CHAPTER 4

T. Krishnamacharya, Father of Modern Yoga

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Every day there must be something new.
—Krishnamacharya, cited in Srivatsan (1997: 40)

INTRODUCTION

T. Krishnamacharya (1888–1989) is one of the most well-known gurus of transnational yoga today. He is often referred to as the father of modern yoga, and his reputation as the source and originator of yoga in the modern world is well established in many practitioner circles, especially those foregrounding popular modern varieties of *haṭhayoga*. This reputation is largely due to the enormous influence of several of his students at the global level and also to the energetic promotion of his teachings by family members and the organizations founded in his name. These students include B. K. S. Iyengar (1918–), who has perhaps done more than anyone else to popularize a posture-based, global culture of yoga;[1] K. Pattabhi Jois (1915–2009), who taught the dynamic "jumping" system of postural yoga known as Ashtanga Vinyasa;[2] Indra Devi (1899–2002), a Latvian woman who studied with Krishnamacharya in the 1930s and subsequently helped to popularize yoga in America with the help of her high-profile Hollywood students like Gloria Swanson and Greta Garbo; and Krishnamacharya's son, T. K. V. Desikachar, who studied with his father from 1961 until the latter's death in 1989 and who established the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram (KYM), Chennai, in his father's honor in 1976. This organization continues to be the main mouthpiece for Krishnamacharya's teachings.

Thirty years later, T. K. V. Desikachar, along with his son, Kausthub Desikachar, founded the Krishnamacharya Yoga and Healing Foundation (KYHF), specifically to provide training for and regulation of teachers and therapists working in the Krishnamacharya tradition. In recent years, T. K. V. Desikachar's involvement in the KYM and KYHF has become minimal, apparently due to serious health issues. The management of these organizations largely fell to Kausthub Desikachar, who has enthusiastically promulgated the legend and teachings of his grandfather. The establishment of KHYF, with its bold mission statements and international ambitions, heralded a major shift in pace and style that gained many new recruits but also saw established devotees, teachers, and students distancing themselves from the organization. In October 2012, Kausthub Desikachar stepped down from the KYM and KHYF due to allegations of sexual abuse.[3] Some months later, however, two new organizations emerged out of Chennai: the Sannidhi of Krishnamacharya Yoga (apparently founded by T. K. V. Desikachar and Menaka Desikachar), and Yoga Makaranda, The Essence of Yoga, which promotes the teaching of Kausthub Desikachar.[4]

In this chapter, we consider Krishnamacharya's place as a guru of modern, transnational yoga. We begin with a brief summary of his life and move on to an examination of the core principles of his mature yoga teaching. We then consider some of Krishnamacharya's pronouncements concerning the role of the guru before examining his relationship to his own gurus. We discuss the importance of his native Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and the apparent tension between his commitment to that faith and the discourse of religious universalism that pervades KYM teaching on yoga. Krishnamacharya's own role as a guru and his creative adaptation and rewriting of tradition are then examined, followed by a consideration of the importance in Krishnamcharya's yoga teaching of *bhakti* (devotion). T. K. V. Desikachar is also considered, since Krishnamacharya's later teachings are in many respects indistinguishable from Desikachar's interpretations and mediations of those teachings, insofar as he was, for several decades, the public and transnational voice of the Krishnamacharya organization.

LIFE

There are two principal biographies of Krishnamacharya, the first by his later student, Mala Srivatsan (1997), and the second, to a large extent derivative of Srivatsan's work, by Kausthub Desikachar (2005). T. K. V. Desikachar's (1998) book *Health, Healing and Beyond* also contains useful biographical information. We do not intend to reproduce Krishnamacharya's biography in any detail here. It is worth noting, however, that Krishnamacharya was apparently reluctant to talk about himself (Desikachar, 1982: 1), and there are significant gaps in our knowledge of his life. Moreover, his relation of the

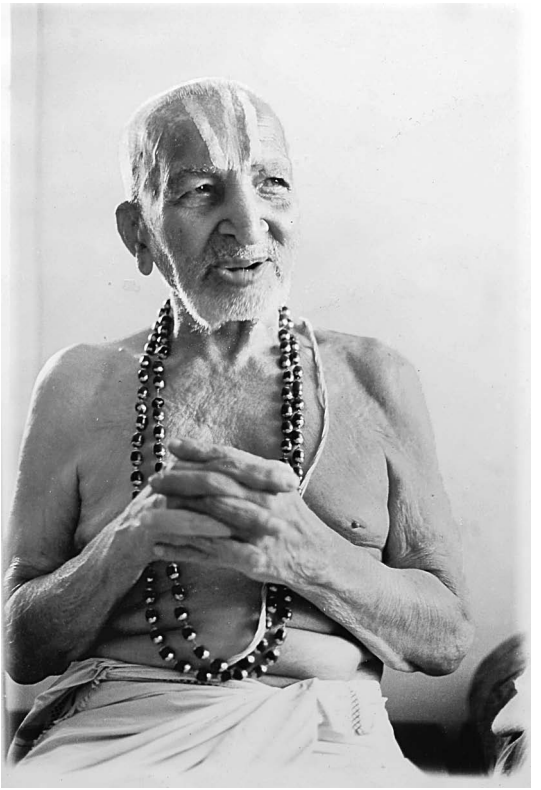

Figure 4.1:
Portrait of T. Krishnamacharya. (With permission of Ganesh Mohan.)

facts of his life would often change, resulting in some contradictory accounts. For instance, in interviews conducted in anticipation of his hundredth birthday, Krishnamacharya listened to stories that he himself had told about his life, sometimes denying them, sometimes adding ("malicieusement," as the French interviewer puts it) the "latest version," and sometimes just smiling without replying (Dars, 1989: 11, author trans.).

This mischievousness with regard to his own history, combined with the sometimes creatively hagiographical accounts of his recent biographers, makes it difficult to offer a definitive version of his life. It also makes clear that Krishnamacharya is complicit in the creation of his own myth. A thorough, academic study of Krishnamacharya's life and teaching has not yet been undertaken. However, it is also worth recognizing that while the scholar may seek biographical fact the hagiographer "has often blended those facts into an intricate mix of myth and legend" (Rinehart, 1999: 3), which in turn becomes its own dynamic, shifting history that influences the guru's status and function within his own or his followers' milieu (for our purposes, transnational

modern yoga). Furthermore, this interplay can reveal much about the dynamics of guru apologetics in the ever-evolving modern yoga scene, since "the mix of myth and history itself is central to the purposes of hagiography and tells us a great deal about how the followers of a saint construct and preserve his or her memory" (ibid.). The management of Krishnamacharya's memory as it plays out in the various portrayals of his life, in other words, sheds light on the concerns and values of modern yoga itself (as well as its power politics) regardless of the historical veracity of the various accounts.

We present here a very condensed version of the now orthodox Krishnamacharya legend. Other aspects of Krishnamacharya's life and work, particularly as they pertain to the guru, will be considered later in the chapter. Born in Muchukundapuram, Karnataka State, Tirumalai Krishnamacharya was the eldest child of a distinguished Vaiṣṇava Brahmin family. From a young age his father began to initiate him into this culture and to instruct him in yoga. He divided his early studies between Benares and Mysore. He studied for seven and a half years with Rammohan Brahmacari in a cave near Lake Mansarovar in Tibet. At the end of his apprenticeship, this guru instructed him to go back to India, start a family, and teach yoga. In accordance with these instructions he returned to Mysore in 1925, married a young girl called Namagiriamma, and for the next five years toured the region promoting the message of yoga (Chapelle 1989: 30).

