20 years experience of teaching Ayurveda in Europe

What have we learned from all this?

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The initial situation

Initial sources of information about Ayurveda

• Through tourism in India and Srilanka
• Yoga centers offering some short introductions
• Maharshi-Ayurveda with TM
• Visitors from India
• Pop-books in market
The initial situation

Prevalent misconceptions

- Nadi: mystification of Pulse-diagnosis
- Pancakarma: misunderstood as massage
- Diet: Every Indian item is Ayurvedic
- Constitution as only important matter
- Food rules: mixing up of modern theories
- Total refusal of conventional medicine
- Ayurveda as a Religion?
- Faith based only
- Over-simplification of fundamentals
The initial situation

Difficulties experienced by teachers-

• Language
• Socio-Cultural difference
• Difference in education systems
• Expectations
• Original texts
• Unauthentic literature- creating misconceptions
• Unavailability of treatment material
• Legal situation

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The initial situation

Difficulties before the students

- Socio-cultural differences
- Educational background
- Misconceptions created by faulty literatures and teachings from incompetent teachers
- Difficulties in application of Ayurvedic teachings arising due to geographical & climatic differences

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Difficulties before the students-
• difficulties in application of Ayurvedic teachings arising due to geographical & climatic differences
• uncertainty about application of Ayurvedic teachings
• insufficient time.
• high costs of training program

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Needs and solutions

Uniform curricula based on needs and circumstances
• after sincere discussions with - responsible major institutions - eminent scholars, - experienced teachers
• basic information about Indian cultural and philosophical background
• avoiding controversial aspects
• emphasizing on practical aspects
• different curricula according to different needs

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Selection and training of good teachers:
• knowledge of Ayurveda (more practically)
• capacity to explain questions from the students
• working knowledge of German language with good English
• experience of climate, life style, beliefs and social setup in the land
• knowledge about existing medical setup
Needs and solutions

Selection and training of good teachers-
• knowledge about the legal aspects concerning Ayurvedic practice
• knowledge about availability of treatment materials
• knowledge about availability of food articles
• Indian institutions may organize training programs for the fulfillment of these needs
Model Example

European Academy of Ayurveda
per year:
• short-term seminars: students 1,400
• long-term courses : students 450
  -currently matriculated
  in MSc (Ayurveda): 120

Total—during 20 years:
• long-term trainings 2 to 4 yrs: 4,500
• Trainings medical professionals: 700
• PG trainings for medical doctors: 250

(source: the European Academy of Ayurveda, Birstein 2014)
Needs and solutions

Publications

- well explained translations of Ancient texts by a team of experts after sincere discussions proper explanations of technical words
- authentic books on specific subjects by teams of multiple authors (should include at least one scholar from European countries)
Needs and solutions

• Refresher and re-orientation programs- annual or biannual programs to exchange the information and to execute the plans after feedback from various sources e.g. institutions, teachers and students

• Recognition of competent institutes

• Profound research at the level of universities under Ayurveda Chair
Conclusion

“Today, Ayurveda is standing on a crossroad, where - if lead rightly - it will firmly establish itself as a scientific system, but - falling in the wrong hands - it might totally vanish as a short lived medical fashion.”

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