

Given May 28, 1975

at Hippocrates Tree Dedication

SPEECH AT DEDICATION OF TREE OF HIPPOCRATES

There is a traditional story concerning Hippocrates, his life and teaching, which persists to the present day in a tangible form, remarkable because it is a living link between that distant past and the present. This link is the Tree of Hippocrates.

The Greek isle of Cos, legendary birthplace of Hippocrates in 460 B.C., is the site of the famous plane tree still growing and flourishing today after more than 2,000 years. It was under this tree that Hippocrates was said to have taught his students and delivered the hippocratic lectures. This is what he said about the teaching and learning of medicine: "He who is going truly to acquire an understanding of medicine must enjoy natural ability, teaching, a suitable place, instruction from childhood, diligence and time. The learning of medicine may be likened to the growth of plants, our natural ability is the soil, the views of our teachers are as if it were the seeds. Learning from childhood is analogous to the seeds falling betimes upon the prepared ground. The place of instruction is as it were the nutriment that comes from the surrounding air to the things sown. Diligence is the working of the soil. Time strengthens all these things so that their nurture is perfected."

At the time this building was completed we believed that we had helped in part to create what Hippocrates called "a suitable place of instruction" and that it would be a suitable and fitting thing to do to plant one of the seedlings from the original tree which had then become available in this country. A similar ceremony had occurred at the dedication of the National Library of Medicine in 1961 when the royal Greek Ambassador presented cuttings to Dr. Martin Cummings, Director of the National Library, for planting on the grounds.

Later in the '60's the Hippocratic Foundation which had its beginnings in Canada made available to institutions and individuals interested in the history of medicine, cuttings for planting in return for a donation to the Hippocratic Foundation, then attempting to build a small memorial building on Cos adjacent to the Escalopian Temple ruins. We obtained one of these seedlings but found that we would be unable to plant it for a number of years because of its tiny size. Mr. Miles Labrum, then State Arborist, took our seedling, nurtured it in his

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own home and planted it in his back yard until it achieved a plantable height.

We had already taken the leaf of the oriental plane tree as our library's logo - using it on book plates, literature stationery and even decals on our glass partitions. Since we had no visible tree to go with it, this has always been something of a mystery to our clientele.

At last we do have our Tree of Hippocrates, large enough to withstand our Utah climate on its own.

We are planting it today at the southwest corner of this building and dedicating it to the teaching of all health science students on this campus in the hippocratic tradition.