

Yoga in Higher Education in Japan: Reflection on the 7-Year Journey through Lens of Graduate General Education Courses (GGEC) Yoga Course with Research and Social Innovation Outcomes



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Submission: December 8, 2021; **Published:** December 16, 2021

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Abstract

Yoga in higher education, why, how, and where does it stand among the general education courses as established at the Graduate General Education Courses (GGEC) program at University of Tsukuba is the topic of discussion as presented through this perspective paper. It traces the journey of yoga as one of the courses for graduate students (across disciplines) in a university setting arising from a core value of 'nurturing rich human qualities. Why graduate general education? - The need for graduates with focused knowledge and skills as contributing members of society facing 21st century local and global challenges with all-round skills. yoga course established as a general education subject under 'mental and physical works' of GGEC curriculum has inadvertently become a hot topic along with keywords such as mental health, well-being, and stress, more so with the current global Covid-19 pandemic in its 2nd year. In schools, institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities) it is now acknowledged that there is stress which affects the lives of students. Can yoga other than enriching body & mind, help alleviate stress and cultivate resilience for the world outside, provide graduate students qualities needed for societal responsibilities and duties in life beyond the university? What is the role of a teacher and who is a yoga expert, how is the curriculum? Is there a possibility to measure its outcome, i.e., research on the impact on students' overall well-being, and innovate wellness at the university level? Are there other examples of other similar yoga courses found in other universities in Japan? We look at all these with a vision toward the future.

Keywords: Graduate students; Theory and practical; Holistic yoga approach; Social responsibilities; Well-being; Covid-19

Abbreviations: GGEC: Graduate General Education Courses, UT: University of Tsukuba, TYFA: Tsukuba Yoga for All, AC: Attention Control, SPS: Sensory Processing Sensitivity

Background

Why yoga?

yoga says, "You have infinite wisdom to overcome the difficulties. That wisdom tells you what you can do now and what you have to do. Please listen to that wisdom. It becomes" So, to now answer Why yoga? and it is answered as such: Are not human beings encountering the unknown now? However, in the history of mankind, such events have happened repeatedly, and people have suffered, have sought solutions, and opened a new chapter of history every time. People have the wisdom to overcome the stress

of the unknown when they encounter it. The time will come when that wisdom blooms. It is important that each of us has that hope. And, then it is important to act, to do, and to do now. So, what do we do now that we are feeling anxious and fearful? The way to do is asana, breathing, zazen, and meditation. In yoga, consciousness naturally turns to self. And the answer in me now comes from the inner self. Let us listen to the inner voice. It may seem difficult. It is easy. It just needs to be done. Just doing – asana, breathing, zazen, and meditation. Do not think "I can do it well" or "What does doing this mean?" You might think, "I have never done yoga or

meditation, so it is impossible.” It is the opposite. Authors argue, “In many cases, the more of a novice (beginner) the more you can get into yourself. At first, try it for a minute or tens of seconds. If you keep doing it every day, you will always see the results”.

Why yoga at the GGEC program and its role in higher education?

