

ADDRESS BY MR. EPAM. PETRALIAS

*President of the International Olympic Academy*

With deep emotion and joy I greet, in my capacity as President of the International Olympic Academy and on behalf of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, the guests, lecturers and participants of the 13th Session of the International Olympic Academy who attend this opening ceremony.

The International Olympic Academy which was founded in Greece, 1961, by the Hellenic Olympic Committee and which has been operating ever since without interruption under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee, has been a source of inspiration and an institution of major importance for Olympism. In the period elapsed since its foundation and during twelve consecutive sessions, the I.O.A. succeeded in realizing a brilliant and fruitful work and in becoming the cultural centre of world sports, entrusted with the task of spreading throughout the world, the lofty principles and humanistic ideals of the Olympic philosophy.

The task which has been undertaken by the Hellenic Olympic Committee is neither simple, nor limited, nor easy.

The Olympic principles and ideas however are an ancient cultural heritage for our people, they live in the mind and soul of the Greeks and are maintained unaltered, inspiring them in their long Odyssey through the centuries.

Greece with faith and dedication in the ideas which were bequeathed to her by divine Olympia, has undertaken this major task which it will carry through with the same faith, the same disinterestedness and dedication and with the increasing realization that she is fulfilling a noble mission.

I can say unreservedly that the work which is being accomplished in Ancient Olympia where the I.O.A. facilities are located, as you will soon realize, is almost unbearable for the financial possibilities of our small country. Nevertheless, the National Government, through the General Secretariate for Sports and the other state agencies has assumed the large expenses for the erection of adequate facilities and for the organization of Sessions and the traditional hospitality extended to our guests. Today, the International Olympic Academy has been firmly established in the conscience of the world which believes in Olympism and is now opening, under auspicious omens, its 13th Session.

In the premises of the International Olympic Academy the scientific

bases on which the large edifice of Ancient Greek education was supported are studied, the principles of the Olympic Movement are investigated and the best ways sought for disseminating and spreading the moral teachings of Olympism to the contemporary world, to the youth of our time, which is more and more turned away from idealism by the rapidly evolving technology.

The International Olympic Academy, with the warm support of the Greek Government, the high patronage of the International Olympic Committee and the indefatigable efforts of our Olympic Committee, will remain the unique centre of world sports where, notwithstanding the rapid developments, it will be taught that wisdom and knowledge do not constitute by themselves human virtue. Virtue means the perfection of the body, the high level of the mind, the nobleness and goodness of the soul.

With these thoughts I greet all those who will attend the 13th Session of the International Olympic Academy, the guests, lecturers and participants, from Greece and abroad and I firmly believe that at the end of a fruitful period of work in Olympia they will return to their countries with excellent impressions of the hard-working hospitable and peaceful country which is called HELLAS.

