



INTERNACIONAL  
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### Speech at Inter-Asian Relations Conference

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Madam President and friends,

I do not think that I should apologize to you, for having to speak in a foreign tongue. I wonder if this loudspeaker carries my voice to the farthest end of this vast audience. Will some of those who are far away will raise their hands if they listen to what I'm saying? Do you listen? Alright. Well, if my voice doesn't carry, it won't be my fault, it will be the fault of these loudspeakers.

What I was going to tell you that I don't need to apologize. I dare not if all the delegates who have assembled from the various parts of Asia, and 'observers' - I learnt the word from the lips of an American friend, he said, "I am no delegate, I am an observer." Thinking that he hailed from Persia, from my very few moments I promised, lo, and behold an American stands in front of me, and I told him, "I dread you, and I wish you would leave me alone." Do you imagine that an American would leave me alone? Not he, and therefore, I had to speak to him. What I was going to tell you, that as my provincial speech, which is my mother tongue, you can't understand, and I do not want to insult you by insisting on the provincial speech. The national speech, Hindustani, I know that it will be a long time before it can be rival in international speech. If there is rivalry, there is rivalry between French and English. For international commerce, undoubtedly English occupies the first place, for diplomatic speech and correspondence, I used to hear when I was studying in my boyhood, that French was the language of diplomacy and if you wanted to go from one end of Europe to the other end, you must try to pick up French, and so I tried to pick up a few words of French in order that I might be able to make myself understood. Anyway, if there is any rivalry at all, rivalry might arise between French and English. Therefore, having been taught English naturally I have to resort in speaking to you in that international speech.

I was wondering what I was to speak to you. I wanted to collect my thoughts, but let me confess to you, that I had no time, and yet I had promised yesterday that I will try to say a few words to you. Whilst I was coming with Badshah Khan, I asked for a little piece of paper and pencil. I got a pen instead of a pencil. I tried to scribble a few words. You will be sorry to hear

from me, that that piece of paper is not by my side. But that is nothing, I remember what I wanted to speak out, and I said to myself, you friends have seen not the real India, and you are not meeting in conference in the midst of real India.

Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore - all these are big cities and therefore, having come under the influence of the West, having been made also, Delhi perhaps excepted, but not New Delhi, having been made also by the English. I then thought of a little essay, I suppose I should call it, which was in French. It was translated for me by an Anglo-French friend, and he was a philosopher, he was also an unselfish man and he said, he befriended me without my having known him, because he always sided with the minority and I was, that is, my countrymen, in a hopeless minority, not only hopeless minority but a despised minority. If the Europeans of South Africa will forgive me for saying so, we were all 'coolies'. I was an insignificant 'coolie' lawyer. At that time, we had no 'coolie' doctors, we had no 'coolie' lawyers. I was the first in the field. Nevertheless, a 'coolie'! You know perhaps what is meant by the word 'coolie', but this friend, his name was Krof - his mother was a French woman, his father was an Englishman -, and he said, "I want to translate for you a French story." You will pardon me, those of you who know the story, if I make mistakes in recalling it here and there, but there may be no mistake in the main incident.

There were three scientists and they - of course it is an imaginary story - three scientists went out from France, went out of Europe in search of 'Truth'. That was the first lesson that story taught me, that if 'truth' was to be searched it was not to be found on the soil of Europe. Therefore, undoubtedly not in America. These three big scientists went to different parts of Asia. One of them found his way to India, and he began his search. He went to the so-called cities of those times. Naturally, this was before British occupation, before even the Mughal period, that is how the French author has illustrated the story, but still he went to the cities, he saw the so-called high caste people, men and women, till at last, he penetrated a humble cottage, in a humble village, and that cottage was a Bhangi cottage, and he found the 'Truth' that he was in search of, in that Bhangi cottage, in the Bhangi family, man, woman, perhaps two or three children. I speak that under correction, and then he describes how he found it. I omit all that. I want to connect that story with what I want to say to you, that if you really want to see India at its best you have to find it in a Bhangi cottage, in a humble Bhangi home, or such villages, so the English historians teach us, are 700,000. A few cities here and there, they don't hold several crores of people, but the 700,000 villages do hold nearly forty crores of people. I say nearly because you may take away one crore perhaps, maybe two crores in the cities, still there will be thirty eight crores. And then I said to myself, if these friends who are here without finding their true India, what will they have come for. I then thought that I will beseech you to imagine this India, not from this vast audience but to imagine what it would be like. I would like you to read a story such as this story of Frenchmen or other things. See, perhaps some of you, a few villages of India then you will find real India. Today I will make this admission also, that you will not be fascinated by the sight. You will have to scratch down below the dung- heaps that the villages are today. I don't pretend to say that they were ever places of paradise. But today they are really dung-heaps; they were not like that before, of that I'm quite sure. That I speak not from history but from what I have seen myself, with my physical eyes, of