A chance meeting of an academic researcher (first author) at the Graduate General Education Courses (GGEC; also described in the later sections) program with a yoga Expert/Master (Genboku Takahashi) at the SPORTS (TAIKU) area resulted in the establishment of a first ever comprehensive yoga course (2015) at the graduate level at University of Tsukuba (UT) (Graduate General Education Courses (GGEC), n.d.). Graduate research is not supposed to be easy, and student’s well-being and mental health is always on the forefront of any graduate school and administration (Duffy et al. [1]). Under the purview of the GGEC and the section (one among six) dealing with ‘Mental and Physical Works’, it (yoga) was a perfect fit, dealing with both the body and mind. The course thus aimed to help relieve the students of ‘daily’ / ‘accepted’ stress of doing high-level research, interpersonal relationships in and outside the laboratory, and a diverse information load in the social-media generation era. Further, it was thought that such a balanced and holistic practice could help achieve ‘high’ performance in research, and towards communication with ‘self’ and others (students across disciplines). Although, we describe yoga in higher education in the Japanese context, a literature search revealed that it (yoga) has been well argued outside Japan that yoga has a place in education/higher education and can be beneficial for improving mental health of students (Douglass, Konecki, Shinde, Klatt, Patet & Elstad [2-7]). Moreover, the role of graduate education has also been researched globally, with mentions of graduate attributes, resilience, spirituality, and yoga (Haigh, Holdsworth & Ergas [8-10]). Although one can see research being conducted globally, there is less talk on where Japan stands on this topic of yoga and higher education. Therefore, taking example of the GGEC program yoga course and avoiding any generalizations of outcome, we look at how yoga has been incorporated into the educational system using University of Tsukuba, and at Hitotsubashi University where yoga is also as part of an undergraduate program. This perspective mainly focusing on Japan traces the journey of the yoga course through the lens of the GGEC program and the instructors leading it through 2015 to 2021, nurturing graduate students’ characteristics and sensibilities, including establishing a social innovation project (Tsukuba yoga for All, TYFA) bringing together communities, young and old, beginner’s and yoga instructors, Japanese and international. These 7 years have been instrumental in bringing a holistic yoga culture, i.e., learning based on encompassing history such as the movement of ancient wisdom/ideas from India into Japan via the Southeast and China, yoga theory and repeated/mindful practice of asanas, discussion and debates among graduate students and faculty alike within UT and other universities. Moreover, this also

led to translation of yoga to society, intermingling of cultures of the East, India and Japan. Finally, we will conclude with a rationale behind proposing a yoga platform for not only students but also for the citizens as part of academia-societal collaboration. Any educational initiative in general education terms does not arise from nowhere, but it follows the teacher’s expertise and way of instruction. So, let us look at who is teacher for yoga - and taking an example of the GGEC program at UT.

7-Year Yoga Journey at University of Tsukuba: A Case of the GGEC Program

Program

The spark and identification of the teacher for the yoga course: Meeting the teacher, the wise one, the enlightened one in the ways of yoga, it as a way of life - its theory, its cultural migration and incorporation into Japan, dedicated practice and teaching in Japan, research and collaboration, was the primary reason to start the yoga course in its present form today. Knowledge about India, through a long visit and experience during the youth of Genboku Takahashi followed by a life immersed in yoga, collaboration with the faculty of TAIKU at University of Tsukuba was the sparks to have the teacher teach at the GGEC program. The sub - sections below briefly look at the life journey of the teacher (second author) without which the understanding on this 7-year academic journey and yoga course outcome and future directions remains incomplete.

The teacher (yoga master/sensei) genboku takahashi

0-19 years: I was a sickly child and often caught colds, middle ear infections and had to go to the hospital multiple times. That is why I often played by myself. When I was four or five years old, I came home with my hands blackened from playing with coal tar outside, and my mother rebuked me that coal tar would give me cancer. Since then, whenever I got tired of playing, I would think to myself, that I must have cancer and die when I turned 20. When I was in the fourth grade, my house was destroyed by a fire. At that time, I escaped with only my school bag containing my textbooks. As I looked at the ruins of the fire, I thought to myself, “It doesn’t matter how many things I have, if they are burned, they are gone. I was interested in Buddhism and Christianity, perhaps because of my fear of death and my experience that things will eventually disappear. In junior high school and high school, my uncle, a mathematician, taught me the basics of mathematics and how to think about it, and I decided to study mathematics at university.

19-40 years: I joined the mathematics department at Tokyo University of Science, but somehow, I rapidly lost interest in mathematics. I began to wonder what the Buddha and Christ were like when they were alive, which eventually led to my interest in India and my enrollment in the Hindi Department of the Asia-Africa Linguistic Institute (AALI). During my studies, I was invited by the Indian Minister of Education to exchange with students from various Indian Universities. Before leaving for India, the

Director of the Linguistic Institute, Prof. Saburo Kikuchi, told us, "When you go to India, you should find Japan in India". At the time I did not understand what he was talking about, but later I found out that we cannot find Japan in India unless we know India in Japan, and this is essential for the friendship between Japan and India. It was also at this time that I read a book repeatedly, Romain Rolland's 'The life of Ramakrishna', which determined the direction I would take. That is to say, I started on the path of detachment from normal social life. When I was a student at AALI, I met Akitsugu Wakamiya sensei, who advocated "The search for life through zen and yoga. The first question he asked me was "What is 'I'?" I replied, "'I' is everything." Immediately after graduating from AALI I joined the Dojo (Ashram) of Wakamiya sensei. There I lived for 20 years until he died. He was a very strict man. If there was even the slightest hint of vanity, selfishness or arrogance in our daily actions or words, he had reprimanded us severely. He was a 'Guru' for me.

