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MADRAS PROVINCIAL

The Thirteenth L.I.M. Conference

BEZWADA.

# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

OF

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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for what I deem to be a great honour you have done in asking me to preside over this thirteenth annual session of our conference. Conscious as I am of my limitations and imperfections, I cannot but feel that your choice of me was actuated more by the spirit of fraternal ties than, of my merits and, this feeling alone had prevailed upon me to accept this onerous responsibility thrust upon my very slender shoulders with very high hopes of your full co-operation to enable me to discharge my duties as the president of this session of our annual conference and I am doubly sure that you will not mind my short comings.

2. Let me, at the very outset, give expression to our sense of joy that we are meeting this year under more hopeful circumstances, when the victory to the progressive forces fighting for Democracy, freedom liberty & progress is closer in sight than in last year, when the silver lines and streaks in the horizon were not so clear, and let us hope that when the conference meets next year it will do so, fittingly commemorating the final and conclusive destruction of the forces of Darkness.

3. Please permit me to apologise, ladies and gentlemen, for having to be brief, as war time economy and, for cutting a new line of approach to the subject. Let me therefore take a long range view in retrospect of the culture and science that we have chosen to play our part in. Our science (viz) the system of Indian medicine had descended from the hoary past to the brutal present, from the antiquities down to this day with full bloomed glory unhurt and undamaged, by virulent onslaughts

that had beset it and powerful assaults sought to be made upon it and let me assure you that by its own inherent strength virtue and merits, every-time during its trials and tribulations by designing and vested interests permeated with malice within and from selfishness without, did come out and will do so brighter and brighter unscathed and unalloyed like a burnished gold.

4. Ladies and gentlemen, needless it is for me to reiterate that our motherland's civilisation dates back from longer ages than that of any other country's of this world and her culture, science, and traditions are according to authorities entitled to opinion, second to none. The vicissitudes of time and the changeable predilections of the ruling powers had pulled them to a downward trend. The encouragement and patronage extended to the system in times of yore by the rulers-both Hindus and Muslims has laterly thinned down. In my opinion, from what I could gather from elders, its steep descent and decline started only five or six decades ago presumably when medicines from western manufacture began to pour into our markets. In consequence of an ill matched competition between the powerfully backed & patronized foreign systems and the poor cinderella (viz) Ayurvedic, Unani, and Siddha medicines constituting the Indian system of medicine, the latter receded farther and farther to the back ground, until at long last the encouraging change of circumstances earned the good will and deep concern in its behalf from well wishers of Indian system of medicine. It was that farsighted statesman the late Raja of Panagal that had given the lift to the system and it is our revered guru Captain G. Sreenivasamurthy, blending in him both east and west, that had toiled hard night and day and gave life to our alma-mater and it was our friend Dr. Dwarkanath and others who had put in the necessary sustenance and our patrons like Sir Md. Usman and Sir S. Muthia Mudaliar and others gave the system a proper setting in the frame



work of the medical society. Our grateful thanks are due to all of them. I shall be lacking in my gratitude if I do not mention here the revered names of late Vaidyaratna Dr. Gopalacharlu, late Dr. C. S. Murugesu Mudaliar, late Shifa Ul Mulk T. Zynelabudeen Sahib Bahadur and our contemporary Dr. A. Lakshmi-pathy who piloted the movement for the re-instatement of our hoary Indian system of medicine in our province.

5. The Much looked for National Ministry, which proclaimed from house tops their avowed object for resuscitating national sciences including medicines, only proved itself to be more Royal than the King. It was a tragic eye-opener to see one of the Ministers, Dr. T. S. S. Rajan—himself a Medical man, brought to bear upon the issue of Indian Medicine his own personal bias and prejudices and indulged in an unbecoming type of mudslinging, making use of the sacred pulpit of the Assembly for the purpose. When bread for sustenance was asked, stones were offered, when an appeal for clear thinking, dispassionate, and impartial judgment was demanded, prevarication and perversion of facts were given. Very luckily for us, majority of the Legislators failed to share Dr. Rajan's policy and he was left alone, high and dry to air his views. What a splendid opportunity was let go by default by the responsible National Ministry!! What has happened ultimately is that, Dr. Rajan left a legacy of step-motherly policy to be pursued in respect of Indian Medicine to his successors, who are not responsible to the electorate. In effect, the present Government has disavowed ~~every~~ <sup>every</sup> other good measure introduced by its predecessor, but not the bad one (viz.) the anti Indian Medicine Policy pursued by Dr. T. S. S. Rajan. When recent history of India to be chronicled, this item will be written under the chapter entitled the tragedy of missed opportunity for doing good to the country.

