

BANGABASI COLLEGE

Is One Of The Miracles Performed By Bengal

Shri C. Raja Gopalachari

[Inaugurating the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Bangabasi College at the Senate Hall, Calcutta, on Monday, the 29th November, 1948 Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Governor-General of independent India said "Bangabasi College is one of the many miracles performed by Bengal." "The history of the Institution is an adventure and a story book," the Governor General added.]

The following is the full text of his speech :—

First of all let me share with you my feeling of great joy at being once again in this place. I have come to a place which I feel somewhat like home. I do not know why Mr. Justice Biswas thinks that it is a matter of condescension that I should agree to share in this joy on the occasion. It is a great pleasure, and privilege to be asked to speak on an occasion like this. If, because I have been appointed to a particular office, Mr. Justice Biswas thinks that I have become a very precious individual, I must demur. I am the same man that I was before and I shall be the same man when I lay down office.

This college was started 60 years ago, and the lights that have been placed here and carefully guarded from vision by friends behind me represent the number of years that the Institution has passed through. It is more difficult for an Institution to reach the age of 60 than

for a mortal to reach that age. I have reached not only 60 but 69 though some people want to make it 71. It is the special safeguards that nature has put in the human body that enable them to reach the age of 60, 70 or more. But institutions have not those safeguards. Unless the men who build it are careful and vigilant, institutions often die long before 60. I can, therefore, understand the pride and joy which those connected with the culture of Bengal, and Calcutta in particular, feel in celebrating this Jubilee.

BENGAL MIRACLES

The history of the Institution is an adventure and a story-book by itself. Modern boys and girls do not know what it was like in the old days. They think that everything was as it is to-day. In the days when the College was founded things were very different. The founding of a school was a great achievement. If it is true that the college receives no grants from Government, I for one can not imagine how it can get on, but many miracles are performed in Bengal and this is one of them. It is inconceivable. It is a matter for great pride. But that does not mean that you should not take grants in future. Colleges, these days, cannot have sufficient accommodation, and equipment, or pay proper salaries to those who work. After all, grants from Governments are not sinful. In the old days a revolutionary institution may have said that it was not wise to take grants which always carry with them a string to control the institution. Now there is no such justifiable apprehension.

This hall is very ancient but whenever I come here— I feel an inclination to advise everybody concerned to

build a new and convenient hall somewhere. This is an ancient relic but a very inconvenient place for meetings of this kind. All the youngmen and girls who are interested in the college are crowding outside without gaining admission. There is not much audibility in this hall. There is more height than audibility, more grandeur than convenience, and more pillars than space. All the people who are crowding in the roads and on the grounds are very angry with us. How can I get any inspiration to say anything whatsoever? I feel it is high time that the University and the public of Calcutta devise measures to build a hall suitable and worthy of the dignity of institutions like Universities and colleges. These are days of difficulty and I know my proposition is not an easy one but yet we should have it before us.

I have great pleasure in congratulating once again all those who have built this institution and those who have maintained it and kept it up. I hope all of you will make the Jubilee festivities a grand success.

DONT CHANGE NAMES

There was a great deal of light as well as serious remarks about the name of the college. There is nothing wrong in the name. All names are just accidents. Bangabasi College is quite a proper name and no apology is needed for it. Let the name associated with it all these 60 years continue. There seems to be a fever for changing all names. I am a very old-fashioned man. Do whatever you like but do not change names. Open the Bangabasi College to everybody in the world. Make everybody a Bangabasi for the time being when he is a student of the college.

Before I sit down, I wish to tell boys and girls seriously that hereafter you should not think of stopping work either in college or outside college. All this function is supposed to invite the blessings of seniors on this institution. But really the institution wants the blessings of young boys and girls. They must be proud of the institution and maintain the institution in full activity. Education has come to mean a preparation for a career to us. But whatever deterioration may take place in either method or motive, the fact remains that education is intended to prepare men and women for life.

The education that we receive in schools and colleges is worth nothing if it does not prepare us for life better than when we entered them. We must know how to think. We must know how to feel, to reason, to observe. That is the object of all education that we get.

It is a process of acquiring the method of thinking, the method of correct feeling and correct action. If we keep this in mind, all colleges, and schools, whatever may be in deficiencies, will do good.

I appeal to you all to make the college a greater and greater success in the times to come. There is no difficulty whatsoever when earnest men and women are here to give the college not only 60 years of sweet memory but another 60 years at least to come.