40-65 years: When I was 40 years old, my Guru passed away. I had no qualifications and no work experience, and I was wondering what I should do for a living. It was then that I received a quest from an acquaintance to teach yoga, and from then on, I started teaching yoga at community centers. However, as I had been living in the Ashram for a long time, I had a strong sense of discomfort with the Japanese society of that time, which was soaring in the bubble economy. This led me to relocate to a mountain village in Nagano Prefecture, where I continued to teach yoga classes in a modest way and earn a living as a ghostwriter. While doing Zazen and breathing exercises every day, I had plenty of time to read a lot of books on Buddhism and Zen. What I found in reading the classics was that the essence of my own inner experience, which I had gained during my training up to the age of 40, and the inner experience of the master's in the books were the same. It was not until I was over 70 years old that I will have realized that I had something in common with the words of the Bhagavad Gita, which unites Karma yoga, Jnana yoga and Bhakti yoga. At the age of 60, a friend invited me to join him, "You shouldn't stay in the mountains", and I was introduced to Prof. Hideho Arita, whom I met and co-authored a book on serotonin breathing. During the writing of this article, I met professors at the University of Tsukuba, Department of Physical Education and interaction with them had begun. Meanwhile, the yoga boom in Japan was taking off and I was being featured in magazines of health and beauty articles in numerous ways. That did not mean my income was stable and I did not know when I would lose it (income). My battle with anxiety and fear is still going on to this day. However, it has encouraged me to be more active in my meditation and breathing practices and continues to enrich my inner world.

65 years: Since my early 60's I have been working with Dr. Kiyoshi Uchiba, and I have been involved in a NPO for the prevention of lifestyle-related diseases and the organization of the Kikuimo (*Helianthus tuberosus*) study group. What I learnt from these activities was how much the diet that I followed in

Wakamiya Sensei's Dojo (Ashram) from age of 20 to 40 would contribute to the maintenance of human health. Moreover, it had also become clear to me that the human diet is closely linked to the environmental pollution by food additives and pesticides. To gain the confidence to share this with others, it was necessary for me to have repeated experiences in the post-graduate yoga course, lecturing on the relationship between 'self' and environment in yoga. In 2013, I was asked to carry out research and surveys for the Body and Mind Integrated Science (BAMIS) project at the University of Tsukuba's, Department of Physical Education. My task was two-fold: firstly, to find out what was common to all Eastern body-mind techniques. In other words, it was a search for a common body-mind philosophy and technique in the tea ceremony, Budo (martial arts) and Noh in relation to Indian yoga, Chinese Zen and Taoist Qigong and Tai chi, and Japanese Zen. The other is the study of Kunihiko Hashida (1882-1945) who was a Japanese physician and physiologist. He was a proponent of a new concept in the life sciences based on Zen thought, that of Zenkisei. Zenkisei is a pioneering concept in modern biology, which holds that life dynamically, interacts with its environment in order to fulfil its potential. At the age of 73, Prof. Randeep Rakwal invited me to teach the yoga course at University of Tsukuba GGEC program (GGEC, n.d.). Together we developed a curriculum suited not only to the GGEC program but also a way to integrate theory and practice into the classes of yoga, which turned out to be holistic in design. What I did with Prof. Rakwal over the next seven years is a subject for another section, but one of the most intensive things I did during those seven years in my own inner world was to get a deeper understanding of the Bhagavad-Gita. I continue to read the Gita because it is crucial to the integration and deep understanding of the various types of yoga. My journey is still going on. I think of this journey as weaving a cloth. If the warp is experiencing and learning, the weft is to share it with as many people as possible. I do not know what pattern I will end up with in the end, but for now my journey is to just keep on weaving.

