

Address by the Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore at the 1997 Annual Induction Ceremony

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Fellow Academicians, friends, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to this evening's Induction Ceremony. On behalf of Council, I would like to extend a very special welcome to our new academicians into the fellowship of the Academy.

The Academy was founded forty years ago to promote the science and art of Medicine and the pursuit of research and excellence in Medical science. The motto "Recta Sapere", meaning to Seek and Savour the Truth at all times, aptly describes our aims and objectives.

We have come a long way from our humble beginnings, of a handful of members operating out of a small office in the Medical Alumni building down College Road, to a roll of more than 1200 fellows and members in ten chapters today. Even as we progress into the new Millennium, new challenges and opportunities arises.

The training, certification and admission of specialists remained one of our many main responsibilities. As training of specialists becomes more and more structured and formalised, it is only logical that the end point of each training programme i.e. exit certification, must be sufficiently objective, uniform and transparent amongst all specialties to ensure that candidates are adequately trained to maintain standards of practice in Medicine. We have to move away from our past practice of informal exit interviews that are rather subjective, to more critical assessment methods of suitability of candidates for admission into the fellowship if the Academy is to remain creditable. While the past method has served the profession well, the training of specialists is now very structured and formalised and training programmes specifically designed. Hence, we have to ensure that trainees have benefited and are sufficiently trained at the end of their programmes. We are in the transition of change and I'm happy to note that the Academy, together with our partners in the Joint Committee for Advance Specialist Training, is in the process of formalising, with our sister colleges, particularly in the UK, uniform exit certifications in some specialties. This will only result in increased credibility, standing and acceptability of the Academy as the main body representing specialists.

Continuing medical education is another main focus of the Academy. Knowledge and technological advancement is progressing at an exponential rate and what we learnt today will be obsolete tomorrow. For the profession to remain relevant and serve our patients well, CME should and must remain the main way to update and upgrade our knowledge and practices. Moves are already being made in some countries to introduce re-certification of doctors in the interests of the public. I feel that the better alternative to re-certification is to have a comprehensive programme of CME activities for each specialty and to convince the profession of its value.

I now come to another issue facing us, i.e. the search for a new permanent home for the Academy. While we are grateful to the Government, in particular the Ministry of Health, for accommodating us in this magnificent COMB building for the past decade at nominal rent, we will not be able to continue with this arrangement any longer. This is a fact we have to accept. Council is already actively working towards looking for a more permanent new home. Hopefully, this will be located in an environment conducive to professional development and in keeping with the stature and dignity of the Academy. I look forward to your support and understanding and hope to be able to report to you in the near future on this.

To our new Academicians who will be taking the Pledge later, I urge all of you to uphold the high ideals and principles of the Academy as our founding members and predecessors have done so. To do otherwise will be to bring disrepute to our profession.

Together we will build a better Academy in the 21st century.

Thank you.

28 May 1997