

LANGUAGE OF THE GODS

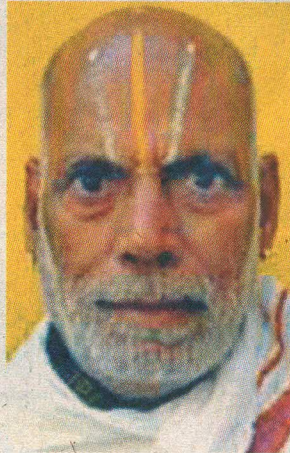
City Sanskrit scholar gets French honour

J.V. SIVA PRASANNA
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“Sanskrit is not a dead language. It is the language spoken by the gods. The problem is not with this great language, we need Sanskrit scholars who know science and scientists who have knowledge of Sanskrit to take this language to the common man and use it for development,” says Dr N.S. Ramanuja Thathacharya who is the first Indian Vedic scholar from Tamil Nadu to be conferred with the prestigious Chevalier award by the french government this year.

This humble scholar rose to become the former Vice Chancellor of Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetam, Tirupati, from a mere research scholar. He is also an erudite scholar in Tamil and Hindi and has mastered English as well.

“Many Sanskrit scholars find it difficult to explain the language in scientific terms. In fact, Sanskrit is a highly structured language with comprehensive literature covering several subjects including science,



Dr N.S. Ramanuja
 Thathacharya

mathematics, astrology and philosophy,” he says. A minimum of 500 words are sufficient to converse in Sanskrit. Though efforts are on to revive the spoken form of this classical language, which is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India, he advocates the teaching of Sanskrit in schools to popularise it.

He has several titles including *Tarkavacaspati* and *Sastraratnakara* to his credit. He has also received several prestigious awards

and attributes his success and mastery of the subject to his father Krishnaswamy Thathacharya and teachers: Ayya Devanatha Thathacharya, Uttamur Veeraghacharya, Sudarshanacharya, Ramachandra Shastry and Dongare Veereshwara Shastry.

Says this renowned authority in the fields of *Nyaya*, *Vyakarna*, *Mimamsa* and *Vedanta*, “the Chevalier award is a recognition of my hard work and affection for Sanskrit.” Hailing from a respectable family from Navalpakkam village in Vandavasi taluk, he is a writer and commentator and has assisted the curator of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai, in publishing several Sanskrit texts, besides authoring numerous independent works.

The 84-year-old's notable works also include *Sabdabodini Nimamsa* - an enquiry into Indian theories of verbal cognition, in four volumes.

He is also the chairman of the advisory committee of Yogakshema Trust, Triplicane.