

OPINION COLUMN

Merger aims to simplify TCM practice to public

Melissa Carr, 24 hours

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(FILE PHOTO)

British Columbia's two most influential associations for traditional Chinese medicine — the Traditional Chinese Medicine Association of British Columbia and the Qualified Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine Association — will merge this Saturday to form the Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture. Say that three times fast!

This event will take place at the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Classical Chinese Garden, which was opened in 1986 based on a "principle of collaborative design." Appropriately, the goal of the merged associations is to work collaboratively with acupuncturists and TCM practitioners, the public, regulators and the government to highlight the effective and safe practices of TCM to British Columbians.

While the Chinatown garden is designed to "emulate the rhythms of nature," TCM uses the analogy of tending to a garden when caring for the body.

Western medicine, in contrast, often views the body as a machine with parts that must be fixed or replaced. Even the wording can be mechanistic — the brain is a computer, the heart is a pump, and the nervous system is a telephone network. TCM practice requires searching out causes for symptoms, diseases and imbalances in the body and then working to return to a state of equilibrium through natural remedies.

1 of 1 The mandate of the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Classical Chinese Garden is "to maintain and enhance the bridge of understanding between Chinese and Western cultures." While TCM is a medical system from China that is several thousand years old, it has grown substantially in the Western world. One objective of the ATCMA will be to help advance communication and understanding of this

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A challenge continually faced by many in this profession is how to take a deep-and- complex system of principles and philosophies based on ages of observation and study and make it comprehensible for patients.

After four years of study in university science, my whole first year of TCM study was spent just trying to re-create a foundation for incorporating the practice into my understanding of how the body and mind works.

The ATCMA is hoping to simplify that by providing ways that the public can understand the benefits of TCM.

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