

## Professor of Chinese medicine in Portland takes emotions and spirit into account

Confucian doctors teach the body is synced with the seasons

Hannah Doyle | Freelance reporter

Published: Wednesday, November 10, 2010

Updated: Wednesday, November 10, 2010 01:11

Fall is the time of year when the bug travels around. Those who have it are trying to get rid of it, and those who don't have it are fighting for their lives to stay healthy. Is it more than just a bug that's traveling around? Is it just the physical symptoms that are keeping everyone sick and tissue-stricken? A professional in Chinese medicine says otherwise.

Heiner Fruehauf, a professor from the National College of Natural Medicine in Portland, explained the premise of Chinese medicine in a presentation on classical Chinese medicine Tuesday night. He said emotion is directly related to the physical condition and that the Chinese believed there are two elements to the human being: physical and spiritual.

Fruehauf argued that modern science has neglected the invisible realm of human beings when diagnosing problems.

"Every symptom is a sign that points toward the invisible," Fruehauf said. "The material world points back to the energy and thoughts that created it."

He argued that if doctors today would pay attention to the emotional and spiritual side of our beings, they could properly treat and diagnose patients. He came to this belief and conclusion through his own experience.

Fresh out of college at the age of 27, Fruehauf went to the doctor because he knew something was wrong with him. After various tests and MRI scans, his doctors couldn't find anything wrong.

Shortly after, he was diagnosed with testicular cancer. He survived, but he said he knew there was something wrong with him far before the appearance of his physical symptoms.

Determined to find an explanation, he soon became interested in the philosophy and cosmology of Chinese medicine.

Because of this intense interest, Fruehauf declined a position as a Chinese literature professor at Harvard University and chose to pursue Chinese medicine and its clinical applications. Fruehauf said that he daily expresses thanks for his cancer because it led him to his passion. He continued to pursue his study and eventually founded the School of Classical Chinese Medicine at NCNM.

Fruehauf describes the practices of Chinese medicine as simple as maintaining things in nature.

"If you want to take care of the tree, you must take care of the roots of the tree," Fruehauf said, explaining that the roots of our physical being is our spirit.

Fruehauf described the practices of Confucian doctors. Their practices teach that the body is synced with the seasons of the year, and because the body is in tune with nature, symbols are used for each season. Wood correlates with spring, fire with summer, metal with fall, and water with winter. Each symbol accounts for certain parts of the body, Fruehauf said. He laid out the mechanics for these symbols, such as metal representing the lungs.

He also said that in Chinese medicine, particular energies induce sickness in each area. For metal, judgment is the negative energy that induces sickness in the functions of the lung. Fruehauf said Confucian doctors treated this particular problem with the use of storytelling to help rid patients of their sickness.

In the example of a respiratory infection, the doctors would question the patient what was going on in their lives and inquire if there was a sense of judgment. For the remedy, the doctors would then tell stories and advise the patients to get rid of their judgment.

Fruehauf explained that organs are not merely physical organs but part of a person's spirit and nature, and he argued that if people treat their bodies only physically, they amount themselves to no more than animals.

"When we live the life of an animal, we are not filling the mandate of being a human," Fruehauf said.