Yoga and its Meaning Today in Japanese Universities

The GGEC yoga course at university of Tsukuba: The GGEC yoga course (1 credit, initially 2 credits) was established in 2015. This is based on the following concept written on the website of University of Tsukuba GGEC program. "Graduate schools are meant to nurture professionals who possess scientific and technical expertise to advance the human race and civilization. What abilities are essential for these professionals? What qualities are needed by the society as a whole? Those who try to find a job after graduation, please ask yourself if you have sufficient abilities to respond to the current social needs. The abilities include intelligence, proactive attitude, management-oriented mind, integrity, and communication & socializing skills. Just by acquiring specialized skills one does not become a successful researcher or specialist. A well-balanced interdisciplinary ability, i.e., productive human qualities, coupled with highly specialized expertise is indispensable. Many business leaders participate

in vigorous discussion about what qualities are required of graduates. Those quantities include the ability to view things from a multidisciplinary perspective supported by an insightful knowledge, professional experience, and specialized expertise. Researchers and scientists are requested to have an awareness of chances and risks, adopt a proactive and simple approach to research results, and maintain professional integrity. In order to respond to these social and global needs, The University of Tsukuba pioneered the Graduate General Education course in education. We are hopeful that graduates of the University of Tsukuba will take many courses to nurture rich human quantities by appreciating the profound and philosophical messages, fostering cultural accomplishments and integrity coupled with professional skills, and become well-balanced researchers and highly specialized professionals (<https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/academics/g-courses-kyoutsuukamoku/about-ggrec-20210409.pdf>).

The first author was creating a series of courses based on this concept when he met the second author, who was working on the BAMIS Project in 2014. As the two of them talked about yoga and India and Japan connections Prof. Rakwal became convinced that the philosophy, history, culture, and body-mind techniques of yoga were appropriate for the GGEC concept. And after about a year of preparation, in June 2015, the GGEC yoga Course was launched. The opening of the course was made possible with the help of Prof. Hideaki Soya and Prof. Yosuke Sakairi of TAIKU (Physical Education; Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences), and later Assistant Prof. Rei Amemiya. The following year 2016 and onwards, Profs. Sakairi, Rakwal, and Amemiya have been continuously working with Guest Lecturer Genboku Takahashi to upgrade and enhance the graduate students learning via yoga. During the preparations, the first two authors worked hard to ensure that the classes were in line with the GGEC concept, so that students could learn not only Asanas (practice, based on the yoga form of exercise), but also the philosophy, history and culture of yoga. In other words, the lectures were designed to teach the importance of knowing the true self and being aware of the unity of self and others, so that the students can solve their own mental, psychological, physical, and social issues or challenges. In other words, we have avoided going into anatomy, health, physical fitness, etc. In line with this aim, a textbook was prepared to incorporate all the required components of yoga for teaching at a graduate level. Additionally, as this is a lecture-based curriculum, 14 PowerPoint slides were also created for the course. In the first year, the text was in Japanese, but from the second year, both the text and the slides were translated into English and made bilingual so that they could be read at the same time and also used for language learning for both Japanese and international students. In other words, many international students started applying for the course. Keeping in mind, the academic/scientific aspects of graduate level courses, authors decided to incorporate certain psychological tests mood tests and flexibility tests for each class

so that the students could objectively know their own mental changes. Moreover, it also was instrumental in carrying out a scientific study on yoga effects on the mental health of graduate students (Amemiya et al. [11])

What is the actual content of the classes?

The syllabus for the GGEC yoga Course was developed reads as follows (Figure 1).

a) Link between academic goal and coursework:

Through the yoga that ancient India produced, students learn oriental thought of practical mind and body to dig into self deeply. By practicing, is aimed for self-realization of students. It aims to cultivate a flexible mind and a strong will that can deal with anxiety and despair. It is because it can foster self that can build a better life. ("Promoting health in mind and body and nurturing firm discipline." from ggrec_courses.pdf).

b) Course objective: To learn the spirit and basics of yoga that can be used for the daily life. Students by learning the asana, breathing and meditation of yoga, will be able to manage their physical and mental health. Can earn the flexibility of body and mind that they can become the yoga instructor if they want.

c) Course overview: 1. Use the POMS and TDMS-ST, to verify the effects of yoga.

