Cultivating the skills within Yoga Practice Planning for Individual Students

One important facet I experienced within the teaching process of Krishnamacharya and Desikachar was an intensive apprenticeship in the skills of being able to design individual practices for a range of possibilities, as well as for a variety of situations and stages within a student's learning interests, needs and practice potentials.

Within this was the key premise of designing an individualised developmental practice for all aspects of practice, rather than just the more well-known notions of therapeutic adaptations, or the homogenous sequencings, that are more commonly seen as representative of Krishnamacharya's teaching within modern Yoga approaches.

Accordingly, this meant that I spent a lot of time over the years in my lessons with Desikachar learning how to plan practices that incorporated a wide variety of Āsana, Mudrā and Prānāyāma techniques, initially as goal in themselves, ere to how these schematics could be applied within a students developmental Yoga journey.

For example in terms of Āsana, this meant learning practice planning skills around an extensive repertoire of Āsana, ranging from complex forms such as Viparīta Daṇḍāsana or Eka Pāda Rājakapotāsana, to more well known forms such as Śīrṣāsana or Upaviṣṭa Koṇāsana, to more commonly used forms such as Vīrabhadrāsana or Ardha Uttānāsana.

Thus my work with Desikachar incorporated many practice planning questions from him. This meant learning through repeated trial and error efforts, accompanied by numerous 'duh' moments as Desikachar would highlight something that was a blindingly obvious oversight, to apply the underlying principles of practice originating from Krishnamacharya.

All of which contributed to the learning in constructing practices that respected these principles through integrating the many idiosyncratic factors inherent in offering a felicitous proposal. This means an applicational understanding of the step by step arrangement of Āsana, both in their relationship within a single practice, as well as their relationship within the challenges of longer term refinement and development.

This means as well as the technical skills in step by step arrangement, also accommodating the student's short term lifestyle needs, without losing sight of their long term direction in Yoga. All of which may change according to the impact of lifestyle commitments or demands on our interests, needs and practice potentials.

Hence the need for an ongoing review process in both the teachers and the students learning aims, within the mutual objective of the transmission of Svatantra. In other words, the ability for the teacher to transmit to the student how to ultimately self-manage and self-develop their personal relationship with their Yoga practice.

To offer windows into the many initial possibilities that exist when exploring Yoga practice being taught individually, I have been collecting and collating the various practice planning questions from within the Yoga Studies posts accumulating over the years.

These posts are now collated into general groupings to facilitate easier access, with each question being accompanied by a downloadable PDF study sheet. Furthermore, these posts are now gathered on a single page, currently grouped under:

1. Āsana Practice Planning Questions
2. Āsana and Mudrā Practice Planning Questions
3. Āsana Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma Practice Planning Questions
4. Āsana Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma Practice Theory Questions

Having this single page collation also means that I can easily add further planning and theory questions from the many examples still in my 'Viniyoga' repository. Plus also being more able to extend the range of planning and theory questions with further additional categories widening the possibilities in terms of the variety of applicational situations.

Hopefully, all of which will help to more fully illustrate Krishnamacharya's and Desikachar's personalised and developmental practice skills when working with individual students.