mind is calm or more concentrated when concentration occurs continuously. In addition, asana on the mat also creates obvious changes of the body such as the flexibility of muscles, tendons, joints, bending, stretching, and muscular strength. The following statements attest to this.

I prefer to practice asanas in the morning, if I have time and if I feel uncomfortable in my physical body. The results of my asana practice are clearly seen; I feel comfortable, clear-minded, relieved, peaceful, fresh and energetic. The changes are very obvious.... I have also practiced with a group in the evening. I practice more when I have yoga class. (K4)

I practice asanas every morning after I wake up. I never stop practicing because the results of its practice are evident in the development of my mind. Reading my own mind should be done every day; it is similar to reading a book until I understand it. I learn and understand myself more when I practice asanas frequently every morning. I practice it in the morning because I am not disturbed by any upset emotions. It helps my mind concentrate more easily. (K5)

I practice asanas every day depending on the amount of time I have. Some days, I perform 3 poses; however, I dedicate about 80%-90% of the practice to joint exercise and deep relaxation. (K7)

2). Off-the-mat Asana (asana in daily activities)

Yoga practice in daily life can always be performed anywhere and anytime by uniting one's body and mind. For asana off the mat, an

expert yoga master who practices it frequently in her daily life explained various characteristics of its practice. The purposes of its practice were for physical and mental balance as well as the consciousness of life maintenance. Life maintenance with consciousness generates wisdom as quoted by yoga master “Sri”.

Wherever there is consciousness, there is wisdom. (K7)

Moreover, most key informants (10) admitted that they constantly practice asana off the mat. Its practice is described in detail as follows.

1) Being in the pose: this form of asana practice is a realization of being in balanced poses such as while sitting, standing or lying down. The realization must always be at a balanced pose and be happy while balanced pose. With this kind of practice, the mind connects with bodily movement in the balance pose. Once there is a realization of pose, a person would know which part of his/her body is tense or tired, and then the balance would be adjusted. This is the perception of a mind that is sensitive to the occurred feeling. In other words, the mind is more delicate. Practicing this form regularly would make the mind concentrate with the body, which gradually and automatically increases awareness. Again, once the mind concentrates on an action, the changing breathing would be perceived; this is a combination of body, mind and breath. Such process would generate the rhythm of natural breathing that is, breathing conveniently and comfortably. Mind concentration on action creates a realization automatically. The following statements support this idea.

Even though I cannot assume the best asana pose compared to others, I always practice it in my daily life. When I am in a pose such as sitting, standing or lying, I always maintain the balance. However, how balanced each pose is, depends on the realization of that person. For example, while I am sitting in the pose, I should realize the sitting

pose by concentrating my mind and I always adjust to reach a balance. (K2)

For healthcare, I practice yoga asanas every day to maintain a healthy life. Our body should be balanced in order to be happy and secure, no matter what pose we are in: standing, sitting or lying down. We should practice, learn, watch and follow balance. (K4)

Furthermore, from the researcher's observations, most yoga masters sat straight on the floor, with very little change of pose. They constantly maintained balance in the sitting pose, even though they had been sitting for as long as 3 hours.

2). *Convergence*: During this practice, the mind concentrates both on the action and the breath, i.e., perceiving how one's inhalation and exhalation are. This is the perception of a mind that is sensitive to the occurred feeling. All of the yoga masters were committed to practicing it constantly. The following statements offer support.

Yoga is with me all the time, from waking up till bed time. I always concentrate on the pose whether walking, sitting or standing. The inner awareness increases when I practice more frequently. It is difficult for those who do not understand the way to improve themselves systematically. Right now, I focus on practicing it in my daily life. I am always aware of each pose, whether doing nothing, working, walking or standing. I observe my whole body, mind and breathing. I am very sensitive to my mind and body. I perceive physical changes quickly when a problem occurs. I am able to clear my blurred mind before the occurrence of physical problems. Hence, I can adjust in order to maintain the right balance for good health. (K4)

3) *Yoga practice at work*: Four informants asserted that, in the present society, where they still make a living and confront the confusion of the society and unavoidable stress, they need to balance their lives by relying on yoga practice at work. This can be achieved with every component of yoga, depending on what component is outstanding at the moment; for example, using Yama while working or

practicing asana while teaching by using one's feeling as a stimulant of practice or perception and pranyama or breathing control when having stress. Concentrating the mind on breathing would make one's emotion more peaceful; that can be done any time. Being consciousness creates a quick perception, adjustment and, eventually, balances. The following statements support this point.

Many things affect my daily work. I would be in a bad mood all day if I do not understand what is causing it. My breath changes if I am moody. I slow down my breathing by concentrating my mind on breathing for a while; then I feel better. After that, I go over what happened and its cause. After thinking over, I discover the cause and adjust my behavior toward others to be a positive one. (K1)

Yoga can always be practiced, even when we are working. Practice depends on what component is outstanding. When I feel tiredness in my shoulders or any part of my body while working or teaching, I ask if anyone has painful or tight shoulders. Someone is slow in perceiving, despite having aches and pains. I, then, stretch my shoulders. I use my feelings to teach others, too, and this benefit both myself and others. (K4)

I work ten hours a day and I spend 3 minutes of each hour sitting still, concentrating on my breathing and going over the past hour. This practices the mind to concentrate on oneself. I may close my eyes lightly and practice 1 or 2 poses of my favorite asana on my chair while working. This practice is correct according to physiology. It helps me avoid being tired and increase my realization as well. (K6)

The practice of this form of yoga regularly would make the mind concentrate on the body, which gradually and automatically increases awareness. Mind concentration on action creates a realization automatically. It is like always having yoga with oneself from waking up in the morning until sleeping at night; for example, having the realization of eating, sleeping and working. A quick mind perception with the whole body generates self-realization. The changes within the body would be quickly adjusted when they happen. Health problems such as backache

and shoulder pain occur due to an inappropriate or delayed adjustment when perception is too slow.

3.3.1.3 Pranyama practice for mind concentration and emotional balance

Pranyama practice involves breathing control comprising inhalation, holding one's breath, and long exhalation. The mind concentrates on inhalation and exhalation during pranyama practice. All of the yoga masters said that pranayama practice should be done regularly after asana practice. Most of their pranayama practices involved Ujjayi, Anuloma viloma, and Bhastrika. All of these pranyama practices help concentrate the mind on breathing and increase Prana (vital energy) in the body, resulting in a peace of mind and support for meditation practice. The following statements attest to this.

I always practice pranyama after asana every morning. The more I practice, the more peaceful my mind is. Its practice helps slow down my breathing. Pranyama practice mainly leads to concentration, a peaceful mind and emotional steadiness. (K5)

Pranayama is practiced after asana; it concerns breathing control. When I concentrate my mind on my breathing, my mind becomes calm. (K6)

Furthermore, four yoga masters agreed that there were also other ways to increase Prana power in the body such as living in a natural and clean environment, eating natural and seasonal fresh food, and being in the presence of true friends. Meanwhile, Prana power is destroyed by our own emotions such as anger, hatred and revenge. It affects one's health and perception if these emotions are present for a long time. A regular practice of pranyama relaxes the body and mind, resulting in a bright or correct perception. One key informant said:

Besides food, Prana is also obtained from sunshine, plants and quiet places without pollution, which are part of the natural environment. The power (Pran) is also obtained from true friends. We should be wise to look for obtaining life power from teachers and true friends. (K2)

The mind concentrates on inhalation and exhalation while practicing pranyama. Even though Prana is an essential and important thing in life, it can increase or decrease depending on the physical and mental state of each person. If the body and mind are not balanced, the quantity of unpurified things or, in other words, the obstruction of Prana circulation spreads in our body, resulting in a decreased area of Prana and the quantity of the inner Prana of the body would be less than that of the outer one. Moreover, a person may feel agitated, confused and uncomfortable when the quantity of Prana in the body reduces. On the other hand, that person would be peaceful and balanced whenever there is a sufficient quantity of Prana in his/her body. We can control the circulation of Prana through our breathing and the quality of breathing also affects the mind. Pranyama practice involves the elimination of waste or the cleansing of the nose or the channel of Prana through breath. We cannot control the movement of Prana, but we can create a condition for Prana to enter the body and penetrate through its parts. Pranyama practice or the prolongation of exhalation is for the reduction of the quantity of waste or obstruction. A person is peaceful and balanced when the quantity of Prana is sufficient. A sufficient quantity of Prana can be noticed from the nature of inhalation that is slow and consistent. All of the yoga masters said that pranyama should be regularly practiced after asana. The pranyama practices they preferred were Ujjayi, Anuloma viloma, and Bhastrika. Ujjayi, throat breathing, is a breathing technique using the throat; the larynx is slightly contracted, so the narrowing of the channel of air intake

results in sound being produced in the neck. This practice generates a cleanness of the neck and a continuous concentration of the mind on breathing. Anuloma viloma is a breathing technique where nostrils are alternated by stretching the exhalation and holding a long breath. This concentration on breathing generates a cleanness of the airway, a peaceful mind and a slower and regular heart beat. Another type of regular pranyama practice is Bhastrika, which involves fast breathing; the stomach moves like an air pump, which results in a cleanness of the airway through fast and hard breathing. All of these pranyama practices help the mind to concentrate on breathing and increase Prana in the body, resulting in a peaceful mind and support for meditation practice. Concentrating the mind on breathing continuously and with enthusiasm is called *Pran dharana*.

3.3.1.4 Concentration and meditation (Dharana and Dhyana) practice

Concentration is practiced to keep a peaceful mind before entering meditation for intellect development. Three yoga masters valued that the human mind changes fast, so it is difficult to keep up with the changes. The best way to keep the concentration of the mind is by listening to one's own words and thoughts, and finding out which ones are wanted and which are not. Meditation was practiced in the morning and before sleeping time. Two yoga masters said:

When following the mind, we often do not catch up with it because it is very quick. Following the mind is accomplished by paying attention to what we say, and determining what we want and do not want. Listening to our thoughts makes us see what we need, and then make the necessary adjustments... (K2)

I formerly practiced asanas and pranyama longer than now. Presently, I practice them just enough to maintain normality and health. I have gradually increased the practice of meditation. I use the concentration technique (Dharana) to calm down my mind before I go on to meditation. (K6)

Seven advanced yoga masters practiced meditation complementarily with vipassana meditation (Buddhist meditation) for the goal of freedom or liberation. They practiced yoga techniques to prepare their minds and bodies for advanced mental development. By the practice of yoga, the mind does not fluctuate and the body is comfortably sitting for long periods of meditation. The further practice of vipassana meditation will help one reach the goal of enlightenment. They expressed:

I practice meditation to gain wisdom for understanding my body and mind according to reality. I use the four Satipatthana to gain firm and steadfast establishment in order to understanding both my body and mind. The more I practice, the more my mind detaches from clinging to materialism of this world, and self continually diminishes, leading to a gradually clearer spirit. I practice yoga and vipassana together. While yoga points me toward my goal, the answer for my mind is later searched in Buddhism. (K5)

I practice both Buddhist meditation and yoga. There is no conflict between these practices. Vipassana practice (Buddhist meditation) is used to gain control over the mind and its modifications to further one's transformation to be liberated. Yoga techniques help calm down the mind for further vipassana. Thus, yoga techniques are used to assist vipassana meditation practice. (K9)

Previously, she (K6) practiced asana more in the morning. Now, she emphasizes practicing Buddhist meditation and Bhavana, and so do I... (G5 family member of K6)

Five yoga masters emphasized asana and pranyama practice and maintained relaxation in order to have a balance of the body and mind, and also took an interest in other sciences to gain wisdom and awareness such as naturopathic cures and Buddhist meditation or *Vipasana*. The following statements support this.

I practice on-the-mat Asana and pranyama every morning, but I do not practice meditation every day. I just do sitting meditation when I feel like it, but not regularly. Both asana and pranyama practice make my mind steady and help get rid of my stress. (K1)

I also practice Dharma (Buddhist meditation) after each time of asana practice. I practice vipasana 'Goenka,' too. Yoga helps me enter the meditative state sooner. It also helps me be more sensitive to changes within the body. When my body is not balanced, my urine is hot. Therefore, I adjust by going to bed early, drinking lots of water, and I detoxify by not having dinner, especially meat; however, I eat fruit or drink coconut juice. (K4)

3.3.1.5 Reaching comprehensive knowledge

The last two components (not the last components in the Yoga Sutra) were *Pratyahara and Smadhi*. These components could not be practiced directly, but there was something that simply happened if the conditions were right or they spontaneously occurred, Pratyahara occurs automatically in a state of concentration. None of the yoga masters mentioned the integration of pratyahara. A yoga master said:

In my yoga journey, I have not practiced pratyahara at all, but, while I practice meditation, my sensation of external objects gradually decreases to the level of absence. (K11)

Smadhi is the culmination of the soul, happening when the modifications of the mind fade away and one single thought remains. At this state, the mind becomes clear, enabling the person to see and understand things as they are. Although these two components cannot be directly practiced, they occur when the mind is into a suitable state, that is, quiet. Hence, all yoga masters agreed that they focused on the first to the fourth components to help their mind get into the right condition for developing mental clarity and further reaching enlightenment. Six yoga masters mentioned that although they have never practiced pratyahara, their senses did not entice them to develop cravings for things. Four yoga masters indicated a lack of pratyahara practice.

3.3.2 Applying Kriyas for physical and mental purification

Most of the yoga masters had applied not only the main components of the Yoga Sutra, but also other yogic techniques such as Kriya or the cleansing technique for life balance. The following statements shed light on this.

I clean my nose and eyes routinely. Some people use aiding equipment, but I do not. I apply a technique of inhaling water, lowering my face and cleaning the nasal cavity. I clean my eyes and gargle every day. (K7)

Kriyas like Chonla-Neti or Ka-Neti are not done every day, but I keep this tool handy. I do these Kriyas when I have difficulty breathing or stay in a place with bad weather or pollution. I drink lots of water and put my fingers in my throat to vomit when I feel uncomfortable or heavy in my stomach. This makes me feel comfortable. (K6)

The cleaning of my eyes and nose are done every day, but that of the gastrointestinal tract is done once a week or when I feel bodily discomfort. Kapalabhati, which is the cleansing of the airway, is done almost every morning. (K9)

The practice of each person may have different forms, but all have the same goal. Six yoga masters emphasized the airway and gastrointestinal tract cleansing every morning by using plain water for the nose, eyes, and throat. The others also cleaned their bodies through yoga techniques, but they did it when they felt bodily uncomfortable. Nasal cleansing was done when feeling the airway was unclear due to staying in places with bad weather or when having nasal congestion. Vamana Dhauti was done when having the feeling of eating the wrong or unhealthy food or feeling tight in the stomach. They did this through drinking lots of water and vomiting by putting both their index and middle fingers inside their throat. These Kriyas, including Kapalabhati (forceful rapid breathing), were practiced to clean the airway through rapid inhalation and exhalation.

3.3.3 Yoga complemented with vipassana to become free

Seven yoga masters practiced yoga following the Yoga Sutra until their minds were calmed and their bodies were ready to practice long meditation; then they practiced vipassana. One of these yoga masters said:

I practice meditation to gain wisdom for understanding the body and mind according to the actuality. I use the four Satipatthana to be firm and steadfast establishment for understanding both body and mind. The more I practice, the more my mind detaches to and the self continually reduces leading to gradually clear of the soul. The ultimate goal of life is clearer.... I practice yoga and vipassana together. While yoga sends me to the goal, the answer of the mind later is searched from Buddhism. (K5)

Vipassana practice is a practice that uses consciousness to observe the perception of senses and the absence of arising physical and mental objects. The goal of this practice is to loosen attachment until practitioner is free, in other words, suffering-free. However, without a firm, strong and steadfast mind and persistent body, it is difficult to reach the intended goal. At the highest meditative state, where one is without avidya or klesas as a result of the accumulated result of our many unconscious actions, one arrives at a real understanding of the object, i.e., seeing where it comes from, how it has arisen, and what effects it has. This state is free of suffering and everyone seeks after it. Likewise, yoga synergizes the effect of meditation and helps one enter the meditative state sooner. Moreover, four of the yoga masters complemented yoga with vipassana to reach the goal of being free. The following statements illustrate this.

