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English rendering of PM addresses the International Conference on Gyan Bharatam in New Delhi

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Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat ji, Minister of State for Culture Rao Indrajit Singh ji, all the scholars, ladies and gentlemen!

Today Vigyan Bhawan is witnessing the renaissance of India's golden past. Just a few days ago, I announced the Gyan Bharatam Mission. And today in such a short time we are organizing the Gyan Bharatam International Conference. The portal associated with it has also been launched recently. This is not a government or academic event; the Gyan Bharatam Mission is going to become a proclamation of India's culture, literature and consciousness. The thoughts and contemplation of thousands of generations, the wisdom and research of the great sages and scholars of India, our knowledge traditions, our scientific heritage, we are going to digitize them through the Gyan Bharatam Mission. I congratulate all the countrymen for this mission. I wish all the best to the entire team of Gyan Bharatam and also to the Ministry of Culture.

Friends,

When we look at a manuscript, that experience is like time travel. This thought also comes to mind that there is a huge difference between the circumstances of today and earlier. Today we can write so much with the help of keyboard, there is also the option of delete and correction, we can make thousands of copies of a page with the help of print   but imagine the world of hundreds of years ago, at that time there were no   

such modern material resources, our ancestors had to depend on intellectual resources only. How much attention was required while writing each letter, so much hard work was required for each book, and even at that time the people of India had built the biggest libraries in the world. Even today India has the world's largest manuscript collection. We have about 1 crore manuscripts. And the figure of 1 crore is not less.

Friends,

In the cruel blows of history, millions of manuscripts were burnt and disappeared, but those that survived bear witness to how deep and wide was the devotion of our ancestors towards knowledge, science, reading and teaching. Fragile texts made of Bhojpatra and Palm leaves (ताड़पत्र), words written on copper plates (ताम्रपत्र) were at risk of metal corrosion, but our ancestors considered words as God and served them with 'अक्षर ब्रह्म भाव'. Generation after generation, families kept preserving those books and manuscripts. Immense respect for knowledge, concern for future generations, responsibility towards society, sense of dedication towards the country - where can we find a bigger example than this.

Friends,

India's knowledge tradition has remained so rich till today because its foundation is based on 4 main pillars. First- Preservation, second- Innovation, third- Addition and fourth- Adaptation.

Friends,

If I talk about preservation, you know that our most ancient scriptures, Vedas are considered to be the basis of Indian culture, Vedas are supreme. Earlier the Vedas were passed on to the next generation on the basis of 'Shruti'. And for thousands of years, the Vedas were preserved with authenticity without any error. The second pillar of this tradition of ours is innovation. We have continuously innovated in Ayurveda, Vastu Shastra, Astrology and metallurgy. Every generation progressed beyond the previous one, and made the old knowledge more scientific. Texts like Surya Siddhanta and Varahamihira Samhita were being written continuously, and new knowledge kept getting added to them. The third pillar of our preservation is addition. That is, every generation, along with preserving the old knowledge, also contributed something new. For example, after the original Valmiki Ramayana, many Ramayanas were written. We got texts like Ramcharitmanas. Annotations were written on the Vedas and Upanishads. Our acharyas gave explanations like Dvaita and Advaita.

Friends,

Similarly, the fourth pillar is – adaptation. That is, we also did self-introspection over time, and changed ourselves as per the need. We emphasized on discussions and followed the tradition of Shastrartha. Then the society abandoned the ideas that had become irrelevant, and accepted new ideas. In the medieval period, when many evils came into the society, there also came such eminent personalities who kept the conscience of the society awakened and saved and preserved the heritage.

Friends,

Apart from the modern concepts of nations, India has a cultural identity, its own consciousness, its own soul. The history of India is not just about the victories and defeats of sultanates. The geography of our princely states and kingdoms kept changing, but from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean, India remained intact. Because India is a living flow in itself, which is created by its thoughts, ideals and values. In the ancient manuscripts of India, we see the lines of the continuous flow of India. These manuscripts are a declaration of our unity in diversity, a proclamation as well. Manuscripts are present in about 80 languages in our country. We have a vast ocean of knowledge in so many languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit, Assamese,



Bengali, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Marathi. Gilgit manuscripts tell us the authentic history of Kashmir. I went to see the small exhibition that is being held right now. It is described in detail there and its pictures are also present. In the manuscript of Kautilya Artha shastra, we get to know about India's understanding of political science and economics. In the manuscript of Kalpa sutra of Acharya Bhadrabahu, the ancient knowledge of Jainism is preserved. The knowledge of Lord Buddha is available in the manuscripts of Sarnath. Manuscripts like Ras Manjari and Gita Govinda have preserved the diverse colors of devotion, beauty and literature.

Friends,

These manuscripts of India contain the footprints of the development journey of entire humanity. There is philosophy as well as science in these manuscripts. They contain medicine as well as metaphysics. There is art, astronomy, and architecture in these. You can take as many examples as you want. From Mathematics to binary based Computer Science, the foundation of the entire modern science is based on zero. You all know that zero was discovered in India. And, the evidence of that ancient use of zero and mathematical formulas is still preserved in the Bakhshali Manuscript. The Bower Manuscript of Yashomitra tells us about the centuries old medical science. Manuscripts of texts like Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita have preserved the knowledge of Ayurveda till date. In Sulva Sutra we get ancient geometrical knowledge. In Krishi Parashara we get information about traditional knowledge of agriculture. Manuscripts of texts like Natya Shastra help us understand the journey of emotional development of human beings.

Friends,

Every country presents its historical things to the world as a civilizational asset and greatness. If the countries of the world have any manuscript, any artifact, they preserve it as a national treasure. And India has such a huge treasure of manuscripts, it is the pride of the country. Recently, I went to Kuwait, so during my stay, I try to find 4-6 influencers there, and if I have time, I spend some time with them, try to understand their thinking. I met a gentleman in Kuwait who has so many documents on how sea trade was conducted from India centuries ago, and he has collected so much, and he came to me with so much pride, that is, with great pride, I saw what all would be there, where all would it be, we have to preserve all this. Now India is going to present this glory to the world with pride. It was just said here that we should search and bring back all the manuscripts in the world and then it was quietly said that the Prime Minister should do it. But you know that the idols stolen from us were returned in very small quantities earlier, today old idols are being returned in hundreds. They are not coming back because they are coming to give it to me after deciding on my chest, it is not like that. They have faith that if they hand it over to such hands, then every effort will be made to increase its glory. Today India has created this faith in the world, people feel that this is the right place. When I went to Mongolia, I was interacting with Buddhist monks there and I saw that they had a lot of manuscripts. So, I requested them that I could do something with it. I brought all those manuscripts, digitalized them and gave them back to them and now it has become their treasure.

Friends,

Gyan Bharatam Mission is an important part of this great campaign. Many organizations of the country are working with the government in this effort with the spirit of public participation. Kashi Nagari Pracharani Sabha, Asiatic Society of Kolkata, 'Dharohar' of Udaipur, Acharya Shri Kailashsuri Gyan Mandir in Koba, Gujarat, Patanjali of Haridwar, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Pune, Saraswati Mahal Library of Thanjavur, with the cooperation of hundreds of such organizations, more than one million manuscripts have been digitized so far. So many countrymen have come forward and made their family heritage available for the country. I thank all these organizations and all such countrymen. I would definitely like to



focus on one topic, I met some animal lovers recently, why did you laugh? There are many such people in our country, and the specialty is that they do not consider cow as an animal. So, while talking to him I told him that in our country there is a lot of knowledge about animal treatment written in the scriptures; many manuscripts are possible. When I was in Gujarat, I had an interest in the Asiatic Lion of Gujarat and I used to show a lot of interest in it. So, I used to find out that if they hunted too much and if they were in trouble, then they knew that there is a tree and its fruit should be eaten because vomiting can happen, the animal knew this. This means that wherever there are lion settlements, it is necessary to have such fruit trees. Now this is written in our scriptures. We have many manuscripts in which all these things have been written. What I mean to say is that we have so much knowledge available to us, and it is written down, we have to search it, explore it and interpret it in today's context.

Friends,

India has never measured its knowledge with the power of money in the past. Our sages have also said - विद्या-दानमतः परम्। That is, knowledge is the greatest donation. That is why, in ancient times, the people of India have also donated manuscripts freely. When the Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang came to India, he took with him more than six hundred and fifty manuscripts. And the President of China once told me that he had spent most of his time in my village, where I was born in Vadnagar. But when he returned to China from here, he lived at the birthplace of President Xi. So, he took me to his village and I went with him to see the place where Hiuen Tsang had lived, and President Xi showed me the manuscripts in full detail, and there were some paragraphs of the description of India in it, which the interpreter explained to me there. It is very impressive to the mind. He would look at each and every thing and wonder what treasure he might have. Many manuscripts of India have still reached Japan from China. In 7th century Japan they were preserved as a national treasure at Horyuji Monastery. Even today, ancient manuscripts of India are kept in many countries of the world. Under the Gyan Bharatam Mission, we will also try to unite this shared heritage of humanity.

Friends,

We had also taken this initiative during the G-20 cultural dialogue. We are involving countries which have centuries-old cultural ties with India in this campaign. We gifted reprinted volumes of the Mongolian Kanjur to the Ambassador of Mongolia. In 2022, these 108 volumes were also distributed in monasteries of Mongolia and Russia. We have signed MoUs with universities in Thailand and Vietnam. We are training scholars there to digitize old manuscripts. As a result of these efforts, many manuscripts in Pali, Lanna and Cham languages have been digitized. We will expand these efforts further through the Gyan Bharatam Mission.

Friends,

Another big challenge will also be addressed through the Gyan Bharatam Mission. Many important information related to India's traditional knowledge system, which we have been using for centuries, are copied and patented by others. It is also necessary to stop this piracy. These efforts will gain more momentum through digital manuscripts, and intellectual piracy will be curbed. The world will also get to know the original sources with authenticity on all subjects.

Friends,

Gyan Bharatam Mission has another very important aspect. For this, we are opening many new domains of research and innovation. Today the world has a cultural and creative industry worth about two and a half trillion dollars. Digitized manuscripts will feed the value chains of this industry. These millions of



manuscripts and the ancient information hidden in them will also serve as a huge database. These will give a new push to 'data driven innovation'. This will create new opportunities for the youth in the tech field. As the manuscripts are digitized, new possibilities will be created for academic research.

Friends,

We have to increase the use of new technologies like AI to study these digitized manuscripts. I agree with what was said in the presentation here that AI cannot replace talent or human resources and we also want that it should not be replaced, otherwise we will become victims of new slavery. It is a support system, it strengthens us, boosts our strength, boosts our speed. With the help of AI, these ancient manuscripts can be understood deeply and can also be analyzed. Now see, not all Vedic mathematics texts are available, if we try through AI, then it is possible that many new formulas can be discovered. We can discover them. AI can also be used to bring the knowledge contained in these manuscripts to the world. Another problem is that our manuscripts are scattered, and presented in different ways, in different periods. The advantage of AI will be that all these can be collected and we can get a very good tool to extract nectar from it, that if there are things lying at 10 places, then with the help of AI we can bring them together and observe them. We may... as it was mentioned in the presentation in the beginning that the same words have many uses, it may be that once we solve them, we will make 100 questions, today we are stuck with lakhs of questions, we will bring it to 100. It may be that when we connect with human power, it will bring results, but there are many such difficulties, but there are ways also.

Friends,

I appeal to all the youth of the country to come forward and join this campaign. And the Minister Ji was just telling me that from yesterday till today, 70% of the people who are participating in this are youth. I think this is the biggest sign of its success. If the youth start taking interest in this, then I am sure that we will achieve success very quickly. How can we explore the past through technology? How can we make this knowledge accessible to humanity on evidence-based parameters? We should make efforts in this direction. Our universities and institutes should also take new initiatives for this. Today, the whole country is moving forward with the spirit of Swadeshi and the resolve of self-reliant India. This campaign is also an extension of that. We have to make our heritage synonymous with our strength, i.e. power. I believe that a new chapter of the future is going to begin with the Gyan Bharatam Mission. I know that these are such subjects in which there is no glamour, no glitter. But its power is so much that no one can shake it for centuries, we have to connect with this power. With this belief, best wishes to all of you once again.

Thank you very much.

MJPS/VJ/SS

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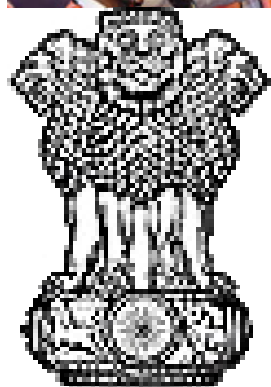


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