

Asian Arts and Its Influence on Me

Whenever the word “Chinese” or “Asian” comes up in a conversation, most people think about their food, their language, and even their supermarkets. They think about Dim Sum, Chinatown and the concentration of Asians in the San Gabriel Valley. However, most people do not think beyond these typical aspects of Chinese and their heritage. There are many more specialties underneath the common views of the Chinese culture. Commonly, but very important, things such paper and calendars were created by the Chinese, but are often overlooked. Their artwork and traditions do not stand out to many as well. In all, the most influential part of Asian culture to me is Chinese Dancing.

As a young girl, I involved myself with Chinese dancing. This was the one time I could truly express my heritage. American music is often faster and very lively. Their dancing is also very modern and arousing. On the contrary, Chinese music is often peaceful and soft. This allows more time for the dancers to fully express their story through graceful and full moves. In addition, I was able to wear beautiful and detailed costumes as opposed to the casual t-shirt and jeans we wear to school everyday.

I learned that there was always a story behind every dance, and a meaning behind every story. My teachers never just instructed us with a variety of techniques. They showed us feeling and emotion through every story. Although I am not currently involved with Chinese dancing, I find myself seeing these connections through everyday life. In the past, I saw Chinese dancing only as an

activity to help me pass time. However, as an outsider viewing the dancers at the studio, I start to build appreciation for everything I have accumulated these past years. I will never regret sacrificing my Saturdays for another dance lesson, no matter how time consuming.

My experiences with Asian Arts have taken me aside from the American culture and opened my eyes to the wide diversity of other cultures. The stories of ancient Chinese history and idioms have helped me a lot I school as well. This strong foundation in fine arts will undoubtedly be a help for me in life later on. Asian arts have influenced me greatly, and I hope to build on my knowledge and emotion for Chinese dancing.