For me, meditation and vipassana, if I did not recognize they are two different words, are the same. My meditation involves the perception of my breathing and senses along my whole body, which arise and disappear. I practice it every morning and evening regularly. Such practice consists in the following of one's feelings in

order to create the wisdom of realization. Once realized, one is not attached to it, and that is being free..... (K4)

I practice both Vipassana meditation and yoga without any contradiction. Vipassana practice aims to achieve control over the mind and its modifications to bring about transformation that leads to liberation, while the aims of yoga practice are to gain spiritual development and help one's mind concentration, which assist the vipassana practice... (K9)

There are two types of meditation, Samatha and vipassana meditation (Sayadaw, 1996). Samatha meditation is practiced to attain a higher concentration of the mind, peaceful and blissful living, and the cessation of suffering, whereas vipassana meditation is practiced to attain not only deep concentration of the mind, but also liberation of all kinds of mental and physical suffering through the realization of our body-mind processes and their true nature. This form of meditation leads to the complete liberation of the mind, *Nirvana*, based on awareness and mindfulness (Malik, 2010). For instance, if one is able to realize the mental and physical phenomena as they truly are (without modification from one's mind), one can do away with all kinds of arising mental impurities, which depend on one's ignorance of mental and physical phenomena and their true nature.

Besides vipassana, one yoga master also practiced Bhavana meditation according to Buddhist principle, which is not part of yoga. She applied it in her daily life together with her yoga practice. The following statements shed more light on this finding.

Asana yoga practice helps me understand the body and the perception of physical movements. Moreover, perceiving them over and over leads to concentration of the mind, and wisdom automatically come. Bhavana meditation responds to the mental need more than yoga, which responds more of physical need. Asana and pranyama practice make the mind peaceful. A peaceful mind enables one to move on to the practice of Bhavana meditation in order to gain

perception according to reality. A peaceful mind has the ability to think clearly. Bhavana meditation creates more wisdom on how to respond to my need. (K6)

Bhavana meditation practice advances mind improvement, which helps diminish suffering until the mind is entirely free from it. Bhavana meditation practice generates true wisdom to accurately comprehend the condition of all things as they really are. These things affect a human's life such as is in solving daily-life problems and loosening avidya or klesa to obtain liberation. Such actions are believed to be due to the accumulation of good deeds in oneself, which lessens the effect of previous bad deeds or makes it impossible for them to catch up with one. Therefore, one will be free from the power of deeds and will live in a good reality or heaven.

3.3.4 Yoga complemented with natural cures

Natural cures refer to the way of life aiming to achieve good health according to the natural way, i.e., by using modern medicine less. It relies on eating healthy food and avoiding food that destroys health. Most yoga masters believed that eating healthy and toxin-free food leads to a healthy body. Seven yoga masters in the study maintained that the amount of consumed food in each meal should not exceed the need of the body and snacking between meals should be avoided. Also, consuming food according to an individual's basic elements for the maintenance of a physical balance should also be considered. Furthermore, fasting was done in order to rest the intestinal tract and eliminate waste products. Five yoga masters fasted by drinking fluids, which may be plain water or coconut juice solely for a whole day. Another five did it by eating only a type of selected fruit such as papaya, apples or bananas during the whole day, without eating other foods, while the other two used a combination of several kinds of fruits and fruit juice. Such action was done in

response to their feeling of mainly bodily discomfort. Fasting was practiced in order to excrete waste from the body when they felt discomfort in their gastrointestinal system or tight in the stomach. The following statements illustrate this point.

I use natural food, which is simple and rarely cooked. I have been eating this kind of food for a long time and I have not taken any medicine for more than ten years. I consume natural food and maintain a balance between hot and cold. Hot food makes us sick, so we must adjust the balance by consuming cold food. Tiliacora triandra (ya nang leaf) juice has cold effects that help detoxify. I clean my body by drinking only water, without eating other food, for one day. I also sometimes do detoxification. I may detoxify using plain water or ya nang leaf juice. I feel comfortable and fresh very quickly after one or two times of practice. (K4)

Whatever helps balance the body and mind and fits well with our behavior is good. I had the experience of joining a balance-adjustment camp focusing on mindfulness, chewing, and asana practice. Hot and cold balance is a science of prevention that keeps us away from diseases as much as possible. My goal is to not use medicine or chemicals. Natural cures are an option to obtain balance and endurance toward disease... (K6)

Healthy food must comprise 5 groups of nutrient, namely protein, carbohydrates, fat, minerals and vitamins. The chosen food must be fresh, seasonally-grown and toxin-free. Meat consumption is also discouraged. It is believed that adults need less protein and more fiber, vegetables or fruit. In addition, it is believed that eating meat makes the body uncomfortable (feeling heavy and inertia). Following the yoga principle of harmlessness would reduce animal killing and cause people to turn plant protein sources such as beans, mushrooms, etc. In addition, the way of naturopathy also includes living in a natural environment with lots of trees and sunshine. From the observation of the researcher, four yoga masters lived in crowded urban areas, but their living places as much trees and sunshine as if they were living in a natural environment. Eight yoga masters lived in an

environment surrounded by nature, which is suitable for the maintenance of one's life balance.

To conclude on the daily yoga practice of yoga masters for the maintenance of life balance and enhancement of intellectual development, the initial yoga practice focused the physical body level, which involved asana and pranayama practice. These practices promote physical and mental health for higher mental development. However, the firm foundation of spiritual experience is not achieved without the ethical conduct of yama and niyama. Therefore, all of the eight components of the Yoga Sutra were used as a guideline along with kriya and naturopathic cures in order to achieve a life balance. Yoga practice complimented with Buddhist Vipassana and Bhavana was applied to obtain liberation.

3.4 Integrating yoga and complementary therapies dealing with health problems

Most of the yoga masters highlighted that their health problems come from an imbalance of elements in their bodies. They had applied not only the main components of the Yoga Sutra for health, but also other yogic techniques, particularly cleansing techniques. Six yoga masters emphasized the airway and gastrointestinal tract cleaning every morning by using plain water to clean the nose, eyes, and throat. The others also cleansed their bodies through yoga techniques, but they did it when they felt bodily discomfort. Nasal cleaning was done when feeling the airway was unclear due to staying in places with bad weather or when having nasal congestion. Vamana Dhauti was done when having a feeling of eating the wrong or unhealthy food or feeling tight in the stomach. They did this through drinking lots of water and vomiting by putting both their index and middle fingers inside their throat. Kapalabhati (forceful rapid

breathing) was practiced to clean the airway through rapid inhalation and exhalation. The below statements serve as illustration.

I clean my nose and eyes every day. Some people use aiding equipment, but I do not. I apply a technique of inhaling water, lowering my face and cleaning through the nasal cavity. I clean my eyes and gargle every day. (K7)

Kriyas, like Chonla-Neti or Ka-Neti, are not done every day, but I keep the tool handy. I do Kriyas when I have difficulty breathing or stay in a place with bad weather or pollution. I drink lots of water and put my fingers in my throat to induce vomiting when I feel uncomfortable or heavy in my stomach. This makes me feel comfortable. (K6)

The cleaning of the eyes and nose is done every day, but I cleanse the gastrointestinal tract once a week or when I feel bodily discomfort. Kapalabhati, which is the cleansing of the airway, is done almost every morning. (K9)

All yoga masters agreed that they tried to manage health problems by using various yoga techniques accompanied by some complementary therapies. Several health problems or symptoms were mentioned.

3.4.1 Allergic rhinitis

Five key informants said that their allergic rhinitis disappeared after they practiced asana and pranyama regularly. However, some respiratory symptoms occurred occasionally due to an imbalance of elements in their bodies. For example, phlegm and cold would easily occur when their bodies were dominant on the water element. Asanas, pranyama, anuloma viloma, and kapalabhati practice as well as cleaning the nasal cavity with water were recommended. Food that enhances power and the fire elements such as ginger, pepper and wearing thick cloth for warmth were also required. For those that were dominant on the fire element, food and fruit with cold effect such as morning glory, tomatoes, coconut juice, and so on

should be eaten to achieve neutrality. Eight of the masters valued that they had not had any respiratory problems since following the yogic way of living and adjusting their food balance. The following statements confirm this point.

I have little of the fire element. I easily have a cold and a little phlegm when the weather changes; therefore, I must enhance the power and fire elements in my body by practicing more Prana and paying attention to food with hot flavor like pepper. Nevertheless, I do not eat spicy food. I wear a coat to keep warm. (K2)

When I have a cold, I use Kaneti to clean my nose with saline solution. When a cold begins, I practice kapalabhati and the cold is gone fast. (K6)

I am a fire element person. I must eat food with cold effectiveness in order to adjust to a neutral balance. The food I cook is bland. I eat papaya, sauropus androgynus, morning glory, water spinach, ivy gourd and tomatoes, and regularly drink young coconut juice which is still sour. I clean my nose with water every day, so my allergies are gone and I do not catch colds anymore. (K7)

3.4.2 Constipation

The problem of constipation concerns eating directly. All of the yoga masters mentioned the realization of eating healthy food, which mainly concentrates on the consumption of vegetables and fruit, the reduction of meat eating, and regular asana practice on the mat, resulting in a normal excretion. Specific asana poses such as Bhujangasana and Pavanamuktasana help eliminate constipation. Moreover, they always practice 14 basic asana and pranyama (Ujjayi, Anuloma viloma, and Bhastrika) techniques to balance their physical body. The following statements support this view.

I eat plenty of vegetables every day. I am conscious about eating and practicing asanas, so I do not have any problem with constipation and diarrhea. (K1)

Practicing asanas helps me solve the problem of constipation; now, I can excrete better. Moreover, good excretion is also a result of the discipline of asana practice. (K5)

3.4.3 Menopausal symptoms

Menopausal symptoms appear in women over 45 years old, but not every yoga master was in the menopausal stage. Six of them had gone through menopause; two were in the perimenopausal stage, while the other two were in premenopausal stage. Six of the yoga masters who had gone through the menopausal stage found that they had a smooth transition. The following statements back this up.

I entered menopause several years ago, but I did not have any of the symptoms that others have such as hot flushes, night sweats, sleep disturbance, vaginal dryness, and so on.... One's attitude to life is very important. It makes mindfully aware/conscious during the changes in one's life span. I think it is not our problems which are at fault, one's way of thinking determines whether one will be happy or not, irrespective of the problems. Although some symptoms may happen during the menopausal period, they transform naturally through the life span. I feel... they do not cause any problem, nor do (should) they affect our quality of life. (K2)

This year, I had some hot flushes. I feel good about this symptom; it reminds me that I am in the vai-tong (menopausal stage). Yoga will play an important role in this transitional stage. (K4)

Moreover, all of the female yoga masters, who had entered menopausal stage, perceived that the menopausal stage was a natural stage in a woman's they had to encounter; they should not worry whether bad things would happen. Abnormal conditions or menopausal symptoms may not happen if people have a good attitude towards the menopausal stage, e.g., to not worry about the mentioned problems. They valued that their yoga practice did not focus on the menopausal stage but on holistic balance. Their practice comprised asanas, pranyama, meditation and Kriya practice. Asana practice focuses on 14 basic poses and prone

position postures such as Bhujangasana, half locust pose, locust pose, Dhanurasana and Surya Namasakara. The following statements offer more detail.

In the yoga class, we perform the 12 poses of Sun Salutation and then continue with other poses. The last pose is deep relaxation. After class, we share our experiences of yoga practice and ways to improve our health.... (K1)

I practice asanas and meditation every day. I do not practice a particular pose for menopause. It involves the practice of basic poses that yoga teachers have taught me and I also teach others at different places. I also get to practice when I teach, so I am not stressed. My menstruation stopped without any vai-tong symptoms.... (K11)

In addition, both asana and pranyama practice help the balance of hormonal secretion, reduce mental stress and strengthen emotion, resulting in a decrease or absence of menopausal symptoms. Furthermore, six yoga masters also mentioned eating soy bean products, which are rich in phytoestrogen (it has estrogen-like effects) that is believed to reduce menopausal symptoms and satisfy the need for sufficient sleep, averaging 6-8 hours, in order to make the required physical adjustment to achieve balance. Two informants said:

I consume lots of brown unpolished rice and beans. I also practice yoga. My menstruation stopped for about 5 months, came once more after that, and then stopped for good. I do not have any vai-tong symptoms. I sleep well; I go to bed early, at about 8-9 pm, and get up at about 4 am. I get enough sleep and my body also gets to maintain its balance. (K1)

I got a tumor in my uterus and had it totally removed. The doctor prescribed hormone replacement therapy to me, but I got severe headache. Therefore, I stopped using it and I started using foods such soya milk, tofu and coconut juice to balance my health, and I have never had any menopausal symptoms since then....(K7).

4. Experiencing the outcomes of yoga practice

The results obtained from regular yoga practice concerned holistic well-being. All of the yoga masters perceived positive outcomes, but they were varied depending on how much they practiced. However, most of them mentioned that the immediate benefits of yoga practice were physical health, emotional stability and increased moral integrity. Details regarding each benefit are described below.

4.1 Healthy body

Although the most expected results obtained from yoga practice focus on the mind and intellectual development, all of the yoga masters perceived positive outcomes towards their physical health. The physical benefits were a healthy, flexible and energetic body with a better figure (fit and firm). Besides, some health problems such as waist ache, backache, and allergies were alleviated and a comfortable body was obtained. The following statements illustrate this point.

Since living according to the yoga way, I have adjusted my eating and practiced breathing control and asanas, and my allergies are gone. I have never used any anti-allergic medicines to treat urticaria since then. Every one wonders what I have done with my physical body; I look so fit. I tell them, it is all due to my yoga practice.... (K1)

Previously, I would get backaches and neck pain, and my body was stiff. Yoga asana can alleviate these problems. My health is very good now, and I am flexible. (K10)

After practicing yoga for a year, my friends admired the fact that my body looked straight calm. They wanted me to teach them how to practice yoga and be a model of yoga practice. Consequently, I taught yoga at Ramkamhang University with other yoga teachers, and I demonstrated my techniques during their classes. This course was free of charge. Those who practiced yoga in this class had better figures and complexion. (K11)

Six yoga masters mentioned that the benefits of a flexible body were a good physical performance and health. Even though they were in the menopausal stage, they did not have any bone problems. Their physical performance remained constant and they had hormonal balance. Moreover, all of the informants admitted that, as results of their yoga practice, they were able to manage some physical problems such as constipation and backache. The following supports this.

My body is very flexible. If I had not practiced yoga, my legs gotten injured when I fell off the stairs. My tendon of ankle was very stretched and my legs collapsed, so I could not get up and stand. It took me a while to get up, stand and walk. I was in pain for one day, but I would have needed a leg cast if I had not practiced yoga regularly. (K12)

At first, I mainly saw physical benefits; my common colds decreased. Asanas practice helps improve my constipation problem, so I keep practicing it. After practice, a light and comfortable body is obviously evident.... (K5)

4.2 Psycho-emotional stability

All of the yoga masters acknowledged experiencing psycho- emotional benefits such as a peaceful mind and emotional stability after yoga practice for a year.

