

The Development of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis in China

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ABSTRACT

The history of psychoanalysis in China started already in 1912, followed by a great interest from Chinese intellectuals in the 20s and 30s. Since 1983 psychoanalysts from different Western countries, especially Germany and Norway, teach psychodynamic psychotherapy at Chinese psychiatric institutions. Meanwhile the IPA offers full psychoanalytic training in Beijing and in Shanghai. Copyright © 2011 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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HISTORY

Interest in psychoanalysis and in practicing psychodynamic and psychoanalytic therapy has in China both an older and a more recent history.

The older history began in 1912 when Qian Zhixiu wrote about Freudian psychoanalysis. In the years that followed, there were several articles on the relevance of psychoanalytic theory both as a clinical discipline and in diverse fields such as political, literary, and philosophical studies. In 1929 the first work of Freud was translated – *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). Several of Freud's central works followed, including *An Autobiographical Study* (1925).

From 1935 to 1939 Dr Bingham Dai, a psychiatrist of Chinese origin trained in psychoanalytic psychotherapy by Harry Stack Sullivan in New York and Leon Saul in Chicago, worked at Peking Union Medical College. He passed on his experiences through teaching, supervision, and training-therapies to his colleagues (Gerlach, 2003). Adolf Joseph Storfer, a psychoanalyst and Jewish refugee from Vienna, came later to Shanghai where he published articles on psychoanalysis that proved to be influential both for Chinese psychiatrists and for intellectuals (Plänkers, 2010). Between 1920 and 1949 many philosophers, psychologists, and literary critics translated and interpreted Freud and other psychoanalysts'

works, and Freudian issues were drawn upon by a number of famous Chinese writers. For instance, the Chinese psychologist Gao Juefu translated Freud's "Introduction to Psychoanalysis," and wrote critical reports about the new science (Gerlach, 2003). An interest in the relevance of psychoanalysis for Chinese politics was similar to developments in many European countries in the 1930s. In 1936 the book *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* by Wilhelm Reich was published under the Chinese title *Jingshen fen xi xue pipan*, and in 1940 *Freud and Marx* by R. Osborn was published under the Chinese title *Jingshen fen xixue yu ma kesi zhuyi* (Gerlach, 2003).

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, central political directives determined the further development of the sciences and of intellectual life. Only after the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the start of the policy of opening to the West could public interest in psychoanalysis again be observed. Psychoanalysis was then given considerable attention in the cultural life of China, and the works of Freud and other psychoanalysts were printed again, and new translations were even published.

TRAINING PROGRAMS IN CHINA

The recent history started in 1983 when German analysts were invited to give lectures and seminars in Canton (Guangzhou) and participated in psychiatric research on an epidemic of mass hysteria on Hainan Island.

From 1997–1999, a group of German analysts from the German-Chinese Academy for Psychotherapy offered ongoing or continuous training in psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy for Chinese psychiatrists and psychologists. They worked in Kunming, Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, and Chengdu. From 2000, under the leadership of Dr Alf Gerlach, they have established similar training in Shanghai in cooperation with the Shanghai Mental Health Center. This group offers intensive training programs of three years duration that have attracted leading psychiatrists and psychologists in China under the auspices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German-Chinese Academy for Psychotherapy, and German psychoanalytic groups, including the DPV (German Psychoanalytical Association), DPG (German Psychoanalytical Society), and DGPT (German Society for Psychoanalysis, Psychotherapy, Psychosomatics and Depth-psychology). The extensive programs range from basic to advanced psychodynamic psychotherapy training. In the last training program, 2008–2010, 14 groups of participants were trained, altogether 144 psychiatrists and psychologists in the basic program, and 80 in the advanced program. The curriculum consists of theoretical lectures, case supervision, and short individual "self-experience" (brief psychotherapy) for the beginners, as well as group psychoanalysis for the advanced participants. As a result of this teaching process, a basic textbook on psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy will be published in English and Mandarin in 2011.

From 1995, Dr Teresa Yuan, an Argentine psychoanalyst with a Chinese background, has actively taught psychoanalytic psychotherapy, offering seminars

for the Child Psychiatric Institute at Beijing Medical University, and, beginning in 2002, systematic training seminars in collaboration with Beijing's Anding Hospital under the leadership of Professor Yang Yunping (Yuan, 1995). The faculty included European psychoanalysts Bien Filet (Netherlands), Sverre Varvin (Norway), and Julia Fabricius (UK). Dr Yuan also conducted psychodynamic training seminars for the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong with the collaboration of Peter Loewenberg (USA) in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

In 2006, training programs in Beijing and Wuhan were arranged by the Norwegian Psychoanalytic Society under the leadership of Sverre Varvin, and financed by the Norwegian Government and Anding Hospital/Beijing government.

