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**Dr. Rajendra Prasad**

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# THE UNITY OF INDIA

*(Selected Speeches, 1951—1960)*

**DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD**



**PUBLICATIONS DIVISION  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

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*This book brings together twenty-eight selected speeches of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, on the theme of the cultural and political unity of India. In these speeches, the President dwells on the essential unity of Indian culture, which is the heritage of the country's unbroken history of thousands of years. He emphasises the need to preserve and strengthen our national unity and to guard against fissiparous tendencies.*

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## OUR COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

A foreigner unfamiliar with Indian conditions would, if he were to travel across this country, see so much diversity that he might easily think that India, instead of being a single nation, is an aggregate of nations, each one of which is different from the other. He would see many physical diversities of a far-reaching character, such as are usually to be seen only in a continent. He would see the snow-clad Himalayas at one end of the country and as he moves south, he would see the plains watered by the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Brahmaputra, and then the green table-land lying between the Vindhya, Aravali, Satpura, Sahyadri and the Nilgiri mountains. If he were to travel from west to east, he would see similar diversities and varieties. He would experience all types of climate; the extreme cold of the Himalayan regions, the scorching heat of the plains in summer, the record rainfall of 500 inches in the Assam hills, and the dry, arid climate of Jaisalmer where not even four inches of rainfall is recorded during the year. There is no food crop which cannot be grown in India, nor is there any fruit which cannot be cultivated here. There is no mineral which is not found in India nor is there any plant or animal which is unknown in the forests of this country.

By studying the people of the different regions of India, one can see the effect that climate has on the physical features, intellect, manner of living and the diet of a people. Similarly, there are several important languages spoken in this country without taking into account the vast number of dialects. Also, people of every known faith live in India

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From address delivered at the inauguration of the All-India Cultural Conference at Delhi, March 15, 1951

and just as the dialects of this country are too numerous to be counted, it is not easy to count the exact number of sects into which the main religions of this country are divided. Naturally, it would not be surprising if in view of these diversities, a perplexed foreigner exclaims that India is not one country but an aggregate of countries, and that it is not one nation but a collection of nations; for, to a person who does not delve deep beneath the surface of things, the diversities alone will be perceptible. But a careful examination reveals, beneath all these diversities, a unity which threads all these diversities into one, in the same way in which a silk thread unites different kinds of beautiful gems into a single necklace of which not a single gem is separate : and each gem not only charms with its beauty, but adds to the beauty of the others. This is not a poetic fancy but a well-established truth. As a result of the confluence of the numerous independent fountains and currents which have maintained their separate existence for thousands of years, a single stream of Indian culture flows over the sub-continent. It is our desire and our effort that it may continue to flow in the same manner as it has done so far and that it may make immortal those forces which have been able to withstand the ravages of time.

There is an eternal ethical current which has been flowing in our country, and which occasionally incarnates itself into living forms. It is our good fortune to have had in our midst a living human embodiment of this ethical faith—a person, who, by making us aware of that faith, infused new life into our lifeless bodies and put new cheer and courage into our dying hearts. The immortal principle he stood for is the principle of truth and ahimsa, which is vital not only for India but also for the continued existence of humanity.

We have already established a democratic form of

government in this country which provides scope for the full development of the individual as well as that of the collective social group. There is usually a kind of opposition between the individual and society. The individual desires his own progress and prosperity and if it obstructs the progress of another individual, a conflict is bound to occur between the two unless, of course, this conflict is resolved by each one by following the path of individual progress through the method of non-violence.

Our culture is rooted in the principle of non-violence, for we attach the greatest importance to the principle of ahimsa. Another name or form of ahimsa is sacrifice, just as another name or form of violence is self-aggrandisement which often finds expression in self-indulgence. According to our philosophy, however, even self-gratification can be obtained through renunciation. Our people have found the highest joy and self-realisation through renunciation. The Sruti says "Enjoy that which has been given unto you by Him." It is by this principle that we wish to resolve the conflict between individuals, between the individual and the group, between the communities and between nation and nation. Our whole ethical consciousness is suffused by this principle. It is because of this faith that we let different ideological currents flow freely in their own channels, different creeds and faiths grow and flourish without any restraint, and different languages develop and blossom to the fullest possible extent.

We assimilated people of different races into our own, absorbed their culture and permitted ours to mingle with that of the others and it was because of this that the links we established in other countries were forged with love and not with aggression. Never in our history did we use force to enslave other people to our power. If we won them, it was by winning their hearts and, therefore, traces of our influence are still to be found all over the world, even though

we ourselves have, in many respects, forgotten that ethical consciousness which gave us this influence over other countries.

Today, the most important problem before us is to find out how far this historic ethical consciousness, which has been the main motive force of the life of our common people, can prove useful to us in the changed conditions of the present age. No one can deny that, in this connection, there are two currents of thought in our country. Some people are of the opinion that in the modern industrial age, an ethical consciousness which teaches man the lessons of non-violence, truth and renunciation has no value. They believe that in the competitive economic system of today, ruthless self-aggrandisement is absolutely necessary. We have, however, to weigh carefully this aggressive egoism of the industrial age against the principles of humility and courtesy which are inherent in our ethical system and adopt one as the driving force and power in the revolutionary reconstruction of our country.

It would not be out of place to say that, in the West, the inevitable and unavoidable result of this aggressive egoism has been the emergence of the theory of class war on the one hand and, on the other, heartless political and economic exploitation, reinforced by imperialism. We have to decide whether cultural progress must inevitably be through the principle of 'might is right' or whether it can also be achieved on the basis of that moral awareness to which, centuries ago, the sages drew the attention of our people. It is no doubt true that, though we may wish to, we cannot keep ourselves aloof from the progress that the West has made in the scientific sphere; nor can we remain unaffected by its developments in the sphere of industry; nor do I think that such an attempt is desirable or necessary. The only consideration that we have to keep in view is how we can

harmonise science with our indigenous culture. I think, while considering this question, we have to remember that notwithstanding the many natural calamities and man-made evils which have afflicted our country from time to time, the creative urge of our people has not been destroyed or diminished. Empires rose and fell, different faiths flourished and declined and we suffered foreign aggression and oppression. Nature and man heaped numerous calamities upon us. Yet we were able to maintain our existence, preserve our culture, and retain our vital and creative powers. Even during the darkest days, we were able to produce such thinkers and men of action who would, by right, have occupied the highest place in any age in the history of the world. During the period of our political slavery, we were able to produce such a man of action, faith and revolutionary ideals as Gandhiji, such a talented poet as Rabindranath Tagore and such great yogis as Sri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi. During the same period, we were also able to produce scholars and scientists to whom the world still pays homage.

Even amidst circumstances which had destroyed some of the famous civilisations of the world, we have not only been able to maintain our existence but have also preserved our intellectual and moral glory. It appears to me that the main reason for our survival is that our collective consciousness rests on an ethical foundation which is stronger, deeper and wider than the mountains, oceans and the sky. The collective consciousness of the nations which have perished was imprisoned in the cage of race and language. It may well be that this cage was of gold, but nevertheless, it was a cage which enfeebled the inmate, with the result that when the cage was broken or had to be changed, national consciousness had become altogether helpless, nay even lifeless. But our collective consciousness, or in other words our culture, has never remained imprisoned within racial, regional or

linguistic boundaries. As I have already said, these different aspects of our life have been only different channels of its expression, and never have they been bonds which crushed and stifled it. On the other hand, the fabric of our culture is woven by the threads of humanity. It is no doubt true that we have not been able to make it permeate every aspect of our life. To a certain extent, our fall was also due to our failure to make it the light of our life. But all the same it is there and we have to give it its due importance. Another point which we ought to consider is that this culture is the very life of our nation. It is this culture alone which unites our cities and villages, different regions and religions, and different classes and castes, with one another. They might differ in all other aspects, but this is the only bond which unites them. It was the realisation of this truth by Bapu that led him to rely upon this ethical consciousness to bring the Indian masses, under the leadership of our intelligentsia, into the current of the revolution. The mass mind suddenly became active under the call of ahimsa, service and sacrifice, simply because these ideals had been dormant in it for innumerable centuries. The far-sightedness of Bapu lay in the fact that he made the consciousness vibrating in the heart of the common people the main driving force of our revolution: in this also lay his success. Even when a section of the masses had become maddened by communal passions, Bapu was able to control them in Bihar and Delhi by appealing to this ethical consciousness.

It is for you to consider whether this ethical consciousness needs to be modified to suit the modern dynamic age. But, as far as I can see, it is basically in harmony with the needs of the modern age. The modern industrial civilisation cannot be confined within regional, racial or linguistic boundaries, for they are obstacles in its further development. It can rest only on a universal foundation. In my opinion,

the conflict that we find in the West today is mainly due to the insistence of the people, under the influence of their out-moded social psychology, on maintaining these divisions. The fact that our culture never gave much importance to such boundaries becomes significant in this connection. I feel, therefore, that if we have to escape the repetition of the injustices and atrocities which produce the conflicts of modern times, it is necessary for us to build our economic system on the foundation of the historic ethical consciousness of our country, and to make selflessness and social welfare the main driving force of our economy, rather than personal profit or self-gratification.

Today, besides the question of cultural harmony in India, we have to consider how we can make the beautiful literary works in different regional languages available for the enjoyment of the people. Is it not desirable that the literary societies of each regional language get their literary works printed in the federal script, that is Devanagari? I believe, at least in northern India, where the languages are inter-related, a literary work printed in the Devanagari script would be enjoyed by almost all the people because of the close similarity in all these languages.

Further, the establishment of an academy which could initiate an exchange of literary ideas through translation would be worthwhile. It can also, at the same time, provide the necessary inspiration to the literatures of the country, help in the creation of standards of literary criticism and in the creation of good and enduring literature. Literature is one of the manifest expressions of culture, others being music, dancing, painting, architecture and sculpture. India has continued to express its national unity through these various forms and, I believe, you will reinforce and vitalise this tendency still further.

## FELLOW FEELING AND COMMUNAL HARMONY

We have a number of problems, but some of them are of a basic nature and underlie all others. One such problem is that of communal harmony in this country. We have got many religions and communities. Unfortunately, sometimes communal harmony gets disturbed for one reason or another. There would be nothing very peculiar about it if quarrels occurred only occasionally, because quarrels do occur between brothers, between husband and wife, between father and son. All such quarrels are soon made up and the basic affection remains unchanged. Similarly, even if one community occasionally finds some cause for quarrel with another, that should not lead them to make this quarrel a source of perpetual irritation or to give it anything but a temporary character. Fortunately, your region has a singular history of toleration and I am told that Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jews have all been living peacefully for centuries. Even a casual visitor like me, while passing along the roads, can see temples, churches and synagogues side by side and one can understand that this was possible only because there has been tolerance and regard for all the religions.

My belief is—and it is the opinion of all true followers of all religions—that true religion is concerned with belief in a supernatural power. Since that supernatural power is above all and all others are like the children of that power, all human beings must be, more or less, like brothers and sisters to one another. If that is the teaching of all religions, then, in spite of differences in the way in which we worship God, there is no reason why we should not really be brothers. Here in India, our ancestors, the rishis of old, realised

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From speech at public meeting, Ernakulam, March 29, 1951

this and laid down once and for all that the truth is one but the wise reach it by different paths. We want a realisation of this truth not only as a matter of intellectual conviction, but also as a rule of conduct to be followed every moment of our lives. It is impossible for us to rise to any height without a realisation of this truth. If we quarrel amongst ourselves, it is obvious that we cannot make any progress. All the effort that is wasted in suppressing one another can very well be utilised in promoting our common prosperity. This is one of the fundamental problems which this country has been tackling from time immemorial, but its urgency needs to be re-emphasised today when we have freed ourselves from foreign domination and are left to our own resources to shape our destinies.

Another fundamental question which naturally affects all of us is that of our economic set-up. We have, in this country, vast masses of humanity, some of them in extremely poor circumstances, not having enough food, clothing, and shelter. There must be millions and millions of men and women who are in such a condition in this country. On the other hand, we have only a few persons who are in affluent and happy circumstances. What we need is not the suppression of those at the top but the uplifting of those who are at the bottom and I cannot understand the philosophy which aims at levelling down instead of levelling up. What is needed is really the raising of the general standard of living. Sometimes jealousies are roused when a poor man sees his neighbour in happy and affluent circumstances. That is a natural instinct and we have to tolerate it, but we must be prepared to explain that they will be happier if both rose higher still and no attempt was made to pull down the affluent and happy.

Mahatmaji laid stress on non-violence. It is on non-violence alone that an ordered society can be based. There

is no use creating violence in the hope that by violence we shall be able to suppress violence. We have a saying in the north that you cannot wash mud with mud. For washing mud, you need pure water. For getting rid of violence, you require something much better than violence. You require non-violence and that is Mahatma Gandhi's teaching. He saw instinctively that in a country like India where we have so many religions and so many languages, unless non-violence is a basic factor in everyday life, there will be no end to our quarrels or problems. That is true not only of us, but it is true of the whole world. India is a sort of microcosm which represents the macrocosm of the world at large. I have therefore emphasised, wherever it has been possible for me to do so, the importance of non-violence in our everyday life, in our dealings with one another and also in our dealings with other countries. There are, no doubt, circumstances which sometimes force our hands to do something against our better judgment. One can understand that and one may be prepared even to excuse such cases. But, if we knowingly deviate from the path, then it becomes a disease. What we need is a genuine effort to shape our own lives through non-violence. If in spite of that there are deviations, it does not matter because we shall be able, ultimately, to come to the right course. As night follows day, the difficulties which are facing us today will disappear if we fully realise that. If we once realise the full truth, there is no problem which cannot be solved. Therefore, it is essential that we must pay due regard to what Gandhiji said. We must not rest content with uttering his name only, but should gladly follow the path which he laid down for us. I desire to impress upon you, friends, that we cannot do better than walk in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. There must be a genuine effort to follow that path. Once that is done, the rest becomes easy.