2. Lecture of yoga philosophy and techniques. (30 minutes) [System of the yoga way of ascetic practices - The history - The Thought (contribution to Japanese culture of the yoga - Effect-Social significance (influence of environmental thought-Contribution to natural science thought)].

3. Practical training (90 minutes) [Pre-Asana practice Asana - Meditation - Breathing]. Students will learn Oriental practical wisdom to survive innocently, against stress & pressure.

d) Lecture schedule: One of the 15 sessions was a special lecture on mindfulness and the relation with yoga by Yosuke Sakairi and the other 14 were Asanas and lectures by Genboku Takahashi. These were

(i) Basic Knowledge and Method of yoga Asana (Slow movement, breathing method and motion, Posture, feeling body, Using gravity, Waiting for softening, When to do yoga, Where to do yoga).

(ii) What is yoga? - History of yoga (History of yoga from India to the world, yoga history in Japan).

(iii) The classification of yoga and the meaning of the word yoga - System of Hatha yoga.

(iv) Meditation - Experience by meditation and life after that.

(v) A characteristic of the Oriental body technique and the expanse (yoga and Buddhism, yoga and Zen, Choshin - Chosoku - Choshin).

- (vi) The benefits of practicing yoga
- (vii) yoga specific technique - Breathing - Asana - Bandha - Mudra - Chakra
- (viii) Understanding of breathing and respiration Basic knowledge for applying the method
- (ix) About Meditation.
- (x) yoga and religion (What is the religion to watch self? -

- Watch Self – Body and mind one and the same - Fusion of space and self - Ecological life – If people are happy, I am happy too)
- (xi) yoga and thought of life biology (Learning from physiologist Kunihiko Hashida)
- (xii) Fundamental thought of yoga - The Bhagavad Gita; (xiii) Bhagavad Gita’s Karma yoga and Gandhi ji.
- (xiv) Japanese people who lived in the same way as Karma yoga (Kunihiko Hashida and the unknown people).



Figure 1: The GGEC Yoga course, syllabus (in Japanese), class image and online teaching (slides and text are both in Japanese and English).

Since the start of the yoga Course in 2015, and over period of seven years, the lecture slides have been repeatedly revised and updated especially in response to student’s understanding and questions, and a commentary book has also been prepared for further study. This included questions to enable students to check their own understanding. In keeping with the purpose of yoga Course, questions were not designed to seek knowledge, but to encourage students to “know the true self and to be aware of the oneness of self and others”. In 2015, we had more than 15 applicants, so we gradually increased the number of 20 and 30 in the following years, and up to 40 students maximum, face to face. Years 2020 and 2021 were taken as online classes due to COVID-19 epidemic. Students were not allowed on campus, so students were not able to take physical classes in the sports (martial arts gymnasium) facilities. At that time when everyone

is feeling anxious and fearful, we felt that it was time for students to learn yoga so that they could condition their minds on their own. Therefore, we increased the number of applications for the online yoga course. The actual number of students applying for the course was around 80 in 2020 and more than 100 in 2021. A critical issue in any online classes is how to communicate well, interact with students. In this regard, the instructors made full use of the teleconferencing systems especially Zoom meetings, and video recording therein for re-cap, and additional pdf/video resources for reading and observing, respectively (Figure 1). Author also utilized the MANABA (a cloud-based collaborative learning system being used by UT) for updating including Google forms to enable two-way interaction with the students. The effect such interactive learning and resources has been unexpected, and instructors received many more questions from students in

class, either directly or via chat than before. Future running of yoga Course will have to consider for more active interaction with students.

