

My favorite Asian Arts and its Influence on me

By: Suki Quan

As I walk across the stage waiting for the curtains to rise and open me up to a big audience, my heart beats with fear, my palms are sweating and my stomach is giving me horrible butterflies. At the second, the only thing that was running through my mind was to do the best I can. The curtains open up and I knew everyone's eyes were on me. I took a look at the judges. Although they had a grumpy and unwelcoming expression on their dull face, I knew with my talent and determination, I can construct a smile on those faces. As the music starts, I move with the music, concentrating on all my moves performing them as carefully and beautifully as I can and giving everyone my biggest smile. I finished off with a strong jump and stood still as the peaceful music comes to an end. I took one last look at the judges; they were smiling as they make notes on a piece of paper. Overjoyed that I was finished, I walked off the stage feeling proud.

It was my first time being on 'Showstoppers'. It was a competition with a lot of other great amazing dancers who are here to dance their hearts out. I remembered I was eight at that time. I sat near the corner and waited for the judges to tell me and my opponents our results. I know I wasn't the only one worried and nervous. Everyone was holding their breathe waiting for the moment of truth. The person with the microphone finally announces my name for my gold prize and top ten. I let out a big sigh of relief and a cheerful smile appeared on my face. As I walk on stage to receive my award, I had a flashback of all my practices. I remember the aches on my sides, the random bruises and cuts on my knees, my legs trembling from being unable to balance, the liters of sweat I have sweated, and how my body felt the next morning after practice.

I will remember those aches forever but at that moment I knew all the pain I had to endure was all worth it. This is what dancing gives me. It gives me one moment of fear and the next with joy. It gave me memories for me to share with my friends and maybe even my children someday.

I remember joining AATF when I was 8. I walked into the dance studio feeling like a naïve little girl who don't know anything. I saw the other girls smiling at me, who later became my best friends, giving me a warm welcoming and making me feel more comfortable. My teacher introduced me to everyone and started teaching the routines. I got confused with my arms and my feet. I felt so lost with all the others experienced little girls. But as I went to my lessons every week, I went from a naïve little girl to a mature, understanding and patient person. With my dance teachers, Mrs. Donna Chen, Lein-Mei, Julie Lein, and Jennifer, I learned a lot.

With each of my teachers supporting me whenever I am out on that stage, I feel more confident. Donna has a way of teaching that made me apprehend if something went wrong while I was dancing, don't just stand there and do nothing. I shouldn't let my audience know I made a mistake and let them laugh at me. Instead I should do something to cover it up. Lein-Mei taught me to be patient and precise when I am dancing. Julie taught me to be free and exaggerate at some moves to make it look immense. Jennifer taught me to be sharp, quick, and strong. I have to give the audience that I have confidence and that I know what I'm doing.

AATF didn't just introduce me to Chinese dancing but to jazz, hip-hop, and ballet. Every genre has its unique style. Dancing was the other side of me. I didn't need to speak to show my feelings. Dancing also gives me a chance to be free and brighten people's day. I understand that I am young and I can't do much to help the society but with my passion for dancing I know I can do something. Whenever there's fundraising for schools, nursing homes for elders, or simply

just for entertainment, I am willing to perform. I love to see the smiles on the audiences' faces after I finished my dance. I love the feeling of doing something to help others. I love the feeling of expressing my love for dancing. And I definitely love sharing the Chinese culture with everyone else.

Chinese dancing is very special to me because it always has a wonderful story behind it or a useful moral along. Chinese dancing doesn't mean you know how to write and speak in Chinese. Anyone can do Chinese dancing as long as you set your mind to it. Chinese dancing had filled my Saturdays with joy and excitement. I wake up every Saturday asking myself 'what are we going to learn today?'

Dancing is very important to me because it has taught me a lot of lessons. It gave me opportunities to meet new people, to see the world outside, to relax, to have fun, and definitely to learn. Dancing isn't just about learning the steps or the tricks and performing them well. There's much more to it, like the community. From dancing I have learned to become more patient. With patience I can communicate with more people outside the world. I have also learned to cooperate with different people. Not everyone's the same and it is very hard to work with people sometimes. But as a dancer I have to work with a team of people, all special and different in their own ways. If I learn to cooperate with people it can help me everywhere I go. Someday when I find a job, I'm going to have to cooperate with a lot of different people, which too many, is a difficult task. But with all my experience from dancing, I have a head start on working along with everyone else. Dancing has also made me realize, I need to earn what I want, which in this case, is a lot of practice. No one is perfect and all it takes is practice.