4.2.1 Peaceful mind and emotional stability

Most yoga masters acknowledged that regular yoga practice helps their mind calm down and reduce emotional swings. Two informants stated:

Yoga balances the mind. I can quickly get away from whatever affects me. It is a basis to understanding my mind better. It helps me be in control during emotional changes; I do not get angry, but am patient, which helps me think about good things. (K1)

At first, the outcomes of practice concerned my physical health. Later, my mental health improved; my emotions were stable, my consciousness level increased, and my mind became more delicate, which helps me perceive quickly and, consequently, my consciousness is able to catch up with any dhuka. I perceive stress quickly and am able to release it quickly. (K5)

4.2.2 Quick adjustment of an occurred imbalance

Most of the yoga masters perceived immediate benefits of yoga practice such as being energetic and more active in daily activities. Moreover, the more they practiced, the quicker they were able to adjust for an occurred imbalance in their bodies. One informant said:

After asana practice for an hour, I clearly see changes such as feeling comfortable, having a sense of relief and gaining more energy. (K4)

4.2.3 Eliminate bad feelings from their minds easier

Six yoga masters highlighted that, after more experience practicing yoga, bad feelings were more easily eliminated from their minds than at the initial stage of yoga practice. Two of the masters said:

Initially, it was difficult to elimination bad feelings from my mind. However, this way (yoga) helps me to quickly drive bad feelings out of my mind; my mind does not suffer long. (K1)

Before, it would take me a long time to adjust when I got emotional upset. However, yoga helps me to quickly eliminate bad feelings in my mind; I do not stay moody for too long. (K4)

4.3 Intellectual development

The perceived outcomes of regular yoga practice mostly relate to the mind and spirit, and they concern self-understanding and consciousness. All of the yoga masters admitted that the benefits of their yoga practice related to intellectual development. These were increasing one's realization towards life, improving self-esteem, enhancing self-confidence, and having loving-kindness, humility, gratitude towards yoga teachers and an enhanced sense of sharing.

4.3.1 Increasing self-realization towards life

Eight of the yoga masters perceived that one of the results obtained from practicing yoga was more self-realization towards life, leading to behavioral changes. The following illustrate this claim.

Life contemplation and self-awareness increase after yoga practice. The more I concentrate, the more I understand myself and others. I have more wisdom and flexibility of life, resulting in stillness, loving-kindness, integrity and sharing knowledge with people around me. These are good qualities to have. It is now easy for me to erase bad things from my mind. A clear mind helps me search for needs in my inner self, and know my own identity; this is obviously leading me towards reaching my life goal. (K2)

Yoga practice helps me perceive every movement. Repeated perception increases mind concentration. The establishment of mind also increases. When a conscious mind is obtained, intellect is automatically attained. (K6)

4.3.2 Improving self-esteem

Four of the yoga masters perceived an improvement in their self-esteem. The feeling of self-esteem makes a person proud of his/her achievement in life, have creativity and determination to solve his/her problems with honesty. That person would be loved if he/she was generous towards others, as reported:

Since living according to the yoga lifeway, I have been teaching many people, both inside and outside the hospital. People often come to me and say that they are still practicing yoga, even after I have taught them. This makes me so proud. (K1)

Teaching yoga to others is like teaching myself because I also practice at the same time. My mind is bright and cheerful. I get wisdom, which is clearer and clearer, and is always with me. It makes my life better. I am very happy to give good things to others, e.g., teach them when they want to study yoga. (K2)

4.3.3 Enhancing self-confidence

Eight of the yoga masters perceived that yoga enhanced self-confidence to confront problems and immediately solve them. They had the intellectual ability to make appropriate decisions. This is illustrated in the following statements.

Yoga makes me brave – I have the courage to act and speak out in front of many people; I analyze the situation before speaking. The mind that perceives quickly adjusts to achieve balance quickly. It gives me consciousness and wisdom to understand my life. (K3)

Formerly, my mind did not fall into right way. I liked to stay alone; I did not like joining others because I thought it was chaotic. After practicing yoga and becoming a member of a yoga group, I was accepted, so I gained more confidence and got along easily with others. (K4)

I can accept the situation and do not get angry with anyone. I am patient and steady. Yoga creates good relationships with others both at work and within the family. I forgive others easily. I can think well when I am steady and am able to handle problems when they occur. Yoga helps me develop my mind, so I am conscious to deal even with critical situations. (K12)

4.3.4 Having loving-kindness

Eleven of the twelve key informants admitted that the yoga way had helped them develop loving-kindness toward themselves and the environment. Their behavior toward everyone and everything was positive. As a result, they were willing to help others and did not harm others, which brought more peace to their mind. The following statements support this idea.

The feeling of loving-kindness and sharing is an access to the value of humanity. We do not hurt ourselves and others because our loving-kindness increases in our yoga way of life. (K2)

Because of the yogic way, we are more concerned with others. We are not angry with others, our mind is not down and our inner perception is gradually clearer. Only assistance toward each other would exist. (K9)

This was also supported by the researcher's observation during her participation in the yoga classes taught by several of the yoga masters (K2, K4, K5, K9 and K10). They were enthusiastic to help their students as much as they could. For example, one student wanted yoga textbooks and posters of yoga pictures. Even though the teachers did not have them, they searched for their students. Yoga master K9 was especially kind to his students; he provided both mental and material support, which was invaluable to the students. Importantly, I perceived yoga masters, especially K9 and K10, having loving-kindness or 'metta' first hand during my doctoral study in India. Moreover, in the Hathapradipika of Svatmarama it is said that, without the grace of a genuine guru, it is difficult to realize the truth and attain sahadavastha – the highest state of attainment in yoga (Gharote & Devnath, 2006: 209).

4.3.5 Having humility

Seven of the yoga masters agreed that, in the yoga way, without having humility, the state of knowledge was difficult to attain. When one's egoism gradually decreases, one's humility gradually increases and then one is able to learn whenever. The yoga way helped the masters obtain humility. The following statements support this idea.

Being a yoga master we should be meek, not arrogant, and not think others do not know. The more we study, the more we discover we do not know. That is how knowledge is found. Our knowledge would increase and we would see the true value of others and have more respect for them. The teachers are always with us. (K2)

This was also supported by the researcher's observation during her participation in the yoga classes taught by several yoga masters (K1, K2, K5, K9 and K10). All of them were modest about being a yoga guru and always talked to their yoga students with humility in order to get knowledge from other persons.

4.3.6 Having gratitude towards yoga teachers

Gratitude is a virtue of a good person, indicating the mental brightness of intelligent people who have a feeling of returning kindness to those who have done much for them. Ten of the yoga masters admitted that yoga is a science that needs to be learned directly from a teacher. Therefore, one way of showing gratitude toward yoga is learning and transferring what one has learned to other people, from generation to generation. The following statements support this idea.

Gratitude toward the persons who have studied, probed and shared their knowledge with us is a symbol of a good person. Teaching yoga is a way to express gratitude toward yoga; the ones who learn first look after those who come later. It is progress whenever there is a feeling of repaying one's generosity because arrogance is reduced. (K2)

When we receive knowledge from teachers, we must share what we have learned with the next generation. Doing so is a sign of gratitude toward our yoga teacher. (K9)

This was also supported by the researcher's observation made during her participation the yoga classes taught by the yoga masters. They emphasized gratitude toward yoga to their student, as well as repaying the kindness shown to them. Moreover, they reinforced gratitude towards their yoga by guru visiting them with a small souvenir and falling prostrate on all fours before them with the hands placed palm to palm touching the forehead. Gratitude and repayment in life can be practiced in various forms such as gratitude toward parents, teachers, friends as well as ourselves. It is like giving without expecting anything in return. Gratitude toward teachers enhances one's advancement toward reaching one's goal. When a person has appreciation, he/she wants to repay someone's kindness, even though a little bit.

This shows that a person reduces both his/her obstinacy and *klesas* (afflictions) when he/she has the desire to repay the kindness/goodness of others.

4.3.7 Enhancing one's sense of sharing

All of the yoga masters admitted that the yogic way helps them gradually decrease their egotism, which is the cause of suffering in the day-to-day life. When ego decreases, it results in the reduction of covetousness and the increase of willing to share our best things with other people. The following statements support this idea.

Previously, I used to waste time with squabbles; however, when I entered the yoga way, my ego fell and I am able to understand things more easily now. It is easy for me to say sorry to others. Finally, I easily forgive other people. (K3).

Once my mind became concentrated, it helped me to understand myself, enabled me to catch up with dhuka, and deal with my ego, which is the cause of stress. (K5)

Furthermore, all of the yoga masters attested to existence of the process of self-development in the yoga way – from novice yoga practitioner to obtaining the expert status. A yoga master is a person who studies and practices yoga regularly until he/she is specialized and able to transfer his/her knowledge to students. Yoga has been transferred from generation to generation. A good teacher should be sincere and have a heart of loving-kindness and mercy towards his students. The following statements lend clarification to this point.

Students can reflect the qualification of the teacher. If the teacher does not yet understand what yoga is, the students would go as far into only the yoga asana as you can see. (K4)

The yoga master's way of life is simple and contented. As a result, he/she is always happy and calm.....(G16: colleague of K5)

Additionally, it was found from the researcher's observations that the yoga masters were characterized by having a good health, loving-kindness and mercy. They always assisted and supported one another, and lived in a contented or simple way, including eating and living, dressing, and being at peace. Their enthusiasm in sharing and transferring life experiences to students could be observed. The following statements support this.

The teacher has a simple way of life. It is all right for him/her to live and eat in this way. He/she dresses simply. He/she has great loving-kindness and no egoism. He/she has great mercy in assisting, advising and supporting others. Right now, I understand the knowledge my teacher has transferred to me. (K2)

Living according to the yoga way makes my life, e.g., both eating and sleeping, much easier. I live a simple life that I am happy with, and my klesa (desire) is gradually reducing. For me, it is essential for a yoga learner to look for the coaching of a guru (master) because most people look at yoga as an exercise that focuses on asanas only, but the real goal of yoga practice is physical and mental balance. Those who study advanced-level yoga comprehend intellectual development. One should search for a teacher with appropriate qualifications. (K7)

In summary, yoga masters realized the value of yoga practice not only regarding their state of health, but also the quality of their lives. They perceived positive outcomes towards a healthy body, psycho-emotional stability, and intellectual/wisdom development. Their perception of outcomes from yoga practice mostly concentrated on self-understanding and consciousness, which lead to intellectual development and self-awareness. All of these affect behavioral changes such as increasing one's realization towards life, enhancing self-confidence, and having loving-kindness, humility, gratitude, and so on. Furthermore, the results toward the development of the mind, society and spirit are a peaceful mind, steady emotions, self-awareness, intellectual life conduct, and living happily with others. It

also reinforces self-esteem as well as assisting one to easily detach from self, leading to liberation. Finally, they possessed the characteristic yoga-master qualities, which are sincerity and a heart of loving-kindness and mercy toward their students.

5. Cultural beliefs influencing daily-life yoga practice

All of the key informants mentioned that there were several cultural beliefs that may influence one's yoga practice. The researcher has also observed and divided these factors in two major categories: cultural beliefs facilitating yoga practice and factors inhibiting yoga practice. The details are described as follows.

5.1 Cultural beliefs facilitating yoga practice

Facilitating factors were mostly derived from religious and traditional beliefs and social structure accompanied by local cultural beliefs. The results revealed nine factors related to cultural and personal beliefs promoting yoga practice. These were: 1) faith in yoga philosophy, 2) beliefs associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism, 3) belief in the theory of sufficiency economy and contented living, 4) high educational level, 5) health problems, 6) experiencing positive outcomes from practice, 7) understanding and support of the family, 8) support of organizations, and 9) support of health promoting policies related to CAMs. The details are described below.

5.1.1 Faith in the yoga philosophy

Eight of the yoga masters admitted that the philosophy of yoga and the experiences of positive outcomes due to its practice made them have faith in

yoga and, consequently, practiced it continuously. The following statements support this claim.

My faith comes from the result of my practice and the goal to reach enlightenment. These motivate me to come frequently.... (K3)

Having a serious faith in science is essential for studying yoga effectively. Without faith in science, we would always search for what we want without an intention to study. Hence, our practice would not advance. With faith, we would be motivated to be patient in our study and practice. If we practiced effectively, we would tell people close to us and the information would eventually spread to the larger society. Sharing our good experiences with others makes us go over ourselves, leading to further changes in our behavior. (K6)

Faith in the yoga philosophy is a basic confidence that leads yoga masters toward the achievement of the life goal. Importantly, enough time must be spent in order to reap benefits from the practice. One would not reach his/her goal if he/she is lazy or disheartened. Limited sources of research for study are another factor that makes it difficult to study; however, faith empowers the students to practice seriously and overcome the obstacles. For instance, if one keeps faith in the yoga philosophy and concepts, including the methods and results of the yoga science, one will be diligent and patiently and regularly practice in order to reach one's set goal.

5.1.2 Beliefs associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism

Belief changes in accordance with the changes of the society and it affects one's decision of how to live and behave. The integration of practice would be easy if the new beliefs are consistent with the original ones. The following beliefs would affect yoga practice.

5.1.2.1 Belief in Ayurveda

Most of the yoga masters believed in Ayurveda, which concerns itself with basic life elements. Five of the yoga masters agreed that both

yoga and Ayurveda proceeding together helped them maintain a healthy life and solve the problem of suffering. They are mutually supportive sciences to prevent various diseases and heal the body. The following statements support this view.

Ayurveda, Thai Traditional medicine, and yoga are all about life talk about the changes of elements. My mother has been taking ancient Thai traditional medicine. I may have used the original one (Ayurveda), but I did not know.... Once I practiced this (yoga), I understood that both sciences are supportive. (K2)

I go to Ayurveda retreats once a year; the yoga teacher should know Ayurveda because it and yoga complement and embrace each other. For instance, I use both yoga and Ayurveda medicine (herbs) for good digestion. Both yoga and Ayurveda are mutually supportive and offer many ways to prevent and heal various disorders of the body. (K9)

I have not used modern medicines since I began using yoga as a way of life; Ayurvedic medicine is preferred to alleviate some undesirable symptoms such cough and fever. My health is in a very good condition now....(K10)

5.1.2.2 Belief in Buddhism related to merit, deed, and morality.

In this study, all of the key informants were Buddhist. The belief that one's old deeds have an influence on one's present life, i.e., doing good means receiving good, whereas doing bad means receiving bad, are consistent with the aspects of yoga, namely Yama and Niyama, which encourage people to do good such as not harm others or speak badly of others in order to gain some advantage. Additionally, some of the morality principles of Buddhism are the same as those of the Yoga Sutra such as being honest and not harming others. Therefore, with such basic beliefs of Buddhist morality and those of the Yoga Sutra – the principles of Yama and Niyama – yoga would be practiced more complementarily. The following statements support this idea.

Presently, I not only get to practice when I teach others, but also make a merit. It makes me feel comfortable. Thinking and doing good and not harming others, this is what yoga is all about. (K1)

I see morality as a necessity of life. Not harming others and living with honesty makes humans more valuable. I completely believe that living in this way (yoga) decreases suffering in my life. Therefore, I always practice it. (K2)

Both Buddhism and yoga deal with one's deeds and the world. I understood this right away once I started practicing yoga. I believe that I get what I do according to the deeds. I believe we set our own new deeds. Wisdom is required in choosing the good or bad way. (K5)

For a Buddhist, morality is very important to live in the society. The yoga teacher always teaches us to practice yoga, not just know it. I have practiced it and found out that it is similar to morality in Buddhism...(G15: A yoga student of K5)

Additionally, the principles of meditation practice according to Buddhism and the yogic way are very compatible. To achieve progress in meditation practice, the preparation of body and mind must rely on the techniques of yoga. The following statements support this point.

