

To-day we have gathered here to observe the National Day of India's great neighbour and friend - the People's Republic of China, a day when the Chinese people dedicate themselves to the lofty ideal of building up their country. India and China, those two great centres of Asian culture and thought, have a remarkable and unique record of peaceful co-existence. For more than two millennia these two great peoples lived side by side, and in the long history of their relations one observes a significant feature that cultural and economic factors predominated, the cultural aspect was even more important, ^{and} ~~for~~ ~~it~~ made a tremendous contribution to the culture of Asia.

Chinese travellers, Buddhist pilgrims, have given us unique and detailed accounts of the culture and life in Ancient and Mediaeval India, and these accounts have contributed greatly to our knowledge of the history of this country. The names of Fa-hsien, Hsüan-tsang and Yi-tsing became familiar to all students of Indian history. These devoted men braved the dangers of the overland route across the deserts of Central Asia and in their quest crossed some of the highest mountain ranges. Recent archaeological excavations have uncovered close economic contacts which once existed between South India and South China by the sea route. A great tradition cannot be allowed to disappear or weaken and it is ^{the} a sacred duty of all of us to foster these cultural links, for art and culture know no barriers and are the best ambassadors of peaceful labour. People in this country should study the language and thought of China, understand her history and arts, just as the people of China become increasingly interested in their Indian neighbour, and her great cultural tradition. We need more books, more good books at accessible prices, to tell the masses ^{about} of the countries beyond their borders. With the appreciation of one's neighbour's culture comes a sympathetic understanding which dispels fears and distrust, this curse of our modern times which has poisoned for so long international relations.

By knowing their country's role in the World and their neighbours achievements, peoples reassert their own independence, and fearlessly look into the future. But the arts of Peace can flourish in peaceful surroundings only. Such an environment has to be created and has to be fought for. There exists an Art of War, but there should also exist an Art of Peace which would enable people to build up spiritual and material values. No doubt it is easier to give a colourful description of hell, than to give an adequate description of Paradise, but this should not deflect people from striving towards a new life. India has produced two great apostles of Peace - the Buddha in ancient times, and Mahātmā Gandhi in our days, and the people of China have exhibited throughout their history a traditional tendency towards a peaceful solution of their national problems. The Leaders of ~~Modern~~ ^{New} China are acutely conscious of this national tradition and the cultural Renaissance which is observed in China since 1949, is an eloquent testimony to the vitality of this traditional peaceful approach.

In our days, on the threshold of a New Age, we have special responsibilities towards ourselves and our neighbours. No matter what people might think or do, this New Age, the Age of scientific thinking, is coming. Different people will, no doubt, choose different paths predestined by their Past and the interplay of social, economic and cultural forces. The roads of approach may be different, but the goal is one, the betterment of our fellow men, the quest for a richer and fuller life. The tremendous development of scientific knowledge has made us all realize that knowledge and culture should be the two foundations on which a New World will be built. The many complicated problems of national life make it imperative to evolve more scientific forms of organization. The pressure of ^{a rapidly} increasing population makes scientific planning imperative. These are, no doubt, tremendous problems, but a dedicated mind knows how to overcome difficulties. On this day let us dedicate ourselves to this

lofty ideal, and send our fraternal greetings to the peoples of China who to-day demonstrate their solemn resolve to build a New and dynamic China.

Long live the traditional friendship between India and China!

Jai Bhārat.

Jai Chīn.