

**Remarks by Shri Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan for “AYUSH:
Embracing Ancient Wisdom in Daily Lives” and “Kerala Day” event
(February 29, 2024)**

Dear Dr. Tsuyoshi Kitanishi, President of Ayurveda Society in Japan,

Dr. Shiho Oikawa, Vice President, Japan Ayurveda Society

Ms. Yukiko Kezuka, Yoga Therapist, Japan Yoga Therapy

Mr. Taku Yoshiki, Representative, Sabinsa Japan Corporation

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen.

A very Good evening to you all.

I welcome each one of you who have joined us here today in the Embassy for this event “AYUSH: Embracing Ancient Wisdom in Daily Lives” and “Kerala Day”. I thank all the speakers for their presence today.

Dear Friends,

It has been a year since we set up the AYUSH Information Cell in the Embassy which was inaugurated in March last year by Hon’ble Minister of AYUSH Shri Sarbananda Sonowala ji. I recall the presence of Dr. Tsuyoshi Kitanishi, President of Ayurveda Society of Japan and Mr. Kimura Keishin, President of Japan Yoga Therapy Society who had attended the inaugural meeting last year. I am happy to see the several activities that the Ayush Cell has undertaken in 2023 to promote Ayurveda in Japan.

Dear Friends,

As someone who has spent nearly thirty years in diplomatic service and lived and served as a diplomat in twelve countries spread across four continents, of which five countries as Ambassador I have seen personally how Yoga and Ayurveda has grown in prominence abroad and also has become one of the most important symbols of India’s culture and traditions.

The knowledge that our ancestors had acquired thousands of years ago was based on a lot of efforts and inspiration for the welfare of mankind. The desire for experimentation and innovation gave birth to the miracles like yoga and Ayurveda. In the last few years, we have seen how Yoga, which has been originally the heritage of India, has spread to the entire human race as its legacy.

Today, there is no village or town where Ayurveda is not practiced. It is my endeavor to see that Ayurveda is practiced in every village and town of Japan as well. If yoga can reach every village of Japan, I am sure that Ayurveda can also reach there. Mahatma Gandhi once said about Ayurveda, and I quote: "I think highly of Ayurveda. It is one of the ancient sciences of India, which ensures the health of the millions in her thousands of villages. I advise every citizen to live life in accordance with the principles of Ayurveda. The Pharmacy, the dispensary and the Vaidyaraj, all have my blessings that they may be enabled to render the best possible service to Ayurveda. Unquote.

Dear Friends,

No celebration of Ayurveda or Ayush is complete unless we focus on Life Mission that Prime Minister Modi launched in 2022 with a clear goal to create an India-led global mass movement that will nudge individual and collective action to protect and preserve the environment. Restoring our Earth begins with individual actions. Each step we take, no matter how small, matters. I am happy to see that the Ayush Information Cell in Tokyo is taking several steps to promote the Life Mission in Japan. Similarly, I am happy to see the various initiatives undertaken to promote Millets in Japan. I am given to understand that at least a hundred millets lounge has been set up by the Embassy team in all our prominent events in Japan in 2023.

Another important element associated with Ayurveda is the wellness tourism. There are many flavours of tourism today. But, what India specially offers to all nature lovers is Wellness Tourism. Its strongest pillar is Ayurveda and traditional medicine. I recall the remarks by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi who said, "Imagine yourself getting a detox in lush green surroundings in

the beautiful state of Kerala. Imagine yourself performing Yoga by a gushing river, by the mountain winds in Uttarakhand. Imagine yourself in the middle of the lush green forests of the Northeast. If your life's deadlines and timelines are stressing you out, it is time to tap into the timeless culture of India. Whether you want to treat your body, or a retreat for your mind, come to India." Unquote.

Dear Friends,

In view of the role that Kerala plays in the field of Ayurveda today, it is only natural that we also celebrate Kerala day today. Having spent over a year in this beautiful serene land of Japan. During my travels to the length and breadth of this landscape, I realised that what makes this country the attraction of the world, is that here in Japan, every Prefecture, every city, every small township and every village has something unique to offer. Wherever you go, you return with the satisfaction of having experienced something unique. The more you explore, the more you realise that there is much more you need to enjoy and explore. I see a huge similarity for Kerala. Every small township and every village in God's Own Country has something unique to offer for visiting tourists.

Kerala has so many stories of amazing history. Lord Mahabali, whom we call with love Maveli, and whose festival of Onam we celebrate, the stories of Lord Parasuram and Creation of Kerala and the history of Adi Shankaracharya born in Kerala in 8th century who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.

Let me repeat, every piece of land in Kerala has a history to say and something unique to offer. The art forms of Kathakali to the martial arts of Kalari Payattu all make this land unique. And today this land is contributing to the well-being of the world including Japan through the healing touch of Ayurveda. So, I invite our Japanese friends to include Kerala in their itinerary to India, along with other sought-after destinations like Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Agra and Jaipur.

Dear Friends,

I am confident that the Ayush Information Cell in Tokyo will continue to contribute in our efforts to Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji. In this Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal, a journey of twenty-five years, to our 100th anniversary of independence, let's continue our efforts to spread the message of Ayurveda and Yoga all across Japan. Let's continue to work towards expanding our engagement with every Ayurveda practitioners and other stakeholders in Japan. Let's work closely with our tour operators to promote wellness tourism. Let's continue to hold several events to spread the message of Ayurveda all across Japan. Let's establish Ayurveda lounges at every event that we organize anywhere in Japan. Together let's celebrate the heritage of India in Japan.

Thank you.

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