

Rachel Lin

AATF Scholarship Essay

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### Take That Risk

A little girl stood at the corner of the studio watching the dancers with awe. They twisted and bent their bodies effortlessly with strength and flexibility. As I watched the class of teenagers, I wished I had the grace to dance with such fluidity. However, I was shy as a child and deathly afraid of people watching me. I hoped by some miracle I could become like the pretty dancers one day.

The opportunity arose for me years later as I was offered a place in an upcoming dance performance. Events unfolded, one of the girls could not perform, and I was soon one of the main characters. The Nazha is a Chinese legend about a magical yet naughty boy who fights against the tyrannical ruler of the underwater realm, the Dragon King. He splits into three boys who each aid in the defeat of the Dragon King and save the creatures of the sea. I accepted the part of one of the NaZha. Though I was honored to receive such an important role, I was fearful because I had very little dance experience. However, I took a risk that altered the course of my life.

The performance went on successfully and smoothly. My first debut is one of my favorite memories. At the finale, I stood in line with the rest of the dancers. I stared past the blinding stage lights into the large crowd. Never in my life had I felt so much pride in my studio and me as the audience applauded loudly.

After this performance, I decided to further my basics and technique and develop more strength and flexibility. I turned to ballet improve my overall dancing. All the sweat and tears

paid off in the end when I received my pointe shoes at age 12 after two years of rigorous training. Not only had I earned my first pair of pointe shoes, but my basics and my technique had improved greatly. I returned to AATF to resume my Chinese dancing and found it to be easier as I linked the different styles together. I took part in dances such as, Daizhu, a dance that resembles the beauty of the peacock, and Dong Huang, a lovely representation of the heavenly and musical Chinese goddesses.

I will never forget the experiences Chinese dance has provided me with by sharing the joy of dancing with my fellow dancers and watching the smiles of the audience. From the moment I stepped onto the stage for the first time, I did not have a clue on what Chinese dance could offer me, yet, without that first step, I would not be the dancer I am today. I took a risk when I agreed to dance, and I don't regret it at all.