India, and I have traveled from one end of India to the other, seen these villages, seen the miserable specimens of humanity, lustreless eyes, and yet they are India, and yet in those humble cottages, in the midst of those dung-heaps are to be found the humble Bhangis, where you will find concentrated essence of wisdom. How? That is a great question.

Well, then I want to take you to another scene. Again, I have learnt from books, books written by English historians, translated for me. All this rich knowledge, I am sorry to say, comes to us here in India through English books, through English historians, not that there are no Indian historians, but they also don't write in their mother tongue, or in the national language Hindustani, or if you prefer to call them two speeches, Hindi and Urdu, two forms of the same speech. No, they give us what they have studied through English books, then, perhaps through originals, but through English in the English tongue, that is the cultural conquest of India, that India has undergone. But they tell us that wisdom came to the West from the East. And who were these wise men? Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by Buddha. He belonged to the East, he belonged to India. Who followed Buddha? Jesus, again from Asia. Before Jesus was Musa, Moses, also belonging to Palestine, though I was just checking with Badshah Khan and Yunus Saheb and they both corroborated me that Moses belonged to Palestine, though he was born in Egypt. And then came Jesus, then came Mohammad. All those I omit. I omit Krishna, I omit Mahavir, I omit the other lights, I won't call them lesser lights, but unknown to the West, unknown to the literary world. All the same, I don't know a single person to match these men of Asia. And then what happened? Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that, but that is my reading. I won't take you any further through this. I tell you this story in order to hearten you, and in order to make you understand, if my poor speech can make you understand, that what you see of the splendour and everything that the cities of India have to show you, is not real India. Certainly, the carnage that is going on before your very eyes, sorry, shameful as I said yesterday, you have to bury it here. Don't carry that memory of that carnage beyond the confines of India, but what I want you to understand if you can, that the message of the East, the message of Asia, is not to be learnt through European spectacles, through the Western spectacles, not by imitating the tinsel of the West, the gun-powder of the West, the atom bomb of the West. If you want to give a message again to the West, it must be a message of 'Love', it must be a message of 'Truth'. There must be a conquest (clapping), please, please, please. That will interfere with my speech, and that will interfere with your understanding also. I want to capture your hearts and don't want to receive your claps. Let your hearts clap in unison with what I'm saying, and I think, I shall have finished my work. Therefore, I want you to go away with the thought that Asia has to conquer the West. Then, the question that a friend asked yesterday, "Did I believe in one world?" Of course, I believe in one world. And how can I possibly do otherwise, when I become an inheritor of the message of love that these great un-conquerable teachers left for us? You can redeliver that message now, in this age of democracy, in the age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can redeliver this message with the greatest emphasis. Then you will, you will complete the conquest of the whole of the West, not through vengeance because you have been exploited, and in the exploitation, of course, I want to include Africa, and I hope that when next you meet in India, you will ... all the, exploited nations of the Earth will meet if

by that time there are any exploited nations of the Earth. I am so sanguine that if all of you put your hearts together, not merely your heads, but hearts together and understand the secret of the messages of all these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become, deserve, are worthy of that great message, then you will easily understand that the conquest of the West will be completed and that conquest will be loved by the West itself. West is today pining for wisdom. West today is in despair of multiplication of atom bombs, because a multiplication of atom bombs means utter destruction, not merely of the West, but it will be a destruction of the world, as if the prophecy of the Bible is going to be fulfilled and there is to be a perfect deluge. Heaven forbid that there be that deluge, and through men's wrongs against himself. It is up to you to deliver the whole world, not merely Asia but deliver the whole world from that wickedness, from that sin. That is the precious heritage your teachers, my teachers have left to us."