I used to practice solely Buddhist meditation, but I did not progress much in it because my mind was not strong enough. After practicing yoga, my body and mind were strengthened, so my meditation practice improved faster. (K2)

Asana practice makes my body flexible, which results in an ability to sit longer when I practice Vipassana or Buddhist meditation. My Buddhist background facilitates my understanding of yoga. They support one another. (K12)

It is seen that Ayurveda and religion principles focus on the balance of life elements. They were practiced along with yoga; these practices support each other.

5.1.3 Belief in sufficiency economy and contented living

Sufficiency economy and yoga practice are very compatible. Eight of the key informants agreed that the yogic way of life is economical and natural, in accordance with the Laws of Nature, and prevents them from being drawn towards external world, which is a constant flux. They claimed that they need to keep in touch with their inner world, and the yogic way of life makes that possible. Moreover, yoga can be a tool to apply the ideal of sufficiency economy, too. One informant said:

Yoga has various methods/techniques to internalize our awareness at different levels, which are applicable to modern people's life style. Yoga can be a tool to apply the ideal of sufficient economy. (K9).

Additionally, it was found from the researcher's observations that most of the key informants were contented in their living and lived in a self-sufficient way.

5.1.4 High educational level

All of the key informants or yoga masters in this study were well-educated; some held doctoral degrees. They would, therefore, be able to read and interpret yoga texts as well as integrate their knowledge into their practice better than those who have low education. It is also easier for them to build their network, which is a source of support for yoga improvement. One yoga master said:

High education level makes yoga integration easy. People with knowledge see the bigger picture better than low-educated people, who see only part of the picture. People who are seriously interested in this delve deeply into science. Education helps create more networks and common interest strengthens the network. People with similar levels of education and interests may converse about subjects of interest such as the study and advancement of yoga knowledge. (K6)

Although the heritage of yoga involves the handing down of knowledge from teacher to yoga students by word of mouth, presently, there were a few yoga gurus for one to study with. Reading textbooks written by gurus helps understand the yoga science. Almost all yoga textbooks are written in English; therefore, highly-educated people would be able to read them and improve their yoga practice – then they could discuss and consult with an expert or guru when the opportunity arises. A yoga master said:

The study of yoga and life development can be achieved through yoga teachers and reading textbooks that the teachers have written. However, we should be wise when searching for textbooks; studying from a good yoga book is the same as studying with a teacher. It is not possible for me to be with a teacher, so that I always have books under my pillow. (K2)

5.1.5 Health problems

Every human wants to have a good health. Health condition is then a factor that makes people have an interest in yoga. Yoga principles help alleviate health problems and promote health, so a person may seek to master self-care practice for when he/she has health problems. Positive or good outcomes after a trial of practice would be a driving force for that person to keep practicing. Three yoga masters, who had health problems related to allergies, practiced yoga consistently and their allergies did not bother them any longer to the point that they did not need to take modern medicine anymore. These statements support this.

My health problem made me look for ways of self-care and yoga was the answer. I kept practicing it and my allergies subsided; now, they are gone.... (K7)

Because of my mind was not in the right condition when I was taking care of my father, who was disabled from car accident, and because of my physical health problems – allergic rhinitis and hyperthyroidism – I looked for something to correct my health, which

was suffering. A meditation course for ten days was the answer and, in that course, yoga asana was practiced every morning. It seemed like I had met an old friend. Then I heavily practiced yoga with magical enjoyment. (K11)

5.1.6 Experiencing the positive outcomes of practice

All of the yoga masters agreed that they did not want to suffer; thus, they sought for a way to make them free from suffering, whether it be little or great. One may try various methods or ways and stick with the one that is compatible with his/her way of life and can lead him/her to the realization of his/her goal of life. Once practiced, direct positive experiences such as having physical comfort, steady emotions, consciousness and wisdom after practice, being energetic, having better health, being flexible and strong are witnessed. These experiences are factors that support them to practice yoga continuously. The following statements support this point.

The results I receive, the progress I make and the one I witness in other people around me, and being in a yoga family and seeing the happiness it generates in all those involved are factors that keep me going in this path. (K2)

5.1.7 Understanding and support of the family

All of the key informants admitted that, to achieve a balance of the body, mind, society and spirit, a person should persevere in the practice of asana, pranyama and meditation as well as have good/high/strong morals along the yoga journey. Yoga can be practiced at home, work place or in a yoga class. Practice affects one's role in the family such as time for other family members, income and life conducts. Only three of the yoga masters had all of their family members practicing yoga with them, which might not affect to them so much. Moreover, all of

the key informants agreed that improvement would be slow if family members did not understand or support them. The following statements illustrate this.

My family understands me. Every morning, my children do not disturb me because they know I practice yoga. My husband understands that I teach yoga to others every Monday and Wednesday evening; he picks me up after 6 pm. I get to practice yoga and make a merit by teaching others at the same time. It would be hard if my family did not understand this. (K1)

Everyone has his/her own responsibilities. When I understood what yoga was, I could manage my time. I know I should not make a mistake; I need to take care of myself, my children and husband. Everything should go together. My family takes a great part in this. Though my husband does not practice yoga, he understands me and knows that yoga makes me happy. I think everyone in my family respects each other. Everyone tries to avoid arranging family gatherings around my yoga teaching time. (K3)

Presently, my family is important in greatly supporting my practice because they share household responsibilities and that gives me a chance to practice and improve continuously. (K8)

In our family there are only two of us. I drive her when she wants to practice yoga with a group or teach yoga. Furthermore, I supported her to study yoga in India for six months, and we presently go together for meditation practice at the temples..(G5: husband of K6)

5.1.8 Support of the organization

Seven of the key informants agreed that the support of organizations gave them more chances in the study yoga. There are limited yoga schools available, but, with the support of their organizations, some facilities and equipment such as a place to practice, yoga mats and the allowance of establishing yoga groups to practice at work were provided. The following statements support this.

With the support of my work place, I had the chance to study yoga deeply and, later, offer a yoga class to my colleagues at work (K1)

I use all of the available facilities of my organization to practice and teach yoga to others. This also allows me to practice more ...(K12)

5.1.9 Support of health promoting policies related to CAMs

The health policies in this country promote well-being among its population. If the people in the country are healthy, their medical expenses would decrease. To this end, yoga practice is promoted in various forms; however, it mostly involves the practice asana as a form of exercise. Seven of the key informants were health personnel, who were encouraged by their supervisors to be leaders in promoting good health among their workforce. In being the leaders of this endeavor, they had more chance to study deeply and had to practice regularly in order to lead others. The other five key informants, who were not health professionals, had noticed that the health policies in this country promote the use of CAMs and alternative medicine; thus, enhancing the widespread use of yoga. The following statements support this idea.

Regarding health policies, it is evident that there are many yoga networks. The hospital personnel also practice. We have networks in various places such as Sriracha, Trang and Songkhla.... (K5)

5.2 Factors inhibiting yoga practice

In this context, all of the key informants highly agreed that the factors inhibiting yoga practice were lack self-discipline and inadequate time to practice because yoga is a practical science, so one attains benefit only by practice. Therefore, little self-discipline and inadequate time to practice will obstruct one's progress in the yoga journey. However, two yoga masters admitted that they did not have any obstacles because the obstacles were viewed as an opportunity for learning and

pushing one to further development. The details of each topic are described as follows.

5.2.1 Lack of self-discipline

Most of the yoga masters agreed that the reduction of their yoga practice came from their lack of self-discipline. The following statements support this view.

I am always discouraged by my own laziness. However, the benefits of yoga practice always stimulate me to practice it continuously. I see positive results, so I just keep practicing; teaching helps me practice sustainably. (K6)

Lack of self-discipline or laziness is a barrier to yoga practice because, when one is laziness, he/she lacks ambition to accomplish anything. Laziness also despoils a person of the sense of accomplishment, self-worth, and self-development. However, there is always something to remind them to continue practicing, i.e., having a good outcome. This is a driving force for them to continually practice.

5.2.2 Inadequate time

Most of the yoga masters agreed that having sufficient time was a great problem for practicing yoga. Because yoga is a practical science, one must spend more time to practice in order to optimize its benefits. The following statements support this idea.

Time was initially a biggest barrier due to me playing multiple roles in my family; however, as a result of the practice, I was able to deal with everything. My family, both husband and children, understand me. A clear mind after yoga practice helps me manage my roles properly; teaching in the class helps me continually practice. When we manage our mind, everything is fine. (K4)

Before I retired from my regular work, my yoga practice did not progress much; I did not have enough time to practice and explore

it deeply. After my retirement, I focused on my goal of life, i.e., to be liberated. Therefore, I keep practicing....(K6)

One yoga master perceived no barrier in her progression of yoga practice. She expressed:

I have no obstacle in practicing yoga because an obstacle is a step toward development. (K2)

In summary, cultural beliefs influencing yoga practice are divided into two groups. The facilitating factors to yoga practice were faith in the yoga philosophy, beliefs associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism, beliefs in sufficiency economy and contented living, high educational level, health problems, experiencing positive outcomes of practice, understanding and support of the family, support of one's employment organization, and support of health promoting policies related to CAMs. While the factors that hinder yoga practice or one's progression in the yoga journey were not making progress, lack of self-discipline and inadequate time to practice.

Conclusion of the Findings

The findings of this study were gathered using the twelve steps of the Developmental Research Sequence (Spradley, 1979). They emerged from four components of ethnographic analysis: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and thematic analysis. These themes were developed reflecting the meanings of yoga practice, strategy of becoming a yoga master, the integration of yoga into daily-life practice, experiencing the outcomes of yoga practice, and cultural beliefs and factors associated with yoga practice.

The informants held views that reflected a diverse understanding of the meanings of yoga. They expressed them during the interviews about the meanings of yoga as being: a tool to promote health, a science and an art of living a perfect life, and a philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment.

Becoming a yoga master involves having motivation and going through the process of being a yoga master. They described the motivations to be a yoga master as: faith in yoga philosophy, yoga being fitting with their goal of life, experiencing the benefits of yoga practice, and being impressed by the way of life of a respected yoga master. The process of becoming a yoga master comprised self-preparation, strategies for self-improvement, and successful factors. The yoga masters showed that their perspectives and experiences regarding self-preparation for being successful in the yoga journey related to self-commitment to really strive and persist in yoga practice and Ahamkara reduction. Successful factors that enhanced one being a yoga master were having good friends and yoga teachers. There were 6 strategies of self-development: searching a yoga course to study and understanding the yoga science, practicing yoga patiently and strictly, making one's yoga practice a complement to one's regular work, creating a group of practitioners, learning and sharing knowledge and life experiences simultaneously, and monitoring one's life.

The integration of yoga for well-being by yoga masters covered four main categories: responding to healthcare needs, maintaining the existence of humanity, maintaining life balance and intellectual development, and integrating yoga and complementary therapies dealing with health problems. Yoga masters acknowledged the importance of the integration of yoga practice to respond to healthcare needs in terms of maintenance of health and self-care activities and relief of Dhuka. Maintaining the

existence of humanity related to the body and the mind and concerned healthy food habits, adequate sleep, and harmonious living in the society. The Yoga Sutra helped set up a mind map in their daily practice to maintain their life balance and intellectual development. Moreover, yoga, when complemented with Buddhist meditation or Vipasana, helps achieve enlightenment faster. Although yoga masters were healthy in accordance with the standards of the yogic way, they sometimes had some health deviations and undesirable symptoms. They applied yoga and complementary therapies to deal with their health problems. These were not only the main components of the Yoga Sutra, but also additional yogic techniques, particularly cleansing techniques were used to maintain health.

The results obtained from regular yoga practice were positive and varied on how much one practiced. The immediate benefits of the practice related to physical health. Regular and patient practice at least a year brought psycho-emotional stability and increased self-realization towards life. Other specific improvements experienced by the yoga masters were the improvement of their self-esteem, the enhancement of their self-confidence, having loving-kindness towards others, having humility, having gratitude towards yoga teachers, and an enhanced sense of sharing.

The cultural beliefs and factors influencing yoga practice included faith in the yoga philosophy, beliefs associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism, trust in the concepts of sufficiency economy and contented living, high educational level, health problems, experiencing positive outcomes from practice, having the understanding and support of the family, having the support of one's employment organization, and enjoying the support of health-promoting policies related to CAMs. Yoga practice was impeded by low self-discipline and inadequate time for practice. These factors

were active in the daily-life yoga practice, and influence the meanings of yoga practice and the outcomes of the yoga practice of the yoga masters under study. The overall summary of the findings is illustrated in Figure 3.

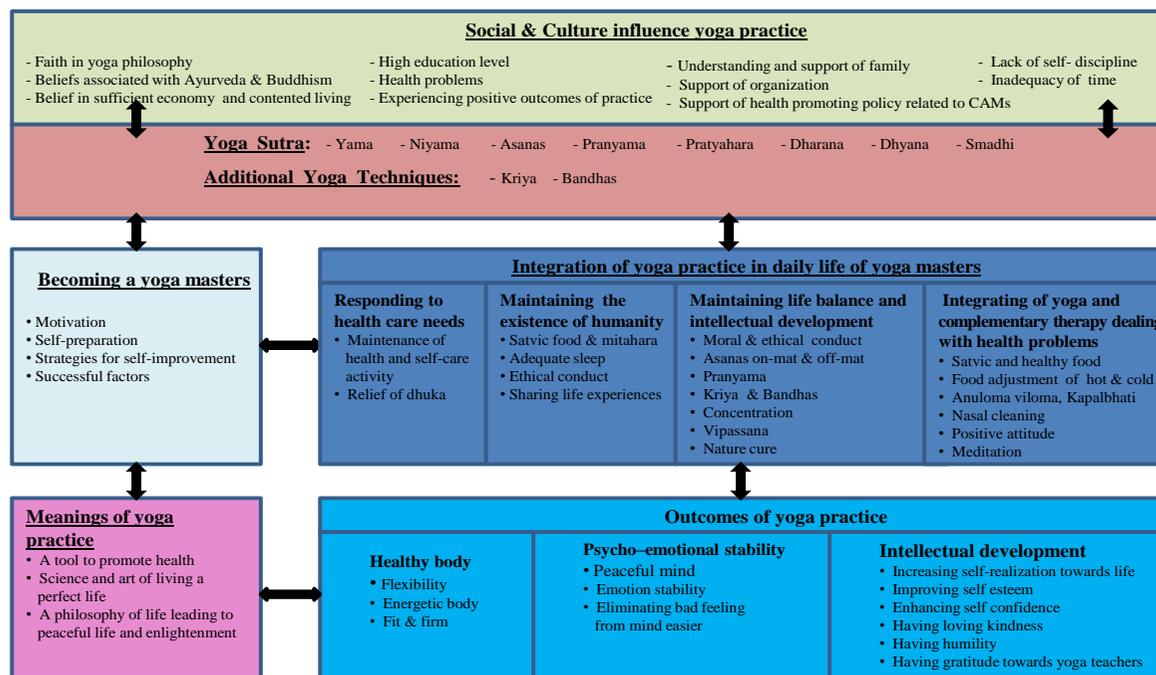


Figure 3: Model of Yoga Practice for Well-being of Yoga Masters

Discussion

The findings of this study present how yoga masters view and understand the meanings of yoga practice, which was part of their daily life as a way to maintain their human existence, how they integrated yoga into their daily life in order to achieve the expected outcomes, and how they dealt with health problems. The informants valued that yoga practice and becoming yoga masters were associated with their cultural beliefs and social construction. The researcher discusses these findings, which associated with the research questions, using existing literature as follows.

The Meanings of Yoga Practice

Yoga, as described by yoga masters in the context of Thai culture, was a tool to promote health, a science and an art of living a perfect life, and a philosophy of life that leads to a peaceful life and enlightenment. All of these three themes reflected the meanings of yoga according to yoga masters, who shared both general and specific experiences of yoga practice in their daily life to achieve the expected outcomes.

