

A Holli-Balanced approach to healthy living

Michael Brown

WEST ROXBURY — It took the duration of a doctorate program in Western medicine at Brown University for Yi Song to realize that something was missing in her life.

"I wanted to look at the big picture as much as I could," Song said. "I realized that you cannot recognize every aspect of Western medicine."



From that realization, emerged Hollibalance, a holistic wellness center in West Roxbury that is owned and operated by Song.

For years, Song believed that an education in Western medicine would provide her with the skills and knowledge to cure the sick and promote healthy living. Over time, however, she began to gravitate back to the tenets of Eastern medicine. Combining aspects of both, Song's unique expertise has allowed her business to flourish.

"I always wanted to relieve pain and help people who were suffering from disease," Song said. "That is why I choose to go into medicine. I wanted to solve the most fundamental problems. I found the research (in Western medicine) to be too narrow. The focus would be on one molecule or one damaged cell, it wasn't applicable to the whole."

Song has been offering her services ranging from facial rejuvenation to acupuncture, Tai Chi and herbal remedies-for nearly a year-and-a half in West Roxbury. She said she has enjoyed the location as her clients have been open-minded to the various treatments, which usually garner a high degree of doubt in Western society. She said that once her customers understand the nature of Eastern medicine and how she can improve their lives, their attitudes rapidly change.

"The majority of people in Western society don't know they have other choices," Song said. "They consider physicians as the most important people, the people who help with one's health. They do not consider themselves to be the most important person."

Song said that peoples' mindsets are the most important part of their health, suggesting that prescription pills rarely solve health problems.

"They think, 'If I get sick, I'll go see a doctor,'" Song said. "They don't think that they themselves are the most important. It's a common mentality. So much of what I do and teach is about prevention."

Song said that a number of prospective clients seek her help after they have exhausted all other alternatives. She said that Western medicine often offers a "quick fix" and symptoms and pains tend to return with time.

"There's a group of people who just don't use treatments, but eventually they say, 'I need to do something,'" she said. "They are generally people who want a quick fix. But if someone comes in with a shoulder injury, say they tore their rotator cuff and are not getting surgery-they have a hard time understanding that there is no immediate help. Once they start to gradually get better, they seem very happy."

Song said that the proliferation of prescription drugs in society could cause a healthcare backlash as people searching out more cost effective methods of healthy living. She said that fundamental problems with the drug industry have left consumers confused and anxious.

"With prescription drug research and production, there is so much effort being put into the development," said Song. "It takes so long to get a drug on the market, the companies want the profits to reflect that. The drug companies are pushing the consumers to ask their doctors about these problems, and they think the doctor will say 'take these' and the problem will be gone. The effectiveness of those pills are often misleading. There are other ways of living a healthier life."

Song said that facial rejuvenation, a popular service for her business, provides an excellent example of how Eastern medicine encompasses more than treatment for symptoms.

"The face reflects what's going on in the body," she said of the procedure. "When the body functions better from within, the more radiant one's appearance is."

Though Song prides herself on healing ailments and promoting healthy living, she stressed that to live a well-balanced life requires discipline and, above all, a solid understanding of one's own body.

Song said that she hopes to convey to a wider demographic just how rewarding a healthy life can be, and to assure the remaining skeptics that Eastern medicine is a safe alternative to western methods.

"What could be safer?" she said.

The Bulletin Newspapers June 7, 2007