

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Short Biography

“There can be no peace in the world until there is peace within”.

Born of a royal dynasty, as a child she conferred with Mahatma Gandhi while living in his ashram, became a medical student and freedom fighter, was an adored mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and the wife of a distinguished diplomat who himself was decorated by presidents of numerous countries and knighted by the Queen of England. Beyond all this, and once her daughters were grown and settled, she embarked on an even more extraordinary mission.

Shri Mataji was born to Christian parents in India. She knew from very early on that she had a unique spiritual gift which she felt should be made available to everyone. And so it was that in 1970 she founded Sahaja Yoga Meditation. She discovered a unique process of Self Realization through which people could easily achieve the peace of a true and lasting meditative state. She charged no money, insisting that Self Realization was everyone’s birthright, with no distinction of religion, race or social circumstance. She said, *“There can be no peace in the world until there is peace within.”*

For the next forty years, Shri Mataji continuously travelled the globe teaching meditation. She was a loved and loving spiritual leader, acclaimed public speaker, gentle guide, philanthropist, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and recipient of numerous awards and commendations worldwide. Extending her care and compassion ever further, she established a holistic health and research centre in Mumbai, a home for destitute women and children in Delhi and an international Music Academy in Vaitarna to promote classical music and arts.

Although at birth she was named Nirmala, meaning ‘Immaculate,’ she eventually came to be known as Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi - respected Mother.

Millions of people have learned how to awaken and benefit from their inner spiritual power through Sahaja Meditation. Meditation centres have been established in more than ninety-five countries, where volunteers teach her techniques free of charge.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi passed away peacefully on 23rd February, 2011 in Genoa, Italy, aged 87.

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi is survived by her husband, Sir C.P. Srivastava, daughters Kalpana and Sadhana, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her worldwide family of thousands of followers. She was laid to rest in India.

A Selection of Awards and Recognitions

Shri Mataji has been recognized worldwide by several prestigious institutions for her selfless work and for the remarkable results of her spiritual teachings through Sahaja Yoga, a few of which are listed below.

Italy, 1986

Declared 'Personality of the Year' by the Italian Government.

Moscow, Russia, 1989

Following Shri Mataji's meeting with the USSR Minister of Health, Sahaja Yoga was granted full government sponsorship, including funding for scientific research.

New York, 1990-1994

Invited by the United Nations for four consecutive years to speak about the ways and means to achieve world peace.

St. Petersburg, Russia, 1993

Appointed as Honorary Member of the Petrovskaya Academy of Art and Science. In the history of the Academy only twelve people have been granted this honour, Einstein being one of them. Shri Mataji inaugurated the first International Conference on Medicine and Self-Knowledge, which became an annual event at the Academy thereafter.

Brazil, 1994

The mayor of Brazilia welcomed Shri Mataji at the airport, presented her with the key to the city and sponsored all of her programs.

New York, 1994

September 26 proclaimed 'Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi Day'. Police escort was offered for a welcoming parade honouring Shri Mataji and celebrating her association with Mahatma Gandhi.

British Columbia, Canada, 1994

Letter of Welcome was proffered by the Premier of the Province of British Columbia, Mr. Mike Harcourt, on behalf of the people of Canada.

Romania 1995

Awarded Honorary Doctorate in Cognitive Science.

China, 1995

Official guest of the Chinese Government to speak at the United Nations International Women's Conference.

USA, 105th Congress, 1997 and 106th Congress, 2000

Honorarium read into Congressional Record by Congressman Eliot Engle commending Shri Mataji for her dedicated and tireless work for humanity.

Cabella Ligure, Italy, 2006

Shri Mataji was awarded honorary Italian citizenship, which was followed by the unveiling of the foundation stone for the "Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi World Foundation of Sahaja Yoga". This Foundation has its home in Cabella Ligure.