Yoga as a tool to promote health focuses on the potential of an individual's capacity to maintain the balance of health or a balance among the five sheaths of life. In this study, the yoga masters agreed that every yoga activity made them balanced in the five sheaths and furthered their happiness through self-exploration, mindfulness cultivation, and moral development. Yoga practice helps cultivate concentration and further mindfulness cultivation aimed to alleviate suffering and stop desire or

attachment rooted in avidya, which is the perception of lack and limitation creating suffering (Bhikkhu, 2006). They practiced asana, pranyama, and meditation to maintain physical health and cultivate mindfulness, which helps gain a deeper understanding of reality and, thus, provide more inner freedom. Asanas and pranyama practice unites the body and mind brings forth cheer and calm. This prevents humans from taking foolish pleasure in bad things and prevents evil from sneaking into the mind. This leads to a clear comprehension and understand of things as they are. Therefore, the mind becomes unburdened and relaxed, existing in accordance with its true nature (Payutto, 1995). They also promote physical flexibility and energy. This finding was supported by the findings from the study of Hodges (2007), which reported that the reason for commencing the practice of yoga was to improve physical well-being, and that yoga practice became a significant strategy for overall self-care among its subjects. Yoga practice removes tensions and restores emotional stability (Gharote, 1990). The daily practice of Asanas, pranyama, and relaxation increase happiness and interpersonal relationships in both healthy and sick subjects (Sharma, Gupta & Bijlani, 2008). Moreover, self-exploration leads one to learn how the mind works, practice consciousness, and become more aware of mental processes such as thoughts, feelings, and images. This process leads one to a big learning of oneself, so the more effective the study, the more one understands both the weaknesses and strengths of one's life. Understand 'who I am' and 'what I am' helps one to scrutinize one's body, senses, and mind, which are all keen to get rid of afflictions or causes of grief. These are the root causes of disease within humans, hidden in their own behavior, habits, character, nature, and mental attitude, whether good or bad, right or wrong. Therefore, the pains that are yet to come, the problems that are in store for the

future and the diseases that are waiting to arise can be avoided and must be prevented by keeping them away through the practice of yoga (Iyengar, 2008). Morality consists of codes of conduct through speech, thought and action that humans believe to be right, good, and truthful. Moral development is maintained following the Yama and Niyama of the Yoga Sutra. These are the firm foundations of spiritual experience and training for basic mind purification, which is present in serenity, calm, kindness, goodwill, compassion, friendliness, and non-violence (Desikachar, 1999). Therefore, the adoption of yoga is a prerequisite for yoga masters to achieve social well-being. Many studies have demonstrated the effects of yoga related to the promotion of psycho-emotional, social and spiritual well-being (Moadel, et al., 2007) such as improving mood (Shapiro, et al., 2007), reducing anxiety (Javnbakht, Hejazi–Kenari & Ghasemi, 2008; John, et al., 2007; Rao, et al., 2008; Sharma, et al., 2007), and alleviating stress (Beddoe, et al., 2008; Satyapriya, et al., 2008). Moreover, the yoga lifestyle improves general well-being helping one feel more interested in one's life and perceive one's functioning as being more smooth and joyful (Sharma, Gupta & Bijlani, 2008).

Yoga as a science and an art of living a perfect life: the informants stated that yoga is a science. This meaning related to it being a science of life that deals with the body, breathing, mind, soul, and the universe itself or the five sheaths of the human being. It teaches one how to be in and how to attain the state which is free from pains, miseries or suffering. The purpose of science is to elevate mankind to the highest pinnacle of evolution and to develop the true human potential (Gharote, 1990). Therefore, yoga is a science because it has the lofty goal of helping human beings to become aware of their ultimate nature. It offers a methodology; through the yoga science one can understand oneself better on all levels, including his physical body,

actions, thought process, emotions, and desires. Yoga is a life practice related to living well. Its techniques, benefits, and the ways to overcome obstacles are prescribed so that everyone can follow. By following the recommended yogic principles, the sense of relaxation and happiness is experienced (Harinath, et al., 2004). This claim has been proven by much research evidence: yoga asana for stress reduction (Michalsen, et al., 2005; West, et al., 2004), blood pressure reduction in hypertensive patients (McCaffery, Raknui, Hatthakit, Kasetsoomboon, 2005), and quality of life improvement (Oken, et al., 2006).

The informants stated that yoga is also an art according to the definition of art in the yoga context. Art is subjective, and means something different to every single person on earth (Esaak, 2003). Yoga is a useful art for human beings. It guides the practitioner to look for his/her goal of life by thinking clearly through the practice of Asanas, pranyama, and meditation, which make the mind brighter and clearer. Then one will know how to reach one's desired goal such as good health, happiness, a perfect life or a peaceful life and enlightenment. It is an art which aims to cultivate friendliness, compassion, joy, and indifference towards happiness as said in the Yoga Sutra (I.33). Moreover, it is a healing art; *yoga practice helps develop a balanced body and mind, bringing a lot of health benefits*. People usually practice yoga not only with the intention to defend against diseases, but also to understand the spiritual world, which provides the ultimate peace and prosperity in their life. As a tool for physical and mental healing, practicing Asanas and pranyama to the point of reaching one's optimal practice level helps enhance vitality, boost mental toughness and make one spiritually sound. One can be mentally and physically strong if one practices yoga regularly. When the practitioners reach the optimum of right movement and perfect

action in each asana position, their consciousness exists everywhere in their body (Iyengar, 1995). If any health problems exist, one will know which part of the body is affected and how it can be revitalized through the practice of yoga. For example, for the ones who have lower back pain, several Asanas help relieve pain and strengthen the affected lower back muscles. Then by observing and experimenting with one's own reaction, one can prevent future pain. This is the healing art of yoga in relation to healing the physical body. Moreover, humans, by nature, are easily caught up in the web of lust, anger, greed, passion and jealousy that cause emotional upheaval and mind fluctuations. According to Patanjali, to free the mind from fluctuation and vibration and to reach a state of steadiness, the practitioner should practice intensely all of the yogic principles from Yama to Dhyana (Iyengar, 1997). Practicing all of the yogic principles, especially slow breathing in pranyama, enhances parasympathetic activation (Busek & Kemlink, 2005), and creates a sense of relaxation and well-being in the subject (Harinath, et al., 2004). This is how yoga heals the mind. Additionally, it is also a performing art; when the practitioner practices asana, beauty and harmony are created. In the present study, eight advanced yoga masters practiced asana as much as to maintain physical balance. They put more emphasis on mental development by practicing meditation, while the other four less-advanced yoga masters focused more on Asanas practice. Hence, yoga is used as a healing art, a performing art, and as a science by experimenting and observing one's life through self-study.

Yoga is a philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment: the philosophy of life means an overall vision or attitude toward life and its purpose. In this study, the informants' view covered both the beliefs and values related to their way

of life. Their desired goal were achieving a peaceful life and making life happy, and yoga as a way of leading them to have a successful, satisfying, and balanced life. According to Patanjali, the Yoga Sutra gives a wealth of ideas and wisdom to guide the practitioner towards full knowledge of his or her own real nature (Iyengar, 1997). Following the process of yoga gives rise to purity of absolute perfection, which is the essential state all human beings need. Yoga masters believed in the philosophy of yoga and recognized that the goals of yoga practice – self-realization and inner peace – were the same as their goals of life. When the Yoga Sutra practitioner practices the highest level of meditation and Samadhi, at that level, the mind becomes free from all thoughts (Nimbalkar, 2007). Therefore, Buddhist yoga masters can further advance their practice with vipassana meditation to attain enlightenment. This is the ultimate aim, the mind reaching a peaceful and happy state.

Becoming a Yoga master

Although, at their initial stage of yoga study, all of the key informants did not intend to become yoga masters, along the way of their yoga practice, the honor yoga masters received and the mind cultivation they were able to achieve changed their mind. Their regular yoga practice made them naturally inclined to assume the yoga master role because the yoga masters they observed were good examples of having a good health, loving kindness and mercy, assisting and supporting others, and living in a contented way. Moreover, when they decided to enter the yoga way of life, they had a variety of reasons. The informants expressed that a common reason for engaging in the yogic lifeway related to their health and well-being. They believed that yoga could

bring the expected results. However, a few yoga masters had initially become interested in yoga when they wanted to use the yoga knowledge for their work. Several motivations have also been identified to becoming a yoga master or yoga teacher, which is more difficult than becoming another teacher because yoga masters have to be their own critics and correct their own practice simultaneously (Feuerstein, 1999).

Regarding motivations to become a yoga master, the informants expressed that they were inspired by their complete faith in the yoga philosophy, by its ultimate goal fitting with their goal of life, by experiencing the benefits of yoga practice, and being impressed by the way of life of their yoga masters. Regarding the yoga philosophy, the aim of yoga practice is to restrain the restless mind to be calm. The practice of yoga follows the Yoga Sutra, which deals with the mind and its activities (correct perception, incorrect understanding, imagination, dreamless sleep, and memory). The result of these activities is *Dhuka* or a feeling of being restricted (Desikachar, 1999). The yogic way helps practitioners maintain their homeostasis or balance and their awareness, which reduce suffering. Faith is a subjective experience (Iyengar, 1995). Faith was a driving force for the yoga masters to improve themselves for the betterment of their lives. It creates new possibilities (Lown, 2008), enhances human abilities to develop new thinking and involves courage and trust. The yoga engagement of a few informants in the present study was initiated and motivated by their positive impression of the yogic lifeway of their respected yoga teachers, leading to faith in yoga philosophy. Thus, the informants were initially driven by their faith in yoga and their desire to follow their yoga teacher in achieving the happiness, peace, and loving kindness that they embodied. Moreover, the yogic way can be congruent

with one's goal of life. Different persons may have different goals of life such as a peaceful life, liberation, good health, and so on. The results from the yoga masters' practice pointed them to the same direction as that of their optimal goal, which was having a peaceful life. These motivations made the yoga practitioners under investigation to consistently practice yoga until they became yoga masters. As Iyengar (1995) said in his classic guide to integrate yoga into daily life in order to reach the goal of liberation, regular practice must be maintained. Therefore, because the goal of yoga practice is congruent with the masters' goal of life, they maintained a constant yoga practice and moved towards becoming experts. Experiencing the benefits of yoga practice such as successful health-problem management, improvement of physical and mental health, as described by the informants, also encouraged their yoga practice. When they obtained benefits from their practice, they served as a driving force to maintain their practice. These findings are consistent with the results of an earlier study, which reported that positive experiences from yoga practice attributed directly to their sustained efforts to maintain an ongoing practice (Hodges, 2007). Similarly, Newcombe (2008) asserted that the effects of yoga in terms of better emotional and physical well-being motivated women to continually attend the yoga class because many women felt improvements in their health and emotional equilibrium. Regarding the process of self-development, their true progress and understanding of yoga, from the novice to the expert level, were able to sustain their yoga practice. Most yoga masters said that there were various factors that helped them progress in their yoga practice.

Firstly, they needed to prepare themselves. They required self-commitment to really strive and persist in the yoga practice. Self-discipline in the practice of asanas,

pranayama, and meditation is crucial because these components help prepare the physical body move towards mental development. According to Desikachar (1999: 153), it is only when the correct practice is followed for a long time, without interruptions, and with a quality of positive attitude and eagerness in practice that it can be a success. Moreover, the findings revealed that, to succeed in yoga practice, practitioners should open their minds and reduce Ahamkara to make them gentle and ready to study. Being opened-minded and gentle to teachers makes them teach what they know with loving kindness by exchanging their life experiences. The exchange of life experiences always encourages the learning of new things. This also helps students overcome barriers in the journey because the teacher can show them, from previous experiences, how to overcome those barriers.

Secondly, concerning strategies to advance in the yogic way, this study found that there were 6 strategies of self-development: searching for a yoga course to study and understand the yoga science, practicing yoga patiently and strictly, complemented one's regular work with yoga practice, creating a group of practitioners, learning and sharing knowledge and life experiences simultaneously, and motivating one's life. Studying and understanding the yoga science can be done through yoga gurus, yoga text books, and learning from one's own practice; however, learning from expert yoga teachers was identified as the best way because teachers can give advice to the practitioners and they know the limitations of each student. Their experiences related to the yogic way can point the students to the right direction and a quick improvement can be made. Nevertheless, there is a small number of expert teachers available in the Thai cultural context. Therefore, reading textbooks and accordingly practicing by oneself are essential; one's understanding increases after practice. Moreover, at the

yoga study course, the practitioner can meet yoga experts and mutually share experiences. Initially, practice helps one understand the actual change the teachers talk about. Therefore, practicing by oneself and reading yoga text books help the yoga practitioner's understanding of yoga. Additionally, having good yoga textbooks is like having a teacher by your side for consultation. Practicing yoga patiently and sharing life experiences related to its practice were important strategies to reach the goal of self-realization. Guru Iyengar (2005) argued that by means of a sustained practice, everyone could reach the goal of enlightenment and freedom while following the yoga journey. Desikachar (1999) recommended three methods to help the yoga practitioners climb upward: tapas – patient practice asana and pranyama and strict diet; Svadhyaya – self-study by reading and studying certain texts help us know ourselves and see a reflection of our mind; and isvarapranidhana – the quality of our action. This is congruent with the strategies that yoga masters used for their self-development in order to become experts of the yogic way. In addition, by complimenting one's regular work with yoga practice and having a group to teach yoga, other persons could be helped to study yoga and additional opportunities to practice yoga while teaching others would be available. Most of the yoga masters heightened that practicing with a group improved their practice fast because they had to push themselves and practice more in order to share their knowledge with others. Furthermore, the group served like an exercise for them to investigate their progress. Moreover, monitoring one's life or observing oneself while patiently practicing yoga was also a wonderful way to gauge the practitioner's progress and state of his/her mind and body. For example, when one practices the same postures every day, one's thoughts and attitude change during the practice due to one monitoring oneself.

Therefore, all yoga masters should practice by using themselves as an experiment to move forward in the achievement of the desired goal.

Lastly, in reference to successful factors, without good friends and yoga teachers or gurus, it is hard to succeed in the yoga journey because gurus give students guidance and inspiration. Yoga is a practical science that deals with the human mind. This study found that intent and perseverance in practice are key to achieving its/one's goal; however, there were many obstacles along the way that could not be solved by the novice practitioner on his/her own. Only the guru, who has first-hand experience of phenomena and realization in the yogic path, can reach the ultimate spiritual destination of all yogic endeavors and help his/her students solve those impediments. Therefore, the tacit intuition of self rising above the ego, which is gurus have experienced, are necessary for progress in yoga. Similar to Bhaskarananda (2002), it is my view that everyone is unique and that students may encounter even hazards while practicing yoga due to a lack of experience. They might not be able to handle those problems without the help of a competent teacher.

According to Feuerstein (2001), in the yoga tradition, there are six types of Gurus, classified according to their function: the impeller who stimulates interest in the would-be devotee; the indicator who points out the spiritual discipline; the explainer who expounds the spiritual process and its objective; the revealer who shows the details of the process; the teacher who instructs in the actual spiritual discipline; and the illuminator who lights up the lamp of mental and spiritual knowledge in the disciple. In this study, yoga masters mean teachers. Teachers are persons who advise, teach and stimulate their students to practice until they realize what the way of yoga practice is according to what is appropriate and comes out right

with them. Without a guide of practice, students may not reach their intended goal or the journey of reaching the goal may be so long that they may get discouraged. The relationship between the teacher and the student should, therefore, be constant. All of character traits of the teachers serve as examples for their students to be perfect in body, mind and spirit.

