

Lilian Trang

### More Than Just a Dance

It's showtime! Costumes? Check. Make-up? Check. Ready to dance? Always. As I step onto the stage, the cheering begins and the lights flash on. My heart is pounding a beat quicker and I begin mentally reviewing the dance. There is always the fear of messing up, but I cover it by simply putting on a smile. People show Asian arts' culture in all sorts of ways, such as in artworks or karate, but I express it through Chinese folk dancing. I have been dancing for approximately 8 years now, and since then, it has turned me into the person I am today: but I couldn't have done it on my own without my friends and mentors. I enjoy Chinese folk dancing because it's unlike the modern day dancing, and it introduced me to different cultures and stories of Chinese history. Dancing is a big part of my life, and has influenced me in many ways; not only is it entertaining, but it has taught me patience, commitment, and confidence.

After 8 long years at dance, it is expected that I've grown a fond and passion for it. If someone were to ask me, "Why do you like dancing?" I would have a whole list of answers! It is also a great way to experience new things; I perform at parades, banquets, parties, shows, festivals, even at Disneyland! Another reason why I enjoy it is because Chinese folk dancing is unlike modern dances nowadays. In AATF (Asian Arts Talent Foundation), we create the dances from historical Chinese stories. I think it is very unique and different than what most people do, which is why I take pride in it. Honestly, I used to be afraid of what people would think of me if I told them my hobby, but I now have come to realize that it's an enormous part of my life, and I should be proud of that. Moreover, underneath all the exciting opportunities that occur, dance means much more to me than just a couple of steps.

“Practice makes perfect.” This is the saying I constantly hear, and my experience in dance proves just that. Asian arts had a great impact on me, and it has trained me to become patient with new dances. I learned that no matter how difficult it is in the beginning, anything is possible. The mindset you have to maintain is to continue trying and never give up. I remember how I had always wanted to be as talented as other dancers when I see them on stage. Although I know I won’t wake up one day and become a professional dancer, I know I am getting there. Step by step, little by little, my skills are improving. I’ve learned that in order to reach your goal, you must work hard and be enduring. Becoming a great dancer could not just happen miraculously; it takes persistence to complete it. And in the end, all it takes is a little patience.

Commitment is a crucial factor when joining a team or a class. In dance, it takes lots of dedication to reach your goal. It requires me to manage my time more efficiently, considering I have volleyball practice and art classes. I’ve learned how to manage my time for any occasion because it’s my responsibility. Once you have committed to something, you must stick to it. At times, it may even involve sacrificing your time. Occasionally, I would have to miss a party or an art class in order to go to a performance, but I know that I had made a commitment. It is important to attend all, or most, of the classes; considering that since our teachers use their personal time to teach the class, we must return the favor by being there on time. AATF has helped me understand what it takes to be a part of something big. Though it has brought me to sacrifice other activities, my commitment to dance reveals how much it means to me.

Confidence is a big factor when performing in front of a crowd. Every day, people show their bravery through various actions like standing up to someone or giving a speech. As for me, I express my courage through the movements in my body. I recall the moment when I first stepped onto the stage, afraid of the outcome. Anxious and frightened, I was afraid of the

possibility that something might go wrong. But as I began to mature, it began to feel more comfortable and performing was just another standard thing to me. However, I remember how my teachers used to always tell their students to “Smile!”, and they still continue to remind us. Even if something were to go wrong, they would constantly tell us to smile and look confident in your dancing. And as time passed on, I realize what an impact smiling has done for me; I now keep an upright and positive attitude in dance and out of it!

Asian Arts Talent Foundation has influenced me to be patient, dedicated, and have self-confidence. For the past years, I slowly progressed from a shy, naive girl to a more mature and established person. Dance has helped me become skilled externally, but strong internally. For example, some people are naturally talented at dancing; but I use tolerance to work my way up to the top. Next, I learned that committing to dance is imperative; it is necessary to be there each day on time. Finally, I’ve advanced in all these years of dance by gaining courage and performing in front of an audience. However, the audience only sees the outcome of the dance, but as a growing individual, I uncovered the true ambition of dance.