## THE TAMIL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

You are rightly proud of your language and culture. You have maintained it in this part of the country as well as outside wherever your people have gone. It is in the fitness of things that you should be thinking of making your contribution to the general culture of the country as a whole. The culture of India is a composite culture which is drawn from the different parts of the country. In the course of thousands of years, we have been able to evolve, in the midst of all the diversities that we see, a general unanimity and unity of culture. This is one great thing which we always cherish.

There has never been an attempt in this country to force anything on others within the country or outside. There is no record of any invasion by the people of India of any other country. Within the country itself, every group and every part of it has been allowed the fullest freedom to develop itself as best it could. The result has been a number of very highly developed languages with rich literatures containing many gems of great value.

At this time, when we are going to reconstruct India, you should be ready and prepared to take full part in the work of reconstruction. It is necessary that the various languages that are spoken and that have a literature of their own, should develop to the greatest possible extent. It is, indeed, necessary that all the languages should develop, because without them we cannot have the India which we wish to build. At the same time, we need a language which will enable us, from the north to the south, from the east to the west, to correspond with one another and understand one

another. In the past, we used Sanskrit for this purpose. We require some language for this limited purpose only. It will help us feel, in spite of divergences, that we are all one.

I have no doubt that in your efforts for the growth and enrichment of the Tamil language and literature, you will get the support of all right-thinking people in the country at large. Just as you are giving us political and social workers and administrators, we want you to give us also literary persons who will inspire not only those people who can speak and understand the Tamil language, but also those who do not understand that language but still wish to profit by its wealth. That can be done by translations of the best works, although it is a big task. I am glad that the Government as well as non-official organisations are bringing about such a fusion as we desire.

In modern times, research work in regard to a great literary work puts more emphasis on things like the author's place of birth and the construction of his sentences or expressions in relation to the set rules of grammar. The result is that more attention is given to the man than to the work. After all, it is not the man that matters so much as the work he left behind. We, in northern India, are no worse off because we do not know the exact place of birth of Tulsidas. What I would like your research workers to do is to help in the propagation of the real teachings of a great work like the Kural. I have no doubt that scholars will bring together the different versions and editions and all the commentaries on the great author. We do not know the dates and places of activity of many of our great men of the past : still, their life has become part of the lives of millions in this country. The Kural has been a part of the lives of millions and millions of people for centuries in spite of the fact that little is known about the life of the author.

I wish the Kural publication all success and I hope it will get help and encouragement from all.

## THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

I thank you for the honour that you have done me today and I shall always value it highly, coming as it does from this University, which was not only the first to make one of our spoken languages the medium of instruction, but which has also done pioneering work in getting text-books in that language on all scientific and non-scientific subjects prepared and published. In its own way and within the limitations of the language chosen as the medium of instruction, that work appeared to me to be quite encouraging as I was and have always been keenly interested in this question ever since I began taking active part in public affairs. I am glad to say that today public consciousness has been thoroughly aroused on this subject and it is generally recognised by the intelligentsia and the educationists that, if there is to be no avoidable and unnecessary waste in our educational effort, it is absolutely necessary that education should be imparted in the indigenous tongues. But with all this there is yet some haziness among certain sections of the people about the language policy best calculated to serve the objectives we have in view.

I would like, with your permission, to say a few words about it. I believe that everyone in this country knows—in any case I would like everybody to know—that under the Constitution the sovereign people of India have adopted

through their Constituent Assembly, it is our duty to establish a democratic society in this country, a society in which every individual and every group has the fullest possible rights and opportunities to realise all his, her or its potentialities. Every individual will also have equal opportunities to shape the policy of the Government in the States and at the centre. While thinking of the policy to be adopted with regard to the medium of instruction we must all keep in our minds this mandatory obligation. I need not say that education is a power by itself and that in any case a person bereft of it cannot have any chance of either realising himself to the full or making any effective or worthwhile impression on the policies and actions of the government of his country and region. It is, therefore, plain that the methods and means of education should be such as do not permit any discrimination between one man and another and between one group and another.

It would thus appear that all kinds of education, primary, secondary and university, should be available in its own tongue to every linguistic group of any appreciable size. It is only then that it would not have to spend more time, money and energy than any other group for acquiring the benefits of education. Any other course of action would put one group at a disadvantage in comparison to the group in whose language its children have to acquire education. This means that education at all stages must be in the language of the region concerned.

But this is feasible only if the linguistic group is of an appreciable size and forms a compact region. It cannot be reasonably demanded by those who are very small in numbers or are scattered in different parts of other linguistic regions. The governments of those linguistic regions must make arrangements for the imparting of education to children in their own mother-tongue except at the lowest stages.

The financial and other implications of accepting such a demand can be easily perceived. In every well-defined linguistic region of India, small numbers of persons speaking other languages are to be found. If separate arrangements have to be made in each school, in each college, and in each university of that region for the teaching of the children of all these different linguistic groups, the cost would be colossal. Moreover, from the political point of view, it is desirable that such scattered remnants of any linguistic group, in any other linguistic region, should identify themselves with the latter group instead of remaining entirely distinct from the latter and thus keeping up a difference which may bring about ill-feeling and misunderstanding between them and the large bulk of the population around them. Much of the complexity of the language question in this country would have been solved if each linguistic group recognised this cold logic of facts—financial and political.

Each regional language has to be developed and its literature enriched so as to enable it to become a fit vehicle and rich store-house of knowledge of all kinds—ancient and modern. It is the duty of the regional government or governments to help and encourage this development. This can best be done by building upon the foundation of the existing form and vocabulary of the language and by embellishing it with whatever can be naturally and easily adopted and adapted from other sister languages. Any puristic attempt to exclude words, idioms, and even grammatical construction on the ground that they were borrowed and did not originally belong to the source from which the language was derived, is bound not only to fail but to result in impoverishing the language instead of enriching it. Besides, we have to conserve our energy to the utmost for devoting it to the urgent task of abolishing poverty and ignorance from our country and can hardly spare any for a wholly unnecessary if

not mischievous purpose like this. I do not see any justification for linguistic purism, for language, after all, is but a medium of communication and if a word symbol is well-understood by the people there is no reason why it should be thrown out merely on the ground of its alien origin. Also, the growth of the language should be in a direction in which it becomes more and more acceptable and intelligible to the vast masses of the linguistic region concerned. Its themes, its style, its vocabulary should be as near as possible to the life and the tongue of the common people. I believe that language, like other institutions of society, would benefit greatly by going to the bosom of the Demos.

Apart from the urgent need of developing and enriching the regional language, there is another question which also demands careful consideration. Ours is a multi-lingual country. We must have a common language that would enable the different linguistic regions to communicate with one another in matters of inter-regional and national life. After full consideration, the Constituent Assembly provided in the Constitution that this language shall be Hindi in the Devanagari script, the form of numerals for official purposes of the Union being the international form of Indian numerals. It was an unanimous agreement, arrived at after trying to accommodate all the relevant interests. There seems to me to be no reason whatever why anyone in this country should feel that his or his group's interests would be adversely affected by this decision in any way. I do not think that I need say more than that within the educational system of each linguistic region, there should be arrangement for the teaching of the Union language. It is necessary to emphasise this so that those speaking languages other than Hindi might not find themselves at a disadvantage in any respect whatsoever. How and at what stage instruction in Hindi can be fitted in with the general scheme of education

in non-Hindi regions has to be worked out without delay and steps taken to implement any plan that may be adopted so that, within the time allowed by the Constitution, we may be able to do without the English language for the official purposes of the Union. This State has three languages spoken by the people in regions which are more or less marked. It has been making every earnest effort to develop Urdu, which I consider to be only another style or form of what has been adopted by our Constitution as the language of the Union, though it has its own script and distinctive vocabulary. It has thus the same problem that our multi-lingual country as a whole has to solve. But, this State has had the advantage of having made headway with a language for public purposes which is distinct from the three regional languages. We should conserve and derive what benefit and lessons we can from the experience so gained and I feel that it may prove of great value as giving us a foundation on which to build. It is the duty and privilege of this University to erect on that foundation an edifice which will redound to its credit and to the great benefit of our land.

## MUSIC IN INDIAN LIFE

Indian music is something we can all be proud of. For ages, music and song have formed an integral part of our national life. Even in the days of our slavery, when it lacked governmental patronage and no facilities for its teaching existed, music continued to inspire us. Perhaps it was

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From speech delivered while inaugurating a music festival organised by the Bharatiya Kala Kendra, New Delhi, April 4, 1952.

because we never looked to music as a source of sensuous enjoyment but considered it to be a vehicle to transport the soul to bliss. I do not know the connection between music and the daily life of other peoples, but, about our country, I can say that music is our constant friend from birth to death. Our child gets its first acquaintance with music as soon as he opens his eyes. All our sanskaras, rites and ceremonies, feasts and festivals are performed to the accompaniment of melodious music. Our men on the farm, our labourers, our women at the spinning wheel or while pounding rice or winnowing wheat, are often found humming a tune or singing in chorus. Sometimes I have wondered whether God blessed us with an extra-sensitive ear for lilt and rhythm. Evidently, music permeates the Indian soul. The Indian gets out of music no transitory pleasure but a deep and abiding satisfaction of the soul.

All clashes and conflicts, for the time being, die away in the resonant concord of music. Music is the language of the soul, it is the voice of humanity. It knows no barriers of race, creed or place. It is above time. It can be the greatest source of inspiration in man's life. Perhaps that is why our mystics, like Chaitanya and Meera, were music-mad. The devotional songs of our saints and mystics such as Kabir, Sur, Tulsi, Tukaram and Narsi Mehta have become a part of the existence of our people. Even our Radha-Krishna literature, so full of poetic exuberance, ultimately takes us to God. On account of this peculiarity, our music came to have such a sturdy tradition that it was able to bind in unison all the communities in India. At least this much is clear that while there have been differences and bickerings in other spheres, in the sphere of Indian music, all sections of the Indian people in all the regions have always thought and still think alike and they will continue to do so. This unity has cut across all political antagonisms and religious

bigotry and has not been affected by regional considerations and linguistic differences.

Undoubtedly, there are two systems in Indian music, but they are not fundamentally opposed to each other. In fact, the two forms of our music are, in the ultimate analysis, homogeneous. This is evident from the fact that both these systems are governed by the same principles of *rāga* and *swara*. The difference between the two is purely external and no one need be deluded by it. It is these principles which have given Indian music its peculiar form.

I hope that our musicians will succeed in making every home and hamlet hum with divine music, just as our saints and mystics carried the gospel of love and peace from door to door in the past. May they realise the aim and ambition of their life through this path of human welfare.

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF KARNATAKA

Indian culture is undoubtedly one; but it is a composite culture, a collective concept, for the making of which every part of India has made its contribution according to its own peculiar genius. You can legitimately feel proud of the part Karnataka has played in building up Indian culture.

I would like to say something about the principal characteristics of Indian culture. One of these characteristics is the essential harmony of Indian culture—harmony which is not superficial, but which has gone deep enough to be evidenced in every texture of its fabric. Anyone who goes

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From inaugural address at the Kannada Cultural Festival, New Delhi, April 15, 1954

round and visits various parts of the country will be struck by the unity which pervades all the apparent forms of diversity. It provides a harmonising influence sufficiently tangible to make Indian culture distinctive. It is, therefore, not surprising if someone from the north discovers unmistakable bonds of unity in the art of the south or a man from the south is struck by the community of design or motif between the temples of the south and those of the north.

The spirit of unity has manifested itself particularly in the sphere of fine arts like music, dancing, and architecture. About the last one, Sisir Kumar Mitra has said : "If architecture is the matrix of all arts and crafts, it is more so in India whose temples and cave cathedrals with all the decorative beauty of their sculpture and painting are the very embodiment of the integral vision of art that came to the builders of ancient India. Evolved out of spiritual conceptions, they have stood through the ages as the principal visible and material record of the cultural evolution of the race, as the symbol of the unity of its godward aspirations."

Your language, Kannada, which is recognised as one of the regional languages of India, is indeed one of the oldest in the country. Spread over a period of about 2,000 years, it has a rich literature. The Kannadigas have also made valuable contributions to Sanskrit literature.

The south in general and Karnataka in particular may well feel proud of the fact that the great Indian renaissance in the eleventh and twelfth centuries emanated from that part of the country. This renaissance which, in course of time, transformed itself into the bhakti movement is one of the most significant events of Indian history of the middle ages. Madhvacharya who was born in Karnataka, and Ramanujacharya who sought shelter there, were the two spearheads of that movement. One of the foremost results of this renaissance, which had its ramifications throughout

the north, was a great religious upsurge which sought expression through devotional poetry. Hindi, which had been in a formative stage for some centuries received a great fillip on account of this upsurge. Even today the literature of the bhakti era is the most valuable treasure of Hindi literature. In a way, therefore, we could say that in creating the conditions which enriched Hindi literature, southern India played a great part. Bengali and Marathi, as they are spoken today, also benefited immensely from this renaissance. It was but inevitable that a spirit of unison and harmony should run through the art and literature of the various regions and their respective languages.

I am glad that the Kannada language, which suffered a temporary set-back for historical and geographical reasons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has once again come into its own. You have now two universities and a number of well-established educational institutions in the regions where Kannada is the medium of instruction. Kannada has a strong Press and a well-developed literature, rich in fiction, poetry and drama. I am happy to observe that in our struggle for freedom, Kannada writers played a prominent part.