The basic idea in both the Norwegian program and the German program in Shanghai has been to educate future Chinese psychotherapy teachers, that is a "train-the-trainers" program. The Norwegian programs have had between 80 and 120 participants and are organized on two levels. An advanced group that benefitted from several years of experience in the earlier German programs in Shanghai, that learns both psychotherapy and supervision of psychotherapy. These participants provided supervisors for junior participants at subsequent seminars, and are now well-qualified teachers and supervisors in continuing programs as well as being important teachers in hospitals and university settings throughout China.

The three programs arranged by the Norwegian group are organized as follows:

- Intense weekly programs twice a year with Norwegian teachers (or in the earlier programs, with German teachers.) There are lectures, group supervision, and short intensive personal experiences called "self-experience," which give the participants a short psychotherapeutic experience.
- Each participant is required to conduct two psychotherapeutic treatments under regular supervision: One of at least 100 sessions, and one of at least 50 sessions. Supervisors have mostly been drawn from the Chinese therapists trained in our programs, but some supervision is provided from Europe over Skype.
- Each participant has to write a paper to graduate from the program.

The first program was completed in 2008. The majority completed the requirements and received a diploma certifying them through the China Mental Health Association. They are now seen as key persons in the continuing development of training in the Chinese mental health system. These three years of programs have, by and large, been a success. We have seen the importance of the continuity of the program when we were able to observe growth in understanding and psychotherapeutic competence beginning at the end of the second year.

Several Chinese trainees of these programs have also been invited to spend between three and 12 months for further training in psychoanalytic departments of universities and hospitals in Germany, or in research institutions like the Sigmund-Freud-Institute in Frankfurt. During these visits they also received a period of intensive personal psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

CAPA

Beginning in 2008, the China American Psychoanalytic Association (CAPA), under the leadership of Elise Snyder, began a new training initiative. CAPA has organized two-year programs with seminars, supervision, and psychotherapy or psychoanalysis. This is largely accomplished by Skype – which perhaps constitutes the main difference from the German and Norwegian programs since the CAPA programs can be conducted weekly instead of episodically. CAPA's programs have attracted considerable interest and have surely benefitted from previous work in China over the last 20 years, especially that undertaken by the German analysts.

PSYCHOANALYTIC TRAINING

Even though the German and the Norwegian programs are not organized by, nor have any formal connection with the IPA, there is no doubt that this work was crucial to the initiation of formal psychoanalytic training in China. Full psychoanalytic training started in Beijing in 2008. An important precondition for this was that Dr Irmgard Dettbarn, an IPA interim training analyst from Germany, began her work in China in 2007. There are now nine candidates in psychoanalytic training in Beijing – all recruited from the Norwegian and German programs. A similar psychoanalytic training will begin in 2011 in Shanghai, with Dr Hermann Schultz from Frankfurt as the interim training analyst.

PRESENT SITUATION

By now there are numerous activities related to psychoanalysis in China. In 2004 the Psychoanalytic Association of China was founded with 33 members in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Harbin, Hefei, Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuhan, and Xi'an. In 2008 the first formal connection with the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) was established with the formation of The IPA Allied Centre of China. There are currently several important centers of psychoanalytic work in China:

- Beijing, Anding Hospital (Prof Dr Yang Yunping, Director of the Department of Clinical Psychology).
- Shanghai, Shanghai Mental Health Centre (Prof Dr Dr Xiao Zeping, President of the SMHC until recently).
- Wuhan, Tongji Medical University (Prof Dr Shi Qijia, Head of Psychotherapy Department).

Psychoanalytic authors now translated into Chinese, among others, are Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, Joseph Sandler, Ralph Greenson and Anthony Bateman, and Jeremy Holmes. An ambitious project of translating Freud's collected works into Chinese is being led by Dr Tomas Plänkner from the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt. Psychoanalytic papers are published in different Chinese journals, e.g.

Chinese Psychotherapy in Dialogue, edited by Prof. Shi Qijia, or in *Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry* (Shanghai Jingshen Yixue).

THE ASIA CONFERENCE IN 2010 AND LATER DEVELOPMENT

In 2009 the second Annual Meeting for Psychoanalysis was held in Shanghai, with the participation of IPA-analysts from different regions. The theme of the conference was “Psychoanalysis in the Modernizing Society,” with lectures and workshops on clinical psychoanalysis, theoretical issues in psychoanalysis, clinical and empirical research, cross-cultural psychoanalysis as well as values and challenges for psychoanalysis in a society in the process of modernization.