Case of the yoga courses in undergraduate education at Hitotsubashi University: The undergraduate yoga education courses have been provided as Physical and Sporting Culture courses, along with other sports subjects, at the Center for General Education at Hitotsubashi University (Tokyo) (General Education at the University). Students can take a course in both spring-summer and fall winter terms to satisfy the requisite Sports and Culture credits, or as an elective by applying available credits from their academic programs. Although the courses are open to all students majoring in social sciences, commerce, economic or law, regardless of year from freshman to senior, students are required to enter the pre-registration lottery due to the maximum capacity limit for safety and quality of education. Since 2016, a total of 448 students took the courses. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, 102 students took them as online courses in 2020. Although the courses were returned to a face-to-face class format in 2021, the number of students registered was cut down to 65 students because of the maximum capacity restriction. The ratio of lottery applicants to registered students by course in 2021 was between 1.53 and 2.75. The courses are taught in Japanese or in English both at the Martial Arts Gymnasium and in outdoor green spaces on campus surrounded by a small forest. Last six years, as a certified yoga teacher with multi-disciplinary academic background in sports, management, social and community studies, Toshiyuki Ogura (5th author) had multiple levels of academic and health goals for these courses. At the beginning, students learn the basics of Hatha yoga such as pranayama (breathing), asana (posture), and meditation, and some basic philosophies such as the Patanjali's yoga Sutras. Typical motives of students to learn yoga vary from mental health benefits such as controlling peaceful mind, stress release, concentration, which reflect issues of our modern competitive society, as well as physical health benefits such as body restoration, flexibility, core strengthening, balancing, and cooling down. Besides teacher's guided- instructions, students are sometimes asked to lead the class and/or work as a group to develop social and communication skills, and self-review progress of yoga study and health balance and teach to others to deepen their understandings of yoga. Once students get used to practicing basic skills of Hatha yoga, students are asked to explore ways to apply yoga to their everyday busy life. They can leverage yoga to improve their personal health balance, resolve social issues, and have synergies with fields of their academic and other interests. Sometimes special topic classes are organized to learn more advanced yoga and physical and sporting culture, as well as to connect with social development, international friendship and peace: Bhakti yoga, forest yoga, healthy foods, the history of yoga, Seva (offer help to others), diversity, yoga for international cooperation and peace, etc. The ultimate goal is to help students to begin their journey of yoga to support their personal development along with their different stages of life.

Effect of the GGEC Yoga Classes and Limitation of Research, Two Universities Models, and Future Direction Including Social Innovation

Mental health/stress and well-being are major topics in graduate school, with or without the pandemic situation, and as also indicated in the introduction section. So, what effect has the 15 yoga classes of Asanas, Meditation Breathing Exercises and Lectures over a period of about two and half months had on the graduate students? Although there has been a lot of individual feedback from the students on the benefit of the course, one interesting comment was to increase its (yoga) presence all the year round as a wellbeing/communication through yoga space where the students can visit as they wish. However, and as mentioned above, a scientific study was also conducted in parallel to the yoga course, and we quote from (the abstract) of a first study published in 2020: "This study aimed to examine the effects of yoga on attention control (AC) and mood states in graduate students with high and low sensory processing sensitivity (SPS) in a physical education course setting. Participants included 20 master's students in Japan who attended a yoga course for a semester and completed the Japanese version of the Highly Sensitive Person Scale, the AC subscale, and Profile of Mood States before and after the yoga course. The results suggest that yoga in physical education for graduate students with high SPS promoted AC and improved mood states. The results of the above-mentioned study (Amemiya et al. [11]) suggested that, by practicing yoga through physical education, graduate students can regulate their mood states and improve AC. However, as this was a pilot study, and the sample size was consistent with enrollment in a typical college course; our numbers were somewhat small for statistical testing. A previous study examined differences in severity of mental health problems among Japanese and international students in several academic majors (Sasaki et al. [12]) future research should examine the effects observed here with larger samples from various regions using different groups, including doctoral students, as our participants were master's students. Additionally, other variables may have caused mood state changes through yoga (e.g., the individual's motivation for yoga, or past yoga and meditation experiences). Moreover, we did not compare control and treatment groups; as a rule, researchers should employ other methods, techniques, and variables in the future. Based on these results, we will consider the way forward for our yoga course and incorporate a more systematic scientific approach to investigate yoga effects in graduate students. Another question arising from not only research but also after conducting such a comprehensive yoga course is also whether yoga can be specifically used to cultivate resilience in graduate students.

