

W. Stör

Gerhard-Bachmann-Award for Dr. Walburg Marić-Oehler

Dr. Gerhard Bachmann

was an outstanding doctor. Yes, we know that in 1951, he founded the DAEGfA as the first German Acupuncture Association and one of the first worldwide acupuncture associations outside of China. Enough already, I reply. But that's not even the most important thing about him: Gerhard Bachmann was a visionary! During a post-war period, which primarily focused on material well being, he realized how much the medical field was suffering due to its sole focus on the human body and its functions in addition to a general paradigm shift towards science. For him, acupuncture was always much more than needling. He saw, he felt, and he experienced in his daily work that acupuncture creates a deep connection from the body to the soul and to the spirit. As he famously wrote:

“Acupuncture and its basic concepts will participate in a restructuring of our view of health and disease...Future developments in medicine will prove the value of acupuncture...The synthetic approach shows how a holistic medicine should look like, which comprises both the somatic and psychological fields to finally reach a breakthrough in the field of mind.” Clearly, one cannot, even after 60 years, more fully express the goals of a humane medicine, centered on the well-being of the patient!

In his honor, the DAEGfA has named its honorary prize to recognize outstanding personalities from the field of acupuncture.

Dr. Walburg Marić-Oehler

is such an outstanding doctor. She also has, like Gerhard Bachmann, led and shaped the German Medical Acupuncture Association /DAEGfA for almost two decades. Her daily business routine was also just a means for a higher purpose. Early on she recognized and emphasized the importance of acupuncture as a medium of intercultural exchange. Already at this early time she promoted for many years the difficult search for common scientific foundations of scientific medicine and traditional healing practices during the 'Bad Homburg talks'.

For approximately the past ten years, efforts have been made to promulgate "Integrative Medicine". Walburg Marić-Oehler acted in this regard already 20 years ago: with 10 Symposia based on 'Acupuncture and University' in Mainz. She initiated this integration with a wide range of experts and with the involvement of Chinese universities. But I do not want to preempt further: Please read the laudatio by Jochen Gleditsch, and you will be amazed by all of Dr. Marić-Oehler achievements and successes.

(...)

Please join us on May 29, 2014 in Bad Nauheim to honor and celebrate a great personality and friend.

Best regards Wolfram Stör

On May 29, 2014 the Gerhard-Bachmann Prize, awarded by the German Medical Association of Acupuncture DAEGfA, will be presented to Dr. med. Walburg Marić-Oehler, MD. The award ceremony will take place at 12 noon. Below we have printed an extract from the presentation speech. The principal speaker is Prof. Dr. Dr. R. Urban, former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and currently Delegate for International Affairs at the University of Mainz.

J. Gleditsch

Presentation speech in honour of Walburg Marić-Oehler

There have been many occasions on which we could have held a laudatio for our honorary president Walburg Marić-Oehler - a speech in honour of her outstanding services over the past decades. And yet, since it is not the custom to mark special birthdays in the case of women - in contrast to men - this intention has unfortunately been postponed for far too long. This only makes us all the more certain that the great majority of the 15,000 recipients of this booklet, dedicated to her by the DZA, the German acupuncture magazine, will join in the thanks and tributes offered here. First of all let me

emphasise that a laudatio is always an interim report, in the knowledge and the hope that the honoured person will continue to work for the well-being of all mankind for many years to come.

If we begin with a general retrospective of Walburg's life and career, we come across her long-held childhood desire to become ambassador in China. This ambitious goal was to some extent an expression of the transcultural openness and ties that had been maintained in her family for generations, but probably also influenced by the circumstances of her home life in Saxony – by the claustrophobic atmosphere of East Germany. As professor of German studies, Walburg's father had published a German language textbook which was also distributed in Asia. There was certainly plenty of impetus, therefore, for Walburg to take up a course in Sinology and Mongolian studies. However, her social and open-minded nature seemed to find little fulfilment in dull linguistics and she soon decided to take another course – in medicine. From the very beginning Walburg was interested in the deeper connections and became involved in anthropological psychiatry as taught by Kuhlenkampff at the time, and later in the interdisciplinary neurotherapy study group run by Dieter Gross in Frankfurt. Her interest has consequently always extended far beyond the standard curriculum of medical studies and further training. But it never remained a mere interest: Walburg went deeper and deeper into the material and became actively involved. For example, when she encountered Nosrat Peseschkian's transcultural psychotherapy and extended it by introducing an Oriental aspect. For a short period she was even Vice-President of the Association. As we see, the young doctor already had three main focal areas in her life at a very early stage. A leaning towards the culture and medicine of Asia, an interest and involvement in unconventional methods (interdisciplinary pain therapy) and a commitment to a more all-embracing and spiritually-oriented psychology.

With such a background, she was more or less destined to find her way to acupuncture and TCM. Walburg had already been on study trips to Japan and China in the 1970s. She received her first training under Bischko in Vienna, at the time considered the pioneer of European acupuncture. Walburg joined the DAEGfA (German Medical Association of Acupuncture) where her expertise and talent were quickly recognised: She became a tutor and lecturer and was able to put her inherited teaching skills to excellent use. When elections were held in 1991, Walburg spontaneously stood as candidate for the position of President. The trust placed in her by the DAEGfA has definitely paid off, as we can see after 20 years. It was a fortunate coincidence to have someone at the helm of the DAEGfA for so many years who led the association with such skill, dedication and commitment - and feminine charm on top – , who represented and strengthened its image in Germany and abroad and who helped to firmly establish acupuncture in medicine. Under her presidency membership of the DAEGfA rose to over 10,000.

Walburg Maric´-Oehler was responsible for the destiny of the association for even longer than its founder Gerhard Bachmann – from 1991 to 2010. Not only did she contribute her experience and ties to the Asian medical traditions of China, Tibet and Japan, but also her commitment to new forms of acupuncture such as Yamamoto's New Scalp Acupuncture. She accompanied the master during his first years of teaching in Europe and systematised his methods - which is how she came to be co-author of Yamamoto's first German textbook.

The eleven "Acupuncture and University" symposia at the Medical Faculty in Mainz, initiated and organised by Walburg since 1996, count among the most prestigious of DAEGfA's events. They were made possible through the lectureship awarded to Walburg Maric´-Oehler and Klaus Hüntgen and thanks to the open-mindedness and friendship of Professor Wanitschke, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Mainz. Since 1987 Walburg had attended several courses at Fujian University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Fuzhou, and formed close ties to this Chinese university and to the Dean, Professor Du, who enriched the Mainz Symposia with many valuable contributions. The cooperation with this university in Fuzhou proved very fruitful, especially as Fujian was the Chinese university commissioned to integrate Eastern and Western medicine. Fujian University paid tribute to Walburg's dedication by making her an honorary professor in 1998. The papers held at the Mainz Symposia were published by Hippokrates-Verlag in a multi-volume series entitled "Acupuncture in Hospitals and Practice".

Further highlights of the 1990s included the brainstorming sessions which Walburg organised in an exclusive atmosphere in Bad Homburg with high-profile guests. Well-known physicists, medical

doctors, philosophers and theologians participated and it is a pity that hardly any of the results of these sessions penetrated through to the wider public.

The joint Anniversary and ICMART Congress in Berlin in 2001, organised by the DAEGfA - or to be more precise by Walburg Maric´-Oehler - in conjunction with DGfAN, enjoyed all the greater recognition: It marked the 50th anniversary of DAEGfA and the 30th anniversary of DGfAN. Berlin offered an ideal venue for the meeting of the many ICMART member associations from Eastern and Western Europe and consolidated the traditional friendship with DGfAN, established when the Wall was still standing at meetings in Prague, Brno, Bratislava and Budapest.

In view of her interest in psychology, which dates back to her university years, Walburg Maric´-Oehler played an important role in translating the psychic aspects of the Five Phases theory handed down by TCM into terms comprehensible to Western minds and continued to pursue it further on the basis of soma-psyche analogies and even somatopsychology.

Walburg's involvement in Tibetan medicine also led to some very insightful symposia and helped make this branch of medicine a firmly established part of DAEGfA training. If we count all the journeys undertaken by Walburg in order to attend to her national and international obligations and invitations – including China, Japan, Korea, Australia, South America, USA as well as most European countries – then the entire extent of her work and involvement becomes clear. The enormous impact that this permanent commitment to the community has on one's own work and consequently one's livelihood is given far too little attention and appreciation. Walburg had to conduct a great number of key negotiations in Germany simultaneously: with medical councils, health insurance funds and other natural medicine associations. Even more important were the negotiations and activities in the new European organisations such as ECPM and CAMDOC Alliance. Walburg Maric´-Oehler held key positions in all these associations from the very beginning - as a committee member or as a representative of DAEGfA, being the largest member association. I would like to mention at this point how frustrating and long-winded the negotiations often were, sometimes with partial successes and then again continual setbacks. Work of this nature really does require a lot of staying power: And this is where we come across other gifts that "our Walburg" possesses in abundance: clarity, sense of purpose, confidence - and patience.

Walburg was appointed Vice-President of ICMART in 1996 and from 2000 to 2002 she was President. After handing over the chair of DAEGfA and being appointed Honorary President, she almost immediately took on a new managerial task – namely that of ICMART General Secretary, formerly held by François Beyens since ICMART's foundation in 1983. Whereas the ICMART President is newly elected every two years so that there can be no long-term influence, the shaping and organisation of this global network of doctors practising acupuncture rests mainly with the General Secretary. There is probably no other medical acupuncturist in the entire world who is as well known as Walburg, who now holds together over 90 acupuncture associations from all over the world under the umbrella of ICAMART.

If I have not been able to mention all of the many outstanding contributions made by Walburg Maric´-Oehler, then this should make us all realise just how much we have to thank her for and what great honour and respect she deserves. Alongside the usual call "ad multos annos", I would like to wish her very good Qi and stable health – and hopefully many more years of beneficial work.