In 1931 he was invited by the maharaja to teach at the Sanskrit College (*paṭhaśālā*) in Mysore and two years later was given a wing of the Jaganmohan Palace in which to teach yoga. It was during this time that B. K. S. Iyengar and Pattabhi Jois studied under him. Patronage, however, came to an end soon after Independence and the *yogaśālā* closed forever. In 1952 Krishnamacharya was invited to Chennai by a leading jurist and took over the evening yoga classes at the Vivekananda College there (Chapelle 1989: 31). He remained in Chennai until his death in 1989. In 1976 his son T. K. V. Desikachar established the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram in his honor, and it remains the principal organ for the dissemination of Desikachar's vision of his father's teaching.

TEACHING PRINCIPLES

> He has developed so much in his teaching, made so many changes, that I don't think anybody can identify "Krishnamacharya's style." One person will say one thing, and a few minutes later somebody else will say, no, no, this is what he taught me.
>
> —Desikachar (1982: 10)

Krishnamacharya taught yoga over a period of nearly six decades, during which time his methods and ideas matured and developed around a set of

core themes. These developments are evident in the diversity of approaches taken by his most influential students in their own teaching. The changes in Krishnamacharya's style during the decades separating the student days of, for example, K. Pattabhi Jois (1930s and 1940s) and T. K. V. Desikachar (1960s and 1970s) show a significant progression in the application of yoga techniques.

Here we focus mainly on Krishnamacharya's post-1960 teachings, which have been comprehensively articulated for a Western audience by T. K. V. Desikachar, his son and primary student over the last three decades of Krishnamacharya's life. These teachings, which remain central to teaching at KYM today, find one of their most complete expressions in Desikachar's 1995 book *The Heart of Yoga*. The following account will mainly draw from this text as well as from Krishnamacharya's *Yoga Rahasya* ("the secret yoga"), which he is said to have received from a vision of Nāthamuni in 1904 at the age of sixteen and which was eventually published by the KYM in 1998. Regardless of how one regards the debatable derivation of this work (discussed in more detail below), the text does provide a kind of manifesto for Krishnamacharya's mature work: here we can see his concern for the health of the physical body (both of men and women), an emphasis on the correct use of *bandha* (physical locks) and *prāṇāyāma* (breathing practices), and a firm belief in the value of faith (Krishnamacharya, 1998:140), the necessity of the teacher, and "devotion to the guru" (ibid.).[5]

Krishnamacharya foregrounded the use of *āsana* throughout his career, and his teaching shows a highly structured approach to this branch of practice. He used the term *vinyāsa krama* ("specially ordered steps") to describe a threefold scheme of preparation, main focus, and then release or restoration of balance (Desikachar, 1995: 25). His initial experiments with *vinyāsa krama* seems to have begun in the early 1930s,[6] with the series of dynamic *āsana* sequences that later came to be known as Ashtanga Vinyasa.[7] In this style, the term *vinyāsa* indicates the repeated sequence of "jump back," from a posture, partial, or complete *sūryanamaskar* (known as half or full *vinyāsa*", respectively), and "jump forward" to the next posture (see Singleton, 2010: 182 for a visual representation of these movements). In later teachings, such as those presented by Desikachar, however, this single, unvarying *vinyāsa* between each posture is less in evidence, and individually tailored programs predominate (see Desikachar, 1995: chapter 4).

This individualized approach requires considerable modification and variation of postures to meet the needs of students with varied physical skills and capabilities. T. K. V. Desikachar (2005: 50) describes modification as an attempt to retain the "principle" of the pose while giving accessibility to a body that may not easily bend into the ideal–typical shape. For more able students, variations of the key poses add interest, intensity, or challenge. Krishnamacharya devised his individualized approach based on each student's constitution,

needs, capacity, and circumstances. Which practice is given depends on a number of factors: "Before yoga is taught, the teacher should consider the time, surroundings, age, nature of employment, energy and strength of the person and his power of comprehension" (Krishnamacharya, 1998: 38).

The choice and use of postures are further varied by performing them in not just the familiar static form (usually considered more intense) but also in groups of dynamically linked sequences, accompanied by breathing ratios. A series of dynamic postures may be used as a preparation for holding one of those poses statically. This might then typically be followed by one or more poses that reduce any potentially negative effects from the *āsana* by countering the body shape with an opposing one in a less intense form. This, known as *pratikriyāsana* ("counter pose"), allows the benefits of the key pose to remain while any potentially negative effects are moderated, reduced, or removed. Counter poses are generally easier than the pose they follow, usually symmetrical and performed dynamically. (For a detailed description of the principles of *pratikriyāsana*, see Desikachar, 1995: 26–37.)

One of the strongest threads in Krishnamacharya's teaching is the use of specific breathing techniques during *āsana* practice; unlike some other methods inspired by Krishnamacharya (such as those of B. K. S. Iyengar), "The first step of our Yoga practice is to consciously link breath and body" (Desikachar, 1995: 19). *Ujjayi prāṇāyāma* (an audible, gently rasping breath) is employed in *āsanas*, with breath ratios building in intensity according to the skill of the student. This is combined with what Desikachar calls *directional breathing*, in which the abdominal wall remains taut on inhalation while the rib cage expands to its near maximum, lifted by the external intercostal muscles. According to M. D. David Coulter (2001: 133), this leads to a "celebratory" mental state. Desikachar (2005: 22) describes "consciously contracting the abdomen on exhalation," which gives the impression that air is expelled from the lower to the upper part of the body, with the last air being expelled from the top of the lungs. Desikachar believes these techniques "have the great advantage of stretching the spine and straightening the back" (ibid.).

Prāṇāyāma exercises in this tradition follow the same developmental *vinyāsa krama* pattern as the *āsana* practice, building step by step and then easing off to create a smooth arc of controlled practice. *Prāṇāyāma*, which can be quite forceful in some traditions, is characterized here by great subtlety, gentleness, and refinement. The classical ratios are considered unsuitable as basic exercises for beginners, but all students are offered some kind of breath awareness and breath control practice (see Desikachar, 1995: chapter 6). Krishnamacharya combined mantra practice with *prāṇāyāma* in a therapeutic modality: "According to the capability and faith of the person he should think of different mantras while doing the *prānāyāma*. *Prānāyāma* done along with mantra has a role to play in the therapy of all kinds of diseases" (Desikachar, 1998: 64).

Bandhas are used to some extent in Krishnamacharya's post-1960s teaching, but less intensively than in earlier teaching methods such as Ashtanga Vinyasa. *Bandhas* are regarded as extremely powerful techniques and are treated with great care. As T. K. V. Desikachar (1995: 73) writes, "*A word of caution:* Do not use bandhas through the entire asana practice. Like all other yoga techniques, bandhas should be practiced artfully and not obsessively. The help of a good teacher is essential." They are linked explicitly with the use of breath ratios and *vinyāsa krama*. In Krishnamacharya's *Yoga Rahasya*, the emphasis is primarily on using *uḍḍiyāna bandha*; however, in practice teachers in this tradition lay most emphasis on the initial use of *jālandhara bandha* (throat lock), and only when this is done safely and securely are the other *bandhas* taught (Fraser, field observation).

