

Perspective of body-approach in psychotherapy, counselling and in daily life in China

(Activities in 2016: DCAP, Ulrich Sollmann and Chinese partners)

The activities in 2016 were characterized by three aspects:

- On the one hand we were busy in continuing and consolidating some projects: The two-years-training-course in Body Psychotherapy at Shanghai Mental Health Center, the cooperation with Shanghai happy-family-helper health-counseling Co. Ltd at Tongji-University, with Chunsheng Fu (PhD) of Zhong Ke Bo Ai (Beijing) Consultation Limited Company
 - ... and of course the Chinese colleagues of the DCAP
 - Finding new ways of communicating the body-perspective in China, also in relation to daily life
 - Creating new tools and projects to open new perspectives to the body-approach and to initiate relevant connections and practical steps
- In April and August we had the second and third workshop of the body-orientated training program which started in August 2015 and is organized and promoted by Qiu Jianyin MD & PhD. The topics were:
 - Body-language, (non-) verbal communication and body-diagnosis



- Emotional expression of the body and integration into personality, relationship and personal life (praxeology)



The size of the group was a bit more than 30 participants. Most of them had joined the first workshop in 2015. Besides the official topics(see above) we focused on the group process in a specific way in the second workshop in April. Each day there was a fishbowl-setting at the end of the workshop so that the group could reflect what happened in the group and how they lived the group process. The next morning I gave some feedback from my perspective on the last day and the fish-bowl. In the beginning the participants were clearly leader-orientated whereas on the third day they took over the lead by themselves. During the week there was a growing understanding of the group-process in the workshop and about some aspects of group-process in general.



In August besides following the official topic, we reflected intensively the importance and relevance of experience (Erlebnis und Erfahrung). This was quite new for the group and yet they were very engaged and quite eager to get to know and experience more about it. This helped us to crystallized out specific inner concepts of body-psychotherapy which helped to understand the practical work, *to understand how it works when it works*. Together we found out that there are three dimensions of experience regarded from the transcultural perspective:

- There is some guideline, specification or structure / hierarchy which induces the process of experience. This seems to be more familiar to Chinese. I call this “*post-experience-model*”.

- We in western countries in addition to the “post-experience-model” also have a “pre-experience-model”. This means that we are faced with the process of experience and come to some conclusion, to some assumptions, to some structure or something like this. This modality of experience seems to be not so familiar to Chinese.
- Finally there is, I call it the “in-situ-experience-model”, which means that you make the process of experience in the group to a subject of discussion or development. This offers the chance to have both modalities of experience in the group at the same time and to explore together with the group how this is handled by the group. This is more or less an inductive procedure. This also refers to the aspect of working with ambivalence / ambiguity.

Next spring we'll have the last workshop.

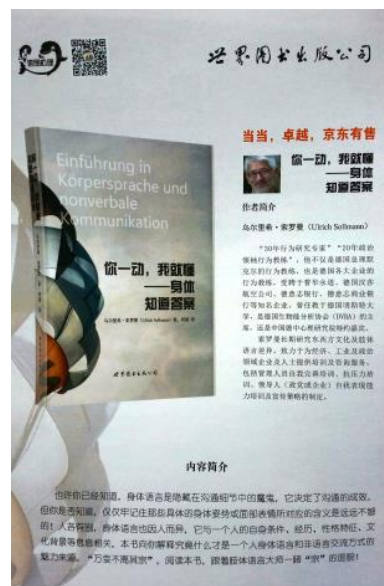
In winter we will discuss how to go on when the first training course has finished. Dr. Qiu and Dr. Pan think about establishing some kind of body-psychotherapy institute at the SMHC. They also think that it would be interesting to publish my book on Bioenergetics in China also. This book will be (re-)published in German in the beginning of 2017 in a revised edition. I added a new chapter on mindfulness and Buddhism.

- The colleagues at Tongji-University (Shanghai happy-family-helper health-counseling Co. Ltd.) communicate the body-perspective practically and thoroughly in a different way than the SMHC. Liu Cuilian is convinced that a more practical approach could be helpful for professionals. So we had a two-days-workshop on body-language, nonverbal communication and diagnostics in April and a three-days-workshop on sexuality, relationship and personal growth in August.



There were more than 30 participants in each workshop. I really was astonished about the resonance and reaction in the workshop on sexuality. When I was asked to offer this workshop with this topic, I was very unsecure how to refer to sexuality in an open workshop in China. So I picked this as a challenge and a chance, asked Chinese colleagues for support and finally was really astonished how personal, professional and intimate the group process was. This experience encourages me to offer more of topic-specific workshops and of course offer workshops on sexuality.

