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Psychosomatics East – West

Traditional Chinese Medicine is based on phenomenological experience. The ancient doctors were quite good in exploring man's lived symptoms. This becomes obvious when we look at the theory of five phases (five elements). The relation between emotions and organs as described in Chinese medicine is reflected in many Western languages. We might say, that psychosomatic thought is at the heart of Chinese medicine. It is wrong to say that Chinese thought does not know the difference between psyche and soma, but they are understood as deeply interrelated. There was no genuine word for psychosomatics in Chinese – it wasn't necessary – so this term had to be translated from the West. It is called 心身医学 (xin shen yi xue = heart body medicine).

A doctor of Chinese medicine is able to make a psychosomatic diagnosis based on the bodily symptoms of the sick person – because he asks for all symptoms the patient suffers from, and because the cluster of symptoms is specific for a certain emotional change: not one symptom is specific for a psychosomatic disorder, it is syndrome. Thus, from a Chinese point of view we should talk of **emotio-somatics**.

However, every medical tradition has its „blind spots“. Western medicine lacks the understanding of emotio-specific symptoms, Chinese medicine lacks psychotherapeutic approaches. Thus, our aim should be an integrative medicine, taking the best parts of different medical traditions and put them together, such way achieving a holistic medicine.

Corner stones of the seminar:

1. Understanding the interrelation between bodily symptoms and emotional changes
2. What is stress?
3. What is happening in the Limbic system?
4. Which methods can we use to treat psychosomatic disorders? acupuncture, psychotherapy, breathing methods like qigong, taijiquan. Relaxation or catharsis?
5. Special disorders: anxiety, depression, burnout, chronic fatigue, addiction