Philosophical discussion on an individual basis between student and teachers is encouraged. In some cases this might be supported by the memorization of texts, chanting, and meditation. Whichever method is used, it must be appropriate for the student and take account of his or her background, skills aptitude, and interests. The second part of *The Heart of Yoga*, titled "The Understanding of Yoga," gives some of the common themes that might be topics of discussion between students and teachers as a way of beginning to develop a capacity to use yoga as a philosophical framework for daily life. Typical topics include the notion of *duḥkha* (suffering), *yama* and *niyama* (moral and ethical guidelines), and the *kleśas* (causes of suffering), all of which are central to Patañjali's *Yogasūtras* (*YS*). Often, and perhaps especially in the hands of Western students, such discussion can take on the flavor of contemporary psychotherapeutic discourse (see, e.g., the thematic suggestions for discussion of Patañjali in Bouanchaud, 1997).

Chanting and sound play an important role in practice in the later Krishnamacharya tradition. Sound is introduced as a way of monitoring the breath in *āsana*, both as a preparation for *prāṇāyāma* and as a *sādhanā* in itself. Material for chanting may come from the *YS*, the *Haṭhapradīkipā*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Yogayājñavalkya Saṃhitā*, and other Indian texts or, where more appropriate, from the student's own religious or cultural tradition. Chanting may also take the form of simple open vowel sounds without meaning attached. Although heavily used by perhaps all teachers in this tradition (Fraser, fieldwork observation), chanting is not treated in Desikachar's *The Heart of Yoga*, which in all other respects is a fairly comprehensive statement of the teaching tradition. A long-term Desikachar student David Charlton suggests that this is because at the time of publication Desikachar associated chanting with the Vedic tradition and had not found yet found a way to "de-Indianize" and secularize it sufficiently for consumption by a Western audience (personal communication, April 2012).

By the end of his life Krishnamacharya had honed his teaching style—characterized by its individually tailored approach and its therapeutic

focus—into a complex interdisciplinary model combining elements of *āyurveda*, astrology, music, and *haṭhayoga*. The mind should be constantly engaged through counting breath ratios in *prāṇāyāma*, considering philosophical questions, or chanting *ślokas*.

KRISHNAMACHARYA ON THE GURU

Krishnamacharya insisted often during his life that training under the guru for a reasonable amount of time is a vital condition if one is to see the fruits of yoga (Srivatsan, 1997: 47). He believed, moreover, that the guru is "the only guiding force who could lead one in the right direction" (p. 74). He consistently emphasized the continued presence of the guru in his own life, from placing his guru's sandals on his head as part of his daily ritual to attributing all his learning and achievement to his guru, effectively effacing his own innovations and contributions. He was known to declare, "I don't say anything, I close my eyes and it is the guru in me who says all those things" (Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram 1988: 9). According to A. V. Balasubramaniam, who studied with Krishnamacharya around 1982, the master used to declare that when the guru teaches he sows a seed within the student and thus is personally responsible for the way he or she develops: the guru "gives a part of his *sadhana* to his students" (in Desikachar 2005: 227).

While the student owes a profound debt to the guru for the learning received from him, the guru also takes on the responsibility for the future development of the student, in a relationship of ongoing mutual obligation and aide, even in physical absence from each other or long after the guru has left his body. The guru must meet the needs of the student but, as Krishnamacharya puts it in an interview carried out in his ninety-ninth year, "should nevertheless always keep the initiative" by judging the right moment and appropriate form for the teaching (Dars 1989a: 75, author trans.). He tells the story of the day when he kept the maharaja of Mysore, who was his yoga student, waiting for twenty-five minutes while he finished his own practice of *japa* (repetition of a mantra or the name of God). Another day, he insisted that the maharaja come for his lesson at 5 a.m. instead of at the hour requested by the maharaja. As Krishnamacharya comments, "That day, the rank of guru took precedence over the rank of king. That's entirely as it should be" (ibid.). In Krishnamacharya's view, sustained contact with the guru is the single, vital, and indispensable element for safe progress and success in yoga, which is otherwise dangerous (the same goes for music, medicine, and dance: Srivatsan, 1997: 101). The presence of the guru enables a communication of knowledge that cannot be grasped through mere words on a page, and, as he puts it, "It is only by remaining constantly in the guru's company that the student—thanks to the presence, the look, the sacred contact and the words of the guru—is

able to grasp the essence of these words and to gain clarity of mind" (Dars 1989a: 75, author trans.).

RAMMOHAN BRAHMACARI, THE "YOGA GURU"

According to Srivatsan (1997: 40), Krishnamacharya had many teachers during his years as student but "only one guru in yoga practice." Little is known about Krishnamacharya's yoga guru, Rammohan Brahmacari. According to *Paṇḍit* Rajmani Tigunait, the current head of the respected Himalayan Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy (founded by Swami Rama in 1971), Rammohan Brahmacari may also have been the guru of Swami Rama's guru, Bengali Baba.[8] According to his own account, and as already noted, Krishnamacharya spent seven and a half years learning from him in a cave near Mount Kailash in the Himalayas (between about 1914 and 1922). He had been directed there by his preceptor in Benares, Ganganath Jha, who told him that Rammohan Brahmacari was the only person capable of giving him mastery of yoga and revealing to him "the complete meaning of the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali" (p. 23). Upon meeting Rammohan Brahmacari, the recognition was instant (p. 25; see also Desikachar 2005: 57), and Krishnamacharya began learning under his guidance.

His guru was a harsh taskmaster, and, as Krishnamacharya himself put it, "every slackening of effort [relâchement] was punished, every emotion banished" (Dars 1989a: 61–62, author trans.), an uncompromising attitude mirrored in Krishnamacharya's own tough teaching style.[9] Srivatsan (1997: 27) summarizes the stages of this apprenticeship: "The first three years he was made to memorise the Yoga texts in the form of an adhyayanam. His focus was in the study of the Yoga Sūtra, Vyāsa Bhāṣya and the Sāṃkhya Darśana. In the next three years he practiced Yogābhyāsa and for the next one and a half years he studied the śikṣaṇa Krama and the cikitsā krama." After his sojourn with his guru, Krishnamacharya had absorbed "all of the philosophy and mental science of Yoga; its use in diagnosing and treating the ill; and the practice and perfection of *asana* and *pranayama*" (Desikachar, 1998a: 43). On completing his training, as the well-known story goes, the guru instructed Krishnamacharya to return to India, to raise a family, and to popularize the practice of yoga. In the mid-1970s, T. K. V. Desikachar related to senior US teacher Gary Krafstow that Krishnamacharya was in contact with Rammohan Brahmacari for many years but lost contact in 1959 after the Chinese invasion of Tibet. At that time he was reputed to be 180–200 years of age (personal communication with Gary Krafstow, May 30, 2012).