I need hardly assure you that your sense of pride and your achievements are widely appreciated outside Karnataka. The whole country has learnt to respect and appreciate the Karnataka style of music. Even in parts where Kannada is not understood, people listen to and enjoy this music.

I congratulate the organisers of this function on their decision to celebrate a Kannada cultural festival. Functions like this, apart from giving a high type of entertainment, are of great national importance. They provide an opportunity to speakers of other languages to come closer to regional literature and art. I particularly welcome the idea of holding such festivals portraying the cultural activities of the

south, in Delhi. I hope functions of this kind are organised in other parts of the country also. I believe that every State or region has something to give to others. Such festivals should be the right medium for give and take in the cultural sphere.

### PUNJABI CULTURE

I am glad that the Punjabi-speaking citizens of the capital thought of holding this function. Lately we have had here such cultural and literary festivals of the people of other linguistic groups also. The number of those who speak Punjabi is probably not less than that of any other single language group in Delhi. It would indeed have looked odd if the Punjabi population of this town had not thought of organising a Punjabi Mela. When I was told about it by Shri Gurmukh Singh Musafir and other friends, I gladly accepted their invitation to inaugurate it.

India is a country where many languages are spoken. Quite a few of them are rich and well developed. They have their own literature and their own literary traditions. On account of this variety in language and customs, we often call India a country consisting of several cultural groups. All these regional cultures and their respective traditions form the basis on which the edifice of India's culture stands. This does not mean that Indian culture has no distinctive individuality of its own and is merely a conglomeration of regional cultures. In fact, as a result of centuries of mutual contacts and the process of constant give and take, a composite

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Speech delivered at the inauguration of the Punjabi Cultural Mela, New Delhi, November 6, 1954

culture has evolved which has its own characteristics and beauties. Though, as before, the thought, customs and traditions of various regions are an integral part of Indian culture, yet Indian culture as a whole may be said to be above each one of them because of its distinctive individuality.

I know some people do not look upon the multiplicity of languages as an unmixed blessing. It is likely that in the past multi-lingualism may have encouraged centrifugal tendencies. It is also possible that this factor may have been looked upon as a challenge to the country's solidarity and unity. But all that has changed now. I would like us to review the situation in the changed circumstances. Luckily we have gone far ahead in this respect and the concepts of political independence and national unity have come to acquire a different meaning. The foundation on which Indian unity and solidarity rest today is so strong that the very forces which might have threatened it in the past are today capable of forging new links to strengthen it. All the units, big and small, of the Indian Union now enjoy complete cultural and linguistic freedom and we look upon the progress of every regional language and culture as an asset to Indian culture. In my opinion, this freedom, given to the various units of the Indian Republic by our Constitution, is not only the guarantee but also the touchstone of our success.

I would like to say a few words about the Punjabi language. Like other Indo-Aryan languages, Punjabi also started taking shape in the middle ages; and again, as in the case of its other sister languages, its sapling too was nurtured by the *vani* of great saints and religious leaders. This language has its own peculiarities and its own grandeur. Though modern Punjabi literature has developed mainly during the last one hundred years, a few Punjabi epics, which

are a valuable treasure because of their literary excellence, were written some centuries ago. The poetic tradition as evidenced in these epics and Punjab's folk-songs is thus fairly old. I think it is our duty to keep this tradition alive and to improve upon it as far as it is possible.

For this reason I welcome the idea of convening such cultural festivals, because they help in keeping our cultural heritage alive. I am sure this Mela will be a source of entertainment not only to the Punjabi-speaking people of the capital but also to others. Apart from recreation, such festivals have also great educative value. In a place like Delhi which has a cosmopolitan population, such festivals provide an excellent opportunity of imbibing the spirit of co-operation and mutual give and take. I wish success to this festival of yours and hope that occasions like this will soon become a permanent feature of our city and country life.

## THE ART TRADITIONS OF KERALA

It gives me great pleasure to be present here today to inaugurate the Malayalam Art Festival and to witness it. I have had occasion to witness similar festivals organised by other cultural groups and to say a few words about the importance of such gatherings and their bearing on the cultural life of the country as a whole, and on Indian unity in particular.

When I received the invitation to inaugurate this function from kind friends of Kerala, I could not help wondering how the thread of unity, woven in centuries, if not millennia, by mutual contact and community of interest, thought and outlook, had strung together into a beautiful pattern the

diverse regional cultures of this ancient land. This diversity portraying the peculiar characteristics and traditions of different regions has given Indian unity a remarkably subtle and kaleidoscopic effect. The whole panorama of Indian culture is dominated by the rich diversity provided by different regions, and yet the concept of Indian culture is so unmistakably clear and unique that as a whole it can never be equated with the culture of any single region nor the latter mistaken for what is known as Indian culture.

If we give some thought to this question we cannot escape the conclusion that vast and variegated though our country is, in course of time certain ideas have permeated the whole length and breadth of our land so well that long distances and differences of climate, language and customs appear to have counted almost for nothing. The myths and legends of the snow-clad Himalayan regions in the north are made of the same stuff as the legends of far-off Kerala in the south. To a large extent, I believe, it is the two great Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which provided common links in the realm of thought, literature and social customs of the various regions. It cannot be said to be purely accidental that literary activity in nearly all the Indian languages, particularly the languages of the north, east and the west, which were then in a formative stage, began with local translations of the two epics or parts thereof. Even in the case of the Dravidian languages, the classical tradition began only with the popularisation of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana through local media. It is a significant fact that in all our languages the first fruits of literary effort were either translations of these epics or independent works based on the themes of the epics. That being so, it is not at all surprising that there is a thread of unity visible to any discerning eye, binding in one pattern the literatures and arts of the various regions.

Kerala, as one of those linguistic and cultural regions, has its own customs and traditions of art and literature. I understand that its language, Malayalam, has a rich literature in which various forms such as the novel, drama and poetry are well developed. One of the greatest cultural assets of Kerala, I am told, is its dance-drama which is based on stories from the epics and which has acquired great popularity on account of its liveliness, its artistic appeal and the picturesque costumes of the actors and actresses. As for Kathakali, which has made Kerala famous in the world of art, nothing much need be said. Kathakali is acknowledged by all connoisseurs of art as one of the finest expositions of Indian dancing. Similarly, the people of Kerala have distinguished themselves in the field of music, painting, architecture and other fine arts.

I welcome the idea of holding such cultural festivals, representing far-flung regions, in Delhi, which apart from being a cosmopolitan town is, in a sense, the heart of the north. It is not only desirable but also essential that the people in this part of the country should know as much as possible about the art and cultural traditions of our southern-most State. I only wish northerners also held their art festivals in the south, if only to complete the process of give and take. I have no doubt that those who witness this festival will find much of interest in it.

I wish the Malayalam Art Festival all success and hope it will stimulate the interest of the non-Malayalees in the art and culture of Kerala and also provide an opportunity to Malayalees to enrich their culture further.

## THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE

I am not a scholar of Sanskrit, nor can I claim to have devoted to its study as much time as I would have wished to. All that I can claim, in all humility, is my love for that language. If I must analyse my attachment to Sanskrit, I may confess that it is based partly on considerations of utility and partly on sentiment.

Sanskrit is the language of India's culture and inspiration, the language in which all her past greatness, her rich thought and her spiritual aspirations are enshrined. The other two languages, Pali and Prakrit, which may be said to supplement Sanskrit in carrying out the functions of a storehouse of knowledge, are closely allied to it. As a matter of fact, the importance of Pali and Prakrit is itself an argument in favour of the Study of Sanskrit, because without it these languages cannot be properly appreciated. Whether one has to know the famous systems of Indian philosophy or to trace the evolution of Indian fine arts like music and dancing or try to fill the gaps here and there in our long history, knowledge of Sanskrit is an essential prerequisite.

I consider the study of Sanskrit as of great value to us. Sanskrit has not only been the treasure-house of our past knowledge and achievements in the realm of thought and art; it has also been the principal vehicle of our nation's aspirations and cultural traditions, besides being the source and inspiration of India's modern languages. The four south Indian languages, which, strictly speaking, do not belong to the group of Indo-Aryan languages, have, through mutual contact and religious and cultural affinity, drawn a large part of their vocabulary from Sanskrit.

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From presidential speech at the annual session of the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, November 11, 1955

I have often heard it said that for many centuries in the past, Sanskrit provided the principal basis for the unity of India. There appears to be a good deal of truth in this saying. Imagine, two thousand years ago when from the point of view of geography and topography India was probably a bigger country than she is today, how people living in the far-flung *pradeshas* maintained contact with one another. In that hoary past, when, in the modern sense of the term, there were hardly any means of communication, the whole country had more or less a common pattern of education, common rituals and common beliefs. It was Sanskrit which provided a common medium of expression and literary effort. While regional languages, in varying stages of development, were spoken in the various regions, Sanskrit truly was the *lingua franca*. It enjoyed the status of what we might call the national language of India for many centuries. Sanskrit has indeed played a great part in the cultural evolution of this country.

I do not mean to suggest that we should or can once again put Sanskrit on that pedestal and make it the inter-State language, though I am aware this plea has been put forth from some quarters. Without hazarding any opinion about the feasibility or desirability of this proposition, I have no hesitation in saying that even in the vastly changed circumstances of today, Sanskrit offers us much that is bound to be of value to the country as a whole. Whatever the status that we might agree to give formally to this great language, the fact remains that it provides the common fount from which the growing languages of modern India derive sustenance.

In spite of the vast distances which separate one region from another and the great variety of local customs and traditions, a man from the north cannot but feel thrilled when he finds that life in the south is governed by the same beliefs and rituals as in the north.

## TAMILNAD AND HINDI PRACHAR

It is my misfortune that I do not know Tamil and cannot read a word of Kamban. But from what I have heard from people who know, I can well imagine that the great poet has written in your language what Tulsidas has done in our language in the north. I can only refer to Kamban as Tulsidas because I know Tulsidas and do not know Kamban. Anyone who is familiar with the conditions in north India knows how, in every village, people—most of them illiterate—repeat lines from Tulsidas and sing with zest for hours together every night. It is in this way that the ancient lore and ancient philosophy of India were communicated to the masses. Therefore, I can very well imagine how the poetry of Kamban must be influencing the lives of the common people who do not read Sanskrit and who have not been able to read a line of Valmiki's Ramayana or any other book of Indian philosophy.

Tulsidas, though a bhakta of Rama, is more enthusiastic in his devotion to Siva and on an occasion has said that a man cannot become a true bhakta of Rama without becoming a bhakta of Siva. Anyway, so far as the masses are concerned, the dispute about the philosophical theories and tenets has been relegated to the background and Siva and Rama have become one in the north. I can very well imagine here in the south that Kamban, who very largely must have drawn his material from the same source as Tulsidas, has been able to portray not the life of a man, although a superman, but of an *avatar* who is an incarnation of Vishnu himself. Apart from the great beauty of his poetry, it is essentially the bhakti that pervades every line of Tulsidas which appeals to the

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From the presidential address at Kamban Day Celebrations, November 14, 1955.

common man. And I believe the same is true of Kamban who also is a bhakta first, and a poet afterwards.

We have now and then discussions about the national language of India, and speaking here before a Tamil audience on a subject which is very dear to the Tamilians, I may say at once as one speaking the Hindi language, as one associated with Hindi *prachar*, that it has not been the intention in the north or in the south to supplant the local regional language by Hindi and if anyone were so foolish as to embark upon such an enterprise, he will soon discover that he is attempting an impossible task. But I am quite sure we are not so foolish and we have never thought of imposing anything on any one, not to speak of language which is so dear to everyone who speaks it. I would therefore request people here in the south to consider the question more or less in the practical way. It is a mere accident that Hindi happens to be spoken by a larger number of people than any other language of India. For this very reason Hindi has been accepted as the language for all-India purposes. It has not been the intention either to weaken or in any way to divert the attention of the people from their own language. I would therefore suggest that this be considered as a purely practical proposition and from the view point of national work. You know also the limitations which not only the Constitution but also practical commonsense lays down. The limitation is that Hindi has to be used for all-India purposes and not for purposes which can be fulfilled equally well or better perhaps by the language that is spoken in a particular region by the people of that region. You can easily understand how it becomes difficult for us in the north to think that there should be any opposition to the adoption of Hindi as the language. Probably you may retort and say that it is difficult for you to imagine how it should be accepted without demur. It is purely from the point of view of national

convenience that a particular language has been adopted. If by any chance any other language had that advantage of being understood by more than half the people of the country, I am quite sure that that would have been adopted as the language of the country for all-India purposes.

The question has been raised about the disadvantages which people speaking other languages may have to suffer on account of the adoption of Hindi. I may say at once that all precautions should be taken so that no one would be placed at a disadvantage as compared with others. As far as I know and as far as I can judge, such precautions are being taken and will continue to be taken so that everyone is placed in a position in which he can compete with others and not suffer any disadvantage on account of not being a Hindi-speaking person. This assurance had been given in Parliament and although as President it is not my function to give assurances—it is the Ministers' function to give assurances which they alone can implement—I believe in a matter like this I can speak with some amount of authority and knowing as I do what the Ministers feel and think, I can unhesitatingly give the assurance that there is no intention of imposing any language on anybody. If Hindi has been adopted for all-India purposes, it is because it is considered to be very convenient from all points of view for the greater number of people in the country.

