



Mathoorji – The heart of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Karnataka - A Homage

Vijayadasami, this year was not joyful for Bhavan and Bhavanites. A pall of gloom had befallen Bhavan's premises and the heart of Bhavanites. Dr. Mathoor Krishnamurti or Mathoorji as we fondly called him, a pillar of strength for bhavan for over four decades was no more. Bhavanites and the scholastic community in Bangalore were distraught in grief.

The passing away of noted scholar, philosopher and thinker Dr. Mathoor Krishnamurthy has left a huge void at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the institution he nurtured since 1972. He will be remembered for spreading the Indian culture across the state and, of course, in London where he spent 22 years.

A true Gandhian, Mathoorji, was a multi-faceted personality. His most-unique facet was his mastery over Kavya Vachana or Gamaka, a special performing art of Karnataka. He had brought out 220 audio cassettes that narrate poetry from the Kumaravyasa Bharata.

While this is a significant achievement for the personality who specialized in the art of giving commentaries or pravachanas and became a familiar face on TV, his work as a writer is no less. He has 40 books—interpretations, translations and commentaries on Indian classics—to his name. His love for the epics, the Vedas, the Upanishads, and ancient knowledge is well-known.

The Kuvempu University conferred the Doctor of Literature title on him. That was just one of the several honours he received—19, including the Padma Shri awarded to him in 2009.

Born in a poor family of Sanskrit scholars in the small village of Mathoor in Shimoga, his path was riddled with difficulties. He started out as a time-keeper with the Minerva Mills in Bangalore, before working as a bus conductor. He went on to become a reporter and then a sub-editor with a Kannada daily.

The eighth child of Sri. Ramakrishnaiah and Smt. Nanjamma, Mathoorji was born on August 8, 1929, auspicious day of Krishna Janmashtami. Mathoorji acted as a key propagator of peace and harmony and was a votary of preserving India's culture and heritage. He authored around 40 books including translations, delivered hundreds of discourses all over the world and contributed largely to the growth of BVB.

He joined BVB in 1969. His next assignment and probably the biggest challenge of his life was in London—he was sent there to start a Bhavan's centre in 1972. He returned in 1994. Today, London Kendra is described as a 'Gateway to Indian culture' in the UK. This institution of national eminence received a grant of one lakh pounds and was graced by the Royal family on many occasions. He made Bhavan a household name in UK. On his return to Bangalore, with the support of Sri Ramanuja, Chairman BVB Karnataka and the team at Bhavan he focused on developing Bangalore Kendra and setting up Bhavan's Kendras in different parts of Karnataka. A HR manager par excellence, at Bhavan he made every person feel important and strived to bring out their best in them for the cause of Bhavan's objectives.

Mathoorji, who was 82, is survived by his daughter Smt Janaki Nandakumar and Son-in-law Dr. Nandakumara who is presently Executive Director at Bhavan's Landon Kendra. Mathoorji served for a large part of his life to bring in Indian values and thoughts in students and common people. This spiritual scholar developed breathing problems in the early morning of 6th October, following which he was rushed to a private hospital, where he breathed his last. The last rites were performed at his native Mathoor in Shivamogga on the banks of River Tunga the next day i.e., 7th October 2011. For us Bhavanites, Vijayadasami will never be same again as we will miss this great soul, a great motivator for the rest of our lives. We will miss him while he has quietly slipped into blissful realms of eternity and immortality and merged in the lotus feet of Bhagavanta.

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