The integration of yoga practice in daily life

The findings in this study show that the yoga masters had integrated yoga into their daily life for a variety of reasons;; each reason related to health and the meaning of yoga. These include responding to healthcare needs, maintaining the existence of humanity, maintaining a balanced life and intellectual development, and integrating yoga into complementary therapies to deal with health problems.

Responding to health care needs

The informants adopted many yoga techniques to maintain their health. They mostly practiced asana, pranyama, meditation, and adopted other health-promoting behaviors such as healthy food. They consumed vegetables and fruit, and slept enough in order to restore their energy supply and damaged tissues. They found that following Yama and Niyama, which deal with ethical and moral commitment, helped eliminate suffering, which mostly occurs as a consequence of ignorance in the form of selfishness or fear. Moreover, the yoga masters mentioned two fundamental ethical precepts as their guidelines, universal morality and personal observances, which helped them shape their attitudes and behavior, leading to good social relationships. Then they moved toward pranyama and concentration; these practices helped them

concentrate the mind, which makes one ready for meditation. These results, like those of Cowen & Adams (2005) and Tran, et al., (2001), asserted that Hatha yoga is comprised of asana, pranyama and meditation, which result in significant improvement of muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. However, these benefits are a result of patient practice (Vivekananda; 2010). The yoga masters continually practiced meditation to clear their minds until they experienced the state of self-realization. At this state, the mind is controlled and the nervous excitement turned down, which brings calmness and enables one to see things more clearly or as they are. One's temperament as well as health is also better. Furthermore, the yoga masters expressed that their continuous yoga practice benefited all of the aspects of their health or the five sheaths, which is similar to assertions of previous studies that yoga has many positive effects on the general components of fitness and health such as balance, flexibility, leg strength, and so on, and on the treatment of several specific conditions such as headache, low-back pain, etc. (Friedl, 2011; Somsap and Lertpaiboon, 2009). When the mind can continually concentrate upon an object for a length of time without distraction and is able to reject the external part of perception, the state of real happiness is reached. Again, discipline in practice begins with the five universal moral disciplines and personal observances related to how to deal with people around us and optimally shape our attitude and behavior. Asana and controlled breathing were practiced together with concentration. After them, the mind as well as the body is relaxed and calm, which is the foundation of meditation, leading to wisdom, awareness and enlightenment.

Maintaining the existence of humanity

Human life concerns eating, sleeping and rest, and living with others in the society. To this regard, all of the informants were also concerned with eating, sleeping and living with others in the society. They were concerned with having healthy food habits, adequate sleep, harmonious living in the society and sharing life experiences with others. To be physically and mentally healthy, their food habits involved mainly consuming vegetables, fruit, protein from plant sources and prolonged chewing. All of the food was Sattavic, which does not interrupt mind. According to the yoga tradition, food is classified into three groups: Rajas comprising food with strong flavor such as chili, onions and garlic; Tamas comprising fermented food such as meat and alcohol; and Sattavic comprising vegetables and fresh fruit. The latter provides the mind with preparedness (Iyenga, 2008). The quality of food one consumes not only affects one's physical body, but one's emotional state also. Yoga prescribes a low-protein and high-carbohydrate and fiber diet (Gharote, 1990). Because meat is tamasic in quality and considered to be heavy and enervating, making the mind dull and sluggish, it should be avoided, while carbohydrates, especially oats, fruit and vegetables that are Sattvic in quality, is excellent for those who desire to live a quiet, peaceful and meditative life. Eating vegetables and fruit, occasionally, fish promotes good excretion and a light body, which are recommended by the yogic way. All of the yoga masters also chewed their food thoroughly and ate in moderation. Prolonged chewing helps the alimentary system digest, and consuming more food than one's body requires means that, according to the principle of Yama, the body is harmed (Ahimsa).

All of the informants in the present study had adequate sleeping hours, averaging 7-8 hours. They valued that adequate sleep was essential for the

maintenance of both a healthy body and mind. The body restores and repairs damaged tissues during deep sleep, and lack of sleep seriously impacts one's health by leaving the individual feeling tired, restless, irritable, dizzy, and having a blurred vision. Yoga techniques such as asanas and meditation can improve sleep quality (Chen, et al., 2009). All of the yoga masters in this study did not have any sleep problems which may be attributed of their regular yoga practice.

As a member of the society, one may face several stressful conditions that disturb one's health and well-being. The yoga masters were interested in living harmoniously in the society, and sharing life experiences with others. They actively participated in social activities and devoted themselves to the welfare of others in order to live happily or have harmonious living. Sage Patanjali gives the yoga tools that can serve as a guideline for one's way of life. The practice of Yama and Niyama helped shape the yoga master to be a loving, helpful, gentle, reliable and responsible person. These virtues helped them live in the society happily and have true friends. In terms of sharing life experiences – yoga taught them to be generous and helpful to others – they believed that the more they give, the more they gain. Hence, they felt proud and spiritually uplifted when having the chance to give and share their knowledge and experiences with others in the society.

Maintaining life balance and intellectual development

The yoga practice was used to balance the five sheaths of human existence. It may not be possible to separate which action affects a certain sheath, but, rather, the five sheaths of life as a whole are continuously affected, and the Yoga Sutra is a guideline for achieving and maintaining life balance. All of the yoga masters valued that Yama and Niyama were foundational concepts for attitudinal modification and initial

mind purification. However, it is difficult for one to start one's yoga practice with these components because they cannot be seen like asanas can; most of the yoga masters initially practiced asana and pranayama. Yama and Niyama were practiced during asana and pranayama practice and helped them shape their attitudes and behavior, leading to a social balance and maintaining peaceful mind. They practiced asana and pranayama more and more until their physical bodies and their minds were strong enough to move on to meditation practice. Asanas help prepare both the physical body and the mind. A good quality of asana practice involves breathing control, so the mind is also affected. When one can link asanas and breathing during the practice of asana, the mind becomes focused (Desikachar, 1999). Then one can move on to concentration. Therefore, this practice assists in achieving mind readiness for meditation and further intellectual development. The informants indicated that the first four components: Yama, Niyama, both on-the-mat and off-the-mat asana, and pranayama along with Sattavic (fruit, vegetables) food, help purify the mind and make mental development possible. The last four components of yoga, which focus on more advanced meditation, help intellectual development or the development of the innermost part of the human being. Hence, both the body and the mind were well-prepared for optimal benefits; particularly, real happiness would be obtained. Furthermore, according to the findings, the yoga masters can be classified into 2 groups based on their goal of yoga practice. The first group aimed to achieve a balanced health and happy life; they focused more on the first four components of the Yoga Sutra. The second group, who aimed to achieve intellectual development, focused not only on the first four components of the Yoga Sutra, but also on meditation. They usually integrated Buddhist vipassana meditation to further their

intellectual development, aiming to attain liberation. They found that yoga was very helpful in purifying their body and mind for advanced meditation practice.

Integrating yoga and complementary therapies to deal with health problems

According to the yogic perspective, diseases come from the fluctuations of the mind, while Ayurveda attributes diseases to an imbalance in the constituents of the body. Most of the yoga masters highlighted that their health problems come from an imbalance of elements in their bodies. Although yoga masters were healthy by yogic standards, they, occasionally, experienced some health deviations and undesirable symptoms such as phlegm, cold, constipation, and menopausal symptoms in the female informants. Many of the yoga masters successfully used yoga and other complementary therapies, relative to their background and beliefs, to deal with their health problems. For examples, to deal with allergic rhinitis and colds, they practice asana, pranayama, anuloma, viloma (breathing control), kapalabhati and cleaning the nasal cavity (cleansing techniques), and adjusted their food balance. Kapalabhati (forceful rapid breathing), which is a kriya technique; especially helps clean the airway through inhalation and exhalation. It also helps improve the extension of the diaphragm, which is good for breathing. This claim concurs with the findings of previous studies, which have reported that asana and breathing control reduce allergic symptoms and improve the quality of life of adults with respiratory allergy (Sabina Williams, Wall, Bansal, Chupp & Katz, 2005). To deal with menopausal symptoms, they practiced asana, pranayama, meditation, and kriya (cleansing techniques), and consumed healthy food, particularly beans and tofu. Practicing specific prone positions such as the locust pose, Bhujungasana, Dhanusana and Surya Namasakan to balance hormone secretion and reduce mental stress, resulted in a decrease of the severity of menopausal

symptoms. That yoga improves hormonal balance associated with preventing menopausal discomfort, was claimed by previous research (Adams, 2003). Other complementary therapies such as herbal medicine, food adjustment (eating food with cold effectiveness), and consuming natural food products (unpolished brown rice, mushrooms, coconut juice, etc.) were used. These kinds of food are Sattavic and help bring balance to both the body and mind. Fresh food also increased prana in the body.

Experiencing the outcomes of yoga practice

In this study, the yoga masters perceived positive outcomes towards having a healthy body, psycho-emotion stability, and intellectual development.

All of them valued that they obtained positive outcomes related to physical health. These outcomes were: a healthy, flexible and energetic body with a better figure (fit and firm), and physical comfort. This was attributed to their asana practice; the equilibrium of the opposite forces helped them obtain good health, flexibility and comfort. Asana also helps the preparation for pranyama practice and mental development (Nimbalkar, 2007). Therefore, the practice of Asanas helped the yoga masters experience improved physical health, flexibility, and comfort. This claim has been proven by scientific experiments. Asana practice over ten weeks reported more flexibility and balance (Puymbroeck, Payne & Hsieh, 2007; Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer, & Eckert, 2007); better muscular strength and endurance and health perception (Cowen & Adams, 2005), and reduction in the proportion of body fat (Smingwan, 2007). Besides, the informants reported that health problems such as waist ache, backache, and allergy had disappeared. The forward, backward, and

lateral bending of the back during asanas practice make the spinal column flexible, move more efficiently and improve co-ordination of the muscles; all of which help release pain in the back (Iyengar, 2008). Empirical proof has been reported that the practice of asana, pranyama and relaxation techniques reduces pain and disability, and improves spinal flexibility (Tekur, Singhpow, Nagendra & Raghuram, 2008). Moreover, four of the informants suffering from allergies reported that their allergies had disappeared after they started living according to the yogic way. This may indicate that yoga has a stabilizing effect on the immune system, and that pranyama practices such as kapalabhati and breathing through alternate nostrils are beneficial to respiratory passages, increasing their tolerance to respiratory infection.

Most of the yoga masters in this study acknowledged the positive effects of yoga on psycho-emotion stability after practicing yoga for a year, e.g., a peaceful mind, emotional stability, and quick adjustment of an occurred imbalance. They perceived that the immediate benefits were energy and strength to perform daily activities. These benefits may be a result of regular Asanas and pranyama practice. Raub (2002) asserted its beneficial influence on four major systems of human body: locomotion through the musculoskeletal system, oxygen delivery through the cardiopulmonary system, and control of nervous and endocrine systems. Moreover, during the practice of asanas one's focus should always be inward, feeling one's body in the pose, noticing what different poses do to different parts of the body, and how one's breathing changes through the practice. Afterwards, one feels more energetic, the emotions become more stable and the mind more focused. These results are consistent with those of the study of Shapiro, et al. (2007), who asserted that the significant immediate changes seen after each yoga class are a more positive mood

and more energy. Some perceived a gradual decrease in egotism, which causes mental suffering in one's day-to-day life. These findings concurred with those of many studies. For example, Harinath, et al. (2004) conducted a study on the effect of Hatha yoga and Omkar meditation on psychological profile and melatonin secretion. Yoga practice, consisting of Asanas and pranyama in the morning for 1 hour and Asanas, pranayama, and meditation for 1 hour in the evening, daily for 3 months, significantly improved well-being among healthy male volunteers. Similarly, the regular practice of Hatha yoga for three months improved overall concentration and attention, decreased trait anxiety, and improved motivation for success among 84 college students (Statler, Wheeler & Siegel, 2007).

The informants of this study valued that the outcomes from regular yoga practice concentrate on self-understanding and consciousness, leading to intellectual or wisdom development and increased self-awareness. These outcomes lead to behavioral changes such as having loving kindness, humility, and easier elimination of negative thoughts from the mind, leading one to live happily with others. Several informants perceived an increased realization towards life, improved self-esteem, and enhanced self-confidence. This may be due to the fact that regular asana and meditation helps the mind slow down and become quiet. When the mind is relaxed and quiet, it becomes easier to identify and listen to the positive thoughts that arise as well as to recognize and let go of negative thoughts. When it is able to move past negative thoughts without being attached to them, self-esteem and self-confidence improve greatly (McConnell, 2010). Most of the yoga masters valued that the yogic way helped them develop loving kindness, humility, gratitude, an enhanced sense of sharing, and an ability to eliminate bad things from their mind easier. When they have

humility, it means that they operate on an empty glass, so they always learn new things. Being humble to the gurus makes them teach whatever they know with loving kindness. The ways we approach each other would be positive and gratitude would be obtained. Moreover, when following a moral and ethical conduct and self-discipline – the first and second limbs of the Yoga Sutra – one should show kindness towards others and their bodies. Regular practice brings the mind into a state of equilibrium (Markil, Geithner & Penhollow, 2010).

Additionally, all of the informants in this study were Buddhist yoga masters. They practiced both yoga and Buddhist meditation (vipassana). Some of the identified outcomes may be as a result of vipassana practice; however, yoga and meditation go hand in hand as tools to help increase self-esteem and confidence in life. The Asanas prepare the body to be able to sit in meditation comfortably by stretching and strengthening the muscles of the body. It also helps to quiet the mind by bringing attention to breathing and sensations within the body. When the mind moves into a more meditative state, the body and mind releasing stress, creating more comfort in the body and increasing self-esteem and self-confidence (McConnell, 2010). When the mind is calm, any limiting thoughts that bring negativity into one's life would release. Then one could connect to one's intuition and make wiser decisions in life and more easily eliminate bad things from one's mind (Lach, 2012). Most of the yoga masters agreed that they had obtained several qualities from the yoga way. These qualities were having humility, gratitude, self-understanding, and loving kindness. All are essential to the yogic way because they, according to the principle of yama and niyama in the philosophy of the Yoga Sutra, are the gate to achieving a clear mind.

When the yoga practitioner shows humility, it means his ego has diminished, which is the aim of yoga practice (Desikachar, 1999).

Cultural beliefs influencing the yoga practice

The findings of this study suggest that the cultural beliefs and factors that influence yoga practice mostly derive from religious and traditional beliefs and social structure. These cultural beliefs are faith in yoga philosophy, beliefs associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism, beliefs related to the philosophy of sufficiency economy and contented living.

Faith in the yoga philosophy was identified by the informants in this study as strong belief and trust in the yogic principles. Faith is fundamental to all forms of spirituality. It is the deeply inspired acceptance of a principle as a basis for action. In the yoga science, through continued faith, the practitioner will be given sufficient energy to achieve success (Desikachar, 1999). Furthermore, faith not only enhances a practitioner's learning, but also helps him/her persevere and access the core of science also. When the results of the practice are acknowledged and passed on to others, a serious practice of yoga is achieved. In other words, the relationship between faith and yoga practice could be explained like this: faith, subjectively acquired through the positive outcomes of the practice, enhances further practice.

Belief in Ayurveda was considered as an added value to yoga practice because both yoga and Ayurveda derive from the Vedic sciences. The body consists of basic 5 elements, namely soil, water, wind, fire and space. Basically, Ayurveda views the

human body as being composed of body, mind, senses, and soul. Yoga has accepted this view; hence, both of these healing sciences view life as a sum of psycho-somatic-spiritual phenomena. Ayurveda aims at ending all suffering and maintaining health (Ranade, et. al., 1999). Even though the main aim of yoga is to achieve liberation; it does not exclude the importance of maintaining health in the process of its pursuit. Therefore, when it comes to living for good health, both Ayurveda and yoga are in unison.