Looking from both the University's Yoga programs, at the graduate (GGEC) level and the undergraduate level each share similar missions and contents. However, compared with the Tsukuba's more theory-oriented program the undergraduate program at Hitotsubashi University has a more physical activity-

oriented Program [13-15]. Why this is case may lie and be justified by the differences between undergraduate and graduate programs. Another reason is how the graduate course was constructed based on the ideas of both the academic/scientific-based approach to

graduate research combined to the vast practical experience-defined practical teaching style of the Yoga Master. Nevertheless, both courses have the interest of the students at heart.

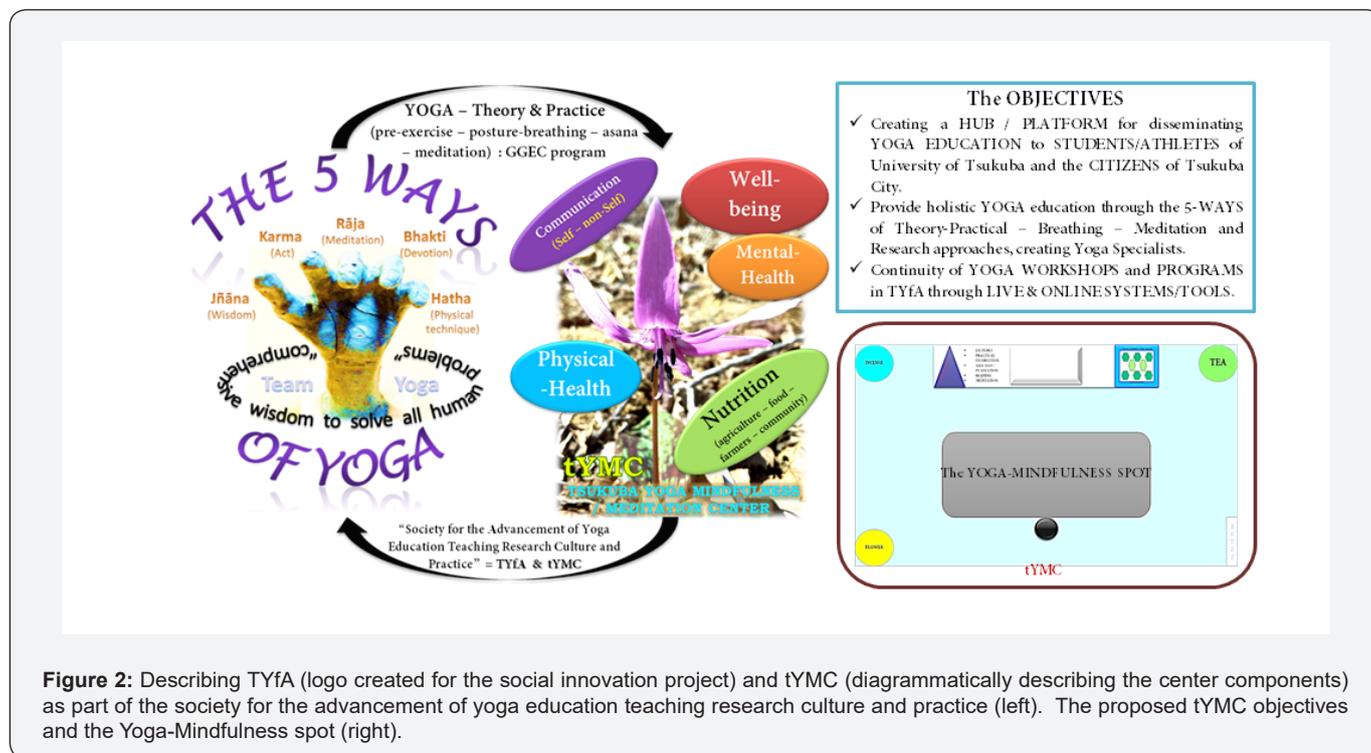


Figure 2: Describing TYFA (logo created for the social innovation project) and tYMC (diagrammatically describing the center components) as part of the society for the advancement of yoga education teaching research culture and practice (left). The proposed tYMC objectives and the Yoga-Mindfulness spot (right).