- As my book “Introduction in body-language and nonverbal communication” is now published in China in Chinese I was asked by New Health to do a two-days-workshop on this issue in April in Beijing. The participants were professionals. Interesting for me was to see how new this perspective is for the Chinese colleagues. Of course there are many general aspects and concepts referring to body-language which are quite familiar, culturally seen, by Chinese. And yet, I was very curious to get to know more of the cultural differences in nonverbal expression and communication. I was also curious to see how the participants tried to integrate this perspective into their understanding of practical work. Some participants asked me i.e. how to integrate the body approach into the work with homeless children and shared their experience later. This gives an impression of how the transfer can work.



- In April 2016 I met the historians of the central committee of the Communist Party of China again, which I've already met in Berlin in September 2015. They invited me to continue the dialogue under the topic of social memory and working through history in Germany. Of course I was glad that we could establish our contact and of course I was glad that they invited me by themselves. To have a dialogue with politicians or representatives of the political system is a very precious and of course important

endeavor. On the one hand it is very necessary to build up the net of communication and of course one has to be very careful by handling one's own comment on political questions, affairs and topics. The political situation becomes more complicated for about a year already. I think it's important to find ways how to follow the (political) dialogue so that the gentle relationship isn't in danger.



When I met the historians I was astonished about the issue which they wanted to discuss and about the fact that they were convinced how important it is to address the public emotionally also. I hope that we can follow this dialogue next year.

- Contact and communication between the Social Democratic Party (those who are responsible for the official political dialogue), the head of Friedrich – Ebert-Stiftung in Beijing is very important. So we are in a good continuing contact especially on the issue of how to relate and to refer to the political system in more or less critical times. I see my part in this communication like this:
 - To join and follow the bilateral communication between the delegates of China and Germany, to mirror my impression and develop relevant questions on the current communication as well as communication strategy
 - Of course this is a transcultural process. Transcultural is different to multi-cultural and intercultural. To bring it in a metaphor one could say that intercultural means learning the vocabulary of the different cultural languages, that multi-cultural means to learn the grammar of the different cultural languages whereas transcultural approach is the competence to speak and to communicate in the two languages so that comprehension on both sides is possible. This transcultural approach is, as I think, a very important perspective in practical relating and communicating with China. It could be an interesting for us and the DCAP to be engaged in this.

3 Approaches for Working with Cultures*

Perspectives	Intercultural	Multicultural	Transcultural
Culture appears as...	Challenge for intercultural learning	Part-system, interference in the expectations	Undetected prerequisites for interaction and identity
Culture concept	Essentialist: Countries, nation states	Systemic: Game rules, patterns	Cohesive: Differences and diversity
Methods	Teaching, advising, training ▶ Apply and adapt	Use of models for the reflection and detection of values ▶ Reflect and test	Deconstruction of all preconceptions, images of normality and power asymmetries ▶ Consider cultural and diversity factors on all levels of activity
Intercultural competence encompasses	Knowledge and techniques	Ability to reflect and flexibility	Competences and personality development
Advantages	Recognition of cultural factors	Multiple perspectives	Essentially difference and equality oriented
Role and particular competences of the expert	Promotes intercultural competence as cultural expert; trains and recommends	Broadens perspectives, choices and options for actions, provokes and intervenes	Assesses collaboratively which identity factors and boundaries are relevant
Challenges	Overestimation of cultural factors	Lack of (inter) cultural expertise	Limited reach of individual influence

*Source: Nazarkiewicz/Krämer (2012): Handbuch Interkulturelles Coaching, V&R.

- I'm glad about the continuing process of the running programs which are organized by the University of Freiburg (Prof. Wirsching/Prof. Fritzsche). On the one hand we finished the conceptualizing of manualising of the research-projekt ("Group psychotherapy for patients with SSD symptoms in China"). If I remember well, concept and manual are in the process of translation so that the official application of approval can be filed.

Meanwhile there are quite a lot of workshops being run in China already to make the Chinese doctors familiar with this concept. Kurt Fritzsche and I had one workshop at the Xi'an conference. Kurt Fritzsche will tell you more about the psychosomatic projects.