Belief in the influence of past deeds on the present reality, i.e., do good to receive good, is consistent with the aspects of yoga. All of the informants in this study were Buddhist, so their basic belief principles are compatible with the morality principle of Buddhism. Morality helps one refrain from behaving badly. This practice generates benefits to self and the society. Some of the moral principles of Buddhism are the same as those of the Yoga Sutra such as being honest and not harming others. Such basic moral principles and those of the Yoga Sutra (Yama and Niyama) can be practiced complementarily. Therefore, their Buddhist beliefs helped the yoga masters automatically increase their practice of yoga. Furthermore, according to the Buddhist philosophy, intellect means to truly understand natural law or reality in order to not fall in the fear of suffering, which is present at birth, as we age, during sickness and at death. Therefore, the mind must be developed to recognize suffering, its cause and ways to eliminate it. Meditation practice is the way to generate this intellect. To obtain intellect, the body and mind must be ready during meditation practice. Asana and pranyama practice helps prepare the body and mind to practice meditation, which creates intellect and realization in order to understand the true nature of things; hence,

this study's Buddhist yoga masters mutually practiced both yoga and Buddhist meditation.

Belief in the philosophy of sufficiency economy bestowed by his Majesty, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, to the people of Thailand, highlights a balanced way of living. The goal of this philosophy is to improve human well-being (Mongawad, 2010). Sufficiency economy and yoga practice are very compatible with each other and strive to enhance human well-being. Another aim of yoga practice is to help the practitioner detach from the material world. Yoga helps maintain human homeostasis and awareness/sensibility to the surrounding environment. Naturally, the yogi begins to consume less, try to conserve natural resources more, and become more content, happy, and healthy. Therefore, following/practicing the principles of the philosophy of sufficiency economy and yoga complement each other.

The results show that there were no cultural beliefs that inhibit yoga practice, but there were two impeding personal factors – lack of self-discipline and inadequacy of practice time. These barriers were similar to those of many other physical activities (Johnson, et al., 1990). However, they were considered insignificant barriers by the yoga masters because they were viewed as incentives to assist self-development. Faith in the yoga philosophy and positive outcome experiences were mentioned as benefits that could help them overcome these barriers. This is consistent with the results of the study by Somsap and Lertpaiboon (2009), who asserted that time, was a factor hindering participants' attendance of yoga practice sessions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the research, including its implications and recommendations in relation to ways in which nurses can apply these yoga principles and practices in nursing practice and education, and future research projects. Moreover, this study's strengths in gathering data and Limitations are also presented.

1. Conclusions

This qualitative research focused on an ethnographic study entitled “Daily life yoga practice for well-being of yoga masters: an ethnographic study,” which was intended to explicate the yoga concepts related to health and well-being as well as explain, from the perspective of yoga masters, the meanings and integration of yoga practice into daily life. This included cultural beliefs factors that influence daily-life yoga practice.

This research was conducted based on the experiences of yoga masters. The ethnographic method was used to achieve the objective of this study. Twelve key informants and twenty-two general informants participated in this study. The data were collected by the researcher using several collecting techniques, including

participant observation and reflection, semi-structured interviews and tape recordings, making field notes, and taking photographs until there was a saturation of the data. The data from the tape recorders were transcribed subsequently paralleled with the data analysis. Spradley's ethnographic method analysis for qualitative data was used as a guideline to analyze all of the information gathered from the beginning of the fieldwork. The findings indicated that the cultural beliefs of yoga masters had shaped the meanings of yoga, becoming a yoga master, the integration of yoga into daily-life practice, and the experience of the outcomes of yoga practice.

The meanings of yoga

The yoga masters, being knowledgeable in yoga practice, described the meaning of yoga practice as a tool to promote health, a science and an art of living a perfect life, and a philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment. Yoga as a tool to promote health was reflected in that it lead to a healthy, balanced, and happy life through self-exploration, mindfulness cultivation, changes of attitude towards life, and moral development. Yoga is the science and art of living a perfect life. In other words, it served as a guideline to reach life's ultimate goal, that is, a real inner peace. Yoga is a philosophy of life leading to a peaceful life and enlightenment, which means having a life without dhuka, but with value and well-being. These meanings related to achieving optimal health and happiness, which all humanity seeks after. Additionally, yoga practice is used as a way of life and spiritual guideline to reach the ultimate goal from the yoga masters' world view.

Becoming a yoga master

Before becoming experts in the yoga science, significant motivation and a self-developmental process were described as necessary by the key informants. The identified significant motivations to become a yoga master were: faith in the philosophy of yoga, fitting yoga with one's goal of life, experiencing the benefits of yoga practice, and being impressed by way of life of yoga gurus. The key informants underwent a process of self-development to truly progress from having little knowledge about yoga as a novice to reaching the optimal level of expertise as a yoga master. This process had three main features. Firstly, self-preparation, which related to self-commitment to really strive and persist in yoga practice, and Ahumkara reduction were identified by the yoga masters. The second feature was strategies to improve oneself in order to advance in the practice of yoga. This feature comprised searching for a yoga course to study and understand the yoga science, practicing yoga patiently and strictly, complemented one's regular work with yoga practice, creating a group of practitioners, learning and sharing knowledge and life experiences simultaneously, and motivating one's life. The third feature was the successful factors enhancing success in journey of the yogic way of life such as having good friends and yoga teachers.

The integration of yoga practice in daily life

The yoga masters described the integration of yoga practice in daily life in four themes. Firstly, responding to healthcare needs; all of the yoga masters acknowledged the importance of the integration of yoga practice into daily life for the

maintenance of health, self-care and relief of dhuka. Secondly, maintaining human existence concerned healthy food habits, adequate sleep and harmonious living in the society. Thirdly, maintaining a life balance and obtaining intellectual development were achieved through the practice of the eight components of the Yoga Sutra, which emphasize asana, pranayama and meditation practice for maintenance of balance in life. They applied both the main components of the Yoga Sutra and other yogic techniques, particularly cleansing techniques and naturopathic cures. Finally, yoga was integrated with complementary therapies to deal with health problems that mostly come from the imbalance of elements in one's body; for instance, the common problems that existed in the day-to-day lives of yoga masters were allergic rhinitis, constipation and menopausal symptoms in women aged above 45 years.

Experiencing the outcomes of yoga practice

The yoga masters perceived positive outcomes towards physical health, psycho-emotional stability and intellectual development. Their perception of outcomes from yoga practice concentrated on physical flexibility, emotional stability, being fit and firm, eliminating bad feelings from the mind more easily, and intellectual development related to an increase in one's self-realization towards life, improved self-esteem, and enhanced self-confidence. All of these bring about behavioral changes such as having loving kindness, humility and gratitude towards yoga. These lead to living happily with others, reinforce self-esteem, and helps one easily detach from self.

Cultural beliefs and factors enhance yoga practice

The cultural beliefs enhancing one's yoga practice with the aim of reaching one's life goal are categorized into two groups. The cultural beliefs enhancing yoga practice were: 1) faith in the yoga philosophy, 2) belief associated with Ayurveda and Buddhism, 3) belief associated with sufficiency economy and contented living, 4) high educational level, 5) enjoying the understanding and support of the family, 6) support from one's employment organization, 7) health problems, 8) experiencing the positive outcomes of practice, and 9) support of health promoting policies related to CAMs. The factors impeding yoga practice were lack of self-discipline and inadequate time to practice. Faith in yoga philosophy led yoga masters toward success in their yoga practice because this faith nourished a desire to practice yoga seriously. Belief in Ayurveda, which aims to end all suffering and maintain good health, associated with the basic life elements; hence, in the journey of living in good health, Ayurveda and yoga proceeded together. Buddhist morality and the Yama and Niyama principles of the Yoga Sutra, which concur with each other, were practiced complementarily. A high education and experiencing positive outcomes were beneficial to helping yoga practitioners understand yogic texts and build yoga networks. Enjoying the understanding and support of family members and the support of one's employment organization enhanced their practice. For example, if one's family members understood of the yoga master's yoga practice, they would help with the family responsibilities that the yoga master was unable to perform due to his/her devotion to practicing yoga; consequently, the yoga master's practice would quickly improve. The support of organizations, e.g. making facilities available for practice, helped yoga practitioners create yoga groups and have continuous opportunities to

practice. Health problems were important to yogic practice because the positive outcomes of yoga practice were a driving force for them to keep practicing. The inadequate time for practice and lack of self-discipline impeded yoga practice because yoga is a practical science; one needs to spend time practicing in order to see any benefits.

2. Implications and recommendations

The findings of this qualitative study showed that the yoga masters' beliefs have shaped the construction of experience of yoga practice in Thai culture. This was reflected in the meanings of yoga, becoming a yoga master, integration of yoga into daily life, and cultural belief factors associated with the practice of yoga. These pointed out significant suggestions and recommendations for nursing practice and education, and further research, as the following.

Nursing practice

1. The findings indicated that yoga is a tool to promote health and a science and an art of living a perfect life. They provide insights for nurses to understand the significance of yoga. It can be applied for health promotion to people of all ages and health statuses, as well as for disease prevention and symptom management. Moreover, yoga is a philosophy of life that aims to lead one to achieving a peaceful life and enlightenment. Hence, nurses as healthcare providers, should use these findings to place sufficient emphasis on the promotion of yoga practice for one's

health and as a way of life. Furthermore, the findings indicated that regular yoga practice improves holistic health and intellectual development, leading to a betterment of life. This could help nurses apply yoga for holistic care in their patients and families, both in the hospital and the community.

2. The findings showed that faith in the yoga philosophy seriously enhanced the practitioner's success in yoga practice. One must be diligent and patient in one's regular practice in order to reach one's ultimate goal in life. Nurses should use this information to help practitioners succeed in achieving a sustainable yoga practice and, consequently, the goal they have set for themselves. Cultural factors influenced the yoga masters' daily-life practice. This should serve as an insight to health professionals to reinforce the appropriate factors that are conducive to encouraging yoga practice in the general population.

Nursing education

Nursing education in Thailand is mainly developed based on the Western scientific framework, which views yoga to be synonymous with the physical discipline of asana. In fact, it is quite possible that yoga practitioners have studied only the physical postures and have not explored the many other dimensions of its practice (the eight limbs of the Yoga Sutra) that are practiced by yoga masters. The nursing curriculum should take into account these findings about the yoga masters' activities and their life ways. Yoga, both theory and practice, should be included in all levels of education. At the undergraduate level, yoga is used for the health promotion of nursing students. Moreover, it can be used for the health promotion of people in communities, e.g., to improve psychological and physiological health, intellect, and as

a guidance for people to seek optimal happiness. At the postgraduate level, students should have enough knowledge in this area and make it their foundation for research studies in order to advance the use of yoga in a healthcare setting.

Further research

In light of findings of this study, the recommendations for future research are as follows:

1. The findings demonstrated in-depth information regarding yoga masters' ideology on yoga ways and how to integrate yoga in the daily life of people with different life goals. This is a valuable foundation to create a health-promotion model. Numerous benefits and a few barriers related to the practice of yoga were discovered; however, there was a limitation concerning the number of yoga practitioners. Further studies on the benefits, barriers and cues related to yoga practice should be conducted among persons who have never practiced yoga, who irregularly practice it and who have a sustained practiced. Moreover, further research that helps develop a yoga health promotion model should be congruent with the intended population's daily life in order to achieve a sustainable yoga practice.

2. The present study clearly showed how the participants, Thai Buddhist yoga masters, integrate yoga into their daily lives to promote health and fulfill their life goal. Research should be extended to the exploration of how to integrate yoga to fulfill the life goal of people with different beliefs and cultural backgrounds, especially Muslims who have a lot of restrictions on wearing clothes (the exposure of their bodies) and religious belief in one God.

3. Strengths in the gathered data

The strengths in the gathered data consist in its employment of specific informants, the background of the researcher, and the inclusion criteria.

Informants: the researcher concerns herself with living a healthy life through yoga practice. The benefits of yoga were obtained from direct experience of yoga practice and not by merely reading yogic books or adopting a specific outward appearance. Thus, the inclusion criteria identified the informants to be experienced yoga masters. This could be an important strength of this study as their valuable knowledge and experience were explored in-depth. This knowledge can be used to guide and maximize the full potential capabilities of yoga practice.

Researcher: the researcher is a Buddhist nurse and a follower of the yogic way. She has a pre-understanding of this perspective. She can share opinions with the informants and has much understanding regarding the yogic way in the Thai situation. Moreover, she gained much understanding when participating in yoga practice and discussions with yoga guru, who are knowledgeable in both yogic theory and practice. However, she also suffered from one weakness; the researcher was familiar with the cultural scene, which may have steered her toward easily jumping to conclusions. To solve this issue, the searcher always asks the informants what they meant in relation to their practice before interpreting information or making conclusions.

Methodology: ethnography allowed the researcher to observe the activities and life pattern of the informants under study closely, and go beyond what was observed in order to explore deeply. Participant observations helped the researcher to clearly and naturally understand the phenomenon under study. The researcher is an

emic being, who had easy access to information and repeated observation of a certain phenomenon.

4. Limitations of the study

This study aimed to explain the meaning of daily life yoga practice and the integration of yoga into daily life practice of yoga masters who had been ongoing regular yoga practice for five years or more in the Thai context. This study has limitation in terms of some words were difficult to find the exact the words to describe; hence sense of meaning may be alter.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX: C-1

Interview guide for key informants

The following open- ended questions related to daily life yoga practice for health and well-being will be explored with key informants. However, the interviewer may modify or add some important questions along the process of interview if needed.

1. What are your objectives of yoga practice?

- What is your motivated goal of yoga practice?
- How do your objectives of yoga practice?
- Do you accomplish your objective of yoga practice? And how?

2. How does your health going on today?

- How do your health status before practicing yoga in daily life?
- How is your current health status?
- What does it differ before practicing yoga in daily life?
- When does it change?
- How do you feel after practicing yoga in daily life?
- Could you tell me how you bring yoga to promote health and solve health problems in your daily living? Please give example.
- How does yoga practice effects to you health? Please give example.

3. What do you perceive and mean about well-being?

- What do you mean as “well-being”?
- What do you think when we are talking about well-being?
- What do you talk related to well-being?

- How do you know, you are well-being in your life? Please specify what indicators are about well-being.
 - If the scores of well-being are 10 and score of 0 is suffering, which does score of your health status?
4. What do you perceive and mean about daily life yoga practice?
- How is importance or significance of daily life yoga practice in your life?
 - How do you integrate yoga in daily life practice? Please give example.
 - Could you describe what is like to be a yogic practice in daily life since get up in the morning until sleeping at night?
 - What is yoga technique that you use in daily life to promote well-being?
 - How does yoga practice promote your well-being? Please give example.
5. What are factors influence your yoga practice?
- What are factors facilitate your practicing yoga? and, How?
 - What are factors inhibit your practicing yoga?
 - How do you deal with these factors?
6. What are cultural aspects that related to your daily life yoga practice?
- What are cultural aspects, such as belief, culture, or custom, influence your ongoing daily life yoga practice? Please give example.
 - Could you describe how cultural aspects influence your ongoing daily life yoga practice?
7. How do you prepare yourself and act to sustain yoga practice until reaching yoga experts?

APPENDIX: C-2

Interview guide for general informants

General questions

1. How long you stay here?
2. How many yoga centers, temples or places of yoga practice are in this community?

Family members/friends/neighbors

1. What are activities that relate to yogi (key informant) perform in daily living?
2. How do you think about performing yoga in daily life practice of yogic master?
3. What do you find yogic master performing daily life yoga practice?
4. How do you notice as a result of daily life yoga practice of yogic master?
5. What are cultural aspects that relate to for well-being of yogic master?
6. Has yogic master trained yoga to you? And how?
7. Do you influence and facilitate yogic master yoga practice in daily life? And how?