It is said that the guru taught from a Gurkhali language text called *Yoga Kurunta*, which contained "practical information on yoga and health" (ibid.). According to K. Pattabhi Jois, this text laid forth the dynamic *vinyāsa* sequences

taught to him by Krishnamacharya in Mysore in the 1930s, known today as Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga (Jois, 1999: xv–xvi). However, Krishnamacharya's grandson Kausthub Desikachar (2005: 60) challenges this notion, referring to writings by Krishnamcharya indicating that the text contained practical instructions on modifying *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* for individual healing, sometimes using props. For a summary of the various statements regarding the *Yoga Kurunta*, see Singleton (2010: 184–186). It is worth noting that two senior Indological scholars have independently suggested to the authors that the word *kuruntam* (variously spelled *karunta, korunta, kuranta, gurunda*) is likely a Tamil (or other Dravidian) variant of the Sanskrit word *grantha* (which means "book") rather than a Gurkhali term.[10] Yoga Kurunta would therefore simply mean "Yoga Book." The generic name (and the conflicting accounts of its contents) may indicate that the *Yoga Kurunta* was one of Krishnamacharya's ever evolving, inspired "teaching texts," much like the *Yoga Rahasya* (see Singleton, 2010: 185).

The Dravidian origin of the book's title may support Norman Sjoman's (1996) thesis that Krishnamacharya's yoga apprenticeship took place in South India rather than in Nepal/Tibet as commonly supposed.[11] It may also indicate, as T. K. V. Desikachar stated, that Rammohan Brahmachari was from South India (personal communication with Gary Krafstow, May 30, 2012). Also pointing to his country of origin is the use of the title "Sjt," which appears preceding his name in the first edition of Krishnamacharya's *Yoga Makaranda* and which Sjoman understands as an abbreviation of *ciranjivi*, a South Indian form of address (contra Singleton, 2010: 223, n.16, who reads it as an abbreviation of *serjeant*, a common spelling of "sergeant" prior to the First World War).

In an interview at the Omega Institute Conference in 2000, then *Yoga Journal* contributing editor Fernando Pagés Ruiz—following up on Sjoman's thesis—asked T. K. V. Desikachar whether it was true that Krishnamacharya had in fact studied in South India with Rammohan Brahmacari and not in Tibet. According to Ruiz, Desikachar affirmed this and said that he repeated the story about the cave in Tibet "to honor his father," who would have "wanted it [told] that way" (Ruiz, personal correspondences, October 7, 2000, with Norman Sjoman; June 2, 2012, with Mark Singleton). However, none of the senior teachers we interviewed for this chapter had heard this account from Desikachar, and these statements did not appear in the *Yoga Journal* article that Ruiz (2006) was researching.[12]

Whether Krishnamacharya apprenticed in South India or in Tibet, it is clear that "Seven Years in Tibet" is a familiar trope in twentieth-century esoteric historiographies of gurus (as Hollywood well knows).[13] Anthony Storr (1996: xv), in his psychoanalytic study of gurus *Feet of Clay*, declares, "Travels to parts of Central Asia or Tibet inaccessible to ordinary mortals have, in the past, been promoted as prologues to the acquisition of esoteric knowledge

and mystical experiences." In this, and regardless of the truth of the various accounts, Krishnamacharya's popular biography conforms closely to the standard mythopoeic conventions of the time.

THE "KRISHNAMACHARYA LINEAGE," ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVISM, AND THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

The "Krishnamacharya lineage," which is foregrounded in much of the KYM's teaching today, however, refers primarily not to Krishnamacharya's relationship to his yoga guru, Rammohan Brahmacari, but to his purported descent from the patriarchs of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, Nammalvar and Nāthamuni. Chapter 1 of Kausthub Desikachar's (2005) biography lays out the importance of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism in South India before presenting Krishnamacharya as an immediate successor of this lineage, not only in terms of blood but also as a result of the direct, transhistorical transmission of knowledge from Nāthamuni. Just as the ninth-century saint had revived the declining Śrī Vaiṣṇava teachings thanks to a vision in which Nammalvar "helped him recover" the lost verses of the *Divya Prabhandam*, so Krishnamcharya revived the practice of yoga after a vision in which Nāthamuni dictated to him the verses of his lost text, the *Yoga Rahasya*. Both visions occurred under a tamarind tree in the village of Alvar Tirungari where Nammalvar is said to have meditated. Completing the circle of revelation, Kaustubh Desikachar's (2005: 35) biography of his grandfather was itself also conceived while sitting in meditation under the same tree after, as he puts it, "maturity [had] dawned in me."

As Kaustubh Desikachar (2005: 52) summarizes, "The incident at Alvar Tirunagari changed Krishnamacharya's life forever. It was clearer than ever to him that he was destined to play a role in resurrecting the glorious tradition of yoga just as his ancestor, Nathamuni, had revived Sri Vaisnava Sampradayam centuries before." In this presentation, Krishnamacharya's yoga (and hence Kausthub Desikachar's also) is invested with the authority of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava patriarchs through blood and through mystical transmission.

Krishnamacharya's teaching is sometimes presented as a synthesis of the North Indian yoga teachings represented by Rammohan Brahmacari and the South Indian teachings of the Āḻvārs, but it seems clear that the "Krishnamacharya lineage" is primarily associated with the latter, in spite of the apparent fact that "[yoga] does not seem to play an important part at all with the Āḻvārs" (Nevrin, 2005: 74). As Srivatsan (1997: 95) sums up, "The Guru Paramparā that had its auspicious beginning in the 9th century still continues and will continue with the guiding spirit of our pūrnācārya ['complete, or completely accomplished teacher']." We have been able to find no indication that Rammohan Brahmacari also belonged to this *guru paramparā*.

Furthermore, it seems that when in later life Krishnamacharya speaks of his guru, it is with reference not to Rammohan Brahmacari but to Shri Vagisha Brahmatantra Parakala Swami, head of Krishnamacharya's ancestral religious home, the Parakala Maṭha in Mysore, and his own great-grandfather, with whom he studied at the age of twelve, after the death of his father (Srinivasa Tatacarya, who had taught him Vedic chanting and *āsana*). His great-grandfather, and then his successor, Sri Krsna Brahmatantra Swami, taught the child Sanskrit grammar, *vedānta*, and logic.[14] It was to this childhood family guru that Krishnamacharya would offer such great devotion in later life. For example, before accepting an interview with senior T. K. V. Desikachar student Claude Maréchal, Krishnamacharya is said to have become absorbed in meditation as he asked his guru and spiritual master Shri Brahmatantra Parakala Swami to give his agreement to the interview. In response to an inquiry about his reluctance to give the interview, Krishnamacharya states, "Since my guru, Shri Vagisha Brahmatantra Parakala Swami, is no longer alive, he can't derive any benefit from fame" (Maréchal, 1989b: 76).

A verse prayer in Sanskrit, composed by Krishnamacharya at his students' request "so that they could pay their respects to him before beginning their studies" (Krishnamacharya, 1995: 67), summarizes this lineage: "I salute my teacher (T. Krishnamacharya) who was initiated by Sri Kṛṣṇa Brahmatantra Parākal Swāmi, who studied the Sri Bhasyam under Śrī Vagiṣa Brahmatantra Parakāla Swāmi and who underwent the ritual signifying surrender to the Lord under the guidance of Śrī Raṅganātha Brahmatantra Parakāla Swāmi" (Desikachar n.d.).[15] The lineage that is being formally praised by Krishnamacharya's (and T. K. V. Desikachar's) students is not just therefore markedly Śrī Vaiṣṇava but is also hereditary and does not (perhaps surprisingly for many practitioners who situate themselves within a "Krishnamacharya lineage") include his yoga guru Rammohan Brahmacari.[16] The lineage of Krishnamacharya's family religion, comprising so-called pontiffs dedicated to the dissemination of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, hail from an institution that is, in Kausthub Desikachar's (2005: 31) words, "as important to the *Sri Vaisnava Sampradayam* as the Vatican is to Christianity." This of course raises interesting questions about the relationship between Krishnamacharya's yoga teaching and his native religion as well as the division of labor between yoga guru and spiritual master, and the place of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism within his system of yoga.

RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALISM

Contrary to what one might expect given the prominence of this very specific Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotionalism in their yoga teachings, Krishnamcharya, T. K. V. Desikachar, and the KYM commonly assert yoga's essentially nonreligious nature, such as in the sentiment attributed to Krishnamacharya by

Srivatsan (1997: 51–2), that "yoga was not merely doing āsana-s [sic] nor has it anything to do with religion. This was how Krishnamacharya saw and taught yoga." Krishnamacharya did not insist that his foreign students adopt his sectarian allegiance and instead adapted practices to suit the culturally influenced needs of the individual. For example, the French woman Yvonne Millerand, who studied with Krishnamacharya in the mid-1960s, learned how to properly pronounce the name "Nārāyaṇa" under his guidance but was then encouraged by Krishnamacharya "to find in your own culture the name which you want to invoke in the depths of your heart" (in Desikachar 2005: 207; see also Srivatsan, 1997: 75). While he remained a devout Śrī Vaiṣṇava throughout his life, Krishnamacharya did not insist that his yoga students adopt his hereditary faith (although respect to the lineage was due). Like his older contemporaries Swami Kuvalayananda and Shri Yogendra (Alter 2004; see also Alter this volume), and Vivekananda before them (Killingley, this volume), Krishnamacharya presented a form of yoga that could be open and accessible to all, beyond religious sectarianism, gender, caste, or nationality. In the year before his death, he declared, "We need to de-Indianize yoga in order to try to universalize it . . . the work of Nāthamuni is of great usefulness for the human community as a whole" (Dars 1989a: 73, author trans.). The unmatched global popularity of yoga forms that he inspired speaks to the success of this mission. In the last decade of his life, the willingness to bend the exclusivist strictures of Vedic orthodoxy even extended to the teaching of Vedic chanting, which Krishnamacharya feared was dying out. What he had formerly considered the province of men only was now made available also to women, provided they fulfilled certain preliminary disciplines (Srivatsan, 1997: 75).[17] (It is also worth noting, however, that while this measure demonstrates Krishnamacharya's openness to change and adaptation it also makes clear how important orthodox Vedic religion is in his yoga system.)

T. K. V. Desikachar's close and enduring early association with the famous antiguru and radical thinker Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986), to whom he taught yoga beginning in 1964, may also have contributed to the kind of universalism apparent in the post-1960s Krishnamacharya tradition. Desikachar's contact with Krishnamurti, in his own words, "opened [his] mind to fresh thinking" and made him "question the relevance of what [he] was learning and doing with [his] teacher [Krishnamacharya]" (Desikachar, 1998: 3).[18] Krishnamurti offered at the time to fund Desikachar's full-time study with his father (Srivatsan, 1997: 80). Many years later Desikachar (1995: v) dedicated his influential book *The Heart of Yoga* to Krishnamurti who, he declares there, "taught [him] to be a good yoga student." According to Ranju Roy, a longtime student of Desikachar, "Desikachar was enormously influenced by Krishnamurti. I remember him often quoting Krishnamurti as telling him 'don't be another performing monkey.' In other words, don't pretend—as Krishnamurti was insinuating many other gurus do—to be other than you

are. I think Desikachar's 'ordinariness'—his refusal to shave his head, to wear religious markings, the way he distanced himself from the Temple etc.— are all indications of his closeness to Krishnamurti" (personal communication, April 18, 2012).[19]

When he met Krishamurti, Desikachar was twenty-seven years of age and had only recently given up an engineering career to study yoga with his father. Krishnamurti was sixty-nine years old and had been a world-famous spiritual teacher since at least 1929, when he delivered his renowned speech "Truth Is a Pathless Land" after refusing the position of World Teacher within the Order of the Star, for which he had been groomed by the Theosophical Society (see Lutyens, 2003). He was in some respects the polar opposite of the orthodox, Vedic Krishnamacharya. Given such a formative early contact with the charismatic, iconoclastic, unorthodox, and antiorthodox Krishnamurti, it is perhaps not surprising that Desikachar (1995: xxvii) insists on the universality of his father's work, which "helps us make sense of all religious traditions and spiritual points of view and practice."[20] It is not surprising either, perhaps, that he emphatically refused the role of guru for himself.[21] Desikachar's universalistic emphasis in the presentation of Krishnamacharya's teaching may also derive in part from his early exposure to non-Hindu spiritual teachers for whom he felt affinity,[22] from his Western education (of which his father was very proud: see Maréchal, 1989: 22–23), and from the fact that Krishnamacharya adapted his teaching to suit the needs of his modern, Western-educated son and his liberal, ecumenical ideas about religion.[23] This has certainly colored the post-1960 teaching of Krishnamacharya, as formulated and popularized by T. K. V. Desikachar, although (as we shall see) the Śrī Vaiṣṇava element is never entirely absent.

Faith and commitment to the lineage of T. Krishnamacharya are fundamental aspects of training at the KYM (see especially Young, 2006: 33–42), but in practice this faith is multivalent and can signify "faith in the tradition, in the teacher or in God, or humbly accepting our duty to society, or even devotion to the sun or some other 'higher force' " (Nevrin, 2005: 73). This multivalency provides "an effective rhetorical strategy" and makes the teachings available to those for whom devotion to Nārāyaṇa—or to any god at all for that matter—is not appealing (ibid.).

READING AND WRITING TRADITION

From one point of view, Krishnamacharya's attribution of all his learning and innovation to his guru is a standard trope in Hindu religious transmission. As P.-S. Filliozat (1992: 92, author trans.) explains, "The orthodox *paṇḍit* is not in the least concerned to restore an ancient state of affairs. If he were to point out the diachronic differences between the base-text and his own epoch, he

would have to reveal his own share of innovation and his individuality. He prefers to keep this latter hidden. For him, the important thing is to present the whole of his knowledge—which contains both the ancient heritage and his new vision—as an organized totality." However, this obscuring of innovation is not merely a question of masking one's individuality to present a seamless whole of tradition. It is also, in A. K. Balasubramaniam's understanding, that each innovation is an expression of the pure truth manifested in the guru–*śiṣya* relationship (in Desikachar 2005: 227). Once Krishnamacharya had entered into a true relationship with the guru, self-generated innovation became in some respects literally impossible, insofar as it was considered to be the seed of the guru at work within him.

