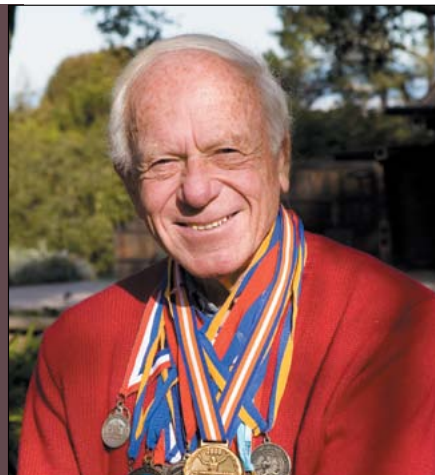


"THE TWAIN ARE COMING"

By Dr. Walter M. Bortz, II, M.D.

"East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet" or that's what Rudyard Kipling taught us. But things they are a-changing. It used to be that in the East health was held to be largely tied to attitudes.



While in the West we held that health was intertwined with things like bacteria and X-rays. In the East health was high-touch. In the West health was high-tech.

But things they are a-changing. The East is starting to incorporate Western technology. The West is starting to recognize the importance of lifestyle in the overall pattern of medical encounters.

Despite all efforts there cannot be a machine to help you stop smoking and drinking. In my view the surgical approach to weight loss is criminal. We don't need a surgeon's knife to treat obesity. We need lifestyle correction. We need more East.

I was interested to note that the incidence of diabetes in Cuba went down when the great United States imposed an embargo on them, and forced people to walk more and eat less junk food. Maybe we need to impose such an embargo on ourselves.

But as the East adopts the Western lifestyle it finds itself heir to our indulgence diseases that we try to remedy by tech, with marginal success and huge cost. The East needs to reclaim its high-touch approach.

We in the West now start to understand that health depends on each of us, and not on some indifferent agency, particularly the huge monster of BIG PHARMA. We need more touch and less tech.

The East is coming our way. Maybe, Rudyard, the Twain are meeting.

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