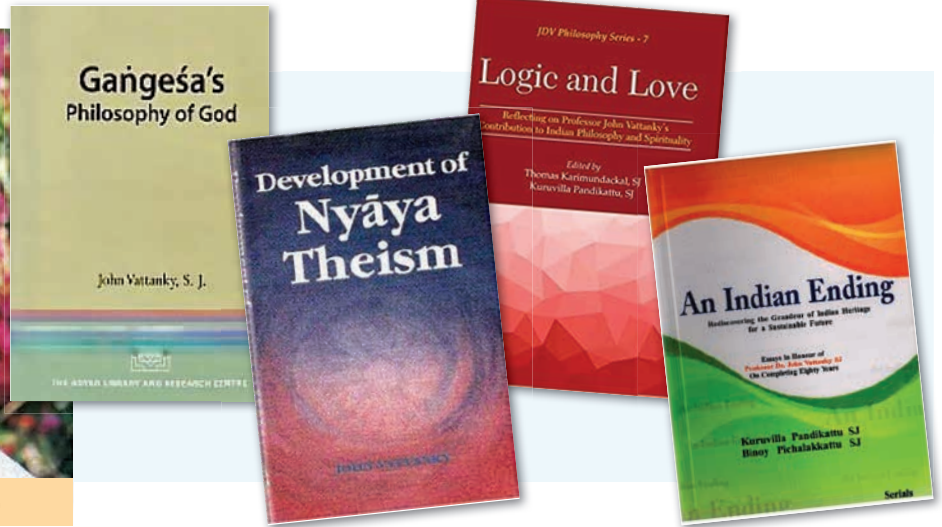


Indian Logician, Erudite Philosopher, Faithful Servant



Prof. Dr. John Vattanky, SJ (1931-2021)



With the passing away of Prof. Dr. John Vattanky, SJ, on Feb 22nd, 2021, the Church and the nation has lost an erudite scholar, a passionate lover and a visionary thinker. His logical mind, coupled with his passionate heart, contributed significantly to a better understanding of the classical Nyaya school!

Fr. John was born on 3rd July 1931, and joined the Jesuit Novitiate at Kozhikode (1950). He was ordained a priest on March 19th, 1963, at Kurseong.

Then he pursued his MA in Oriental Studies at the Oxford University (1966-1969). He obtained his PhD in Indology from Vienna (1974). He then moved to De Nobili College, Pune, and founded the Centre for Advanced Indian Studies (1982). He served as Professor of Indian Philosophy at Jnana Deepa, Pune. He authored five significant books and has become a world authority on Navya Nyaya.

What guided his philosophical quest and Christian reflection, may be summed up in three of his enduring passions:

Passion for Indian Philosophy

His training at Oxford and Vienna prepared him to be an erudite and meticulous scholar, capable of long hours of serious and dedicated research. He had truly fallen in love with Indian philosophy and its nuanced interpretations. He was fully convinced of the relevance of classical Indian philosophy. That is why the first festschrift in his honour, was aptly titled *An Indian Ending: Rediscovering the Grandeur of Indian Heritage for a Sustainable Future* (2013). His book *Gangesa's Philosophy of God* was favourably appreciated by Kanchi Sankaracharya, who honoured him specially.

Rooted in Logic and Love

A man of deep conviction and faith, John had a rigorous mind for the Navya-Nyaya system of logic and a devout heart for God. His intellectual acumen brought him closer to the people. Hence the second volume in his honour - *Logic and Love* (2019). He was both a logician and a lover with mystical traces.

Open to Oriental Traditions

Late in life, he had discovered the depth of Oriental theology and symbolism. After learning Syriac, he studied St. Ephrem, and was truly fascinated by his symbolic theology.

Vattanky firmly believed that it is only in the absolute, that the human being is able to explain himself. According to him, a "proper self-understanding of the human being is not possible without the absolute. In other words, the human being cannot understand himself properly except in the absolute."

Fr John passed away on Monday, 22nd February 2021, at Christ Hall, Kozhikode, after being bedridden for five long years, and suffering peacefully and joyfully.

Vattanky was a passionate thinker, based on Indian tradition! He was a logician-lover, open to both reason and devotion. He was also open to his oriental roots, which did not limit him. It enabled him to open himself to others, with a deep love for the Church, for the nation and for his traditions.

▮ Kuruvilla Pandikattu, SJ