

The Life of a Chinese American Folk Dancer

Born in America, my life has been shaped and surrounded by the American lifestyle. I am an American girl. My parents tried everything they could to make sure I remember the culture of where my family came from and who we are. They even enrolled me in different Asian arts classes like abacus and calligraphy as well as Chinese classes, but I never really felt passionate about them. Though, once I joined AATF (Asian Arts Talents Foundation) and started doing Chinese Folk Dance, I started to truly understand my Chinese culture, about my true identity. I am an American, but I am also Chinese; I am a Chinese American girl. Therefore, my favorite Asian Arts is Chinese Folk Dance because it reminds me and connects me back to my true Chinese culture and identity. Other than that, Chinese Folk Dance has influenced me and shaped me into the better person I am today because it taught me teamwork, dedication, and sacrifice.

Joining the Chinese Folk Dance team taught me that everyone works as one. In order to work as one, we need teamwork. The dances we do require every member to be there for it to be complete. If one does not put in the effort, the entire dance becomes confusing and turns into a mess. In the end, it would not just affect negatively to that one person, but it affects negatively to all of us as one team. In addition, if one accidentally makes a mistake such as tangling a ribbon or dropping a fan, we do not ever put him or her down. Instead, we have to stick by each other and be there to bring them back up and to cheer them on. Succeed or fail, we will always be one team. Chinese Folk Dance helped me realize that teamwork does not just apply to dance, it applies to my everyday life. My school's officer team, friends, and family all require

contributions as a team to succeed and prosper. The entire dance team works together to perfect the dance just like how my entire officer team works together to manage the club. The entire dance team has to support each other through the ups and downs just like how friends and family have to support each other to pick each other back up when they fall and give them the spirit to go on. Because I joined the Chinese Folk Dance team, I learned that teamwork means no one is ever left behind and no one ever works alone. Though, in order for there to be teamwork, there needs to be dedication.

Chinese Folk Dance has drilled into me the characteristics of dedication. It told me that once you commit to something, you stick to it until the very end. Our dances are choreographed so that everyone has a position and everyone knows their moves. If one suddenly decides to quit or not show up, the dance will be ruined and the entire team will have to start over. We have three wonderful teachers that dedicate all their attention to us during practice. As a result, not only do the team member dedicate their time, but the teachers also dedicate their time. If one does not devote their time during, then everyone's time is wasted. In addition to just committing time, I have also learned that we must commit all our attention and emotions to the things we do. Devote your all. You being there but your passion somewhere else results in no difference than if you were not there at all. With Chinese Folk Dance, I have realized that genuine dedication is really important. Whether it is for dance, school, class, friends, or family, they are all equally important. Committing to going to every dance practice is just like committing to going to every academic class, every club meeting, every piano lesson, every Chinese class as well as doing homework, practicing, and completing chores. Additionally, I have learned to completely dedicate myself to my friends and family whenever they rely on me for something. Thanks to Chinese Folk Dance, I began to dedicate myself in all the things I set my mind to. Also, I put my heart into it completely because doing things halfway is like not doing it at all. Nevertheless, to completely

dedicate oneself, sacrifices need to be made.

For Chinese Folk Dance, I am willing to give up anything, sacrifice anything. Events will unfortunately bump into each other on the same date on the same time, but it is our responsibility to determine which event is more important, prioritize, and make the sacrifice. Because of our hectic dance schedule, especially when performances are coming up, the team has to give up a lot of their homework time to go to dance practice. That also means that in order to compensate for all the time lost, we have to sacrifice time going out with friends. Our three teachers always sacrifice their weekend to teach the entire team; our dance team also sacrifice their weekend to be there to learn. Chinese Folk Dance has helped me determine what should come first and what is more important and how to make the sacrifice from there. Dance is very important, so are academics, club responsibilities, and home responsibilities.

In conclusion, Chinese Folk Dance has taught me teamwork, dedication, and sacrifice. Not only did it teach me to work together, commit, and sacrifice for the dance team, but it also taught me that teamwork, dedication, and sacrifice applies to school, clubs, class, and many other responsibilities. Because of AATF and because Chinese Folk Dance, it has influenced me and help me improve myself to be a better person with better work ethics and character. In addition to that, it has helped me understand and connected me with my true Chinese culture and identity. Although I was surrounded by the American culture ever since birth, Chinese Folk Dance also provided me the opportunity to surround myself and learn the Chinese culture. Because of my favorite Asian arts of Chinese Folk Dancing, I live the life of a team working, dedicated, and sacrificing Chinese American Folk Dancer.