The question as regards the quality of language does not really arise. I believe most languages in India are quite developed and because they have not been used for administrative purposes for nearly 200 years, they may not have a ready-made vocabulary which would be intelligible all over the country. As a Hindi-speaking man, I have more than once appealed to all non-Hindi people to take part in shaping the Hindi language and moulding it so that it can become a proper vehicle for expressing modern ideas and modern

thoughts in whatever way they like. And when it becomes the national language or the language for the whole country, it becomes not only the privilege but also the duty of people speaking other languages to make their contributions to enrich it. It has been so in the past. If you read any book in Hindi, you will find a number of Persian and Arabic words in it because of the influence of the Persian and Arabic languages during the Muslim period in India. You will find in the Hindi of today the influence of Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati and the influence of even English. I am not able to say whether there has been a contribution from Tamil as well. But knowledge of other languages and Hindi justifies me in saying that Hindi is ever open to adjustments, ever open to take whatever it can get from other sources. I invite you to make your own contribution so that you may also call it your own language just as I call it mine.

I have often told people in the north that they should try to learn one of the south Indian languages if not for any other reason at least for this that unless they knew such a language and read some good works in it, they would not really be able to enter into the spirit of the people as a whole. It is therefore necessary that people in northern India should study south Indian languages so that they might enter into the spirit of the south Indian people. Up to now, Sanskrit has supplied that medium. It has brought about a synthesis and unity which could not be often attained in any other way. Now is the time when we have to do something to keep that kind of unity and synthesis so that the nation that we are may continue to prosper and to grow and to get more and more strength.

The tribute I could pay to Kamban would best be paid by making this request and appeal to you. I am quite sure if a translation of Kamban's works could be produced by someone who knows Hindi equally well there would be a

good number of people in the north who would appreciate not only the poetry and bhakti of Kamban, but also the greatness of the Tamil language.

## NEED FOR NATIONAL OUTLOOK

We recently had a most disturbing exhibition of what narrowness can create in our midst. People who have been working with Gandhiji could little imagine that small changes in the boundaries of States would create such upheavals as we have witnessed during the last few weeks. Let us hope that this is the last of that kind of narrowness which the country has seen. It is for everyone of us, in whatever walk of life we are situated and whatever work we are engaged in, to see that we develop a sense of oneness and unity and that we do not mistake the wood for the trees. The trees will not last if the forest is destroyed. The country alone can preserve the States, and no State, however good, however strong, however well-knit, will be able to survive if the country as a whole gets shattered into pieces. We have, therefore, to be vigilant and cautious in thought, word and deed.

Speaking as I do in the southernmost part of India and coming as I do from the northernmost province of India, I can speak for the whole length and breadth of this great country. I ask you, living near the Cape, to believe that the areas at the foot of the Himalayas are yours, and to permit me, living as I do at the foot of the Himalayas, to treat Cape Comorin as mine. Unless we develop this sense of unity and patriotism, and subordinate local, parochial, caste and communal considerations to the consideration of the country at

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From speech in reply to a civic address by the Trivandrum Corporation, February 1, 1956

large, we might lose the freedom which we have attained and our democracy might be very short-lived. This is a warning which recent events have given us. Let us take it seriously. I can only hope that the people will rise to the occasion and the foundations of democracy which have been laid in our country will prove to be strong. Whatever disturbances were witnessed in recent months will prove to be as foam on the waves of the ocean which do not touch the bottom at all. Like foam they were dirty and let us hope they will soon disappear. Let us all try to make our own contribution, however humble, in making the country worthy of its great past and of a greater future.

### THE PUNJABI LANGUAGE

One feels so much gratified to see that like the other Indian languages Punjabi is also making rapid progress and its literature is being enriched. All these languages are like one family, known collectively as Indian literature. Each one of these languages is important and each one of them adds to the glory and the enrichment of Indian literature. There can, therefore, be no question of any antagonism or inherent opposition among these languages. Each one of them has its own peculiarities and its own regional literature. Their mutual bonds are so strong that it is not possible to understand the origin and growth of anyone of them without appreciating the development of the other languages.

The stream of Indian literature has flown steadily, highlighting the ideals of harmony and freedom of thought right from pre-historic times. After the Vedic age, when the

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Speech at the second All-India Punjabi Conference, New Delhi, April 15, 1956.

historic period begins and we can be somewhat sure of the process of literary growth, we find Sanskrit to be the sole medium of the nation's literary effort. Sometime later, Pali and Prakrit came to be recognised as alternative media of literary expression, and along with Sanskrit these languages also began to develop. In the middle ages all the three languages started sprouting into other tongues. This was the time when the modern Indian languages began to take shape. These tongues, all of which belong to the Indo-Aryan group of languages, continued to develop according to their peculiar genius and local environments. Clearly, all of them, including Punjabi, have a common origin. Their vocabulary is mainly drawn from one source and the sources of their inspiration, namely, Indian culture, thought and historical background, are also common. On the other hand, the south-Indian languages, which belong to the Dravidian group, also began to develop about the same time, except Tamil, the oldest among those languages, which is believed to have started taking shape much before the middle ages.

When we view the question from this angle, it will be agreed that there has been complete freedom in our country not only of thought, but also of language. There might have been differences or clashes between State and State due to various causes but, as far as I know, the issue of language has never been one of those causes. In the midst of political turmoil and the changing fortunes of various kingdoms, one after another, our languages continued to grow according to their capacity, unhindered by those changes. Not only this, sufficient proof can be adduced to show that the process of give and take among these languages has continued throughout. We have a number of "border-line" poets claimed by more than one language. For example, Vidyapati is claimed by Hindi and also Bengali, while Mira is looked upon as their poet both by the protagonists of Hindi and those of

Gujarati. As for Punjabi and Hindi, the number of poets common to both the languages is more than a dozen. The revered Gurus and their followers, who laid the foundations of Punjabi and developed it, are all assigned a place of honour in Hindi literature. The close and intimate relationship between Hindi and Punjabi even today is evident from their respective histories and the large volume of common words in their vocabularies.

The status of Hindi has undergone some change in free India in so far as it is gradually becoming an all-India language and has to take the place of English in course of time. Though both of them are sister languages, Hindi and Punjabi have separate spheres of influence. Like the literature of any other Indian language, the literary treasure of Punjabi also forms a part of our common national heritage. I do not know much about Punjabi and its literature, but I can say that its trends and traditions are healthy and in keeping with our culture and national aspirations. India is a very big country in which followers of many religions and speakers of many languages live. There is ample scope here for various linguistic groups to develop their respective languages and literatures in an atmosphere of perfect freedom. Let me hope all the Indian languages will continue to develop and thus contribute to the liquidation of ignorance and illiteracy prevalent in our country.

### INDIAN UNITY

The sense of oneness pervading our country, from one part of the country to the other, needs to be re-emphasised in the context of the heated controversy we have had on the question

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From speech at a public meeting, Madurai, August 16, 1956

of the re-organisation of States. We should not think that our unity is a matter of course and it need not be thought of or cared for. It should also not be imagined that it is capable of bearing all kinds of strains to which it may be exposed. The fact is that our unity, although very ancient and well-rooted, needs to be nurtured and strengthened, at least at the present moment. We know that although our cultural unity is ages old, it failed to give us political unity, and we succumbed to foreign invasions times without number. Fortunately, now we have attained political unity also. Under the circumstances, it will be easier for us to reinforce and preserve our cultural and political unity. But politics plays havoc occasionally and it is necessary to beware of it.

Let us not, therefore, imagine that this political unity does not require our careful attention from day to day. Imagine, what would be our state if this political unity were to be lost? As it is, India is the second biggest nation in the world. With the exception of China, there is no other country which has got such a large population and is governed by one Constitution and ruled by one set of Ministers. I do not think there has been another instance of an election in which something like 180 million people were enfranchised. A second general election will be coming during the next few months. In this age numbers count more than anything else. India, with more than 360 million people, can play a great part in the world today. But imagine what would happen if we were again to be separated, one from the other, and instead of having one India we had a number of independent States. It is necessary that today we, who are 360 million people, stand united as one man. Unity does not mean dull uniformity. A distinctive feature of our nation is unity within diversity. Here in these parts women are wearing jewels. Each little bit of stone that is there has its own value and its own position, and yet the whole jewel is quite different

from the individual stones. As a whole piece of jewellery, it is not only very valuable but much more beautiful. India is like such a piece of jewellery with all its variety. Let us not break any of the stones which constitute the whole piece of jewellery. Each one of the stones must be preserved in its place, in all its glory, in all its beauty and in all its splendour. Then alone will the jewellery shine at its best.

There is no occasion for undesirable rivalries. We should all help each other in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. I know that occasionally there are differences. That cannot be avoided. But we should try to keep them within bounds. They should not be permitted to destroy the fundamental unity of the country. Mahatma Gandhi used to tell us : "Be prepared always to give, not to take". This is true not only of individuals but also of groups and communities. If every group thinks of the other, there will be no group left unthought of. The trouble arises because instead of caring for others we think of our own particular group. The result is that the group alone tries to safeguard its interests and no outsider bothers about it. If each group were to think of others and not of itself, then each group will be thought of by all others except itself. This will make a difference. It is therefore necessary in the interests of the country that we think of the nation as a whole and not of narrow groups within it. This is all the more necessary in the present context when certain regrettable incidents have happened. I am hoping that this is only a passing phase.

Fortunately, you have had no such trouble here; I hope you will not have it in future either. I am quite sure you will think of the country as a whole, for you are in one corner of it, although a very big corner. If you look at the map of India from this corner, you will find that either you are at the foot or at the top. In whatever position, your responsibility is great. If you are at the foot, you have to

carry the whole weight of the body; if you are at the top, the head has to share the burden. I therefore hope that you will never forget the country or ignore its interests. We are acquiring a new place in world affairs. Our Prime Minister has been devoting himself whole-heartedly to the maintenance of world peace. You can understand with how much greater force, emphasis and authority he can carry forward this mission if he is convinced that in his own country there is no trouble at all.

We are, at the present moment, engaged in working out the Second Five Year Plan. The First Plan has proved to be more successful than we thought it would in the initial stages. Let us hope that the Second will be even more successful than the First. That can happen only if all the people co-operate in the working of the Plan and put their shoulders to it. There are people who are trying to maintain the balance in different parts of the country; you can rest assured that they will not neglect the interests of any region. But there is such a thing as priority. Even when we go to the temple, everybody cannot get *darshan* at the same time; we have to go one after another. Similarly, when we go to a river to bathe, it is not always possible for all to bathe together. To stand in the queue and to take your turn does not mean you are being neglected. It only means that steps are being taken to see that everyone gets an opportunity. Unless this is done, equality of opportunity cannot be ensured. Similarly, in the matter of the Five Year Plans, everybody has to be thought of, but not at the same time. And you may rest assured that no one will be ultimately neglected.

## HINDI SHOULD KEEP ITS DOORS OPEN

The work of propagating the national language in this State has been going on for the last twenty years. You have already been told what progress has been made in this direction during this period. Since independence, it has been felt that this work should be expedited as far as possible so that Hindi could be adopted as a medium of inter-State contacts and business in the various spheres.

In this connection we should remember a few things, because it is necessary that we avoid misunderstandings which tend to create difficulties, at least psychological difficulties. The first thing which those who speak Hindi should keep in mind is that Hindi is not to be propagated in place of or at the expense of any regional language. All these languages have not only to continue to be used in their respective regions but their growth and enrichment has to be planned, and in this work every help should be extended by all sections of the people. If this fact is lost sight of, the result would be that in non-Hindi speaking areas Hindi *prachar* would inspire opposition rather than trust and popular interest. Therefore, while encouraging Hindi, nothing should be done which impedes the progress of regional languages : and it should be clearly understood that in those areas Hindi has to be used only for purposes of inter-State contacts. We find sometimes Hindi being pitched against regional languages whereas actually their rival is English and not Hindi.

As we know, universities are springing up in all the States and they are encouraging the local languages. To promote the growth and systematic development of those languages

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From speech at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, September 13, 1956

and to enrich their literatures is a primary duty of these universities. Some of these universities have already adopted regional languages as the media of instruction, and we can be sure that in universities where this has not been done so far, the switch-over to the language of the region is bound to take place sooner or later. It is, therefore, a mistake to imagine that when English ceases to be the medium of instruction in the universities, its place will necessarily be taken by Hindi. In your own State, which is a bilingual State, Hindi and Marathi have been recognised as the media of university instruction and more and more work is being done through them in Government offices and the universities. This trend will continue to gain momentum even when this part of Madhya Pradesh joins another State. Even there, the two regional languages, Marathi and Gujarati, will dominate the scene of university education. Actually, the Gujarat and Poona universities have already accepted Gujarati and Marathi respectively in place of English. These universities have accepted the enrichment and development of their respective languages as one of their principal aims. Similarly, wherever Marathi is spoken, English will be replaced by Marathi, just as in Hindi-speaking areas Hindi will take its place, and in the south, the four south Indian languages. But in the sphere of business, and countrywide contacts, English will be replaced by Hindi. To assign a sphere for the national language wider than this is neither necessary nor, in my opinion, desirable. If there is any misunderstanding in this regard, it is the duty of all those who speak or work for Hindi to remove it.

The other thing which must always be kept in view is that the proper growth of all Indian languages and the enrichment of their literatures is our desideratum. When I presided over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held here as far back as 1936, I stressed that it was not in the interest of Hindi to

boycott words of non-Hindi stock. Words of exotic origin which are now current in Hindi should not be excluded and replaced by Hindi or Sanskrit words. I am of the same opinion even today. I feel that Hindi should keep its doors open to words of other languages which have been or can be absorbed in it. Take the case of English. If you take an English dictionary and compare its latest edition with one of its early editions, many additional words will be found to have been added to the language. Sometime back I happened to see an old dictionary. That dictionary, in volume, is hardly one-tenth of the present-day edition of the dictionary, although, in course of time, the types in which the latest edition is printed have grown smaller. This is entirely due to the addition of new words. I am told when the Oxford Dictionary was being compiled, a good many new words came to be added to the English language and while the compilers were still tackling the concluding portions of the dictionary, a supplement had to be printed in order to accommodate the new words. This shows that English is a living and growing language, and also explains its all-round progress. As our Prime Minister said the other day, 70 per cent of the scientific and technical journals of the world are brought out in English. If the supporters of the English language had adopted the policy of boycotting words of foreign origin and decided to confine themselves to words known to Chaucer and Shakespeare, it would not have made this phenomenal progress.

