

Medicine and universality*

When one has traveled from far away and arrives in Macao, a natural feeling of physical tiredness soon gives way to spiritual delight at seeing, with one's own eyes, an important facet of the Portuguese presence outside Europe.

If, centuries ago, our ancestors had the ingenuity and the skills that enabled them to reach every continent of the world, spreading their culture, over time, with all kinds of developments, peoples have now become closer, capable of knowing each other better and exchanging ideas more easily, some of which were so important that they proved to be universal. In fact, this sense of universality has been a part of our History since the Middle Ages, at a time when those valiant Portuguese of old were searching for unknown lands.

Afterwards came the heroic deeds of the Discoveries and the unification of the globe, adaptation to the most diverse climates and customs, and the assimilation of the most heterogeneous cultures.

The sense of universality is, without doubt, the common thread that runs through all the movements of our History and our reality as a people, with the ecumenical vision that should increasingly link diversity and unity. And in the general vocation of peoples towards universality, Portuguese is an example that is recognized everywhere.

This spirit of universality that we have inherited now needs to be expanded, and deepened, simultaneously appealing to the essential identity, in the mobilization of all the creative energies.

Today, our circumstances are different: Europe is no longer at the center of the globe, and there is a state of independence never seen before, which is enabling dialog and communication, previously restricted, among cultures and civilizations. Nowadays, this sense of universality is also recognized in Medicine.

Technological advances achieved one day, in one place, are known about the following day on the other side of the globe. People increasingly have a need to



communicate, not only with those we deal with on a daily or annual basis, but also others, whom we know only remotely, and whom we now hope will personally pass on to us their knowledge and concerns.

Hence the importance of congresses like this one, drawing professionals from all walks of life, training and cultures so that, without losing sight of their respective identities, they can increasingly confer, to Medicine also, the authentic sense of universality, because all men, without exception, stand to benefit.

Macao, which is recognized as a meeting point of civilizations and a beacon for the spread of culture, now welcomes, with its traditional magnanimity, delegates of physicians who have come to compare experiences and exchange points of view, in short, promote progress.

Clinical Practice and Internal Medicine, without disrespect for the specialties of a more technological nature are, without doubt, the pillars of the health systems in any part of the Globe. The first being geared more towards prevention and outpatient care, and the second towards hospital activity, they complement one another perfectly, with prophylactic aims, for the treatment and rehabilitation of man. At a time when we are delighted by so many advances, they help humans to maintain or recover a state of health that

*Speech given at the opening of the 1st Luso-Chinese Congress on Clinical Practice and Internal Medicine in Macao

enables them to feel happy.

Thanking those who distinguish us by taking part in this Inaugural Session for their honorable presence, and the dedicated collaboration of all those who have made this initiative possible, I am sure this I Luso-Chinese Congress of Clinical Practice and Internal Medicine of Macao will meet the scientific expectations, provide a pleasant environment, mark the start of a tradition that will cause us to gather in years to come, and be an instrument – through medicine and the promotion of health – of universality governed by the peace that men strive for and truly deserve! ■



Armando Porto