Students

1. Could you explain me how you notice yogic master perform yoga in daily living?
2. How do you notice as a result of daily life yoga practice of yogic master?
3. What do you learn about daily life yoga practice from yogic master?
4. What do you impress related daily life yoga practice of yogic master?

APPENDIX: D

Observation guideline

1. What is going on with yogi master's home family member, physical aspects and environment?
2. How does yogi master practise yoga?
3. How does yogi master integrate yoga practice during their work, their eating, and their rest?
4. What kind of food does yogi master eat, and how does she/he perform eating?
5. What does yogi master aim to do activities?
6. What activities does yogi master perform during health deviation?
7. How does yogi master express verbal and non-verbal such as face voice and behavior during she/he talks or interacts with others?
8. How is different of yogi master's activities from interviews and from observations?
9. What religion practice relate to yoga practice of yogi master?

Beside these guidelines, the content of previous interviews and observation will be used to guide the next observation.

APPENDIX: E-1

Field Note Tanking Form

The following will be used in interviewing

Informant.....

Date Time.....

Place Data collection strategies.....

Plan.....

Semi structure interview guide	Interview tape recorded	Researcher's opinion

Conclusion

Problem.....

Next plan.....

APPENDIX: E-2

The following will be used in interviewing and observation

Informant.....

DateTime.....

PlaceData collection strategies.....

Plan.....

Condensed accounts	Expanded accounts	Researcher's opinion

Conclusion

Problem.....

Next plan.....

APPENDIX: E-3

The following will be used in field work include observation participation, and reflection.

Informant.....

DateTime.....

PlaceData collection strategies.....

Plan.....

Fieldwork journal	Researcher's opinion

Conclusion

Problem.....

Next plan.....

PPENDIX: F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thesis Title: Daily Life Yoga Practice for Well-being of Yogi Masters: An Ethnographic Study

My name is Thaparath Rakpanusit. I am a PhD student of Faculty of Nursing Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand. I am conducting a research project for doctoral degree study. The objective of this study is to gain knowledge and more understanding of daily life yoga practice for well-being of yogi masters. Information enhanced from this study will be valuable and be importance as it will provide data for developing a model of health promotion for people in their culture and sharing experience in using yoga promoted well-being.

I would like to encourage you to join in this study, which will be acted using participation observations, interviews and reflections. This will engage me visiting you at home a number of times over a period of months. Both interviews and discussion will take place during my visits or at anytime and anywhere that you prefer. If you do agree participate in this study, you will be interviewed, which will take time around 90 to 120 minute and will be tape-recorded. During the interview, you may turn down to answer any questions and demand that the tape record will be turned off. No names will show on transcribed interviews. All information from your answers will only be used for purpose of this research project. There is no risk to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary in nature; you may withdraw from this study at any time even after start the interview process. There will be no any effect of your decision to refuse to participate in this study. Your signature will indicate that you understand this form and willing to participate in this study. However, if there are any questions or concerns regarding to this research, please do not hesitate to make contact with me.

Signature:.....

Thaparath Rakpanusit

Name :.....

Krasaesin Hospital, Amphur Krasaesin,

Date :.....

Songkhla, Thailand, 90270

E-mail:thapa_rat@hotmail.com; Phone: 081xxxxxxx

ขอเรียนเชิญเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัย

โครงการวิจัยเรื่อง การปฏิบัติโยคะในชีวิตประจำวันเพื่อส่งเสริมความผาสุกของครูโยคะ

เรียน ครูโยคะ ที่นับถือทุกท่าน

ดิฉันขอเล่าถึงโครงการวิจัยที่กำลังทำอยู่และขอเชิญท่านเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้ จากการทำท่านเป็นผู้เชี่ยวชาญเกี่ยวกับการฝึกปฏิบัติโยคะมาโดยตลอดและได้สอนการฝึกปฏิบัติโยคะให้กับผู้อื่นมาเป็นเวลานานจนเป็นที่ยอมรับของสังคมว่าท่านได้นำโยคะมาใช้ในการส่งเสริมความผาสุกในวิถีชีวิตได้เป็นอย่างดี ซึ่งท่านอาจต้องอาศัยปัจจัยหลายอย่างประกอบกัน ดิฉัน นางสาว รุปรัตน์ รัชฎาภานุสิทธิ์ ซึ่งกำลังศึกษาหลักสูตรปริญญาเอก(นานาชาติ) ที่คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ จึงสนใจที่จะศึกษาว่าท่านปฏิบัติโยคะในชีวิตประจำวันเพื่อส่งเสริมความผาสุกอย่างไรและมีปัจจัยอะไรที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการปฏิบัติโยคะของท่าน เพื่อเป็นข้อมูลในการนำเสนอให้เกิดประโยชน์แก่บุคคลอื่นและแบ่งปันประสบการณ์ให้คนอื่นได้นำโยคะมาใช้ให้เกิดประโยชน์ได้อย่างมีคุณภาพต่อไป ถ้าท่านตัดสินใจเข้าร่วมโครงการนี้ จะมีขั้นตอนของการศึกษาเกี่ยวข้องกับตัวท่านคือ จะมีการสัมภาษณ์ 90-120 นาที การสังเกตการปฏิบัติโยคะและกิจกรรมของท่าน ผู้วิจัยเข้าร่วมการปฏิบัติโยคะและกิจกรรมอื่นๆร่วมกับท่านเป็นครั้งคราวหลายครั้งในช่วงติดต่อกันนับจากนี้ไปตามที่ท่านเห็นสมควร ในโครงการนี้จะมีการบันทึกเสียงการสัมภาษณ์และการถ่ายภาพกิจกรรมการปฏิบัติโยคะของท่าน รายละเอียดข้อมูลที่ได้จากท่านจะถูกเก็บไว้เป็นความลับ การนำเสนอข้อมูลในรายงานวิจัยจะเสนอในภาพรวมของกลุ่มผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยทั้งหมด การเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยครั้งนี้ขึ้นอยู่กับความสมัครใจของท่านและเมื่อท่านเข้าร่วมโครงการนี้แล้ว ท่านมีสิทธิ์ที่จะยกเลิกหรือถอนตัวออกจากการวิจัยไม่ว่ากรณีใดๆ ถ้าท่านมีคำถามใดๆก่อนจะตัดสินใจเข้าร่วมโครงการนี้โปรดซักถามดิฉันได้อย่างเต็มที่

.....

ขอขอบคุณอย่างสูง

(.....)

นางสาวรุปรัตน์ รัชฎาภานุสิทธิ์

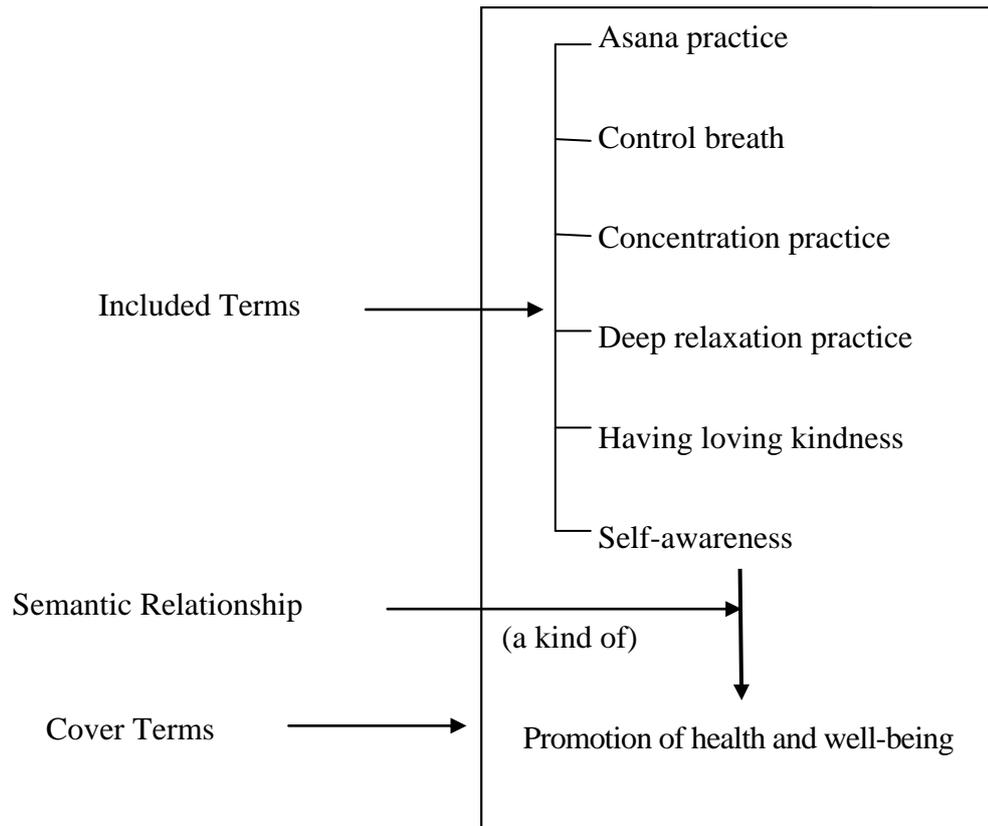
ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัย

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APPENDIX: G

APPENDIX: H-1

Development of domain

DOMAIN: Promotion of health and well-being

APPENDIX: H-2

Taxonomic analysis: Daily life yoga practice

Daily life yoga practice	Food consuming	Selected food eating	Healthy food	Physical health			
			Reduce meat	kindness	Calm mind		
		Adjusted food eating	Kind of food	Cooked food	Not spicy	Comfortable/ no abdominal pain	
				Natural food	Vegetables Fruits	Good excretion	
			Temperature water				
			Quantity of food	Reduce eating	Feel comfortable	Physical balance	
		Meal	Big meal	Breakfast/ Lunch	Full required	Nourish the brain	
				Dinner	Reduce required	Comfortable	
			Between meal	Plan water	Good excretion		
		Chewing	Awareness of chewing	Development of awareness	Intellectual development		
	long chewing		Good digest	Physical healthy			
	Asanas	Individual morning practice	Physical health	light	Muscle toned	Reduce fatty	Physical strength
			Mental health	Relief/comfort	No distraction		
		Group, evening practice	Emotion	Emotional stability	Self-awareness	Intellect/wisdom	
			Social	Sharing knowledge	Make merit	happiness	
	Cleansing/ purification	Body	Taking bath				
			Fruit	Good excretion of waste product			
		Mind	Asanas	Still mind	awareness	Right problem solving	feeling happy
			Change attitude	Oneself	Good thought and good act	Mind calm	
				Social/ environment	Sharing	Good relationship	Be delighted
	Help	Recognize					
	Sleeping pattern	Sleep early	Enough rest	Energetic working	Quality of work	Happiness	
		Get-up early	Cleared brain				

APPENDIX: H-3

Componential analysis:

Paradigm for 'Way to promote physical health'

Dimensions of contrast	Contrast Set	
	Asanas practice	Exercise practice
1. Method	-done slowly with relaxation and awareness - cooperation between body and mind	-done quickly and strain muscle - disunion between body and mind
2. Oxygen consumption	- decreased	- increased
3. Affected areas	- help to harmonize endocrinal secretion - Stimulate parasympathetic nervous system - Blood pressure and heat activity decreases - balance emotions -Tend to eliminate toxins in the body	- overwork to the joints - engender rheumatism Stimulate sympathetic nervous system - Blood pressure and heat activity increases - Tend to build up toxins in the body
4. Expected outcomes	- Remain steady, calm, and comfortable - develop inner awareness for wisdom development - Training to overcome own mind	- Cardiorespiratory endurance and musculoskeletal strength - Not necessarily develop wisdom - Training group to win award
5. Duration of practice	- Long period	- short period
6. Satisfaction	- Yes	- No
7. Reasons	- Comfortable after practice - Calm mind - Practice anytime - Give positive attitude to life	- Fatigue and tired after practice - Joint pain - Practice specific time - Give stiffness to life

APPENDIX: I

List of yogic terms

Asanas: postures which have evolved from the basic concept of learning to sit still for meditation.

Avidya: misapprehension, incorrect knowledge, false understanding; the most important of affliction.

Bandhas: to bind or lock

Citta: a composite word for mind

Chakras: spiritual levels attained through the practice of yoga

Dharana: the state of mind in which the mind is oriented toward one point.

Duhkha: a quality of mind that give us the feeling of being squeezed or limited.

Dhyana: meditation

Gunas: quality of the mind; quality of the universe; any of the three subtle substances that constitute Mother Nature

Isvarapranidhana: to surrender and offer all actions to God, without attachment to the fruits of our action, one of the niyama and a component of kriya yoga

Kriyas: action

Kriya yoga: yoga of purifying action as taught by Patanjali

Kaivalya: ultimate state of yoga, freedom

Moksha: liberation or freedom

Mitahara: food should never exceed nor be less than requirement; it should be nutritious, sweet, and lubricating

Mudras: symbol that refers to skillful technique being helpful in the practice of yoga

Nadi: subtle passage in the body through which prana moves

Nidra: dreamless sleep

Niyama: personal discipline

Panca kosha: five sheaths of human being

Pingala: nadi that terminates at the right nostril

Prana: life-force energy

Pranayama: the process of breathing and control it which consists of three phases inspiration, retention and expiration.

Pratyahara: withdrawal of the senses

Raga: attachment or desire

Rajas: the quality of matter responsible for activity

Sadhaka: yogic practitioner

Sadhana: practice

Samadhi: state of meditation in which only the object of meditation is apparent

Samskara: habitual movement of the mind, habit, conditioning

Svadyaya: self-inquiry; any study that helps person understand himself; the study of sacred texts; one of the niyamas and a component of kriya yoga

Sattva: one of the three qualities of matter responsible for clarity, and lightness

Suffering or dukkha: sorrow, pain, grief, distress

Shusumna: central nadi running through the center of the spine, from the base to the top of the head

Tama: one of the three qualities of matter responsible for heaviness and stability

Tapa: process of removing impurities, elimination, purification, one component of niyama and a component of kriya yoga

Yama: discipline concerning our dealings with society and the world

VITAE

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-

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List of Publication and Proceeding

Publications :

Rakpanusit, T., Hatthakit, U., Boonyasopun, U., Bagga, A. (2013). Menopausal transition with a yogic lifestyle: experiences of Thai yogi masters. *PRINJ*, 17(1), 83-95

McCaffrey, R., Rakpanusit, T., Hatthakit, U., & Kasetsoomboon, P. (2005). The Effects of Yoga on Hypertensive Persons in Thailand. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, July-August, 173-180.

Proceeding:

Rakpanusit, T., Hatthakit, U., Boonyasopun, U. (2013, January, 10-12). Living a healthy life through yoga of yoga masters: a qualitative inquiry. Oral presentation at “*The 1st Annual PSU Phuket International Conference 2012: Multidisciplinary Studies on Sustainable Development*” Phuket, Thailand.

Rakpanusit, T., Hatthakit, U., Boonyasopun, U., Bagga, A. (2012, March 21-22nd). Moving through menopausal transition with yogic way of living: experiences of Thai yogi masters. Oral presentation at *The 3rd International Nursing Conference 2012*” Bandung, Indonesia.

Rakpanusit, T., Hatthakit, U., Boonyasopun, U. (2010, April 7-9). Living healthy life through yoga of yogi masters: an ethnographic study. Oral presentation at *the 2010 International Nursing Conference “Diversity and Dynamic of Nursing Science and Art”*. Phuket Graceland Resort & Spa, Phuket, Thailand.