We want and shall gladly accept all the help that other languages can give in enriching Hindi. I would like the different shades and meanings of Hindi words in other languages to be properly studied. I am not sure if academicians would accept this proposal, but eventually they will have to do it and accept not only words of other languages, but also countenance some relaxation in the rigid rules of Hindi

grammar. Today about 42 per cent of our people speak Hindi. If the remaining 58 per cent are also to learn the language, rigid adherence to old forms of grammar will have to be given up. I have seen some Hindi works written by Marathi-speaking and Bengali-speaking writers who were by no means scholars of Hindi but only of their respective languages. These works had a distinctive style and mode of expression. We must show some indulgence to such variations in style and consider them as part of Hindi. I hope this is the way to ensure the development and popularisation of Hindi.

We also hear sometimes that some people are not favourably inclined towards Hindi. They say that English is a more widely understood language and we shall not be able to do without it. As in the case of Hindi organisations in the north and elsewhere, I have also been connected with the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in whose functions I have often participated. When I was there last month, Shri M. Satyanarayana told me that in the south where Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam were spoken, the number of English-knowing people did not exceed one million. He took these figures from the latest census report. The number of people who knew Hindi, on the other hand, was not less than five million, that is, five times the number of English-knowing people. How can we say that people in the south do not know Hindi? It is another matter that some of these people are scholars of English, whereas those who learn Hindi do not generally attain scholarly heights. That is perhaps because it is not necessary, for the present, to make an intensive study of Hindi. As English is still being used as the language of newspapers and administration in Government offices, it creates the delusion that the use of English is more common and that English-knowing people are larger in number than those who have studied Hindi and

passed various examinations in it. The statistics I have given are really surprising. I hope that more facts will be known when the Official Language Commission's Report is published. In any case, I do not think that it is so very difficult to make Hindi our national language.

Sometimes it is also said that more people are not cultivating Hindi because its study has not been made compulsory. This question arose in Madras a few years ago. The Government did not make Hindi compulsory but instead appointed a Hindi teacher in every school. Even under this arrangement, about 70 to 80 per cent students in Madras are studying Hindi. It is, indeed, a happy augury that such a large percentage of students is studying the Hindi language even when it is an optional subject.

Let us hope that the work of Hindi *prachar* will continue to progress throughout the country. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, where a very large number of people know Hindi, this work should not be difficult at all. In Maharashtra even those who do not know Hindi are not opposed to it. It is not the intention that anyone should give up his mother-tongue; on the other hand, all languages spoken in the country should be provided an opportunity of all-round development. Their literature must be enriched. At the same time Hindi should be cultivated in non-Hindi-speaking areas only for transacting all-India or inter-State business. Let me hope your efforts in this direction will be crowned with success.

### THE SPECIAL PLACE OF SANSKRIT

It is gratifying to note that the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad has been advancing gradually towards the achievement of its

Inaugural address at the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, Kurukshetra, January 11, 1957

goal, namely, the popularisation of Sanskrit language and literature throughout the country. In the universities Sanskrit is becoming more and more popular as a subject of study among the students. It has also become a subject of active discussion in social and political circles. It was perhaps as a result of this awakening and the activities of this Parishad that the Government have lately set up a Commission to investigate all questions relating to the study of Sanskrit in the country. It is hoped this Commission will consider these questions from the point of view of the utility and wider propagation of Sanskrit, and that it will be able to make recommendations which will enrich not only Sanskrit language and literature but also our national life. We are happy to see that our people and Government have begun to pay more attention to the study of Sanskrit and the Indian languages. Just as the Kurukshetra University has been founded here today, it has also been decided to establish a Sanskrit University at Varanasi, which has been associated with Sanskrit learning from time immemorial.

Although, as a result of the Parishad's efforts, the educated classes in India have begun to realise the importance of Sanskrit studies, it cannot be said that the common people in our country share that inclination to the same extent. I feel that as far as possible we should strive to simplify the learning and teaching of Sanskrit in accordance with present-day requirements. The study of ancient literature is no doubt of great importance, but the present-day student cannot be satisfied with only that. He desires to study a literature which brings him closer to the life that he actually leads and which endows him with the capacity to face the problems and difficulties inherent in this life.

So far as the recognition of Sanskrit as an important subject of study is concerned, we see good omens all over the country. Sanskrit, which does not want to encroach on

any of the spoken languages of India, occupies a special place in our cultural and religious life. I would not be wrong if I added that its importance in our political life is equally great, because for thousands of years it was Sanskrit which kept the various regions of this great country together. Although Sanskrit ceased, in course of time, to occupy the same prominent place in our curriculum, it still occupies the foremost place in our social, religious and cultural life. It would, therefore, be correct to say that the importance of Sanskrit as an instrument for forging the bonds of unity in this country has not altogether disappeared even today.

I hope that Sanskrit will once again occupy in our lives the place it deserves.

### A CASE FOR ONE SCRIPT

I must begin with a word of apology for not being able to address you in Telugu. Our decision to learn as many languages of this country as possible has come at a stage in my life when I am too old to learn any new language. I must also apologise for not addressing you in Hindi because I understand there are many persons in this audience who would not be able to follow Hindi. I have, therefore, no option but to speak in a foreign language. But I believe and hope that the time will soon come when it will not be necessary for any Indian to use a foreign language in addressing another Indian. That was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi when he started Hindi *prachar* in the southern part of the country. When the time came for drawing up a Constitution for the

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Speech while inaugurating the Andhra Sahitya Academy, Hyderabad, August 7, 1957

country it was realised that we would not continue to carry on our functions in a foreign language for any length of time. It was for this reason that the Constitution-makers adopted Hindi as the language for all-India purposes. At the same time it was felt and laid down in the Constitution that the provincial languages should also be encouraged and given all facilities for rising to their full stature in all walks of life. For that reason a national literary academy was instituted by the Government of India. The object of the academy is not to develop any language in any particular State but to develop all languages and bring them all together on a common platform so that they can exchange their best. The translation of classics of all the languages of the country as well as of foreign languages into Indian languages is encouraged. It is proposed to award prizes to the best authors of each language. The Sahitya Akademi, an all-India body, was established three years ago and academies have since been established in some of the States for the different languages. You have had good reason for not starting an academy earlier because you were waiting for the realisation of your cherished dream of Vishal Andhra.

This is an appropriate occasion for me to point out that it has never been the intention of anyone to force Hindi on any part of India. What is wanted is that we should express ourselves to one another in an Indian language, particularly in all-India matters, whether they are political and administrative matters or matters of trade and commerce. In a vast country like India where we have so many languages, the language understood by the largest number of people has to be adopted as the national language. It was mere coincidence that Hindi happened to be the language spoken and understood by the largest number of people in the country and it was for this reason that it was adopted as the official language. No reason other than numbers induced the

framers of the Constitution to adopt Hindi as the language of the country. Although there are people in some parts of the country who still feel that Hindi is being forced on them, I also know from my personal experience that you are not among them. Even 20 years ago, when I toured this part of the country as the President of the Congress and to address large numbers of meetings, I remember that in most of the places people wanted me to speak in Hindi rather than in English. The reason was also clear.

The majority of the audience understood neither Hindi nor English and they had to wait for a translation of my speech. The number of those who could understand English was probably the same as the number of those who could understand Hindi. So if they had to wait for a translation, it did not matter whether I spoke in Hindi or English. But Hindi being a national language, they preferred Hindi. It was then that I first realised your attachment to Hindi which was later on adopted as the national language and your great enthusiasm for making your contribution to national causes. Ever since then I have retained that high opinion about you.

It is not surprising that in a vast country like India we have so many languages. Europe, too, has many languages, some of which are spoken by a much smaller number of people than those who speak any of the Indian languages. Even so, Europe has preserved these languages. It was the wisdom and farsightedness of our ancestors that in spite of differences of languages, they kept the country one; they devised measures which united us and in spite of all kinds of difficulties and calamities which no other nation could have survived, we have survived and are still living together as one country and one nation. Now that we have attained political freedom also, it is incumbent upon us to behave and carry on our affairs in such a way that the independence which we

have won may last for ever and ever, and every section of the vast community, irrespective of the language it speaks, its customs and modes of living, should have all facilities and opportunities to develop to the maximum possible extent.

I was thinking how we could help this unification still further. I have had some experience in this which I wish to share with you. Many years ago there used to be a publication, *Devanagar*, which was run by a judge of the Calcutta High Court named Sharada Charan. *Devanagar* carried articles in different languages of India but in the Devanagari script. We found that we could understand a great deal of the other languages through the Devanagari script. I have ever since felt that it is possible for the provincial languages to be better known and understood if we could render them in one script. Fortunately, the alphabet of all Indian languages except Tamil, is the same. That is the case not only in India but outside India also. For example, Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand have the same alphabet as ourselves. The script is different but the sounds are the same. We have this advantage. If we could adopt one script which is acceptable to all, it would be easier for the people of one language to understand people speaking other languages. It will be a great day when we have brought this about.

The journal to which I have referred existed some forty years ago. Four or five years ago, when the members of the new Parliament met me, I suggested to them that they revive the publication of the journal. They accepted my suggestion, and *Devanagar* has been restarted. What Shri Sharada Charan's *Devanagar* used to do was to publish articles in different languages together but in the Devanagari script. But in the present *Devanagar*, articles in different languages are given along with their translations. Hindi articles are translated in Tamil, Tamil articles in Telugu, Telugu in Gujarati, Bengali in Marathi and so forth, but all are reproduced

in the Devanagari script. I am placing this idea before this gathering of learned people as worthy of consideration. In my view we would be able to enrich our various literatures further if it were not for the difficulty of script. The Devanagari script is being mentioned because Sanskrit has always been written in the Devanagari script and it is already known all over the country. But I am not particular about it. You may adopt any other script which might be feasible. What I want is that we should adopt one script for the whole country so that, as I have said earlier, it may become easy for people speaking one language to read another language. I am making this suggestion as an individual interested in the unity of the country. It has no authority behind it.

## YOUTH AND THE TOLERANT SPIRIT

India is an ancient country. During thousands of years of its history it has witnessed the rise of vast empires and their gradual disintegration. It has even seen the queer phenomenon of its own geographical limits expanding and contracting. In spite of these vicissitudes of fortune India is still, by God's grace, a living force, while several ancient countries exist today nowhere except in books of history. The foremost reason for this survival seems to be that our traditional thought has some inherent strength in it which manifested itself in the form of a common binding link through all these cataclysmic changes. This link is broad-mindedness and tolerance. Thus our system of thought was able to assimilate new ideas and accept new values.

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Speech at the inauguration of the Inter-University Youth Festival, New Delhi, November 1, 1957

India has today become a sovereign democratic republic. In its long and chequered history it is perhaps for the first time that the whole country has been brought under one administration, one Constitution and one national flag. The older people have somehow been able to devise for the nation a legal and constitutional mould and give it a *de jure* unity. To improve upon it and make it a *de facto* unity is a task which devolves largely upon the youth of the country. You can do it successfully only by having an open mind and adopting a broad-minded outlook on life. You can achieve it by eschewing narrow-mindedness, by accepting the principle of equality, by rising above factionalism and caste or class distinctions and by forsaking for ever provincial or regional prejudices. It is your good fortune that you are receiving your education in free India. Men like me who have had to study in institutions run by foreigners might well envy you in this respect.

You may have noticed that the whole country is busy implementing the programme of reconstruction. Dams are being built, canals are being dug, heavy industries are being established, cottage industries are being revived, new facilities are being provided to the people in the countryside and everything possible is being done for the economic development of the country. Certainly, you can also lend a helping hand in furthering these activities. If you could directly take up something in hand by working in the cities or villages, well and good; otherwise, you could still do your duty by imbibing the spirit of liberality and thus by giving an impetus to the forces of broad-mindedness. Let it not be forgotten that sooner or later you have to shoulder heavy responsibilities. You are the future nation and the burden of completing the task of reconstruction has to be borne by you. We have tried to make the best of the opportunity that we got and do our bit to make India a prosperous country,

but we have never been in doubt that the most valuable wealth of our nation is its youth. May I, therefore, put it to you that you should mould your thoughts and actions according to modern conditions while at the same time remaining steadfast to the long-cherished ideals of this ancient land ?

### HINDI, ENGLISH AND THE REGIONAL LANGUAGES

The medium of instruction plays a very important part not only in promoting an interest in knowledge but also in enabling people to achieve a high standard in different subjects. It is not surprising that our Government should have taken a decision that our own languages should be the media of instruction right up to the university level. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that such literature should develop as would meet the requirements of students in the higher classes. This is a question of time.

There is no question of conflict between any State language and Hindi. I think that if there is any conflict, it is between English and the Indian languages amongst which Hindi is one. Even that conflict is only in regard to the use of a language for official purposes. What is required is that we develop our languages in such a way that they may take their place amongst the richest languages of the world. I have no doubt they are capable of being so developed. As most of them have Sanskrit as their background there is no doubt also that they can draw upon that rich language in making

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Speech while inaugurating the Telugu Academy of Science and History at Hyderabad, August 21, 1959

up such deficiency as there may be in finding technical terms and expressions which may be required. We should not be too particular about one language or another in the matter of technical terms. The idea should be to popularise them and if there is any English word which has become so popular that it has to be retained, there is nothing wrong in retaining it. Similarly, if there is an expression which has to remain, nothing is lost by retaining it. In all such matters we have to adopt the golden mean, and find out what is most convenient and serviceable from the point of view of the country. I hope as a result of the work of your institution it will be possible in due course to enrich your language, Telugu, and introduce it in the universities in Andhra Pradesh right up to the degree and doctorate levels, so that any justification for maintaining a foreign language as the medium of instruction in our colleges and universities may be removed. It is inconceivable to me that a free country should depend for the purposes of its administration and business on a foreign language, however rich that foreign language may be. We should not hesitate to learn foreign languages, especially a rich language like English from which we have derived such great benefit. But it is altogether a different proposition to place English over the head of our own languages. The sooner we take to the more natural course of adopting our own languages the better for us. I am sure the people will understand such a step, because, after all, it is not the few people who were educated through the medium of English who now count in this country but the masses. And the masses can be approached and reached only through the regional languages.