In 2010 the IPA organized in Beijing its first Asia Psychoanalytic Conference, celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the IPA. The congress was held in cooperation with the Chinese Association for Mental Health and brought together psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic therapists from Asian Countries, Europe, North and South America, and Australia. The conference, with over 500 participants, proved to be a highly successful event. There were papers of high quality from Chinese colleagues and colleagues from other countries. Most importantly, the conference became an intercultural encounter where IPA had the opportunity to show its face in Asia and where people from the Asian part of the IPA family established contacts both between each other and with colleagues from the rest of the IPA world. It was, for example, significant that some reconciliation between Chinese and Japanese colleagues could be achieved in connection with Shigeyuki Mori's paper on Japanese war-children (Mori, 2010).

HOW TO DEVELOP PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS IN CHINA

The long-term strategy of the German programs since their beginning in the 1990s was to educate a core group of Chinese colleagues in basic psychodynamic psychotherapeutic principles. Basically it was a “teaching-the-teachers” program. This line was followed when the Norwegian program was implemented later. The aim was not only that professionals working in the mental health field should gain this competence, but also that they should be able to organize themselves and develop as teachers in order to train younger colleagues later on. This strategy was developed further in the Norwegian program where groups of senior colleagues who had had their basic training in the German program underwent training as supervisors. We then had participants at both basic and advanced levels as well as supervisors in the same program. The participants in the supervisory training could then, as part of their training, supervise younger colleagues at the same course. This was developed further when training courses started in Wuhan, where those who had been educated in the German programs and also in the beginning of the Norwegian programs functioned as teachers in parallel with the Norwegian teacher, giving lectures, and also performing short-term therapies during the

course. In this way, competence has been built on several levels with the explicit aim that Chinese colleagues will eventually be able to arrange their own training.

This development represented the background for the development of the IPA psychoanalytic training program. The candidates in this training program had all had thorough basic training in psychodynamic psychotherapy in the earlier German and the Norwegian programs. Several colleagues who had training in the German and Norwegian programs have subsequently chosen to follow the CAPA program, which has been successful in part because so much prior work had been done to promote psychodynamic psychotherapy in China.

CONCLUSION

IPA analysts have worked hard to develop psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in China over the last 27 years. They have been active in:

- (1) Training a significant number of psychiatrists and psychologists in psychoanalytically derived methods that have demonstrated clinical efficacy for several disorders. Many of these trainees are in leading positions in Chinese psychiatric hospitals, psychotherapeutic hospital departments, faculties for clinical psychology at universities and in health bureaus of the Chinese government.
- (2) Qualification of trainers, who can now teach psychoanalytical understanding and treatment methods to new generations of clinicians.
- (3) Perhaps most crucially, the psychoanalytic understanding of the therapist-patient relationship has proven to be of importance for any psychiatric treatment. We have been able to show our Chinese trainees, for example, that it has been demonstrated that the efficacy of giving medication is highly dependent on the quality of the doctor-patient relationship. Here, an understanding of transference and countertransference is indispensable for giving the medication in the right emotional atmosphere. The same holds true for other non-analytic treatments in psychiatry. Once our trainees are teaching in hospital and psychology departments, they can demonstrate that within other treatment paradigms, such as cognitive-behavioral methods, understanding of the importance of the unconscious interaction between therapist and patient (transference and countertransference) needs to be valued. Psychoanalysis and therapies based on psychoanalysis are thus both forms of treatment, and also a way of understanding the relationship between therapists and patients in all forms of treatment. In this context it is pertinent to ask for evidence about whether treatment works, how it works and what works for whom. Research in the Chinese context by Chinese researchers is therefore necessary. There is an increasing interest in research among psychoanalytically oriented Chinese colleagues. Psychoanalytically relevant research projects are already under way in which IPA colleagues are involved as supervisors in, for example, trauma research and research on therapeutic competence (Varvin, 2009).

- (4) Training of future psychoanalysts in China who will form psychoanalytic institutes and societies.

There have thus been considerable efforts during the last twenty-seven years by IPA analysts to establish psychoanalytic psychotherapy in China on several levels:

- To develop training and supervision in psychodynamic psychotherapy.
- To aid the establishment of professional organizations.
- To help integrate psychoanalytic therapies and understanding in the general care for the mentally ill.
- To help establish psychoanalytically relevant research.
- To establish psychoanalytic training with the aim of establishing psychoanalytic institutes for training in China.

China is now working on mental health reforms that will include training in psychotherapy as part of the training of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. This demonstrates the crucial relevance of the work of the training programs we have described. IPA analysts S. Varvin and A. Gerlach are consultants in this Chinese legal-administrative-educational process.

In sum, the three decades of psychodynamic teaching and clinical work by psychoanalysts has resulted in a good beginning: Psychoanalytic thought is becoming a sturdy part of the foundation of the rapidly evolving mental health system in China.

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