

Humility matches his scholarship

PROFILE For the Chevalier awardee N. S. Ramanuja Thathacharya Swami, philosophy is a way of life.

SUGANTHY KRISHNAMACHARI

Vidya Dadaathi Vinayam (*Learning gives humility*)... an example is Sanskrit scholar N.S. Ramanuja Thathacharya Swami, who was honoured at a recent function in Chennai.

This year's recipient of the Chevalier Award by the French Government, he was flanked by scholars and dignitaries on the stage, yet remained unmoved by the trappings of fame. *Vainavan Kural*, a magazine devoted to the cause of Visishtadvaita, Visishtadvaita Pracharini Sabha and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan had jointly organised the function.

Scholastic journey

NSR Swami, as he is fondly referred to by his disciples, studied under his father Krishnaswami Thathachariar Swami and Devanatha Thathachariar Swami. A Siromani (with a First Class) from the Madras University, by the age of 16, NSR Swami was a full fledged Naiyayika. He was the first Vice Chancellor of the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati. Every

scholastic journey led him on further voyages of discovery. One such instance was his work on Nagesa's 'Jnapakasangraha,' which records propositions which are different from the paribhashas, and which are indicated in the aphorisms of Panini, and are found in Patanjali's 'Mahabhasya.'

Dr. K.E. Devanathacharya, from the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati, said that no one studied Nyaya these days, without referring to Swami's commentaries.

Dr. Veezhinathan, who has had a 50 year association with NSR Swami,



FETED: Prof. Ramanuja Thathacharya Swami with AP Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan.

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spoke of Swami's kindness in writing a commentary for 'Panchalakshani Gadadhari,' so that Veezhinathan could understand the work better!

Upon his retirement, NSR Swami was invited to Puducherry by the French Institute. He was told that his presence at the Insti-

tute was enough. But Swami published four volumes, exploring Sanskrit from various angles, and gave the work the title "An Inquiry into Indian Theories of Verbal Cognition." He studied more than 140 original texts for this project. Thanking the organisers of the function, NSR Swami quoted the instance of Periya Tirumalai Nambi, who told Ramanujacharya that he could think of none lower in stature than himself. Swami said he felt that way too, leaving the audience as overwhelmed by his humility as by his scholarship. The Governor of Andhra Pradesh E.S. L. Narasimhan, Dr. V.N. Vedanta Desikan, Dr. Venkatanathan, Srinivasan K. Swami and former CEC N. Gopalaswami, also spoke on the occasion.

Paramacharya's words

Dr. Veezhinathan recalled Kanchi Paramacharya's words regarding NSR Swami: "I am keeping my life long solely with the desire to see the commentaries of Thathacharya on the

texts of Gadadhari. If he does not interpret these texts through his commentaries, they would, in course of time, cease to be anything but a matter of historical interest."

S.K.