

SECOND MORNING SESSION: Integrative Medical Text Study—Small group practice of clinical problem solving skills

TIMES and DATES: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm, SUN 4.28 to FRI 5.3, 2019

COURSE LEADER: Adam Blanning, MD; the course takes place in groups of 7-10 with an MD/DO facilitator

CONCEPT: This course involves close reading and textual analysis of one chapter from the book, *Fundamentals of Therapy*, by I. Wegman MD and R. Steiner PhD, a classic text on integrative medical thinking written in 1924.* The aim of this course is to inform and guide participants' exploration of the foundations and causes of health, illness and treatment.

Through reading and discussion, the following issues are explored, mainly through guided group discussion and Q/A:

- Scientific medical epistemology (How do we acquire knowledge? How do we know what we know?), as it applies to an integrative medical model.
- Scientific methodology (What does research tell us? What kind of research approach gives us what kind of understanding?), especially as it applies to research on integrative medical therapies and practices.

The material which serves as our study focus requires us to consider these topics as examples on which to base the above considerations:

OBJECTIVES:

- Consider the potential for reductionist biases inherent in the format and reviewing procedure in medical literature typical of the modern scientific medical context. Examine in what way this text varies from typical medical literature, and in what way it is consistent.
- Explore the validity of qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
- Consider, at the hand of the text, what methodologies would be most appropriate to researching disease conditions given a model of the human being as body, psyche, and individual self.
- Assess in what way the text stimulates exploration of biological processes as opposed to fixed structures. Is this fundamentally different or in the same mode as a typical modern medical text? In what way(s)? Is our ability to observe, reason, and diagnose, altered, and if so, how?

* This course was created for the International Postgraduate Medical Training at its inception in 2002, by the Medical Section at the Goetheanum (Institute) in Dornach, Switzerland, and is taught to physicians in over 20 countries worldwide.

Description of daily course work from the International IPMT Guidelines (by Michaela Gloeckler, MD):

“The third session [in the IPMT daily schedule] following movement [eurythmy] and inner dialogue with nature by Goetheanistic observation [medicinal plant lab] is the schooling of thinking. For this purpose, we will use chapters from Fundamentals of Therapy. After a short introduction, the work takes place in the same small groups as for the Goetheanistic [medicinal plant lab] studies. Using this text, a path of schooling in thought is taken that has four stages:

- a) *Reading of the text, numbering the paragraphs, working through what has been said, in writing. Connections that remain incomprehensible or give rise to questions are written down for further dialogues if they cannot immediately be satisfactorily answered.*
- b) *“The train of thought will be followed from the first paragraph through to the last: How does one thought join with the next? Where does the train of thought apparently break off, in order to be taken up again at another place? Where do new thoughts start and—perhaps with apparently no connection—stand next to the first and second thoughts? What is the thread running through? Are we in a position to be able to reproduce the train of thought, developed by Steiner, ourselves? And what about the inner evidence of these thoughts?*
- c) *While the first and second steps have more to do with the way in which the content is brought as thought forms, in the third step the emphasis lies in comprehending the composition of the chapter as a whole: How are the beginning and end related to each other? In the course of the paragraphs, do various important points reveal themselves or does the whole move towards a climax which is all important? Does one thought develop out of another in a more sculptural style or is it a more inspirational style where one thought does not directly join onto the next, but rather is in a loose illuminating association, i.e., a complementing form? In this third step, which has to do with a deeper, artistic grasping of the way in which the inner and outer structure of the chapter is built up, the possibility arises of unlocking the text in a much more intimate way as a work of art, a composition. Through this it may then be possible to come to a further, deeper understanding of the content in the text and thought relationships.*
- d) *The highest stage of grasping in thought and understanding is the attempt to penetrate to its essential nature, which means „the being“ of what is written. Rudolf Steiner's spiritual-scientific research rests upon super-sensible experiences, which he was able to translate into clear concepts and thought connections. In that he could also put them into words, he was able to make them reproducible and comprehensible for present-day people. We want to take the reverse path: Going*

from the written text, to the effectiveness of the thought; from there to the artistic revelation and, in the end, to the being of what is recognized and said."