We should not worry ourselves at this stage about what the all-India language should be. Let us confine ourselves to the State languages and once that question is decided and settled in a practical way, so that Telugu is used in Andhra

Pradesh, Tamil in Tamilnad, Hindi in the Hindi-speaking areas, Bengali in Bengal, Marathi in Maharashtra, Gujarati in Gujarat, Oriya in Orissa and Assamese in Assam, I am sure it will not be impossible for us to reach an agreement without any hitch about having one language for all-India purposes.

Not on the score of any superiority or any richness but as a matter of practical experience, Hindi has been adopted as the language for all-India purposes. It will be able to replace English without any difficulty. Therefore I am not so worried about it as to be constantly talking about it. Things will settle down without any effort on the part of the Hindi-speaking people. There can be no other language which can be adopted for all-India purposes and I have no doubt in my mind that when people have to choose between English and an Indian language or between one Indian language and another, they will prefer an Indian language and it will not be any language except Hindi. When that happens—and that will happen one day—Hindi will become really a binding force just as in the past Sanskrit used to be a binding force which kept together north and south, east and west.

### AGE-OLD IDEALS AND REALITY

India is a large country with a variety of languages and faiths adopted and accepted by the people. Each part has made an impressive contribution to the development of Indian culture, literature and art. Though I cannot claim to be deeply read in the history of Karnataka, I know of its

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Convocation Address at the Karnataka University, Dharwar,  
November 6, 1959

great literary tradition and of its galaxy of great saints and philosophers. Your literature, both secular and religious, is saturated with lofty ideals and the noblest of sentiments. It has been, through the ages, one of the forces which sustained not only the people of Karnataka but also many others living in far-flung regions. It has enriched the life of the community, ennobled our traditions and created favourable conditions for the development of fine arts. Though all these developments took place in Karnataka, they had their impact on the whole country.

The diversity which I find in the local cultures and various traditions of India fascinates me. Perhaps it is not the diversity alone which is fascinating but the unifying thread of certain basic concepts and beliefs which binds them all together.

I venture to think that the roots of this unity are deeper than many of us imagine and that in the ultimate analysis these roots draw sustenance from a common faith in certain ideas and ideals, a common belief in the why and whereto of human existence. In her long history, India has never known regimentation of thought. Even at the time when her thought touched Elysian heights and the various systems of Indian philosophy were in the making, the most interesting feature of Indian thought was its diverse pattern based on the fullest freedom of thinking and philosophising. What greater proof can there be of this freedom than that not fewer than half of the six schools of Indian philosophy may be said to be atheistic in nature and that, in each of the remaining three which believe in God, the underlying idea of the Supreme Being is quite different? Nevertheless, this amazing diversity characterising the intellectual and emotional levels of the people never seriously undermined their cultural unity and their beliefs in things and matters important in everyday life.

We can never be too grateful, therefore, to those who laid the foundations of our early beliefs and concepts with which the complicated pattern of our culture was woven in varying designs and different hues. The great flow of bhakti and devotional preaching which originated in Karnataka went a long way in sustaining that pattern.

I wonder if, with the achievement of political and constitutional freedom, it is too much to hope that the constructive genius of the Indian people, which in the past found such varied expression within the country and overseas, will not blossom forth once again to further our age-old ideals of forbearance, love and tolerance. Never before in human history have these ideals come so near tangible reality and practical commonsense as today. Never before in our own history have our cherished beliefs and ideals had to face a greater challenge than they are facing today. Now that the whole thinking world is gradually veering round to our ancient beliefs and faith, we cannot afford to turn our backs on them and discard that which has kept us alive.

There is a tendency in some quarters to relegate culture to a secondary place and to treat it casually as an idle pastime. And when we do think of pulling it out of the limbo of neglect, we tend to go to the other extreme and make light of culture by confusing it with brass bands and jazz music. I do not suggest that culture is so austere that it would not go well with things that please or entertain, but certainly it is wrong to equate it with all those for pantomime and stage shows.

Culture is essentially an expression of the inner urges and cumulative beliefs of a community or nation gathered through centuries of experience. It is an aspect of the mode of living which links the living generation with the generations gone by. The warp and woof which go to make its texture are not always visible on the surface, but thinking

men know the fingers that move the silken cords, the fingers which, transcending time, have ever been busy weaving that texture. In a limited sense it is true that things of the moment may sometimes claim precedence over cultural matters. That is not necessarily because cultural matters are of secondary consequence but because they are ingrained too deep in human nature to suffer any set-back from temporary lack of attention. On the other hand, things of the moment live mainly on the surface and would cease to exist if the focus of attention were turned away from them. This distinction between the two activities is to the advantage of human society because it rules out any conflict between things of the moment and things of cultural value.

It is the perennial flow of the cultural stream which determines a nation's strength, its character in the wider sense and its capacity to survive. But our claims to a rich culture go ill with the misery and poverty on the surface. If we want our view of our culture and its richness to be understood and appreciated by others, we must establish some kind of harmony between it and its outward expression in our actual living. A healthy cultural tradition and a maladjusted society cannot go together. Therefore, I have always felt that our collective efforts to reconstruct our society and bring about a new era of plenty and prosperity in India are well worth our while. They will bear fruit only if we draw inspiration from our cultural heritage and seek to mould our lives in keeping with its basic ideals and beliefs.

I consider universities to be the proper places from where these ideas should flow. It is the seats of learning which must see that the arteries of the nation are well supplied with cultural nourishment in an assimilable form. I believe even a rank materialist will not deny the force of ideas. Need I say that ideas have something of a hereditary quality, something which has its roots in the past? It is for the universities

to present them in a form which the common man can understand.

## THE STORY OF ST. THOMAS

This is an occasion when we seek to uplift ourselves by thinking of a great saint, an apostle who came to India more than nineteen hundred years ago and preached the tenets of the Christian Church and breathed his last in Mylapore in Madras. Though there may or may not be enough historical evidence to satisfy critical historians, yet the fact of St. Thomas's visit to India and his preaching the Christian gospel here is above question. Old tradition in our country as also in Syria and Alexandria supports this belief.

It is not historical authenticity that we need look for in order to derive inspiration from the story of St. Thomas. What inspires us and fills with pride the hearts of us all, Christians and others, is the fact that the first apostle, on landing in Malabar, found the soil sufficiently congenial to enable him to settle there and preach the Christian faith unhindered and unchecked. Not only that, the old tradition also confirms the fact that St. Thomas and the new faith were shown tolerance by the common people, and in some cases, by certain rulers as well. To appreciate fully the significance of this fact, we have to understand the conditions and the religious climate prevailing in India at that time. That was the time when Buddhism had been accepted in several parts of India, including the South. Through Emperor Asoka, this new light had already been transported to Ceylon, and

the traders and seafaring people of India had started carrying with them their religious ideas and cultural traditions to lands in Central and South-East Asia. It would indeed have been amazing if the Indian people had shown intolerance towards the tenets of the Christian faith when their own cultures and religions had been welcome and, subsequently, adopted in so many countries with which they came into contact. Therefore, the traditional story of St. Thomas's visit to India and the material vestiges of Christianity in the South are as much our pride as ancient monuments scattered throughout the Malayan Archipelago, the dense forests of Cambodia and the vast expanses of the Central Asian steppes. I would go so far as to say that the legend of St. Thomas as it has come down to us is essentially of a piece with the material which has gone into the making of India's cultural heritage.

One of the best known characteristics of the people of our country has been to show veneration to saints and prophets of all faiths. In spite of internal dissensions now and then, in spite of many a bloody war recorded in history, I would make bold to say that there is something peculiar in the climate of this country which has throughout the ages imbued its people with faith and also sustained that faith, whatever its source or origin. This characteristic was responsible for the rapid spread of Buddhism and at the same time for the upholding of the individual's freedom in religious matters so that for generations Buddhism and Hinduism flourished side by side in the same region, in the same street and often under the same roof. We know now that when the valley of the river Krishna was at the height of its glory and when Nagarjunakonda held aloft the torch of learning, in most cases, men subscribed to the Brahmanical faith while the womenfolk were ardent Buddhists. The principal chaityas and other Buddhist monuments in Nagarjunakonda were

constructed as a result of the enthusiasm of and the subscriptions raised by the queens and other women of Sri Parvat, near Pratishanpur, the capital of the Satavahanas. It is facts like these which demonstrate human catholicity and the feelings of love and forbearance which impart charm to history and enrich a nation's tradition.

I am glad that the movement to celebrate St. Thomas's Day is gathering momentum every year. It is a pious day for the Christians no doubt, but no less sacrosanct for others, for it was ordained by Providence that India should be a mosaic of faiths and cultures. History bears witness to the fact that many faiths and many cultures intermingled here and sought some kind of synthesis. If, for the moment, we forget the past and look at the present, the same panorama of cultures and the same spectrum of religious faiths are visible in Indian life. I consider it our most valuable treasure. The Father of modern India impressed it upon us and the grateful nation has embodied it in the Constitution of the Indian Republic by guaranteeing to every individual freedom of faith. Let us all be faithful and true to religion by all means, but let harmony and mutual understanding rather than exclusiveness or hostility emanate from that faith. This is the one thought that comes to my mind this day when we are celebrating the landing of St. Thomas on Indian soil. It is indeed a great day in our history. It marks the coming of a great faith into our country and the way in which it was received by the people symbolises the spirit of true religion which the people of this ancient land have always sought to uphold.

## AMIR KHUSRO—A UNIFYING FORCE

At a time when the Hindus and the Musalmans had not yet come sufficiently close to one another and a wide gulf existed between the two communities, Khusro, with the blessings of his spiritual preceptor, Hazrat Nizamuddin, sought to bring the two communities nearer to each other. It speaks for his foresight and catholicity that before assuming this undertaking Khusro acquainted himself fully with the historical and traditional background of the two faiths, Islam and Hinduism. In addition to Persian and Arabic, Khusro studied Sanskrit and some of the basic scriptural sources of Hinduism. He found that the main cause of the two communities keeping apart from each other was that the two spoke different languages and this retarded social contact. It was to remove this difficulty that he started experimenting with current tongues and written languages. His aim was to find a common medium of expression. He started writing in the language which was commonly understood in and around Delhi. Khusro's effort was crowned with remarkable success. The language in which he wrote more than seven hundred years ago may be said to have laid the foundation of modern Hindi and Urdu.

We need not go into the Hindi-Urdu controversy here; nor need we discuss the evolution of these languages. The undisputed fact is that Khusro's writings are probably the earliest sample of modern Hindustani or Hindi or Urdu. In his own inimitable way he proceeded to compile a basic vocabulary of commonly understood Persian and Sanskrit words, and using them in the local dialect, Khusro invented

a style of writing which is universally recognised as the mother of present-day Hindi and Urdu. This is the biggest contribution of Amir Khusro to India and its literature.

Some might reckon that the work which Khusro accomplished in the social field is even more important than his contribution in the sphere of language and literature. The beginnings of India's composite culture can be traced to Amir Khusro's early efforts. He wrote and spoke extensively about the beliefs and the mode of living of the Musalmans who had made India their home. On the other hand, he also wrote about the traditional thought and the way of living of the Hindus for the benefit of the Musalmans. As a result of these efforts the gulf which separated the two began to be bridged. Social contact between the Hindus and the Musalmans increased as a result of mutual understanding and sympathy and the two communities began to come closer to each other. Our history bears testimony to the fact that it was as a result of the preachings of Amir Khusro and other sufis and saints that the basis of the Delhi *saltanat* and the shape of governmental machinery became broader in the fourteenth century and thereafter. It is not surprising, therefore, if among Khusro's admirers we find both Muslims and Hindus.

Although the *urs* of Amir Khusro has been celebrated year after year for centuries, I think there are special reasons why we should celebrate it in the present age. India is today a free country, a country whose Constitution confers equal rights on all its citizens and where no one has a right to consider himself superior and none need fear that he will be dubbed inferior on the basis of caste, creed or religion. In the eyes of our law and Constitution all citizens of the State are equal. We Indians can take pride in the fact that for thousands of years people professing different faiths and belonging to different communities have

been living in this country. Even today there is hardly a living faith whose followers are not found in our country in large or small numbers. We feel proud of this diversity in our cultural pattern and look upon it as a blessing.

But it is not enough merely to say this. If we must feel proud and call this diversity a blessing, we have got to do something to ensure that it is really so. We must all cultivate tolerance and goodwill towards one another. Let people of all faiths living in this country feel that they have an equal right to live here and follow the faith of their choice. This is one of the most fundamental principles of our Constitution and it is the duty of every citizen to foster the spirit of liberality and tolerance.

For achieving this objective nothing could be of greater importance than celebrating such occasions as the *urs* of Amir Khusro and appreciating the services rendered by men like him. To have faith in God and religion and to show sympathy towards all His creatures are one and the same thing. It is this fact, above all else, which the lives of men like Hazrat Nizamuddin and Amir Khusro bring into prominence.

