

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF
'DISTINGUISHED INDOLOGIST AWARD 2016'**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi: December 1, 2016

1. It is indeed a privilege for me to be present amidst you on this occasion to extend a warm welcome to this distinguished assembly and present the Distinguished Indologist Award 2016. The eminent indologists present here have devoted their faculties to the exploration and propagation of the Indian knowledge system. I thank all of you for your invaluable contributions which have promoted and spread Indology around the world.
2. I am indeed happy to have conferred the second 'Distinguished Indologist Award 2016' on eminent Prof. Yu Longyu of the People's Republic of China. He has been selected by the learned Jury for his significant contribution to Indology - as a researcher, teacher, and academician. He is a foremost epigrapher on the History of Indian Religions. His work has added substance to indological studies and will go a long way in inspiring future efforts in this direction. I commend the Jury for their selection and I congratulate Professor Yu Longyu. I have no doubt that his work and contribution to indological studies will be an inspiration to many others in his country and beyond.
3. It is not surprising that the 2nd Distinguished Indologist Award is being conferred on a scholar from China, a civilization with which India has had age-old academic and cultural exchanges. The contacts between our scholars, scientists and historians date back to ancient times. These mutually inspiring

relationships were further reinforced by the impelling ties of religion, trade and cultural affinities. The infusion of geographical and mythological elements of India into Chinese literature and art bear testimony to the rich cross-pollination of ideas between our civilizations and the vibrant cultural and economic linkages that have continuously flourished between our two peoples. Writings and colourful descriptions contributed by Chinese historians are an invaluable component of India's recorded history.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. In every aspect, India represents a balance between tradition and modernity. We find our history and heritage reflected in almost all our transactions – from the mundane level of every day custom and ritual to our academic work – in science, innovation and maths – and also our spiritual pursuits, creativity and cultural activities. Our villages are firmly rooted in our traditions but have simultaneously leapfrogged into cyber space. Yoga and ayurvedic medicine are examples of ancient Indian science that still have an important influence in our daily practices. They continue to be popular and are being actively revived and promoted. Indian civilization has always been open to new streams of thought and information. This diversity is at the core of our pluralistic society. The wealth of our multi-faceted experiences has made Indology vast in its scope. Our unique heritage has made it extremely rewarding for scholars to explore it – in the framework of India's vibrant tradition, its history, languages, culture and religions.

5. It is important to recognize that indology is a relatively modern and developing academic discipline. We owe its progress and popularity to 18th century pioneers like William Jones, Henry Thomas Colebrooke and August Wilhelm Schlegel. In the 19th century, organisations like the Asiatic Society, American Oriental Society, German Oriental Society, Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, to name a few, played an important role in its evolution. I take this opportunity to once again pay tribute to their path-breaking work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. The contribution of foreign scholars to the development of Indology has been critical. Their efforts have led to the worldwide awareness of India's rich cultural and civilisational past. Indology has helped to understand the development of human civilization. From religion and philosophy to science and social science, language, grammar and aesthetics, ancient India had theories and answers about the whole range of complexities of human life. These are some of the reasons why I felt that a special effort to promote indology needed to be made. I am glad to note that ICCR has not only instituted this award, but also co-ordinated with counterparts in other countries to take this initiative further.
7. I take this opportunity to also commend the leadership of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister, Smt.

Sushma Swaraj and Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri M.J. Akbar for their efforts and numerous initiatives for the promotion of Indological studies both in India and abroad. I am confident that their endeavours will be fruitful and will enhance interest in Indian studies in all parts of the world.

8. With these words, I once again congratulate Professor Prof. Yu Longyu of the People's Republic of China. I also offer my best wishes for the success of the 2nd Indologists' Conference being hosted in the People's Republic of China this year. I wish the Conference all success.

Thank you

Jai Hind