6. Unfortunately, blindness and bias appear to have become chronic more in our own countrymen than those elsewhere. Even so recently as in January last, Dr. K.V. Krishnan who presided over the section of Medical and Veterinary Sciences at the Indian Science Congress held at New Delhi, was reported to have said in the course of his Presidential Address "if really India wishes to keep pace with modern developments in science and come into line with all advanced countries, she must, however unpalatable it may be to some people, be prepared to abolish this antiquated, empirical system of medicine. Any sympathy or attachment to it will only retard scientific progress. The plea that the indigenous system is better suited to Indian constitutions is a myth. The plea that it is cheap and within the means of poor people is no criterion of its value or usefulness. The plea that it is readily available even in remote areas is a dope to ease the conscience of the sick for whom we are unable to provide the scientific medical aid that we ought to. Under these circumstances we must make up our minds as to what to do with these systems of medicine." ("Hindu" dated 7th January 44).

Such unmerited slur cast upon the Indian systems of medicine born out of total ignorance of them and prejudice and consequently one sided, will, no doubt, certainly not carry weight with any intelligent body militating as they do against all canons of jurisprudence. To condemn the system as a whole as unscientific is a travesty of truth. As a concrete instance in point of efficacy of an Indian Medicine called "paseela" prepared by the Walker laboratory Madras, I have ventured to extract the opinions about the said Indian Medicine, of eminent allopaths and others.

Mr. A. R. Cox I.C.S. Collector of Madras in the course of his speech at a Durbar held to present

sanads of titles, was reported to have declared.—“Outside his official duties, Rao Sahib Jesudasen has come to notice in another capacity. He has the distinction of having discovered a new drug called “Paseela” to the efficacy of which the late Surgeon General P. H. Benson certified after an extensive trial in Government Hospitals. He sent as a free gift large quantities of this drug for use in War Hospitals where it was found very useful in the treatment of wound. Major-General Giffard, the present Surgeon-General to the Government of Madras, accepted a similar gift for use in the Hospital Ship “Madras”.

Rao Bahadur Dr. C. S. Govinda Pillai, M.B. Ch. B. L. R. C. P. & S., D. P. H. (Edin.) in the course of his letter dated 17th January 1941 states:—that the medicine “Paseela” was tried by some of the Medical Officers of the Corporation dispensaries and by the Veterinary Graduates in charge of the Conservancy Cattle Depots, who report that it has been found efficacious in treating Chronic Ulcers.

Lt. Col. K. G. Pandalai, I. M. S. (retd.) M. B. C. M. F. R. C. S. (Eng.) in the course of his letters dated 3rd October 1937 and 30th Sept. 1939 stated in effect that the use of paseela on a case of chronic ulcer in the General hospital, which had baffled other methods of treatment, and a trial of the same on two bad cases of chronic suppurating cavities were attended with favourable results.

Dr. St. E. Mitchell I. M. D. Physician and Surgeon Rayapuram, Madras in the course of his letter dated 26th November 1939 observed:—A soldier came to me with a syphilitic phagedenic ulcer of the male organ. I gave him 14 arsenical injections (7 Sulphur-sanols and 7 neosalvarsans intravenously.) He was under my treatment for 6 weeks and during this time his condition generally grew from bad to worse. The whole of the prepuce was destroyed by the ulcer

which had also burrowed over half way into the glans penis. Five buboes (2 in the left and 3 in the right groin), had also developed during the time. I had opened the whole five, which together with the ulcer, were discharging pus copiously.

At this stage, after trying all the various Allopathic remedies I knew of, I despaired entirely of curing this case, and in my extremity I consulted the late Dr. S. Rungachary M.B., C.M., the eminent Surgeon. He after hearing the full history of the case, and seeing the condition of the patient advised partial amputation of the male organ as the only remedy left.

This the patient did not agree to and asked for time to consider. On my way back from Dr. Rungachary's place I met Rao Bahadur Jesudasen, who requested me to give Paseela a trial.

I immediately started dressing the patient's ulcer and 5 buboes with Paseela and in 3 weeks' time the whole condition was normal once again.

The burrowing of the ulcer was arrested in 48 hours and healing was complete in 2 weeks. The buboes, which were packed with gauze soaked in Paseela, stopped discharging and healed very rapidly so that in 3 weeks time only slightly raised scars were all that were left of them."

Likewise many eminent allopaths bear testimony to the efficacy of this Indian drug.

F. Howard Oakley Esq., of M/s Oakley Bowden and Co., Ltd. Madras in the course of his letter dated 18th December 1934 wrote "I mentioned the name of Paseela to friends in Holland *who were looking for Indian remedies*, (italics mine) and I did so because of the very excellent results I have had with your products in the case of treatment of boils. I have never yet found anything so effective etc."



