

ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE*

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DR. SAXENA, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

On behalf of the Reception Committee as also of the people of Murshidabad, I have great pleasure in extending to you our most cordial welcome to the Fourth Session of the West Bengal State Homœopathic Practitioners' Conference at Berhampore.

We are extremely glad that you have kindly accepted our invitation to participate in this conference at considerable personal discomfort.

Hailing as you do from different parts of the country, you represent the interests of Homœopaths all over the land. The people of Murshidabad welcome you all. Murshidabad may not be rich enough in externals and may not offer you all the material comforts you need; but I like to assure you that Murshidabad will not be found lacking in the spirit of her hospitality and warmth of her heart.

Murshidabad has a glorious history of her own. Her tradition is linked to the cultural heritage handed down to her people from the teachings of Mahabir, the last Tirthankar of the Jains. Azimganj bears to this day evidence of that great heritage. The Hindu culture of the land reached its zenith during the reign of Sasanka, whose capital at Karna Subarna was a few miles off Berhampore. The catholic spirit of her people, inspired perhaps by the Jaïna tradition of *anekanta-vada* gave shelter to Islamic tradition and cultural trends from many other quarters. The advent of the British rule and the subsequent transfer of the capital from Murshidabad to Calcutta no doubt eclipsed her prosperity, but even during this period of comparative depression Berhampore served

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as the dreamland of Bankim Chandra's "Bande Mataram" and savants like Sir Gurudas Banerjee, Sir B. N. Seal, Maharaja Manindra Chandra and Acharya Ramendra Sundar enriched her tradition and gave a new impetus to her cultural life.

As a home of Homœopathic tradition too Berhampore has a brilliant record to her credit. Among noted homœopaths of the current century mention may be made of the late Dr. Surendra Nath Bhattacharya whose unique success as a medical practitioner is still a household word in many parts of this district.

Fellow delegates, your Conference at Berhampore is important in more ways than one. The Government of the land have no doubt accorded recognition to Homœopathy as an alternative system of medicine. But this recognition does not help you much in the absence of well equipped hospitals, research centres and teaching institutions exclusively devoted to the homœopathic system of medicine. It is true that this system of medicine has, even in her days of adversity, immensely benefited the country and its people. But this has been possible owing to tremendous sacrifice made by distinguished homœopaths all over the land in spite of apathy from many quarters. It is high time that the State came forward to patronize this system of medicine in a really befitting manner and give proof of its catholic policy for scientific development even if that means the abandonment of the beaten track it has so long pursued. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that some of our men at the top do not believe what they speak out or have not the courage to implement what they believe. One glaring example of discrepancy between the profession and practice of our administrators is that they would preach the gospel of impartial treatment to all alternative systems of medicine including homœopathy, but refuse to admit homœopaths to the privilege of Employees' State Insurance Scheme.

Fellow delegates, you are all wedded to the cause of homœopathy and, to that extent, to the cause of suffering humanity as well, and consequently interested in the health of the nation. Like all other systems of knowledge medical science is fast developing and research in this sphere is as much important as its application in relieving humanity of its ailments. This conference will therefore rightly claim ample opportunities for homœopaths to pursue their

science and art of healing in all legitimate spheres. Article 38 of the constitution of India lays down a directive principle of state policy namely, that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inspire all the institutions of the national life. Homœopaths are therefore both legally and morally justified in claiming for themselves an equitable treatment in the hands of our administrators. Let us not forget that mere recognition of homœopathy as a system of medicine is not enough. Words must accompany belief and practice must follow belief. This conference will be amply justified in demanding the establishment of State-managed homœopathic hospitals, teaching institutions and research centres. Science demands that its boundaries should widen more and more. But demand is more than mere desire. This conference has the responsibility to make its demands as effective as possible within the bounds of law.

Friends, on behalf of the people of Murshidabad, I wish your conference every success.