

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

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POSITION: Scholar / Practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine

ORGANISATION: Alliance of Chinese Medicine Associations of Australia

SUBMISSION1: ' Treating Disease By Preventing Illness' ~~~~ -
The Yellow Emperor

The establishment of the Preventative Health Task Force to tackle chronic diseases brought about by obesity, tobacco and excessive consumption of alcohol, thereby enabling Australians to be the healthiest people on earth by the year 2020 is a very wise policy initiative. It deserves vigorous support by every Australian.

More than a couple of millennia ago, the Yellow Emperor, speaking through an English translation of the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine agreed with the Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd and Health Minister, the Hon. Nicola Roxon when he stated then that

In the good old days, the Sages treated disease by preventing illness before it began, just as a good government or emperor was able to take the necessary steps to avert war. Treating an illness after it has begun is like suppressing revolt after it has broken out. If someone digs a well when thirsty, or forges weapons after becoming engaged in battle, one cannot help. Are not these actions too late?

Resonating with the Yellow Emperor, the Warring States (480 BC-221 BC) Chinese philosopher Laozi said in Chapter 64 of the Dao De Jing said

What is at rest is easy to hold.
What manifests no omens is easily foretold.
What is fragile is easily shattered.
What is small is easily scattered.

Tackle things before they appeared.
Cultivate peace and order before confusion
And disorder has set in.

A tree as big as a man's embrace springs from a tiny sprout.
A tower nine stories high begins with a heap of earth.
A journey of a thousand leagues starts from where your feet stand.

He who fusses over anything spoils it.
He who grasps anything loses it.
The sage fusses over nothing and therefore spoils nothing.
He grips at nothing and therefore loses nothing.

In handling affairs, people often spoil them just at the point of success.
With heedfulness at the beginning and patience at the end,
Nothing will be spoiled.

Therefore the Sage desires to be desire less,
Sets no value on rare goods.
Learns to unlearn his learning.
And induces the masses to return from where they have overpassed.
He only helps all creatures to find their own nature,
But does not venture to lead them by the nose.

Being unhealthy, sick, obese and and excessively consuming alcohol and cigarettes shows that some people have lost their balance i.e. lost their 'nature' ben xing 本心. Hence 故, it is the responsibility of every individual in the community; the state as well as health practitioners from all traditions of healthcare in Australia to help people find their balance recover their health and are one with their own nature as well as with the 'Heaven-Earth' around them.

We are at the threshold of an epoch i.e. a humanist, modern and globalise era, characterized by a growing 'disbelief in the metanarratives of science, rationality and objectivity, where lived lives, the diverse, the complex... the unique' are favoured, and more importantly the local, which 'acknowledges individuality, complexity and subjectivity of personal experience' as well as the organic unity of man (humanity) and heaven (nature) tian ren he yi 天人合一 i.e. the natureworld and the humanworld being organically of one Qi" tian ren tong Qi 天人同气.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), health is a balance between the imaginary Yin and Yang, which metaphorically express a cultural imaginary. A healthy body is one where there is balance between body and mind, as well as between the human body and the body of environment. Health means having a life free from any discomfort, pain and suffering, which imaged as a beam-balance scale deviating towards imbalance. The ideology or imaginary of health-as-balance is also embedded in the Chinese characters which refer to TCM, Zhong Yi 中 医 as well as in the Chinese character Ping 平 which both conjures the image of 'balance'.

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit