

Sacred Music

(Inaugural address at the World Festival of Sacred Music in Tata Memorial Auditorium Bangalore on 9th april, 2000)

I address you advisedly as Sisters and Brothers as we all believe in the ideal of the Brotherhood of Man and in global harmony. Here we have persons belonging to *different race, religion, creeds, language and ethnic groups joined together in pursuit of peace and harmony in the mother earth* we live in. We have over 100 delegates from abroad and many representatives from India meeting and mixing with each other as a member of the global family. Never in the annals of India have we had a gathering of enlightened souls as I see before me.

Primordial man was no better than the beast. He hunted for his food, ate, drank and slept like any other animal. He was violent selfish and greedy. He fought his fellowmen as he did with the beast. Such an animal has today grown intellectually, morally and spiritually, developing qualities of kindness, compassion, service and sacrifice living in peace and harmony with other beings. He has enriched his life with art, music, dance and literary pursuits. In short, the history of Civilization is nothing but the history of human development from stage of a beast to the level of a refined being.

The twentieth Century has achieved progress in every direction far more than any earlier century. The political map of the World has changed. One of the marvels of the last Century is the voluntary transfer of power to the subject nations and elimination of Colonialism from the greater part of the Globe. Empires like the British, French and Portuguese have tumbled down and millions of peoples have become free and independent.

In science and Technology, breath-taking developments have taken place. We have conquered space, built supersonic planes, placed satellites in the orbit, split the atom, invented the Computer, the robot, created the Information revolution, transplanted organs, and produced test tube babies.

The dark side of the picture is equally stunning. Out of the estimates 6 billion population in the globe, nearly a quarter is living in poverty. 80% of the World's resources are consumed by 20% of the population. Such an unequal distribution cannot be sustained except by force, political or economic. Even among the advanced countries, all kinds of violence is breaking out. Renowned cities of the World are plagued by Mafia of different varieties like the arms, drugs and sex. Rivalries among the gangs lead to reckless killings, arson and loot.

The nuclear powers have exploded over 2000 nuclear devices so far. These have polluted the oceans, blasted 6 whole islands into radioactive fallout, poisoned marine life and spread incurable diseases among hapless people in the neighborhood of their explosions.

Aggressive salesmanship through the electronic and print media kindles consumerism and an uncontrollable desire to possess more and more resulting in violence in the shape of robberies, decoities and murders. In developing countries, consumerism leads to uncontrollable jealousies and engenders class conflicts.

It is therefore, the duty of the present generation to save the earth for posterity. This can be achieved only by promoting harmony among all nations and peoples. The points of agreement among nations should be strengthened and the differences eliminated.

For instance in field of culture, there is complete unanimity among peoples of the world. They enjoy art, music, dance, drama, painting, sculpture and literary works without regard to race, religion, creed, language or ethnic differences. The best pieces of literature are now

translated in all languages and are read and enjoyed by people living in different parts. Likewise every other piece of art is admired and applauded all over the world.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the living apostle of peace and harmony. He is the embodiment of kindness, compassion and harmony. With his unique vision he has set the world agog with a call for WORLD FESTIVAL OF SACRED MUSIC to usher in the new millennium dedicated to universal peace and harmony.

The world has responded to his call and music festivals are organized by each national committee to further the cause of harmony among nations and peoples. During 1999, world festivals of sacred music have been held in Los Angeles, Chicago, Vancouver in America and Cape Town in South Africa. In Cape Town several Noble Peace Prize- winners participated and lent weight to the function. During this year festivals are proposed to be held in London, Luxembourg Milan, Hiroshima, Berlin and a number of the places. The effort is to rouse the conscience of the entire world to achieve Peace, Harmony and Brotherhood among the peoples of the world. None other than His Holiness the Dalai Lama could have awakened the world to such a noble cause.

The main function of the World- Wide event is being held in Bangalore- the garden city, the city Beautiful of India. His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be participating in the function on 11th April. The rich flora, the verdant foliage, the salubrious climate and charming soft spoken people lend a unique colour and glow to this city and the state of Karnataka. Buddhism, Jainism and Islam flourished in this land side by side with Hinduism whose great exponent Madhva Charya left immortal philosophy to the entire Indian Nation. The monumental sculptures of Aihole, Belur Halibid and Hampi are of insatiable delight to people of India and abroad.

Music is the vehicle of noble thoughts and ideals. Every society, modern, tribal, aboriginal or primitive has its own. It provides not only entertainment but functions as the vehicle of devotions and prayers. Music Calms the nerves and even cures illness. Shakespeare said:

When gripping grief
the heart doth wound
And doleful dumps
the mind oppress
Music with her
silver sound
With speedy help
doth lend redress.

That is why His Holiness has chosen the World festival of Sacred music for propagating Universal peace and harmony among humanity.

Karnataka is the seat of both Karnatic and Hindustani music and in this respect Karnataka represents the synthesis of India. The renowned saint Purandara Dasa composed devotional music of infinite charm, which is being sung even today, centuries after him. The state has produced Maestros in Hindustani music like Mallikarjan Mansoor and Kumar Gandarv. It is therefore the ideal place to hold this magnificent main event of the National programme of World festival of sacred Music.

As Chairman of the National Committee of the World festival of Music, I offer to all and each one of you a most warm and Cordial welcome and wish you a very pleasant stay in this ancient land of ours. I am deeply grateful to the government of Karnataka for the facilities and cooperation extended to the National Committee. We shall, during the next 7 days, have unique

privilege of hearing national and international music concerts. We are deeply grateful to the artists who have taken the trouble to travel from all parts of the World for the purpose of displaying their musical skills. No words will be adequate to express our heart-felt thanks.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating the main session of World Festival of Sacred Music and hope that the objective of peace and harmony so dear to the heart of His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be globally furthered.