- There were some lectures like one at the Beijing Normal University on body-language and nonverbal communication, another at the 20th anniversary of the DCAP conference in Xian in July and a workshop "Introduction to body-psychotherapy" (meanwhile online in the internet available)



In August I was invited by the National Association of Mental Health to give a lecture on body-language and nonverbal communication at the annual conference. There I was also invited for a panel discussion on the “Integration of Psychotherapy in China, national and international views”. This was very interesting insofar as there were a colleague from Mainland-China, Hong Kong, Italy, Australia and me from Germany. On the one hand it was really interesting that all of us though we didn’t communicate before the conference referred the necessity of integration of principals and values of the humanistic psychology approach. If I remember well it seemed to be clear that integration can’t be seen as a trial to put tools, concepts and instruments of different therapy-schools in order to find “the best way” how to work. If I remember well, integration was discussed as: what is written about and presented in training-programs also has to be integrated by the experience of the professional. The better one is aware of his own experience and personal growth which is connected with the training in one or two therapy concepts the better one can understand and live what integration could be for him and/or his practical work.

- In the beginning of 2016 Chunsheng Fu, PhD, of Zhong Ke Bo Ai (Beijing) Consultation Limited Company added nine videos to their online-platform. I was asked to demonstrate practically in these videos how to work with body-language and the patterns. We produced these nine videos on body-language and the patterns of behavior of six Chinese celebrities just like Ma Jun from Alibaba and

three politicians like Obama, Merkel and Putin. We also produced three videos about general aspects of body language and nonverbal communication. All videos are in English with Chinese subtitles.

Chunsheng Fu, PhD, also invited me for a three-days-workshop with the focus: “The application of body-language in personal growth and professional relationship”. The 35 participants of the group were professionals. Some of them had already visited some of my workshops, some of them were told by friends and colleagues to join a body-workshop. This shows that colleagues talk about their experience related to the body-approach and think that it is helpful and necessary to be experienced in this way. In addition I was glad that we could work on the application of this approach. They made a professional video of this workshop and I guess that this video will be online available somehow in November 2016. Others asked me about the transfer to their practical work and later shared their experiences. This is quite helpful as a kind of indirect feedback about that the body approach corresponds practically to the work of at least some of the participants.

- I also worked with some managers in China and Chinese managers in Germany. The main focus is the transcultural understanding of communication and practical and strategic support. Two aspects were especially interesting: The relevance and importance of transcultural approach (in contrast to multicultural and intercultural) and the big difference of the images about China in Germany (mostly produced by media) and the experience and therefore established pictures of Germans in China.
- In cooperation with Li Wentian from Wuhan we published articles together. In the beginning of 2016 I was invited to become member of the editorial board of CAET (Creative Arts in Education and Therapy – eastern and western perspectives). CAET is an international journal for artist, educators and therapists. Now and then I write about my experiences in China in my column at the Focus-online (<http://www.focus.de/wissen/experten/sollmann/>)
- Two companies who offer trainings in psychology and psychotherapy (Zhong Ke Bo Ai and HRI) want to start online training-programs in 2017. They want to respond to the fact that professionals live all over China. Therefore it's very difficult for the professionals to meet for a weekend at one specific place. The two companies therefore start to conceptualize specific important and relevant issues and concepts

of psychology and psychotherapy. I was invited to join and we will see how it works. My part will be to develop a bunch of lectures, to offer a forum for questions and answers and to support peer-supervision in whatever way this can be developed. Then we'll produce the videos and establish some platform for questions and answers as well as for decentralized peer-supervision.

- “On the bridge of death and life”

Every day, Chen Si rides his scooter around on a bridge over the Yangtze River trying to stop potential suicides. During the past 10 years, he has saved more than 200 desperate people, many of whom come from rural areas. Some of them talk with rare candor about the problems they thought they could no longer face. It's striking that so many of them feel driven to distraction by abuses of power on the part of an employer or the government, making the immense pressure caused by unfettered economic expansion in China frighteningly palpable. As the camera follows him in his daily activities, Chen Si shares what he has learned about life and death; at least, when he's not busy pulling someone – at times quite forcefully – back from the edge. At the same time, the film paints an intimate portrait of this volunteer. Because of his own turbulent life, he takes the victims' stories so to heart that he can only lighten his mood with drink. Who will save Chen Si?

This is a very impressive film about the soul and psyche of Chinese people. It will have its premiere in Amsterdam at the end of November. I was asked for consulting the director about the main topic and the way how to portrait the four desperate people, their lives and psychic state of being.

I thank all of you whom I met and could spend such an interesting and inspiring time together and hope to meet you again in 2017. If you in advance have questions please let me know.

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