## HINDI WILL NEVER BE IMPOSED ON ANYONE

Hyderabad was looked upon as a fertile field for Hindi literacy campaigns long before Hindi was adopted as India's official language. In fact, Hyderabad and the neighbouring areas, which have generally been referred to as the Deccan in history, had been something of a laboratory for experiments in linguistics. When the Muslim kings carved out

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Translation of convocation address, originally delivered in Hindi, Hyderabad Hindi Prachar Sabha, August 3, 1960

their kingdoms and settled here about five hundred years ago, Persian and the languages of North India came to the Deccan with them. The intermingling of the languages of the North and the South considerably helped the process of the evolution of a common language which both the Hindus and the Muslims understood and used. Let us look upon Hindi and Urdu as one language basically. Whatever name we give to this language, the writers and patrons of Dakhini contributed a great deal towards its evolution. It would be no exaggeration to say that the entire Hindi world is indebted to the people of Hyderabad and the Deccan.

While speaking on Hindi and the desirability of propagating it in the country, I would like to say something by way of allaying the misgivings of some of our non-Hindi-speaking brethren. I fully realise and appreciate the place that one's mother-tongue occupies in one's life. When one talks of the need of propagating a language in a region, the foremost thing to be asked is : is this step likely to have an adverse effect on the mother-tongue of the region, and has all that is possible been done to safeguard the place of the mother-tongue in the life of the people of the region ? I do not think anyone in the non-Hindi-speaking regions can have any misgiving in this regard. All the regional languages and their interests have been fully safeguarded in our Constitution and full powers have been given to State Governments to do all that is possible to develop and encourage these languages with a view to using them to the maximum extent in the administrative and day-to-day work in the States.

The other question which arises is that of studying that language which representatives of the nation have decided should be used for certain specified all-India purposes in the national interest. I know that there are important regions in our country where Hindi is not the mother-tongue of the

people. It is, therefore, possible that people of those regions may have some difficulty in learning this language. This difficulty has throughout been kept in view while formulating the programme for switching over to Hindi for specified purposes, as laid down in the Constitution. I am absolutely sure that whenever the language policy is reviewed or discussed in future also, the difficulties and feelings of our non-Hindi-speaking brethren will not be ignored. As our Prime Minister has said so often in the Lok Sabha and in his public utterances, Hindi will never be imposed on anyone. This position has been repeatedly clarified in the context of the recommendations of the Official Language Commission and the opinion expressed by the Parliamentary Committee and the decisions taken by the Government on the basis of these recommendations. This stand has been once again reiterated in the Lok Sabha by our Home Minister only two days ago.

I urge my fellow countrymen from the non-Hindi-speaking regions to think what their duty is as members of a free and self-respecting nation. A step taken in the interest of national unity and its future integrity does not become improper merely because it might be easier to implement it for certain sections of our people. We have to consider this question from an all-India angle. Of course, if there is any apprehension that such a step might prove discriminatory against, or lead to difficulty for, a section of our people, such apprehension can and should be removed. I am convinced that our goodwill, our devotion and our faith in the future of this country can overcome the language difficulty and all other such difficulties.

It will not perhaps be out of place if I talked about the Hindi language on this occasion. How Hindi—a direct descendant of the dialect spoken by wandering sadhus and bhikshus—evolved in its present form is for the philologists

to say. But I should like to observe that the more I have tried to survey the history and evolution of the Hindi language, the more I have been convinced that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when Hindi was evolving from the dialect to the language stage, the contribution of South Indian saints and bhikshus to its development was very prominent. Who does not know that the Rama and Krishna bhakti movements led by saints played a great part in the development of Hindi and that these bhakti movements spread from the south to the north? It was Sri Ramanuja and later Swami Ramananda, a disciple of his line, who brought the Rama bhakti movement to Kashi. It was owing to their inspiration that the bhakti movement came to be propagated in the regional languages, besides Sanskrit. And, in this way, Awadhi, which was once a spoken language only, came on the scene as a literary language. On the other hand, Braja Bhasha owes much to Vallabhacharya and his followers who inundated Mathura with the Krishna bhakti cult. The Krishna bhakti movement has influenced deeply the Bengali language also. Thus we see that the saints of South India have played a great role in the evolution of the Hindi language even though their main aim might have been to propagate the bhakti movement.

### THE POWER IN YOUR HANDS

We have already lost two wings on our two sides, which now constitute Pakistan. But the rest of the country that we have inherited is bigger than what it was at any time under one political rule. We owe it to ourselves, we owe

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Address at citizens' meeting, Coimbatore, August 10, 1960

it to our ancestors, and even more we owe it to those who will follow us to leave this country more united and more prosperous. In the presence of this great heritage, every other consideration which might divide one part from another should shrink into insignificance. We have drawn up a Constitution, not by any one group or one set of people, but by representatives of the whole country coming from every corner of it. That Constitution assures to every State within the country certain rights which cannot be taken away even by the Centre, and that Constitution assures to every State within the country the right to run its own administration in the best interest of the people within it. With that autonomy on the one hand, there is also the obligation on the other hand for every State to be prepared and ready to maintain and support the entire Republic. The Constitution does not permit the Central Government to impose its will in matters not in its own jurisdiction on a State, and it equally imposes the obligation on the Centre to do whatever is required of it under the Constitution for the good and benefit of the States. Sometimes unfortunate happenings in one corner or another are apt to blur our vision; whatever such differences, let us be sure that we are one as a country, one as a nation.

In regard to administrative measures which you as citizens may not approve, you have the right to have them changed. That right is available to you both as against the State Government and the Central Government. You have your State Government and you have the Central Government, and both are composed of men whom you have elected. By electing them, you have given them your confidence and they are carrying out what they consider best in the interests of the country. It is therefore necessary that you should realise the strength that you possess and the power that you have in your own hands. That power has

to be exercised with caution and with a full knowledge of the responsibilities it imposes.

I have gone into this matter at length because I feel that in some places a tendency is visible which does not appear to me to be right. The Constitution does not permit either the Centre or any of the States to establish any kind of imperialism in this country. You should also realise that those who have fought imperialism are not likely to resort to it themselves.

I would therefore ask you to keep in mind that this country is one and indivisible.

Since I arrived here this morning, I have visited two institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission. It is saints like Sri Ramakrishna who have bound this country together from one end to the other. It is a very pleasant sight to see the Ramakrishna Mission working here, just as pleasant to see the *mathas* established by Sankaracharya functioning in the North today. It is not only Sankaracharya you have given us, the people of the North, but also Ramanujacharya, Ramananda and Vallabhacharya; and it is the teachings and the lives of saints like these which have kept us together all these centuries. To this heritage political unity has now been added. It should be our foremost duty to maintain this unity for ever.

## PRESERVING OUR SECURITY

I am visiting Salem after twenty-five years. This period has been a most remarkable period in India's history. When I visited this town in 1935, we were in the midst of our struggle

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Speech at citizen s' meeting, Salem, August 11, 1960

for freedom. We were trying our best to prepare the country for the final non-violent struggle against the British rule.

While we were all full of hope that one day our efforts would succeed, none of us could be sure when that happy consummation would take place. Only two or three years later we saw the beginning of the second world war which later brought about tremendous changes. Soon after the cessation of the war came negotiations between India and Great Britain and ultimately we succeeded in winning our freedom in 1947. Representatives from every part of the country then assembled to draw up a Constitution. The British had brought under their sway a large portion of the country which was directly administered by them. Still, one-third of the country was not under the direct administrative control of the British. By the wisdom, statesmanship and firm action of Sardar Patel, even those portions which were under the administrative control of the Indian princes became integrated with India. In 1950 when we declared ourselves a republic the whole country had become integrated under one Constitution and under one administrative control.

The fundamental fact of the Constitution is that we have a Government which is the elected Government of the people and it is within the competence and power of the people to dictate their wishes to the Government. I, therefore, do not need to plead that there shall be no criticism. Without criticism the Government is apt to go wrong. But in criticising the measures and policies of the Government, let us make sure that the unity and security of the country are the first demands on all of us. Once that is assured, the rest can be left to the good sense and power of the people. This is the only way in which democracy can work. We are in a sense fresh to this democracy and

therefore we are apt sometimes to magnify things which do not need or deserve magnification. We ought always to bear in mind that whatever criticism we may make must be subject to the paramount necessity of keeping the country secure and keeping it free.

Our past history and our present position in the world, no less than what is happening all around us, demand that we should be cautious and vigilant about our freedom and security. Throughout our long history, we would never have been defeated by foreign aggressors or foreign invaders if they had not been able to secure the support of some of our own people. It is one section of our own people who with the aid of foreigners defeated another section of our people and thus enabled the foreigner to establish his rule here. Such a narrow motive which has subjected the country to foreign domination more than once should be guarded against. Let us develop in our minds and hearts love for the country as a whole. Any harm done to any corner of the country should be regarded as harm done to the country as a whole. Now that for the first time we have one administration and one rule throughout the country, let us be ready to sacrifice, if necessary, the interest of an individual or a group for the interest of the country as a whole. Only if we realise the importance of this duty shall we have justified our right to rule ourselves.

### A WORKING DEMOCRACY

We have had differences of various kinds. We have had differences of religion. We have had differences of language. We have had differences in our mode of living, in our mode

of dressing and even in our food. But with all these apparent differences and distinctions there has been a thread of unity running through our whole history. Today we have the added advantage of political unity also. We shall be really unfortunate if in spite of the added advantage and in spite of the past teachings of history, we allow ourselves to be divided and thus open the door for intrigue and aggression. I say this because even on small matters we are too prone to express opinion in some sort of public demonstration. It is not necessary, now that we have a democratic Constitution, to take to any method other than that of constitutional agitation or constitutional expression. The country gets the opportunity every four or five years to express itself. If it so chooses, it may express itself even before the expiry of five years. We can in this way maintain the contact that is necessary between the Government and the people at large. This is at the root of all constitutional procedure and constitutional machinery. If any programme is to be tested, it requires at least three or four years. Any Ministry that comes into power requires at least that stretch of time to put its own programme into effect. It has to be remembered that this programme will have formerly received the sanction of the country at large. If by any chance, that policy turns out to be wrong or its implementation turns out to be ineffective, it will be open to the people to entrust the Government to somebody else and to some other party. We have a Constitution which is flexible. It permits all kinds of differences of opinion to be expressed. It permits all freedom to the individual in every respect. We need not think of anything other than constitutional procedure and constitutional method.

## WE MUST HOLD TOGETHER

It is rarely that I address legislators except those who sit in Parliament. Under the Constitution, I am required to address them at least once every year and that I do. But, as you all know, my address is mine only in name and I do not get any other opportunity to address legislators even in Delhi. I am therefore thankful that you have given me this opportunity of having not exactly a speech but a sort of heart-to-heart talk on some matters which appear to me to be of paramount importance at the present moment.

It is only thirteen years ago that we attained independence. Three years later we declared ourselves a republic. Within those two to three years we were able to frame a Constitution which covers the whole of the country. The British left the country in a very much divided condition. Apart from the great problem of Pakistan and the division of India on that account, we had more than 500 States, each run by its own ruler in his own way. It must be said that most of these rulers decided even before independence to join India and one or two who stayed out for the time being also came in later. The result was that we were able to draft a Constitution which covered not only that part of the country which was formerly under direct British rule, but also those areas which were under the Indian princes. And so when we got a Constitution, we divided the whole country into a number of States. Later on there have been changes with regard to the boundary of these States, and now I do not think there is any State which can be said to be entirely a descendant of one of the former Indian States. Either they have been broken up and joined to different States or they

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Address to legislators of Madras State, Madras, August 13, 1960

have joined to themselves some other portions of other States. In this way we have succeeded in bringing the country under one Constitution, under one rule. There is one Parliament whose writ runs throughout the country. There is one Central Government which has authority and jurisdiction over many subjects with regard to the whole country. Of course the States are autonomous in many respects. They have exclusive jurisdiction in many points of great importance. But, on the whole, the country is now run as one State, and you can call it a unitary State or a unitary federal State or a federal unitary State, or whatever you may like to call it. We have achieved something which had never been achieved before by any ruler of this country. We had emperors like Asoka who had a great part of the country under their dominion. We had also the Mughal emperors. But none of them could claim that their rule extended over the whole country. What happened was that there were local rulers who owed allegiance to them and each expressed his allegiance in some form or other by paying tribute which in most cases was nominal. According to the Hindu custom, a raja whose writ could go through the whole country without obstruction was called a *chakravarti*. His *chakra* could go throughout the country without obstruction. The Mughals also had their own *subas* or divisions where *subedars* were more or less independent of the Central Government and only nominally owed allegiance to it.

It is for the first time now that we have this political unity. Of course we have had a history in which the geographical entity known as India has been recognised as distinct, right from the Himalayas down to the Cape, bounded on both sides, the east and the west, by the sea. This chunk of territory has always been regarded as one indivisible country although there have been separate States within it, but culturally and also by religion the whole country was one.

Later, when other religions came, even then the country as a whole did not cease to be one entity. It continued to be one country, but not politically. Now that same cultural unity has the added advantage of being reinforced by political and administrative unity. Therefore the field of our activity is much vaster than it has been at any time before. The opportunities are also much greater. The responsibilities too are correspondingly greater. We owe a great responsibility to ourselves, to our ancestors and, even more, to those who will follow us, and that is to maintain and strengthen this unity so that there may be no danger to it at any time. There are dangers from outside and there may be dangers from inside also. Our own fissiparous tendencies have to be conquered which manifest themselves on the slightest occasion, without sufficient provocation, causing anxiety to all lovers of the country. Some kind of difference between one group and another creates trouble, which is far more serious than it really looks if we examine the cause and the motive behind it. While we have no reason to be pessimistic, we should be cautious and careful. We should not grow complacent or believe that having succeeded in winning freedom we are safe to do whatever we like. It is up to every one of us, to whatever part of the country we may belong, to be always cautious and careful in our words and deeds and in our attitude towards others, whether they are close to us, or next-door neighbours or distant brothers, living, say, one or two thousand miles away.

