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**Interview of the week:
TKV Desikachar, Founder, Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram.**

By H. Ramakrishnan



Intro: Where is the delusion when truth is known? Where is the disease when the mind is clear? Where is death when the Breath is controlled? Therefore surrender to Yoga - **T Krishnamacharya in Yoganjalisaram.**

Yoga was in the family. Krishnamacharya was born in Karnataka in 1888 and belonged to a family of distinguished ancestry. Among his forebears was the 9th century teacher and sage Nathamuni, who was a great Teacher who created remarkable works, such as the Nyaya Tattva. In his youth, Shri Krishnamacharya experienced insights around some of these teachings in a mystic dream whilst on a pilgrimage. He was Sankhyayogasikhamani, Meemamsa Ratna, Meemamsa Theertha, Nyayacharya, Vedantavaageesa, Vedakesari and Yogacharya.

His son, TKV Desikachar, had the privilege of living and studying with his father. For over 45 years, TKV Desikachar has devoted himself to teaching yoga and making it relevant to people from all walks of life and with all kinds of abilities. His teaching method is based on Krishnamacharya's fundamental principle that yoga must always be adapted to an individual's changing needs in order to derive the maximum therapeutic benefit. In addition to the three decades of yoga training he received from his father, TKV Desikachar holds a degree in structural engineering. One of the world's foremost teachers of yoga and a renowned authority on the therapeutic uses of yoga, TKV Desikachar continues to oversee Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram's work

and guiding the faculty of KYM. H Ramakrishnan interacted with him on behalf of Chennai Online.

“People are looking for a panacea for their health problems. My father was able to reduce the physical suffering of several people. This system cannot give you any instant remedy. But, it can provide slow but steady relief. My father could help people come out of several ailments like paralysis, diabetes, partial stroke, asthma and structural problems. He would choose the appropriate practice for each person. When they find improvement, they would tell others that when nobody else could cure or even lessen their suffering, Krishnamacharya could do it. They would advise others also to learn Yoga practice from my father. It is a kind of mouth-to-mouth communication, reaching a lot of people the world over. We do not believe in advertisements,” says Desikachar, who continues his father’s practice of one-to-one teaching.

He then elaborated several aspects of Yoga. Yogaha Sannahana. According to our ancient tradition, Yoga means, to prepare – to prepare for something. Upayam, the step by step approach. Dhyanam, meditation. Sangathi, to link consciousness. Yukthi, strategy.”

Yoga at KYM transcends religious connotations. “We never emphasize on the religious aspect of Yoga. People of all communities--Muslims, Christians and others--came to study Yoga under my father. Nothing was imposed on them. He respected their faith. When my father was invited to teach the Nizam of Hyderabad, he spoke to him in Urdu. The Nizam was so impressed that his entire family practiced Yoga. People of all faiths come to Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram as there is no religious inhibition. That is why the present Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M Karunanidhi, practices Yoga everyday without fail. He has total faith in that. On several occasions he has eulogized the benefits of Yoga. I recite what he can easily comprehend. I don’t recite ‘Mitraya namaha’. Instead, I recite ‘Gnayiru Poatrudhum’. He likes it that way and talks highly about the benefits of Yoga,” says Desikachar.



There are other VIP students as well. And one such is J Krishnamurthy. The year was 1965. In Switzerland, a French man was attending a talk by JK. He found that JK was having some health problem. He told JK that he had also some physical ailments for which the Great Yoga Master, Prof. Krishnamacharya gave easy solutions. The Frenchman recommended the Master to JK.

“In December that year, when J Krishnamurthy was in Chennai, he sought an appointment with my father for learning Yoga practice. The very next

morning we went to him and upon his request demonstrated a few Yoga, breathing and Asana practices. Krishnamurthy was so impressed that he instantly requested my father to send one of us (his children) to him for guiding him on Yoga.

Next day, which is on January 1, 1966, I went to him. I requested him to show me what he was practicing. He went for the headstand. Mind you, he had a stiff neck. While doing the headstand, he would spit some bile and phlegm. I saw that there was something inappropriate. I sought my father's advice. 'You please request him to stop all that he has been practicing. I am going to suggest some very mild practices,' said my father and gave me some instructions. I started guiding him the way my father wanted me to, twice a day. After a month he saw remarkable improvement in his health. He took me to Rishy valley for a couple of weeks. Then, he wanted me to go with him to Switzerland to continue teaching him Yoga practices. I told him I would do so, provided my uncle and a very famous Yoga Master Mr BKS Iyengar approved of it. JK got my uncle's concurrence. Krishnamurthy practiced Yoga from the age of 68, until he breathed his last at the age of 92."

Desikachar then detailed how his revered father received advanced training in Yoga. "It was from Rama Mohana Brahmachari. And, that is a very interesting incident. My father went to North India after studying Sanskrit. The then Viceroy, who was at Simla had some health problem. His son, a Doctor, could not cure his ailment. My father could bring relief to him through Yoga practices. Overwhelmed with joy, the Viceroy wanted to repay his debt of gratitude. He helped my father to visit Manasarovar in Tibet to learn advanced Yoga from Rama Mohana Brahmachari. My father spent seven and a half years with him learning all aspects of Yoga. My father could stop his heartbeat for two minutes. He acquired several such Yogic powers."

Asked about the first book on Yoga that his father wrote, he said, "The then King of Mysore, Nalvadi Krishna raja Wudaiyar practiced Yoga under my father's guidance. He was cured of his diabetes. The King asked my father to write a book on Yoga. Thus the first book was published in 1931. He wanted others also to benefit from the knowledge of my father and he started a Yoga School. It was a very successful experiment. But after the demise of the King, it could not be run."

About how this Mysore-man landed in Chennai, he recalled, "Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, a famous jurist and one of the architects of Indian Constitution suffered from a stroke. Professor Krishnamacharya came to Chennai to help him recover. The disciple-circle enlarged and they wanted the Master to stay on in Chennai. Then we started this Mandiram."