Krishnamacharya never ceased to innovate within this framework and was presenting new teachings even a few years prior to his death. As T. K. V. Desikachar states in 1982 with regard to *āsanas*, "He continues to discover new postures, in fact I am unable to keep track of his new discoveries" (p. 32). One of the senior-most teachers in the tradition, Maréchal (who made forty trips to India to study with his teacher Desikachar and indirectly with Krishnamacharya between 1969 and 2002) similarly declares: "A large number of postures, notably most of the standing postures, no doubt come to us directly from Prof. Krishnamacharya, who developed them in response to the needs of the modern age" (1989a: 47, author trans.).[24] Although the metaphorical basis of the terms is different in the two accounts (discovery vs. development), it seems clear that a similar process is envisaged here. In a recent interview with Mark Singleton, Maréchal elaborated on his earlier statement, recounting that when Krishnamacharya arrived in Mysore he observed the physical education routines of a regiment of British soldiers stationed there and "saw very clearly that the standing postures should be an important element of yoga" (Interview, June 23, 2012, Singleton trans.). Krishnamacharya was a renovator, he borrowed [French: "reprit"] things, and "he himself invented postures" (ibid.).

His use of textual material proceeds along similar lines and was similarly innovative. The *Yoga Rahasya*, which, as we have seen, was purportedly received in a vision of Nāthamuni when Krishnamacharya was sixteen, is a practical guide on how to adapt yoga to the individual and formed "the basis on which he established his principles of yoga practice and lifestyle" (Srivatsan, 1997: 15). It is held by some scholars to be a patchwork of other, better-known texts plus Krishnamacharya's own additions[25] and was subject to constant variation through his teaching career (see Ramaswami, 2000: 18). Perhaps surprisingly for some, the original *Yoga Rahasya* appears to have been written by Krishnamacharya in Telugu and not in Sanskrit as commonly believed.[26] It was only in later years that Krishnamacharya translated it into Sanskrit, in which form it was eventually published by the KYM in 1998, without reference to its Telugu prototype. What is more, senior Desikachar student Paul Harvey recalls that a very different "origin story" was told in the early days of his

apprenticeship in Chennai. In this version, Krishnamacharya was wandering in Afghanistan when a mysterious stranger approached him and handed him a bundle of pages, saying "This is for you." It turned out to contain the *Yoga Rahasya* (personal communication, September 26, 2012). These examples further demonstrate the plasticity and evolving nature of Krishnamacharya's text-based teaching as well as the element of creative variation in his own myth formation, albeit firmly within the mythopoeic conventions of the mystical East.

The mysteriously vanished *Yoga Kurunta* may also have been subject to Krishnamacharya's creative adaptation (if not his very authorship), as the varying views of its contents suggest (see Singleton, 2010: 184–186; also discussed herein in a previous section). He also selectively eliminated elements of *haṭha* texts, rejecting the purificatory practices (*ṣatkarmas*) and five of the *mudrās* of the *Haṭha Pradīpika* (which nevertheless remains a core teaching text within the KYM) and challenging the authority and reliability of the *Gheraṇḍa Samhitā* and the *Śiva Samhitā* (Maréchal, 1989a: 44–45).[27] Similarly, he "corrected and filled up the gaps" in the manuscripts of the *Yogayājñavalkya Saṃhitā* (trans. Desikachar 2000: xi) and "correct[ed] certain passages of the famous commentary by Vyasa on the third book of the YS," which he judged to be too theoretical, difficult to understand, and responsible for confusion (Maréchal, 1989a: 41; more follows on his adaptive use of the *YS*). It is clear that Krishnamacharya is engaged in a dynamic and creative relationship with the textual tradition on which he draws for his teaching.

Where a "diachronic," cultural historicist study of Krishnamacharya's teaching career might emphasize the difference that results from ongoing adaptation and innovation in the face of modernity, for Krishnamacharya this is secondary and perhaps irrelevant when set beside yoga's perennial sameness. As he himself puts it, "Whatever place, whatever time, the ancestors have framed the yoga practices to suit them all. Only the attitudes and circumstances of human beings change. Time and space do not change. The same sun shines as ever" (Srivatsan, 1997: 11). "New" techniques, texts, and teachings are never invented, but always discovered, and thus the new is never really new but is a reframing of the ancient and unchanging logos of yoga. Through the relationship with the guru and the lineage, innovation becomes the manifestation of the continuing tradition, and empirical historicity or textual philology are rendered inconsequential by authentic and authoritative performativity. In other words, the very instant of the guru's enactment and utterance of the new is also its transformation into the synchronous present of timeless tradition. From this standpoint, constructivist studies that work from the premise that yoga is the contingent product of the (fallible) human imagination through time, with distinctly different and occasionally irreconcilable expressions at different points in history, are therefore suspect insofar as they fail to recognize the transcendent and perennial sameness that always

underlies the *appearance* of difference in the guru's teaching. What the historian may see as revisionism is in fact conservatism: there is nothing new under the guru's sun. And this sun is itself the always already present source of the guru's authority.

BHAKTI

The declarations of universalism within the Krishnamacharya school can seem somewhat ambivalent given the obvious importance of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism in Krishnamacharya's life and the way this colors his understanding of yoga. The most visible practical manifestation of this is the pronounced devotionalism, which pervades the yoga teaching of the KYM: as A. K. Balasubramaniam puts it, "If I were to describe [Krishnamacharya] in one word, I would choose the word, 'Bhakta,' or devotee, rather than a scholar, healer, or anything else" (Desikachar 2005: 229). As we have seen, Krishnamacharya considered himself a lineage holder of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism through Nāthamuni, and his daily *sādhanā* consisted of *āsana, prāṇāyāma* and ritualistic devotional practices (*pūjā*) to Nārāyaṇa. He was scrupulous to observe every last detail in his practice of ritual, especially in his later life (Desikachar, 1998a: 141). This devotionalism remains a vital component in the teaching of his organization and informs many other aspects of practice. For example, *prāṇāyāma* practice may itself be conceived as a form of devotion to Nārāyaṇa: "Inspiration is like an inspiration from God himself. Retention is some sort of meditation, because you are with Him. Exhalation is some sort of movement towards God, and retention after exhale is like surrender to God" (Desikachar, 1982: 34–35). Therapeutics and healing, which are central rationales for the practice of yoga in Krishnamacharya's system, are also conceptualized within a religious, devotional framework, setting this method apart from more secular, medicalized yoga systems (such as those of Kuvalayananda and Yogendra) that predominate in the modern period and emphasize the purely scientific basis of yoga's healing properties. Krishnamacharya's paradigm of healing is markedly theistic rather than merely biological/mechanical. As T. K. V. Desikachar (1982: 20) puts it, "Faith in God is absolutely necessary for any healing."

Krishnamcharya's reading of the *YS* also reveals his religious and devotional convictions. The *YS* was Krishnamacharya's most important teaching text: if the *Yoga Rahasya* was the practical manual of his craft, the *YS* was the source and authority for this practice. Srivatsan (1997: 43) writes: "In his teaching every aspect of yoga, [sic] would rely on the authority of the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali: he would validate everything he taught with the appropriate sūtra." The YS were for him "the only yoga text that has any clear presentation of yoga" (Desikachar, 1982: 35). The YS continues to retain its central status in the teaching of the KYM, and its verses are routinely chanted in the same way

as Vedic texts, which as Klas Nevrin (2005: 71) notes, "considerably elevates the status of the *YS* vis-à-vis the Vedas." Moreover, the *YS* are conceived in Krishnamacharya's hands as instruction on *bhakti*. The atheistic, dualistic outlook of Sāṃkhya, perhaps most often considered as the primary metaphysical underpinning of the text (Bronkhorst, 1981; Larson, 1989; 1999), is here superseded by a devotional, theistic emphasis. Indeed, in later life, "the essence" of Krishnamacharya's thinking was that "the yoga of Patañjali is the only means to develop *bhakti*" (Desikachar, 1982: 1). A similar message is put forth in the verses of the *Yoga Rahasya*, where "the yoga of eight limbs (Patañjali's aṣṭāṅgayoga) is proclaimed as Bhakti yoga" (Krishnamcharya, 1998: 17). *Yoga Valli*, Krishnamacharya's final commentary on the YS, dictated to T. K. V. Desikachar, gives "an entirely devotional interpretations to the text as a whole" (Maréchal, 1989a: 42).

