

From Nandini:

Dear all,

You are receiving this message since I have interacted with you in the context of yoga in some form or fashion. I wanted to let you know about some recent events that have occurred that I find extremely troubling.

As many of you already know, my mother Lakshmi Ranganathan and I translated Krishnamacharya's Yoga Makarandam in 2006. A few of you have copies that I distributed then and perhaps have shared them with others, and several of you have seen me using it in my classes since. We made just a few copies and gave one to Sri. Desikachar as he had been such an important person in both of our lives. He was extremely happy with it and after reading it carefully, let us know that it was an excellent translation that was true to his father's words and tone, and repeatedly said that he had not seen any other effort of this quality. He asked us whether we would allow KYM to publish it and he insisted that he would make sure that there was no censorship or revision. We agreed and I have an email from Kausthub in 2006 requesting and thanking me for receiving the electronic copy so that he could use it. Our only request was that the text be published without embellishment or distortion.

Nothing was done for several years. This past November, Kausthub sent us an email letting us know that the publication was ready and that he'd like to acknowledge our efforts and wanted us to agree without looking at the manuscript. We insisted that we need to look at the final document before approving. He didn't want that and went on to say that he had added several lines of commentary and clarification. He compared himself to Sankara writing commentaries. He also wanted to use line drawings by his friend rather than the original photographs. We disagreed and insisted that the comments should be separate in an appendix or in footnotes --- this would be the first text of Krishnamacharya published in English and we thought it was worthy of standing on its own without other voices mixed in. We were unable to reach agreement and asked Kausthub not to use our translation or any part of it. He agreed that he would not use any part of our text; he then suggested that he had done his own translation (that he had never told his father or anybody about) and then right after that (in the middle of this email chain) miraculously found a translation in a box from the 1980s by a Mr. Ramaswamy Iyengar.

Kausthub has now published this "translation" by Sri. Desikachar and Ramaswamy Iyengar. Looking through this book, it is perfectly clear that Kausthub has just done what he originally told us he was doing --- added his commentary and ideas to our text. There are entire passages in this translation that are word-for-word identical to ours and occasionally one word is changed here or there. I have included a few of examples as attachments for you to view and compare. As you all know, having read so many versions of yoga texts in translation, each translator has a unique style. It would be impossible for there to be such overlap in the translation, especially given the difference in fluency and style of the translators involved.

This is plagiarism and a violation of copyright law and we will deal with this accordingly through legal channels (especially in the US). But even more importantly, this is incredibly unethical and I find it shameful that a person connected with yoga and with Krishnamacarya would behave in this deceitful fashion. We have not been allowed to talk with Desikachar regarding this. Many of you know that his mind is in a fragile state of lucidity recently, but before this development he was openly telling people that that my mother and I had completed a translation of the book and that he wanted the Mandiram to publish our work. Even in our exchanges with Kausthub this past November, he kept saying that Desikachar would look over and approve changes (unlikely in his current state), but he never once mentioned a translation by him. It is shameful that Sir's name has been tacked onto this enterprise in order to add credibility to this theft, and I find it quite sad that his reputation is being compromised in this way.

My mother and I began this project in good faith --- we wanted there to be a version of Krishnamacarya's text that was accessible to people who spoke English. We had always wanted it to be available to anybody who wanted to use (or misuse as we know now) it and had originally intended to just distribute the material informally. It was our own decision to embark on this project, we did not discuss it with anyone at KYM until the translation was complete, and we have not asked for or received any compensation for our efforts, time, or costs.

I am happy to email any of you an electronic version of our translation. (It is a large file with beautifully restored photos that apparently Kausthub decided to use after all and perhaps a dropbox may be easier). I ask that you do not sell it but you are welcome to put it on a website for anybody to download, to email further, or to lend your manuscript to be copied by anybody. It does have typos (remember, we did this in 2006 and planned to do a final revision or new edition later) but I think it is actually otherwise reasonable (we would welcome corrections and comments). Most importantly, it will accomplish our goal that people read what Krishnamacarya had to say without interruption and without censorship. The book is powerful and wonderful and I hope any of you that reads it finds it as meaningful and relevant as we did.

I am completely disappointed that Krishnamacarya's legacy has been tarnished by the deceit practiced by members of his family and in the name of an institution that bears his name. Each of you can make your own decisions regarding this situation but pretending that or behaving as if something like this never happened would be completely contrary to the honesty and sincerity we profess in our study of yoga.

I would hope that we receive a formal and public apology and acknowledgement of error and that this book which is a product of theft be withdrawn from publication. In the meantime, I ask that you not purchase, sell, distribute, or recommend a book that is a product of plagiarism and deceit.

I thank you for your patience in reading through to the end of this mail.

-- nandini (ranganathan)