Mention was made of the earthquake of Bihar twenty-five years ago. That was a very great calamity for a small part of the country. But I was really happy at the sympathy it evoked throughout the country. It was my good fortune to receive donations in money and in kind from each corner of the country for the relief of the sufferers there. That heartened me, and that held out to me the hope that we had

begun to realise the organic unity of the country. Whether it is a matter of joy or of sorrow, we should all be happy or sorrowful together. Unless we develop that kind of genuine sympathy and love for the country as a whole, things are bound to occur which will upset us now and then. It is only a firm realisation of fellow-feeling and oneness of the different parts of the country which will enable us to keep our heads cool when trouble arises here or there, by some mistake, by some chance or by the folly or misdeed of someone.

We have had plans of development and these plans are expected to bear fruit and benefit different parts of the country. Of course it cannot be said that each part of the country, each little corner, is benefited by each plan. That is not possible. But the idea is to reach as many places as possible, go as far as possible, through successive plans. The plans are expected to raise our standard of living and we are all hoping that we shall be able to see the results better and more fully as time passes. Even as it is, I do not think there is any reason to be pessimistic or to be apologetic about these plans. We have had good success as far as we have gone and we have not yet achieved full results because it takes some time for these plans to bear fruit. We are getting some fruits but not all the fruits. There are of course difficulties. But we are on the road and we shall move forward with all the experience which we are gaining and with all the knowledge which we are getting from other countries.

What I wish to emphasise, however, is that with all this material prosperity we shall not be able to make our people quite happy. In this country at any rate we learnt long ago that happiness does not consist only in getting more material wealth and more material possessions. It is something beyond all these and above these. In spite of poverty and in spite of all the sufferings which our people have had to undergo, they have never lost hope or faith. They have always

had a smile on their faces. Even the poorest man, who does not have much clothing on the body, still wears a smile on his face. That is because he has been brought up in an atmosphere of feeling contented with what he has, and so long as we continue to possess that great quality of remaining contented and remaining happy even if we are in trouble, we shall be able to make more and more progress.

Of course it is said on the other side that this kind of contentment only leads to misery and poverty. But I do not personally believe that. I do not feel that misery consists in poverty. Misery consists in what we feel. With the feeling that we have done our best and must now endure whatever comes, we shall be able to make ourselves happy even if we are in difficulty. Not that we should remain in poverty and destitution. We wish to progress materially : we wish to have more and more of the good things of the world; but side by side with these things, I think we should not neglect and ignore the fundamental teachings of our culture and religion, whether it is Islamic religion or the Christian religion or the Hindu religion. It is up to us, especially to those of you who are occupying the position of representatives of the people, to carry to them this message.

## TOWARDS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE

In my wanderings, I have seen most parts of the country more than once. I notice tendencies in all directions which indicate that we have not completely understood our obligations to the country. In many places the feeling of

regionalism gets the better of every other feeling. In other places the feeling of casteism gets the better of other kinds of feelings. Provincial feelings sometimes take us off our feet. And linguism is another subject which makes us wild.

While we have the various States with their peculiarities, with their specialities and with their own personalities, we have the Indian nation as a whole which comprises all the States and all the personalities of the States. Our Constitution provides for the fullest development of each State in its own way, according to its own personality, and it also provides that they will all work together so that the country as a whole grows and prospers. Therefore every State has a twofold responsibility—its responsibility to the Central Government, and its responsibility equally to its own minorities, to its own groups. A State can prosper only if it realises its responsibilities in both these respects fully. The responsibilities of the State to itself include the way it treats the minorities within it. There are places where caste plays havoc, and the provisions of the Constitution which are intended for the service of all are sometimes used for the purpose of groups. These may either be religious groups or caste groups or they may be linguistic groups. Undoubtedly, it is necessary that the language of the State, that is to say, of the majority of the people, must have its due place in the administration of the State and in matters educational, but it is equally necessary that those who constitute a minority within the State, the linguistic minority, should feel quite safe within the State.

We have had some very unfortunate happenings recently. I do not know the facts fully to be able to say with certainty, but perhaps very largely at the bottom of these happenings were linguistic considerations of a narrow type. There might have been also some grievances about the services. We have therefore always to be careful that none of these things should give cause for trouble to anyone. Our Constitution

as well as our administrative orders have guaranteed even to small minorities the protection of language, so that their children may be educated, at any rate in the primary stages, in their own mother-tongue. Similarly, in the services also, care has to be taken that every one gets his full share. But in this connection we must remember that after all Government service is not the only source of employment. With the development of our industries, there will be progressively less dependence on Government service. Until that stage is reached, it has to be seen that no one has a grievance because he belongs to a minority group, and certainly no one should have a grievance regarding admission to institutions because he belongs to a minority group.

So much about the duty of a State to its own citizens. But the State has its duty to the Centre also. About that we have provisions in the Constitution laying down the duties as well as the rights and responsibilities of the States and the Centre.

As the question of language has been agitating the minds of many people, I should like to refer to it in some detail. Even while we were engaged in the struggle for freedom, Mahatma Gandhi realised that we would have to solve the problem of the language of the country. We have so many languages which are spoken in different parts of the country : and because we felt that each language deserves to be developed to the fullest extent, in the very first session of the Congress over which we had control we got the Constitution of the Congress amended. It was in the Congress of December 1920 at Nagpur that linguistic provinces were created for the Congress. And even in States which had more than one language, there were several Congress provinces. Those of you who are old enough to remember these events will know that even in this State you had the Tamil language, you had the Telugu language, you had also in parts of it the Malayalam

language, and also the Kannada language. Administratively there was one province, but the Congress had several provinces within it. Similarly in Bombay, we had not only Marathi and Gujarati but we had also Kannada; and the Congress had several provinces within that State as well.

So the idea of linguistic provinces is not a fad of the present Government. The idea of linguistic provinces was given by Mahatma Gandhi and it was only fulfilled by the present Government by legislation. The idea behind the linguistic provinces is to enable the languages of the various provinces to develop to the fullest extent. The Constitution has provided for it and we want each province to develop its own language to the fullest extent possible. Even our seats of learning which are very conservative in this respect are now gradually coming to recognise the place of the Indian languages in their curricula. Many of them have already adopted partially the State languages as media of instruction in their respective areas, and although it cannot be said today that all the universities have adopted the regional languages as the media of instruction up to the highest standard, the day is not far when they will have to do so.

Not only in education, but also in administration, the provincial languages have to find their place : and while at the lowest levels of the administration the provincial languages have always been used, they are now being used largely in the higher rungs also. One day they will be used exclusively in all administrative matters within each State. This was exactly what Mahatma Gandhi intended.

But Gandhiji also thought of a language for the whole country, and naturally he thought of Hindi. I say naturally because he saw that it was spoken by a very large number of people, larger than those speaking any other language. When people talk of Hindi imperialism, I sometimes wonder what they mean. The idea of introducing Hindi as an all-India

language has not emanated from any Hindi speaking person. Two persons in northern India have been responsible for the spread of Hindi as an all-India language. Hindi was not the language of either of them. In the seventies of the last century, Swami Dayanand realised that if he wanted to spread his own form of Hinduism, he must resort to Hindi. He did not come from a Hindi-speaking province. He came from Kathiawar. And some fifty years later Mahatma Gandhi took up the same work. He also did not belong to a Hindi-speaking province. Although in the later days of his life he spoke Hindi fluently and addressed large meetings in Hindi, I remember the days when he faltered and was unable to talk fluently in Hindi. Even in South Africa, he had conceived the idea that Hindi alone could be the language for the whole of India for communication with one another. Even there he had been addressing people, including Tamilians, in his own broken Hindi. And when he came to Champaran in 1917, he was able to speak just a few words. But he was above all a practical person. He therefore told us that he would not insist upon his Hindi but would talk to us in English and listen to our English : and much of the work that we did there was conducted through the medium of English. That was because he regarded work as more important and therefore he had to resort to English. Not that he had given up the idea of having Hindi as an all-India language for all-India purposes. Even from there he sent his son and Swami Satyadev to Madras to spread Hindi; and the foundations of the Hindi Prachar Sabha were laid then, not by a Hindi-speaking man but by Mahatma Gandhi and his son.

You have therefore no reason to think that it is the Hindi-speaking people who are trying to impose any language on you. We are as practical as, I hope, Mahatma Gandhi. And just as he agreed to conduct work in English because he considered work important, we are conducting our work in

English even now. And it has been authoritatively stated that we shall continue to do that so long as you wish us to do it. But may I put one thing to you? You expect us to respect your feelings, and we do. We do not want to impose anything on you. Not even an Indian language. Therefore, please do not wish to impose on us a foreign language. We are respecting the feelings of others also, and we are determined not to impose Hindi on you. I hope you will also relax and not impose English on us.

So far as education is concerned, I think Hindi is also spreading very fast in these parts. I believe more people have learnt Hindi in these parts than English. Hindi Prachar has served at least 70 lakhs of men and women in these parts. Some 15 lakhs have appeared at its examinations. I do not know how many people have passed the English examinations. I do not wish to embarrass you by asking how many of you know English and how many of you know Hindi.

I wish the people of the north also realised their responsibilities in these matters. I have a feeling that if they had left the question of Hindi to be solved by the people of southern India, we would have made greater progress by now. The way in which Hindi has been adopted and accepted as a matter of study has encouraged in me the hope that you will adopt Hindi for other purposes also, and I want the people of the north to realise that they cannot do anything only according to their wishes without consulting and without acquiring the consent of the people in the south. After all, it is one of the fundamentals of the Constitution that the wishes of the minority must be respected. But it is not only for administrative purposes that we want Hindi or other Indian languages to be studied. It is necessary that the different parts of the country should understand each other much better than they do today; and the way to the hearts of the people is through their language. I am a Hindi-speaking man, but

I had the good fortune of receiving my education in Bengal, in Calcutta, and I picked up a little Bengali then. Some years ago when I was invited to Calcutta to deliver the convocation address, I spoke in my own broken Bengali. I do not imagine there was anything very valuable in what I said. But it had one great advantage—it reached the hearts of the Bengalis.

I want the people of the north to study the languages of the south. It is not possible for everyone to learn many languages. But it is possible to translate from one language to another, and that can be done only if people study languages. More than that, it is necessary that people should travel through the country, and I do not want them to travel and talk in English. Well, so long as you cannot talk in Hindi, you had better talk in your own language when you come to us and it should be our look-out to get translators to interpret you to our general public. Although I could have found many persons from amongst you who could have translated my speech into Tamil if I had spoken in Hindi, I have not done so. That is out of respect for you. I was really afraid that you might charge me with imperialism if I did so. All our lives we have fought imperialism. Please do not imagine that at the fag end of my life I would be guilty of imperialism of any kind.

I am afraid I have strayed from the subject I wanted to discuss. The real point is that we want unity in the country. Provincial feeling, caste feeling and linguistic feeling should all be made subservient to the feeling for the country, and I am quite sure that the feeling of patriotism will dictate to you the adoption of Hindi in due course. I can tell my north Indian friends that when you take to Hindi, they must beware that they will be defeated in examinations. You have defeated the Englishman in English, and I have no doubt you will defeat the Hindi-speaking man also in Hindi.

Therefore no one who wants to enter service at the Centre need be afraid. But so long as that fear subsists, however unfounded it may be, we have to respect it.

## STOP THE FORCES OF DISRUPTION

We feel gratified to see the ever-increasing tempo of nation-building activity which we all agree is fast changing the face of our country, particularly the shape of things in rural India. Our industrial and agricultural output is going up year by year fulfilling the targets set in our Five Year Plans for the development of our national resources. The foundations are being laid and we can look forward with hope and confidence to the progressive realisation of the aims and objectives of our Plans.

I do not, however, propose to dwell on this aspect of our reconstruction activity, howsoever pleasant and gratifying it may be. I would rather assign myself the unpleasant task of referring today to certain unfortunate trends in India which have occasioned second thoughts in the minds of many patriotic Indians regarding the future happiness and prosperity of our country. These trends, unless they are checked betimes, have the potentiality of setting at naught the great strides that we have been lately taking in the field of industry and other nation-building activities. It should, therefore, be the foremost duty of every well-wisher of our country to stop the march of these fissiparous forces so that the freedom that we have attained after centuries of foreign domination and the

opportunities that have come our way to reorient our economy and social structure are not frittered away.

Let me, therefore, stress today the need to strengthen the forces of unity in the country by eliminating all causes of friction through goodwill, understanding and mutual accommodation. We have witnessed in the recent past certain unfortunate happenings, the very reference to which makes me sad beyond words. Whatever their background or the predisposing causes or the immediate provocation, there can be no excuse for letting tension and ill-will get the better of our reason and judgment and our feeling of nationalism. Such happenings tend to encourage feelings of exclusiveness and bitterness which threaten the very unity of the country. Whether it is a question of religion or of language or of any other aspect of our life or activity, resorting to violence is indefensible. Let us understand that it is also profitless. I would appeal to all my countrymen to have a broad vision and not to lose their sense of perspective. Given the right perspective and mutual forbearance, I am quite sure such ugly situations as we have had the misfortune of witnessing in certain parts of India, will never recur. The existing tension and risks at our frontiers ought to strengthen our will to unity within.

I know it is not usual to speak in this tone on Independence Day. If I have done so it should be taken as a measure of our earnestness to set things right and my personal keenness that the trends I have referred to are checked before it is too late.