In my own town (Vellore) instances I know, that the Indian system of medicine had effected a cure where a high sense of Allopathy had despaired and failed. As instances in point, let me tell you that Mr. C. Srinivasa Rao, the retired Dy. P. M. G. whose young daughter affected with Asthma with no relief under best and ablest allopaths committed the patient to the treatment of a Sanyasi living in a secluded corner called Ammanankuttai quite close to my Town, and got a cure of the vexed malady. Likewise a friend of mine Mr. L. Subba Rao M. A. Geologist whose son suffering from Asthma which was baffling to the best brains and expert knowledge with the degrees of the foreign universities in Allopathy, ultimately and as a last resort chose the above said Sanyasi and entrusted him with his son's treatment which in about forty days cured the malady what Allopathy tried its best for about a couple of years in vain. Are such curative effects can be said to be the result of unscientific process? While I agree that the quackery and charlatanism should be put down ruthlessly, to say, that the Indian system alone is capable of admitting the said kind of practice and that there is no such thing in allopathy is a prevarication of fact. How do you term the many compounders with a meagre and dribble knowledge of Allopathy, masquerading as Doctors treading blindly upon paths not to their knowledge with any amount of accuracy?

Let me leave at that and I hope that our revered Guru Dr. Srinivasa Murthy who combines in him the knowledge of both our system of medicine and that of Allopathy and consequently more competent to pronounce a verdict, will give a fitting reply to Dr. K. V. Krishnan's above excerpted ill conceived observations.

7. Let us now, ladies and gentlemen, examine for a moment our own qualifications and positions

(latter precarious indeed) Vis-a-vis the same with those of our brother allopaths and find out whether the inferiority complex sought to be forced on us is rational and justifiable, whether fair and deserving and, whether the differences discovered are real or otherwise and for this purpose let us first set out the aim and end of the medical science in general which are nothing but affording relief to the ailing humanity so as to infuse and promote happiness of health. Looked at from this angle of vision are we in anyway second to our brother L.M. P's ? We are positively and certainly not.

8. The alumni of the school of Indian medicine during their five years course are not only imparted with all knowledge of the Indian medicine but also with a requisite knowledge of the allopathy such as "modern physical and biological sciences, anatomy, physiology, surgery in all its branches including midwifery and ophthalmology," where-as our friends in allopathy can boast of a knowledge of the latter set of subjects, perhaps with more elaborations which, in the opinion of the committee on Medical Education appointed by the British medical association "involve needless wastage of every kind" and "nine tenths of dissection were an absolute waste of time" which should have made no less a person than Dr. Wilkie Miller to aver "that it was wholly unnecessary for the student to acquire such an amount of details in anatomy physiology pathology and bacteriology as was at present the case," Weighing probably, these aspects of studies, Lt. Col. Virghese I. M. S. of Orissa had declared "that the average L. I. M. is better than the average L. M. P". (Page 11 of presidential address 1941 to quote with apology) Ipsofacto it follows, therefore, that we L. I. Ms' do posseses an additional and more knowledge than our brother allophas in all essentials.

9. Turning to a different aspect of a general character of the soil we find that our motherland is

poverty stricken and per capita income is said to be less than two annas perday hardly enough even for a single meal. With such pauperism stalking the land, can it be wise on the part of anybody to suggest and to inflate the expensive and costly drugs as Allopathic medicines are, which in adaptability assimilability and simplicity cannot compete with indigenous products. Further, let me repeat that it is a common knowledge that the siddha and its allied system of medicines are more efficacious in diseases which are a despair to the allopathic system. "Self help is the best of help" is a saying pregnant with wisdom and from what we find to-day a more truer saying does not exist. Viewed under this headlight, the Indian system of medicine alone carry the weight of preference.

10. I do not mean to derogate or belittle the value and efficacy of western system of medicine much less the science. Far from it. My purpose is only to show clearly and unequivocally at least the deserving equality if not the superiority of the combination of oriental and occidental, to the pure and simple occidental alone and hence, the indignities sought to be inflicted upon us through various Government orders—woeful betrayals of the lack of balanced and unbiased judgement on the part of the powers that be such as G. O. No. 3935 dated 11th Sep. 1941 in utter contradiction to and stultification of G. O. No. 1841 P. H. dated 17th Aug. 1933 without any rhyme or reason and culminating as at present in a bombshell of a Government order No. 51 E. war M. very liberally indeed !!! (ironically speaking) offering to recruit us for compounders for war service thereby adding insult to injury, are atrocious. We are indeed grateful to our provincial association for having lodged our emphatic and vehement protest against this piece of thoughtless discrimination born of vision blinded with prejudice. This is not all. G. O. No. 3935 dated 11-9-41 seeks further to cast a slur upon the moral

calibre of private L. I. Ms. which is uncalled for and unmerited and looks on the very face of it more purposeful of ill designs than anything else.