Perhaps the clearest instances of Krishnamacharya reading against the Sāṃkhya grain of the *YS* is his interpretation of *sūtra* I.23 (*īśvarapraṇidhānādvā*), where the particle *vā* is interpreted to mean "only" rather than the more commonly accepted "or." He thereby makes meditation on (or submission to) the Lord the *only* means to reach the goal of yoga and no longer simply one option among the several laid out in the first chapter of the *YS* (e.g., I.34–39). *Īśvara* is the final object of yoga and is certainly not simply an expedient or psychological "transitional object" toward liberation as many have understood it.[28] For Krishnamacharya, such was "the interpretation relevant to the kaliyuga (our present age)" (Srivatsan, 1997: 91), and one that is in keeping with the qualified nondualism of his tradition.[29]

CONCLUSION

For many practitioners in the West today, Krishnamacharya is considered the source of and authority for yoga practice. His reputation as the father of modern yoga is increasingly widespread, while other innovators in the modern *haṭhayoga* revival, such as Yogendra and Kuvalayananda, are largely eclipsed in the popular transnational yoga psyche—and this in spite of their arguably much wider renown and deeper influence on yoga's development during the first half of the twentieth century. As we have already proposed, this is no doubt in large part because of the global impact of Krishnamacharya's students and because of the energetic promotion in recent years of the "Krishnamacharya legend" by third- and fourth-generation practitioners and teachers in the various modern (sub-)traditions that, to a considerable extent, dominate transnational yoga today. Even yoga students who have not heard of Krishnamacharya may well often be practicing a form that has developed directly or indirectly from his work (such as the various popular styles deriving from Ashtanga Vinyasa, like Power Yoga and Vinyasa Flow).

Sarah Dars (1988: 12) noted that, in spite of his considerable innovations, "[Krishnamacharya's] theories now constitute in themselves a new orthodoxy." A quarter of a century later, after the massive boom in postural yoga's popularity during the 1990s and 2000s, this is all the more true, and at much more of a global level. Transnational postural yoga's orthopraxis (i.e., the right way of practicing) and belief frameworks (i.e., the theory and rationales used to explain practice) have been radically shaped by Krishnamacharya's work and legend. Moreover, over the last two decades (and increasingly in recent years) Krishnamacharya himself, as guru, has become the focus of worldwide reverence among (mainly) non-Indian yoga students. It may be significant in this regard that the biographical portion of Desikachar's (1995: 41) book *The Heart of Yoga*, written "for the purpose of introducing Krishnamacharya's yoga teachings to a wide audience," is confined to a mere ten pages near the end (219–229) and contains little mention at all of Krishnamacharya's Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. This is perhaps in keeping with Krishnamacharya's own "reluctance to talk about himself," Desikachar's consequent hesitation to write about him (see Desikachar, 1982: 1), and Desikachar's concern that the universalistic elements of his father's teachings be emphasized. While information about Krishnamacharya's life and religious affiliation is by no means suppressed there, it is rather minimal when compared with the more recent cult of personality that has grown up around Krishnamacharya. The presentation is certainly in contrast with Kausthub Desikachar's (2005) book, which, as we have seen, foregrounds the Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and the mythopoeic elements of Krishnamacharya's lineage.

For some today, indeed, especially perhaps in the United States, it would seem that the story of yoga as a whole begins and ends with Krishnamacharya.[30] His enormous significance in the development of recent globalized yoga cannot be underestimated, but it is also true that a posthumous, revisionist history of modern yoga itself is under way, with Krishnamacharya as the principal, beatified protagonist. As a final example, the trailer for a new film about Krishnamacharya and his students (in particular B. K. S. Iyengar and Pattabhi Jois), titled *Breath of the Gods: A Journey to the Origins of Modern Yoga*, bluntly states the matter: "Modern yoga originated in South India in the early twentieth century, a creation of Indian savant Tirumalai Krishnamacharya" (Schmidt-Garre, 2012). Such history may well strike scholars of yoga as exaggerated, partial or exclusionary in its account of how yoga developed within India and transnationally during the twentieth century: all the more so, perhaps, because of the uniquely elevated status afforded to Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga and Krishnamacharya's early years in Mysore. Krishnamacharya is, says the voiceover, "the man who in the 1920s and 30 turned yoga into what it is today" (ibid.).[31] Nevertheless, assertions like these are symptomatic of the enormous influence of Krishnamacharya today and suggest that the rehearsal of his legend is an essential aspect of belonging to the imagined community of yoga practitioners.

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NOTES

1. Writing in 1997, Krishamacharya's son, T. K. V. Desikachar, wrote: "If Śrī Krishnamacharya is now known all over the world, the credit must go to [B. K. S. Iyengar]" (Srivatsan, 1997: 3).
2. Pattabhi Jois claimed, "I was the first one to make Krishnamacharya's name famous in America" (Schmidt-Garre, 2012).
3. In September 2012, news emerged that four women from the European branch of KHYF had filed formal complaints with the Austrian police against Kausthub Desikachar, accusing him of "sexual, mental, and emotional abuse," including "the misuse of his position as a yoga mentor by utilizing his knowledge of personal histories of sexual and emotional trauma in an attempt to initiate sexual relations." Other, similar allegations date back to at least 2007. See Sonia Nelson, Chase Bossart, Kate Holcombe, and Dolphi Wertenbaker, letter to the American KHYF: http://www.yogadork.com/news/kausthub-desikachar-krishnamacharyas-grandson-accused-of-sexual-mental-emotional-abuse/, accessed October 1, 2012. In an email dated September 18, 2012, sent by two of his senior British students to KHYF's UK members, he was said to be "full of remorse and shame and is seeking help from different directions, to change his behaviour" (ibid.). Thus far, at least one senior Indian teacher in the lineage has called for the dissolution of the KYM and KHYF in response to these events. Insofar as Kausthub Desikachar is the grandson of Krishnamacharya himself, and in some respects the primary lineage holder and senior executive of the Krishnamacharya institutions worldwide, this is clearly of significance for our study of the Krishnamacharya lineage. Unfortunately, this latest turn of events will have to remain largely unexamined here due to publishing schedules and space restraints.

4. The Sannidhi of Krishnamacharya Yoga is intended to be "the medium through which the whole range of the teachings of T Krishnamacharya will be extended into the current century in a traditional manner, yet relevant to the modern era" (publicity email received by the authors, January 23, 2013). Through the organization Yoga Makaranda, The Essence of Yoga one can "begin or sustain your Yoga Journey with Dr. Kausthub Desikachar" (publicity email received by authors May 27, 2013). Courses include Divine Feminine Chant, and Yoga for Pregnancy (ibid.). It is not entirely clear what the relationship of these two organizations is to each other, but it is noteworthy that they share a common Chennai postal code, a common mailing list, and a common mail-shot system (https://madmimi.com).
5. Some of the comments on practice in this section come from Tara Fraser's direct experience with teachers of this lineage over the past thirteen years.
6. "In the beginning of [Krishnamacharya's] teaching, around 1932, he evolved a list of postures leading towards a particular posture, and coming away from it" (Desikachar, 1982: 33).
7. On Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga, see K. Pattabhi Jois (1999), *Yoga Mala*; Byrne, this volume; Maehle (2006); Smith (2008).
8. Thanks to Gary Krafstow for this information (personal communication, May 30, 2012). Although we received this information too late to be able to develop it in this chapter, it is clear that if true it would be of great significance for the study of modern lineages of yoga.
9. B. K. S. Iyengar (1978: 5) recalls, for instance, that Krishnamacharya's "presence was like a frightful nightmare." See Newcombe, this volume, and Desikachar (2005: 188).
10. Thanks to Frederick M. Smith and Dominik Wujastyk. There are only a handful of manuscripts called *Yogagrantha* in the as-yet-unpublished "Y" volume of the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* being prepared at the University of Madras. We have not had time to consult them. We thank Dr. Siniruddha Dash, University of Madras, for providing these references.
11. Sjoman (1996: 66) believes that references to Rammohan Brahmacari's apparent location on the banks of the Gandaki River in Nepal actually refer to a river in Northern Karnataka, also known as the Gandaki. He cites from the original preface to Krishnamacharya's *Yoga Makaranda* (1934), which refers to "Sjt Ramamohan Brahmacari Guru Maharaj of Mukta Narayan Ksetra (Banks of the Gandaki)" (1996: 61).
12. This may point to the varying levels of discursive censorship that operate within the yoga media as well as to the loosely enforced narrative conformism that may be characteristic of certain Krishnamacharya lineage groups (see Byrne, this volume, on discursive self-policing within Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga and the telling comment by Ruiz that while researching Krishnamacharya's life he felt like he was "investigating Watergate"; personal communication with Norman Sjoman, October 15, 2000).
13. We refer here, of course, to the 1997 blockbuster movie "Seven Years in Tibet," directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud and starring Brad Pitt. This was a Hollywood remake of the 1956 movie of the same name directed by Hans Nieter. See http://www.imdb.com/find?q=seven+years+in+tibet&s=all, accessed March 12, 2012.
14. See T. K. V. Desikachar (1998a: 34) and Kausthub Desikachar (2005: 31). See *Gurum Prāsayet Dhīmān* (1988) for an outline of this period of his life.
15. The prayer appears in a Devanagari script in Krishnamacharya's *Yogāñjalisāram* (1995: 67) with T. K. V. Desikachar's aforementioned comment. The translation by

Desikachar (n.d.) is from a sheet circulated by him to students and in widespread use in the KYM. Thanks to senior British Wheel of Yoga teacher and longtime KYM student Wendy Haring for providing a copy.

16. Moreover, it is not the *Yogasūtra* that is referenced but Ramānuja's commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, the *Śrībhāṣya*.
17. It is in fact this very aspect of Krishnamacharya's teaching that is singled out in T. K. V. Desikachar's introduction to the Sanskrit prayer in praise of Krishnamacharya (in Desikachar n.d.): "Through this verse, we remember and honour T. Krishnamacharya, who opened the doors of vedic chanting to everyone."
18. See Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram (2006: 23–25) and Srivatsan (1997: 80) for accounts of Desikachar's encounter with Krishnamurti.
19. Roy also points out that Desikachar has been critical of Krishnamurti for not teaching a clear methodology or practice (ibid.).
20. Desikachar acknowledges three major influences in his life: "that of my father who represented the Vedic tradition, that of J. Krishnamurti, an extraordinary Indian personality who represents everything that is other than the Vedic tradition of India—and Mr. Gerard Blitz from the West who introduced me to Buddhism, Zen and all that" (Desikachar, 1998: 4).
21. Leslie Kaminoff has recently spoken of his teacher Desikachar's emphatic refusal to be treated as a guru; his refusal to offer easy, formulaic answers; and his dramatic dissolution of the organization founded on the basis of his teachings. "Reaction to the Anusara situation and the idea of the Guru", YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1qD0_ewm-s&feature=youtube_gdata_player, accessed May 14, 2012. One can't help but be struck by the close echoes with Krishnamurti's own history (in particular his dissolution of the Order of the Star) and self-presentation.
22. "I have known a great many teachers of many different traditions, and I have never felt strange in their presence. I think this is a tribute to my father's teaching I have never felt myself to be against somebody . . . I was with J. Krishnamurthi [sic]. I was with U. G. Krishnamurthi. I have been with great theosophists, with great *ācāryas* [teachers]. I have friends who are devoted Muslims and others who are Christians. My own experience has taught me that my father's teaching is universal; it helps make sense of all religious traditions and spiritual points of view and practice" (Desikachar, 1995: xxvii).
23. "I am a Western-educated person and he was a traditional teacher. He saw that I was different so he adapted his teachings to me" (Desikachar, 1995: xxi).
24. Significantly, this assertion is made seven years before Sjoman's (1996) controversial study *The Yoga Tradition of the Mysore Palace*, which makes a similar claim regarding standing postures.
25. Somadeva Vasudeva, personal communication, March 2005. See also Smith and White (this volume, fn. 6): "It might be harsh to call [the *Yoga Rahasya*] spurious, but it is written in rather unfortunate Sanskrit and is little more than a projection into antiquity of a modern description of and justification for the primacy of *āsana* practice."
26. Krishnamacharya showed the original Telugu manuscript directly to Claude Maréchal (Interview, June 23, 2012).
27. On Krishnamacharya's critical stance toward *haṭhayoga* methods, see Singleton (2010a); Srivatsan (1997: 109) also records Krishnamacharya's view that "Gorakṣa Samhitā and Haṭhayoga Pradipikā contain certain practices such as nauli, dhauti, basti, Kuṇḍalini cālana, etc. These are no[sic] consistant [sic] with the spirit of the

yama and niyama of the Yoga Sūtra." Desikachar (2005: 231) notes that *ṣatkarmas* are also absent from *Yogayājñavalkya Saṃhitā*, another important text of the KYM tradition.

28. See Nevrin (2005: 81) for some examples.
29. As Klas Nevrin (2005: 76) summarizes: "With reference to Nāthamuni himself, Krishnamacharya legitimates and authorizes a set of practices and doctrines that combine Patañjali's YS with his version of Shri Vaishnavism, as well as with various Haṭha-yogic practices, healthistic ideologies and Neo-Vedāntic interpretations of classical Hinduism."
30. A very good example is the video made by American yoga teachers titled "The Story of Yoga," YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4Iewghkixw, accessed January 10, 2012. The pietistic tone and the presentation of Krishnamacharya as the sole modern authority on yoga are in some respects typical of recent hagiographical accounts.
31. In an interview on the film's website, Schmidt-Gare elicits "the paradox of a practice thousands of years old formed only recently by one single man [i.e., Krishnamacharya]." http://www.breathofthegods.com/interview/, accessed May 8, 2012.