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2groom –
special feature

By Ellen Boonstra

High-tech Health

Surprises were in store for this staunchly vegetarian editor and a bon-vivant friend when we underwent high-tech medical checkups at the Bodhi Holistic Wellness Center in Bangkok.

Imagine comfortably sitting in a chair with a pair of headsets - surrounded by futuristic beeping infrared beams - and 'presto', 30 minutes later you receive a comprehensive overview of your current medical condition. No more sticking out your tongue, being probed by 'what' and 'god-knows-where', or undergoing any other more notorious invasive procedures. These 'Star Trek' results come in the form of a colorful 10-page report filled with charts and pictures highlighting your body parts flagged with yellow and red, as well as a few other ominous-looking black symbols.

The Bodhi – a word taken from the Bodhi Tree, which is associated with good health and calmness in Buddhism – specializes in a holistic approach to health, integrating the best of western and eastern medical science, as well as offering advice on nutrition and fitness. Although the center

does treat its fair share of patients with illnesses ranging from hypertension, diabetes and obesity... to Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and coronary heart disease... their main focus is anti-aging, i.e. the prevention of sickness.

"You get your car serviced every 10,000 kilometers – whether it's broken or not. Why not do the same for your body?" says Bobbi Kittichaiwong, The Bodhi's Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

While I – a health-conscious vegetarian – am certainly long overdue for a medical maintenance checkup, I drag along what I perceive to be a much more interesting subject – a stressed-out international executive who, with his frequent business travels and many not-so-healthy client dinners out-on-the-town, rakes up a lot more miles on the odometer.

After an explanation of coming attractions by the center's friendly staff, we're both put to the (high-tech) test. First up is the 'live blood test'. The squeamish among us will be happy to hear that this only requires a tiny prick in the finger with a pen-like instrument. A small drop of blood is subsequently deposited on a glass plate, microscopically enlarged 400 times and projected onto a screen. The sight of your red and white blood cells, crystals (not good), the odd bits of heavy metal (bit worrisome) and other bits of debris swimming around is positively fascinating. A nurse points out the various objects and tells you what this all means – in my case there are toxins floating around plus I may be somewhat anemic; while my friend has – among others – issues with his digestive system.

Next up was the body mass index (BMI) test, performed on another piece of amazing and enlightening equipment – the Biospace Inbody 720 Body Composition Analyzer. This test involves standing motionless on a kind of scale, holding onto two handlebars. After two minutes, it provides you with the analysis of over 50 body compositions, including muscle to fat ratio for weight management. As suspected, his BMI was too high and he needs to lose a bit of weight, while I could use some



Inbody 720

'beefing' up – preferably by eating more protein (meat anyone?).

Third and last came the niftiest machine of all – the aforementioned MRIT (Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technology), originally developed for astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle. Simply explained, each cell in our bodies is an active transmitter of energy impulses which is picked up by the MRIT scanner. Readings are subsequently converted into a 10-page report, indicating whether the level of cell energy frequency transmitted is above or below the normal range. Based on this report, a medical specialist is able to determine the condition of one's body and vital organs.

I have to admit I was quite skeptical at first, but when the doctor accurately pinpointed a couple of (minor) medical maladies I'd been suffering from (and which I had declined to reveal before the test), I was spooked! Again, even for this 'supposedly' healthy vegetarian editor there was a lot of room for improvement. The doctor recommended food supplements to counteract mineral deficiencies, plus several lifestyle modifications like cutting out coffee (a challenge) and reducing the intake of carbohydrates. For our test subject, not surprisingly, losing weight was priority number one.

The real test of course is the 'out-of-The-Bodhi experience' or rather the 'after-The Bodhi experience', i.e. whether or not you manage to incorporate the wellness center's recommendations into your daily life on an ongoing basis. Old habits die hard...now if only they could find a machine which implants motivation and discipline directly into your brain.

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