

PROF MALUR RANGACHARYA (1861 – 1916)

PROFESSOR OF SANSKRIT & COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY, PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, MADRAS.



Malur Rangacharya was a Sanskrit scholar, was professor of chemistry, Sanskrit and comparative philology at Presidency College, Madras and secretary, Hindu High School, Triplicane, had received the title of Rao Bahadur. Works The Vedanta-sutras, with the Sri-bhashya of Ramanujacharya (Vol 1, 1899) (transcription project) The Hindu Philosophy of Conduct : being class-lectures on the Bhagavadgita (3 vols) Vol 1, 1915. He has written many other books.

After early schooling at Mysore, obtained an MA degree in Physical Science from the Madras Christian College as a favourite student of the principal Rev. William Miller.

Worked for some time, as a researcher with the Railway Electrical Engineering Department, but returned to academics and was Professor of Physics and Chemistry.

In the meanwhile blossoming into an erudite Sanskrit scholar and writer. Lord Amptill, Governor of Madras, considered him as the best person to be appointed as the Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology at the Presidency College.

As brother-in-law of Sri Alasinga Perumal was fully involved in the Vivekananda moment. He pioneered for the first time to deliver a series of lectures on Chapters and Verses of the great work Bhagavadgita which he called the "The Hindu Philosophy of Conduct".

Such serial lecturers in English, hundred years ago were unheard of. His aim was for newly English educated youths to look inward into our heritage and religion and not fall prey to the Western cynical thought.

Eighty eight lectures in all were conducted at weekends with a rapt audience listening to a most lucid, rational exposition of the great scripture was in itself epoch making. Lectures were universal in appeal explaining various views whether it was advaitic, dwaitic or his own vishistadwaitic.

Those were days where modern recording gadgets were unheard of. The lectures were taken down by shorthand writers for printing it as a book. While the first volume was published by Prof. M. Rangacharya himself, there was long delay in preparation of second and third volumes.

Sri Rangacharya had passed away in the meanwhile. The written records of the lectures would have been lost to the posterity but for the laborious painstaking efforts of Late Rangacharya's erudite son Prof. M. R. Sampathkumaran and another erudite scholar Sri M. B. Varadaraja Iyengar and later by his son Sri M. B. Narasimha Iyengar.

If one has to understand and appreciate the Bhagavadgita, Sri M. Rangacharya's treatise is most lucid one.