Social contribution is also social innovation (<https://www.oecd.org/regional/leed/social-innovation.htm> [16]), but why is it important here is that the ones created in the common subject’s area such as the GGEC program at UT have a good basis and these courses can be used as they are. In other words, they are results of a well-defined GGEC. Since the GGEC program has created a solid curriculum, the curriculum has the same meaning as social contribution, but it can be increased, deeper, summarized according to various themes, and utilized according to the real world. This is what we aimed to do through the Yoga course, as one of the examples. The course was enhanced with our own experiences along with the answers to participants’ questions. In terms of social contribution, how did we do the 3-hour class? This was a challenge but combining the THEORY to HOT TOPICS with active discussions led us to create a new series of monthly workshops, short and long, including 2-day Yoga camps and extension programs (UT), welcoming special guests from different areas of expertise linked to ‘well-being’, and contributing to the society from the classroom setting. Let us look at the Yoga camps and extension programs, where it was possible to welcome special guests and contributing to society from the class. Since the class is a basis for entering society, it is necessary for the university and society to be connected. Teaching at the university is of course for the university students, but it is also important to teach to society. College students can also understand what kind of activities they

are doing in society. The one-hour yoga protocol was solidified and changed to the ‘Genboku protocol’. This led to research. We were approached from other research institutes to collaborate on Yoga understanding and research using scientific analysis/biomedical research. If we did not share and contribute Yoga towards the society, such an opportunity would not arise. Social contribution was useful in the sense that it exceeded the limits of the class. For example, library yoga walk-in approach and the Asian body and mind technique workshop at the Tsukuba Global Science Week. All these experiences starting from the GGEC course leading to social innovation projects impressed upon us to create something more, namely written text and slide collection through printed booklets to kindle edition and demonstration and educational videos on all aspects of Yoga. Regardless of Yoga being taught or not, who need Yoga? It can be said, Yoga exists for those people – who are caught up in the whirlwind of a fast-paced stressful life - who frequently have difficulties to cope with stress and cease to act any more. The TYFA logo depicting 5 ways of Yoga and the idea behind the Tsukuba Yoga Meditation-Mindfulness Center (TYMC) is presented in (Figure 2).

Summary

In all, there could be a need for Yoga as a general education course in the Japanese universities (using two universities yoga courses as case examples). This reasoning is based on the

increasing interest/enrolment and active participation in this course, and which is continuing through to the social innovation workshops. Although at present there are only a few universities incorporating such a Yoga course its introduction in higher education may be one way to creating a mental health/well-being protocol for students. Sharing holistic Yoga knowledge through teaching via Genboku Takahashi as the Yoga Master/Expert was a major outcome not only for the graduate students, the primary focus of this Yoga course, but also a slow but continuous spread to the society in steps leading to the creation of a platform, the TYfA and now (in 2021) - tYMC (Tsukuba Yoga-Mindfulness-Meditation Center) under the auspices of the "Society for the Advancement of Yoga Education Teaching Research Culture and Practice" - TSUKUBA TEAM Yoga (Figure 2). By being a graduate-level course, this has also resulted in a valuable resource and library (books and videos as educational materials) for students and society alike and people. Finally, we note as follows: "Ultimately, Yoga learning and practice begins with an acceptance of ourselves as we are. You cannot teach this process to others, nor learn from others. The process requires effort and yoga is one of the best practices to make what you obtain well worth the effort. Each person has to explore one's own way to encounter "who I am". This is the learning that the Yoga courses-workshops-camps-educational videos impart to students (university or society) and letting them realize their own selves".

Acknowledgements

Thank you to University of Tsukuba, the Graduate General Education Courses (GGEC) program, for the opportunity to conduct this course successfully. Thank you TAIKU, the Martial Arts Gymnasium, GSI (Global Sport Innovation) building and all the participating graduate students and support students (including the TA's). Thank you, TEAM Yoga and participants, from Japan and abroad, for the social innovation project workshops, extension programs and Yoga camps.

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DOI: [10.19080/JYP.2021.09.555761](https://doi.org/10.19080/JYP.2021.09.555761)

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