

Text of the Vice-President's address at the unveiling of the statues of Sushruta and Charaka (Excerpts)

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Very good morning. It is always a pleasure to be in Goa.

Goa — paradise for tourists, or more importantly, a dynamic Governor and young, dynamic Chief Minister. So, that's an additional reason.

Hon'ble Governor Shri P.S. Sreedharan Pillai Ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant Ji, First Lady of the State Smt. Advocate Rieetha K., I tell you something interesting. When I was Governor, State of West Bengal, I tweeted from my official handle that the Governor, State of West Bengal, and the First Lady will be visiting a particular place, and someone immediately told me — who is the second lady?

A very distinguished Minister of State, Shri Shripad Naik Ji; Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha — very active, very energetic, always disciplined, contributing by discourse and debate.

Shri Sadanand Tanawade — I always remember him when I take the name Sadanand — ' '. Shakespeare , " — every rose will smell the same by any other name"; ! , —

Shri Damu Naik, a very senior leader of the State — my interaction with him was very rewarding, very enlightening. I wouldn't name members of the Assembly because there are 7 or 8 here. My greetings to all the Members of Legislature, but I will name the son of an MLA for a different reason because he is the Mayor, Shri Rohit Monserrate. Am I right?

We are privileged to have the Deputy Speaker also, Shri Joshua De Souza. Well, the Leader of Opposition is also a very impactful personality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we must always salute our bureaucracy and many in uniform. We have the Chief Secretary here, the DGP, and we have the people from Coast Guard, Army, and anyone connected with uniform. They have made us proud most recently. The entire world acknowledged their power and might. When we targeted Bahawalpur, Muridke headquarters of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, the targeting was precise, calculated, calibrated, impactful with no dissent. No one asked for proof because coffins were taken, where we see the army present, terrorist present, government present.

Therefore, salutations to our Armed Forces for making the nation proud, and Bharat is very different—Bharat is confident and bold. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sent a message not only to our difficult neighbour but to the entire global community "terrorism shall no longer be tolerated." He has gone beyond—terrorists will be punished wherever located; they will be hunted out. 'Operation Sindoor' continues, and it was needed. We must salute the vision of the Indian Prime Minister for having so accomplished.

Friends, this is a very special occasion. This is a special occasion because, first, it has happened in Raj Bhavan—very innovative, setting a new benchmark.

We are celebrating today those who epitomize knowledge — Charaka. Charaka was the royal physician in the Kushan Kingdom. Charaka is known as the father of medicine, and Charaka authored the Charak Samhita, which is a foundational text for Ayurveda. The other one is Sushruta, the father of surgery. I had the occasion to see what you had put in paintings — surgical instruments from those days — so forward-looking, and we must always remember that Sushruta was a disciple of Dhanvantari, another celebrated name.

Before I come to our other talented people in history, let us note what has changed recently. Our Atharva Veda was a gold mine for health—encyclopedic—but we forgot about it in recent centuries. But a big change

took place in this country.

It defined a new set of governance, returning to our roots and that was when the Indian Prime Minister goes to the United Nations, invites the attention of the entire world to . In the shortest time, the largest number of countries supported the move and now Yoga is celebrated in this country. In all countries, it is celebrated in all places where there is sunlight. A gift of Bharat to the entire world for wellness, for health, fitness — we could have done it earlier, we did it now.

As I reflected on Atharva Veda, we didn't have Ayush Ministry, we have it now. These are game-changing situations. So, I appeal to everyone, particularly youngsters, you need to know who are the people whom we should look up to now. The entire West will be stunned if we learn more about our treasure of knowledge. Then we can talk of people. I said Charaka, Sushruta, Dhanvantri, Jivaka, renowned Ayurvedic physician. And he was Buddha's personal doctor. I am saying so, so that you can relate to the time zone when these people became functional.

When it comes to mathematics and astronomy, Aryabhatta — we have named our satellites after him — a great name. During those times, we had Bodhayana, a great mathematician, and we have Varahmihira. Let me tell you his fame. He was there when Chandragupta Vikramaditya's court was there and, much before Akbar had his nine jewels, Vikramaditya Chandragupta had them. He was one of those. He had an observatory at Ujjain during those times. I can keep on going, but why I say this is, it's time for us to look back in our Vedas, in our Upanishads, in our Puranas, in our history, and time to tell our children from birth about our civilizational depth of knowledge.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be here on this momentous occasion—commissioning the statues of two towering figures of Indian medical heritage. A proud moment for everyone in the country. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the visionary leadership of the Governor and the Chief Minister.

When we have installed these statues, these will be motivational centres, inspirational centres. Anyone who will come to know about it, will say, "Oh my God! I belong to this Bharat. Look at the wealth of knowledge we have." It was during the COVID challenge that we took recourse to our ancient literature and knowledge and tided over the situation. These statues are not commemorative—that will be underplaying the situation. They are living symbols of India's rich medical and intellectual legacy, a legacy we need to nurture and take further.