11. Let us hope that better counsels and sanity will prevail and such thoughtless, bordering upon superciliousness, Government orders, are withdrawn, and proper amends made.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I take you to one other aspect of our needs. You are all aware of the fact that if a medicine is to be efficacious its constituent ingredients must be pure. At present we are getting products not of a pure and superior quality through a pernicious tender system bent more upon profit-eering than soundness of quality. Let me repeat what my illustrious predecessors from this chair had time and again suggested and impressed, so far in vain, lest it is apt to be forgotten, that a central stores of Indian medicines ought to be established by the government to cater purer drugs to the needs of the dispensaries in this province.

12. We are as a class hard working and willing type of Medical men. The emolument given to us we are sorry to say, is not commensurate with either our qualifications or our capacity for delivering goods. The following contrast will bear witness to the statement :-

Imagine our Sanitary Inspectors, who receive a blitz-krieg course lasting about a year, are started on a pay rising from Rs. 55/- to Rs. 120/- whereas, L. I. Ms with 5 years intense training in all aspects of medicine, including public health and sanitation, and in consequence equipped with better knowledge of medicine both preventive, and curative, are started on Rs. 40/- the maximum they can ever hope to reach being Rs. 70/- Judged from all canons of justice, fair play and commonsense can this disparity be justified ?



Ladies and gentlemen, one word about our sisters. With apologies for repetitions (lest we forget and be forgotten) lady L. I. Ms. are not considered eligible for child welfare and maternity centres and this stigma on their capacities and qualification should forthwith be removed, if fairness and justice have any place in the administration of the department. Last but not the least, the practice now in vogue, of inspection by District Medical Officers who are totally ignorant of the Indian systems of medicine, of the dispensaries with that system as their back ground, should be discontinued as their opinions, more often than not, based upon ignorance of the system, cannot but be warped and consequently not to be relied upon.

13. Ladies and gentlemen, to the best of my abilities I have tried to delineate in my address what we deserve but how we are treated and where the responsibilities lie for our present sad plight. Let me also state that it is not our purpose to embarrass the government at this juncture and criticise their actions and attitudes towards us beyond representing to them with utmost restraint that those whom they can more usefully employ, are being treated with scant courtesy and the omissions and commissions on the part of the Government are too bitter to be swallowed with equanimity and without protests. Let us have abundant faith in the human nature and, our government after all humane, will come round, if not to-day at least to-morrow, and learn to appreciate our view points to redress all the wrongs they have done us. Let us live for the present upon such hopes at least.

14. Just as I am about to conclude my address, I hear rumblings of discontent and despair among the students of our alma mater. This is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory. The students, one and all, and belonging to all the sections and different years, are loudly expressing their discontent at the teaching they

now have both in theory and practice in the School. It is also said that during the last 3 Examinations the Examiners have unsparingly criticised the knowledge possessed by the students. Having been myself one of the oldest alumni of the Institution - many among you have been likewise - have had no occasion to be dissatisfied in the training we have had. Even three years ago the students had not much to complain about the teaching obtained in the school though, they clamoured for more opportunities for learning. Today, the picture seems to be reversed. The complaint is, I am afraid, rather true. Instead of creating more opportunities for much more intense training, to water down what was already available is very regrettable. This subject is of vital interest to us, as in the case of a cell whose life and health is dependant almost exclusively on the health of the nucleus. In this cellular system all the L.I.Ms form the periphery and the School of Indian Medicine happens to be its nucleus and the life spot. Any injury to the life-spot or nucleus will end in the total destruction of the cellular structure as a whole. The inter dependency existing between the L.I.Ms. and their almahater is so intricate and vital that anything that affects the School will reflect upon the L.I.Ms., scattered all over the Presidency and viceversa. Therefore it is up to us to take a hand in this affair and see to it that the defects if any within the Institution is rectified here and now. Of this, a delegation of students who have come here will be able to explain more clearly. I am quite sure that you will do what you think is right in the matter.

15. In conclusion may I suggest that a periodical magazine through or from our association is a desideratum yea, a clamant need of the hour not only to combat the mischievous and malicious propaganda against our interests and our system of medicines, may be by vested interests or prejudiced minds, but also to make ourselves felt by the powers-that-be who had

unfortunately chosen to treat us with more callousness than concern, legitimately due to us.

16. Let us pray for more strength and fortitude with unflinching loyalty to the system of Indian medicines, come what way, and be more united and cemented and present one solid front with unflinching and unwavering resolve to wrest recognition of our rights and redressings of the wrongs done to us and may this association labour steadfastly to that end to the discomfitures of the enemies of progress and to the delight of us all.

17. Ere I finally conclude, I have to confess that I have not been able to discuss at length several other vitally important problems confronting us. This was because of the indifferent health I have been keeping for sometime past. My only anxiety was to obey your orders even though my health is a militating factor and I console myself with the hope that those others among you who are veteran workers for the cause and who have time and again fought incessantly and hard for our cause, will naturally help me in my task, with their experience and knowledge. I thank you very much.



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