

Students learn art of Taiji

By Tina Ramos-Ingold
Staff Writer

As Kin Lam watched, his students executed the art controlled but fluid motions of the ancient Asian art of taiji.

Every so often Lam would stop one of his students to offer suggestions.

Lam teaches a taiji therapeutic exercise class on Saturdays at Dynasty Gymnastics in Rancho Cucamonga. The class is offered through the city Recreation and Community Services Department.

Lam, an Ontario resident, teaches the yang style of taiji, which is better known in the western world, Lam said.

Taiji is about more than just form. It's also about relaxation and concentration. It deals with fitness of the body, mind and spirit.

L.P. Parker of Alta Loma treats Lam's class as his "one-hour vacation a week," he said.

Parker met Lam when the latter substituted for Parker's taiji instructor at Chaffey College. Parker was intrigued and signed up for Lam's class.

Margaret McIntrosh of Rancho Cucamonga always wanted to do taiji, but it wasn't until she retired from her teaching job three years ago that she found the time to indulge her interest.

She took classes in the wondrous style of taiji through the city. When she heard about Lam's class, she decided to try a new form of the art.

"It's very stimulating," she said. "It puts you in touch with how your body moves. It makes you aware of how the different parts of the body work together." She's also learning the philosophy and roots behind the art form, McIntrosh said.

Rancho Cucamonga March 16, 2001

Nancy Clark of San Bernardino knew Lam before taking his class. She likes it.

"It keeps me flexible and teaches me balance," Clark said. "It also calms my mind."

Clark's co-worker Bob Adam and his wife, Connie, are also in Lam's class.

Bob Adam used to teach a taiji class through Rancho Cucamonga for two years. He decided to return to being a student after he heard Lam was going to teach a class.

Adam is also involved in martial arts. He has an eighth-degree black belt in san soo. He likes to integrate taiji into his martial arts training.

He calls Lam an excellent instructor.

"Kin is probably the best (instructor) I've ever been exposed to," he said.

Connie Adam is just as impressed by Lam.

"He knows what he's doing," she said. "You can tell by looking at him."

Parker said Lam relates taiji to life in general.

Lam has practiced the art of taiji for years, but it didn't become an important part of his life until he met his master or mentor, Jie Si-Tu, in 1994. Si-Tu, a Shanghai native, taught at Pitzer College and Claremont Graduate University.

Interpreting for Si-Tu in his classes led Lam into teaching. Lam is also a certified massage therapist and teaches martial arts fitness.

He likes teaching.

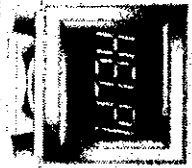
"I learn so much from teaching," Lam said.

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Tina Ramos-Ingold/Staff Writer
Taiji therapeutic exercise class instructor Kin Lam, left, shows how to make one of the art form's fluid moves to L.P. Parker of Alta Loma.

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