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East vs West - Comparing the Latitudes of Healing Approach

Dr. Vijeta Gautam (Asst. Prof.) Department of English
Km. Mayawati Govt. Girls Postgraduate College
Badalpur, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.

Abstract

The Eastern culture puts more emphasis on looking at an issue holistically while people from the Western culture tend to analyze different objects independently. This point could be clearly seen from the practices of the Eastern and Western medicine. The development of medicine in Western nations follows the way of hypothetical deduction and the Eastern approach uses the inductive method. The Western approach clearly divides the health from the disease, yet the Eastern approach considers health as a balanced state versus disease as an unbalanced state. The Western approach tends to change the environment and the Eastern way is to prefer to adapt to the environment. The same terminology may apply to entirely different facts, the teaching and learning methods are quite different, and the evaluation of the treatment is almost not comparable. The Eastern medicine puts emphasis on "adjusting," "supplementing", and "resting upon" the body of the patient while the Western medicine talks about "treating" the body. Both Western and Eastern systems have their place. Some believe that the greatest strength of Western Medicine is in its trauma care and therapies for acute problems, while Eastern medicine excels in the areas of chronic problems and preventive medicine. **Keywords:** Eastern, Western, Medicine, Mechanical, Holistic.

The difference between Western and Eastern medicine is very much reflective of the difference in philosophies of the two cultures. In the West, we rush and conquer, and this is as true of our medical model as any other facet of our lives. Our relationship to disease process is adversarial. Frequently we do not take more than minimal care of ourselves until medical disaster has overtaken us. In the East, the pace is slower. There is still time for, and celebration of, nature. Flowing with the energy of the moment is a high value in the East, and that moment provides the key to healing. The medical models are worlds apart. But they do share one process in common: diagnosis and treatment begin with observation of the patient.

In the West, however, that observation is increasingly mechanical. Temperature, pulse, respiration, blood chemistry, and digestive processes can all be sampled mechanically. All these tests in their varying technological complexities are designed to clarify the workings inside the ailing body. That body's environment, including how the patient is nourished physically, but spiritually and emotionally as well is rarely considered. It is seen as having little bearing on the problem at hand. The body's systems are seen as a complicated machine, susceptible to mechanical and chemical intervention.

In the East, a far gentler and more holistic process is used. The problem is observed - in the East as well as the West, what the patient is able to tell the physician may not be the entire story - and the patient's flow of energy, is assessed. The symptoms are viewed as caused by imbalance in this energy flow, and correcting that imbalance seen as the route to resolving the issue. The solution is as apt to lie outside the body as in. It may be a problem of