Sushruta, I wouldn't say just a surgeon, but the first globally known surgeon. And obviously, it had to be Bharat. We are a unique civilisation. Hardly a country or two can rival us. They are a close second but a far second. Long before we came abreast of the modern surgical situations—300 surgical procedures, plastic surgery, gutter removal, fracture management, and even caesarean delivery. Just imagine! .we need to take great pride in it.

At that point of time, what we call super specialty hospitals—the things they transact in medical science, we had already. And it is not only that, they put it in writing for academicians. Sushruta's writings reflect not merely anatomical knowledge, but a profound scientific spirit emphasising accuracy, training, hygiene, and patient care. All these are fundamental. These days hospitals say, "We are super specialty because we focus on these issues." It was done in this country long back, centuries ago.

He introduced and I had the good occasion, thanks to the Hon'ble Governor's vision—120 surgical instruments. For want of time, I couldn't look at all the instruments, but the ones I looked at, I was amazed. Ages back, those instruments were there and his teachings resonate with modern principles of evidence-based medicine and clinical precision.

Now, that is not the work of an individual. We must go a little in depth. A system was working, and the system—if we go to that extent—was working in all fields: medicine, astronomy, and if we talk about architecture, talk about skills, we have our—I would say—we have godfathers. Ages ago, our architectural design had to be there.

In fact, and this is my message to the medical fraternity in the country, contemporary surgeons around the world acknowledge the pioneering work and great role of these two great people. And, therefore, we are not

honoring them because they should have been honored long back. We are indicating to our present generation that we are seeing the writing on the wall, and the writing on the wall is—we are a nation with a difference. Now, we are a different nation.

We are rediscovering our roots, and we will get rooted in our roots. I strongly focus on alternative medicine because India is the home of alternative medicine. It is being practiced now very extensively, but fortunately, in 2014, it has been structured and structured because there is a new Ministry. Those initiatives are taking place.

What a great step has been taken. We have a distinguished Vice-Chancellor here. National Education Policy speaks of this. It doesn't want students degree-laden, bag-laden, book-laden; students who can think, innovate, research, and make their knowledge relevant to the needs of society.

I wish to also focus on, and highlight, a particular cultural trait. It is our cultural trait. Within sections of our society, there is a belief that anything Indic or ancient is regressive. This trait has no place in modern India. This trait has no place in our times. The world has realised our importance. Time for us also to realise it. We cannot afford a situation to believe the West is modern and progressive. Look at the current scenario and you will find it is far from it. India is the center. The International Monetary Fund was not wrong and must have said with great difficulty, we are the center of excellence. We are a hotspot of golden opportunities, opportunity for investment. And, that being the situation, let us believe in Indic situations. The West is far behind us. In their own mind, they are learning from us.

I am certainly not against Western medicine, and no one is, because when we had ancient institutions of excellence — Nalanda, Takshashila, and many more — in Nalanda people flocked from all over the world. They gave us also; they took away from us. It's a two-way traffic. Whatever is good, anywhere on the planet, must be absorbed, and whatever is with us must be disseminated. We embrace everything which is positive, but we should not allow this country to be drawn by a fact that everything has to come from the West. It is already there with us.

Friends, India today is at a remarkable juncture. Our ancient wisdom was confined to manuscripts, and they were destroyed in Nalanda — four weeks together. About 1,300 years ago, the fire kept on raging for weeks in a nine-storied building that had lakhs of books. That being the situation, we must go beyond manuscripts and oral traditions. We are a global soft power centre now, but every individual has to contribute.

I am extremely happy that the World Health Organisation has recognised it by establishing a global centre for traditional medicine in Jamnagar, Gujarat. What a powerful recognition of the universal relevance of our systems like Ayurveda.

I know time is a constant, but let the lives and works of Charaka and Sushruta be a source of inspiration and motivation for all, particularly our impressionable minds. Let us not confine our ancient texts to libraries. They are not meant for a shelf in a library. They are meant to be widely disseminated. Let us bring timeless ideas to life through research, innovation, and reinterpretation using modern scientific tools. Let us pursue evidence-based validation, digitisation, translations, and cross-disciplinary studies to make these treasures accessible and applicable to contemporary challenges.

As we saw a while ago, these magnificent statues today — let us remember that we are beholding the eternal spirit of Indian wisdom, Indian knowledge, Indian treasure; the timeless flame of compassionate science, and the unbroken thread of ethical healing that binds generations past, present, and future.

I congratulate the Governor again and the Chief Minister for getting involved in such an initiative, which I am sure will be replicated in every taluka of the country, and that will be motivational.

Thank you so much. It's a rare occasion for all of us. Let us carry a great message that we have to go back to our roots and make everyone aware of these.

Thank you so much.

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