

Taking flight in a healing art

By Eu Hooi Khaw

THE air was fresh and crisp, the sun was just emerging from behind some dark clouds amidst the rolling hills at the Awana Resort in Genting Highlands. Four reflexologists — one from Taiwan, two from Hong Kong — gamely tried to show us what they could do on a foot-massage board.

They appeared as phoenixes facing the sun, hands rising like graceful wings, and trying (wobbling a little) to rest a foot on a protrusion from the blue massage board, but they kept still and the camera captured that "perfect" stool.

According to Chinese mythology, the phoenix is an ancient and every bird, resurging every year after a scorching heat in the sun. The bird revival is a metaphor for rebirth, and is celebrated in this east-south-eastern region, called "The Sun Facing Phoenix".

The exercise is to improve blood circulation vertically from head to toe. It is helpful for people who have cold or sweaty hands and feet, and dry skin; those suffering from nervousness, fatigue and moodiness.

Mr Theon Tschien, president of the International Institute for Rwo Shur Health in Taiwan; Mr Tatsuro Kukita, managing director of Best Care Co Ltd in Tokyo; Mr Orita Mitsuru, director of 21 Rwo Shur Health Institute in Japan; and Mr Aris Yong, adviser to a group of Rwo Shur Health instructors from Hong Kong were in Malaysia recently to learn this and other Longevity Exercises on the foot-massage board. Their teacher was petite but energetic Mrs Geraldine Tay, representative of the International Rwo Shur Health Institute in Malaysia.

Tay is a reflexologist who has been in the business for eight years. She runs two reflexology massage centres in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. She has been adding a creative, 20th Century touch to this ancient art of acupressure, which consists of massaging various zones

and when they practise they can feel the good effects.

"Not only is it an exercise, but it also helps one to breathe better, clear the mind, stimulate the chi and then the blood circulation. We think it is a good method. Previously we knew only how to practise reflexology, now we can have the chi as well."

"We have a professional master course on the Rwo Shur Health Method every month," says Tschien.

It is a two-week course and every morning we practise the Longevity Exercises. The course is supposed to have a multiplier effect. When the students go back, they will teach other people what they have learnt."

There are more than 40 Rwo Shur Health Method centres in Japan and Mitsuru is learning the Longevity Exercises so as to train instructors. The centres have 150 people trained in Taiwan to serve members.

Mitsuru works for Best Care Co, the sponsor of the last International Rwo Shur Health Conference in 1989 in Tokyo.

One example of the self-help reflexology equipment produced by the company is the Rwo Shur health roller.

The company started a family club last May to recruit members and teach them various aspects of the Rwo Shur Health Method. To date it has 2,000 members.

"We hope to enrol 10,000 members within the year," says Kukita. "We have a magazine published by the club for the benefit of health and the Rwo Shur Health Method are discussed. It is the first step towards communicating as a family."

The club has broken up into 40 districts and participation is voluntary work. It is significant that 90 per cent of the members are women in their fifties though there are members as young as 14 years.

"In Japan as everywhere else, women are becoming a great power," says Mitsuru. "We must let people know that the exercises are good not only for the elderly but for young people too, especially women."

"The breathing method (which is an important part of the exercises) is very good for us," says Mitsuru. Kukita's only complaint about the Longevity Exercises is that though the music is soft and nice, "it is difficult for men to learn (referring to himself)."

Yet on a hopeful note, he says, that in Japan men are learning aerobics. "It is a different generation now." Most male members of the club are in their six and thus have the time and the money to indulge in exercising, says Kukita. But he hopes to make a breakthrough with those in their 20s who are more interested in physical activity. "They can practise and do these exercises by themselves."

Both Kukita and Mitsuru graduated from the Rwo Shur Health Method professional master course in Taiwan.

Best Care Co is also a member of the Wonderful Aging Club in Japan. "It is aimed at aging gracefully, healthily and beautifully," says Mitsuru. He feels the Longevity Exercises will be well received by the members of this club too.



Mitsuru exercising on a foot-massage board

Exercises are not only for the elderly

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From left: Kukita, Tschien, Mitsuru and Yong in "The Sun Facing Phoenix" stance of the Longevity Exercises

1,000 people from all over the world, including one from the World Health Organisation, who are expected to attend. As in the last conference in Tokyo, when the Longevity Exercises were introduced by Tay, the coming conference will see delegates participating in various reflex zones and massage techniques, known in 43 countries.

At the International Rwo Shur Health Institute in Taiwan, says Tschien, there is a 2½-hour class on Longevity Exercises every Thursday. At the moment everyone is saying that it is a good exercise. The music is beautiful, and they can take care of their own health.

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